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Rude & Playful Shadows: Collective Performances of Cinema in Cold War Europe

by

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Committee in charge:

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Abstract

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by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Performance Studies

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"Rude & Playful Shadows: Collective Performances of Cinema in Cold War Europe" is a historical examination, which engages rigorous discursive and performance-based analysis of underground film screening events that crossed the West/East divide and brought together an international group of artists and filmmakers during some of the "hottest" years of the Cold War period. At its center, the study investigates the practices of two pioneering filmmakers, Austrian Kurt Kren (b. Vienna, 1929; d. Vienna, 1998) and German Birgit Hein (b. Berlin, 1942). Tracking their aesthetic, ideological, and spatial reconfigurations of the cinematic apparatus—their "performances of cinema"—in Austria and former West Germany, the dissertation demonstrates how Kren and Hein were progenitors of influential new viewing practices that operated in the tacit geopolitical interstices between nation-states and underground cultures. Contemporary art, film, and media scholarship tends to move in one of two directions: either toward aesthetic inquiries into the appearance of moving images and other time-based arts in the visual art museum since the 1990s, or toward the politics of global media distribution in the digital age. "Rude & Playful Shadows," alternatively, takes two steps back, seeing these strands of inquiry as interlocked sets of historical conditions. Practices such as those of Kren and Hein, this study contends, were vital to the formation of contemporary arts curatorial models. Importantly, if not paradoxically, they also remain crucial models for conceptualizing noncommercial and anti-institutional underground circulation and the kinds of convenings such movement fosters.

Each chapter of the study looks at different screening event forms in which Kren and Hein partook, considering how these forms developed under different sets of materials circumstances and in response to different sets of political aspirations. Through its analysis of these event forms and practices of "eventing," "Rude & Playful Shadows" sheds new light on pre-histories of today's transnational time-based media networks, offering critical revision of the conventions for reading allied histories of art and film, film and performance, performance and art.

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PREFACE

Sitting in the office of film scholar Anton Kaes at UC Berkeley on an overcast day in the early spring of 2013, I could not help but to smile as he recounted for me his first encounter with the work of the 1960s Austrian art movement known Viennese Actionism, specifically artist Otto Mühl's performance, *O Tannenbaum*, from 1964. Structural filmmaker Kurt Kren's highly edited celluloid translation of Mühl's performance *8/64*—a flicker film harkening back to the days of the stag film—was being screened as part of a Monday night underground film series at the *Türkendolch* restaurant/bar/college hangout behind the University of Munich. The year was 1969. Kaes went silent for a moment and, staring off into the distance, described the darkened space: haphazard with some chairs and tables around, and a thick cloud of hash smoke hovering just below the ceiling as The Doors' "The End" played. He and other film students showed up with no idea of what was to be screened; it was a habit of faith, "like a religious thing," he said, where you just went. You went to see something transgressive and "weird" (Andy Warhol's films also came up as did the early theatre experiments of Fassbinder and his troupe when students there); you went because this *was* the alternative cinema context—what we sitting here today might think of as "art" film was not yet in the museums and nowhere near possible in the popular movie houses. Kaes could still vividly remember seeing Mühl and Kren's work. He paused again—this time I could almost see him seeing the film—and after a few moments he continued: "it was beyond obscenity, beyond nudity." Our conversation turned in another direction, returning to Kren's film only when the word "excess" came up in discussion of the 1960s context. For Kaes, Actionism was in conversation with the excesses of the Summer of Love. For him, the 1964 Actionist performance-qua-film was alive in the screening event on a college campus in 1969, five years after its production, a year after the '68 revolts, and in the midst of both Mühl and Kren's exoduses from Austria into West Germany.

On the bus ride home after the meeting that evening, I reflected on the first time I had ever seen Kurt Kren's films. It was 2006. It was in a garage in Long Beach, California—a port city just south of Los Angeles—where a group of fellow painters-turned-performance-artists had gathered to drink and collectively talk through why we had left behind our painting practices. At a certain moment, we all ended up gathered around a laptop screen to watch a YouTube video one guy had put on. It was one of Kurt Kren's Action films, *7/64 Leda und the Swan* (made one month before the 1964 *O Tannebaum* that Kaes had seen in 1969). In our space played *Nightlife*, the then newly-released album from the experimental "post-riot grrrl" band Erase Errata. The garage was lit by a few bare red light bulbs, and the air was thick with the smoke from joints and cigarettes. As the swan in Kren's film exploded into a flurry of feathers, the voice of the band's lead singer belted out in a suggestively separatist staccato manner, "I don't take you / I don't make you / I don't save you." My eyes were glued to the computer screen: what was happening? What was this thing—this mess—we were watching? Since that day forward, I have been working in one way or another with these three- to four-minute films. It was much later, though, on that day with Kaes in the spring of 2013 that I realized what I cared about was the screening events: where did people see these films? And what was that space like? How did people know to be there? What kind of community was that? These questions—watching Kaes remember that setting so vividly—became the foundation for the study that unfolds here.

INTRODUCTION

Expanding and *Eventing*: Performances of Cinema in Cold War Europe

The screen flashes up with the light of a projector, and you know the film has begun. Your space glows with the warm red colors of the interior space being reflected on screen. Then things go dark again. In the brief flickers of light that follow, a group of faces appear. During the intermittent, brief moments that they return over the next minute or so, you recognize that they—these faces—are also watching a screen. They too are audience members. They stare back at you in your position behind their screen, beyond their screen. The image goes dark; the room goes dark. As the scene continues to flicker in and out, lighting the theater on both this side of the screen and that one for the next four minutes (the film's duration), we see people lounging on rows of blanketed benches, which populate the small theater space over there; sometimes they engage in focused conversations, sometimes they casually lean back to roll cigarettes on their bellies, sometimes they edit film. Once or twice someone arises from a bed in the back of auditorium and dresses after getting some rest. This theater space, it becomes clear, is for more than just the screening: it is a meeting point, an editing room, a space for relaxing and conversing, even, on occasion, a shelter for the night. In the closing moments a man engaged in conversation cuts onto the screen in the foreground of the frame. He looks directly out—for him, at the projection screen; for you, at the camera. He raises his forearm in a gesture towards it—towards you? After lighting a cigarette he leans back, now stretching his arms upward and outward in what appears to be a measure of scale; a measure of some sort of expanse. Is he gesturing towards the camera that records him, or towards the person behind that camera perhaps? Towards the screen that is projecting his recorded image? Or, possibly, to you on this side of the screen? Just what does this outstretched gesture include in its grasp?

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Rude & Playful Shadows: Collective Performances of Cinema in Cold War Europe is an attempt to chart the expanse articulated in this closing scene from *30/73 Coop Cinema Amsterdam*, a film made by Austrian experimental filmmaker Kurt Kren (b. 1929, Vienna; d. 1998, Vienna). Shot over a period of three weeks while Kren was leading an editing workshop in Amsterdam at the beginning of 1973, *30/73* positions viewers as spectators to a programmed in-person event organized by the local filmmakers' cooperative that had been formed just a few years prior. Kren's camera was set up behind the projection screen, recording the activities happening in the space. Spectators of the film thus see the expanding uses of this site of the theater: it is a public screening space, an educational space, a quasi-domestic space, *and* a scene for the filmic event. Networks like the cooperative system were a support structure for a wide range of practices, from structural film experiments like those of Kren, to Expanded Cinema projects that forewent the use of celluloid altogether, to filmed theater productions and non-commercial animation work. Co-ops like this one in Amsterdam held together a diverse range of practices through a shared economic basis—a practical need for any moving images that did not fit into the feature-length narrative-driven cues of commercial film. This shared economic basis did not, though, translate into a shared aesthetic. This, in part, has made it difficult for historical studies to discuss the sites of these co-op networks and the screening events that they produced. Such networks are seemingly extraneous to considerations of specific film texts, and perhaps just too para-textual if the goal is to parse the contours of individual aesthetic practices. Yet, as a project like Kren's *30/73 Coop Cinema Amsterdam* records, these networks were crucial supports for the development of different kinds of viewing practices, which had developed outside the conventional movie house.

In turning the camera towards this infrastructural space of the co-op and locating viewers of the film somewhere between the diagetic and the non-diagetic, the on screen and off screen structures of film as industry and film as art form, *30/73* re-posed a query, which was asked throughout the Kren's practice, and which echoes throughout this dissertation: where and when are the spaces that cinema happens?[1] And, if cinema is a particular form of exchange, how and by what means can that form materialize? One can begin to think of the outstretched arms of the co-op member gesturing at the screen in *30/73* as also directing attention to the edges of a series of frames—the frame of the screen, of the makeshift theater space, of the collective gathering site, of pedagogical space. The blurring of categorical divisions between the material (and material conditions) within each of these frames was the effect of an expanding, which foregrounded circuits of movement. This blurring called into question any stable notions of aesthetic/social, inside/outside, formal/informal; and, in the process, changed the ways that distribution and exhibition practices were understood in the arts. Cumulatively, moreover, they stand as an example of the kinds of formations—in both market and community-building senses—that are possible when producers re-cast themselves as distributors.

Blurring / Expanded / Expanding

Blurring of divisions is, of course, a familiar trope of post-World War II art, popularized by the well-known U.S. American artist Allan Kaprow, whose 1958 "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" marked a tidal change in the concept of painting specifically and the role of process in art production more broadly. Bracketing off formalist readings of the drip paintings, Kaprow's

1. This mirroring effect of one screen to another in *30/73 Coop Cinema Amsterdam* also structures other films by Kren, such as *38/79 Sentimental Punk* (1979). In the 1979 film the mirroring is lens to lens; see Canyon Cinema website for full description, <http://canyoncinema.com/catalog/film/?i=1391>.

text emphasized the action-based nature of the Pollock's process and of his bodily immersion into the field of production.[2] In so doing, the progenitor of Happenings hit a kind of reset button on the course of history-making when it came to visual art—medium specificity would no longer be the basis for meaning making or evaluation. First established in the eighteenth century by philosopher, playwright, and art critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, medium specificity was intended to clarify distinctions between the static and temporal arts, which would in the twentieth century be reconfigured by art critic Clement Greenberg with the realm of the plastic arts.[3] While such divisions never quite held up, they nonetheless set the terms of a progress narrative, which, according to Greenberg, reached a peak with Pollock's dripped canvases. Long before Kaprow, the institutional interventions of the historical avant-garde activities, such as the Futurist *serates*, Dada cabarets, or Surrealist walks, had re-oriented painting by placing it in relation to theater, sound art, poetry, and urban space. Boundaries had already begun to breakdown between objects, actions, words, sounds, and images, and between temporal and spatial registers of aesthetic experience, but these practices remained, in Kaprow's time, largely outside of art's histories. With Kaprow, though, the boundaries of medium and discourses therein were radically expanded, which is to say both enlarged and proliferated—ground well-covered by historical accounts of installation art, mail art, score-based performance, and so forth, all of which did away with a concept of medium specificity.

2. See Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," (1958) in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, edited by Jeff Kelley, 1–9 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

3. See Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), translated by Edward Allen McCormick (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1984); and Greenberg, "Towards a New Laocoön," *Partisan Review* 7 (July-August 1940): 296–310. Lessing's ideas moved on through the Wöfflin-Riegl lineage of formalism that would go on to set the terms of historical narrative-making in the British Bloomsbury School, which would eventually be adopted by Greenberg.

In the realm of film, meanwhile, non-commercial works from the historical avant-gardes had earned a place in New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1935 just before the outbreak of World War II thanks to the enormous efforts of figures like Iris Barry, who campaigned tirelessly to persuade both museum donors and commercial film industry insiders of the artistic and educational value of moving images materials. Not only was it crucial to save those avant-garde works from the destruction of the war in Europe, it was also important to teach film literacy to people across the United States. In so doing, Barry and others transferred the cinephilic orientation of interwar ciné-clubs into the structure of the museum by way of the library (not the gallery) where films, like books, could be held for rental.[4] Such repositories became the basis for art cinemas in the immediate postwar period, like Cinema 16 in New York or the Art in Cinema film series at San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art. This model of the loan system—and not necessarily the library itself—would also become hugely important for the filmmakers' cooperatives like the one recorded in Kren's *30/73*.[5] Through the co-ops, forms of production operating somewhere between Kaprow's process-based provocations and the non-commercial avant-garde practices held in film libraries found channels for circulation. The shifts in organization of the screening that followed recast relations to and between labor and leisure. The industrialization of leisure time characteristic of modernity—in which the movie house and the

4. See Haidee Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 20.

5. The first filmmakers' cooperative, the Filmmakers' Cooperative (FMC) in New York, was established in 1961 under the quasi-leadership of Jonas Mekas (although several artists signed the founding manifesto, including: Stan VanDerBeek, Ron Rice, Rudy Burckhardt, Jack Smith, Lloyd Williams, Robert Breer, David Brooks, Ken Jacobs, Gregory Markopoulos, Ray Wisniweski, Doc Humes, and Robert Downey). The FMC was in part began as a reaction of the curatorial control of sites like Cinema 16—the rejection of Stan Brakhage's film by Cinema 16 curator Amos vogel is directly referenced by Mekas in his "The Film-maker's Cooperative: A Brief History." <http://film-makerscoop.com/about/history>. See also Scott Macdonald, "An Interview with Amos Vogel," in *Cinema 16: Documents Towards a History of the Film Society*, 37–62 (Boston, MA: Temple University Press, 2002).

practice of film viewing played central roles—was at sites like the Coop Cinema in Amsterdam turned on its head. Practices of leisure related to film watching eluded industry standards there, blurring divisions between labor and leisure and making it unclear just how either was to be performed. Kren's *30/73* registers this, drawing attention to the blocking, choreography, and management of experiences that was taking place in these kinds of alternative screening sites, which disregarded the "proper" modes of engagement performed in commercial movie houses by, for instance, turning the theater space into an editing room, a smoking room, and even a sleeping room, in addition to being a screening room. By turning the camera on all these activities from behind the projection screen, Kren's film approached the space itself with its workshop environment as the stage of activity and the in-person*ness* of the communities members gathered there as the actors in a kind of performance—a kind of performing differently of the screening site and, by extension, of viewing.

Recent examinations of changes in cinema's sites and viewing practices during this postwar period, such as those by Brandon Joseph, Gloria Sutton, or Andrew Uroskie, are the most immediate reference points for a study like *Rude & Playful Shadows*.[6] Each of these scholars has carefully tracked various origin points for what is today broadly understood as Expanded Cinema practice—a practice of filmmaking, that is, which emerged alongside Happenings and action-based arts and foregrounded (and even sometimes willfully flaunted) the performance of the cinematic apparatus either outside the movie house or in non-traditional ways within it. My interest in linking the screening sites and viewing practices to the political economies that made these shifts possible, however, marks a slightly different focus. If those

6. See Brandon Joseph, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage, A 'Minor' History* (New York: Zone Books, 2011); Gloria Sutton, *The Experience Machine: Stan VanDerBeek's Movie-Drome and Expanded Cinema* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016); and Andrew Uroskie, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Postwar Art* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

recent studies have given primary attention to the so-called ***expanded*** medial qualities of the art object—to, in other words, the enlargement and proliferation of medium boundaries—my study gives more weight to analysis of the ***expanding*** infrastructural frameworks and networks of movement that made the material circulation of non-commercial film, so-called Expanded Cinema, and other, different forms of time-based art, possible at all. To put it simply, if the primary concerns of these recent studies was production practices, here the sight lines have been adjusted to center distribution and exhibition practices; "Expanded Cinema," I posit, would simply not have been inconceivable without the robust cooperative networks and practices of ***eventing*** that connected filmmakers and audiences across genres and across geographies.

Eventing / Kurt Kren and Birgit Hein / Cold War Europe

Geography is another key point of departure for *Rude & Playful Shadows*. Where the aforementioned studies on Expanded Cinema have largely been focused on figures within the United States, this dissertation shifts focus to the European continent—that place from which avant-garde film(s) had to be saved during the war. In particular, it turns to Austria and Germany, territories at the core of what was understood as Central Europe until the end of World War II when they re- emerged from the disasters of fascism as lynchpins in the geopolitical construction of the West/East divide that marked Cold War Europe (and, in many ways, marks contemporary Europe still). The Berlin Wall is an obvious symbol of this; but I would also point to conversations amongst the Allied forces during the Reconstruction Period when it was proposed to form a "Southern German Confederation," which would have merged the Bavarian province of South Germany together with the rump state of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—a union first conceived at the end of World War I when Austria had lost its imperial identity and

was increasingly identifying with its German-speaking "big brother." After the Second World War the idea was resuscitated (and advocated in particular by Winston Churchill and the British Foreign Office), but to very different ends: in the 1940s it was conceived from outside as a means to create a bulwark against the Socialist East, including the Soviet territories of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, as well as Tito's Yugoslavia.[7] Though this confederation never materialized, that such a forced union was even conceived of indicates the extent to which the two nation-states (Austria and Germany) figured into the spatialization of Cold War boundaries and the role they play, specifically, in the conceptualization of an international West. Closely linked to these Cold War boundaries is also the concept of the "nuclear age"—the connections between the two frames of periodization is ubiquitous across literature, and particularly potent in the West German context where the first wave of the nuclear disarmament movement (roughly 1957–1964) was undertaken in close communications with British activists. The public sphere building that resulted helped not only to catalyze the student

7. See Audrey Kurth Cronin, *Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria 1945-1955* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Erika Weinzierl, "The Origins of the Second Republic: A Retrospective View," in *Austria 1945–1995: Fifty Years of the Second Republic*, edited by Kurt Luther and Peter Pulzer (London: Routledge, 1998); and Joachim Becker and Andreas Novy, "Divergence and Convergence of National and Local Regulation: The Case of Austria and Vienna," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 6, no. 2 (1999): 127–143.

movement in the Federal Republic, but also to solidify its westward facing international identity in the realm of radical politics—or, that is to say, beyond official state diplomacy.[8]

The focus here is on these networks—official, radical, and in the blurry spaces between—that supported activities in German-speaking Europe. In particular, *Rude & Playful Shadows* concentrates analysis on two figures within this context: the Austrian experimental filmmaker Kurt Kren, whom the reader has already met, and the West German filmmaker, programmer, and historian Birgit Hein (b. Berlin, 1942). Hein had first seen Kren's films in Hamburg in 1967 when Viennese filmmaker Ernst Schmidt Jr. had brought them along to the *Hamburger Filmschau* to screen with other films from the Austrian scene, but it was not until the first program by the Cologne-based XSCREEN Studio in March 1968 that the two met in person. After that they remained close friends throughout up until the early 1980s when they lost touch after Kren relocated to western regions of the United States. During that decade, though, they screened together, traveled together, and, at times, lived together. While this study is organized around their practices and collective efforts, it is by no means a monographic-like examination of their lives. A primary reason that I have chosen to take up both Kren and Hein, in fact, is precisely to avoid an impulse to singularize what were in actuality collective endeavors that relied on numerous people—alongside Kren and Hein, the reader will also meet a series of other

8. For a broad overview from this enormous body of literature, see Jim Falk, *Global Fission: The Battle over Nuclear Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); April Carter, *Peace Movements: International Protest and World Politics since 1945* (London: Routledge, 1992); Deborah Welch Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust: U.S.-Soviet Relations During the Cold War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000); J.P.B. Dunbabin, *The Cold War: The Great Powers and their Allies* (London: Routledge, 2007). For texts specific to the German situation, see the numerous articles on the subject written by historian Holger Nehring, including "Cold War, Apocalypse, and Peaceful Atoms. Interpretations of Nuclear Energy in the British and West German Anti-Nuclear Weapons Movements, 1955 – 1964," *Historical Social Research* 29, no. 3 (2004): 150–170; "Politics, Symbols, and the Public Sphere: The Protests Against Nuclear Weapons in Britain and West Germany, 1958–1963," *Studies in Contemporary History* 2 (2005): 180–202; and "National Internationalists: British and West German Protests against Nuclear Weapons, the Politics of Transnational Communications and the Social History of the Cold War, 1957–1964," *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (November 2005): 559–582.

figures, including: members of the Viennese scene like Otto Mühl, Hans Scheugl, Peter Weibel, and Oswald Wiener; members of the Cologne scene like Wilhelm and Karlheinz Hein, Hans-Peter Kochenrath, and Rolf Wiest; and other cultural and political persons, ranging from Cologne city council member Kurt Hackenberg to Swiss-German curatorial legend Harald Szeemann.[9] One will immediately notice that Hein was, in many cases, one of the only women in this male-dominated scene. This has made it that much more important to bring her activities into the center of the discussion; even still, though, her practice, like Kren's, moves through this narrative like a rude and playful shadow. Somewhere between Kren's films and Hein's organizational efforts a picture of collective performances of cinema in Cold War Europe emerges.[10] This was a situation of mutual constitution: the materiality of film and the material conditions of cinema were inseparable. Kren's experiments in seeing were, as I discuss throughout the chapters, deeply interwoven with the experiments in living that Hein and others created as they devised ways of what I call "eventing" non-commercial film. In what ways, to put it simply, could screening events be made that were in excess of just projection? That operated outside the confines of conventional movie houses predicated on feature-length, narrative-based films, and which people would actually know about and attend? Tracing the shared networks of Kren and Hein, and, in the process, the kinds of infrastructures (and the

9. Though still employing a monographic focus, it is important to note that a few recent studies on Kaprow have worked towards undoing the singularity of his practice by reframing the line of questioning to focus on audience, circulation, and reception. In such studies Kaprow emerges as a model of the "artist" amidst the various institutional and informal networks through which his work moved. See Judith Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); and Philip Ursprung, *Allan Kaprow, Robert Smithson, and the Limits to Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

10. The way in which gendered roles of "making" and "supporting" operated in these collective performances of cinema is something that I will discuss at greater length in chapter 3 of this study. These power relations are also the subject of my current research on Hein and other women programmers in both West and East Germany in a study tentatively titled "Curating and Kinship: Women, Domestic Labor, and Programming Experimental Arts in Two Germanys."

infrastructural choices) that supported event activities like those at the Coop Cinema in Amsterdam and elsewhere, the dissertation offers some possible answers to these questions. The "performances of cinema" as I theorize it, then, has less to do with debates around form and medium specificity, and more to do with ***eventing***—and ***expanding*** infrastructural support networks for—different kinds of experiences of time and space.

I started here, as I do each chapter, with Kren's films, which offer glimpses into the multiple kinds of economies that connected filmmakers and artists like himself to each other and to other communities across cities, countries, and continents. The Austrian filmmaker is an elusive yet persistent figure in twentieth-century histories of both performance- and film-based experimentation. His practice was idiosyncratic to say the least, staked in experimentation across media communication platforms in film and the visual arts no matter where that took him—from cooperative theaters, midnight screenings at commercial theaters, fringe film festivals in abandoned U-Bahn stations, and punk shows in warehouses, to art schools, artist studios, galleries, and international art and film festivals. In films ranging from pseudo-pornographic collaborations with the Austrian performance art group known as the Vienna Actionists (*6/64 Mama und Papa*, *10/65 Selbstverstümmelung*), to meticulously durational records of everyday space and time (*15/67 TV*, *31/75 Asyl*, *32/76 An W+B*), to self-reflexive "documents" of film cooperative life and experimental worlds (*23/69 Underground Explosion*, *30/73 Coop Cinema Amsterdam*, *38/79 Sentimental Punk*), Kren combined and re-combined structuralist film techniques with inquiries into social space, re-constituting what "film about film" or "film as film" might mean.[11] The logic of his practice, as *30/73* begins to model, is a kind of entryway

11. For an extended analysis of Kren's practice, see my "Kurt Kren: The Life of Film/Films of Life," keynote lecture given on the occasion of "A Sentimental Punk: An Incomplete Kurt Kren Retrospective, 1956– 1996," at The Lab, San Francisco, September 2018.

into an examination of the broader logics of distribution and exhibition; and, at the same time, the irregularity of his combinatory strategies reflected (quite literally, as in the case of *30/73*) the wide-ranging developments of technologies of organization during the period. Yet, despite some critical attention given to his work in the mid- to late 1970s, much of his career has been lost in the interstices of film and visual art discourses, eclipsed by (and subsumed within) either the post-World War II avant-gardist strategies of the New American Cinema Group with which he and the European scenes were in dialogue, or the work of the Austrian painters/performance artists with whom he collaborated through the 1960s. Kren's practice, it turns out, rudely and playfully haunts numerous histories.

Similarly, Hein's practice of eventing is an under-acknowledged touchstone for the ways that alternative screening practices operate today. She is perhaps best known as a prominent example of experimental film in West Germany for her work with former husband Wilhelm Hein, which ranged from the Structural film classic *Rohfilm* (1968), to their multi-year Expanded Cinema project *Superman and Superwoman. Filmperformance* (1981–1982); as well as for her later essayistic experimental documentaries like *Die Unheimlichen Frauen* (1991) and *Baby I Will Make You Sweat* (1994) made after the dissolution of her marriage. Throughout the years included in this study, which roughly extend from 1964 through 1978, the collaborations of Birgit and her husband Wilhelm helped to pioneer the expansions of film form for which the period is known. And, along with figures like Malcolm LeGrice, Tony Conrad, and Gregory Markopoulos (all of whom were friends), they staged interventions into the basic tenants of the cinematic apparatus. Simultaneous to this work in filmmaking, Hein was also a writer, producing regular articles and reviews for publications ranging from the mainstream newspapers like the

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<https://vimeo.com/301041318/3cfb16634c?fbclid=IwAR0eLQFONih4h3yOMvJ68jhgz8V5iOtFzGLZU02dm1Gt-IaOXBy--i18EAc>.

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger of North Rhine-Westphalia, to underground independently published journals like *Supervisuell* that sprang up across Europe to bring visibility to underground film outside of centers like New York (where Jonas Mekas established *Film Culture* and, later, began the weekly column "Movie Journal" in the *Village Voice*) and Berlin (where the New German Cinema-oriented *Filmkritik* was published). Hein's writing also extended into historical studies; her 1970 *Film im Underground* was one of the first histories of avant-garde film to be written—the very first in the German language. In it she put forth a mode of thinking about film practice that considered economies of production and distribution side-by-side; and she put this method into practice in both her filmmaking and her programming work. In March 1968 she co-founded (along with Wilhelm) the XSCREEN Studio for Independent Film, a programming project established in in the West German city of Cologne. XSCREEN is one of the most important and least known "expanded arts" organizing structures of Western Europe's long 1960s. Perhaps this study's inclusion of the Studio—and Hein's central role within it—can offer somewhat of a corrective to that narrative.

Performances of Cinema: Transdisciplinary Encounters

The reach across disciplines I take up throughout this dissertation is, like the open arms of the Amsterdam co-op member in Kren's *30/73* or Hein's thinking in *Film im Underground*, expansive. Most basically, I employ an interdisciplinary Performance Studies methodological approach (discussed at more length below) to triangulate three fields of discourse: those of film, visual art, and theater. Putting these spheres into conversation with one another is by no means any easy task; internal debates informing each overlap and collide. It seems most useful to start

at film historian Tom Gunning's 1986 "The Cinema of Attraction," which is a crucial point of departure for *Rude & Playful Shadows*.[12] Gunning's turn of attention to the staging of the film screening as an event and his articulation of a longer intermedial history of the screening event—from the beginnings of moving image technology in the late nineteenth century into expanded cinema and performance experiments of the 1960s—raises numerous questions about the ideological formation of the cinematic apparatus and normative spectatorship, and, in the process, proposes postwar avant-garde experiments in the second half of the twentieth century as continuous with, rather than a rupture from, the history of film. Gunning, in fact, explicitly identified the avant-garde alongside early cinema, yet little work has been done to follow through on the historical study of those avant-gardes, in particular after the Second World War when experimental film because irrevocably entangled with visual art.

Part of the reason for this oversight has perhaps been a pre-occupation with the competing theoretical and political positions of film theorist Annette Michelson and film critic Gene Youngblood, whose writings in the 1960s and early 1970s articulated "rival" forces within independent and non-commercial film of the time.[13] Michelson's 1966 lecture, "Film the Radical Aspiration," set the terms of the divide.[14] At stake was the legacy of montage and narrative film. Shifting too far away from the entertainment function of film and its industry standards,

12. Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *Wide Angle* 8, no. 3–4 (1986): 63–70.

13. See Michelson, "Film the Radical Aspiration," in *The Film Culture Reader*, edited by P. Adams Sitney (Lanham: Cooper Square Press, 2000); and Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (London: Studio Vista, 1970). Peter Wollen's "The Two Avant-Gardes" did some work nearly a decade later to articulate the material-economic differences between these two camps of filmmaking, but his insistence that the difference was not "purely" economic—or industry-driven—curtailed some of the most meaningful insights of his text. See Wollen, "The Two Avant-Gardes," *Studio International* 190 (November/December 1975): 171–175. For an overview of this history, see A.L. Rees, "Expanded Cinema and Narrative: A Troubled History," in Expanded Cinema: Art Performance Film (London: Tate, 2011).

14. Notably, this was the same year VanDerBeek's Movie-Drome "premiered" as a destination screening event in the festival. That, as Sutton points out, Michelson "held court" with other notable scholars and artists at the Movie-Drome premiere speaks to the ways in which, critical debates aside, even Michelson participated in the alternative perceptual experiences offered/promised by "expanded cinema" events.

Michelson asserted, moved too far from the potential of mass communication, which is at the core of film's promise. Instead, the theorist proposed (primarily through the work of French New Wave auteurs Jean-Luc Godard and Alain Resnais) that the radical aspiration lay in the "conversion of conventions,"[15] or, as Godard described of his own work, attempts "to make 'experimental' films in the guise of entertainments."[16] In this act of "conversion" there remained a "commitment to the constraints and stimuli of a given form," and it is in the "straining of the limits of that form, [that] it exemplifies a commitment to the value of Form…."[17] Here the question of medium specificity surfaced—what made film *film* was its capacity to tell stories, and, potentially, to tell stories differently. Youngblood, conversely, hedged his bets on another dimension of the moving image's entertainment value: its potential status as spectacular event. Film events offered a fundamentally different ideological vision of what "radical" change even meant. As exemplified in practices about which Youngblood wrote, including those of Jordan Belson, Les Levine, Carolee Schneemann, and Stan VanDerBeek, to name just a few, it was not narrative, but the kinesthetic processes and effects on seeing that constituted film's radical potential.[18]

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15. Michelson, "Film the Radical Aspiration," in *The Film Culture Reader*, 413.

16. Ibid., 411.

17. Ibid., 413. This shift from form to Form, or from material form to Form as concept, is one worth noting as it will appear later in the Rosalind Krauss's reworking of expanded.

18. In Michelson's argument, conversely, the intermediality suggested by this turn to the kinesthetic was a last-ditch effort that returned to old tactic, the "revival of the old dream of synaesthesia," which was not generative but rather a manifestation of the "syndrome of that [old] radicalism's crisis, both formal and social." In other words, for Michelson, it would seem that to be in a situation where economies come under consideration is one that artists and filmmakers must be forced into by state funding structures. In being forced into these positions they "ban together" (go interdisciplinary) and in the process lose sight of a commitment to the formal as well as the social aspects of the radical effort.

While this binary—much like the distinctions between mediums set up by Lessing two centuries earlier—never quite held up, it has nonetheless continued to contour historical narratives of the period. The work of Michelson's colleague and fellow co-founder of the journal *October*, art historian Rosalind Krauss, at the end of the 1970s would finally wrest the "expanded" form from the utopian eccentricity of Youngblood's criticism, which had imagined film as something akin to a psychedelic experience. In Krauss's 1979 "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," the terms of the debate over radical potential became embedded within a structuralist logic of form.[19] It was no longer a question of formal versus social aspects of film, or even of film *per se*; instead the conversation was re-directed, positioning "the expanded" as the crux of a "new" meaning of medium specificity linked not to film at all, but to sculpture.[20] This expanded field provided a way to engage keywords like expanded and site but still remain faithful to object analysis, even if the boundaries of the objects under examination were dramatically extended to now encompass whole architectural and landscape sites. Expandedness, thus, was rewritten. Following Michelson's "Film the Radical Aspiration," Krauss's expanded field came to be about pushing against the limits of convention. It was not an extension beyond the limits in the way that Youngblood had envisioned, but, rather, a recognition of them.

Krauss's method, though intended for analysis of sculpture, has come to animate nearly every historical investigation of so-called Expanded Cinema and moving image installation since. It is logical why: the art historian's conceptualization of expanded allows a place for non-commercial (read: non-narrative) film without making any major claims to change in the film

19. Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30–44.

20. Krauss, "Montage 'October': Dialectic of the Shot," *Artforum* 11, no.5 (January 1973): 61–65. Interestingly, this was Krauss's contribution to a special issue on Expanded Cinema edited by Michelson in anniversary of Eisenstein and Stan Brakhage, whose practice Michelson all but rejected in her contribution to the issue, "Camera Lucida / Camera Obscura."

industry; instead, it transposes these kinds of film practices into the visual art industry where they operate like another medium altogether, distinct—though often blurry how so—from commercial and also independent (festival) industries. Alongside the more historical works on Expanded Cinema by Joseph, Sutton, and Uroskie mentioned above, several other recent studies from contemporary art history and film studies like those by, for instance, Erika Balsom and Kate Mondloch, have charted the "expanded" aesthetic parameters of film installation and moving image media in the visual art museum since the 1990s.[21] The intersection has become a hot topic across Art History, Film Studies, and Curatorial Studies since the establishment of the first Department of Media and Performance at the Museum of Modern Art New York in 2006. While such analyses have offered key insights into the possibilities afforded artists by media technologies and white cube techniques of display, their focus on production has continued a long-standing artist- and object-oriented methodological approach, which obscures the richness of the ways cinema was being performed collectively in the 1960s and 1970s outside movie houses and before its wholesale entry into visual arts institutions.[22]

This visual arts legacy of the expanded misses what are for me some of the most exciting possibilities that underground cinema—the apparatus through which Expanded Cinema moved—

21. See Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013); and Kate Mondloch, *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

22. My thinking here has been heavily influenced by recent insights into the political economies of contemporary art made by a range of scholars working in the visual and performing arts, including Julia Bryan-Wilson, Martha Buskirk, Isabelle Graw, Jen Harvie, Shannon Jackson, Pamela Lee, and Jon McKenzie, to name just a few, who have explored the intersections of the global art market, the demands of the experience economy, and the market structures of a neoliberal system. Such work in the spheres of art has been informed by cultural critiques of theorists like Giorgio Agamben, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, David Harvey, Fredric Jameson, Maurizio Lazzarato, Jacques Rancière, and Gerald Raunig. See, for instance, Bryan-Wilson, "Occupational Realism," *TDR* 56, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 32–48; Buskirk, *Creative Enterprise: Contemporary Art between Museums and Marketplace* (New York: Continuum, 2012); Graw, *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010); Harvie, *Theatre and the City* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Jackson, "Just-in-Time: The Aesthetics of Precarity," *TDR* 56, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 10–31; Lee, *Forgetting the Art World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012); and McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

had to offer. To revivify these possibilities I turn neither to Youngblood nor to Krauss, but (perhaps rather rudely and playfully myself) to a phrase from Michelson's 1966 lecture: "when medium become industry."[23] I am much less interested in debating the merits of narrative or non-narrative, movie house or no movie house, then I am with tracking the film screening events that did take place and the political economies and market forces that gave rise to them—in practice, the film works that came to circulate through these screening events ran the spectrum in terms of form, so theoretical boundaries (once again, like Lessing's boundaries two centuries earlier) do not quite hold up. At particular times and particular moments underground cinema events emerged, their distribution routes solidified, and diverse formations of collectivity and of convening came into and fell out of being. These were moments when things could have gone differently and out of which an international experimental time-based art market would eventually be forged. Taking up Gunning as my anchor to enter this history and to explore Michelson's medium/industry provocation affords me some space to side step the fraught genealogy of "the expanded," including both the aesthetic-political debate between Michelson and Youngblood and the medium moves of Krauss. Gunning's "The Cinema of Attraction" affords this precisely because it turns attention to another of film's "others": theater.

The relationship between film and theater has a fraught history from the very beginnings of the moving image's appearance; one of the primary goals of early film criticism was to distinguish the merits of film from the activities of the stage. Montage and its narrative capacities—something that was impossible in the real-time medium of theater—were at the core of articulating this distinction. Nicholas Vardac's 1949 study, *Stage to Screen*, was an early

23. Michelson, "Film the Radical Aspiration," In *The Film Culture Reader*, Edited by P. Adams Sitney (Lanham: Cooper Square Press, 2000).

consolidation of this narrative. Vardac historically mapped a kind of competitive development between film and theater; and, in particular, the ways that film changed the understanding of realism in theater, leading to more and more intricate—and, simultaneously, progressively more enormously-scaled—staging techniques.[24] Film, it would seem, won. A version of this narrative also underwrites Michelson's later argument in her 1973 article "Camera Lucida/Camera Obscura," which returns to the legacy of Eisenstein as a reminder of his move away from theater.[25] Yet, in essays like "Montage of Attractions" (1922) Eisenstein introduced the notion of the attraction—the same "attraction" that Gunning will return turn 65 years later—in order to foreground the centrality of theatrical staging to any event meant to engage spectators in a spatial-temporal experience.[26] Moreover, the work of playwright and director Bertolt Brecht (one of Benjamin's recurrent subjects of study and a reference point for poststructuralist screen theory) also adopted techniques from the screen to speak back to the stage, most notably the acting techniques of Charlie Chaplin, but also the use of intertitle cards to signal narrative shift. For Brecht the techniques of film became at least part of the grounds for his conceptualization of alienation.[27] In both Eisenstein and Brecht there was a grappling with the relations between theatre and film, neither in terms of what is lost or gained for medium specificity, nor in terms of

24. Nicholas Vardac, *Stage to Screen: Theatrical Methods from Garrick to Griffith* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949).

25. Michelson, "Camera Lucida/Camera Obscura," *Artforum* 11, no. 5 (January 1973): 30–37.

26. Eisenstein defines attraction as "any element of the theatre that subjects the spectator to a sensual or *psychological impact, experimentally regulated and mathematically calculated to produce in him certain emotional shocks* which, when placed in their proper sequence within the totality of the production, become *the only means that enable the spectator to perceive the ideological side of what is being demonstrated*—the ultimate ideological conclusion." See Eisenstein, "Montage of Attractions, An Essay" in *The Film Sense*, translated by Jay Leyda, 230–233 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970).

27. See Bertolt Brecht, "New Technique of Acting" (1940) and "A Short Organum for the Theater" (1949) in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, edited and translated by John Willet, 136–147 and 179–206 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

anxieties around the live versus mediated body or mis-en-scène, but in terms of an attention to the terms of spectatorial engagement and modern modes of communication in the staging of the event. In other words, they move us away from questions of differentiation and delimitation, and towards questions of how the materiality of media technologies become infrastructurally infused in the staging of time-based events, and, how, in turn, these sites of interaction affect our perception and comprehension of the world. Their concerns were, like mine in this dissertation, with political economies and knowledge production.

These mechanisms of staging that concerned Eisenstein and Brecht—what in the parlance of theater is known as scenography—is what in this study I understand to be crucial in analyzing the phenomenon of when medium becomes industry and under what conditions this happens. In scenography, the relation of media technologies to the conditions or staging of a site is foregrounded, and, in so doing, it introduces what I understand as an expanded notion of materiality: the materiality of the site as it is determined by specific geopolitical, economic, and cultural material conditions. Alongside Eisenstein and Brecht these were also concerns of the historical avant-garde movements like those of the Futurists to which Gunning referred in his "Cinema of Attractions." Contemporary theater scholars like Günter Berghaus, Matthew Causey, or Chris Salter have all pointed to mechanisms of the stage and staging (of scenography, in other words) as at the forefront of the aggressive interventions of these historical avant-gardes.[28] At the center of those interventions—onto the stage and the screen—was a shared (even if often divergent) belief in the critical potential of theatrically, if not riotously, staging events at certain sites. Attacking such sites, and the protocols for how one should act, was a means by which they

28. See Berghaus, *Performance, Theatre, and the Historical Avant-Gardes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Causey, *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture: From Simulation to Embeddedness* (London: Routledge, 2006); and Salter, *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010).

confronted the institutions of art as such, challenging the material conditions therein. Turning to Gunning, to scenography, to the issue of when "medium becomes industry" as my theoretical grounds thus proposes quite a different perspective from which to enter histories of the "expanded."

Towards a Distribution Studies Methodology

This shift in perspective has much to do the Performance Studies lens that guides this dissertation, which is grounded in the methodological insights of performance historiography. From Joseph Roach's notion of "surrogation," to concepts like Diana Taylor's "scenarios of discovery" and Rebecca Schneider's "inter(in)animation," performance historiography has offered me generative models for thinking about the mediated overlaps, imbrications, and mutual constitutions of bodies and sites in spaces and time.[29] In particular, I draw on the work of Shannon Jackson who has examined at length the ways in which the labor practices that support the production, circulation, and display of art have become self-consciously folded into practices since the 1960s.[30] As she writes: "What if, for instance, the formal parameters of the form include the audience relation, casting such inter-subjective exchange, not as the extraneous context that surrounds it, but as the material of performance itself? What if performance challenges strict divisions about where art ends and the rest of the world begins?"[31] Jackson's

29. See Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); and Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

30. Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

31. Ibid., 15.

concern for what gets included in "the form," what is seen as extra, or outside of it, and how we might approach practices that are experimenting with "the unraveling of [that] frame…"[32] offers a model of thinking about performance that understands it to be a process of disruption to frames of experience and an unraveling of any such frames—this one is art, this one is social, this one is political, this one is the form, this one is "extra-aesthetic," and so forth. As scholars like Roach, Taylor, Schneider, and Jackson have modeled in their respective studies, starting from questions of distribution (mobility) and exhibition (display and, by extension, access) in the production of time-based events sidesteps anxieties around liveness and the authenticity of bodies-in-action, which haunt any examination of time-based art, including the film screening event. Instead, these historiographic approaches open up discursive space for centering crucial issues like the management of interaction and engagement in relation to geopolitical currents, or the infrastructural mechanisms of staging at work in the creation of specific spatial-temporal experiences.

Drawing on these lessons this study combines extensive archival and interview-based research with close readings of film texts in order to foreground matters of mobility, display, and access. At its core, it is a deeply historical materialist project that has included archive work across seven countries, from Croatia and Slovenia, to Britain and the United States, with a critical mass of time spent, of course, in German-speaking Europe, including in: Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt, Kassel, Karlsruhe, Salzburg, Stuttgart, and Vienna. Along the way formal interviews and informal conversations with artists, filmmakers, curators, film distributors, professors, and archivists have brought human voices and on-the-ground insights to bear on my findings. The aim in casting such a wide net has been to develop an understanding of the historical conditions

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32. Ibid., 16.

across and between the national (and Cold War ideological) contexts within which collective performances of cinema happened in order to geo-locate the conditions within German-speaking Europe in a broader context. The centrality of this transnational, archive-based approach to the project has led to two primary organizing principles: first in terms of geography and, second, in regard to my objects of analysis. It would be impossible to examine materials from all of the places I have conducted research given the vastness of the geographic expanse. Instead of attempting to offer an overview of this that would necessarily have to remain superficial, I have chosen to organize each chapter around a particular German-speaking city where Kurt Kren and Birgit Hein worked. This spatial delimiting of the conversation has afforded me the discursive space to flesh out specificities of context and to go deep into the parsing of national identities after World War II, international aspirations in the West, and the circuitous movements of underground cinema through them. The second organizing principle has been in terms of objects; because the archives have been so crucial in piecing together the movements of underground cinema and its screening sites, I have opted to read archival objects alongside works of art. Rather than go to the archives to help understand "the work," the close readings of Kren's films that bookend each chapter have, in a kind of reversal of norms, served to clarify and illuminate ideas about viewing practices, media and screen cultures, and eventing present in the "non-art," or "extra-aesthetic," archives. Kren's films also drop readers of this study *in media res* and into the thickness of the histories I am examining. My impulse throughout has been to read the historical details of geo-located and biographically-embedded everyday activities as the basis for a theory of collectivity: taken together, the film texts and the print materials in the archives present a story of how performances of cinema were being conceived of and enacted collectively.

In shifting away from an investigation of art objects per se—or the films themselves—to a spatialized analysis of the circulation networks that connected audiences to them through particular print materials and at particular screening events, I shift from a focus on production to an engagement with distribution. In this regard, it is my hope that the dissertation offers a new distribution studies methodology to the field of Media Studies, which, following the lessons of Abigail De Kosnik, Malte Hagener Jennifer Holt, Ramon Lobato, Eric Schaefer and others, centers how distribution platforms are performed collectively—sometimes from the top-down and sometimes from the bottom-up—at different sites and at different times.[33] It is also my hope that these methodological choices have something to offer the fields of Art History and Film Studies. In particular, geographic concerns with how experimental film and art distribution was performed in the contexts of Cold War Europe, and, to that end, my archival methods have generated much content to counter the U.S.-based or so-called "global contemporary" production-orientated focuses of many of the scholars referenced above. The sheer amount of original source material brought together in *Rude & Playful Shadows*—some of which have never been available to researchers before—is a resource for mining the distribution histories of time-based arts in 1960s and 1970s Europe, and provides the beginnings of a much-needed pre-history for the variant and often uneven international peripatetic movement of cultural producers and their works that has become the standard—the "global contemporary"—for aesthetic practices today.

33. See De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016); Hagener, *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avant-Garde and the Invention of Film Culture, 1919–1939* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011); Holt, *Empires of Entertainment: Media Industries and the Politics of Deregulation, 1980–1996* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011); Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema: Mapping Informal Film Distribution* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919–1959* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

Chapter Overview and Something Else

Each chapter of the dissertation looks at a different screening event form in which Kren and Hein partook, each in a different German-speaking city. Spatializing the study in this way has allowed me, as stated above, to consider how these forms developed under different sets of materials circumstances and in response to specific nation-state—and even municipal—contexts, as well as to the distinct sets of political conditions in each of the countries after World War II. Moreover, the chapters move roughly chronologically, starting around 1964, when Kren's collaborations in the Austrian scene began, and ending in 1978 with Hein's traveling film museum exhibition. In chapter 1, "Collectivizing Distribution in Vienna: Meetings, Markets, and *Bildung* at the Edges of the Institution," Kren's milieu in the Austrian capital takes the lead with Hein and her Cologne-based scene entering the frame towards the end of the chapter. Here I examine two artist meeting formations that emerged in Vienna following the Reconstruction Period (April 1945–July 1955): the institutional and alternative. In institutional meetings, artists nominally adopted and adapted the languages and infrastructures of institutions, taking on the academic marketplace and educational models in order to gain visibility in mainstream cultural space. Conversely, in the alternative meeting formats that emerged, artists cast off such ambitions for institutional visibility, demanding, instead, the establishment of new kinds of markets for art in the cultural sector. These formations, as I refer to them in the chapter, did not reproduce the rhetorics of postwar capitalist, liberal democratic order. In the Viennese context, this shift is signaled by the move from the 1964 Institute for Direct Art to the 1968 Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative. Tracking this activity in Vienna, the primary aim is to lay a foundation oriented around education, which I argue throughout the manuscript is central to all of the projects under consideration. The uneasy relation between meeting formations—that of the

institute and that of the cooperative—carries through the next two chapters, informing both the political investments and the aesthetics of engagement within the event forms that were developing in parallel to these artist meeting formations. A secondary goal, though, is also to offer a counter-narrative to the legacy of Kaprow and the U.S. Happenings scene that dominates histories of postwar art, as well as conceptualization of when, where, and how the blurring of art and life can or did happen.

Chapter 2, "Convening Curated Programs in Cologne Underground Cinema between State and Markets," moves out of Vienna and into a new center of the re-emerging art market in late 1960s West Germany. Once in Cologne, Hein's milieu comes to the fore, and Kren (living in West Germany at the time) becomes a figure within that scene. In this chapter tensions between the institutional and the alternative reached a kind of climax in the curated program "Underground Explosion," which took place at the 1968 Cologne Art Fair. The "Kunstmarkt Affair" as the program came to be known in the popular media catapulted the XSCREEN Studio for Independent Film onto a national platform where it pushed up against censorship laws in the midst of West Germany's so-called "Porn Wave." XSCREEN's curated program—and the 1969 reiteration of it as a traveling festival—tacitly operated between the state, the commercial market, and the radical Left, as they redefined the terms of a media event, or, what in the chapter I call a "cinema of attraction for the nuclear age." In adopting this phrase, I come back to Gunning directly, proposing the Underground Explosion as a kind of moment of "overflow" in which underground cinema's activities were forcefully raised for public debate. This overflow, as the chapter examines, spatially manifested an underground status, demarcating a clear distinction from "cinema's institutional order."[34] While the Studio worked closely with

34. This phrase is taken from the final chapter of André Gaudreault's *Film and Attraction: From Kinematography to Cinema*, translated by Timothy Barnard (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 84.

cooperatives and other programming projects over the years, it remained an autonomous endeavor—and this is the other focus of the chapter: the formulations of what a community convening could be and what an audiences for this new cinema of attraction would be.

Lastly, chapter 3, "Displaying Experimental Film in Kassel: Above Ground Formations of the Time-Based Exhibition," theorizes the exhibition models pioneered in 1972 and 1977 at the West German quinquennial mega-event documenta. Analysis of display structures and curatorial premises largely takes over, with Hein as one of the curatorial figures examined whose particular political stakes helped to shape the medium boundaries of experimental film, and with Kren as rude and playful shadow alerting attention to the stakes of the transition from underground cinema to medium. In this final chapter I draw attention to the strategies established in Kassel as emergent from—and, ultimately, an institutionalization of—the curated program, as well as the political conditions that gave rise to this, from the initiation of a kind of realism for the "international West," to the political debates happening in critical film circles over the issue of narrative. Looking to the conceptual and infrastructural concerns that accompanied the entrance of time-based media into the visual arts institution, the examination here is meant to shed some light on shifts in organizational practices that gave rise to both the role of the curator and the medium of "experimental film"—the introduction of time had many effects, many of which continue to shape the exhibition event in in museum galleries, as well as in global festivals and biennial circuits, today.

I want to close by moving back into the co-op mis-en-scène with which I opened: the theater hangout, with its smoke-filled air, secondhand seating, and makeshift housing. The youths-qua-pilgrims with their shaggy hair and leather jackets that populate that theater are both an audience *for* the screening and actors *in* the staging of a screening event. They have gathered

to see underground film in this underground place, a place where one can allow herself to feel unsure of what will happen, where maybe anything can happen or, perhaps, where just *something* different, *something* else will happen.[35] Something, as Theodor Adorno and Ernst Bloch discussed in a 1964 conversation, that is missing—something, as Bloch described in that dialogue, which "if…not allowed to be cast in a picture, then I [Bloch] shall portray…as in the process of being."[36] The Marxist dimensions of process drawn forth in Bloch's speculative statement connect to the process-based reformulations of distribution, of networks of movement, of convening, and of exhibition taking place in collective performances of cinema in Cold War Europe. As Kren, Hein, and their networks explored: what if the film screening event form was re-conceived? What if the distribution of moving images was re-conceived? What if practices of gathering and of viewing were re-conceived?

It is the possibilities of these *something elses*—these "what ifs"—that were being imagined in the alternative and underground networks of circulation established, supported, and argued for and against, throughout the period under examination in this dissertation. Such reformulations reflected the turbulence of the times as nation-states across ideological borders worked to re-build infrastructures and cultural identities after war and after fascism. How, though, can we track the production of these networks and their relation to the actual work being moved through them? Such movement is uneven, so attempts to capture it in a static picture are necessarily incomplete. Bloch offers another option: to portray a process. Mapping the material

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35. These ideas around the viewing experience from the insightful keynote address given by Shannon Jackson and Judith Butler at the 2012 MOMA Annual Performance Symposium, "How Are We Performing Today?," Friday, November 16, 2012, the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

36. The phrase "something's missing" is drawn from Bertolt Brecht's 1930 play *Der Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahogonny*. See Adorno and Bloch, "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing," in *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, 1–17 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 13.

and ideological movement of film screening events and the print materials that surrounded them through differently scaled economies of distribution, the following chapters take quite seriously expanding notions of communication, distribution, and exhibition, and, most crucially, the eventing practices that accompanied them. Given the increasing amount and range of cultural materials to which we are exposed through increasingly diverse paths of movements today, thinking carefully about the historical mechanisms that have organized distribution of and access to non-commercial moving image and time-based materials—and certainly underground moving image and time-based materials—within national and international contexts is as vital to projects of critical media literacy and cultural engagement now as it was in the years that Kren, Hein, and their networks were collectively performing cinema.

CHAPTER ONE

Collectivizing Distribution in Vienna
Meetings, Markets, and *Bildung* at the Edges of the Institution

This story begins in a scene that is familiar to many in the arts, a scene that since at least the 1880s has been a hub for avant-garde activity: the café.[37] From the cafés-concerts in Montmartre, to Club Dada in Berlin, to the travels of the Situationist International "tribe" through Saint-Germain-des-Près, the coffeehouse has been a locus of activity since the avant-garde's inception. Part eatery, part bar, and part dance/music hall, the café was a meeting place for filmmakers, artists, and writers, a culturally acceptable (or at least allowed) *Trefftpunkt* for people from all different segments within bourgeois society.[38] The coffeehouse was familiar yet took on a distinct character and function in the postwar period. It was through weekly assemblies of the interdisciplinary *Art-Club* (established April 1947) at local cafés during the Reconstruction Period (1947–1955) that the newly repatriated Austrian Jewish filmmaker Kurt Kren became acquainted with other first generation Austrian avant-garde filmmakers like Peter Kubelka and Marc Adrian, as well as with members of the Dada-inspired Vienna Group.[39] The cabarets held by the Vienna Group included multiple actions being performed simultaneously, ranging from

37. References to the café scene are ubiquitous throughout literature on the early twentieth century cultural history, modernism, and the avant-garde. To give just a few examples, see Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 – World War I* (New York: Harcourt, 1958); Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002); or Jean-Michel Mension, *The Tribe: Contributions to the History of Situationist International and Its Time* (Volume 1), translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Verso, 2002).

38. The café was, of course, also a living legacy of colonialist trade routes. See, among others, Paul Knox and Linda McCarthy, *Urbanization: An Introduction to Urban Geography* (Boston: Pearson, 2012); and John Rex, *Race, Colonialism, and the City* (London: Routledge, 2013).

39. Kren met filmmakers like Kubelka and Adrian, as well as later members of the Vienna Group Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener and other important Austrian artists of the time like conceptual photographer Padhi Frieberger and kinetic painter Helga Philip. The Austrian chapter of the Rome-based interdisciplinary *Art-Club*, through which they all met, was founded in 1947 and was responsible for organizing several exhibitions, including one at the Secession building. Its mission was aimed at reintroducing contemporary artistic production across disciplines (including in literature, music, poetry, and the visual arts) into the country after the war. The local group within the international formation called itself the *Strohkoffer* and met in the cellar of the Loos-Bar until 1953 when it moved to a larger space at Dom-Café. See Otto Breicha, *Der Art Club in Österreich: Monographie eines Aufbruchs* (Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1981); and, more recently, Günther Moschig, *Informel in Österreich: Kunst aus Österreich im internationalen Kontext* (Vienna: Erhard Löcker GesmbH, 2017).

performative lectures and readings of mainstream press, to proto-Expanded Cinema experiments.[40] In one such experiment Kren sat in the middle of the café hall, pushing film stock through his hands as other actions unfolded around him, including a haircut and a reading of *Der Spiegel* by Oswald Wiener. As discussed in the introduction, ideas emergent in Allan Kaprow's "blurring of art and life" were also circulating in this Austrian context. In 1954, two years before Kaprow's landmark "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" (1956), Wiener, a member of the *Art-Club*, penned the *Cooles Manifest* [Cool Manifesto]. [41] The co-signers of the *Cooles Manifest* used the event structure as a space to perform multiplicity and in which to collectivize interpretation of meaning—a space, as Wiener described, of "'social action' in which symbols [had] concrete and irreversible consequences."[42] Within this framework activities were at once more politically and more socially charged: importantly, they were not happening in galleries in the context of an art world.[43] Instead, they were "social actions" as described in the manifesto, which unfolded in the social space of the café.

In 1963 two cultural producers associated with this scene, one Kurt Kren and the other Otto Mühl (b. 1925, Mariasdorf, Austria; d. 2013, Moncarapacho, Portugal), a former Wehrmacht soldier turned process-based painter, met at Café Merkur. The following year they would collaborate in an empty cellar in the city's newly reconstructed second district (all

40. For a more thorough description of the Vienna Group cabarets, see Thomas Eder, "The Scenic Works of the Vienna Group," in *Vienna Actionism: Art and Upheaval in 1960s Vienna*, Eva Badura-Triska, Hubert Klocker, et al., eds., 24–25 (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2012).

41. The others who signed the manifesto included H. C. Artmann, Friedrich Achleitner, Konrad Bayer, and Gerhard Rühm. See Oswald Wiener, "Remarks on some Tendencies of the 'Vienna Group,'" *October* 97 (Summer 2001): 120–130.

42. Ibid., 128.

43. It is crucial to also acknowledge that alongside their cabarets, members of the Vienna Group also organized demonstrations, such as in March 1955 when they co-signed another manifesto, this one against Austrian rearmament, and organized a protest to accompany it. The demonstration ended at St. Stephens Cathedral where, it is no coincidence, the first art gallery emerged after the war.

buildings had been destroyed in World War II and re-opened between 1962 and 1963) on a series of "action films" that shocked the Viennese public with their rejection of normative body politics and attendant social practices of the bourgeois public sphere.[44] The content of Mühl's performances upended the norms of bourgeois Viennese public space and pillars of social organization like the family and the Catholic Church. His messy critiques of the familial unit in *Mama und Papa*, for instance, explicitly sexualized the marital relation and aggressively asserted the base, bodily existence of mom and dad. In *Mama und Papa* mom is covered in food stuffs like flour and eggs, dad suckles mom's nipple like a child, and the two engage in a session of coitus more ferarum with a giant balloon acting as their prophylactic—until it pops releasing a flurry of feathers into the air. The irreverence with which Mühl treated themes like this one or like the Judeo-Christian Christmas tradition in *8/64 O'Tannenbaum* (1964) was in direct opposition to the saccharine narratives offered in mainstream *Heimat* films, which were popularized during the 1950s. In *Heimat* films of that preceding decade, like, for example, in the *Sissi* trilogy, the German-speaking film industry harkened back to the imperial glory of the once powerful Austro-Hungarian Empire, selling sentimental stories of normative bodies happily forming bourgeoisie family units in idyllic landscapes through a mythic memory of benevolent monarchic grandeur.[45] The genre's nationalist overtures were widely understood by artists and other cultural critics as a veiled revival of the very foundations that allowed Nazism to flourish a

44. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). An entire field of literature has developed from Habermas's landmark study, which is far too vast to cite here, but to give a few touchstones, see Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* no. 25/26 (1990): 56–80, as well as Fraser's more recent "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World," and other essays in Fraser, Kate Nash, et al., eds., *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014); Nick Crossley, *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); and Craig Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

45. See Robert von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Co., 2008).

generation earlier—revived here though, perhaps paradoxically, to affirm a postwar conservative Catholic order. Against the backdrop of this context, the manifestly sexual and latently violent content of Mühl's "material actions" was an affront on good taste, moral decency, and the postwar Austrian order. In this content sense, Mühl's actions and their attendant manifestos were both art performances and radical propositions about education, or *Bildung*, in the Second Federal Republic. They appeared to propose a break with the affirmative cultural cues of art's pedagogical place under the tenants of modernism and, in particular, modernism in German-speaking Europe.[46] In the following pages, however, I propose to think about the radical proposition for education as emergent from the conjoining of Mühl's shocking content together with Kren's experimental film form. Two projects, I contend, were happening simultaneously: there was Mühl's live performance *Mama und* Papa, and there was *6/64 Mama und Papa* (Kren), which was a messy cross-medium collaboration that gave credit in its opening title cards to both Kren as filmmaker and Mühl as producer of the "material action." It was from the collision of content and form in this collaboration—a collaboration undertaken as a clandestine meeting in a cellar—that something radically different in terms of knowledge production was proposed.

The material action events of Mühl and others in Vienna were part of a broader interrogation into the nature of representation and real space that was happening in the visual arts at the time. Much has been written about the formal art historical relations between Mühl and other artists at the time. Combining painting and sculpture in real space, the Austrian artist's works echoed elements of Robert Rauschenberg's well-known combines and Yves Klein's

46. It is Philip Ursprung who made this important connection between Actionism and Herbert Marcuse's notion of affirmative culture in his "'Catholic Tastes': Hurting and Healing the Body in Viennese Actionism in the 1960s," in *Performing the Body / Performing the Text*, ed. by Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson, 138–152 (London: Routledge, 1999). To understand how one gets from *Bildung* to "affirmative culture," see Christiane Thompson, "Adorno and the Borders of Experience: The Significance of the Nonidentical for a Different Theory of Bildung," *Educational Theory* 56, no. 1 (2006): 69–87, 72.

Anthropométrie nude paintings. As with Klein's spectacular stagings of process painting, Mühl's material actions were performances of the artist's process come to life. This emphasis on process was also an emphatic reassertion of the artist's presence as author, which begun with Abstract Expressionism and, in particular, was exemplified in the myth of Jackson Pollock. Pollock's existential "marks in the void" came to define the direction of such authorial narratives through the WWII and postwar periods; these narratives also extended into the realm of filmmaking where figures like Stan Brakhage had transferred the painter's mark-making strategies onto the celluloid surface of the film.[47] But Kren's flicker films, like *6/64*, undid the authority of representation altogether—of the dad and the mom per Mühl's performance, of Mühl himself as conductor of this action, and even of the filmmaker.

6/64, the "action film" that historically represents the "material action" *Mama und Papa*, can hardly be called a document. Under the mathematical precision—yet seeming arbitrary cuts—of Kren's edits, images of Mühl's live performance emerge and recede from within a series of semi-repeating sequences; visual directives of overlap, interruption, and collation replace the documentary truth of the bodies-in-action. Even without conventional narratives like those of the *Heimat* genre, film spectators—including Mühl himself—expected (and still today, for the most part, expect) a visual cohesion of bodies on screen in order to re-affirm the cohesion of their own bodies. In stark contrast to such expectations, the film frames held together under the title *6/64 Mama und Papa*, one of three material action films produced in the basement, break apart the bodies of Mühl and his female collaborator—dad and mom—into parts.

Following the handmade title cards, which list both Kren and Mühl as authors, *6/64* begins with a solarized image of disembodied lips on a stark white ground. The only frame not

47. For a critique of this artist myth in film, see Annette Michelson, "Camera Lucida/Camera Obscura," *Artforum* 11, no. 5 (January 1973): 30–37.

taken from Mühl's action, the lips appear three more times throughout the four minutes of the silent color 16mm film. They punctuate the furious procession of single-frame shots, which flash across the screen sewn together along messy suture lines that emphatically foreground the surface of the film frames. The fissures frantically jump across the frame, fracturing what is already a convoluted scene dense with multiple perspectives and images—of a breast or a face or an ass or a groin—that twitch but do not seem to move. In such sequences, images of a sexualized and bodily mom and dad gyrate back and forth, suspended in perpetual motion. It is unlike traditional montage where the arrangement is intended to maintain the illusion of an action's linear progression or even didactic message; here the images take on a rhythm influenced by the atonal serialism of Viennese composer Arnold Schönberg.[48] Through manipulation of time and image—frames appear out of chronological order with no regard for image integrity—Kren's swooping flows of editing break down a hierarchy that would position the linear movement at the top. In the process, the temporal and spatial syntax of Mühl's action is undone; and, moreover, the visual unity of experience is broken as the pictorial space is cut apart and roughly sutured back together. The experience of "the action" is no longer held together in terms of the narrative unity of a story—of the artist as mythic shaman or elegant conductor or genius. Meaning is thus not produced through an "accurate" connection to Mühl's "authentic" actions, as documentary images, but through Kren's manipulations—the repetitions, close-ups, cropping and cuts—that contour the perceptual field. It's a continuous build-up with no climax, sexually or didactically.

6/64 Mama und Papa pulsates with the plasticity of the representations themselves, shattering the notion of a unified body, infusing into and excavating from formal film structures

48. The first scholar-critic to discuss this connection was Malcolm LeGrice in his article, "Kurt Kren," *Studio International* 150, no. 978 (November/December 1975): 183–187.

questions of subjecthood and being after total war in a world increasingly understood to be known and knowable through still and moving images. On multiple levels, thus, authority was questioned in the action film collaborative project—from the authority of the family, to the authority of the artist, to the authority of the filmmaker and his document. In this sense, the film is an inquiry into the nature of identification and, as French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas proposed, recognition of an other.[49] This is a different orientation to existential thought, one that places communication at its center, and, in so doing, opens up onto issues of media communication cultures of the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than action as the basis for existence—as it had been for Pollock or Klein and was for Mühl or Brakhage—*6/64* centers this sense of recognition by centering the mediated image of action. As such, the film de-centers any easy or simplistic notion of what it means to be interpolated into subjecthood, specifically within the context of the Second Federal Republic, but also, more generally, as an acting body. *6/64* is an experiment into ways of seeing, of recognizing and of reflecting upon, the social relations involved in recognition and the regimes of seeing to which such relations give rise.[50] The dissonance Kren introduces into seeing echoes the linguistic and experiential experiments of the Vienna Group and their "assault on automatism in interpretation." Like the co-signers of the *Cooles Manifest*, Kren's 6/64 works against "successful communication"—or, that is against the

49. Together with the work of Martin Buber on dialogue, Levinas's ideas around the face-to-face and recognition form a postwar Jewish framework distinct from that of Sartre and others. See Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy" (1961) in *The Levinas Reader*, edited by Seán Hand, 75–87 (Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, 1989); and, for a reading of Levinas' ideas in relation to communication theory and media studies, see Amit Pinchevski, *By Way of Interruption: Levinas and the Ethics of Communication* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2005), and Ronald C. Arnett, *Levinas's Rhetorical Demand: the Unending Obligation of Communication Ethics* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2017).

50. "But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which established our place in the surrounding world…"—these opening lines from the classic visual-studies-television-series-turned-text *Ways of Seeing* are informative to the notions of seeing, perception, and apperception raised by Peter Weibel in relation to Kren's work. See John Berger et al., *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972).

process of interpretation as a one-to-one perceptual transaction. As Peter Weibel described, Kren's films did not simulate motion, but, rather, "delivered a disrupted perceptual experience" wherein the viewer was presented with an apperceptual shock. If perception refers to information taken in through the eye and transmitted to the brain, Weibel continued, Kren's apperceptual antics in *6/64* and the other action films cleaved this transmission—the eyes see but the brain does not grasp. This disrupted motion, for Weibel, "gave back the action its [anarchist] character."[51] Mühl had intended for his actions to enact this experiment—this was his abreactive proposition for education after fascism—but, perhaps ironically, it is Kren's splices and cuts of Mühl's actions in *6/*64 that do so. It is the film, rather than the action itself, which interrogates the set of expectations that is brought into acts of looking and seeing and moving and being, into acts, that is, of knowledge production.

Visibility, Legibility, and *Bildung*
Artist Meeting Formations and New Approaches to Distribution

A dynamic meeting that chance encounter between Kren and Mühl at the café was; it gave rise to an intense few years of collaboration of which *6/64 Mama und Papa* was just the beginning. Together with other artists and filmmakers, including Günter Brus, VALIE EXPORT, Hermann Nitsch, Ernst Schmidt, Jr., Rudolf Schwarzkogler, and Peter Weibel, among others, Kren, Mühl, and their cohort shaped the history of postwar art in the Second Federal Republic, both internally in the country and beyond. The body of visual material produced—with *6/64* and Kren's other action films at the raucous center—remains a touchstone of visual art performance

51. Weibel offered this reading of Kren's action films in conversation with the author, June 15, 2017.

history, the next major contribution of Austrian art to Western art history after the force of fin-de-siècle duo Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele. In the year after their collaborations, Kren and Mühl would go on to be founding members of what was sometimes called the Institute for Direct Art and other times called the Direct Art Institute. Years before "Viennese Actionism" was codified as a historical group by Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative co-founders VALIE EXPORT and Peter Weibel in their 1970 *Bildkompendium*, the Institute was the name taken by Kren, Mühl, and others from the Viennese scene engaged in mid-1960s exchanges and alliances.[52] Unlike much analysis of the politics of Actionist work, which focus on public performances like Günter Brus's 1965 *Vienna Walk* or the 1968 *Kunst und Revolution* university action, this chapter opened with one of Kren's action films in order to draw attention to the educational facets of "Actionist" practice in a slightly earlier moment. Accordingly, in this chapter I am less concerned with staking out a political position for 1960s Viennese aesthetic experiments, than with mapping out the kinds of meetings, the kinds of markets, and the kinds of conceptions of knowledge production that became possible in postwar Austria as the European continent headed into the 1960s and children born in the war period came of age; as the art market re-emerged en force across a newly-minted "international" West and peripheral scenes like that in Vienna sought ways to participate in it; as postcolonial struggles proliferated (particularly in Vietnam) and the bourgeois public sphere came under intense scrutiny; as students across continents began to demonstrate against the instrumentalization of knowledge; and as the Cold War heated up.

Almost immediately after World War II, activities in Vienna had started up once again at café meetings like the *Art-Club* cabarets. Such forums re-collected avant-garde practice, but by

52. Peter Weibel and VALIE EXPORT, *Wien Bildkompendium: Wiener Aktionismus und Film* (Frankfurt: Kohlkunstverlag, 1970); for an analysis of Weibel and EXPORT's text see, especially, the introduction in Andrew Weiner, *Times of the Event: On the Aesthetico-Political in West Germany and Austria circa 1968*, (Phd diss., UC Berkeley, 2011).

the 1960s filmmakers and artists began to experiment with other formations of the meeting, other formations of collectivizing, or coming together; two such formations are the subject of this chapter. These two formations are what I call the institutional and the alternative meeting, and they would remain tacitly imbricated throughout the period discussed in this study. The following pages are meant, then, to propose a vocabulary for conceptualizing the dialectical nature of these experimental events, poised as they were (and still are) at the edges of the institution—that is, between institutional infrastructures and their markets, and other, equally unsustainable, alternative imaginings. Here I am specifically concerned with the formations of and the transitions between the Institute for Direct Art, founded sometime in late 1964, and the Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative, established in 1968. The Institute nominally adopted a language of the marketplace, following widespread trends in art practices of the time, ranging from those of Happenings artists like Jim Dine and Claes Oldenburg who occupied commercial storefronts in New York, to Fluxus members' collected efforts in mass production held together in an Amsterdam-based publishing house, to the writers and performers associated with Better Books in London. As has been noted by Benjamin Buchloh and others, however, there was a marked difference between the activities of the US "happening" artists and the Viennese "action" artists.[53] Most often such differences have been attributed to intellectual distance: in the US artists engaged ironically, while in Austria they engaged vis-à-vis un-ironic rituals that were felt "concretely and biographically."[54] A goal of this chapter is to dismantle such thinking.

53. See Buchloh's entry on Viennese Actionism, "1962b" in *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Anti-Modernism, Postmodernism*, 464–469 (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011).

54. Peter Gorsen quoted in Philip Ursprung, "'Catholic Tastes': Hurting and Healing the Body in Viennese Actionism in the 1960s," 146.

Instead, in the Austrian scene, as I argue, the marketplace that artists came to occupy was that of education. Within this framework, artists were imagining new ways of becoming visible in social space, as well as legible within—and often times alongside—institutional market structures. In thinking through the new terrains of knowledge production—of visibility and legibility—being staked out by the postwar Viennese cohorts, I turn consistently to the concept of *Bildung*, which dates back to German Idealist philosophy of the Enlightenment period when it was proposed by Wilhelm von Humboldt as a life-long practice of self-cultivation.[55] Though von Humboldt's ideas have been both instrumentalized and (rightly) critiqued since the publication of his 1851 "Ideen zu einem Versuch die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen" [*The Limits of State Action*], they have nonetheless continued to exert influence on the course of educational theory in German-speaking Europe. The canonical *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [*Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 1944] is at its foundation a rejection of the violence of Enlightenment rationality and, by extension, much of the bases of *Bildung*. Yet, after the publication of his 1944 philosophical treatise with Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno continued to revisit the concept of *Bildung* in works like his 1958 "Theorie der Halbbildung" ["Theory of Half Education"], which offered a dialectical analysis of the promise of *Bildung* and the violence of its instrumentalized practice, *Halbbildung* (which, of course, in Adorno's dialectical fashion is constitutive of *Bildung*). [56] In so doing, Adorno picked up on a critique first offered by Nietzsche, who had already noted in the nineteenth century that the German *Bildung* was "a vehicle for

55. See Elsina Stubbs, *Wilhem Von Humboldt's Idea of "Bildung" and Education*; and Pauli Siljander et al., eds., *Theories of Bildung and Growth: Connections and Controversies Between Continental Educational Thinking and American Pragmatism* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013).

56. Theodor W Adorno, "Theorie der Halbbildung" (1959) in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003). For a broad analysis of Adorno's argument, see Thompson, "Adorno and the Borders of Experience"; and Krassimir Stojanov, "Theodor W. Adorno—Education as Social Critique," in *Theories of Bildung and* Growth, 125–134. For more on the "learning society," see Jan Masschelein, "The Discourse of the Learning Society and the Loss of Childhood," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 35, no. 1 (2001): 1–20.

cultural and national self-affirmation," which was "infected" by exchange value.[57] Education was, thus, highly contested terrain for a century already. In Vienna in the 1960s, it was Adorno's critique and his tacitly proposed revisions of *Bildung* that influenced thought—regular interface with the West German critical theorist's students in Frankfurt exposed Kren, Mühl, Weibel, and others to reformulations of the classic concept, prompting them to ask: What does it mean to become "educated" after—and still in the infrastructural throes of—Nazism?[58]

Though not without their own internal conflicts and contradictions (as indicated above in my discussion of film versus action in *6/64 Mama und Papa*), the projects undertaken by those associated with the Institute for Direct Art and, later, with the Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative were radical propositions for *Bildung—Bildung* as Adorno had imagined; that is, as an approach to knowledge production located in the insurmountable gap between the individual and the world. Remember the fragmentations—the cuts, distensions, and repetitions—that structured Kren's *6/64*: they, like Adorno's dialectical approach to *Bildung*, were not an affirmation of the individual or its social units. Instead, they were an unrelenting encounter with the non-identical, presenting viewers with a situation in which "the experiencing subject is confronted with the impossibility of relating to its own experience."[59] As opposed to "knowability" of the world—what a normative understanding of *Bildung*, or Adorno's *Halbbildung*, would purport to—works like *6/64 Mama und Papa* and the broader systems of information distribution through which

57. Where *Bildung* can be understood as an ongoing process of cultivating sensitivity to the world and grappling with the irreconcilability of experience in it—because, as Christiane Thompson has written, "what is experienced always exceeds the previously delineated horizon"—*Halbbildung* is understood to reify knowledge, placing emphasis on the market performance of the individual and the expansion of the mind as a "spectrum of assets." See Thompson, "Adorno and the Borders of Experience," 73.

58. This connection between the Viennese scene and Adorno's students in Frankfurt was described by Peter Weibel in an interview with the author, June 15, 2017.

59. Thompson, "Adorno and the Borders of Experience," 83.

Kren's film moved, confronted expectations—expectations of the unity of the body, of the identity of the subject-citizen, of the authority of certain forms of knowledge acquisition. It is these kinds of confrontation that pervade the pedagogical strategies deployed across the meeting formations that I discuss in this chapter. It is also this sense of confrontation that contours the various collective engagements with (or they might also be thought of as assaults upon) inherited strategies of social visibility and market legibility. There will be numerous interventions into these strategies examined within this chapter; what holds the disparate tactics together within and across institutional and alternative formation is a shared recognition (albeit often implicit) of educational sites as the preeminent staging grounds.

This, to reiterate, had much to do with the purportedly post-fascist context of German-speaking Europe at the time; how can or should education work to re-align the worldview of nations living in the shadows—and the on-going infrastructural realities— of Nazism? Such an inquiry was particularly urgent in Austria. Whereas in West Germany there was at least a nebulous model of denazification educational training—not to mention the return of public intellectual figures like Adorno and others associated with the Institute for Social Research—Austria's situation was markedly different. The country's geopolitical position as a battleground in those early years of the Cold War allowed for the state to evade its accountability in the atrocities of the war. Instead, the Second Federal Republic plunged itself into part-repressively Catholic, part-capitalist consumer restructuring, which pervaded all aspects of political, economic, and cultural life—as the popularity of the *Heimat* genre made clear. The result was precisely what Adorno had articulated in his "Theorie der Halbbildung": violent restrictions on the multiplicity and non-identity of experience imposed in order to produce a social world that

could be easily assimilated into "pre-given subjective schemes of reality perception."[60] If that was the cost of regaining stability, then Kren's *6/64*, as well as the meeting formations I examine in this chapter, chose instability as their pedagogical strategy and as their formal technique.

In the first section of the chapter, I am particularly interested in the question: What *forms* could educational materials and techniques take against the backdrop of Austria's tentatively post-fascist, conservative Catholic consumerist conditions? It was not in discrete works like Mühl's live action, I suggest, but in the messy collaborations and the media materials through which such collaborative endeavors moved—press materials, or even their "documents" as in the case of *6/64*—that questions of pedagogy and aesthetic form were posed and through which possible answers were proposed. Though no mission statement was ever formally drafted nor was a membership list ever noted, the Institute for Direct Art was, as its elaborate branding strategies made clear, a collectivizing container and conduit for the circulation of the Viennese scene transnationally. In the next chapter I examine that transnational circulation, but here I am specifically concerned with the press supplies produced by the Institute—letterheads, moniker stamps, and postcards. On such supplies circulated a range of materials, from manifestos to event announcements to counter-representations of Austria's Nazi past. This visual design ephemera lent a unifying force to the often divergent interests of the Institute's members who each had their own approaches to postwar re-education—Mühl's abreactive approach, for instance, versus Kren's queries into apperception. While press materials may seem (and are often interpreted as) paratextual, the argument here is that they are essential to understanding how the Viennese milieu in the early to mid-1960s reworked systems of institutional meaning-making in the

60. Stojanov, "Theodor W. Adorno—Education as Social Critique," 128.

Austrian context, ***not*** by exploding such systems from outside, but by rudely and playfully re-structuring them from within their own formal logics.

Just a few years later, though, the transition from 1967 into 1968 brought with it a tidal wave of changes. Geopolitically, the Vietnam War was well underway, the Tet Offensive having brought the military incursion to a peak; and the student movement was reaching an equally critical mass.[61] Within the sphere of experimental art, the third meeting of the Knokke Experimental Film Festival in Belgium had brought together artists and filmmakers from across Europe and around the world, introducing cultural producers from different national contexts to the cooperative form and, in many cases, to each other. Like the Institute, the first co-op, which formed in New York in 1962 and is known simply as the Filmmakers' Cooperative (FMC), utilized institutional marketing techniques to "make official" an alternative meeting strategy. In Belgium, however, the cooperative meeting form of the FMC intermingled with radical Leftist European politics of the time, generating an energy that would lead to the spread of cooperatives across North America and Western Europe, reaching into Eastern Europe, South America, and Southeast Asia by the mid-1970s. These cooperatives, as I describe below, collectivized distribution for experimental film, offering both forums for experimental aesthetic activity and bases from which to mobilize the political power of the group.[62]

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61. It is worth noting that the Tet Offensive made it seem very clear for a broader public (outside of the anti-war movement) that the war could not be won; as such, it was a point at which people really started to oppose the war on massive, public levels in German-speaking Europe and elsewhere. See Wilfried Mausbach, "European Perspectives on the War in Vietnam," *GHI Bulletin*, no. 30 (Spring 2002): 71–86.

62. The first Filmmakers' Cooperative in New York began as a radical break from filmmaking and film screening conventions—see "The First Statement of the New American Cinema Group" as it appears in Jonas Mekas, "The Film-maker's Cooperative: A Brief History," <http://film-makerscoop.com/about/history>; but, importantly, Mekas made clear distinctions between aesthetically radical and politically radical in later *Village Voice* articles. The politicization of the co-op happened in Europe, beginning in particular with the London Filmmakers' Co-op, which was founded in 1966 a few years after the New York group and provided a clearer model for how the co-op could intervene into state and commercial funding structures as a political activity. See Julia Knight and Peter Thomas's *Reaching Audiences: Distribution and Promotion of Alternative Moving Image* (Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2011); and Joy I. Payne, *Reel Rebels: The London Film-makers' Co-operative 1966-1996* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse,

Back in Vienna a few months after the Knokke meeting, EXPORT, Kren, and Weibel, together with Hans Scheugl, Gottfried Schlemmer, and Ernst Schmidt, Jr. established the Austria Filmmaker's Cooperative (AFMC). Their cooperative proposed different kinds of meetings, a different kind of market, and a different approach to *Bildung*, which was no longer measured in the slightest against the markers of assimilability into pre-given schemas, of both the marketplace and, as I investigate at length below, of postwar liberal democracy. Instead, as the protest demonstration leaflet and media photograph I look at the end of this chapter suggest, the cooperative in Vienna formed in direct opposition to compromised state structures—from the specters of fascism, which riddled governmental and civic agencies, to the promises of liberal democratic ideology offered by the "international" West. In offering an alternative network formation to counter such protocols, the co-op form and the concomitant network form/formation posed a powerful praxis-based moment of critique. In particular, this meeting formation offered an activist platform that moved from Vienna to Hamburg, offering forth different—often hybrid—models of film exhibition market, from the museum to the festival. It was in Hamburg that Cologne-based filmmaker Birgit Hein joined with members of the AFMC, including Kren, to protest the commercial interests underwriting the northern German scene's festival. Hein and her cohort from Cologne had met Scheugl and Schlemmer at the Knokke festival, and shortly thereafter the two scenes—those of Vienna and Cologne—joined forces in terms of screening events, as well as in terms of critical campaigns, demanding different orientations to film, to the film market, and to the pedagogical function of the film screening event. To that end, the group more explicitly linked specters of fascism haunting German-speaking Europe with the new promises of the U.S.-imposed liberal democratic order and its

2015). In general, very little scholarship exists on the cooperative movement outside of the monographic-like studies focused on New York or London.

capitalist foundations. Ultimately, though, the critiques they launched were unsustainable, and the limits of the alternative meeting formation became clear.

Pedagogical Meetings and the Educational Marketplace
The Institute for Direct Art

Kren's direct collaborations with Mühl and Brus during the early years of their private actions in the cellar were short-lived. By 1966 Kren was no longer working with Mühl on films and only occasionally working with Brus.[63] Both artists had been dissatisfied with Kren's lack of single-take reportage style documenting of their actions—Mühl, as Kren laughingly recounted in numerous later interviews, went white after the first time he saw *6/64 Mama und Papa*. Kren would also continue to record the Actionist performances, though by early 1967 this kind of footage was part of Kren's collected footage—part of his "material fusions"—with not even the slightest claim to "documentary" as the works from 1964 and 1965 had been. As these lines of engagement between Kren and his initial collaborators shifted, the Institute for Direct Art allowed the artists to maintain their connections to one another—to collectivize their distribution—without direct collaboration. The single most significant collective act of circulation undertaken by the Institute was their group appearance at the 1966 Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS) in London. It was the first appearance of the postwar Austrian scene outside of Vienna, and, according to the DIAS Preliminary report released just after the meeting, made

63. Some of Kren's most provocative films would be made with Brus over the next two years, between 1967 and 1968, including his *16/67 20. September*, which has often been listed with the secondary title *(eating drinking shitting pissing)*.

the single biggest impact on the proceedings.[64] The Symposium, like the Institute, had adopted the educational nomenclature to unconventional ends, using the structure to re-collect avant-garde activity together after World War II and take stock of new art forms that had emerged in the nuclear age.[65] It unfolded over a three-day period in the British metropole, bringing together an international group of nearly one hundred artists who contributed ephemeral events and happenings as well as papers and lectures. It was there that Institute affiliates would meet members of the Fluxus group, including Robin Page and Al Hansen, who both produced Flux scores in homage to the Institute, and Wolf Vostell, who would remain a close friend of Kren's throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[66] Such network building was the goal here, as it is in any Institute.

Beyond the group's appearance in London in '66, there are no records that identify the official dates of the Institute's establishment or end, nor are documents explicating its mission or function. Its existence is, outside of the DIAS press that circulated heavily in Britain and the United States, only evidenced by its nominal appearance across documents from the time, quite literally enframing the actions. Like so much of what this study examines, the Institute's entanglements with other activities and kinds of formations marks its existence, and these "other

64. See "DIAS Preliminary Report," *The Guardian*, September 9, 1966, ASII Box 16 "Dokumentation chronologisch, 1961-77," Mappe "1966," Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

65. As DIAS chief organizer Gustav Metzger wrote, "The cataclysmic increase in world destructive potential since 1945 is inextricably linked with the most disturbing tendencies in modern art, and the proliferation of programmes of research into aggression and destruction in society. The organizers of DIAS seeing the close relationship between art forms using actual destruction of material and social reality, have arranged a three day Symposium…DIAS aims to assemble the maximum amount of information on the new art forms and related topics, and to make this information freely available." Metzger quoted in Kristine Stiles, "Sticks and Stones: The Destruction in Art Symposium," *Arts Magazine* 65 (January 1989): 56.

66. In Page's score, *Merry Christmas '66: Homage to the Vienna Institute of Direct Art*, the artist circulated a letter requesting gifts to be "dumped" on top of the artist in a tribute to the messy material actions performed by Institute member Otto Mühl. Over 60 gifts came from artists ranging from Mühl himself, to Kurt Kren, to Ray Johnson, Robert Filliou, and Daniel Spoerri. See "ROBIN PAGE|bMERRY CHRISTMAS '66," (1966), TGA 815/2/2/4/162 in the David Mayor Collection, Tate Britain. I discuss Hansen's score at length below.

activities" have retrospectively come to obscure it. In particular, the Institute's complicated connection to the postwar group that would become known as "Actionism" has eclipsed its historical visibility. Put another way, the Institute's presence is marked by its acute absences from visible histories that often jump from 1962 to 1968.[67] This section begins with mapping out the '62 and '68 events that mark the edges of Actionism, and then shifts into the murky history of the Institute that rudely and playfully moved between those two events. In so doing, I mean to insist that Actionist production—as in the case of messy collaborative endeavors like *6/64 Mama und Papa*—be thought together with the field of performatives in which they found distribution. It is in this sense that instability as both pedagogical strategy and formal technique was operative, moving between mechanisms of resource sharing (press materials, etc.) and specific artworks (the film *6/64 Mama und Papa*). A close analysis of the group's interventions into the visual coding—the formal techniques—of the educational institution gives a different context to the infamous 1968 teach-in, as well as to the function of the "Institute."

Actionism's Activities and Aftermaths

Though members of the Institute were Actionists, the two were by no means synonymous—the nomenclature of "Actionism" did not exist until around 1970 when it was reified in EXPORT and Weibel's *Bildkompendium*. Whatever we are to call them, though, the group of artists associated with the Institute for Direct Art had burst onto the Viennese scene and into the pages of the capital city's mainstream press with their 1962 action event entitled *Die Blutorgel* [*The Blood Organ*]. Held in the cellar of Mühl's apartment in the Leopoldstadt district

67. 1965 is also recognized as an important year in this history, understood as it is for including the first public Actionist performance: Günter Brus's *Vienna Walk*. For more on Brus's action, see Mechtild Widrich's chapter, "Audiences" in *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialisation of Public Art*, 53–101 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

of Vienna—the same cellar in which Kren's *6/64* was shot two years later—*Die Blutorgel* included three days of direct actions by Mühl and fellow artists Hermann Nitsch and Adolf Frohner. All of the performances were undertaken in a closed off room in the cellar; during the three days the artists produced an installation space filled with Nitsch's ritualistic paintings and the readymade combine sculptures of Mühl and Frohner. On the third day, as an iconic image of the event printed in the Austrian newspapers records, an actress hired by the artists and outfitted in a perfectly proper early '60s evening dress and pair of pumps broke through the bricked-off entrance into the cellar; behind her was a crowd of people, as well as a line of police.

From that day in June 1962 when *Die Blutorgel* was revealed to an awaiting crowd and forward, Actionist events—from the direct actions of the visual artists to the screenings of experimental filmmakers like Kren—would face heavy condemnation in the press and in popular opinion because of their startlingly visceral challenges to the normative body politic. They would also face substantial censorship from the state, often resulting in legal trials and numerous threats of imprisonment. Ultimately, the Institute and "Actionism" did not survive the 1960s.[68] Tensions reached a climax in June 1968 when members of the Actionist group were invited by the SÖS (*Sozialistischer Österreicher Studentbund*/Austrian Socialist Student Union) to appear at a teach-in at the University of Vienna, and they performed their now infamous *Kunst und Revolution* event. Outrage erupted after the actions, which included urinating while singing the national anthem, public bloodletting by Brus, flagellation by Mühl, and a lecture by Wiener. The public outrage brought the Actionist period to an end and forced some of the associated artists, including Kren, to flee to West Germany in order to avoid prosecution. Kren, who had not been present for the event, nor had his films been included, had the prints of his Action works (the

68. This history has been thoroughly examined in numerous studies, most recently in the massive sourcebook, *Vienna Actionism: Art and Upheaval in 1960s Vienna*.

collaborations with Mühl and Brus undertaken in 1964 and 1965) seized from his apartment by authorities and was suspended from his job at the National Bank from which he resigned shortly thereafter. Reflecting on the '68 situation two decades later, Kren would suggest that "the media cast the judgment and the law was obliged to enforce it."[69]

The blowback by the state's legal apparatus against the *Kunst und Revolution* event also effectively shut down the student movement and any other organizing within the university system in Austria—which had since its inception earlier in '68 been heavily policed and was, following the *Kunst und Revolution* teach-in, banned by the state. Student mobilization remained off-limits until nearly a decade later when social unrest, primarily amongst youth, led to the Arena occupation movement in 1976 and later the 1983 Vienna Opera Ball demonstrations.[70] Until the election of Bruno Kreisky to Chancellor, student organizations remained formally banned by the state.[71] This punitive legal repression of open assembly was disastrous for the development of oppositional politics and counter-public spheres. Moreover, it institutionalized the mounting tensions between artists and activists in the capital city, exacerbating an already strained relationship between art and politics within the country's frameworks of cultural production. "In blurring the distinction between aggressor and victim," as historian Philip Ursprung has written, "the Actionists openly subverted received political and moral agendas.

69. Quote from interview with Kren in *Keine Donau*, dir. Hans Scheugl (1988).

70. See Robert Foltin, "Squatting and Autonomous Action in Vienna, 1976–2012," in *The City is Ours: Squatting and Autonomous Movements in Europe from the 1970s to the Present*, Bart van der Steen et al., eds., 255–276 (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2014); as well as Foltin, "Vienna in March 1981: A 'Puzzling Demonstration' and Its Consequences," in *A European Youth Revolt: European Perspectives on Youth Protest and Social Movements in the 1980s*, Knud Andresen, Bart van der Steen, et al., eds., 41–52 (Bochum: Ruhr Universität Bochum, 2016). Also see Ruth Beckermann's excellent documentary on the 1976 Arena occupation *Arena besetzt (Arena Squatted)* (Austria, 1977) and the recent exhibition entitled "Occupied! The Fight for Free Spaces since the 70s" (Wien Museum, 2012).

71. As part of his program of increasing cultural openness in the country, in 1975 Kreisky also issued a pardon for artist Günter Brus, the only artist still facing prosecution for the *Kunst und Revolution* event.

Because of this, the Austrian Left saw Actionism as politically compromised and […] subsequently, they were banned throughout the 1970s and 1980s and labeled neo-fascist."[72] Unlike in other European nations, such as France or West Germany, where artist collectives like Situationist International or SPUR worked closely with the student movement and the emergent New Left, the situation in Austria was markedly different.[73]

Several scholars have weighed in on this fraught association, including most recently cultural theorist Gerald Raunig and art critic Andrew Weiner. Both approach the situation from the position of politics, Raunig asserting a "negative concatenation," or linkage, between the aesthetic and political in the Austrian context. "The artist's endeavors," he writes, "concentrated more on minimal free space for new art practices and thus on marginal public sphere in an otherwise rigidly conservative art field until into the late 1960s."[74] In such a situation, there was neither a lasting relation established between art and politics, nor a lasting radicalization of the Left. For Raunig, the most lasting contribution of *Kunst und Revolution* would be precisely that which had earned the Actionists the title of neo-fascist: its subversion of received political and moral agendas from both sides and a critique of political organization in general. Weiner, alternatively, sets his sights on the issue of aesthetics in an expanded field, asking in a Rancièrean gesture what defines the contours of an "aesthetic" or "political" event under the changing terms of subjectification and hegemony in the postwar period.[75] Citing Hannah Arendt,

72. Ursprung, "'Catholic Tastes': Hurting and Healing the Body in Viennese Actionism in the 1960s," 148.

73. See Gerald Raunig, "'Art and Revolution,' 1968: Viennese Actionism and the Negative Concatenation," in *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, translated by Aileen Derieg, 187–202 (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2007); for a survey of the situation in other Western European states, especially West Germany and Italy, see Jacopo Galimberti, *Individuals against Individualism: Art Collectives in Western Europe (1956-1969)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017).

74. Gerald Raunig, "'Art and Revolution,' 1968: Viennese Actionism and the Negative Concatenation," 188.

75. See Raunig, "'Art and Revolution,' 1968: Viennese Actionism and the Negative Concatenation"; and Andrew

Weiner writes, "an immanent contestation of the means by which the rights to appear and demonstrate as an intelligible subject are policed, whether literally, as actually happened [in the case of the Actionists], or on the phenomenological level, through a specific partition of the senses."[76] His turn to Arendt and her discussion of the public sphere bridges the notion of "minimal free spaces," which had been Raunig's focus, and what Wiener refers to as a "specific partition of the senses," or the perceptual field of legibility. Here, as in Kren's *6/64*, perception and apperception emerge as crucial concepts for determining the political force of the ideas, actions, and textual referents put forth by the Institute. Whereas Weiner's interests lie in aesthetics, however, I want to turn attention towards the frames that contour how, where, when, and why the senses become partitioned in the pedagogical field. Following the logic of the institute as organization structure—or as particular kind of meeting formation—how might a proposition about the nature of education be mined from the art-politics debates in which "Actionism" is entrenched?

"In the land of Mama let there be a Dada Party!"[77]*: Education and/at the Institute*

My interest lies in the circumstances of *Kunst und Revolution*—that is to say, in the fact that it took place under the auspices of a teach-in at a formal site of education. It was the first and last time members of "Actionism" would inhabit such a formal site. As Ursprung, Raunig and Wiener assert, their teach-in performance held an oppositional stance to programmatic agendas

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Weiner, *Times of the Event*. Also helpful is Weiner's "Reevaluating Actionism: Austrian Performance, Then and Now," *PAJ: Performing Arts Journal* 37, no. 3 (September 2015): 50–57.

76. Weiner, *Times of the Event*, 61.

77. Al Hansen, "NYC Provo Action Manifesto," 1967, ASII Box 13, Mappe 01 "Prozesse," Sohm Archive, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

of both the Right and the Left, and such a position proved indeed to be disastrous. Ultimately the *Kunst und Revolution* action brought about a spectacular end to the Actionist educational propositions-turned-public provocations. The limits of the institutional seemed exhausted after the university action as artists, filmmakers, and writers faced formal charges from the state for their sexually and politically explicit work; and most fled the country to avoid incarceration.

Art historian Philip Ursprung's analysis of the event has aptly situated the project in an Austrian historical context. Setting aside Actionism for the moment and, instead, focusing on the educational dimension of *Kunst und Revolution*, his contextualization can help to ground the pedagogical "work" of the Institute (and Actionism within that) in a longer narrative of cultural production in German-speaking Europe. Ursprung specifically looks to the notion of *Kultur* circa 1900, which, as he describes, proposed a model of art/life integration based neither in an avant-garde "radical opposition" to bourgeois culture, nor in the intellectual distance of *l'art pour l'art* ideology—both of which emerge from the French national tradition. Alternatively, *Kultur* offered forth an ostensibly apolitical position, promising *by aesthetic means* to give voice to the political and social frustrations brought on by the rapid changes imposed by modernity, and claiming "to be more 'direct' than parliamentarianism, relatively more 'popular' than aristocratic elitism, more 'humane' than capitalism, and more 'nationalistic' than socialism."[78] It is clear that such a concept laid the groundwork for the rise of fascism after the First World War in both Austria and Germany, but of primary concern to this discussion is how *Kultur* inflected on—and increasingly nationalized, or, to draw phrase from Nietzsche, "infected"—aspirations toward *Bildung*, relegating the pedagogical function of art to the contemplative sphere in what Herbert

78. Ursprung, "'Catholic Tastes': Hurting and Healing the Body in Viennese Actionism in the 1960s," 144.

Marcuse identified in 1937 as "the affirmative character of culture."[79] In so doing, art, and cultural production more generally, was restricted to a site for "the symbolic performance of political struggles."[80] This "symbolic" performing of politics had real effects, galvanizing a German nationalist position and effectively binding a German-speaking public both in the Nazi period and after—recall, once again, the postwar *Heimat* genre that glorified Austro-Hungary's imperial grandeur.

Despite Actionism's flirtations with this nationalist reactionism of *Kultur* (keeping in mind that the concept emerged in German-speaking Europe as a response to the dominance of the French tradition), the Institute—and here is where the distinction between the two becomes crucial—worked against the apolitical associations of *Kultur* by concretely engaging the symbolic performances of education and their potential as a site of contestation—as a site, in other words, where the real effects of the supposedly symbolic were manifested. The field of education had this potential precisely because that is where the right to appear, to be perceived, or to be legible is quite literally entrained into individuals; what this training could look like, what kinds of forms it could take were a primary focus for members of the Institute. The very adoption of the nomenclature of "Institute" makes this clear, enframing as it did all of the activities of members of the Institute, including the *Kunst und Revoluion* teach-in, as education oriented. And, indeed, education was a site of major concern in the Second Federal Republic. After World War II, Austria had roughly six hundred thousand disenfranchised ex-Nazis. When faced with the issue of reintegration and re-education, the two primary political parties, the

79. Herbert Marcuse, "The Affirmative Character of Culture," in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro, 65–98 (London: MayFlyBooks, 2009). It is no coincidence that Marcuse's text is written during the rise of National Socialism in Germany and variant forms of fascism throughout the European continent when the supposed apoliticism of *Kultur* crystalizes as xenophobic nationalist ideology.

80. Ursprung, 144.

Austrian Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), saw in this large mass a way to bolster their own constituencies. Thus what began as a retreat from and opposition to fascist ideology, developed into a slow integration and partial acceptance of Nazi elements (and elements of Austro-fascism) within the government and within the educational system. [81] As Peter Weibel recalled, during the 1950s it was well known amongst students that many of their teachers were former Nazis.[82] The failure of the state to firmly reject its own fascist past—and, by extension, to clarify its approach to educational policy—created an atmosphere marked by suspicion, resentment, and anxiety toward any mode of knowledge production that exposed this integration and acceptance.

In this cultural climate, the title "Institute" was adopted by Kren, Mühl and others. It lent the group an appearance of institutional officiality to the artists' meetings, thus producing an air of sanctioned assembly under the rubric of education. It was also parodically adapted to throw into relief the continued degradation of *Bildung* in such a post-fascist-but-not-really context. Satirical imitation indeed played a prominent role in the Institute's image; as Fluxus artist Al Hansen wrote in 1967 (the year after he had met the group at the DIAS event in London) when

81. For a specific analysis of the situation in Austria in relation to artistic production, see Eva Badura-Triska, "The Initial Cultural Situation: The Underlying Conditions and Reference Points of Vienna Actionism in Austria," in *Vienna Actionism: Art and Upheaval in 1960s*, 15–21. For a more broad examination of the political situation in Austria following the World War II, see Anton Pelinka, "SPÖ, ÖVP, and the 'Ehemaligen': Isolation or Integration," in *Conquering the Past: Austrian Nazism Yesterday & Today*, edited by F. Parkinson (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 245–256. Pelinka gives several specific examples of civil sites where Nazi ideology was still prevalent and, moreover, political figures that emerged in the 1950s and '60s who were former Nazi officials. In relation to this integration of ex-Nazis into the democratic state, one example comes to mind in relation to the Actionists which illustrates the complexities of this fascist past in Austria: in 1976 then-Austrian chancellor Bruno Kriesky pardoned Günter Brus for charges lodged against him as a result of the 1968 *Art and Revolution* event. Almost simultaneously (in 1975), Kriesky was also the primary defender of then-government official and former Waffen-SS officer Friedrich Peter who had come under attack by Simon Wiesenthal for his role in the Holocaust. In his defense of Peter, Kriesky launched a harsh and personal assault on Wiesenthal for "stirring up the past." See Pelinka, 253.

82. Peter Weibel in interview with the author, June 2017.

describing the Institute's members: "In the land of mama let there be a Dada party!"[83] Once again, as in Kren's 1964 collaboration with Mühl, the parental unit was invoked only to be undone—only to become, that is, the basis upon which different modes of perception and the worldview systems they produced could be conceived (as was the case in *6/64*). Hansen's score for the Institute took as its foundation a gendered relation to "letting go," which assigned to the figure of the father, or "dada," the party. In this way, the fraught politics of the sexual revolution with their privileging of the cis-gendered heterosexual male body appeared here underlying the tongue-in-cheek joke of the Flux score and revealing already a limit line in terms of thinking about gender that would plague the Institute as well.[84] Beyond—and inside—Hansen's gendered word play, the score ostensibly revolved around the high school educational structure. In it he playfully proposes: What if such structures made good on the "high" in their title? For instance, what if all officials were required to imbibe drugs and then give their opinions, merging—as with art and life—work and play? He then went on to describe members of the Institute, including Mühl, Brus, Kren, Weibel, and Nitsch, and their artistic strategies-cum-pedagogical approaches: Mühl as the patriarch of home economics, reclaiming food in "a City [*sic*] renowned as a

83. Hansen, "NYC Provo Action Manifesto." Following the success of the 1966 Symposium held in London, Hansen and other staged a second iteration of the meeting in New York. It was there that Kren would perform his first film action since his 1950s collaborations with the Vienna Group; and it was also the DIAS New York that Kren would reference in an Institute postcard sent to Wolf Vostell in early 1967.

84. Numerous studies have examined the sexual revolution as it manifested across different national contexts through the 1960s; given that Hansen's work emerged out of the U.S. American context, I cite here just a few of the most well-known studies of this period in the United States: David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, An Unfettered History* (London: Routledge, 2016); George Frankl, *The Failure of the Sexual Revolution* (London: Open Gate, 2003); John Heidenry, *What Wild Ecstasy: The Rise and Fall of the Sexual Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997); Aaron Krich, *The Sexual Revolution* (New York: Dell Publishers, 1964); Eric Schaefer, ed. *Sex Scene: Media and the Sexual Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Edwin Schur, ed. *The Family and the Sexual Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964). For more on the "undocumented revolution" that characterizes the conjunction of the gay and lesbian rights movement and the Sexual Revolution see, among others, David Evans, *Sexual Citizenship: The Material Construction of Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1993); and Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer, "'I Can't Even Think Straight': Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology," *Sociological Theory* 2 (July 1994): 178–187.

romantic culture bed…[which was] strangling in academic conformity like a bakery full of sour pastr[ies]"; Brus as the "antichrist" (psycho)drama teacher; Kren as the film teacher, re-training perception with his "flickering symbol[s]…shattering...the cinema frame"; Weibel as the art and philosophy instructor; and Nitsch as the classics coach, training students as the "Bruckner of Happenings."[85] In Hansen's descriptions traditional educational roles were subverted and inverted, highlighting the unconventional means by which members of the Institute conceived of education.

Performative Print Materials

Such a conception also extended beyond the roles performed "in the classroom" so to speak and into the codes and cues of the educational institutional structure itself—the visual design materials in this sense were as imperative to the project as the "in class" personas. Like they would occupy the classroom at their teach-in at the end of the decade, members of the Actionist group also occupied the language and visual design cues of educational institutions from the mid-1960s onward. They were in fact highly self-conscious in the circulation of press regarding their activities, maintaining tight control over the images circulating of their actions and events. Art historian Mechtild Widrich has tracked this in relation to Brus's curation of photographs selected to represent his 1965 *Vienna Walk*; and in Mühl's archive contact sheet after contact sheet shows specific selections of which images were to be cropped for printing and reproduction.[86] Through such carefully defined photographs, "the intended audience," as

85. Al Hansen, "The Vienna Institute for Direct Art," ASII Box 16 "Dokumentation chronologisch,1961-77," Folder "1967," Sohm Archive, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

86. One can, for instance, compare the slides in Mühl's personal collection to the images that came to be included in press packets that circulated to galleries and museums like Museum Moderner Kunst Salzburg where one such

Widrich has described, "…extended into the future and indeed principally occurred there."[87] While Widrich is focused on the futurity of the actions, her argument here also points to the centrality of the audience. In so doing, she echoes Hansen's claims in regard to the group's attention to (and attempts to re-conceive of) reception. Part of the program was the intense production of paper materials—manifestos, event leaflets, and press materials—aimed at different kinds of publics at different scales of public.[88] Maintaining visibility across this kind of diverse range of audiences required some sort of organization in the most basic of senses—who is in communication with programmers, curators, and gallerists? Who is producing the announcement for the event? What will the announcement say? How to present an at least semi-coherent field of activities as an event? What images to show? What should the captions say? The legibility of the scene depended on finding answers to these kinds of questions. Accordingly, press materials came to function as a site of meaning production in their right.

Questions of management for the scene's image (and images) were partially resolved by the invented educational organization known as the Institute for Direct Art (and sometimes referred to as "Vienna Direct Art" or the "Institut für Direkt Kunst"), which was a parodic formalization of the educational institutional structure. In particular, letterhead and the press imprint logos became key referents for the Institute, marking numerous flyers for film and action events, as well as manifestos and other publications, and linking them together. Letterheads and press imprints are almost invisible in their ubiquity—a branding strategy required of any group

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packet still exists in the *Protokolle* held at the Museum der Moderne Salzburg. Images from that packet were included in the museum's 2014 exhibition "In Dialogue: Viennese Actionism." Sabine Breitwieser in conversation with the author, August 3, 2015.

87. Mechtild Widrich, "The Informative Public of Performance: A Study of Viennese Actionism, 1965–1970," *TDR* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 137–151, 144.

88. See Andrew Weiner, "Reevaluating Actionism: Austrian Performance, Then and Now," *PAJ: Performing Arts Journal* 37, no. 3 (September 2015): 50–57.

seeking to establish and demarcate the boundaries of its identity in the marketplace. Such logos appear for both brand identification, and they serve copyright purposes. While copyright law does not protect a typeface *per se*, fonts and particular configurations of typeface can be covered by "trademark." In the marketplace of ideas, thus, the letterhead serves a specific function: it secures recognition. This is why, typically, a letterhead appears consistent across documents—perhaps there are vertical and horizontal configurations or color and black-and-white versions, but the typography remains regular, the color scheme consistent and translated as closely as possible into achromatic variations. In the case of the Institute, however, such uniformity was absent.

Sometimes such logos used the same typeface, sometimes they mixed multiple typefaces, sometimes they appeared added to a document by a rubber stamp, and sometimes members simply used a typewriter to ad hoc add in the words "institute," "direct," and "art" somewhere on the page. Like in the parodic adoption of the terminology of "the Institute," the letterhead and press imprint were unconventional and, to complicate matters further, were regularly interwoven with titular nomenclature of Institute member's independent projects. As one booklet entitled "B & M direct art" exemplifies, the moniker was adaptable.[89] Put out by Brus and Mühl in 1967, the publication is marked "Direct Art Press" on its cover in the upper right corner by small sans serif type in upper and lower case. The lettering is crooked and the print quality irregular so that it appears almost as a stamp made after the publication had gone to press. In contrast to this seemingly quick addition, the bottom right corner of the pamphlet's cover is also marked with a logo; this one is for "ZOCK PRESS"—a name that Mühl in particular had assumed in his

89. From "Actionist Ephemera" materials in the Otto Mühl Papers, box 102, folder1, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

individual practice most notably in his manifestos. “ZOCK PRESS” appears more permanent: it is parallel to the page’s edge, aligned with the title “B & M direct art” and evenly printed. As in the messy inter-medial collaboration with Kren in *6/64 Mama und Papa*, authorship was blurred as individual practices mixed under the rubric of the Institute. Turn the page to the front matter and yet again the logo has changed. Inside the title of the Institute is printed in all uppercase serif lettering in three different languages (German, English, and Italian), which do not align along either edge. The spacing of the letters is also inconsistent—the kerning between the letters spelling out “Direkte Kunst” and “Arte Diretta” completely different, and the lettering for “Direct Art” internally inconsistent so that the “ir” of “direct” and the “ar” of “art” are nearly overlapping whereas the other letters have almost too much space.

In addition to the irregular letterheads and press stamps included on such publications, as well as on flyers, event announcements and makeshift “festival programs,” the Institute also produced at least one postcard. One copy of it remains in the Kren archives of collector Harry Sohm. It is unclear where Kren would have gotten it, whether he produced it himself, or whether there were more that were distributed by the Institute members. Postcards in particular later became a steady part of Kren’s individual artistic practice and networking habits. He regularly produced cards from still photographs featuring views of his own artistic process (such as, for instance, the camera set-up during the making of *31/75 Asyl*), or of language fragments he observed on urban billboards and marquees in around the cities he traversed (as in the storefront series made during a trip to London in 1973). Unlike the photograph-based imagery of Kren’s later mailables, however, the Institute’s postcard used a hyper-realistic drawing technique to depict a claw hammer, a vacuum tube (an electrical component that pre-dated solid-state technology), and a gold ring with Nazi insignia. The objects all lay partially buried in sand with a

few brilliant red drops of blood staining the ground around them. Seen from an aerial view they have almost too much detail, certainly more than a camera could capture: grains of sand appear particularized and the light glimmers off of a clump of tiny hair follicles that cling to the hammer's head sticky with blood. Even the nicks on the hammer's metal surface and grooves in its wooden handle are executed with meticulous detail. For as much detail as there is, though, the strange still life appears without context: the aerial perspective neutralizes the directionality of a light source, so there is not sense of time, and the tightly cropped image offers no ground upon which to place the objects other than non-descript patch of sand—a ground upon which the objects almost appear to float in spite of their being partially buried. The minutia of the drawing thus adds up to nothing contextually specific. There are no markers that would place these objects and symbols of violence in a particular time or space. One knows, as had been the case in *6/64 Mama und Papa*, exactly what she is *looking at* and, yet, has no idea at all what she is *seeing*. It appears almost as if a representation of memory—out of time and out of place, yet incredibly vividly rendered. And the sand. It is a material known to constantly shift and move, displacing geographic markers as quickly as the wind can change. Why is it that these objects are partially buried in this material? Or, perhaps they have been excavated by the shifting surface of the sand? Perhaps, that is to say, these objects—the hammer as brute force and the tube as technological power—and their connections to state violence—signaled by the Nazi insignia—have just been uncovered or recovered. Perhaps in the act of rendering them in such hyper-detail this uncovering/recovery has actually become possible. Perhaps in rendering it all in such a decontextualized hyper-detail the disjunction between *looking at* and *seeing* becomes possible.

Meanwhile, the back of the postcard presents as totally standard—like the kind of generic souvenir purchased from a tourist gift shop. The right side of the card is left blank for a

receiver's address; on the left side appears pre-printed prompts in blue ink, which guide the sender through a basic greeting: Dear… / How are you? How is the weather in… / I hope to see you… / Servus [*see you soon*]…. As usual, a block of text divides the two sides of the card; this text would normally be the caption information for the image on the opposite side, but, in this case, the only reference given is "Vienna Direct Art Postcard." Once again, as with the imprints on the "B & M direct art" leaflet, the typography of the logo deviates from any standardization and defies uniformity. It is difficult to know if the postcard is to be understood as part of the same body of print material production as the leaflet; or if the moniker of the Vienna Direct Art can be adopted by anyone associated with the Institute regardless of what the print material is. Nonetheless, there are characteristics of this aggressively explicit postcard that shared with the Institute: like the Institute, it works through mimicry. As the Institute playfully mimicked the visual cues of the educational institution in its irregular—and even erratic—branding design, so too does the Vienna Direct Art Postcard playfully mimic the visual cues familiar from popular art tourist postcards. Here, however, the representations of state violence change the tone. Is this playful? Or is this deadly serious? Can it be both? As with the disorientation brought about in seeing the bourgeois heads of family mom and dad fragmented and distended in Kren's *6/64 Mama und Papa*, here too the problem of seeing emerges: How is one supposed to *look at* and how is one supposed to *see* the Nazi past?

If the specter of fascism had loomed throughout the references made to and emerging from the Institute, here they confrontationally come to the fore, abruptly countering the non-appearance of "denazification" re-education programs in Austria following World War II by introducing into mass circulation enigmatic imagery as reminder. Significantly, the postcard was not only an internal document—a printed material intended to circulate amongst a particular

community, as, for instance, an event announcement or even a leaflet might. Instead, it would travel through the mail, crossing the sightlines of innumerable people working within national and international postal frameworks. In this way, the Vienna Direct Art Postcard was akin to independent distribution experiments of, perhaps most notably, the Fluxus group whose editions, yearbooks, and so forth, also tapped into such mass systems of exchange.[90] As the Institute's adaptions and inversions of the educational institutional structure differed from those of the Happening artists in the United States, though, so too did their interventions into the mass circulation system: once again, vis-à-vis questions of education, perception, and, specifically in this case, historical memory. To that end, it is worth remembering that Austria holds a special place within the infrastructural history of this kind of mass circulation.

The idea of the postal card was proposed by an Austrian in 1869 and was accepted by the Austrian-Hungarian government in the same year. In the following year regularly printed cards began to appear in the capital city of Vienna, and the first of these was a card commemorating events of the Franco-German War—the conflict that would result in the foundation of the German state in 1871. Five years later, in 1875, delegates of twenty-two countries met in Switzerland as the General Postal Union, and they established a standard postage rate and government issued card to be exchanged between countries in the union. This made it possible for postcards to circulate across national borders—like the ones that had been commemorated in the very first postcard.[91] So, then, the history of the postcard begins with a war commemoration,

90. Numerous publications have addressed the histories of Fluxus experiments in publishing; see, for instance, Elizabeth Armstrong et al., eds., *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, (New York: Walker Art Center, 1993); Hannah Higgins, *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); or Anna Dezeuze, *The "Do-It-Yourself" Artwork: Participation from Fluxus to New Media* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

91. See Richard Caraline, *Pictures in the Post: Story of the Picture Postcard and its Place in the History of Popular Art* (Philadelphia: Deltiologists of America, 1972); Larry Wolff, *Postcards from the End of the World: An Investigation into the Mind of Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (London: Collins, 1988); and, more recently, Bjarne Rogan, "An

and again in the Vienna Direct Art Postcard from Fall 1967 war is the subject—a war, that had also changed national borders, specifically those, once more, of the German state. For a brief period, the boundaries of the German state had been expanded by force to include Austria, Poland, and other European nations; and this expansion had rapidly contracted as sovereignty was returned to Austria, et al., and the German state was divvied up and eventually split into two. The fast-shifting sand into which the hammer, tube, and Nazi insignia are partially buried (or partially unearthed, as it were) on the Vienna Direct Art Postcard seems to speak to this history of shifting, positioning these representations of state violence against a permanently reconfiguring—and reconfigurable—ground; the ground, that is, of the state. If the Nazi regime (and post-imperial Austro-fascism) had been the ground upon which the physical violence of the hammer had been unleashed, by 1968 the ground in German-speaking Europe, and Austria in particular, had shifted at least once more. The ground of the state had been reconfigured based upon liberal democratic ideals, which buried the outright physical brutality of the hammer below—and, one could argue, inside—the structural violence of an ostensibly inclusive free market order. The vacuum tube here served as a bridge, marking the dependence of any regime upon control of technology and, by extension, media communication systems.

One of the most significant limitations on the work within the Institute—as the *Kunst und Revolution* teach-in would make clear—was its emphasis on identifying the minimal free spaces within the existing institutional order. The relationship of individuals working with the Institute to this order remained ambiguous, and many often circuitously succumbed to some of the exact structural violences that they were ostensibly working against. They "wanted in," and in wanting in they took for themselves positions of power that mirrored the patriarchal order against which

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Entangled Object: The Picture Postcard as Souvenir and Collectible, Exchange and Ritual Communication," *Cultural Analysis* 4 (2005): 1–27.

they were reacting—the gender politics underlying Hansen's score, centered as it was around a "dada" party in the face of "mama" had already signaled this. In so doing, they began to transform political struggles into political affects channeled through their own heterosexual male bodies.[92] This institutional formation could not, it seems, keep up with the shifting ground of the state; at a certain point, the tentative break with affirmative culture, or *Kultur*, that had been a driving force within the Institute itself broke. It is precisely this risk that haunted the adaptation of the institutional formation, no matter how satirical it may have been. The shifting grounds of the state and its attendant reconfiguration of "doing politics," instead, called for a new kind of approach to artist meeting formations, as well as a new kind of reproach to the attendant market systems. "Wanting in" was simply not enough. In response, thus, there was a turn to an alternative meeting formation, the cooperative, which attempted to turn the form of the meeting—and a notion of collectivized distribution—back toward real, and not only "symbolic," political struggle.

Grounds for Critique
The Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative

The performative pedagogical materials that defined the Institute and its national and transnational (as in the case of the postcard, or to recall the multi-lingual printing of the title "Institute for Direct Art") gestures moved by 1968 into direct actions—this was, of course, the ill-fated *Kunst und Revolution* teach-in at the University of Vienna. Following the debacle of the teach-in, the Institute dissolved, and, in its place, emerged the Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative. The explosion of co-op spaces in Europe through the 1960s reached Austria in the opening

92. Jodi Dean has aptly identified this transformation as a central problem in art production in her *Communist Horizon* (New York: Verso, 2018).

months of 1968 when—only a few months before *Kunst und Revolution*—a group of "second generation" Viennese filmmakers, including VALIE EXPORT, Gottfried Schlemmer, Ernst Schmidt Jr., Hans Scheugl, and Peter Weibel banned together with "first generation" filmmakers Marc Adrian and Kurt Kren to form the Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative (AFMC). Kren, as Hans Scheugl has recounted, was a crucial member of the group, working closely with the younger cohort and operating as a bridge between their increasingly "expanded" aesthetic and political experiments and the structural/ist concerns of their predecessors.[93] The establishment of the AFMC was, at least in part, an outgrowth of the momentum began with the Institute/Actionism—the two formations shared members and were represented together in the 1970 *Bildkompendium*, which not only solidified "Actionism" as the historical name of the group of artists held together by the Institute, but also explicitly linked the event structure experiments of the Vienna Group—and their *Cooles Manifest*—to those of the filmmakers in the AFMC.[94] The attitude across these activities was one of dissent: if the cabarets of the Vienna Group had been non-institutional and the events of the Institute pseudo-institutional, then the AFMC's demonstrations were counter-institutional. Unlike the pseudo-institutionalism of the Institute, the AFMC went through all proper steps to attain legibility within the Second Federal Republic. It registered as an organization, or *Verein*, with the state. It received the official state stamp. Yet, it remained nearly as professionally non-professionalized as the Institute had, actively working against the market structures at the foundation of that state from which it had gained approval.[95] Run out of Hans Scheugl's apartment in the west Vienna neighborhood of Währing for the first

93. Scheugl in conversation with the author, May 2, 2017.

94. Weiner, *Times of the Event*, 7.

95. Ibid.

several years, the AFMC blurred lines between public and private, production and protest, performance and cinema.[96]

They took up an alternative meeting formation—the cooperative—as a platform for thinking through the links between geopolitics, history, communication, and, at the center of this all, distribution. Accordingly, the following pages examine the media materials produced for two consecutive protest demonstrations led by the AFMC. My analysis thus draws upon the lessons of form learned from the Institute and its performative paper materials, but it also shifts more squarely into issues of content, tracking the ways in which the co-op transformed the "action" into an explicit critique that took on, first, questions of "the democratic" and, second, questions of "the liberal democratic." In so doing, they were, on the one hand, interrogating what they saw as exclusionary principles of the authoritarian programming vision, which organized the newly established Austrian Film Museum (ÖFM); but, on the other hand, they were also rejecting the rhetoric of liberal democratic inclusiveness being propagated by experimental festival structures like the Hamburg Filmschau. Paradoxically then, the co-op became a platform from which to develop of a negative form of critique in the Viennese context. While this strategy of negative critique also became key elsewhere, like Cologne in particular, this orientation to critique, I want to suggest with the remainder of this chapter, was born of the AFMC and their early recognition of what Roland Reichenbach has articulated as the "two-fold subversion" of *Bildung*: "The entanglement of self-understanding and world-understanding in the process of *Bildung*" Reichenbach writes, "always implies non-controllable elements or moments of becoming a self

96. After Scheugl leaves in 1974 the co-op falls into disarray; the new generation, according to Scheugl, is unorganized with no sense of a group (everyone working separately), and the co-op not re-established until 1982. Whereas the first group, which formed in 1968, had been very selective, by the 1980s the membership had increased significantly, and the focus had shifted. Filmmakers' involved were more interested in making feature-length films and in using the co-op as leverage to secure more state funding for such work. These observations come from Hans Scheugl in conversation with the author, May 2, 2017.

which we may best call freedom."[97] In this observation Reichenbach would seem to reflect the Adornian dialectical conception of *Bildung*, linking it to the practice of democratic politics. *Bildung*, in this sense always contains within it *Halbbildung*. It is both mediated by non-sovereign, non-autonomous sociocultural structures—including instrumental rationality, a utilitarian approach to knowledge, and violent restraints on "the ability to have experience that is in excess of expectation"[98]—and it is the source of the very conception of sovereignty and autonomy as it "can illuminate how social imperatives are at work in our representations of education and ourselves."[99] The uncontrollability born of the precarious entanglements of self and world is what *Bildung* and political life have in common; both must presuppose non-sovereignty and non-autonomy—the entanglements—as a precondition for the possibility of freedom. The Viennese cooperative's disavowals and reversals—of supposed liberatory politics, of the perceived radicality of inclusive market models, of its own spheres of influence in the co-op network—were, for a short time anyway, able to hold open space for this negative dialectic of *Bildung*.

The Cooperative Form

Before turning attention to the 1969 manifestations organized by the AFMC, I first want to give a brief introduction to the cooperative structures that took hold globally from 1962 onward. The internal conflicts between different cooperatives were numerous, but, nevertheless, in each—and across the network—the co-op provided distinct distribution mechanisms that were

97. Roland Reichenbach, "Beyond Sovereignty: The Two-Fold Subversion of Bildung," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35, no. 2 (2003): 201–209.

98. Thompson, "Adorno and the Borders of Experience," 78.

99. Ibid., 84.

alternatives to mainstream film industry, as well as the emergence of state-funding for an independent arthouse film industry. A cooperative references both a society more broadly and a store offering goods more specifically. Cooperative societies and stores were first identified as such in the early nineteenth century, when the structure began to take hold among communities taking first steps towards a communistic organization of society. The idea of the cooperative imagines a collective amassing of goods from small, independent parties to increase the visibility and distribution viability of all. Subsequently, the resources gained from this distribution are in part returned to the initial independent party and in part put into the collective fund of the cooperative. The funds returned to the group are intended to maintain operating costs of the cooperative itself. This cooperative model for production and distribution of goods and resources depends on support systems that at their base require mutual and proportionate gestures of care among the cooperative members according to needs—so, for example, what part of the gained resources is returned to the independent party, what part is kept for the co-operative, and who is determining that split determines the long-term viability of the cooperative as a functioning entity.

Reflecting the radical utopian politics circulating at the time, filmmakers' cooperatives emerged en masse throughout the 1960s and 1970s: 1961 Canyon Cinema was founded in San Francisco; the Filmmakers' Cooperative in New York in 1962 (and thereafter becoming the flagship co-op); the London Filmmakers' Cooperative in 1966; the Canadian Film Distribution Center, the Hamburg Co-op, and Roman Independent Cinema Cooperative in 1967 [originally founded in Naples and moved quickly thereafter to Rome]; the Austrian Filmmakers' Cooperative in Vienna in 1968; the Polish *Filmwerkstatt* and numerous independent *Filmwerkstätten* in the German-speaking world (Düsseldorf, Munich, and so forth) around 1970,

as well as the Yugoslav Film Cooperative [which emerged out of the regional Kino Clubs of the 1960s] in 1970; the Directors Guild of Japan in Tokyo in 1971 [originally established in 1936 but shifted to a co-op model following a 1971 change in copyright law]; and the Paris Film Co-op in 1974. This is only a handful of examples from the long list of co-ops that emerged globally at the time, each of which was established on premises, economic and otherwise, of horizontality.

It was a system into which any filmmaker could buy in for the cost of membership dues. The list of films, their costs (with a price per minute of footage suggested by the co-op), and their description were submitted by the filmmakers, leaving them control over the what was available, how much it cost, and how those materials would be framed, both by the language of a description and the parameters for the cinematic apparatus. Would, for instance, a description be excerpted from a critic's review or would it be the artist's own words? Were there viewing conditions stipulated by the filmmaker? Should there be a live or recorded musical accompaniment to a silent film? Should the reel be projected onto a screen or a wall or a body? These were just some of the specifications that a filmmaker could set for the reception and the experience of their work; and they could adjust such provisions every year or two when a new distribution catalog was released. In such ways, the filmmakers in co-operatives had control over the distribution of their films. Each had an equal say in setting co-op policies, such as rental fees, language of the catalog, or the regularity of catalogs' updates. In spite of these relatively stable practices of decision-making—or perhaps because of them—the cooperatives remained always on the edge of ad hoc, adopting do-it-yourself tactics that changed considerably depending on the context and needs of filmmakers involved. This co-op form was, in other words, adoptable and adaptable to numerous different contexts. They each took up the support structure offered by the cooperative model in different ways: some as a practical challenge to state and commercial

industries monopolies on film distribution, some as an activist mechanism to leverage state support of experimental film practice, and some—as was the case in Vienna—as a platform for critique and protest.

This turn to the cooperative was oriented largely around distribution and exhibition support—making reels available for screening to publics outside of local contexts. One of the primary mechanisms that held together the diverse range of co-ops that did emerge was the distribution catalog, which, simple as it may seem, was groundbreaking in terms of imagining how to move this work without being contingent on either individual personal connections or institutional support from the state or private organizations. The catalog was a kind of communication technology; and it made available vast bodies of works previously inaccessible through any distribution mechanisms of the film industry, whether those were the commercial Hollywood system, the Japanese production studio system, the West German state granting system, or arts institutional systems like Museum of Modern Art Film Library in New York. The catalogs did this by taking up a library organizational framework and combining it with an open-access cataloging system, which kept systematic track of what materials were available for rental. Co-ops shared their distribution, and works by filmmakers from one co-op were often also available in the catalogs of other co-ops catalogs—so, for instance, the London Co-op catalog was also available in Munich and films by members of the Austria Filmmakers Co-op were included in catalogs in London, Munich, Rome, and New York. Such practices of sharing—of both information and actual reels—was crucial to building a community that crossed huge geographic distances and sociopolitical situations. Through this network of distribution, spectators could come to "see" (quite literally) the concerns, both aesthetic and political, occupying filmmakers in hugely divergent contexts. An on-going conversation about the genre

of documentary could be cultivated. Documentary films coming from Hamburg, where in the early 1970s it was being used to think about immigration struggles, and those coming from Split, where, at the same time, documentary was being used to record the everyday movements of Yugoslavian ship workers, could be shown together at a single screening site in, say, Naples. Mixed screening programs, as I examine in the next chapter, were another of the possibilities that the catalogs and the co-op network form allowed.

They were media platforms more that political ones. That said, each cooperative had its own alignments. They regularly suspected one another of instrumentalization by the state and/or the market and also frequently—often aggressively—lobbed accusations back and forth between different figures working in the co-op structure. They were, thus, far from holding an internally unified as a political position. They instead held a shifting center and operated in a non-rigidified framework, which was shot through with indeterminate and uneven politics. It was their malleability that allowed for the formation to shift and move, sway and bend, yield and accommodate—what allowed, that is, for the infrastructure to hold. Moreover, the relation between the activities of production, distribution and exhibition varied depending on local contexts, which determined, on the one hand, the possibility, and, on the other hand, the need, for particular frames of assembly. For instance, the co-op in Amsterdam, as Kren's film records, was organized around a physical site, but that was not always the case. The Austrian Co-op produced programs in the off-hours of commercial art theaters around Vienna; and the Hamburg Co-op worked as organizers of the quasi-underground, quasi-commercial *Hamburger Filmschau* to produce high-visibility experimental festivals. Moreover, the Amsterdam group did not produce a distribution catalog, but the Austrians' list of films appears in numerous locations inside and outside of the co-op network, as well as the country's national borders; and the form of the

distribution catalog itself is a lasting legacy of the co-ops in London and New York. So, then, neither were the cooperatives politically unified nor were they consistent in terms of their material infrastructures. Each one represented a different way of collectivizing and of conceiving of the value of the alternative meeting formation.

Contested Democratic Infrastructures: The ÖFM and the Co-op Collide

In 1964, the same year that Kren and Mühl collaborated on *6/64 Mama und Papa*, the Austrian National Film Museum (ÖFM) was established within the official cultural sector. It was (and still is), like other state institutions, in the capital city's first district*,* the *Innere Stadt*, which is encircled by the *Ringstraße*. Redeveloped by the rising bourgeois class at the turn of the century, the "ring street" developed around the old imperial center of Vienna in the last years of the Hapsburg monarchy as the aristocratic class found itself indebted and selling off properties at fast rates.[100] There, encircling the former Hofburg Palace are the cultural institutions of the post-imperial Federal Republic. Just behind the Kunsthistorisches and Naturhistorisches Museums—both of which are housed in former palatial buildings—and nestled below the Albertina Museum—a former construction office for the palatial fortification-turned-aristocratic palace—on Augustinerstraße, the ÖFM stands. It began as a nonprofit organization established by filmmakers Peter Konlechner and Peter Kubelka, and it quickly grew into one of the most important centers for early film preservation in Europe.[101] The museum is also well-known for the quality and rigor of its film programs, which bring together film from around the world.

100. The development of the city's *Innere Stadt* was explored at length in the exhibition "The Metropolis Experiment: Vienna and the 1873 World Exhibition," at the Wien Museum in 2014; see https://www.wienmuseum.at/en/exhibitions/archive/detail.html?tx_wxplugins_exhibitiondetail%5Bexhibition%5D=234&cHash=35d1f25d5fa1c8f14c52df9eae35483c.

101. For the official history of the museum, visit: https://www.filmmuseum.at/en/about_us/history.

Likewise, the site's founders were also well-known. It was Konlechner who established the first animation film festival there in Vienna; and Kubelka has been since the early 1960s understood as one of the canonical figures of experimental film for his classic structural works like *Adebar* (1957), *Schwechater* (1958), and *Arnulf Rainer* (1960). Moreover, Kubelka's position as co-founder of the New American Cinema Group and the Filmmakers' Cooperative in New York, as well as his ongoing public presence through the legendary food and art performance lectures, further solidified his visibility on an international scale. Kubelka's personal connection to Jonas Mekas and the New York experimental film scene granted him access to international "underground" networks, and his status as co-director of the film museum gave him the authority to shape visions of contemporary avant-garde cinema in Austria. He had amassed a huge amount of power in terms of the "minimal free spaces" infrastructurally available both nationally and internationally for experimental film.

There were moments when the ÖFM supported Austrian filmmakers. Writing to Belgian Film Archive curator Jacques Ledoux in early 1967, for instance, Konlechner recommended Kurt Kren, Hans Scheugl, and Peter Weibel alongside Kubelka as filmmakers to contact for the Knokke Experimental Film Festival.[102] Though Kren did not attend, it was at that festival at the end of '67 that Scheugl and Weibel would be exposed to the co-op scene and a broader international network of experimental filmmakers. Positioned as they were "at the end of Europe," the Viennese filmmakers had up until Knokke been mostly isolated, so the exposure was critical to their development (both in terms of individual practices and in terms of their

102. Letter from February 1967 sent from Peter Konlechner at the ÖFM to Jacques Ledoux at the Belgian Royal Cinemathèque, box "EXPRMNTL 1967 VI," folder "Ernst Schmidt," Cinematek Library, Royal Film Archive Brussels. For the history of the Belgian Royal Cinemathèque—now known as the Cinematek—in Brussels, visit: http://cinematek.be/index.php?node=15.

meeting formation).[103] Thus, the museum's role in promoting young Austrian film was pivotal; but it was, nonetheless, troublingly offset by Kubelka's consistent refusal to grant access to other Austrian filmmakers. When asked, for example, about the avant-garde in Europe by Mekas in a 1966 interview for the *Village Voice*—the year prior to the ÖFM's recommendation of Kubelka, Kren, Scheugl, and Weibel for Knokke—Kubelka simply responded, "there is no avant-garde in Europe."[104] Also that year he rejected Peter Weibel's request for an exhibition at the ÖFM, suggesting, as Weibel has recounted, that he (Weibel) was not making cinema.[105] Moving away from celluloid like so many filmmakers at the time, Weibel's practice—like Expanded Cinema more generally—lacked legibility for film audiences, even within the experimental community. In projects like Weibel's 1967 *Nivea*, for example, the filmmakers' own body was cast as site of action and as projection screen; to some eyes it perhaps looked more like theater than film.[106] When a little over a year later, in January 1969, Kubelka organized a program of young Italian experimental film at the museum in Vienna, the just established AFMC acted.

In the winter following the infamous *Kunst und Revolution* teach-in at the university, the AFMC launched an incisive critique of another state cultural institution: the museum. Here, once again, the generatively critical tenor of *Kultur* surfaced: as in the case of the Institute and by extension, the teach-in. The AFMC protest opposed the dominance of foreign cultural production in the then redeveloping Austrian cultural sector, which included the institutions of the university and the museum. Though no visual documentation of the protest exists there is a flyer marked

103. Scheugl in conversation with the author, May 2, 2017.

104. Peter Kubelka in conversation with Jonas Mekas, *Film Culture*.

105. Peter Weibel, "On the Origins of Expanded Cinema," in *Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film*, A.L. Rees et al., eds., 190–193 (London: Tate Publishing, 2011).

106. For a description of *Nivea*, see EXPORT and Weibel, *Bildkompendium*, 258.

with bold black lettering, which identifies the oversized pamphlets as "Documentation—Propaganda" [*Dokumentation—Meinungsmache*]. It is a compilation including four type-written statements, or "handbills" [*Flugblätter*], as is written atop each reprinted text alongside their publication dates. There are two leaflets presumably distributed by the AFMC at demonstrations (one at the ÖFM and one at their later Filmschau protest, which I discuss below); a response from the ÖFM in regard to the AFMC action; and a second-hand account of the demonstration in Vienna by Gert Winkler, a leading Austrian film journalist and critic at the time.

In the short but dense ÖFM protest leaflet, the first of the texts printed in the "Documentation—Propaganda" pamphlet, several strands of critique coalesce. Most predominant is an attack on the consolidation of power in the hands of Konlechner and Kubelka: "An institution as important as the film museum [should not be] led by two people at the exclusion of the members—the public."[107] Though it is unclear who constitutes the public to which the leaflet is referring, it can be assumed that at the very least such a public would include Austrian filmmakers like those of the AFMC. Instead, the museum gave representation to foreign film production; though the protest erupted during a program of Italian film, the co-op's frustration was more likely directed at US experimental film, which, as Winkler's second-hand account pointed out, constituted seventy percent of the ÖFM's programming. To that end, the protest was also an attack on the museum's complicity in American cultural imperialism and, specifically, of Kubelka's ties to it: "one sees in the film museum," the leaflet reads, "only Kubelka's *Gesamtkunstwerk*"; moreover, his "total vision," the leaflet claimed, reified "the film politic of 'New American Cinema,' which serve[d] oppositional production forces ('New

107. "eine Institution von der Wichtigkeit des Filmmuseums von two Personen unter Ausschaltung der Mitgleider—der Öffentlichkeit—geführt wird." Translation by the author.

American Cinema' in Europe—Kubelka in the U.S.A.)."[108] Kubelka's vision was centralized, in other words, around the promotion of the New American Cinema Group, and the museum his vehicle for the advancement of New York-based filmmakers, as well as of his own career: "a film museum is not a launching pad for orchestrating careers!" the leaflet exclaimed.[109] Implicit thus also was a critique of the professionalizing auteur model of the New American Cinema Group and its accompanying Filmmakers Coop. More than just a consolidation of decision-making, then, at issue was the question: Who does the museum serve? And, furthermore: Which histories are made visible and which are not? Which publics are represented, and which are not? Which kinds of cultural production would come to define an Austrian worldview, and which would not?

Such inquiries offered forth a kind of proto-Institutional Critique (IC) gesture. However, unlike in works like Hans Haacke's 1971 *Shapolsky et al.*, which tracked implicit sympathies between Manhattan slumlords and members of New York's Guggenheim board of trustees (the presumed sympathetic class affiliations of the Board with Shapolsky were threatening enough to catalyze the exhibit's cancellation), the AFMC critique was expanded. It moved away from critique as an aesthetic form within an individual work by an individual artist—filmic in this case—and toward critique as a social form linked to collective formations: the protest leaflet was not written by any one co-op member but was, rather, penned collectively. To that end, the alternative meeting formation of the co-op was a crucial component of the protest and the critiques it mobilized. If Kubelka was guilty of using the film museum to propagate his own film

108. "Sah man im Filmmusueum nur das 'Gesamtkunstwerk' Kubelkas… die Filmpolitik mit dem 'New American Cinema', die dem Schaffen gegenseiter Bastionen dient ('New American Cinema' nach Europa—Kubelka in die USA)." Translation by author, box 101, folder 3-6, Otto Mühl Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

109. "Ein Filmmuseum is keine Startrampe für manipulierte Karrieren!" Translation by author.

career, then the anti-individualism of the co-op offered another way—another way of forming and another way of building a market for circulation. Visibility was reconceived as communicative action, and legibility as a collective, "public" demand. The protest action addressed itself toward both. It offered another way of gaining visibility; indeed, the performative nature of the leaflet, a kind of manifesto, brought into being the AFMC as a formation—or perhaps counter-formation—of "the public" in the national context of Austria. As the final line of the flyer exclaimed in bold, all-capital lettering, the co-op demanded "the democratization of the film museum!"[110] The claim of anti-democratic control over the institution—and, by extension, over the history of film in the country—was also a struggle for collective control of representation in history and of history. The attack on the democratic foundation of the ÖFM was also both critiques of democracy in the post-fascist Second Federal Republic and of the educational structures at the foundation of it. It was an incendiary outcry, which would have had a shocking edge to it in postwar Vienna where all sectors, including the cultural and educational realms, were permeated with former National Socialists who had transferred all too easily from one bureaucratic framework to another.

Much of the force of these deeper analyses was lost in the inflammatory affront presented by the rallying call of democratization, as well as by the accompanying actions that co-op members staged at the demonstration. The provocative nature of the protest's language and action were highlighted by the museum in their response to the demonstration. Signed by Konlechner and Kubelka and released a few days later on January 17, 1969, the response was quick to emphasize the aggressiveness of the demonstration and, moreover, the relatively small number of protestors involved. It began by pointing out that the "no more than twenty"

110. *Die Demokratiesierung des Filmmusems*!" Translation by the author, box 101, folder 3-6, Otto Mühl Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

demonstrators had disrupted programming in the previous week. Citing the more than seven thousand members of the public who had attended programming the previous year (versus the no more than twenty protestors), the ÖFM attempted to prove its inclusive, democratic character. The museum, as the statement went on to explain, was open to public input via monthly town hall-style meetings or through contact with leadership by way of telephone, writing, or in-person feedback.[111] This inclusive character of the museum was contrasted to the "violent" and "demagogic" nature of the small group of protestors' tactics.[112] Given these differences, the museum—as its statement claimed—was clearly the "rightful" representative of the public, the very public that had been at the center of the AFMC's critique. Moreover, the AFMC's claim of American film imperialism was dismissed as "absurd" and its assertion that the ÖFM was boycotting young film was just "untrue." The museum, it argued, was representing the diverse technical innovations and aspirations happening in the film industry. Such a practice had nothing to do with politics, and the museum simply could not be a political instrument. It was, instead, a democratic educational site. An attack on such a site, the museum co-directors claimed, was itself an attack on democracy because it interrupted this inclusive, educational democratic mission of the institution.

There is, of course, much that could be said about the odd refutation of the political orientation of the museum within the same sentence in which it claimed itself to be bearer of democratic education. Would not democratic education also be at its base a political program? I

111. "…ebenso ist ein Kontakt mit der Leitung des Österreichischen Filmmmuseums telefonisch, schriftlich oder persönlich immer möglich," box 101, folder 3-6, Otto Mühl Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

112. In the statement, Konlechner and Kubelka write about the demonstrators "violent prevention of the [scheduled] film screening" and the "demagogic manner in which [their] allegations were made." Original quote: "die gewaltsame Verhinderung der Filmvorführung wie auch genen die demagogische Weise, in der die Beschuldigungen vorgebracht wurden." Translation by author. box 101, folder 3-6, Otto Mühl Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

want to put the emphasis, though, on the educational claim, on the museum as site of "a democratic *Bildungsfaktor*"[113] because this is the first instance in which the issue of *Bildung* was explicitly raised within these debates, which traced all the way back to the Vienna Group in the immediate postwar period. The appearance of *Bildung* here in a handbill from early 1969 was no doubt prompted by the student protests that swept Europe in the previous year, including Vienna—recall the *Kunst und Revolution* teach-in. And it was not the protestors that raised the issue of this convergence of education and politics. It was the institution itself as it was forced to clarify its pedagogical mission and, simultaneously, to distinguish this mission from the sphere of politics. Despite its best attempts, however, the museum's statement instead reminded readers of its own pivotal role in cultural education and, by extension, the role of cultural education in political praxis. Democratic ideals or politics more broadly were, in other words, learned precisely at sites like the film museum.

Such principles were also, as the AFMC critiques proposed, learned through the processes of media circulation, hence the importance of the film museum where moving image media was culturally valorized. It was out of the same expanded cinema practices, which Kubelka had rejected as cinema, that the notion of expanded media communication emerged. Cinema, as EXPORT articulated in her 1968 text on Expanded Cinema, was no longer just about the moving images projected onto the screen but the entire infrastructure of distribution that supported them. What, EXPORT and the AFMC probed in an Arendtian sense, was able to appear in "public" space was highly mitigated by conditions of circulation and industry protocols—whether that industry be "film" or "art" or something else—that determine such conditions. Perhaps this is why the "Documentation—Propaganda" compendium of leaflets

113. Box 101, folder 3-6, Otto Mühl Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

around the 1969 ÖFM protest was even produced; it performed public circulation in a way that street action could not. It is uncertain if such leaflets ever really did circulate by hand or if this was a debate played out in a series of "official press statements" lobbied back and forth between the co-op and the museum.[114] If the latter is the case, then the "Documentation—Propaganda" pamphlet was not just a record but also a critical site of the protest in it of itself. Whether or not handbills were ever distributed on the streets that the text documents were collated together at all echoes the strategies of the Institute. Like the Institute, the co-op intervened into strategies of media communication, and they had a keen sense of future audiences—future publics—for its activities. Such attentiveness to futurity was also an awareness of representation in history. By looking both forward and back in this one communicative gesture, the co-op surpassed its predecessor in its mobilization, not just on the streets but in its recognition of the multiple temporalities of performativity enacted by and through such media interventions. In this way, and by nature of its status as an alternative formation, the co-op's approaches to intervention had a more explicitly politicized—and less satirical—orientation: the handbill was as much about the critique being written as it was about the tropes of media circulation and their role in the formulation of democratic thinking. This awareness of circulation would appear also appear within the filmic materials they produced—think here of Weibel's *Nivea*, which played with brand marketing, or of Kren's interest with recording media cultures in *23/69 Underground Explosion*, which I examine at length in the next chapter (his interest with the "press box" as I refer to it there).

114. With only one copy of the compendium flyer saved in the archives of artist Otto Mühl, none of the original compendium remaining, and only one copy of the handbill from the later Hamburger Filmschau protest preserved in the archive of Birgit Hein, it is difficult now to get a sense of scope of distribution for these paper materials would have been.

This is not to say, though, that the street protest action was not also important—it worked in tandem with the performative leaflet. Gert Winkler's second-hand account included in the "Documentation—Propaganda" flyer is primarily devoted to describing the gestures made by the demonstrating co-op filmmakers over the two days of the protest. It is significant that the AFMC chose to include the journalist's descriptions in their compendium flyer: while there are not images of what the ÖFM protest looked like, the textual account marks the event. On the first day, Winkler writes, Weibel shouted at Kubelka, "he dare not open his mouth because his 'chops' stink." While on this opening day, the language was aggressively pointed at the museum co-director and his questionable programming politics, on the second day Weibel, Scheugl, and Kren each took up positions within media event that expanded out from such direct reproach of Kubelka. In a Happening-like fashion reminiscent of the *Kunst und Revolution* teach-in—which Weibel had participated in—the three co-op members performed actions simultaneously. Weibel emphasized keywords (what they were is not known) by stirring cheers and prompting roars of laughter from bystanders and passers-by. Though Winkler's description is brief, one can imagine Weibel's efforts to provoke the crowd as similar to those taken up to "pump up" the audience at live television recordings. In the midst of this keyword action Scheugel periodically interjected with calls for the "missing million" to come back—what exactly that meant is unclear. Perhaps it was is reference to the slaughter of Austrian Jews in the World War II period, perhaps in reference to the ever-rising death toll in Vietnam of his own generation. Whatever the case, Scheugl's call evoked histories of violence to which much of the underground film community addressed itself in those years around 1968. Finally, Kren photographed counter-protestors for a black list, proclaiming "for this audience I do not want to show my films; I shit on that." There were clear connections to media cultures in the gestures of both Weibel and Kren, and, also in

both, to the role of media in demarcating—and, thus, producing—publics. These interrogations into media access alongside critiques of the museum foregrounded questions like: What is at stake in who gets to determine social visibility and market legibility? And, moreover, in what does or does not constitute democratic practice?

Filmschau 69: Protest, Liberalism, and the Festival Form

The claims to inclusiveness that the ÖFM had made in the their response to the January 1969 protest—recall their use of attendance numbers to show their rightful claim to be representing "the public"—relied on a liberal rhetoric of inclusivity, which was understood as being at the foundation of postwar democratic thinking. Such liberal claims of inclusivity would emerge in another context for film programming later that year in the northern West German port city of Hamburg. As at the ÖFM, the stability of such liberal foundations was (like those of education) called into question by the performative media assaults, as well as performance-based activities, of the AFMC. This time members of the AFMC gathered alongside a group of Cologne-based filmmakers and critics, including Birgit Hein. She and her partner Wilhelm Hein, along with Hans Peter Kochenrath—all co-founders of the XSCREEN project discussed in chapter 2 of this study—stood with members of the Viennese co-op in protest of the '69 Hamburger Filmschau. The two groups had first met in Knokke and then again in November of 1968 at the First Meeting of Independent European Filmmakers in Munich. There the confluence of the geopolitical and economic interrogations of influence had first emerged at a transnational scale; and from the protest in Hamburg onward the two groups would be closely linked.

The Hamburger Filmschau was a festival established in 1967 in the north German port city of Hamburg. From its beginning, the event was a collaboration between the city's

filmmakers' cooperative—also formed in 1967—and the city's commercial media center, which led (and still leads) the country's production industry, from film to publishing. In the first two years the festival had earned itself the title of 'second Oberhausen'—a reference to the well-known short film festival founded in 1954 in the Ruhr region city of Oberhausen and made infamous in film history circles by the 1962 Oberhausen Manifesto that had established the first generation of New German Cinema and effected long-term changes in state-funding structures. I will return to the manifesto later; more crucial in the protest was the media declaration of Hamburg as the "new" Oberhausen and their terminology of "das andere Kino" [the other cinema] as indicative of all experimental film throughout German-speaking Europe. The label had come to dominate the scene, extending well beyond the contexts of Hamburg (and closely associated Berlin scene where a publication entitled *Das Andere Kino* was produced), and obscuring the actual work—both in terms of filmmaking and in terms of film programming—being done elsewhere, such as in Cologne's XSCREEN project. The dominance of city's parlance within media discourse around the West German underground was seen by XSCREEN and the AFMC as an attempt on the part of "professional" filmmakers in Hamburg and Berlin, who worked for TV and film production studios, to establish a new circuit for experimental cinema in an old film industry. In Cologne and Vienna, by contrast, experimentation in programming in particular was pushed far beyond any commercial limits; screenings in these places juxtaposed experimental film with pornography, educational film, and political documentaries. If anything, this programming was an embrace of other *cinemas*; but such differences were flattened out under the singularizing rubric of "other cinema." What is more, the Filmschau claimed for itself an inclusive position; so, like in Vienna, the issue of democratic thinking and representation of "the public" were central.

The Filmschau protest, though, was more so a critique of collaboration, rather than of geographic privilege as had been the case in Vienna. In other words, if much of the critique of the ÖFM has been of co-director Peter Kubelka and the imperialist underpinnings of his persistent promotion of U.S. experimental film, at issue in Hamburg were entanglements with the commercial film industry. The question thus shifted from a where to a what. What constitutes the underground? What is its place in critiques of capitalism? What is its place in political action? Hamburg, for the filmmakers-cum-protestors from Cologne and Vienna, was not to be lauded as a second Oberhausen but was *in the best case scenario* to become a second Oberhausen.[115] Like in Vienna, the AFMC produced a protest leaflet that was to be distributed at their boycott: "Festivals are markets. They are products from the factory of the interests of an authoritarian and capitalist system," and, "what is more, liberal accommodations like 'no pre-selections' and 'no prizes' cannot hide the fact that the festival mechanism and the culture industry are here and there the same."[116] So this, then, was not just a protest for greater inclusivity as some reviews from the time suggested, but a much deeper critique of the capitalist bases of the liberal order. The ameliorative claims for non-competitive inclusion and exhibition without a reward system were, for the AFMC, only a topical corrective for a deeper lying problem, which was the mechanism of the festival itself.

In response, the protestors staged their own festival in Hamburg parallel to the one organized by the city's co-op members. The "anti-festival," as organized called it, came to garner much media attention, appearing in mainstream news articles and quite literally diverting

115. "Hamburg ist auf dem besten Weg ein zweites Oberhausen zu werden." Translation by author.

116. "Festivals sind Markte. Sie sind Produkt und Um schlagplatz der Interessen eines autoritären und kapitalisticshes System. […] Liberale Zugeständnisse wie 'keine Vorauswahl' und 'keine Preise' können nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, daß die Festivalmechanismen und der Kulturbetrieb hier wie dort die selben sind." Translation by author, box 101, folder 3-6, Otto Mühl Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

cameras from the main festival. One such camera appears in an image of the filmmakers-cum-protestors gathered together outside the screening site of the counter-event that was printed with articles in the popular press publication *Der Spiegel* and *Bild*. Taken on the street, the candid photograph shows the seven anti-festival organizers, five men and two women including Kren from Vienna together with Kochenrath and the Heins from Cologne. The group stands around with hands in pockets, looking at each other with smiles on their faces; no one looks at the camera. Instead, their bodies all seem to be oriented leftward and focused on a camera crew that appears to be recording, or preparing to record, them. The camera crew is partially captured along the edge of the newspaper image. Though their cameraman is not in frame we see two men wielding sound recording, one of who holds a boom mic out toward the group of protestors. The media photograph, thus, captures the organizers media intervention in process. Where the critiques of media distribution in the ÖFM protest had been mostly peripheral to major circulation outlets—it is unclear where Gert Wilder's account of the action has been printed—in Hamburg this critique came center stage. One could ask if this ultimately undermined the goals of the anti-festival; Wilhelm Hein has since suggested that the protest was a publicity stunt, which had more to do with a rivalry between the filmmakers in Cologne and Hamburg than with a critique of liberalism. Conversely, Birgit Hein has remained unwavering in her conviction that the action was in protest against the dominance of the commercially-oriented Hamburg Co-op. In either case, the splintering of the cooperative movement—and, alongside it, the ideological foundations of the alternative meeting formation—were made clear, as was the intense interest in media power—the power of communication first overtly recognized by members of the AFMC in Vienna in January 1969 and then reiterated and expanded in the Fall of that same year. Issues of, on the one hand, public funding and accountability, and, on the other hand, the influence of

private and commercial interests, were clearly articulated by the filmmakers in Vienna who, regardless of the quarrels that may or may not have been taking place among filmmaker groups in West Germany, undoubtedly used the alternative meeting formation as a platform to imagine something else.

Their protest leaflet for the Filmschau went on from calling out the liberal order to listing calls to action, which centered largely on imagining an organized union of filmmakers that might represent the rights and interests of these filmmakers in the face of industry standards. While such a program was never realized amongst the filmmaker cooperatives, a program of unionization was in fact taken up in 1972 in Britain where artists organized into a union supported by the Trade Union Movement. In the opening lines of their founding constitution, the Artists Union claimed that, "affiliation to the trade union movement suggests more than fighting for our own ends, it means identifying our aims ultimately with the working-class movement as a whole. This in turn means questioning the very nature of art and the role of artists in a class society."[117] The filmmakers' co-operatives that showed up in protest at the '69 Filmschau, however, never got this far, lacking a unified cooperative program and, in the midst of in-fighting where much energy was expended, losing sight of how such critiques of the festival market fit within a larger framework of identification with working class movements. Consequently, their demonstration became relegated to the field of aesthetics, seen more as "whining" about a lack of representation at the festival and separated out from the larger political and economic fields to which the demonstration statement had addressed itself. As the institutional meeting formation had hit certain limits when it came to its ambiguous relation to affirmative culture, so too did the alternative meeting formation run up against certain

117. "Artist Union Manifesto Sheet," TGA 709, Artists' Union London Collection. Tate Britain, Tate Britain Special Collections, London.

boundaries when it came to the political implications of proximity to mainstream media cultures. The "actual" political field, it seemed, was something else in terms of film and was somewhere else in terms of filmmaker organizational efforts.

Conclusion

Return to the Amsterdam Co-op

In closing, I want to briefly return to the mis-en-scène of Kren's *30/73 Coop Cinema Amsterdam*: the theater hangout, with its smoke-filled air, secondhand seating, and makeshift housing. The youths-qua-pilgrims with their shaggy hair and leather jackets that inhabited that space were both an audience *for* the screening and actors *in* the staging of an alternative or informal cinema event. They had gathered to see underground film in this underground place, a place where one could allow herself to feel unsure of what would happen, where maybe anything could happen, or, perhaps, where just *something* different, *something* else would happen. In the introduction to this study, I suggested this mis-en-scène gestured outward toward the expanding possibilities opened up by new networks of distribution and exhibition. This gesture outward was indeed seen in the activities of the groups discussed in this chapter: the collectivized interventions into sites of education made by the Institute for Direct Art, from the letterhead to the literal classroom, were unlike any others in the Happenings scene of the time; and, similarly, the demonstrations organized by the AFMC put pressure on other educational sites including the museum and the festival in ways that pushed at the boundaries of even the alternative formation of the cooperative. Such formations were as crucial in expanding the conception of cinema and time-based practice, as they were in laying groundwork for new strategies of eventing. Yet, as I have surveyed above, each had their infrastructural and ideological limits. Expanding and eventing were matters of collectivizing, and, in particular collectivizing the means of

distribution. How this was to happen was by no means clear; and contradictions abounded just as much as new ideas.

With these limits and their resulting tensions in mind, I want to offer an alternative framing of my earlier proposition about the wide embrace of the co-op member in Kren's *30/73*. For as much as his arms did indeed open outward, they also held certain things in, necessarily demarcating an edge outside of which some things fell. What was excluded from that embrace? What was missed? What, so to speak, was just beyond the co-op member's fingertips? The co-op member's outstretched arms also delineate, in other words, the delimited conditions of possibility for "something else" in the mercurial and uneven terrain of the Cold War capitalist liberal democratic restructuring of Western Europe—possibilities of collectivity and collective distribution under the changing terms of media communication strategy and technology, and possibilities for meeting formations and group configurations under the changing terms of the state and the market. What comes out across in the media intervention histories of the Institute and AFMC is a tangle of different issues that have to do with formations and the tensions between them—between the institutional and the alternative, between the national and the international, between the state and the market, between art and film markets. To pull just one example from the histories I have outlined in this chapter, the relation of the national and the international was one of clashing at the AFMC's ÖFM protest, but it was one of collaboration in the case of the Institute's postcard correspondence with West German Fluxus artist Wolf Vostell. Finding the balance between these various conflicting and conflicted forces was an ongoing process that remains unresolved and perhaps, as in Adorno's dialectical conception of *Bildung*, irreconcilable. The different kinds of balances that were struck between institutional and alternative, national and international, state and market, art and film are the subject of the next

chapter, which turns its attention to the AFMC's collaborators at the Hamburg protest: Birgit Hein and the XSCREEN project in Cologne.

CHAPTER TWO

Convening Curated Programs in Cologne
Underground Cinema between State and Markets

In the spring and summer of 1969—the same year that would in the United States see events like the iconic Music & Art Fair in Woodstock, New York and the weekly performances of The Cockettes at San Francisco's Palace Theater[118]—an experimental art and media concert known as "Underground Explosion" toured five cities in German-speaking Europe, including Cologne, Essen, Munich, Stuttgart, and Zurich. The multimedia, multi-sensory, and "altered state" event was organized by the Munich-based film programmer and gallerist Karlheinz Hein (b. 1938, Berlin), and Viennese filmmakers VALIE EXPORT and Peter Weibel.[119] The "big-underground-festival," as press referred to it, put emphasis on the rhetoric of liberatory excitement that accompanied the sexual revolution and rock cultures sweeping through the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and other Western nations, and echoed the youth energy of sites like Woodstock and the Palace Theater. As the concert's press release asked, "Are you sexually repressed???" [*Sind Sie ein Sexmuffel???*].[120] To be frustrated, to be repressed, to be bored—these were unfulfilling states from which these festivals could provide liberation; this is how the Underground Explosion marketed itself to attendees. Combining the popular appeal of these newfound subcultural "freedoms," events with the influence of Andy Warhol's intermedia art extravaganza *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (*EPI*) (1966-1967), Underground Explosion

118. That this is the era of rock concerts, which performance studies scholar Philip Auslander turns to when considering his liveness in a mediatized culture is no coincidence; see Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999). For more on the importance of the screening event in terms of value production for film, see Erika Balsom, "The Event of Projection," in *After Uniqueness: A History of Film and Video Art Circulation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

119. The Progressive Art Production Agency was the first gallery devoted exclusively to film and time-based art production. Hein's "gallery," or "agency" as he called it, was like no other of the time. There were other gallerists beginning to include time-based works in their exhibitions, such as at Castelli and Sonnabend Galleries in New York, but in both those cases the film work was always by familiar artists who also produced paintings and/or sculptures, such as Richard Serra. Hein's P.A.P Agency was alone in its focus on film.[119] Like the Undependent Center, the P.A.P. Agency was under constant threat/surveillance; but unlike the Center, it was not interested in consolidating an identity totally outside of state and commercial institutions. Rather, it sought to infiltrate/integrate into (that line was a murky one) the commercial structures.

120. 1969 Underground Explosion Flyer, box 4, folder "Propaganda – 1967-1970," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection. Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

featured projects from across spheres of art experimentation, including in theater, music, film, and visual art performances. Like Woodstock and Warhol's installation art concert with The Velvet Underground, Underground Explosion brought the sonic cacophony of experimental music together with the multi-channel film projections and strobe lighting of the rock concert, a then emergent cultural formation.[121] All took up the dizzying effects of media environment technologies to create an audience experience that was rooted in exploration and experimentation.[122] Such encounters with the stage and screen recalled the spectacular theatricality of the cinema of attractions from the silent cinema period of film and media history, before fixed-position spectatorship for a narrative feature-length became the industry standard. It was within this mode of theatricality that Kurt Kren's film of the Underground Explosion also operated.

Kren was brought along to document the attractions at the Underground Explosion. Of the over eight hours of footage that he collected, what remains as a "document" is a five-minute-and-thirty-second, out-of-focus film entitled *23/69 Underground Explosion*. If *23/69* documents anything, it is the particular form that events like the Underground Explosion took. Mirroring the theatricality of the event itself, the film captures the scene of 1960s anti-institutional film screening networks, their hectic spaces of exhibition, and the kinds of communities that

121. Warhol's influential presence on the development of Cologne scene is clear in the press that circulated at the time in the regional press. See W. Hein, B. Hein, Christian Michelis, and Rolf Wiest, *XSCREEN: Materialien über den Underground-film* (Köln: Phaidon, 1971). Also see Branden Joseph, "'My Mind Split Open': Andy Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable" in *X-Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s*, edited by Matthias Michalka, 14–31 (Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 2004). Warhol's *EPI* has been lauded since its premiere in 1966 as the "most dynamic" of intermedia explorations of the time, and, as such, as achieved a mythic character in the narratives of Expanded Cinema in particular and experimental film and performance more broadly—that character was no less potent or pervasive in the late 1960s than it is today.

122. For more on the live performance of the rock concert, see Philip Auslander, "Tryin' to Make It Real: Live Performance, Simulation, and the Discourse of Authenticity in Rock Culture," in *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture,* 73–127 (New York: Routledge, 1999).

convened for their mixed media, time-based programs. Kren's off-kilter camera work and rapid jump cuts in *23/69* introduce spectators to a mescaline-induced haze of motion, which enfolds everyone involved in the concert, both on- and offstage, on- and offscreen. Catching glimpses of groups of onlookers as it darts through the stadium seating, Kren's camera takes a tumble about two minutes into the film when the filmmaker tripped and fell down the stairs. [123] The image thus plummets into a free-fall for almost a full minute.

Once mostly back in focus, the camera eye tentatively settles on the stage area where a discordant cluster of Happening-like actions proceed below billowing white panels, which serve intermittently as projection screens. The actions range from theatre warm-up trust falls; to loose, languid, nude "hippie"[124] dancing; to people climbing over one another à la Simone Forti's *Huddle* (1961); to bodies writhing on the floor together à la Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy* (1964).[125] The scene is intensified by a discordant soundscape made up of experimental jazz phrases, the vocal tracks from Motown classics, rock guitar riffs, and electronic feedback noise. These audio elements drift in and out, sometimes syncing with the movement of bodies, but more often not. In the flash of a film projector light the traditional stage lighting is replaced by a

123. Kren recounted these details, including his own experimentation with mescaline at the event, in an interview in the 1988 documentary directed by Hans Scheugl on Kren's life and work for Austrian television. The documentary is entitled *Keine Donau* after Kren's 1977 film *33/77 Keine Donau*. Scheugl's film on Kren was able to raise visibility around the filmmaker's practice and importance in national history, thus catalyzing efforts to bring him back to Vienna (from Texas where he had been living in borderline destitution for nearly a decade) and set him up with a state pension.

124. The Underground Explosion press release specifically appealed to hippies the as one of the primary groups listed in the statement's headline: "Hippies, Deadbeats! Exis! Sisters and brothers! Comrades!" [*Hippies, Gammler, Exis! Schwetern und Brüder! Genossen und Genossinnen!*]. 1969 Underground Explosion Flyer, box 4, folder "Propaganda – 1967-1970," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

125. While it is uncertain that those involved in "Underground Explosion" had knowledge of Forti's *Huddle*, they without doubt were familiar with Schneemann's work, which had traveled to Europe vis-à-vis Jean-Jacque Lebel in Paris, and had made the news when shut down by police in New York and Paris. Through Wolf Vostell and West German Fluxus, as well as through the experimental festival circuit, Lebel would have had connections to the West German figures and scenes, including Hein, Kren, Weibel, and the circles in which they moved—they all, for instance, would have met at the 1967 EXPRMNTL Film Festival in Knokke-le-Zout.

radiating red and blue glow, and the scant visual information to which there was access now blurs out as the jazz phrasing being performed on stage picks up speed. Clips of Peter Weibel on stage leaning into a microphone start to cut in and out as the camera moves behind Weibel and musicians, and the strobing lights. Recycling back to footage from Kren's earlier fall, the camera goes into a free-fall once again. Figures and instruments begin to dissolve into streaks of red, blue, and yellow light moving across a smoky black ground like acid shadows. They pulsate with halos, afterimages, and visual snow that move through the perceptual field—like the effects brought on by 3,4,5-trimethoxyphenethylamin (mescaline) and lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). Things are moving quicker and quicker. The volume and density of the sound is holding an impossible pace. The moving images and crescendoed noise are claustrophobically closing in.

And then the building wave of action breaks. Things go silent. Everywhere is dark.

The intensity of the Underground Explosion environment, as represented in Kren's documentary footage, seemed to consist of both the exhilaration of discovery and the panic of overstimulation involved in the hallucinogenic-influenced experience. One could perhaps dismiss it as "trippy, man" but for the ways that Kren's camera jarringly jerks us around showing the full scope of the event. His in-camera, trip-induced editing—induced, that is by his own experimentation with drugs and his stumble on the stairs—is a reminder that the generative potential of psychedelia is always also the stuff of which bad trips are made. In these drug-riddled and highly sexualized spaces, which had the aura of being rife with activities forbidden by the status quo, the view keeps shifting—from the stadium seating that the camera eye weaves through; to the stage and its projection screens, clusters of sound equipment, and chaotically

moving bodies; to the reflective surfaces and flashing bulbs of the media photographers' cameras in the press box as they clamor to get shots for their articles.

These spaces of the spectator, the actor, and the media, as Kren and company well knew from their training in film and knowledge of its histories, are constitutive elements of the cinematic apparatus. Cinema historically consists of spectatorial engagement (e.g., arrangements of the audience such as seating configurations), representational strategies (film and performance forms), and media relations (publicity). Kren's *23/69* maps out the three elements of the "explosive" events that this chapter examines: audience arena (spectatorship), stage/screen (form), and the press box (publicity). This tripartite organization of cinema indeed also informed the tripartite organization of live media events. The "liveness" here was not was not only the activities happening on the stage, but the whole mis-en-scène of the stadium and the actor-attendees gathered within it—the mis-en-scène of the apparatus, that is.

The out-of-focus perspective through which Kren visually and sonically represents this triangulation of cinema's constitutive elements mimics the blurred and blurry ideological effects of the part political, part psychedelic, performance media concert—an event which distorted and distended the lines between elements of the cinematic apparatus. In each city the festival traveled to it took over a local stadium or circus hall for two hours, over which time an audience of between two and four thousand youths assembled, as Weibel has described, in revolt.[126] The sense of revolt that lead to this new cinema of attraction was part of a multi-pronged cultural attack: It was student revolt against schools and an education system still being run by Nazis, or, at least, former members of the party. It was a sexual revolt against the repressive norms of a West German state anxious to distance itself from the racialized lasciviousness of the Nazi

126. From Weibel interview with the author, June 15, 2017

period. It was a philosophical revolt taken up under the pervasive influence of Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* and the work of his students in Frankfurt. It was a revolt in music in the form of an embrace of US traditions of jazz and rock 'n' roll, as well of a nascent German experimental sound scene—"from [Jimi] Hendrix to [Karlheinz] Sockhausen" as Weibel recounted.[127] And it was an expansion of the arts, or an "inter-technological" revolt against the separation of media communication systems.[128] The coalescing of these various strands of the '68 movements lead, by 1969, to a countercultural market for an event like "Underground Explosion"; or, this is what Hein, EXPORT, and Weibel imagined. Youths in the recovered economy of the FRG had some money to spend and were eager to experience counterculture currents of the decade in some form or other. A stadium-scaled avant-garde concert definitely had appeal—the chance for illicit meetings and potential danger drew thousands into a mostly unorganized crowd where everyone was performing a version of political commitment by way of their subcultural style. Kren's vertiginous configuration of spaces onstage and off, on-screen and off, though not the document that had been expected, captures both the breakneck acceleration at which media technologies were changing the possibilities of spectator/actor and spectator/screen relations, and the huge interest amongst publics—both those at the stadiums and, as signaled by the presence of the press, those at home—to engage with these new experiences.

127. Ibid.

128. Ibid.

Curated Programs
A Cinema of Attraction for the Nuclear Age

Two events that took place in West Germany at the end of the 1960s, both called "Underground Explosion," blurred prevalent cultural and political boundaries. One Underground Explosion was the traveling media event that Kren documented in *23/*69, which I described above. The other Underground Explosion was a curated screening program that took place in Cologne in 1968—the traveling media event Kren documented in *23/69* was named and conceived in homage to this earlier curated program. Though the two Underground Explosions shared their title and both dramatically shifted audience and screen/stage relations, the 1968 event had a much more complicated relationship to publicity. It was not an independently staged spectacle selling sex and Leftist identification as the concert in 1969 would be. Instead, it was a satellite program to the annual Art Cologne [*Köln Kunstmarkt*] organized by XSCREEN, a cultural association established in Cologne in 1968. This original Underground Explosion—the ways in which its reconfigurations of audience, screen/stage, and media worked and did not work within the context of the state-sponsored art fair—is the primary focus of this chapter. Though nominally based in film—the XSCREEN Studio for Independent *Film*—the Studio's adamant focus on noncommercial and, often, anti-institutional production was conceptually and economically distinct from the avant-garde scene around the prevailing New German Cinema (NGC) movement of the time. Unlike the NGC, the Studio's focus was not on restructuring the film market *per se*, but, instead, on creating a different market altogether—a market that opened access to the film that could not play in the movie house: documentaries and newsreels, industrial and educational film, animated and experimental shorts, and pornography. As diverse as these genres of film were, they were held together by their status as noncommercial film, that is, as film that had no market in the commercial movie house, the carefully organized theater

space for what André Gaudreault has called "institutional cinema."[129] The 1968 Underground Explosion was a carefully curated screening program at which a different cinema, an anti-institutional cinema, a "cinema of attraction for the nuclear age" appeared.

My idea of a postwar "cinema of attraction for the nuclear age" arises from an extended reading of the closing sentences of Tom Gunning's article. There, to recall, Gunning connects an early film screening event history to postwar American avant-garde film vis-à-vis Futurism and Eisenstein. I want to both clarify and complicate this lineage in the postwar moment, and, in so doing, to draw out some ideas on the "radical possibilities" to which Gunning alluded. The geopolitical situation of the period—as "the Cold War was heating up"—created a lot of friction beyond avant-gardes in the U.S.; it both underwrote the inclusionary tactics of cultural imperialism being taken up from the top down in nation-states outside of the U.S., and from the bottom up it brought under investigation institutional mechanisms across sectors (cultural, educational, political). Cutting across this struggle for power—recall the struggle to claim "democratic thinking" in the AFMC museum protest—there was the emergence of multimedia practices that circulated though underground screening events, not only in the U.S. but transnationally in response to rapid technological developments in fields of media communication and elsewhere, which were brought on by the Cold War "race" to lead the way in everything from nuclear power, to domestic appliances, to ideological worldview. At the same time, nuclear disarmament protests proliferated across the globe, as the threat of nuclear war loomed heavy on the minds of many. In this situation of radical reconfiguration moving in multiple directions, what would a cinema of attraction look like? And in what kind of a

129. André Gaudreault, *Film and Attraction: From Kinematography to Cinema*, translated by Tim Barnard (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

framework, or frameworks, could it circulate? What, in other words, could a cinema of attraction in the nuclear age even be?

Much has been written on the political and aesthetic work of the West German Fluxus group led by Wolf Vostell in Düsseldorf in the 1960s, as well on the dynamism of Cologne media institutions like the Westdeutsch Rundfunk or the gallery market scene built up around the art fair.[130] But relatively little attention has been given to the XSCREEN Studio that was also in Cologne and established a form of curated program and underground convening still operative today. Their network was vast, including the organizers of the 1969 concert, alongside Birgit Hein, Kurt Kren, and many others whose practices have become synonymous with avant-garde art and film: Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, ShirleyClarke, Tony Conrad, Jean Genet, Takahiko Iimura, the Kuchar brothers, Gregory Markopoulos, Werner Nekes and Dore O., Paul Sharits, and Jack Smith, to name just a few.[131] Underground Explosion was novel in its form, and through its form, forcefully foregrounded questions about the intersections and collisions of aesthetic and spatial, political, economic and social interests. Such attention to form(s) gave the Studio and its convenings a distinctive underground character, which openly differed from other undergrounds operative at the time—"underground" at XSCREEN was a matter of redefining

130. Wilhelm Hein made frequent comparison to Fluxus when recounting his memories of XSCREEN and the experimental film scene of the time; Hein in conversation with the author, June 8, 2017. For more on Wolf Vostell and Fluxus activities in Düsseldorf, see René Block, ed. *Eine Geschichte mit vielen Knoten: Fluxus in Deutschland 1962–1994* (Stuttgart: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 1994); and Andrew Weiner, "Memory Under Reconstruction: Politics and Event in Wirtschaftwunder West Germany," *Grey Room* 37 (Fall 2009): 94–124. The Cologne gallery scene has received much less attention on its own outside of monographic studies on Polke, Höfer, and others who worked within it; for a more general overview, see Daniel Birnbaum, "Ripening on the Rhine: The Cologne Art World of the '80s," *Artforum* 41, no.7 (March 2003); and Renate Goldmann et al., "Cologne: Inside Out," *Frieze*, February 8, 2013, https://frieze.com/article/cologne-inside-out.

131. Very recently some scholarship has begun to appear; see Randall Halle, "Xscreen1968: Material Film Aesthetics and Radical Cinema Politics," *A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 10, no 1 (2017) 10–25; and Anna Schober, "Cinema as Political Movement in Democratic and Totalitarian Societies since the 1960s," in *Public Spheres After Socialism: Between Contestation and Reconciliation*, edited by Angela Harutyunyan et al. (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2009), 39–62.

what a screening event could be, how noncommercial and anti-institutional cinema could be seen, and how or where networks like theirs might use the ideological schisms of the state and commercial markets to pry open space for new kinds of cinema practices.

The conditions from which it arose give moment to pause and take stock of how to situate understandings of "the underground" and its relations to "the state," and moreover, how to situate understandings of "the underground event." In tracking the 1968 convening, as well as the support structures that held the Studio and its programs together, this chapter offers a framework for event analysis that foregrounds the deep dependence of the experimental media event form and the curated program on the complicated sets of negations and alliances from which they emerged. Implications, impacts, and impasses abound. If the events like the Destruction in Art Symposium in 1966 or the filmmakers' cooperatives that sprung across Europe throughout the 1960s had helped to establish experimental art and film networks, the XSCREEN Studio in Cologne used those networks to convene various kinds of curated programs over its four years of existence. While toggling between "official strategies" and "grassroots mobilization"[132] is a strategy I have previously examined, in this chapter I take it up more directly, moving from the festival network to more acutely focused and embedded convenings. Here the emphasis is on the curated program as event form and, especially, the material and contextual connections between the underground and the state that played out in the organization of such programs long before transitions in the museum rendered media events—from film installations, to curated screening programs—ubiquitous. While such programs were precursors to the later time-based exhibitionary event form discussed in the next chapter, the following pages show just how different these embedded convenings were from those events that would become standard in the

132. This "toggling between" has been examined by Anna Schober in her "Cinema as Political Movement in Democratic and Totalitarian Societies since the 1960s."

art world; they were highly unusual and in defiance of customs and laws. As such, the XSCREEN's screenings sat in uneasy relation to the state and to commercial markets, both in film and in art. In this tacit "between" position, the screenings reflect the deep entanglements of experimental and normative cultures, and the extent to which the state's propagation of free expression was built upon an implicit desire to control public cultures in the FRG. The result of these precarious co-imbrications: various political battles ensued—particularly around censorship and charges of distribution of "obscene imagery"—and incisive critiques of state and market power emerged.

Throughout the 1960s conflicts between an inward facing concern with establishing a new national identity and an outward facing interest in building cultural capital on the world stage caused schisms in the West German state. The "cracks" opened up by these conflicts of priority allowed brief moments of possibility for the XSCREEN's underground to use the economic support of the state—cracks that were often closed by force of law. For four years in Cologne the Studio set up a regular screening in a theater afforded through a state rent-subsidy and advertised in the local newspapers. Their Underground Explosion in 1968 was a city-supported satellite event to the Cologne Art Fair. Despite this municipal backing, the program was shut down by law enforcement, sparking protests led by both artist activists and student groups. The event scandalized the West German public, making headlines for its brazen, "explosive" surfacing of underground film activity—"das Underground drängt nach oben" [the underground pushes up] one headline proclaimed.[133] Though numerous photographs circulated in mainstream press of the protests, which resulted from the screening program's premature closure, below I focus on a single documentary photograph of the projection booth area at

133. Enno Patalas, "Das Underground drängt nach oben," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, November 21, 1968, box 4, folder "Propaganda (c. 1967–70)," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

Underground Explosion. This photograph did not circulate; it was a document created by participants to record their own environment, their own community space. Taken by an anonymous participant, the photograph opens out onto the ways in which the elements of audience arena and stage/screen became irrevocably blurred at XSCREEN's convenings. The crammed screening space captured in the photograph evokes an image of an alternative movie house, which openly differs from the space of the commercial theater. Only the press box was kept at bay—above ground as it were—to be engaged once the crowd was moved to the streets. This scene is a visualization of the kind of the XSCREEN convening space, capturing perhaps the most potent critique that the network offered forth: its very ability to grow and move and thrive in the subterranean cracks of the city and the art market.

Such lived critiques also extended beyond the aesthetic programs in screening space and into living space. As had been the case in the Viennese context in chapter 1, communal living experiments were part of the everyday environment in Cologne. In the XSCREEN network, collaborators lived together, traveled together, and produced works in conversation with one another over the dinner table. A suite of travel photographs and home movies of the XSCREEN network's activities from the late 1960s and early 1970s shows just how deeply aesthetic relations and social relations were being integrated. From a camping trip, to an impromptu lecture outside the National Film Theater in London, the "offscreen" images of the XSCREEN network draws attention to the importance of daily practices of convening communities around experimental film. Practices of maintenance, of making, and of maneuvering were crucial in an underground network defined as much by its precarious support from the state and its clandestine practices of distribution and exhibition, as by its communal meals and shared housing. Examining these photographs and footage in the context of the XSCREEN network's public-

facing programs puts pressure on historical divisions between the private and the public; such distinctions do not in fact hold up when it comes to understanding the form the curated program would take in the XSCREEN network. As already mentioned, the very ability to grow, move, and thrive was one of the most potent critiques that the programs offered forth. Such convenings, it turned out, were aesthetic and spatial, political, economic, and social.

At the end of the chapter I return to Kren's films, looking to the next work made after *23/69 Underground Explosion*. Kren's representation of a representation of a representation in *24/70 Western* returns focus to the political stage upon which curated programs at underground convenings were taking place. *24/70* methodically records representations of the violent realities of imperialist war underpinning Western nation-states claims to power. It does so by looking to the media—that is, to the publicity of the press box—which recorded and reported on such world events. Turning his camera around toward such violence without a clear propagandistic aim, as most documentary political films and newsreels would have had, Kren suspended identification. That gesture of suspension was also performed through the form of the curated programs pioneered in the XSCREEN network's underground. The various ways that these convenings became integrated into everyday life, as the chapter outlines, resuscitated an orientation to revolutionary systemic change based in negation as much as alliance, legibility as much as visibility, action as much as representation.

Setting Up the XSCREEN Studio
Underground Attitudes and Infrastructures

In March 1968, a newly formed West German cultural association [*Vereinigung*] called the XSCREEN Cologne Studio for Independent Film [Kölner Studio für unabhangigen Film]

was established by a group of 13 critics, artists, and filmmakers based in Cologne. After its founding the group quickly dropped down to five members, including critics Hans-Peter Kochenrath, Christian Michelis, and Rolf Wiest, as well as the filmmaker duo Wilhelm and Birgit Hein. It was a coalition of different stakeholders in the realm of experimental film who worked together to create more access to noncommercial and anti-institutional cinema.[134] In a leaflet penned by Michelis in 1968, the critic declares, "we must change the structures of the museum from the ground up and, at the same time, we must develop other forms of reception and confrontation."[135] Such a development of different forms of reception and confrontation was in large the project of XSCREEN.

This began with the organization of the Studio itself, which was from its start a state-registered association. Though not providing financial subsidy, this status did nominally offer important protections from censorship. As an association with dues-paying members (2-3DM) and a membership list, it could hold free screenings that flew under the radar, so to speak, of authorities. The institutional edifice created some freedom to show works that would otherwise have been in violation of §184 in the FRG's Basic Law [*Grundgesetz*], which details the prohibitions against distribution of pornography, giving special focus to public film showings' profit motives and especially to *whom* is in the audience.[136] Even still, as I discuss below, in Cologne and elsewhere convenings associated with XSCREEN's network were shut down by law enforcement and those responsible for the program arrested. The "association" status also

134. Statement for the Cologne Studio for Independent Film, box 4, folder "XSCREEN," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

135. "Wir müssen die Struktur des Museums von Grund auf verändern; und wir müssen gleichzeitig andere Formen der Rezeption und Kronfrontation entwickeln." Text signed by Michelis and included in *XSCREEN: Materialien über den Underground-film*, 120.

136. For the full version of Section 184, see https://www.gesetze-im internet.de/englisch_stgb/englisch_stgb.html.

gave leeway as to the programming mission, which was incredibly diverse. The Studio's screening programs were an experiment in combinations—of film genres, audiences, funding mechanisms, aesthetics, and politics—devoted to regular monthly explorations of "the possibilities of the medium of film and of the horizon of the public."[137] Building an audience for new explorations in film form and production outside of institutional cinema was a shared concern across groups active at the time—the Studio's commitment to this "new horizon" in their founding manifesto reflected wider efforts across the continent. From the beginning, however, XSCREEN stood apart from many other groups operating within the international art film networks. Their convenings had an attitude and orientation to critique, which, as Weibel articulated, was in the spirit of Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. Second, and by extension, the Studio diverged in its approaches to convening, including the emphasis it placed on regular media visibility beyond spectacular headlines, and its commitment to routine screenings of mixed programs.

Mode of Critique

XSCREEN's attitude to film, to the movie house, and to critique was made clear at its first convening in March 1968. The premiere screening event was of Viennese experimental projects by four Austrian filmmakers who would later that year go on to cofound the AFMC in Vienna (see chapter 1)—Kurt Kren, Ernst Schmidt Jr., Hans Scheugl, and Peter Weibel. The Studio's founding members knew immediately that the work of the Viennese scene would comprise the first program. It would set the tone.[138] In particular, the intensely kinetic experience

137. "die Möglichkeiten des Mediums Film und der Horizon des Publikums." See the XSCREEN Manifesto, Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

138. From conversation with the author, April 2017.

of watching Kren's infamous Action films sold out the theater, prompting the XSCREEN organizers to add a second night to the program. It also sold out. The pulsating rapid montage of the Action films released into the movie house a flurry of energy described in the press as a "turbulent mixture of cinema and action."[139] The mixture of cinema and action that Kren and his Viennese cohort brought forth was one that combined a "[literal] shit show, technical non-proficiency, and the attempts of a Happening."[140] The raucousness of the program, from Kren's hard and fast cuts, to Weibel's aggressively theatrical provocations, refused the standards of a seamless screen experience. Spectators, instead, were met with the challenge of engaging with a different kind of screening site, which unraveled the protocols of passive spectatorship.[141] The AFMC demonstrations discussed in chapter 1 proved crucial to understanding the XSCREEN Studio's orientation to critique offered forth at this first convening and across their programming work. Like the AFMC, the Studio took up an Adornian orientation to the critical work of culture, working consistently through acts of negation that pressed up against what was believed to be "cinema" by turning over again and again the question of form.

The first set of the negations was political: in the XSCREEN Studio, political identity was figured as non-identity against the ground of not fascism, not state socialism, and not *quite* liberal democratic capitalism. Preeminent in the Studio, as was the case for many in West

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139. "Underground Film im Köln." *Film-Dienst*, April 2, 1968, box 4, folder 2 "XSCREEN," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

140. Ibid.

141. For analyses of different alternative spectatorship models, see Andrew Uroskie, "Siting Cinema" in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, edited by Tanyan Leighton, 386–400 (London: Tate Publishing, 2008); Julia Bryan-Wilson, "'Out to See Video: EZTV's Queer Microcinema in West Hollywood," *Grey Room* 56 (Summer 2014): 56–89; and David E. James, "Introduction," in *Alternative Projections: Experimental Film in Los Angeles, 1945–1980*, edited by David E. James and Adam Hyman, eds., 3–22 (New Barnet, UK: John Libbey Publishing, 2015).

Germany, was what such identities offered in terms of market access. With the so-called "economic miracle" [*Wirtschaftswunder*], the FRG had emerged out of the 1950s Reconstruction era transformed under the fiscal recovery program led by Konrad Adenauer and his conservative Christian Democrat (CDU) administration. This produced a certain kind of state character oriented around markets. As historian Mark Spicka has persuasively argued, "economics, to a large extent, became the basis for a new West German identity…its citizens identified with the economic benefits of the Federal Republic of Germany rather than with any political institutions or traditions."[142] The market-led political sphere was intertwined with shifts in the cultural sphere, which became increasingly Western-oriented, or "Americanized," and moved away from the state's historical geopolitical position as Central European. Alongside internal shifts brought about by this reorientation, tensions with the FRG's "eastern" counterpart, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), peaked.[143] The completion of the Berlin Wall in 1961 spatially registered this tension, marking the "hot" start of the Cold War in Germany. In West Germany liberal ideals were crucial in the propagation of the new (West) German state system. Following the U.S. model but under a social market economy, the FRG sold itself on ideals of "freedom of choice," which were carefully linked to the ability of the liberal democratic nation-state to provide best (or, at least, better than state socialism) for its citizens.[144] Under this rubric, all sorts

142. Mark E. Spicka, *Selling the Economic Miracle: Economic Reconstruction and Politics in West Germany, 1949–1957* (New York: Berghahn Books 2007), 3.

143. Though economically the Marshall Plan aid was modest, the cultural and commercial links it helped to secure across the European continent were game changing. See (among others): Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); and Michael Holm, *The Marshall Plan: A New Deal for Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

144. By looking at intersectional issues of race and gender within the political economies of nation-state building Heide Fehrenbach, Elizabeth Heineman, Dagmar Herzog, and Uta Poiger have each contributed significantly to my understandings of German cultural history as outlined here. See especially Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity After Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Heineman, *Before Porn Was Legal: The Erotica Empire of Beate Uhse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Mortality in Twentieth Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton

of things, from sexual relations and familial structures, to communication technologies, media access, and urban planning, were being carefully re-organized around a rhetoric of democratic choice, which a liberal-based, freedom-of-individual-choice consumerism was to offer.

The FRG's shake-ups and shifts in national identity brought about by these rapid transformations were also contoured from without, by the critiques and claims of decolonialist, socialist, and communist struggles happening around the world.[145] As in many nation-states through the Cold War period, in the FRG art and culture was a useful tool through which to perform postwar, "international" cultural openness—to enact, in other words, the ways in which the West German state was a "free" and "equal" nation in order to affirm its global position and, thus, its democratic identity.[146] While XSCREEN put pressure on this newly forming idea of West German subjecthood and identity—pushing up against official positions on sex, family, communication, media, and urban space—they did not do so as members of a kind of cultural wing within the New Left student movement. Although tentatively connected to such groups, the Studio remained distant from explicitly Leftist programmatic agendas, which they felt relied on old standards of cinema even as they agitated for new forms of politics. As Hein wrote in her

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University Press, 2007); and Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

145. In the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, the local newspaper in Cologne, weekly announcements for XSCREEN programming line-ups were routinely printed alongside reports on decolonialist struggles in Africa and Southeast Asia; see "Propaganda" folders, Hein Papers, Archiv der Avantgarden, SKD. Also see Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global 60s: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962–1978* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

146. There exists a large amount of literature on the connections between the CIA and Abstract Expressionism, which keys us into the ways that art and state were to be linked through the Cold War period. For an overview on this situation in the United States, see, for instance, Gabriel Rockhill's chapter "The Politicity of 'Apolitical' Art: A Pragmatic Intervention into the Arts of the Cold War" in *Radical History & the Politics of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). Conversely, however, relatively little analytic work has been done on the joint US-FRG support of experimental art as propaganda tool in European Cold War politics, specifically within the divided German. The role, for instance, of initiatives like the Berliner Künstlerprogramm in cultivating cultural diplomacy (bringing internationally recognized US American art world figures like Yvonne Rainer, Allan Kaprow, and Nam June Paik to West Germany on the dime of the US and West German governments) is well-known but understudied.

1971 *Film im Underground*: "Experimental films cannot be easily incorporated into the existing social order as can political films that move entirely within familiar convention."[147] Experimental film and the other kinds of noncommercial and anti-institutional film with which it circulated demanded different kinds of spectatorship—not just different attention spans or different politicized gazes, but different orientations to the ideological value of moving images and to the relationship between spectators and screen. Given the constitutively tentative infrastructural situation—working between competing agendas as they did—programming was consistently and almost willfully at times ambiguous in terms of its scales of convening and of its "list of demands," or end goals. Programs like Underground Explosion intentionally worked against direct alliances with the commercial market economy, the state political economy, *and* activist political groups; instead it worked between all of them. Because at the Studio there was a shared belief that new forms of politics required new standards for cinema—a "new horizon of the public"—both by way of a new film language and of changed screening conditions. As Birgit Hein has recalled, the focus at XSCREEN was "on programs, not programmatic agendas."[148] The curated program, in other words, *was* the politic. XSCREEN, in other words, explicitly positioned itself against both state and commercial markets in the form and format of its programs.

This belief in the program was also what made the Studio distinct from the NGC movement within the German film industry. Their focus on the program was paramount to another set of negations, which had to do with film aesthetics and economies of cinema. In *Film im Underground* Birgit Hein described the situation as such:

147. Heidenreich et al., eds., *Film als Idee: Birgit Hein's Texts on Art and Film*, edited and translated by Nanna Heidenreich et al., 235–270 (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2016), 259.

148. From interview with author, January 16, 2017.

> Underground film is the latest, least well-established art form in our time. Since it cannot be easily exploited commercially, it still has no market behind it (like, for instance, the book market or art market), which could secure a place for it in the official business of culture. […] *But this also means that it is not yet dependent on the official business of culture*, at least for the time being, since scandals such as confiscation, police actions, and resignations from festivals have given it the necessary publicity over the last few years to get enough spectators for regular screenings of films. […] This economic outsider position justifies the term [underground] derived from the political situation.[149]

The three elements presented in Kren's *23/69* appear here in Hein's analysis as well: the audience, the screen/stage, and publicity. Each is dependent, as Hein points out, upon a market place. The underground as she identifies it in this text from 1971—and as was understood in the XSCREEN network from its beginnings in 1968—had to do with an economic position in the FRG's social market economy. This affected and perhaps even determined its cultural position, its political position, and its legal position. For as groundbreaking as the 1962 Oberhausen Manifesto had been for German film history, with its calls for "freedom from the conventions of the established industry [,] freedom from the outside influence of commercial partners [, and] freedom from the control of special interest groups."[150] they only briefly produced viable channels for state-funded experimentation.[151] Moreover, the NGC movement that came out of

149. Birgit Hein, "Film in Underground" reprinted and translated in Heidenreich et al., eds., *Film als Idee*, 236.

150. "The Oberhausen Manifesto," in *German Essays on Film*, edited by Alison Guenther-Pal and Richard McCormick, 201–202 (New York: Continuum, 2004), 201. For an overview of the economic situation and attendant aesthetic parameters of the New German Cinema, see Thomas Elsaesser, "The Old, the Young and the New: Commerce, Art Cinema and *Autorenfilm*?" in *New German Cinema: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989). Alexander Kluge in particular worked also to effect change in the television culture, but this also was within the boundaries of set industry models.

151. The critiques of the young German filmmakers, which coincided with the collapse of the state's film industry at the end of the 1950s, resulted in new opportunities and the opening up economic space for different models of filmmaking. For a few years there existed a Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film, which was given five million German marks (just over three million US dollars) by the state to distribute to young and emerging filmmakers over a three-year period. See Stephen Brockmann, *A Critical History of German Film* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010); and Knut Hickethier, "The Restructuring of the West German Film Industry" in *Framing the 1950s: Cinema in a Divided Germany*, edited by John E. Davidson and Sabine Hacke, 194–209 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

the manifest placed emphasis on the feature length film, which left no room for filmmakers working in short film outside of—and without aspiration to—an institutional cinema production model, or an industry model more broadly.[152] For Hein, NGC, like French New Wave, maintained all the formal conventions of institutional cinema, intervening, instead, into narrative form. Underneath and alongside aesthetic battles over efficacy of cinema's "radical potential,"[153] which centered on issues of length, narrativity, acting, and so forth, there was a larger war being waged over funding structures and the organization of film's screening economies, of its market motions, and, most fundamentally, over the sets of social relations that "cinema" *could* and *should* foster.[154]

Everyday Visibility and Access

These multiple and simultaneous sets of negations—which had led to the early demise of the AFMC—were in Cologne tempered by the Studio's deep commitments to building infrastructural supports. Even as they were incredibly provocative, XSCREEN convenings were also carefully composed programs buttressed by media and material consistencies. Establishing these supports was a task primarily undertaken by Rolf Wiest and Birgit Hein. Wiest lead the

152. As Brockman states: "short film has become in Germany a school and experimental basis for the feature film." Ibid., 202.

153. Such debates are exemplified in the U.S./British context Michelson/Youngblood dialectic. See Annette Michelson, "Film the Radical Aspiration" (1966), in *Film Culture Reader*, edited by P. Adams (New York: Coopers Square Press, 2000); Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton, 1970); and Peter Wollen, "The Two Avant-Gardes" *Studio International* (November/December, 1975). For more on the Oberhausen Manifesto, see Catherine Foweler, ed., *The European Cinema Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002). And finally, for more on the distribution end of this discussion, see Ramon Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema: Mapping Informal Film Distribution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

154. As historian Heide Fehrenbach has suggested, cinema has always remained dangerous for the state because "despite its merits for fostering citizen loyalty and national identity," it has also always engaged with erotics and fantasy in incontrollable ways. See Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity After Hitler*.

charge in securing screening locations; and Hein submitted the weekly programming listings to the local newspaper, the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*. She also worked with her partner Wilhelm to paper the city's civic and commercial spaces, like U-Bahn stops and shop windows, with posters for the upcoming programs. The do-it-yourself advertising lacked any sleek marketing design; instead, the hastily handwritten signs bluntly conveyed details of the convenings' times, days, and locations. The lack of imagery in the posters, whether intentionally or not, reinforced the underground, do-it-yourself nature of the material. As the Studio's founding manifesto stated: "a fixed system of production, distribution and screening of commercial films, sanctioned by state institutions, has patronized and manipulated the public for years [..., and] the possibilities of the film medium and the horizon of the audience are narrowed by the industrial apparatus in a catastrophic manner."[155] In their wheat-pasted posters and elsewhere the Studio sought to offer alternatives to state-sanctioned commercial markets; and they knew that such alternatives had to have media visibility—publicity and the attention of the press box was vital. Along with the street posters and weekly newspaper listings, a flurry of other print materials were also produced: XSCREEN members Kochenrath, Wiest, Michelis, and Hein continued to pen previews and reviews of programs in the North Rhine-Westphalia press; and they began to join efforts with others in the underground like Swiss filmmaker Klaus Schönherr who established the trans-European journal *Supervisuell* as a round-up of field reports for activities happening across the continent.

Such media visibility only worked, though, if it was founded upon an everyday practice. The XSCREEN's regular screenings became known throughout the international experimental film scene, as well as throughout underground youth cultures across the FRG, as a space for

155. Statement for the Cologne Studio for Independent Film, box 4, folder "XSCREEN," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. Translation by the author.

performing—that is, for convening, for screening, for sharing ideas and space—differently. In the beginning, convenings happened in rented theaters as monthly midnight screenings because this was the cheapest available option. By the end of 1968 the demand for more convenings would lead them to begin weekly screenings. This weekly schedule would continue nearly uninterrupted for the next three years, eventually moving into a regular space rented with support from the city for a secured, low rent lease. They were in many ways a forerunner to the communal cinema movement [*kommunales Kino*], which flourished in cities and towns across the FRG in the 1970s. [156] Lacking the funding that later fueled the development of communal cinemas, XSCREEN relied both on membership fees from event attendees—part of its status as a *Vereinegung*—and other means. Because the fees were never really adequate to pay for the venture, the group offset the remaining costs of the running Studio by illegally obtaining and then illegally screening hardcore pornography smuggled in from the Scandinavian countries. One porn film would be screened per week in a mixed program that also included educational and industrial film, avant-garde shorts, animation film, and, importantly for Birgit Hein, documentary—from footage of the Vietnam War, to Weimar period Berlin Leftist films from Germany's political film tradition.[157] Once again, it was the institutional edifice that made this possible; because the porn films were slipped into diverse programs and because the group's status as cultural association limited scrutiny by authorities, XSCREEN could often get away with it, though not always. On several occasions, police intervention ended screenings early, but because the organizers were careful—storing porn reels in other canisters, for instance—few

156. See, for instance, "Kein Kommunales Kino in Köln," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, November 19, 1971, box 4, folder "XSCREEN," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden; Hein also discusses this communal cinema movement in a later interview with Mike Hohlboom, "We Are All Monsters: An Interview with Birgit Hein," *The Independent Eye* (1989): 7–12.

157. Hein in conversation with the author, January 16, 2017.

arrests at the regular screenings were ever made. It was also the sheer regularity of the screenings that delimited this kind of intervention. The Studio's first monthly and then weekly screening events brought underground cinema into an everyday schedule. If one could not make it to the theater this week, then there would always be another program next week. A network was able to develop through the regularity—the everyday, or at least weekly, presence—of the screening events. It was a stable site for convening. Rather than relying only upon the spectacular conditions of a festival or a fair (though those sites were also utilized), the programs could be integrated into the practice of daily life by a range of different kinds of people, ensuring a steady flow of audience interest.

Mixed programming was in particular a feature of XSCREEN. Unlike the cooperatives of the time that tended to encourage single filmmaker screening programs, the Studio embraced combinations and juxtapositions.[158] In so doing, it created a mixed-used space out of the theater, bringing together people from very different sectors, both within the arts and outside. Scientists, for instance, might show up for screenings of certain educational and industrial films and stay for the experimental abstract shorts, or, maybe, youths interested in the porn could also be exposed to films on steel production or Weimar-period political films.[159] The notion of underground that XSCREEN followed, thus, was not specifically about pornography or sexually explicitly material, though that was certainly a part of it and brought police intervention on multiple occasions. The spectacles produced in such overt clashes with the legal apparatus was a key part of the Studio's critical/political work without doubt, but to focus on this alone would risk

158. In its rental directives, the FMC New York's distribution catalog, for instance, suggested, "whenever it is possible, you should prepare programs devoted to one particular filmmaker…films of a particular director can be properly understood and enjoyed only in the larger context of his work." See the first distribution catalog, Filmmakers' Cooperative Archive, New York.

159. By the end of 1972, once pornography was fully legalized in the FRG, however, the problem shifted from state censorship to private lawsuits from porn theater owners wanting sole rights for the distribution of porn films.

backgrounding other significant dimensions of the Studio's intervention. Open defiance was always a means and not the end—a means to financially ensuring the life of the group and to building underground community. Because at XCSREEN, the underground included any kind of film shut out of the commercial mainstream system, its convenings were also a site for formations of community where different kinds of social relations developed. Promoting the underground as they did was a matter of bringing more visibility and legibility to all of the cultural production happening outside of institutional cinema—including spheres whose goals were not always in tandem. This created complex political situations where it was not always clear who was an ally and who was adversary. Such complexities became explosively apparent in the more publicized programs that XSCREEN convened, like Underground Explosion.

"The Underground Pushes Up"[160]
The XSCREEN Program at Art Cologne, October 1968

In October 1968 in Cologne an estimated seven hundred people gathered in an officially closed subway station for a curated screening program. Two slightly different versions of a photograph of the projection booth have come to stand as a primary document of the event, appearing at the time in newspaper coverage of the scandal that ensued, and later as general historical evidence of the era's underground scenes. In the photograph, the makeshift projection booth, which consisted of two narrow tables set perpendicular to one another, is emphatically central. Crowds of people encircle it. They are sitting on chairs, huddling on the floor, standing, and perched atop chairs craning to see the projection screen from the back. They find space wherever they can. For as packed as it is though, everyone is making sure not to cast their

160. Patalas, "Das Underground drängt nach oben."

shadow and block the path of the four 16mm projectors set up on one of the tables.[161] The spools on three of projectors are in use and one sits empty. Film canisters sit neatly stacked on the adjoining table, waiting. Three people sit behind the projectors, two lean in to talk while the third leans away from them, staring intently at the screen with his mouth slightly agape and right arm gently resting on the canisters. The three sit separate, part of the booth-screen assembly, rather than part of the audience; yet they are in the middle of this crowd. The booth, the lightcone, and the screen are in the middle of the crowd.

Other images of Underground Explosion document the specific performances and activities in the program—the installation of performance document photographs along the walls, for instance, or the stage space of the experimental music sets. Yet this photograph focuses on the projection booth, not the screen, nor the content of the film being projected. The booth, though usually unseen, is a central feature of the cinematic apparatus. In institutional movie houses projector sit in a booth at the back of the theater, their presence hidden from the captivated spectators who are to be dazzled by the illusions to which it—the projector—gives light. The reminder of its presence broke the illusion of another world for those at the screening, tethering the material reality of the screen to the bodies of the spectators and undoing the strict organization of the cinematic apparatus. The presence of the projector in Expanded Cinema experiments is well documented,[162] but this projection booth photograph extends beyond the individual artist or filmmaker project. It is the booth for a whole program that was, as the event's

161. German Siemens 2000 models with one possible silent 16mm projector.

162. Numerous recent studies have explored Expanded Cinema projects since the breakthrough 2009 *Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film* exhibition and accompanying catalogue: A.L. Rees et al., eds., *Expanded Cinema: Art Performance Film*. Andrew Uroskie in particular has written extensively on site and the spatial logic of the Expanded Cinema installation. See Uroskie, "Siting Cinema" in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*; as well as his full-length study *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Postwar Art*.

schedule states, nonstop.[163] Screenings of films from Kenneth Anger, Robert Beavers, Werner Nekes, Shirley Clarke, and others were interspersed with literary readings from Hans Werner Bierhoff, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, Renate Rasp, and Fred Viebahn, and with daily "beat and light shows" from the collective, The Noah's Arc. Beer, sausage, and soda were available throughout the nights. The booth was always in operation, whether rolling film or providing light for the readings or beat and light shows happening on the improvised stage space in front of the screen. There was an economy of means at work, which enfolded audience space with stage and screen, making those in the audience into screening *attendees* who, no longer only *spectators*, were acutely aware of the space their bodies occupied, gathered around the projector like campers around the fire pit.

Exhibitionary event cultures like the one that supported this convening in October 1968 played a crucial role in the rebuilding of West German cultural life. Not only was there a massive influx of Anglophone materials at the time, from mini-skirts to the music of The Beatles, but there were also art and film scenes—like Fluxus in Düsseldorf or NGC in Berlin and Munich—within the FRG that were re-emerging, absorbing outside influences and forging new ideas and avant-garde strategies. Given that XSCREEN remained mostly separate from the narrative preoccupations and economic models of New German Cinema and institutional cinema more broadly, their programs appeared regularly in the realm of the visual arts where mixed media experiments proliferated. These investigations were often time- and installation-based, working between action, performance, painting, sculpture, and moving image. This exploratory situation, much recounted in the histories of contemporary art, in the context of the FRG created numerous opportunities for noncommercial and anti-institutional filmmakers to work and exhibit alongside

163. See the Event Program, box 4, folder "XSCREEN," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

their counterparts in art. They were able to do so because, at the same time, the international art market was being actively re-established in the state in order to jumpstart cultural exchange after World War II and the expulsion of avant-garde practice. Accordingly, several high visibility exhibition events—and civic funding streams—were established. These events were intended to bring foreign work back into the country and, importantly, to showcase domestic artistic innovation. The first of these events was documenta, the quinquennial 100-day art exhibition founded in the small town of Kassel in 1955 amidst the wreckage of the war (see chapter 3), which was intended to serve as a highly visible foil to the German art exhibitions being staged in the FRG's counterpart, the GDR. Documenta became a place-making model for other cities in the FRG looking to raise their visibility on the national and international stages. One such event was Art Cologne, which began in 1967. At the time, Cologne was a site of heavy industry in the West German state, and a lot of money was flowing into the city domestically as well as from United States postwar aid. This economic situation was coupled with a progressive cultural atmosphere, which in those critical years at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 70s allowed for—even invited—political-critical projects like XSCREEN to develop.[164] Such projects were able to happen with relatively stable acceptance from the Social Democrats (SPD) who dominated the municipal government, in contrast to the centrist-conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) that controlled the federal administration. Drawing on the example of documenta, the fair was envisaged by gallerists who came together as an association [Vereinigung] as a way to draw critical attention and financial interest to the North Rhine-Westphalia urban center. The gallerists' negotiated with SPD members of the Cologne

164. This cultural situation was also the case in Düsseldorf where the West German Fluxus movement flourished. The similar electoral situations in the two cities are what led to the friendly rivalry that emerged by the end of the 1960s. It is significant that throughout the 1970s the art fair moved between the two before settling once again in Cologne in the early 1980s where it remains today.

Department of Cultural Affairs, led by Dr. Kurt Hackenberg, to host the fair in the city. They were successful drawing over fifteen thousand visitors in 1967, its first year.[165] The expansion into "alternative programming" in the second year was prompted by the shared desire of the gallerists and the city to compete with Düsseldorf as *the* cultural destination in the region.[166]

The "first modern art fair," as Art Cologne has since been called, brought experimental cultures like that of XSCREEN together with an overtly commercial market.[167] The city officials who invited the Studio recognized the advantages of folding experimental cinema activities into the visual arts fair alongside other avant-garde projects. That year also featured numerous Happening performance activities and environment installations from recognizable art world figures like Joseph Beuys (whose work would be the first by a German artist to sell for over 100,000DM at the fair) and Allan Kaprow.[168] It was in this context, as parallel programming, that XSCREEN's Underground Explosion program was scheduled to happen October 15–19, 1968 in a newly renovated—and still not open to the public—subway station, the Neumarkt U-Bahnhof, which had entrances opening out onto the *Kunsthalle* (the site of the fair) as well as the adjacent *Volkshochschule*. Just as the city recognized the advantages of including this kind of "alternative" programming into its commercial collaborations, the Studio knew well the benefits of using the resources provided by the city and their sponsorship of the spectacular commercial

165. See "Kunstmarkt Köln 1967," *Artblog Cologne*, April 7, 2016, https://www.artblogcologne.com/en/from-zadik-kunstmarkt-koeln-67/; and Günter Herzog, "A History of the First Modern Art Fair: 1967–1969," http://www.artcologne.com/ART-COLOGNE/Trade-fair/History-of-ART-COLOGNE/Geschichte-ART-COLOGNE-(2).php.

166. Enno Stahl, "'Kulturkampf' in Köln: Die XSCREEN-AFFÄRE.1968" (Düsseldorf: Heinrich-Heine-Institut, 2007). The following section draws significantly on Stahl's careful reconstruction of the events that transpired at the fair that year. From 1974–1983 the two cities shared the title of host to the fair, and in 1984 it once again returned to Cologne as its exclusive site. See http://www.artcologne.com/ART-COLOGNE/Trade-fair/History-of-ART-COLOGNE/Geschichte-ART-COLOGNE-(4).php.

167. Günter Herzog, "A History of the First Modern Art Fair."

168. From interview with the author, January 16, 2017.

event—from support for installation, to publicity. For these reasons the Studio temporarily aligned with state and commercial art spheres. Their support for the Underground Explosion program made it possible to circumvent the spatial constrictions of institutional cinema's movie houses. It also meant, though, that the Studio had to strategically succumb to other sets of limitations that came along with such proximity to the art market, including its uptake of experimentation as a marketing tactic. Then in the process of drumming up interest in a lackluster art market, the West German gallery scene took to constructing a self-image as protector and promoter of "cutting edge" artistic activity. In the end, however, they would prove to be an unreliable advocate.[169] Nonetheless, the Studio's choice to take municipal support and provisionally join the galleries allowed them to literally move into the city's infrastructural cracks vis-à-vis its underground transit network. The subway station, as any city-dweller knows, is a critical site in urban space—a kind of artery in the lifeline of the city, which allows for inhabitants to move around. And, like an artery, its constant operation below the surface makes everything possible. Spatial integration into this kind of central urban infrastructure brought XSCREEN's performance of cinema not to the surface *per se* but to the subterranean spaces and networks upon which above ground formations relied for mobility—from an official art fair to the daily commutes of the city's residents. The integration of these levels of "mobility" by Underground Explosion laid bare the overlaps between state and commercial mechanisms of distribution, and between physical and cultural movement.[170] These overlaps became increasingly visible as the nights of Underground Explosion wore on. The integration, in the end,

169. See the XSCREEN's post-event report in *XSCREEN: Materialen über den Underground-film*.

170. Examples of this abound; most recently one could look to the 2013 protests in Brazil, which demanded free public transportation and, concomitantly, greater attention to domestic cultural concerns rather than international ones, such as the states over-spending on stadiums for global sporting events. See, for instance, Alfredo Saad-Filho, "Mass Protests Under 'Left-Neoliberalism': Brazil, June–July 2013," *Critical Sociology* 39, no. 5 (2013): 657–669.

did not work out; or it worked out in unanticipated and controversy-igniting ways. As the underground pushed up by digging down, "explosions" ensued.

Night one

XSCREEN's Underground Explosion programmed its activities over the five days of the fair. Screenings and performances were to be held nightly from 6:30 p.m. until midnight. Night one, Tuesday, began with experimental shorts by the West German filmmaker Ulrich Herzog. Three works from the already legendary California-based filmmaker Kenneth Anger followed, including *Fireworks* (1947), *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), and *Scorpio Rising* (1964). The dramatic, tenebristic images in Anger's homoerotic shorts distilled elements of theatre—its use of spot lighting with vivid color gels, its costuming and props, its non-linguistic strategies of character development—into an on-screen fantasy world somewhere between mystical and softcore pornographic. Laces and leather and feathers and furs, beading and sequins, and gleaming metal surfaces, pass across the screen adorning and obscuring bodies that almost float in shallow non-spaces. Depth is derived not from the ethereal set that the androgynous and hyper-gendered figures and their objects occupy, but from the film's complex use of "trick" editing techniques, like superimposition and collage, which build space through manipulation of the film frames.[171] The feeling of clandestine rendezvous that Anger's shadowy films irradiate, was paralleled in the subway station screening space:

> The whole square in front of the *Volkshochschule* was a huge construction site. The entrance to the hall [station] went over the stairs of the Kunsthalle. It was practically only the raw concrete walls and the floor that were finished. In the track tunnels one saw down

171. For more on the aesthetics of the trick film and debates therein, see: André Gaudreault, "Theatricality, Narrativity, and Trickality: Reevaluating the Cinema of Georges Méliès," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 15, no. 3 (1987): 110–119; and Tom Gunning, "'Primitive' Cinema—A Frame Up? or the Trick's on Us," *Cinema Journal* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1989): 3–12.

> into deep dark holes. The stairs were cast, but there was no railing or sidewalls. The back of the hall was dark. We agreed to divide this part of the hall into a semicircle with partitions [borrowed] from the Wallraf-Richartz Museum. In front of that, screen and stage should be constructed. In the middle of the space a big pedestal was set up for projection, films, etc.[172]

Descending into the station, Underground Explosion attendees entered a dark, shadowy mis-en-scène. With its unadorned, unpainted, rough concrete walls and missing safety guardrails, the station captured the mysteriousness of Anger's spaces. In Cologne at the screening site these shadows were a spatialization of the city's seams, which were exposed as it remade both its public infrastructures and its public image. Attendees did not enter a fantasy world so much as they entered the "backstage" of the city in which they lived—a fantastical space all its own. This backstage, now made into front stage, intensified the reorientation of projection booth, spectator, and screen. The two reinforced one another. The geography of screening site embedded attendees into the material infrastructures of the city, and the set-up of the screening site embedded them into the material infrastructures of cinema. The subsequent reorientation of the spectator to the space of the event as an attendee was a reorientation of the stage/screen, opening up the possibility of where viewing could happen and what exactly it was one was to be viewing. One could almost imagine it as in the early days of cinema when spectators would have entered darkened screening tents at fairs or carnivals. The act of "drawing back the curtain" here was transformed into a kind of environmental installation or stage set. The close subway station entryway theatrically spatialized the "dangers" of the underground into which one was about to plunge—and with no guardrails to hold them.

172. Hoffmann and Schobert, eds., *W + B Hein: Dokumente, 1967–1985 Fotos, Briefe, Texte* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 1985), 18.

Once below, attendees were met with the prominent projection booth described above. The booth stood like a pedestal—a familiar prop from the art museum—in the middle of the room. The edges of this screening room were defined only by moveable walls, beyond which the lightless tunnels of the subway tracks far extended. To accommodate this set-up a traditional organization of seating like the theater's raked aisles had been eliminated and replaced, instead, by only a few rows of chairs—woefully inadequate to accommodate the number of spectators. Without a capacity determined by the number of seats, people piled in. All of these bodies were crammed together in the dark. They touched. The smoke from people's cigarettes created a haze filling in any empty space. This was intimate. Yet regardless of the cramped circumstances, in the projection booth photograph we see that most everyone was, like the man in the projection booth with his mouth ajar, intensely focused on the screen. From the crowd only six faces look at the camera. Two men sitting on the floor below the projectors smile. One of them lifts his upper body so as to be included in the photo. His head just barely makes it in along the bottom right edge of the composition, pushing into the extreme foreground of the image. Behind stylish frameless glasses and long sideburns his eyebrows are slightly raised and his face is lit up. With lips slightly parted his mouth opens up into a wide sheepish grin—the kind someone might have when caught in the act of doing something they are not supposed to do and are feeling a little guilty but mostly amused and aroused. The other four faces all appear decidedly more serious. A couple sitting in chairs seems almost to scowl, and two more men who stand on chairs toward the back of the crowd cross their arms against their leather coat-covered chests staring out from behind their bohemian facial hair as if they are looking through the camera. Each expression—the pleased smile, the un-amused scowl, and the intense stare—divulges that what was

happening on the screen, and in the screening space, was not (in the eyes and minds of these spectators) cinema as usual.

The threat of the "obscene" in this context exceeded the formal boundaries of what Linda Williams has described as hardcore pornography, which depends on the making visible of the penetrative sex act and the dénouement of orgasm.[173] Instead, obscenity—those things prohibited by the vague language of §184 in the Basic Law—encompassed a range of things. The "indecency" of the pornographic stretched from overt explorations of sexuality (and especially homosexual pleasure as was celebrated in Anger's films) to the "risk of exposure to racial otherness." Works like Shirley Clarke's *Portrait of Jason* (1967), which screened two nights after Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, represented this kind of risk. In the 1967 film Clarke introduced attendees to Jason, a black American gay male sex worker in New York whom the filmmaker interviewed about his life.[174] Such imagery threatened to feminize, or "soften," and to radicalize, or "harden," youth cultures.[175] On the one hand the refusal of the state's normative body politic—from the organization of theater seating that kept bodies separate (and *not* touching), to the prohibition against depictions of bodily erotics on-screen—was a feminization of bodies. With a film like Anger's *Scorpio Rising* screening at an event like Underground Explosion there was on- and offscreen risk of sensuousness and permeability. Sometimes it was drug-induced as had been the case in Kren's mescaline-induced *23/69* and

173. Linda Williams, *Hardcore: Power, Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

174. Once again, see Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*; Heineman, *Before Porn Was Legal*; Herzog, *Sex After Fascism*; and Poiger *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

175. The mutual constitutions of sexual and racial identities amongst youths in both Germanys in relation to U.S. popular culture is a primary concern in Poiger's *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*; see especially her third chapter, "Lonely Crowds and Skeptical Generations: Depoliticizing and Repoliticizing Cultural Consumption."

sometimes not. This feminization led, on the other hand, to a radicalization of the bodies involved in this sensuous experience. Exposed to that kind of way of being, it was feared, would harden their anti-institutional resolve and refusal to willingly perform subjecthood within the boundaries of national identity. Most basically, with around seven hundred people packed into a space with only two entrances and exits and no recognizable organization or order, anything could happen. This made the convening exemplar of the softening/hardening threat, and, as the range of reactions on the faces of attendees expressed, everyone in the room seemed to know it.

Night Four

Two more nights passed. The fourth night of the program, Friday, began with an open screening for which anyone could bring in 16mm, 8mm, or super 8 reels to project. Then, following a reading by poet Fred Viebahn, the night was to close with screenings of Shirley Clarke's *Portrait of Jason* (1967) and two action films from Austrian performance artist Otto Mühl. Shortly before 10:00 p.m., as *Portrait of Jason* should have been screening, around seventy police officers gather outside the subway station's two entrances, blocking them and trapping the Underground Explosion attendees underground. It was a raid. Twenty-six films were confiscated, all bags were searched, and everyone inside was rounded up as police "searched for films, young people who had missed their curfew for the nightly homecoming, and criminals."[176] Attendees without identification were detained and those with identification were cross-checked for criminal warrants. The organizers of the event from XSCREEN, as well as other "suspects," were photographed. Rolf Wiest from the Studio was taken to the station. As a newspaper report

176. Stahl, "'Kulturkampf' in Köln: Die XSCREEN-AFFÄRE. 1968."

on the raid described at the time, law enforcement "struck indiscriminately."[177] The article went on to suggest that the event and the views of the filmmakers involved had "ruptured the rules of the game of sexual repression."[178] As was the case in most Western states at the time, the sexual revolution had swept across West Germany; and, as §184 emphasized, sex on-screen and in the cinematic experience were particularly scrutinized spheres up for deliberation. Wiest's arrest at Underground Explosion was on suspicion of offense against §184 for the screening of Otto Mühl's films. Though the "shitting and pissing" of Mühl's work was on-screen, it was still, as the police report stated, "capable of injuring the modesty and morality of an impartial third party by aversion and disgust; it must therefore be regarded as unkind in the sense of §184."[179] The impact of filmic representation on subject-citizen identity construction was here taken as a given, that films entrains their spectators too obvious to even explain. The language of the official explanation thus showed how porous the division of on-screen and offscreen was in yet another regard: the eyes of the law.

There are conflicting accounts of what brought law enforcement to the event that night. Newspaper coverage at the time made mention of a gas station attendant who had been out for a walk with his friend, a detective at the Cologne police department, when they saw people entering a closed subway station. Upon further investigation, they found a screening of "shitting and pissing" underway. As a result, the police descended on the event. According to historical descriptions, however, it was concerned parents who had called into the station, worried that

177. Reproduction of Hans Georg, "Köln: Kunst = Richter," *Pardon*, undated, in *XSCREEN: Materialen über den Underground-film*, 114.

178. Ibid.

179. Police report reproduced in *XSCREEN: Materialen über den Underground-film*, 117. Translation by the author.

their 15-year-old son had gone missing from an event at the nearby *Volkshochschule*.[180] Upon looking for him the couple had come upon this event screening illicit materials in the subway station where, though they did not locate their son, they purportedly did see minors.[181] These two stories mix in the official police report, which describes the situation first beginning on the third night of the program, culminating in the raid on night four. Birgit Hein has suggested that the police intervention was actually initiated by "one of the most influential art dealers in Cologne [and was] as assault against Hackenberg…aimed at damaging his reputation because the Kunstmarkt [Art Fair Cologne] was seen as a competitor to the established art world of Cologne."[182] The gallerists had targeted XSCREEN as a means to end, mobilizing the "porn panic" across the FRG to cast suspicion onto just what might be happening in those underground nightly screenings and at the art fair that sponsored it.[183] The prevailing panic could have made such a claim not only believable but seemingly urgent. Regardless of what precipitated the raid, the spatial literalization of the underground in the subway station and its spilling over into the streets during a police raid must have been quite a jarring scene: hundreds of bodies pouring onto the street from a closed subway station during the night. It was an overflow—literally, of bodies and, culturally, of the perceived excesses of the underground scene. The triangulation of audience arena, stage/screen, and press box had been massively realigned. The audience

180. Unlike the *Gymnasium*, which trained students for higher education, the *Volkshochschule* conferred technical degrees. The difference between the two schools even more pronounced at this time, then it is today. As such, the *Volkshochschule* carried within it very real class dimensions, which would most likely have tempered accounts of the Underground Explosion event—read: poor and working class kids go to pornographic films, and this sort of behavior, or this kind of classed practice, needed to be curtailed at any cost.

181. Stahl, "'Kulturkampf' in Köln: Die XSCREEN-AFFÄRE. 1968."

182. "Interview: Gabriel Jutz with Birgit Hein," in *X-Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s*, 118–129, 121.

183. For more on this "porn panic" see especially "The Permissive Prudish State" in Heineman, *Before Porn Was Legal: The Erotica Empire of Beate Uhse*.

assembled at the subway station was reoriented and disoriented. Those gathered had physically moved down under the city, electing to participate in this derelict setting in order to get away from the FRG's veneer of civil society. In so doing they openly acted in opposition to normative West German culture, which went to great pains to make the state appear reconciled with its Nazi past. The threat of such opposition was too risky, and the Underground Explosion attendees were hastily shuttled back up to the surface—re-confined to the veneer—by police order. In the intervening period between arriving and being removed, they gathered around the projection booth, immersed not in "daydreams of cinema" on screen, but, rather, in the material conditions of the city and of cinema's apparatus.[184] The effects of this immersion and subsequent overflow were felt well beyond the subway station, exposing rifts in both the state's and the commercial market's support of experimental cinema. Though no one was found either to be underaged or to be a criminal, tickets were issued and charges were filed (which were abruptly dropped a year later). For undisclosed reasons the next morning the subway station had been closed by order of building inspectors. The Underground Explosion convening had thus come to an apparent end.

Night Five

Despite the venue closure, though, convening continued. The next night at least fifty people showed up at the subway station entrance in a protest action lead by Cologne prize-winning poet Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, whose strident critiques of "democracy" and "high culture" in his speech at the protest and in a published statement became part of a rallying call.[185]

184. See Siegfried Kracauer, "The Little Shop Girls Go to the Movies," in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, edited and translated by Thomas Y. Levin, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 291–304.

185. See Brinkmann's article, "Kunst in Köln?" reproduced in *XSCREEN: Materialen über den Underground-film*, 115.

The demonstration resulted in physical confrontations between event attendees/protestors and the police. The police action drew attention from the Association of Progressive German Art Dealers who "sharply condemn[ed] the autocratic actions of the Cologne police." As events unfolded with police and protestors demanding the release of the censored films, the gallerists joined in intermittently. On day five, Friday, the fair opened in the morning, but booths were closed by the afternoon in protest of the police censorship—because, as gallerist Otto van de Loo (head of the progressive art gallerist's association) stated, "this police action was not directed exclusively against XSCREEN, but against the progressive art in general and the art fair in particular as a forum for this progressive art."[186] Despite this action on Friday and accompanying calls to shut down the art fair in solidarity and even to move the event to another city, by Saturday morning, the gallery booths were opened again. For its final day the gallerist opted re-open the fair, setting aside a two-hour block of time in the afternoon for booths to close and for debate between the gallerists and demonstrators to be incorporated art fair's forum. The record attendance and sales achieved at the fair had persuaded the gallerists to stay. Likewise, the support of the state—or at least, the city's Department of Cultural Affairs—was also fleeting. In the wake of the protests that followed the demonstration on the fifth night, SPD city council member Kurt Hackenberg defended the police censorship. Though Hackenberg had been the one who initially supported the Studio and had sponsored their invitation to the fair, with his political career possibly at risk, he came out to protest with megaphone to denounce the indecency of the films that had been screened and to proclaim:

> The action of the police is absolutely okay! The permanent cultural revolution adamantly demands to be productive creativity. Efficient productive creativity [in the service of] progress [however] is only in: science, medicine, and engineering. Legitimate also is

186. From "Protokoll einer Polizeiaktion gegen die progressive Kunst" reproduced in *XSCREEN: Materialen über den Underground-film*, 116.

> sociology, if it brings with it realizable proposals for the permanent improvement of the form of human society. Man distinguishes himself from mammals only through his creative ability to reason, not through sexual organs. We do not want to be animals therefore we do not conduct ourselves in carnal respects […]. In all states on earth, like the Soviet Union, the USA, China, India, and so forth, individuals who behave as foul animals would be treated as such.[187]

Hackenberg's public statement reveals the prevailing conservative sexual politics of the state and much more. The specter of Nazi ideology in his words (e.g., the language of human improvement) is palpable. Respectability—and humanity itself—are tied to scientific knowledge and rationality, progress connected to concrete propositions for change. Scientific research and possibly some work in the social sciences could support this, but art and aesthetics had no place in such matters. This approach to knowledge and progress, he concluded, was not only a guiding force in the FRG but in other important states on the international stage (to which, one can insinuate, the FRG should be compared), including both the United States and the Soviet Union. Gesturing at a supposed morality that transcended even the ideological and organizational divides of Cold War politics, the West German politician made clear that the city's support of experimental art had little to do with political commitments.

Many did not agree with Hackenberg's interpretation of things. The city's attempt to brand itself as a center of art and experimentation, instead, backfired. Fliers were distributed, lines were drawn, and political watchdog groups of state censorship quickly got involved. Numerous images circulated in the context of Underground Explosion showed the protests that erupted across the city in response to the raid. Hundreds if not thousands showed up outside Cologne's City Hall with signs demanding the resignation of the SPD politicians in power who supported police terror. Where those associated with XSCREEN had just a few months earlier

187. Transcription of Hackenberg's public statement in *XSCREEN: Materialen über den Underground-film*, 115.

been the subject of protests by activists concerned with the political complicity of supposedly "formal" filmmaking, here they became what film historian Randall Halle has called "a Lefitist *cause cèlèbre*."[188] The convening had found itself at the center of political battles happening in the streets, which ranged from imperial wars abroad to representations of sex and sexuality domestically.[189] Even after the projection booth at Underground Explosion had been dismantled and the film canisters confiscated, images associated with the event continued to show crowds of people crammed together in a space outside of institutional organization. The unruly mass of bodies was now resolutely above ground, gathered for the press box that had been held at bay by the Underground Explosion screening site's subterranean location. As is the case with most street protests, media coverage was crucial for bringing visibility to the situation, and this case was no different. The confrontational situation stretched the boundaries of the audience, screen/stage, media relationships, as it also tested the limits of state and commercial institutional provision. Sometimes XSCREEN accepted the support of the state and/or the commercial art market and other times, like this, they relied on the backing of New Left student groups and Leftist organizations. They were contradictory and explosive sets of alliances indeed.

Such a convening—in the subway station and later in the streets—had only been possible because of XSCREEN's by-any-means-necessary approach, and its willingness to engage in contradictory alliances—with the state, the art market, and the radical Left— simultaneously. They had gained support from one arm of the state, the city council, which afforded them the

188. Halle, "Xscreen1968: Material Film Aesthetics and Radical Cinema Politics," 11.

189. In London two years later at the 1970 London Underground Film Festival, for example, curated programs organized by XSCREEN and the Progressive Art Production Agency drew protestors from both the Right and Left. In an article published by the free leaflet *OzNews* described, the "foyer [of the theater] was enlivened by a violent argument between three Maoists and two National Front regulars who turned up to watch the 'corrupt, decadent movies.' Despite their full agreement that the movies should be stopped, they disagreed on ideologies of why…." See *OzNews* article, London, 1970, Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

material means by which to produce the Underground Explosion convening. It had thus been the city that had provided legibility for the Studio within the art fair context. It was through another arm of the state, law enforcement, and its counterpoint of activism that their event had gained public visibility for programs of noncommercial and anti-institutional cinema. In this process, the state's international vision for itself as culturally open democratic nation ran headlong into the its highly contested national interests in regulating access to sex and sexuality. Maneuvering in the narrow openings between these interests, the Studio maintained its commitment to an anti-censorship position. This was, as Birgit Hein articulated, a political act without any particular party affiliations. The foregrounding of anything invisible in mainstream, commercial markets, which extended out from a commitment to anti-censorship, was a threat to a state-sponsored consumer-based market system that relied on the conventions and conditions of moving images' ideological value in their publicizing and presenting strategies. To work in this kind of underground was, as Birgit Hein has recently suggested, "already a political act."[190] Such an orientation to the underground also hit limits though. The censorship of XSCREEN by the state, even as it had also been the state that enlisted XSCREEN to raise the prestige of the art fair, seemed to pit legibility—interpolation into a sustainable economic structure—against visibility—representation within a media landscape. The two remained at odds throughout the four years of the XSCREEN Studio's existence. Visibility continually remained at risk of becoming pure spectacle, and the group's provocations for new languages of cinema, new means of film distribution, and new kinds of media networks of being interpreted as publicity stunts. In such situations, visibility was disaggregated from calls for legibility, which were launched by convenings like Underground Explosion where the complex sets of negations (not fascist, not

190. From Birgit Hein interview with the author, January 16, 2017.

communist, not liberal democratic, not institutional cinema, not visual art project) were performed. Working under such precarious conditions of legibility came at serious costs legally and politically for some involved, often extending far beyond screening sites like the subway station, and into the homes of XSCREEN members and participants.

"It Was The Way We Lived"[191]
Daily Life and the Underground

As the Studio's form of underground convening maneuvered between state, commercial, and activist forces, so too it maneuvered between formalized screening institution and communal makeshift movie house. The two were linked. Though their screenings did not always feature a project booth in the middle of the screening space—for practical reasons most of their programs happened in small Weimar-period movie houses in the city—elements like the open screenings that kicked off the fourth night (and would have also the fifth night) of Underground Explosion were frequently part of the mixed weekly programs. Whether the result of self-conscious physical immersion in the cinematic apparatus or the ability to have direct input into the stream of images, this kind of reciprocity between audience ("spectators") and screen/stage ("actors") was constitutive of the ways in which XSCREEN convenings worked. Blurring the lines between spectator and actor, onstage and off, front stage and back extended into many different kinds of convenings. Like Underground Explosion they nourished the network aesthetically and intellectually, providing new film forms and cinematic experiences; and they also sustained the network in more substantive ways. Though not as politically spotlighted as Underground Explosion, several of the Studio's screenings drew police presence and materials were

191. Quote from Birgit Hein, in conversation with the author, April 17, 2017.

confiscated more than once. There were never any convictions, but some reels may still be in evidence lockup in a Munich police department.[192]Arrests, arraignments, seizures of films, and raids at both screening sites and in homes—most practically the professional and personal—regularly crossed in the work of XSCREEN along legal lines. Given the high stakes of their shared struggles against the states repeated charges of general obscenity, members of the Studio's network also came together as a system of support. The aesthetic and the social, like the political and the spatial, were linked. The construction of underground economies of circulation was—often out of necessity—the convening of personal communities as well. "It was," Birgit Hein later reflected, "the way we lived."

Traveling Together

A kind of kinship network emerged. In some senses, the XSCREEN network was from inception rooted in family; three of its five members were related: Christian Michelis and Birgit Hein were siblings; Birgit and Wilhelm Hein were married; Wilhelm and Karlheinz Hein (a frequent collaborator, though not a co-founder of the Studio) were brothers. This situation created a certain domestic sensibility that distinguished the projects from, for instance, the transnational filmmakers' cooperatives also active at the time, as well as from the later communal cinemas that would emerge in the FRG. From the Studio's first convening in March 1968 for the Austrian experimental film program, a close exchange between the groups in Cologne and Vienna developed. In particular Kurt Kren became close friends with XSCREEN cofounders, and the relationships that developed from there would shape the lives of all involved over the next decade. When Kren left Vienna in 1970 facing legal accusations for supposed

192. "Interview: Gabriel Jutz with Birgit Hein," in *X-Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s*, 118–129.

distribution of pornography, it was to Cologne he moved. There he became a fixture of the flourishing underground scene, traveling and often living with the Heins, as well as, on occasion, with Hans Peter Kochenrath or Karlheinz Hein. It was living with Kochenrath that Kren produced his enigmatic time-lapse portrait *28/73 Zeitaufnahme(n)*; and it was at the Kochenrath's cabin in rural southwest Germany that Kren made his acclaimed structural film *31/75 Asyl*, which required twenty-one days of consecutive shooting from the same standpoint. *32/76 An W+B*, similarly, was made while Kren lived in the Heins' apartment shooting out the same window over a two-month period. Across these works from Kren's classic structural phase, especially in the latter two, the conditions of the films' production depended on the shared living situation and the stability it offered—most basically each of the pieces required the ability to film at one location for an extended amount of time. *31/75* or *32/76* simply would not have been possible without a "home base" at which to set up a camera.

In Kren's case the home was a place at which he could set up the camera looking out, but elsewhere the camera was pointed inward, toward the shared living experiences happening in those domestic spaces. A suite of travel photos and home-movie footage produced at the time document these living experiences. Mostly taken by Birgit's husband Wilhelm Hein, the scattered materials, which range from 1969 through 1973, pull together a kind of portrait of life in the XSCREEN's underground. Several snapshots exist of one particular "family trip" to Cannes in 1969. During the same spring that the Underground Explosion concert was touring the FRG, the XSCREEN group traveled to the French resort town together in a VW bus together. They had been invited to curate a program for La Quinzane des Réalisateurs, an "alternative film festival" organized by the Cinema en Liberté, which ran in Cannes concurrent with the well-known international festival hosted annually in the French Rivera resort town since 1946. In one

snapshot Kren and two others crowd around the VW bus as the group prepares to leave Cologne. With his camera strap swung over his left shoulder, Kren casually leans against the opened car door in center frame. He looks into the van (and away from us), engaged in conversation with his fellow travelers while waiting. Once at the regional park, Kren and Karlheinz Hein survey the campsite. Shirtless and in jeans, they scan the grounds looking for suitable places to set up the tents. Later they sunbathe together, both now wear bathing suit bottoms. Kren wears dark sunglasses and a black turtleneck with his suit, maintaining a cool '60s look, even as he partakes in the very vernacular outdoor vacation activity of campsite lounging. He sits in a folding chair with bearded chin resting in hand and his head turned towards Karlheinz, who looks up from his prone position on the ground. In another shot, Kren stands alone amidst the park's shrubbery. Still in his sunglasses but now with the turtleneck removed, he stands feet shoulder width apart in a speedo, black socks, and shoes. He holds something in his hands, perhaps a bundle of brush to contribute to the campfire or maybe a camera that he is drawing up to his eye to begin filming. At dusk and now fully clothed again, Kren sits eating with Birgit Hein at a picnic table. While a third person sitting at the edge of the table is almost completely obscured by the dimness of the fading light, Kren and Hein seem almost to glow with dramatic, aura-like silhouettes against the thick, darks wall of trees behind them. In all of these photos the subjects—the filmmakers and curators—pay no attention to the camera. Sometimes they pay no attention to each other; they are merely in the midst of camping.

Not unlike the 1968 Underground Explosion convening that had been a satellite to the commercial art fair, in Cannes the XSCREEN program was part of a counter-film festival that relied upon its proximity to the prominent "official" commercial festival for visibility, even as it aggressively rejected institutional economic systems and aesthetic priorities. La Quinzane des

Réalisateurs reflected a broader interest, which had developed almost immediately after ’68, in assimilating these noncommercial, anti-institutional curated programs into mainstream market-adjacent economies. Even the 1970 Venice Biennale included a program on underground cinema.[193] While underground convenings began to make regular appearances at, or adjacent to, official sites like this, the infrastructures to support them remained provisional at best. In some situations, as with Underground Explosion, support was politically tentative; at other times, as in Cannes, the support was economically scant. The group trip came about because the group had no money for a hotel in the posh Mediterranean city, nor was there funding from the Cinema en Liberté to assist them. Instead, XSCREEN members camped in the Préalpes d'Azur Natural Regional Park roughly twenty kilometers away. It was a kind of maintenance activity that sustained their underground activity, practically making it possible to put on the public-facing convenings for which the Studio was known. Traveling together kept costs down, camping together allowed for an overnight stay, and other activities—like the sunbathing or the meal times—came along with this togetherness. The intimacy of the personal relationships on the camping trip and elsewhere was not at all separate, but, rather, was infused into the programming as a condition for their possibility. Like the films of Kren’s structural phase that required a “home base,” these convenings necessitated a willingness to live together.

Hosting One Another

Back in Cologne the Heins’ one-bedroom apartment also fostered numerous moments of cohabitation and convening. During the late 1960s and early ’70s their small home became a site of critical exchange amongst German-speaking and international filmmakers alike. Filmmakers

193. Biennale Program, box 4, folder “Propaganda – 1967-1970,” Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

and their families would often stay at the Heins' apartment, sharing meals and sleeping spaces with the XSCREEN members. A series of home movies made between 1970 and 1973 show that an intermingling—or perhaps willful confusing—of the public and the private was typical at the Hein residence. The living room could become a makeshift screening site, the coffee table an editing table, and the kitchen table a place for debates to run into the early hours of the morning. Such was the case, for instance, in 1971 when the Heins hosted New York experimental filmmaker Jack Smith who took up residence in the apartment for several days, overlapping with Kren's longer-term stay. In one of the home movies Smith and Kren sit in the living room. Smith carefully reviews his slides for a performance of his *Boiled Lobster Color Slide Show*, which he gave at a space in Cologne the following week.[194] Smith sits in an armchair examining his images through a viewfinder while Kren reclines on the couch smoking a cigarette. From the doorway on their right, which leads into the kitchen, Birgit Hein moves in and out of frame as she both cooks a meal for everyone while also offering her thoughts in conversation with her male counterparts. That Hein was performing the traditional female labor of cooking the family meal is not totally surprising—these kinds of conventionally gendered labor dynamics operated largely unbroken alongside the widespread embrace of the tenets of sexual revolution. This remained a contradiction throughout the period, both in the XSCREEN underground and elsewhere.[195] For as much as the private sphere of the home became a part of the public work of curating screening programs, the integration of the aesthetic and the social in the XSCREEN's underground was not as smooth as one might imagine. As with the impasses and inconsistencies

194. For more on Smith's slide shows, see M. Darsie Alexander et al., eds., *Slideshow: Projected Images in Contemporary Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University press, 2005).

195. Among the vast body of work on this subject, see in particular: David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, An Unfettered History* (New York: Routledge, 2001); and Paula England, "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled," *Gender & Society* 24, no. 2 (April 2010): 149–166.

that the Studio faced in its attempts to integrate the political and the spatial at public-facing convenings like Underground Explosion, here too in private-facing convenings there were impasses and inconsistencies to face as well.

Birgit Hein's central role in XCSREEN convenings, from Underground Explosion to hosting visiting filmmakers and their families, thwarts a simplistic gender narrative. The situation was more complicated than that, as was Hein's own relationship to feminist politics. Coming of age on the cusp of the 1970s Feminist Movement, Hein's conceptions of gender, sexuality, and the family were in large formed prior to a widespread feminist consciousness; though she regularly advocated for women filmmakers alongside their male counterparts—she herself worked side-by-side in a collaborative duo with her husband—there was a lack of critique of systemic imbalances in the day-to-day politics of living. Yes, the family structure propagated by the FRG was to be dismantled, as were the sexually repressive mores and censorship practices of the state's cultural and legal policies, which upheld that familial structure; but it was still Birgit who cooked and tended to childcare. Tellingly, though, this responsibility was sometimes shared with Kren, who spent a great deal of time with Birgit and Wilhelm's daughter Nina. In several snapshots from the time Kren and Birgit sat together with Nina, taking turns holding the small child. This was not the standard, however. Such disconnects between a public critical-political mission and the realities of home life were not unusual, but under the conditions of the XSCREEN's underground—moving between public and private convenings as it did—they were that much more palpable. Instead of realigning gender dynamics, Hein tended, rather, to take on both the labor of the programming and the labor of the home. She did everything, setting up a highly unsustainable (though certainly admirable) model for women in the underground: She was a primary engine behind the programming, and she was the caretaker for each person that passed

through the Hein apartment in Cologne for screening events—cooking meals, providing clean blankets and towels, and so forth. She was also the first person to write the history of underground, experimental, and avant-garde film for a German-speaking audience in her 1971 *Film im Underground* (cited above); and she was also raising her daughter Nina. As she got older Nina also attended screening events on occasion—whenever possible it was she who was in charge of turning on and off lights during her parents Superman and Wonderwoman *Performance*. On one flyer for the event, Nina inserted a crayon drawing of herself into the photograph of the projection/performance space, writing "this is N. Hein" ["dies ist N. Hein"] and explaining her important role in the project.[196] This was a situation of both/and. There was both a kind of upholding of the conventions of gendered labor and, yet, there was also a way that such domestic labor and family life became folded in with the work of filmmaking, programming, and scholarship, both on- and offstage.

Nina and other children—the family environment—figured largely into the home movie footage alongside historic meetings between well-known filmmakers. These offscreen overlaps between the "personal" and "professional" spheres, even as they reproduced certain elements of normative gender dynamics, were brought explicitly on-screen as well. Such intersections were the subject of the Heins' home-movie film *London 1973*, which premiered at an experimental film festival in 1974. The film documented a series of convenings in 1973 in which the Heins participated, from hanging out with visiting filmmakers in Cologne, to the Heins' travels to London for the second iteration of the London Underground Film Festival (re-titled the Festival

196. Hein Papers. This particular image was also reproduced in the Hein's 1985 publication of materials from the XSCREEN archive. See Hoffmann and Schobert, eds. *W + B Hein: Dokumente, 1967–1985 Fotos, Briefe, Texte*.

of Independent Avant-Garde Film that year by festival organizers).[197] While the home movie genre was certainly nothing new by '74, what was new was the visibility of "family life" as interwoven into the work of programming and writing an underground scene.[198] In one scene from the film the Heins sit together with New York-based filmmaker Tony Conrad and his family. The group is at the park, lounging together in the grass on a sunny afternoon while their toddler-aged children lob a plastic ball back and forth running playfully in circles around the reclining adults. The "action" was not anything of filmmakers making, but, rather, was a conflict that arose between the children: the Heins' daughter attempts to withhold the plastic ball from the Conrads' son Theodore. Birgit Hein breaks away from conversation to talk with Nina and convince her to share with her peer. Hein takes the role of the mother here, teaching her child to share; at another point in *London 1973* she takes on the role of the teacher in another context. This time she is outside the National Film Theater in London where the screenings for the London Underground Film Festival took place. Hein sits on a bench underneath a tree with Jonas Mekas, New York-based experimental filmmaker and cofounder of the highly influential New York Filmmakers' Cooperative. It was a meeting of two powerful voices in the international experimental film scene, and a meeting of the U.S. and European perspectives. Hein and Mekas face toward each other in conversation as a group of other filmmakers, seated on the grass below, listen on. Both the family outing in the park and the legendary meeting of Mekas and Hein, the film proposes, were part of the same underground network. Both convenings, like the group camping trip in Cannes, were crucial to the maintenance of the underground, which could not

197. The shift in title that year reflected a broader absorption of underground film into the market structures of avant-garde art. This shift was described by festival co-organizer David Curtis in conversation with the author, June 2, 2017.

198. See Carrie Smith-Prei, *Revolting Families: Toxic Intimacy, Private Politics and Literary Realisms in the German Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

have survived on curated programs alone, no matter how "explosive" those convenings were. Indeed, those "explosions" were constitutively contingent on an infrastructural support network, which not only created opportunities for distribution and exhibition of noncommercial and anti-institutional film, but also provided housing, meals, and senses of community and kinship to the filmmakers, critics, and participants involved. In the face of the state's persistent attempts to promote a unified national identity, the XSCREEN underground in Cologne pushed up into both public spaces and private ones. It was a total, though certainly not complete, project of re-imagining how to spend time together and how to share space with one another.

Conclusion
After Underground Explosion, Convening as Critique

One year after Kren documented the 1969 Underground Explosion concert in his *23/69* he produced his enigmatic *24/70 Western*, the second of two films from his oeuvre that reflected upon war atrocities. The first of these war films, *20/68 Schatzi*, screened at the inaugural XSCREEN program in March 1968. In it Kren looked back to World War II by way of a single photographic image found in a friend's attic. The image shows a military officer of unknown nationality (though presumably a member of the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, paramilitary group) with hands folded behind his back as he surveys a field of bodies. The officer faces away from the camera, his identity and affect as obscured as the bodies around him. The violence is startlingly emphasized by the saccharine title Kren attributes to the piece: *Shatzi*, or "sweetie"—a term usually reserved for relations of care. "As if to underline the limit to visual truth," A.L. Rees has written, "the title maintains a sardonic and perhaps bitter distance from false sentiment—

historically and subjectively."[199] Using a permutation-based editing structure, *20/68* twitches between positive and negative prints of the photograph, haunting the spectator with its brutal frankness—a frankness that foreshadows *24/70 Western*. The 1970 film turns from a private family photo of the past, WWII, to a publicly circulating image from present, the Vietnam War. In silence for three minutes, *24/70* repeatedly pans over the 1969 anti-Vietnam poster *And Babies*, which reproduced a photograph taken by Army photographer Ronald Haeberle of women and children massacred in Sơn Mỹ, the Vietnamese village decimated by the United States-led Mỹ Lai invasion. In the poster the photograph is framed by the text "Q: and babies? A: and babies." The words, lifted from a television interview, enclose the image on top and bottom, bleeding into it and staining the scene red. Entitled *And Babies*, the poster was created by the New York-based Art Worker's Coalition (AWC) group and, has subsequently come to stand as an "iconic image of the New York art Left."[200] The AWC, like XSCREEN, was a network that emerged in the 1960s, connecting artists by non-aesthetic means. Stylistically agendas varied greatly in the AWC, but the artists were held together by political commitments, one of which was the United States war in Vietnam.

In contrast to images of the *And Babies* poster in situ at AWC demonstrations, the methodical scanning motion of Kren's camera in his filmic reproduction is so close up that the full poster never appears in frame. Instead, as filmmaker and critic Malcolm LeGrice wrote in 1975:

> [T]he closest Kren comes to a simple political content and direct reference to this underlying element of his image, the recognition of the image is withheld. […] in

199. A.L. Rees, "*20/68 Schatzi*," in *Kurt Kren: Structural Films*, edited by Nicky Hamlyn, Simon Payne, and A.L. Rees, 109–115 (Bristol: Intellect, 2016), 115.

200. Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 20.

> *Western* [this is done] by an exploration of the poster in such extreme close-up that it is again the surface rather that the 'message' which forms the dominant experience. The ambivalence — first choosing the material for its connotations, then denying simple interpretation by withholding early, or at any stage, certain recognition — is evident through the irony of a 'formalist' presentation of emotionally loaded images. At the same time the irony is not a satire: it is a device for confronting the view with a complex response even where simple condemnation would otherwise suggest itself as a self-evident reaction.[201]

As in the acclaimed Action films of the mid-1960s (see chapter 1), Kren's close-ups in *24/70 Western* focus on the bodies and their skin, short-circuiting intended responses to the images. Spectators—witnesses—to the poster are meant to abhor the gruesomeness of the scene, and to be moved by moral outrage at the thought of…even babies. Kren's close-up radically decontextualizes the image from the poster's intentions, separating it from the blood red lettering of the AWC caption and from legible text altogether. The slow pan of Kren's camera lingers and returns to violated bodies of these Vietnamese victims, piled up in middle of a road. It is difficult to watch and difficult to look away. The ambivalence here is not to the atrocity itself—to see the victims so close up and to be led to linger on their wounds is horrifying. There is no doubt, captioned or not, of the horror; resting so unwaveringly on the image, in fact, intensifies the reaction. Nevertheless, as LeGrice continued, "the mechanisms of accommodation are complex… [and] there is no simple condemnation but a seeming search for identification…."[202] *24/70*, like *20/68 Schatzi* or *23/69 Underground Explosion*, experiments with the limits of the union between experience and structure, reflecting upon the ethics of seeing—what is seen and how it is seen, through the camera and through broader media communication cultures.

The suspension of identification—what LeGrice calls ambivalence—in Kren's two war

201. Malcolm LeGrice, "Kurt Kren," *Studio International* 190 (November/December 1975): 183–188, 185.

202. Ibid.

films is not directed at the content but at the systems of representation and communication through which images of such carnage move, and in which they take on programmatic response. Even on the Left. *24/70* returns us to the singular brutality of this image and ethical questions, as Susan Sontag would articulate them thirty years later, about regarding the pain of others.[203] The triangulation of audience, stage/screen, and the press box in this work from 1970, just months after *23/69*, goes directly to publicity: it is a reproduction of a reproduction of a reproduction of the extreme violence of the United States war in Vietnam, which, as Sontag wrote in 2003, was "the first to be witnessed day after day by television cameras, [and] introduced the home front to new tele-intimacy with death and destruction."[204] In the European context, removed from the "at-home" protests in New York and around the U.S., Vietnam War images had become a regular part of social life through media cultures alongside underground cinema.

Always sitting just across from structures of care that held the underground together was an awareness of the intense violence of the period. By this point, the student movement was coming to a head, particularly in response to the Tet Offensive, which many thought evinced an imminent victory for the Vietnamese. Moreover, the impacts of the Eichmann trials and the prosecution of other Nazi officials was all over the news. Publicization of war crimes, both those of Germany and of the US (which were fetishized in normative German culture) was extremely common practice in the FRG. Less often discussed is that the reports on the two—Vietnam and various wars of Western imperialism—frequently appeared in West German newspapers printed side-by-side with reviews of curated screening programs, festivals, and so forth. From mainstream press sources like the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* to Leftist leaflets like *Pardon*, coverage

203. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

204. Ibid., 19.

of the Socialist Germany Student Union (SDS) movement, the Vietnam War and decolonial struggles, or the Red Army Faction and West German militant action sat parallel to coverage of underground cinema convenings and ongoing debates about the economies of cinema, which had been revived from the interwar period. The intermixing of these various cultures of critique across media constituencies was both a reflection of the complex post-Nazi attitudes of the time and a product of Cold War politics. Such print media cultures both guided and reflected systems of communication that connected screen and audience. Just how these "tele-intimate" modes of communication were deployed and to whose political ends they were affectively implemented shifted constantly—to know, one needed the image caption. The "irony without satire" in Kren's film was that in stripping this stable layer of publicity away and emphatically focusing on the grisly image, it stripped identification away from an image that would seem all too easy to identify.

The strategy of suspension of identification with the image in *24/70* was a strategy of negative critique. It was also indicative of XSCREEN's project of convening as a form of critique. The Studio's curated programs mirrored Kren's suspension of identification, destabilizing the familiar infrastructures of institutional cinema. It was no mistake that *20/68 Schatzi* was in the first XSCREEN program. New forms of politics required new forms of cinema. Things could have been otherwise. There were other histories of cinema. There were other configurations of the cinematic apparatus. Curated programs like the 1968 Underground Explosion were a reminder of that. Michelis' provocation that year to change strategies of reception and confrontation came to life at such convenings. Unlike in New York, the XSCREEN network was not exclusively focused on the museum space, nor any one institutional

space.[205] Given the lack of a market for noncommercial and anti-institutional film, the Studio was confronted with a wholly other situation—it was about making space for different kinds of convenings, not necessarily in the museum but in cultural space alongside institutions like the museum or the *kunstverein*, sometimes working in alliance with them and often, during this period anyway, not. XSCREEN and the sets of negations that constituted it—not fascist, not communist, not quite liberal democratic, not institutional cinema, not visual art project—was (also) not a network like AWC. Though both were moving in step with the sexual and cultural revolutions of the time, as a coalition the AWC wrangled interests in way more akin to the Institute for Direct Art in Vienna in the mid-1960s or the cooperatives that sprang up through the late 1960s and 1970s (see chapter 1). These organizations provided a framework that held artists together to increase visibility of individuals' as well as the group's demands; they were often focused on financial and intellectual protections for individual property rights.[206] While the Studio's financial records show that all films were rented at fair rental prices and artists were paid for screening and performance appearances (this is why they screened porn once each week—to pay these costs), XSCREEN remained insistently focused on the programs and not property rights.

It is crucial to remember such convenings, which constituted a kind of artistic critique that emerged from the '68 moment and was not directed at demands for autonomy. On the contrary, the self-aware embeddedness of XSCREEN curated programs like Underground Explosion chipped away at strongholds of sovereignty, testing limits of everyday access allowed

205. Members of the AFMC in Vienna who were a part of the XSCREEN network did hold demonstrations against the Austrian national film museum, as chapter discussed, calling for "democratization of the museum" in 1968, just as the AWC would do in New York the same year.

206. As Julia Bryan-Wilson has examined, these artist workers' rights were problematically distinct from other worker's rights, and this created contradictory conditions, undercutting the claims of/for broader political activist efforts. See Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*.

by the West German state and its markets for art and film through their re-configurations of audience arena, stage/screen, and press box, and their suspensions of identification therein. Mobilizing "different critical forces" vis-à-vis their complex sets of negations and alliances did not mean abandoning social critique and demand for stability as under the purview of party politics. On the contrary, the very conception of the underground in Cologne revolved around this issue of stability. As discussed above, market legibility for noncommercial and anti-institutional cinema was of primary interest; navigating between this aspiration to legibility and the limits of representational visibility for the convenings was an ongoing process. Reception, circulation, industry, markets—these were key terms at the foundation of the Studio. The weekly curated programs promised a certain consistency; the regular open screenings combined with mixed genre film programs engaged a cross-sector of voices, participants, and attendees. Moreover, the integration of these programs into daily life in Cologne and in the homes of XSCREEN members were as important as the explosiveness of events like Underground Explosions in establishing a new order to cinematic practice. Critiques of state, critiques of the film industry and art market, and critiques of the state's postwar status quo were made by way of the programs' very existence—by the XSCREEN network's ability to move and grow and thrive in in the subterranean cracks of the city and the markets.

Cinema was being performed otherwise, and this was only to be the beginning. In an undated "Plan for an Expansion of XSCREEN" the Studio tasked itself with developing an infrastructure out even further than the curated programs they had quickly and successfully established. They imagined bringing elements of the meeting and the festival—events structures discussed in the previous two chapters—together with the Studio's programing through funding streams devoted to weekly programming costs; workshops and seminars for international groups

of filmmakers; collaborations between filmmakers, scholars, and technicians; and even an institute for media aesthetics and communication. It was a plan to build out a transnational network for progressive film. Alas, this plan did not come to fruition. The Studio broke apart as core members began to move on to other projects and, importantly, as their underground convenings were increasingly absorbed into visual art exhibition strategies and spaces, or, alternatively, into popular music concert culture. Birgit Hein, as the next chapter discusses, played a key part in the former, transitioning the curated program from the subway station to the gallery where everything changed.

CHAPTER THREE

Displaying Experimental Film in Kassel
Above Ground Formations of the Time-Based Exhibition

By the early 1970s convening for curated programs was becoming regularized across underground scenes and national contexts; noncommercial film, including experimental film, was also beginning to appear into other industry models more regularly. One such site was television. Public broadcast stations across Europe began to make—and in some cases commission experimental filmmakers to produce—documentaries and public experimental film projects. In Britain, for instance, there was BBC's Channel 4, and in West Germany there was the Westdeutsch Rundfunk (WDR), which worked with Kren, Hein, and others.[207] WDR bought rights to sometimes minutes and on occasion entire films from figures in the underground cinema scene, or what in popular press was coined "the other cinema" [*das andere Kino*] already by the late 1960s.[208] The money paid out for such gigs was much more than one could make off of rental fees for the reels held at the cooperatives, so it behooved filmmakers to work with the mass media producers. [209] By the late 1960s, thanks to explosive events like the '68 Underground Explosion and other curated programs by the XSCREEN Studio in Cologne and the Progressive Art Production Agency in Munich, as well as festivals in Hamburg and elsewhere, underground activities had become a mainstay in the cultural coverage of the West German press. This attention in print media brought with it opportunities for mass media visibility in television as well. It was from this context that Kren's *29/73 Readymade: 3 letters by Marx or the Terror of Media / the Terror of the Media* (1973) was produced. In the same year that he created *30/73 Coop Cinema Amsterdam*—the film with which this study opened and was made over a three-

207. The work of an art world figure like Chris Burden is a familiar example of television art from the period, but in the state-funded context of European television, art experiments showed up outside of the realm of advertising.

208. This, in part, was what the XSCREEN Group had been protesting when they joined members of the AFMC in the 1969 demonstration against the Hamburger Filmschau. See my discussion in chapter one.

209. Invoices for these public broadcast rentals and appearances show up across the archives of both Kren and Hein; for instance, one invoice shows payment for Birgit's appearance in/on the BBC documentary "The Lively Arts" within a segment on "underground film," which was aired on September 19, 1970 at 1:15 p.m. GMT; Hein was paid £100.

week period of film editing workshops in Amsterdam—he also made his "readymade," which included found footage from an unaired WDR documentary on the 1942 Academy Award winning sensation *Casablanca*. At the same time such film was beginning to appear on the small screen, an interest in classic Hollywood was also sweeping West Germany, and WDR produced a series of portraits of classic film. Kren had been hired as a talking head for the *Casablanca* documentary and was charged with reading the three letters written by Groucho Marx to Jack Warner in 1946. The subject of Groucho's texts is the cease and desist order Warner Brothers had had issued against the Marx Brothers' *A Night in Casablanca*, which was a spoof on the classic film made and set to be released that year. The slapstick comedy did not have the copyright permission, as Marx writes that Warner Brothers claimed it needed, to use the term *Casablanca*—a term made famous by their 1942 film starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Can someone hold copyright over a city name, Marx asked in his letters: "apparently," he wrote, "there is more than one way of conquering a city and holding it as your own."[210] Marx went on to question the production company's use of "brothers" and the head of the company's name "Jack." In the first letter, Groucho quippily suggests, "I just can't understand your attitude. Even if they plan on re-releasing the picture, I am sure that the average movie fan could learn to distinguish between Ingrid Bergman and Harpo. I don't know whether I could, but I certainly would like to try."[211]

Marx's letters are the stuff of Hollywood legend. *A Night in Casablanca* was the last of the Marx Brothers films; they, in fact, came out of retirement to make it. It is no coincidence that they did so in 1946—around the time that the House Un-American Activities Committee

210. Groucho Marx letters to Warner Brothers, *Groucho Marx Papers, 1930–1967*, Library of Congress, Washington,DC..

211. Ibid.

(HUAC) trials began and the Hollywood 19 were named. At the critical juncture when the "red scare" of the McCarthy era came to Hollywood, Jack Warner, CEO of Warner Brothers, testified as a HUAC-friendly witness. Against this backdrop, *A Night in Casablanca* was originally attended to be a direct parody of the Warner Brothers classic, going so far as to include a character by the name of Humphrey Bogus, and it was when the Warner Brothers legal department heard about this character's name that they sent inquiries to the Marx Brothers. Though *A Night in Casablanca* eventually became a more general spoof on the spy genre, the letters that circulated in the media were meant to launch a critique of the Warner Brothers heads as humorless and elitist—the "alleged pretentiousness and arrogance" of which Groucho sarcastically assures Jack Warner he is not a part. The letters were also, of course, meant to publicize the Marx Brothers film and their critique of institutional order.

29/73 then is footage of Kren reading these letters again and again and again over thirteen minutes as the WDR crew tries to get a clear reading for the camera. Each time Kren finishes he looks up and around, searching for some sign of approval that this reading will have been the last. The humor of the letters wears out, and what remains is a slightly droning thirteen-minute reflection on studio production processes and litigations. The WDR documentary project was abruptly abandoned once production was completed, and the film was never aired. One can't help but wonder if the reasons were political—hidden beneath Groucho's rude and playful jab at the Hollywood star system and the scope of Warner Brothers copyright claims, was a critique of Jack Warner, the production studio, and U.S. patriotism in the midst of the HUAC Hollywood trials when the studio system proved its complicity with McCarthy era censures and purges. This was a particularly charged moment in institutional cinema, and *29/73* turns a document from that history of anti-censorship legal battles into a script—a script that is performed by a filmmaker

working in underground cinema who was himself frequently a target of censorship.[212] In the readymade Kren becomes an actor/non-actor enlivening a debate about the political mores of mainstream film distribution, decency, patriotism, and state policy that impacted his own practice as it impacted the practice of the Marx Brothers. Kren, the actor/non-actor, becomes filmmaker once again, saving the footage from the editing room floor and making of it a "readymade" film on "the terror of (the) media." Not unlike Duchamp's *Fountain* that famously exposed the contingency of the meaning of art on its institutional contexts, Kren exposed the contingency of the category of film on its contexts—particularly in this case, its context of studio production and the entrenched politics and policies of such a system in both state and commercial markets.

The terror of "mediums" [*Medien*], or the terror of "media" [*Medien*], which Kren references in the subtitle to the readymade *29/73*, operated on multiple levels. There was the censorship happening within the Marx Brothers context, within his own context, and then there was the epistemological terror of systems of meaning-making that render information—perceptual, as in *6/64* or *23/69*, or historical, as in *29/73*—legible. This was the terror, in other words, of when a medium an industry, asserting a particular kind of institutional order. But such an industry order is what, in some ways, was being sought. The aim for many, including the founders of XSCREEN, was to establish viable market structures for works circulating in underground cinema networks. As XSCREEN co-founder and film critic Hans-Peter Kochenrath wrote in 1968 just one month after the Underground Explosion: "The primary concern […of]

212. At one point, seizure of Kren's films in a massive raid of Karlheinz Hein's home in Bavaria prohibited the reels availability for a retrospective program scheduled in North Rhine-Westphalia and the retrospective was subsequently canceled. Birgit Hein references this situation in her interview with Gabriele Jutz in the exhibition catalog *X-screen: Film Installation and Actions in the 1960s and 70s*, edited by Matthias Michalka et al., 118–129 (Vienna: Museum of Modern Art, 2004).

how someone can earn money with their films, remains largely unsolved… [and] with exhibitions alone one cannot even come close to approximating the print costs."[213] If underground cinema had no place within the commercial film industry and it had no pool of private collectors interested in buying copies of the films, then where and how did or could it fit into an economic model? It did not; it must establish new models. One avenue was the kinds of collaborations with mass media production, as had been the case of Kren's work with the WDR. Another avenue—and this is where the terror of "mediums" became most apparent—was the realm of the visual arts, a field which itself was grappling with medium as aesthetic production turned increasingly to the time-based in realms such as experimental film, or "the other cinema."

Time-Based Exhibitions
New Consumer Patterns for the New Cinema of Attraction

The blurring of boundaries, or tentative alliances, which had been so critical to the XSCREEN project, was swiftly being supplanted by new formal institutional infrastructures, like that of public broadcast. Another important infrastructure was the college circuit to which the vast majority rentals in the cooperatives went.[214] This circuit was an infrastructure of art school programs that had emerged as a preeminent site for film screening events featuring noncommercial experimental shorts like *29/73* and many of the other projects mentioned throughout my study. Through such formalized circuits, Hein, Kren, and others associated with the XSCREEN Studio made frequent trips to surrounding states throughout the 1970s, including

213. "Das Hauptproblem der Tagung, wie man mit seinen Filmen Geld verdienen könne, blieb weitgehend ungelöst… can mit Vorführungen allein lassen sich nicht einmal annähernt die Kopiekosten decken." Numerous newspaper articles in West Germany also discussed this issue of a market. See: Hans-Peter Kochenrath, "Von der Leinwand kamen Raketen," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* (Nov 1968); Rolf Dewonn, "Engelche macht weiter," (April 1969), Otto Mühl Papers, box 101, folder 2, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

214. See David Curtis, "The Co-operative Movement — Internationalism — New Directions," in *Experimental Film* (New York: Universe Books, 1971), 134.

to Austria, Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, for screenings, filmmaker workshops, and other such in-person events. In plain, leather-bound notebooks that Kren kept through the decade, he documented these travels in meticulous detail, identifying with whom he and the group spent time, where they went (usually the café they visited), whose work was screening, and what he thought of those works screened. Interlaced into notes on his everyday life—the nights he had trouble sleeping were, for instance, chronicled just as matter-of-factly as pivotal cultural moments like the January 1970 televised debate for the upcoming Austrian chancellor's election (the first televised political event of its kind in the Second Federal Republic)[215]—Kren also mapped out his movements through the underground scene, encircling in red ink the name of the cities where convenings were held. To give an example: in 1970, Kren recorded travel through thirty-two cities, including Salzburg, Graz, Vienna, Munich, Cannes, Munich, Luzern, Munich, Basel, Munich, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, London, Frankfurt, Vienna, Munich, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Delft, Amsterdam, Haarlem, Amsterdam, Breda, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Tillburg, Amsterdam, Cologne, Munich, and Vienna.[216] These kinds of circuitous movements were becoming possible for numerous noncommercial filmmakers, and by 1972 an article in the U.S.-based *Filmmakers' Newsletter* even put out an article outlining different

215. The debate was between Chancellor Josef Klaus and his challenger Bruno Kreisky. Kreisky would go on to win the election and usher a new, left-leaning liberal era into the state. Later in the 1970s Kreisky's administration pardoned all outstanding charges against members of the Viennese Actionist circle, in particular painter and performance artist Günter Brus, who was still facing jail time.

216. The repetitions of city here are cited directly from Kren's notebooks in the order in which they appear. Munich appears so regularly because during that year Kren was living mostly with Karlheinz Hein, who, to recall, was closely connected to the XSCREEN Studio: not only was he the brother of Wilhelm Hein, Birgit's husband at the time, but he was the founder of the Progressive Art Production (P.A.P) Agency, which worked closely on organizing events in collaboration with the Cologne-based programming project and was largely responsible for the 1969 Underground Explosion touring festival discussed in chapter two.

venues and distribution centers across the European continent to contact if planning a film tour.[217]

In addition to its appearance at these kinds of educational sites and the independent touring made possible by them, experimental film was also showing up regularly in visual arts institutions, tied to similar pedagogical missions as those of the college circuit but also linked to art markets forces. Such infrastructures had been infused into the underground networks for quite some time—recall the use of the moniker Institute for Direct Art under which Kren's work had first traveled out of Vienna in 1966 or the contingency of XSCREEN's "Underground Explosion" on the Köln Kunstmarkt art fair in 1968—but now the presence of these infrastructures was being determined by (rather than tentatively linked to) highly visible institutional platforms. *Kunsthallen* in West Germany and Switzerland played an especially important role in this, as did curators like the Swiss-German legend Harald Szeemann whose 1970 "Happenings & Fluxus" exhibition comprehensively brought, for the first time, underground performance and media practices inside the hallowed walls of the museum.[218] At the same time Birgit Hein continued to operate in curatorial capacities in various cities across West Germany, helping both to facilitate things like public broadcast rights purchases, as well as organize screening events and, increasingly, exhibitions of experimental film.

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217. David Devensky, "Showing Your Films in Europe: A Journal of a Traveling Filmmaker," *Filmmakers' Newsletter* (Summer 1972): 31–34; box 101, folder 5-7a, Otto Mühl Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Devensky begins by warning US filmmakers planning to travel abroad that "political film is now the rage throughout Europe… political film societies, political film co-ops, political distribution centers, political university clubs" (31).

218. Most recently Szeemann's curatorial legacy was the subject of the major exhibition "Museum of Obsessions" at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf; see: Glenn Phillips and Philip Kaiser, eds., *Harald Szeemann: Museum of Obsessions* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2018). Also see the publication that accompanied a 2007 exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel, edited by Niele Toroni et al., Harald Szeemann: "With, Through, Because, Towards, Despite" (Basel: Kunsthalle Basel, 2007); as well as Hans-Joachim Müller, *Harald Szeemann: Exhibition Maker* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006); and the canonizing entry on documenta 5 in Bruce Altshuler, *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that made Art History, 1962–2002* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2008).

If the Underground Explosion had explosively marked a turning back toward the cinema of attractions of film's earlier years, here I examine how the form of the event within geopolitical and consumer market structures was being adapted accordingly. It was a kind of institutionalization of the cinema of attraction for the nuclear age. That is to say, event conveners were attempting to map out—and thus to formalize—the medium coordinates for the kinds of viewing practices necessary for appreciation of experimental film; something also being taught in the art school circuit. This legibility made events accessible to broader and broader constituencies in the bourgeois public sphere—such viewing practices were being written into a canon. The time-based exhibition was a decisive site for this process of coming above ground. As opposed to curated programs like the 1968 and 1969 Underground Explosions (or any of the XSCREEN projects) time-based exhibitions extended the duration of works' presentation, replacing the quick temporality of the publicly-shared plan of action that is etymologically linked to the "program" with an aesthetic of protracted public display. Moreover, this shift also marked a turn away from action and its performative enunciations in writing—call to mind the *Dokumentation—Meinungsmache* of the AFMC, the advertisements for the Destruction in Art Symposium, or the publicly wheat-pasted XSCREEN event announcements—toward a purely visual experience.[219] This affinity-based rather than politically-grounded orientation to viewing practice is of course constitutive of the exhibition model, rooted as it is in the colonialist project of the world's fair, the preeminent time-based exhibition of modernity.[220] In the realms of visual

219. Martin Puchner's *Poetry of the Revolution* has been hugely informative in formulating my understanding of the role of writing in relation to the program of action. See Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Garde* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

220. See, among others, Jane Chin Davidson, "The Global Art Fair and the Dialectical Image," *Third Text* 24, no. 6 (November 2010): 719–734. I also discuss the neocolonialist project of documenta and the biennial circuit in my forthcoming article, "Performing Internationalness: EXPRMNTL and the 'Global Contemporary' Exhibitionary Form."

art and theatre this is the history of Modernism as distinct from the avant-garde. As theatre historian Günter Berghaus has described, the absorption of provocational time-based activities into a market structure for events is the delimiting factor in marking the boundaries between "avant-garde" practices and "modernist" ones.[221] What Berghaus calls (per Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*) the absorption of provocation is what this chapter situates as the above ground formation of the new cinema of attraction. In taking up this terminology of the "above ground" I mean to keep the conversation closely linked to the underground, rather than to the avant-garde. In so doing, my intention, as I have said again and again throughout this study, is to set aside an impulse to stake out positions on the relation between aesthetics and politics, and, instead, to indirectly approach this impulse by way of reflection upon conceptions of knowledge production that became possible (and, conversely, impossible) in Cold War Europe during this period. What, for instance, happened to the critical-political task of a project like XSCREEN in this shift? The goal in the following chapter, hence, is not to indict the exhibitionary form as immanently "bad" practice, but, rather, to draw out important distinctions between the distribution politics of the "underground" and the "experimental"—distinctions in which the exhibitionary form has played (and continues to play) a leading role.[222]

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221. Günter Berghaus, *Theatre, Performance, and the Historical Avant-Garde* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Berghaus draws significantly on Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, translated by Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), but expands on Bürger's visual art-based analysis to consider the production of time-based events. Given Berghaus's focus on time-based productions, Bürger's notion of provocation also implicitly emerges as the crux of a concrete dilemma in reception.

222. There have been numerous articles in recent years that have been intended to assert the potential for resistance in third world biennials and other such "global contemporary" exhibitionary practices. Such assertions are, in particular, evidenced in a 2004 special issue of *World Art* (vol. 4, no. 2) and in *The Biennial Reader* from 2009 (edited by Elena Filipovic et al., and published through Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz). To name just a few texts from those collections: Carlos Basualdo, "The Unstable Institution" (2003), in *The Biennial Reader*, 124–135; Oliver Marchart, "The Globalization of Art and the 'Biennials of Resistance': A History of Biennials from the Periphery," *World Art*, 263–276; Rafal Niemojewski, "Venice or Havana: A Polemic on the Genesis of the Contemporary Biennial," in *The Biennial Reader*, 88–103; Michael Oren, "Biennials that Promote an 'Emancipatory Politics,'" *World Art*, 277–305; and Simon Sheikh, "Marks of Distinction, Vectors of Possibility: Questions for the Biennial," in *The Biennial Reader*, 150–163.

With this in mind, I began with Kren's *29/73 Readymade* as a rude and playful reflection on the ways in which commercial and noncommercial were beginning to overlap more and more directly, and less and less tentatively. I understand the transformations at the base of such overlaps to be fundamental for articulating the differences between the underground and the experimental, and the complex position of the blurring of art/life between them. *29/73*, in short, draws attention to this new kind of contingency. As the screening event's legitimate place—physically within public space (the U-Bahn stop versus the museum) and discursively within the public sphere (the program versus the exhibition)—became resolved by way of changing visual art industry standards, so too did the function and status of the organizer change. The belatedness of organizational transformation—technologies of artistic production had been rapidly developing since the immediate postwar period[223]—is in part what had precipitated the development of underground networks and the work of programmers like Birgit Hein who moved materials through them. Over the course of the 1970s, however, the programmer became a thing of the past, replaced by models of the curator and the producer. It was Szeemann's curatorial purview at the 1972 West German international exhibition known as documenta, two years after his "Happenings and Fluxus" show, which is widely understood to have ushered in these new models.[224]

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223. As I discuss in the Introduction, recent work by art historians, including Andrew Uroskie and Gloria Sutton, have made this clear. I would also point to work in film studies by figures like Nicole Brenez to emphasize the parallel developments happening in European contexts. See, for instance, her lecture on French Expanded Cinema at Museum of Modern Art Stiftung Ludwig Wien on the occasion of the 2003–2004 exhibition "X-screen: Film Installation and Actions in the 1960s and 70s."

224. Founded in 1955 under the direction of Arnold Bode in the sleepy central German city of Kassel, documenta was established at the close of the post-World War II occupation period as a means of both rebuilding the West German cultural sphere and re-establishing international networks of cultural exchange in the country. The documenta format diverged from other large-scale international exhibitions in two ways: first, it jettisoned an exhibition plan based on national representations; and, second, it introduced a committee-based curatorial process. Unlike the group-based decision-making of previous years and following heavy criticism of the 1968 iteration, d5 saw the committee centralized around the "General Secretary" Harald Szeemann. For the purposes of this study, I

Thus, I turn first to Szeemann's documenta, the fifth iteration of the international exhibition, and I do so by way of the show's catalog, which took up the format of a course reader from a university seminar. As such, the catalog for documenta V (d5) enacted a discursive reorganization of the traditional exhibitionary form, frontloading the pedagogical—what Szeemann called the "worldview making"—functions of the site as a durational, multi-media event-based space. This was a radical departure from previous documentas, which had all remained comfortably contained in the Museum Fridericianum, the exhibition's primary site and Europe's first purpose-built public museum.[225] From its inception, documenta was known as the "100-day museum," but d5 departed from this conventional form of display, replacing it with the "100-day event" that moved well beyond the walls of the Fridericianum. Nevertheless, this was also a markedly different orientation to the educational site than those that had been proposed within (interrogated and critiqued by) the underground activities of artists and filmmakers in Vienna and Cologne. It was in this context—radicalizing in some ways and institutionalizing in others—that underground film and media practices made their debut on the international visual arts scene; and that a conception of the public-*ness* of and for such works was rendered visible. Though Kren's work did not appear at d5, the films of Birgit and Wilhelm Hein did, alongside works by the New American Cinema cohort, including figures like Gregory Markopoulos, Paul

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have chosen to delimit my discussion to Szeemann, but elsewhere I have written on the role of his co-curators Bazon Brock and Jean-Christophe Ammann; see my "Documenta 5 and the Kinetic Catalog: Expanding Documentation for *Das 100-Tage-Ereignis*" presented at the 2017 College Art Association annual conference, New York, February 18, 2017.

225. Constructed in 1779 under the direction of Frederick II, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel from 1760 to 1785, the Museum Fridericianum was the first open exhibitionary space in Europe that was not a former imperial palace, but, rather, was conceived as a public museum. Though the building had gone through a number of uses in the intervening two centuries, it was returned to this original use after World War II with documenta. Interestingly, the building project was funded by money earned through Frederick's "renting" of Hessen mercenaries to Britain during the American Revolutionary War, inflecting rather strangely on what we might today understand as the democratic vision of the "public" museum.

Sharits, Michael Snow, Andy Warhol, and others. The importance of these new cinema practices to Szeemann's thinking has been consistently underacknowledged in the history of d5 and the contemporary exhibition model—an oversight this chapter seeks to at least partially correct.

Another oversight in this history has been the importance of what came after Szeemann in the formulation of the contemporary exhibition model. As contemporary curator Matthias Michalka described: "d6 is where things really shifted in terms of thinking about the structuring of the *work* of curating a multi-media, intermedia, interdisciplinary exhibition."[226] Michalka's observation gestures at the infrastructural and institutional shifts that emerged in response to the turn towards the time-based in artistic production. If Szeemann's d5 can be characterized by the excitement of an above ground "discovery" of underground practices, then the next iteration of the international exhibition can be understood as carrying out a process of identification.[227] It is to this process that I turn to next. After Szeemann's eventing of the exhibition in 1972, at documenta VI (d6) in 1977 there was a partitioning of practices by medium and a broader discussion of media/medium questions [*Medienfragen*], in particular: How can the museum exhibit mediums in a rapidly changing technological culture? To that end, the centralized, curator-as-auteur (Szeemann) was replaced by a series of working groups [*Arbeitsgruppen*] led by experts from different fields of production, each appointed and overseen by d6 chief organizer Manfred Schneckenburger. Experimental film was one of these working groups. Led by Birgit Hein, the Experimental Film working group assembled together filmmakers and artists from

226. Matthias Michalka in conversation with the author, December 20, 2017. Michalka, chief curator at the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna one of the first contemporary curators to organize and exhibition on Expanded Cinema in the 2003 "X-Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 70s" at the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna.

227. In taking up this term "discovery," I am influenced by the important structural observations for performance historiography made by Diana Taylor in her *Archive and the Repertoire*. See Taylor, "Scenarios of Discovery: Reflections on Performance and Ethnography" in *Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 53–78 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

across the expanded field of moving image production, presenting a film program as well as numerous gallery installations. One such installation was—or was intended to be—Kren's *35/77 Dogumenta*. Made in the same year as his third and final canonical structural film, *33/77 Keine Donau*, *35/77* was a parodic riff on the Expanded Cinema installation, using multiple media technologies to present an album of photographs of dogs. Though *35/77* was never actually installed at d6 (it is unclear why), the descriptions and scant visual documentation of Kren's saccharine environment offer here a satirical codex for reading the shift in exhibitionary practice and the new-found "above ground" legibility of underground activity.

At the end of the chapter, I turn to Hein's 1978 survey-scale traveling exhibition "Film as Film" [*Film Als Film*], which emerged out of her work in d6 and situated experimental film firmly within the museum by way of archive displays, vitrines, and some projections onto the gallery's white walls. Hein's complex role in these transitions is highlighted throughout; and, here at the end, I read her exhibition alongside a text on film and politics she presented at the 1976 Edinburgh Film Festival where she articulated her own position on what she saw as a kind of passing out of the underground. Behind, underneath, or, perhaps most aptly, *in media res* of the story of these two 1970s iterations of documenta, is also a story of "the terror of mediums," as industry standards and infrastructural protocols in the visual arts museum shifted, as conceptions of the exhibition form changed to adopt and adapt the event structures of the cinema of attraction for the nuclear age, as certain for legibility in the underground cinema came to pass, and underground cinema became experimental film.[228]

228. As David Curtis has suggested, the shift in title, from the London Underground Film Festival in 1970 to the London Festival of Independent Avant-Garde Film in 1973 was made because of the recognition at the time that underground cinema had ceased to be. Curtis in conversation with the author, June 1, 2017.

Das 100-Tage Ereignis
Eventing the Exhibition, Expanding Pedagogical Purview

The international festival scene of the early Cold War period had begun to reflect these changes in arts production—and, specifically, the turns toward the multi- and intermedia, incorporating projects from and collaborations with other sectors of the arts including dance, film, music, and theater—years before d5. In West Germany and Belgium the EXPERIMENTA Theater Festival in Frankfurt and the EXPRMNTL International Film Festival in Knokke-le-Zout were pioneering in these kinds of cross-sector organizing efforts.[229] In particular, the EXPRMNTL festival, organized by the Royal Film Archive in Belgium, was working at the intersections of cinema and visual art in an international scope already by 1967. At the '67 festival (its fourth iteration), for instance, visual art performance figures and members of the Fluxus circle Jean-Jacques Lebel and Yoko Ono performed live actions over the course of the four-day convening. Moreover, EXPRMNTL also shifted the protocols of the film festival by introducing commissions wherein filmmakers were given film stock to produce new works—this is, for instance, how much of the footage for Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972) was made; and it also changed protocols to include an open screening session, which encompassed all works submitted to the festival regardless of their status in the competition.[230] Birgit Hein was there in Knokke-le-Zout, as were members of the AFMC Hans Scheugl and Gottfried Schlemmer (it was, to recall, this festival that led to the establishment of the co-op in Vienna), as was Szeemann.[231]

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229. Xavier Garcia Bardon, "EXPRMNTL: An Expanded Festival. Programming and Polemics at EXPRMNTL 4, Knokke-le-Zoute, 1967," *Cinema Comparat/ive Cinema* 1, no. 2 (2013): 53–64.

230. This liberalizing of the festival form was, to recall, heavily critiqued by the Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative at their 1969 Hamburg Filmschau, but it, nonetheless, had a major impact with the development of the film festival from there forward. It was, indeed, this performing of internationalism by the West that was at the foundation of the AFMC protest.

231. Towards the very end of his life Szeemann spoke of the influence of the 1967 EXPRMNTL on his work at d5 in an interview with Xavier Garcia Bardon in preparation for the 2005 exhibition "La Visionnaire Belgique: C'est

The medial and geographic inclusivity that characterized EXPRMNTL that year reflected broader geopolitical shifts, as the Cold War grew increasingly hotter. It was no longer the "postwar moment"—as is often still the reference point in discussions of documenta. This was the moment of a blossoming of inclusionary politics in the West and a concomitant prioritization of internationalism as liberal democratic ideal. The ideology of "the international" at EXPRMNTL, as was also the case five years later at d5, was being produced in relation to its other: "the international" of the Communist East, with its legacy of the Comintern and its then current support of decolonial struggles happening around the world. The coming together of the infrastructural web that made EXPRMNTL possible and, later, helped to give rise to Szeemann's contemporary exhibitionary form, were born, then, in part from this performing of internationalism in the West.[232]

But, as I have previously examined, the festival form had its own organizational logic, inhabiting a compressed temporality, like that of the curated program, rather than the extended duration of the exhibition. Unlike XSCREEN's mixed programs and their sensational explosion above ground at the art fair in Cologne, or even the state-organized multi- and intermedia four days of EXPRMNTL in Knokke-le-Zout, it was the duration of Szeemann's d5 in Kassel that became influential: one hundred days. This stretched out timeline produced a different set of relations to knowledge production. Put simply, it helped (whether intended or not) to formalize things in terms of scope, as international underground networks became visible within a single, fixed framework; of impact, as the educational value of these expanded modes of scope and

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arrive près chez nous" at the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles. Bardon in conversation with the author, April 26, 2017.

232. See my forthcoming article, "Performing Internationalness: EXPRMNTL and the 'Global Contemporary' Exhibitionary Form."

display had to be rendered legible for an attending public; and of display, as the practicalities of long-term presentation of time-based practices had to be resolved. The exhibition's systematic approach to addressing these dimensions of formalization was reflected in the catalog, which attempted to bind the energy of "discovery" that was taking place.

When Attitude Becomes Form[233]

At first appearance the d5 catalog might appear as just another standard three-inch binder, this one with a red orange plastic vinyl stretched across a cardboard frame, the plastic lifting away along the edges, in part from being overfilled and in part from being opened and closed numerous times. The red orange vinyl of this binder features a funky fashion pattern: trompe l'oeil ants, which cast long, hard shadows, crawl across the surface. A few stray from the cluster, making their way to those frayed and lifted edges of the vinyl, but most coalesce together just right of center page forming a "five." Accompanying this prominent graphic on the cover is a more direct label, which runs along the binder's spine in clear, bold white lettering; it reads *1972 documenta 5*. The inside of the binder appears no less unassuming. The two rings hold together a stack of loose-leaf pages that are organized by dividers into sections. There are twenty-five in total. All of the pages seem to be too much for this one binder to hold—the punched holes are chewed up and torn; they struggle to maintain their integrity and keep each page in its place. One must turn the pages carefully so as to not put any more strain on the holes than what is already

233. This phrase is taken from another of Szeemann's canonical exhibitions, "Live in Your Head. When Attitude Becomes Form," which preceded d5 by three years, occurring at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969, the same year as the traveling "Underground Explosion" festival. Szeemann's show is well-known for being the first to present a comprehensive view of Conceptual Art and performance practices, like those of Robert Barry, Joseph Beuys, Alighiero Boetti, Joseph Kosuth, Jannis Kounellis, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Dennis Oppenheim, Allen Ruppersberg, William G. Wegman, and Lawrence Weiner, to name just a few. See Daniel Birnbaum, "When Attitude Becomes Form: Harald Szeemann," *Artforum* 43, no. 10 (Summer 2005); and Germano Celant et al., *When Attitude Becomes Form: Bern 1969, Venice 2013* (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2013), which was published in conjunction with an exhibition restaging Szeemann's canonic show on the occasion of the 2013 Venice Biennale.

there. It is not unlike the countless binders I have at home from my seminars over the years: overfilled and organized by dividers at the end of the term, or, that is, after all of the pages have been individually printed, read, and notated. These divided sections are organized, not unlike in Kren's *31/75 Aysl*, by a logic of accumulation—by a logic of build up over time made possible by a certain kind of stability of conditions. At the same time, in the binder the pages can be moved around and shifted as one goes, rather than bound in a predetermined, nonnegotiable order. It is the difference between a seminar binder, which is collected together by a student over the course of ten or twelve weeks, and a seminar reader, which is compiled and bound by an instructor before the course ever began.

This funky red orange fashion binder is not just a seminar binder like the ones I have at home though; it is an exhibition catalog, and, as such, it reconfigures an understanding of the exhibition by engaging a format of reconfigurability, replacing didactic dictate with open exchange. At the same time, though, its ordering was highly specific. While planning for the upcoming documenta V in 1971, Szeemann wrote in his notes: "d5 will for the first time act as a producer not only of the exhibition and the events, but also of the information about documenta 5 ([including] an accessible 'kinetic' catalog, catalog, films, objects, teaching materials, and courses)."[234] Much as the Institute for Direct Art had mimed the language of the educational institution in its moniker and letterhead imprints, in reversed effect the d5 catalog attempted to simulate the looseness of non-institutional movement. It did so by taking up the form of the binder in order to formulate (and formalize) an expanded notion of institutional documentation—documentation geared specifically towards presenting teaching materials and courses; each of the

234. "D5 wird zum ersten Mal als Produzent nicht nur der Ausstellung und der Ereignisse, sondern auch der Information über Documenta 5 auftreten (Begehbarer 'kinetischer' Katalog, Katalog, Filme, Objekte, Lehrbücher, Lehrveranstaltungen)." Translation by author.

catalog's twenty-five sections offers thematic topics for discussion, ranging from play and reality, realism, social realism, and "trivial realism," to advertisements, political propaganda, utopia, and film. The binder format, in other words, put forth an air of experimental reconfigurability, but the terms of this were set by a curatorial control of information. In this way, it shared not only in the appearance, but also in the structural function of the seminar binder, which is kept up by a student under the terms of the instructor's reading selections and course program. This is a particular orientation to pedagogy, one that is informed by the classroom and the university which can be a site of exciting discovery and also a place where knowledge becomes standardized—classical conceptions of *Bildung*, to recall, proposed a canon of objects, images, and texts that everyone should know.[235] In some ways, perhaps d5's evocation of the seminar binder, as opposed to a bound reader, was a response to West German students' en masse rejection of standardization practices in the previous decade, putting forth an expanded, and allegedly reconfigurable, alternative to the "same old" analects.

Yet no matter how radicalizing this expanded pedagogy was intended to be, such a proposition—and such a binder—nonetheless materially followed suit with standardization efforts of the time. Such efforts had in Germany been in effect since the WWI-era when German Institute for Standardization (DIN) paper formats had been adopted by the office supply industry as part of a national, and nationalizing, effort. Such regularization streamlined production, making, for instance, only one screw necessary for hole punching, which could then be used on multiple printing machines. This, in turn, made it possible to systematize the reconfigurability of documents in a binder, which had effects far beyond the war effort, extending into the business sector, as well as the cultural one where it was taken up at educational sites like the university,

235. See my discussion of *Bildung* in chapter one.

and, with Szeemann, the museum.[236] The d5 catalog, to its credit, seemed to merge this history of systematization with interrogations of knowability launched much earlier in Marcel Duchamp's binder works (and echoed in the Institute for Direct Art's non-uniform letterhead imprints), bringing out the fraught potential of democratization.[237] d5's theme, "Questioning (of) Truth," from this perspective, could be seen as picking up on Duchamp's rude and playful critique of the binder's aesthetics of administration—the DIN paper format, the hole punching—and, as the Dada legend and cohorts of postwar artists and filmmakers after him had, turning these aesthetics on their head. This perspective, however, was deflected by the exhibition's ambitions on the geopolitical stage upon which entered; the "questioning of truth" here was specifically linked to ideological sight lines of the liberal democratic West. The "democratization" efforts of the standardized binder, which, ironically, were once part of a nationalizing effort, became the platform for performing a certain kind of internationalism: the internationalism of the West, its "realism," and its boundaries of knowability—contained as they were in the overfilled catalog binder.

Amongst the curators' explanations for this theme, "Questioning (of) Truth," the notion of a "New Realism" was put forth as a means to re-claim realism from the Social Realism of the Communist East, and set it into the gestures and movements of postwar Western European artistic practice (hence also its recurrence across the catalog binder's twenty-five sections). The "Principle of Realism" was yet another title Szeemann proposed for the exhibition; here realism

236. See Gloria Meynen, "Büroformate: Von DIN A4 zu Apollo 11," in *Work & Culture: Büro. Inszenierung von Arbeit*, edited by Eleonora Louis and Herbert Lachmayer, 80–88 (Klagenfurt: Ritter Verlag, 1998); Jürgen Kocka, *Industrial Culture and Bourgeois Society: Business, Labor and Bureaucracy in Modern Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999); and, for a broader overview outside the German context, see Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); and Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Towards a Media History of Documents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

237. See David Joselit, "Dada Diagrams," in *The Dada Seminars*, edited by Leah Dickerman, 221–239 (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005).

was understood to be "concrete" and "literal" exhibitionary display set into motion. Truth, by extension, was disaggregated from static forms of knowledge, such as the traditional encyclopedic display of aesthetic objects, and ostensibly re-aligned to reflect lived experiences—experiences of the city, of the state, of the world. New Realism at once included the aggressive distribution tactics taken up in the interwar period by Dada artists like Duchamp, but also Raoul Hausmann, John Hartmann and George Grosz in the German context, and the postwar quasi-spiritual activities of Yves Klein and others in the French context of *Nouveau Realisme*. Where the former posed incisive critiques of Weimar media culture and the latter implicated their own bodies and the bodies of art's audiences in real-time actions, both were understood in the context of d5's New Realism to be probing at the limits of knowability and Truth.[238]

This capacious understanding of realism depended upon a politic of inclusivity, which extended from the concept of worldview making, to engagement with the West German state's other event cultures. Worldview making, the committee notes express repeatedly, was what connected the artwork and museum to a broader, interdisciplinary sphere of knowledge production, which also included, as Szeemann cited, areas like sociology and information theory. This is what tethered documenta to the international stage; a critical site in the West German state. Szeemann and the d5 co-curators were in particular thinking of the function of documenta in Kassel alongside the Summer Olympics, happening in Munich in 1972. In preparation for the international athletics event, the West German state had established a field of activity moving between Berlin, Munich, and Kiel; Kassel, Szeemann insisted, must also play a role. The entire city—what Szeemann called "documenta Urbana"[239]—came to be part of the show; and the

238. See "Erläuterungen der Austellungsmodell der d5," Mappe 89 "Konzept der d5," documenta Archiv, Kassel.

239. See "Vorentwurf einer Konzpetion für die docuemta 5 in Kassel," Mappe 88 "Material zum Konzept," documenta V, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

attention to all print materials surrounding it, including the catalog binder and press materials, which emphasized collaborations with other sectors of the arts and education, brought a new, highly self-conscious level of audience engagement to the exhibition-as-event.

The "expanded" geopolitical scope and roomy category of New Realism that circumscribed it, in turn, offered for Szeemann and his co-curators both a conceptual basis and an infrastructural model through which to re-configure the exhibitionary structure, taking into its logic the postwar cinemas of attraction that had been developing through networks like that of XSCREEN and other underground spaces. To be in the world in an expanded—an inclusive—way necessitated a different kind of display, and it required that art be placed in a wider context of, as Szeemann called it, worldview-making—a worldview-making, which was based on a particular conception of internationalism with its attendant organizational forms, like the binder. "Art, like other areas of production," the curator explained, "is about the development of 'hard ware' and 'soft ware.'"[240] Recalling Marx's observations on production and the organization of the modes of production, Szeemann—once again taking cues from the Duchampian legacy—claimed that art was not only about the production of objects, but also about the arrangement of the information produced therein and about the attendant systems of communication that made such arrangements visible.[241] Visibility, so important to the underground networks, was here re-configured as media's visibility, or, that is, the making visible of the routes through which media move vis-à-vis "artists' visions," like those of Berlin Dada, *Nouveau Realisme*, and, most recently for Szeemann, Conceptual Art, Fluxus, and other performance networks. Szeemann's formulation obscured the technologies of organization that had been developing within the

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240. Ibid.

241. Ibid.

underground networks, foregrounding instead technologies of production within artistic practice. Indeed, for as much as d5 was touted as frontloading pedagogical exchange, it relied quite heavily on a purely visual—albeit a new kind of "purely visual" perhaps a "purely experiential"—display.

The d5 curators' choice to turn toward the experiential was achieved largely by opening documenta up to closer collaborations with theater and film vis-à-vis partnerships with Frankfurt-based EXPERIMENTA theater festival and the Film Society of Berlin. The former brought with it a ten-day theatre festival, which ran at various sites around Kassel for a week and a half during the hundred-day exhibition. Some of the projects happened in a traditional black box stage of Kassel's state theater house, some on small podium stages in the park outside of the Museum Fridericianum, and some in streets and squares throughout the city. The decision, as EXPERIMENTA organizers Karlheinz Braun and Peter Iden expressed in their notes to the committee, was born out of a recognition of the shared concerns of young forms of visual art and current forms of theatre; it was also, they pointed out, an important moment for coalition building across the arts within the high visibility context of documenta.[242] The latter collaboration brought with it the first robust film program at a documenta exhibition. Alongside EXPERIMENTA's improvisational and proto-postdramatic theater workshops, in the ten-day program were also works of avant-garde film from German filmmakers Alexander Kluge, Edgar Reitz, and Ulrich Gregor. These were made accessible to the exhibition through a documenta and EXPERIMENTA partnership with the Film Society of Berlin, which arranged for copyright

242. "Die Entscheidung begründet sich einerseits aus dem deutlichen Zusammenhang, der zwischen jüngeren Formen derbildenden Kunst und aktuellen Formen des Theaters nachweisbar ist, und andererseits aus kulturpolitischen Überlegungen, die eine optimale Ausnützung der öffentlichen Mittel in einer konzentrierten Anstrengung zweier Organisationen nahelegen." Translation by author. From "Erläuterungen der Austellungsmodell der d5," Mappe 89 "Konzept der d5," documenta V, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

permissions and material loans from the national film library, as well as rentals from the Hamburg and London filmmakers' cooperatives. The connection to the co-ops meant that, also for the first time, there was an experimental film screening program, which included Hamburg-based filmmakers like Werner Nekes and Dore O., as well the Cologne-based duo Birgit and Wilhelm Hein.[243] This theater and film programming were connected directly to other educational mandates that the exhibition had set out for itself. Primarily under the guidance of co-curator Bazon Brock, who had worked with Jean-Jacques Lebel in French Fluxus activities during the 1960s, an "audio-visual foreword" to the exhibition was set up and a visitor's school [*Besuchershcule*] was established. The "foreword" spatialized the themes of the show (each with a section in the catalog binder) in a multiscreen multichannel installation that wrapped around the walls of part of the Fridericeanum's elaborate eighteenth century entrance hall. The screens and sounds immersed viewers in a version of "New Realism," plunging them into the (hyper)realism of mass media. Similarly, the visitor school staged a permanent theater project on the stage of the Hesse State Theater, just across the street from the Fridericeanum. It "expanded" the ten-day program organized by EXPERIMENTA over the one hundred days of the exhibition. Ten theatre groups were invited to circulate through Kassel's state theater every ten days over which time they led workshops and reading groups, as well as staged experimental theatre productions that brought "trained" actors together with untrained d5 visitors. These combinations of public/community, of street theater and "closed" forms of theater, of theater and film, of avant-garde and experimental film, of performance and pedagogy, and of the improvisational, the industrial, and the documentary, as Braun and Iden described elsewhere in their notes to

243. Kren's work appears elsewhere in d5 in the context of Otto Mühl's work in the art and pornography section of the exhibition event.

Szeemann and the committee, played out the notion of documenta Urbana that Szeemann had envisioned.

From Programmer to Curator

Engaging directly with theater and film introduced a new awareness to the shaping of time and experience. If the exhibition was to offer this "expanded"—and inclusive—mode of embodied engagement, it needed a new model that could be recognized as such. This put a new importance on the role of the curator whose job it became to shape the exhibition-goer's experience. Whereas the underground networks' "programmers" (plural) had once held a position akin to this, theirs was more diffuse and contingent. Programmers like Hein and the XSCREEN project, or the various co-ops running across Europe, were producing events, but they did so in the context of an underground ad hoc network. The first co-op in New York had in fact been formed, as its manifesto stated, in protest against the ciné-club model where "gate-keepers" served as curators, or "arbiters," of what could be shown, inevitably privileging (as was claimed) the European historical avant-gardes at the expense of showing new works.[244] In response to that situation, co-op screening events were conceived as part of a kind broader "network action" run on the horizontal model of the distribution catalog. Experiences certainly happened at those screening sites, and spectacular ones to be sure—call to mind the 1968 Underground Explosion in Cologne—but they lacked a totalizing authorial vision. As aggregate platforms they attempted to circumvent a value system predicated on tastemakers, instead pulling

244. Amos Vogel uses these words to describe why he was shut out of the Filmmakers' Cooperative formed by Jonas Mekas and others in 1961—a rejection that Vogel expressed disappointment about. See Vogel's interview with Scott McDonald in *Cinema 16: Documents Towards a History of the Film Society*, 37–62 (Boston, MA: Temple University Press, 2002).

together films and film audiences from across genres, across geographies, across constituencies, as they negotiated fraught sets of alliances with both institutional sites and alternative ones.

Already by the early 1970s such network actions had become increasingly absorbed into the exhibition-as-event approach; but this process of absorption was by no means one-sided. As Braun and Iden had pointed out, high visibility platforms like that of documenta were crucial to coalition-building across groups that might otherwise never know about one another. Once circulating on these platforms, though, the skill of shaping a "total" aesthetic experience, which included theater and magazine art and conceptual art installations and film, became the task of an expert whose profession it was to craft convenings as a conductor might craft the soundscape of an orchestra. This shift suggested a different framework of labor relations built upon a partitioning of specialized knowledge, with the labor of co-curators and collaborators subsumed under a unifying authorial vision.[245] It also, importantly, marked a calcification of specific standards and protocols—what Pierre Bourdieu has called "criteria of evaluation"—by which to arrange cultural objects and also to experience an event as aesthetic. The "artist's vision" that Szeemann's d5 privileged was thus mirrored in the centrality of his own vision as curator—and quite a vision it was. Szeemann's radically interdisciplinary style and interest in the experimental is today the stuff of legend in the art world, garnering exhibitions in their own right.[246] The curator became an auteur in his own right, known for both the particular artists with which he worked, as well as for his particular methods of *eventing* the exhibition form.

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245. The election of Szeemann as General Secretary came out of critiques of the 1968 documenta IV, which was the last to be organized by a large committee led administratively by documenta founder Arnold Bode.

246. Drawing on ideas put forth in Conceptual artist Daniel Buren's analysis of the exhibition as well as Barbara Rose's review of it, Bruce Altshuler's entry on documenta V in his encyclopedia *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that made Art History* aptly points out that the artistic strategies were taken up by Szeemann as curatorial strategies, which, Altshuler claims, was one of the most significant curatorial contributions of the exhibition. See Altshuler, "10: Documenta 5," 157–174 (and reprints of Buren's "Exhibition of an Exhibition" and Rose's "Document of an Age" therein).

Events that Make it Above Ground
d6 and Experimental Film

Szeemann's curator-as-auteur model, though, was only one that emerged from the absorption of inter- and multi-media experimentation into the exhibition-as-event model. At the next documenta in 1977 (d6)—known as the "media documenta"—another, more rhizomatic model was instantiated. Within this framework the position of the programmer was maintained but subsumed under the purview of the "system plan" set out by the event producer and his curatorial team. Manfred Schneckenburger, the "producer" of d6, and his co-organizers panned out from the artist—and curatorial—visions that had defined the enthusiastic, almost euphoric, spirit of discovery that characterized d5. In its place, they launched an inquiry into the shifting mediums and "mediascapes" of art production. Where Szeemann and his co-curators had sought to imaginatively juxtapose practices in a kind of 1960s-esque total vision of the "expanded arts," the 1977 iteration attempted to slowly pick it all back apart, deconstructing the "expanded" by examining overlapping technologies in the spheres of production and distribution. Such a move, to recall Michalka's observation, transformed the framework for a thematic curatorial endeavor, foregrounding media/medium form and the attendant communication technologies. In the process, understanding of what kinds of expertise were needed when and where in regard to identifying the medium and the media of a work was drastically expanded. The question was no longer posed as how to *curate* such an exhibition, but, instead, how to *produce* a wide-ranging technologically "plugged in" event.[247] The concomitant shift from "curator" to "producer" had a

247. The overwhelming presence of papers on collecting, conserving, and exhibiting media art at 2013 symposium accompanying the Nam June Paik retrospective at the Smithsonian Institute showed that such questions are still be reckoned with in museum and arts institutions. Paik's work, it should be noted, was also present at d6 alongside

series of effects: the exhibition producer outsourced labor to medium-based specialists, thus reconstituting medium as a central concern and reconfiguring it to be inclusive by systematically accounting for the expansion and proliferation of what would now be called "medium-concepts."[248] It was as a medium-concept that viewing practices for experimental film would become legible as distinct from those of commercial film.

Problem Fields, Translation, and Value

At the foundation of d6 was what Schneckenburger and his co-curators identified as "problem fields" [*Problemfelder*], which explored the emergence of new—and reconsideration of old—"media-concepts." Taking up medium as a historical development, the committee linked formal issues to technologies and their attendant industries. Extending back to the printing press—that technology, to recall, that was changed by standardized hole punching for binders—and coming up to live broadcast television—another site of experimental film, as Kren's *29/73 Readymade* had rudely and playfully enacted—d6 attempted to map genealogies of these "problem fields" of media, cutting across the various industry standards associated with each medium (painting, sculpture, film, bookmaking, design, and so forth) and presenting them all in the context of the time-based exhibition event. One of the exhibition's primary concerns in this cutting across was to identify the position and function of "artistic practices between image and reality" [*künstlerische Praxis zwischen Bild und Wirklichkeit*]—between, in other words, image technologies and something like Szeemann's worldview making. The "problem fields" created in

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works by both his contemporaries, like Vito Acconci, Ant Farm, Chris Burden, Anthony McCall, and Michael Snow, as well as figures from the historical avant-gardes like Hans Richter and László Moholy-Nagy.

248. From "Public Press Statement," Mappe 55 "Konzept der d6," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

the course of such developments, though, posed serious difficulties to the museological task of identifying artistic production and displaying it for viewers. How could a medium-concept be practically exhibited for audiences? And what was the value of artistic production that laid emphasis on these very problem fields? The terror of mediums indeed.

Artistic production, d6 postulated, had become a process of translation—art a mediation, a mediator, and a medium (in the material and spiritual senses) shuttling between images and reality, media and mediums. Under such conditions, as d5 had elucidated in its alternative title "Content becomes Form," distribution and exhibition were now critical components of production as the sites at which translation occurred. It was at these sites of translation, as the d6 committee notes went on to describe, that "the value and place of art in a world of reproductions" were articulated.[249] Walter Benjamin's 1935–36 "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," evidenced in this note, emerged repeatedly elsewhere in committee conversations as well. Readings of the interwar German theorist's canonical essay, though never published in his own lifetime, were then circulating in the realm of German media theory and such readings became a touchstone for approaching these issues of medium/media.[250] Benjamin's text and its contemporary interpretations operated as a guide for the d6 organizers' careful deconstruction of the barriers between manual production, technical production, and technical reproduction. By returning to Benjamin's ruminations on communication and proximity, which circled around the concept of the aura, Schneckenburger and the committee

249. "Thema sind die kunstlerischen Entwicklungen der 70er Jahre…und ihr spezifischer Beitrag zur Problemdarstellung und –verarbeitung der Gegenwart: Stellenwert und Standort der Kunst in einer reproduzierten Welt. Perspectivee der documenta 6 sind die Veränderungen der Kunst im Spannungsfeld einer Mediengesellschaft," Mappe 55 "Konzept der d6," documenta VI "Vorbemerkung," documenta Archiv, Kassel, Germany.

250. Such references appear, for instance, across the "Ergebnisse-Protokoll" (dated June 26/27, 1975), as well as in an untitled and unsigned short essay dated June 24, 1975; both documents are in Mappe 55 "Konzept der d6," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

grappled with the issue of value and evaluation: What was the value of this recent turn to translation in artistic production? And how was that to be communicated—that is, exhibited—without being transformed into ideological dictates like (the committee notes explicitly cited) those of Social Realism? Invoking Social Realism as its foil, as Szeemann had five years prior, made it clear that even as the discussion was being shifted from discovery to evaluation, it was still be formulated in relation to the international West's other. Meanwhile, above ground, where they were necessarily being posed from the top down, questions of visibility and legibility (of, that is, translation, communication, and exhibition) presented differently than they had in the underground networks. Above ground they were transposed into a marketplace—where medium becomes and industry—and interpolated into new protocols of evaluation.

It was a paradoxical set of queries for a high visibility, "taste-making" institutional platform like documenta to be asking. Closely reading parts of Benjamin's canonic essay alongside more recent media studies texts like Marshall McLuhan's "The Medium is the Message" or Boris Eichenbaum's Russian formalist thinking, d6 organizers bracketed off the German theorist's political project—like, for instance, the closing aphorisms on aesthetics and politics. When read alongside his 1934 "The Author of Producer," for instance, the "Work of Art" essay could have taken on a very different meaning. Contextually the earlier essay had been written for presentation at the Institute for the Study of Fascism, but it was never delivered. Why? Because of its critique of its own constituency: the intellectual class. As Benjamin wrote in that never presented lecture, citing Brecht, the demand must be for "functional transformation," or, that is, systemic change wherein "certain works ought no longer be individual experiences (have the character of works) but should, rather, concern the use

(transformation) of certain institutes and institutions."[251] Not only was this a paradoxical task for documenta as an institution to engage, but it was also a tall order for the broader institution of art and the attendant practices of evaluation in which the exhibition was situated. It simply would not be possible for a site like documenta—the very function of which was to value certain individual practices and, now, their "expanded" forms—to move away from the "character of works." Instead, the d6 organizers moved further into the "character of works," examining how they mined meaning from the world of mass media communication.[252] With the political project of Benjamin thus bracketed off, they could focus on his insights into mass media communication, shifting questions about expanding distribution and exhibition—those questions being enacted in the underground cinema networks as they had been asked by Benjamin in 1934—into expanded institutional space. This had the effect of a depoliticization and subsequent repoliticization of tactile reception and viewing practice. It was a mode of engagement based on a historical approach to media, from the printing press to television. Placing technology, rather than artistic vision (as Szeemann had done), at the center of the exhibition-as-event form, the exhibition tracked the trajectories of this "plugged in" production, and objects ranged from the fine arts to design. Being tracked, in other words, were medium characteristics defined, and grouped, by their technological apparatuses.

Interlude: Dogumenta, the Phantom of d6

251. Bertolt Brecht, quoted in Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume II, Part 2, 1931–1934*, edited by Michael W. Jennings et al., 768–782 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), 774.

252. "Ergebnisse-Protokoll" (dated June 26/27, 1975), Mappe 55 "Konzept der d6," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

On the train from Vienna to Kassel in the spring of 1977 with longtime friend Trude Rinde, a photographer and avid dog lover, Kren produced *35/77 Dogumenta*, the phantom of d6; a rude and playful jab at its anxieties over medium and meaning-making. Much as Benjamin had lobbed a critique at the institutions that supported his work, so too did Kren at this institutional order of the museum. In the enigmatic *35/77* he combined slide and reel projection to display for audiences larger-than-life images of dogs with halos hovering over their heads. The film, as in *24/70 Western*, was a recording of still images, but in this case they were images of Rinde's and other friend's pets; and the slides held on them hand scratched drawings of ovular shapes, which when projected onto the film projection read as halos hovering over the wrinkly, furry heads of hounds. Though there are no records of the work's installation at d6 anywhere outside of Kren's own personal notebook and a postcard circulated ten years later, the installation-that-maybe-never-was highlights a breakdown in communication, a meaninglessness of translation. Here, as in so many of his projects, the limits of knowability—that Adornian revision of *Bildung* that had been at the basis of the Viennese scene in Kren's earlier years—were foregrounded. Such a move ran headlong into the general pedagogical goals of the d6 exhibition, and, specifically, into the project of making "experimental film" legible within that structure. *35/77*'s tongue-in-cheek play on the word "documenta" in its title immediately signaled a kind of suspicion of institutional legibility and of the seriousness with which it treated media communication. *Dogumenta* was, instead, like a proto-formation of the twenty-first century cats of YouTube phenomenon.[253] And

253. Though there are no records of Kren's installation in either the documenta Archiv or the Birgit Hein Papers, an installation view of the project appeared in a mail art postcard project published as the seventh issue of the Los Angeles-based film journal *Spiral*. The postcard reproduced a tightly cropped image of a wrinkly-faced hound with a halo over his head. UC Santa Cruz archive of *Spiral*, a journal published by Terry Cannon in Pasadena, CA during his tenure as direct of the LA Filmforum.

like the YouTube cats, it utilized the most ubiquitous of technologies, employing a slide projector and a film projector to no particular end.

Nonetheless, *35/77* brought together technology in all the rights ways; such combinatory strategies were widely used in practices at the time—in practices like those of Anthony McCall or Michael Snow, for instance, which did appear in d6. The "slide projection," as was described in a 2004 exhibition on the technology and these 1960s and 1970s practices, "represented a common 'language' that the general public could understand…."[254] A general public could understand it because, like the binder, it was a familiar prop from the classroom, an object of the educational structure. The slide projector offered accessibility and familiarity, but also made possible different kinds of combinations and juxtapositions, which could unfold in a temporal structure other than that of seamless narrative time. The rotation of projected slide images through the carousel enacted a similar perceptual awareness of the frame, the editing, and, concomitantly, the dual materiality of the apparatus and of the thing represented. The slide projection functions analogously, making its viewers aware not only of the materialist qualities of the slide image, but also of the projector itself, which assumed a prominent sculptural position in the configuration of space (versus, for instance, in conventional film projection wherein the equipment is typically hidden from viewers in a projection booth). Vis-à-vis the projector (slide and film), artists were introducing a range of new material to public visibility, from fantastic engagements with trash (Smith), to the apparatus' own light patterns (McCall), to domestic images of the national "other" (Höffer).[255] *35/77* draws on all of this as well—the accessibility offered by the slide projector, the sculptural foregrounding of the apparatus, and so forth—but

254. Darsie Alexander's "Slide Show" quoted in Amy A. DaPonte, "Candida Höfer's Türken in Deutschland as 'Counter-publicity,'" *Art Journal* (Winter 2016): 17– 39, 34.

255. See DaPonte, "Candida Höfer's Türken in Deutschland as 'Counter-publicity."

pushes such techniques into the too familiar.[256] In Kren's hands the slide projection did not function as a means to introduce viewers to difficult and/or unfamiliar material; instead, the familiar gave way to the more familiar, to maudlin overfamiliarity.

While *35/77* remains shrouded in the uncertainties of history, the story of *Dogumenta* and the little known about it vis-à-vis Kren's notes raises numerous questions around the status of an event—the status of a critical viewing project—and its position within the underground network versus the above ground exhibition model. Aphorism XVIII in Benjamin's "Work of Art" essay, to return to a touchstone for d6 organizers, would seem to offer some insight here: "*For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at historical turning points cannot be performed solely by optical means—that is, by way of contemplation. They are mastered gradually—taking their cue from tactile reception—through habit*."[257] Implicitly drawing on his own earlier readings of Brecht's concept of *Gestus*, or gesture (as well as Brecht's own writings), Benjamin's dictum draws attention to the choreographic and embodied means by which what is being seen becomes informed by how it is being seen. Film, of course, was his preeminent example throughout. Its turn away from aura—outside of classic Hollywood production system, that is, which reified aura through the celebrity system and other such mechanisms—carried the potential to foreground this tactile reception. What Benjamin could not have foreseen was the absorption of such ideas, which harken back to the vaudeville days of the cinema of attraction (as

256. The slide projector figured largely in the expanded cinema experiments of which Kren had at times been a part. Recall the "1973" Hein home footage film with Kren and Jack Smith sitting in the Hein's living room—the performances Smith would do in Cologne during that period employed a slide projector in combination with reel projection. Also in other practices, such as those of Anthony McCall or Candida Höffer who also both using the projector to very different ends. See Darsie Alexander et al., "Slide Show: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art" exhibition at the Walker Art Center in 2004; Chrissie Iles's "Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art" exhibition at the Whitney Museum in 2001; and George Baker et al., "Round Table: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *October* 104 (Spring 2003): 71–96

257. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Media Writings*, edited by Michael W. Jennings et al., 19–55 (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the University of Harvard Press), 40.

Brecht had in his admiration for early Charlie Chaplin), by another institutional framework: the institution of documenta, as the d6 committee worked out the terms of a visual arts production system—and, in particular, the terms of its production of time-based exhibition events.

The medium is the message indeed, and what a terror it can be. Interrogations into the cinematic apparatus and its institutional order—some of the foundational ideas the cinema of attraction for the nuclear age—were all about the relation of bodies to spaces it occupies; one can recall the U-Bahn station where the Underground Explosion was held. The reconfiguration of screening space in the subway tunnel was socio-spatial and formal in an exhibition sense: the pedestal-cum-projection-stand in the center of the room with the audience surrounding it. But it was this tactile reception mixed with the "dangerous" content that drew legal measures. Delimited to formal exhibition shifts and their engagements, or counter-engagements, with different industrial standards of media communication, underground cinema could be experimental film a formal exploration of viewing practice. *Dogumenta* rudely and playfully jabs at this, using all of the correct technologies, but to what end, the installation-that-maybe-never-was asks. Media visibility through the cooperatives, the college circuit, and explosive scenes of the underground was crucial to the development of the networks that connected underground cinema scenes. Textual circulation in particular played a central role in cultivating media visibility and articulating—that is, making legible—the language of underground film, aesthetically, economically, and politically.[258] Through print media efforts like those examined in the previous two chapters, the underground came above by way of the press box (recall Kren's *23/69 Underground Explosion*). The recording, reporting, and reviewing happening in writings from Hein, to Kochenrath and Patalas, and others, circled around programming—what kinds of

258. See my discussion of newspaper coverage in chapter two; to recall, coverage of underground cinema events appeared regularly alongside political events, particularly the Vietnam War and other decolonial struggles.

events were these underground networks assembling? How was cinema being performed otherwise? Links between this kind of media visibility and institutional medium legibility at a mega-site like documenta, however, produced certain crises for critical-political projects like that of the XSCREEN group; or, it at least re-framed them—as the Marx Brothers film had *Casablanca*; as the WDR documentary had Groucho Marx's letters, as Kren's appropriation had the WDR footage—making them contingent on something other.

Establishing Arbeitsgruppen

In order to get some traction on the medium-concepts and their problem fields, d6 laid out a system plan with working groups devoted to the different medium-concepts. In this framework specialists were brought in to curate each area, under the largely (though not exclusively) administrative purview of Schneckenburger. The working groups [*Arbeitsgruppen*] accommodated the wide-ranging diversity of technologies employed and deployed in the exhibition event; but, in the process, they also produced unwieldy classifications like "art that reflects another medium," or other categories that would appear to be stable but were here made unwieldy, such as a section on "photography" which showed more concern for moving images than still ones.[259] Kren's *35/77 dogumenta* stands as an example of such work—the slide projector a technology of artistic production that intentionally collapsed the distinction between "still" and "moving." This yoking together of concrete, logistical distribution and exhibition

259. Committee notes working through how to think about the individual medium and the connections, overlaps, and relations between them (their histories, their concerns, their strategies); I have pulled two of nine of the elements with the "system plan": II. "Kunst, die ein anderes Medium reflektiert (Stichwort: Mediendoppelung – Kombination);" and VIII. "siehe VII (Medium Fotografie); ganze gewiß ist es nicht Aufgabe der documenta 6, eine Filmgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts anzubieten, um die 'Gleichberechtigung' des Mediums Film zu demonstrieren. Die Grenze liegt da, wo wir das Profil der aktuellen Szene retrospektiv nivellieren, was nicht nu rim Bereich der Malerei, sonder auch in anderen Bereichen gefährlich ware." See "Vorläufige Materialsammlung und Entwurf zu einem System," Mappe 55 "Konzept der d6," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

needs with the notion of medium can be understood as the development of a technology of organization, which responded to technologies of artistic production like the slide projector. These unwieldy categories (nine of which the d6 organizers came up with in preliminary notes) eventually settled into twelve working groups: Painting, Sculpture, Material Environments, Video Installation, Experimental Film, Drawing, Utopian Design, Photography, Artist Books, Performance and Actions, Cinema, Video and Television. Some of the working groups' fields were clearly distinguishable—painting or sculpture or drawing seemed to be so, for instance—but several overlapped in various combinations, from Drawing and Artist Books, Material Environments and Utopian Design, to Video Installation and Video and Television or Video and Television and Performance and Actions or Performance Actions and Cinema.[260] How were these medium-concepts distinguishable? By the different routes they took.

Though d5 had been the first documenta to include a program of noncommercial film, it was in 1977 that the implications of this multi-media dimensionality within exhibitionary space were fully realized. It was as if this point of realization was also the source of the "problem fields"—the more questions asked about the medium-concept from both logistical and conceptual perspectives, the more such mediums seemed to transform into concepts. Film and video, for instance, shared the qualities of the moving image, but their performances of these images differed enormously. Each had its attendant apparatus—the projector and screen, and the monitor alluded to earlier—so each moved through different paths of communication technologies. The complexities of a given medium, accordingly, had to be understood within broader questions of media and different kinds of engagement with it. This division had less to

260. These working groups are all listed out, with the artists represented in each, in the d6 exhibition brochure, which would have been freely distributed to attendees. In the brochure, numerous artists are listed within two or more of the working groups. See documenta VI press materials, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

do with technologies of production than with standards for viewing practices, not something that would appear to be inherent to the medium and yet crucial to the medium-concepts. Such collisions and distinctions seemed to make explicit the imbrications of medium and communication technologies, as Schneckenburger and his co-organizers had devised à la Benjamin.

In re-shaping the classificatory map of artistic strategies in terms of medium-concepts d6 took up the "hard ware" and "soft ware" that Szeemann had explored in his notes for d5 as foundational forces. Foundational to the conception of the form of the works, the medium-concepts, and to the reorganization of the technologies of organization through which such medium-concepts could be identified and articulated vis-à-vis exhibitionary display. The exhibition event thus fragmented into a highly choreographed series of events (plural) coordinated by a complex scaffold of working group "organizers" and "members." These divisions of labor that accompanied the divisions of medium-concepts created numerous tensions—more problems emanating from the "problem fields"—in regard to which medium-concept held claims to which technologies of production, which technologies of organization, and which artists and artistic trends. Nowhere was this more true than in the realm of film and cinema, or "Experimental Film" and "Cinema (Filme der 70er Jahre)", as the working groups were called, or "Film As Film" [Film Als Film] and "Film as Art" [Film Als Kunst], as they were referred to in much of the press materials, including exhibition catalog texts.[261]

261. Such attempts at classification are echoed in contemporary attempts to establish new departmental standards in the museum for the purposed of collecting and conserving works of art. See my "Museums(') & Media," paper presented at the University of California, Berkeley Film and Media Studies Graduate Student Conference, Berkeley, CA, September 23, 2016; and Mansfield, Michael et al., *Conserving and Exhibiting the Works of Nam June Paik*, conference proceedings at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C., June 26, 2013.

"Film Als Film" and "Film Als Kunst"

The lines between "cinema" and "experimental film" had everything to do with the boundaries between "commercial" and "noncommercial" spheres of film distribution—divisions that had produced the underground cinema networks associated with the cooperative movement since the early 1960s. In 1961, it should be remembered, the FMC had formed in New York as a protest against curatorial control of the screening event, but when the co-op form reached Europe en masse in 1967 it took up another character. In the European context the question of the curator was rarely raised and major figures in the co-ops scene like Birgit Hein (who was not tied to any one co-operative) were preoccupied with economically carving out space for noncommercial film screening events through these new, underground networks of distribution and their tentative alliances with state, commercial market, and activist forces. Hein had written at some length about this in the introduction to her 1970 *Film im Underground*; it had been at the core of demonstrations organized by the AFMC; but by 1977, ten years later, these networks gave way to a new form of curatorial control, now in the space of the visual art museum's exhibition event, rather than in the ciné-club movie house monthly program.

Ideas from Annette Michelson's work in "Film the Radical Aspiration" and Peter Wollen's "Two Avant-Gardes" echoed, not as outright politically-motivated, but, rather, as aesthetic guideposts for interpolating the medium-concepts of cinema—that is questions of distribution—as distinct from film in the museum. The artificiality of such a division was recognized a few months before the opening of d6 by Schneckenburger when he wrote to Hein, "I have the feeling that the film program will be somewhere between medium purism and cinema."[262] Schneckenburger's recognition of the hybrid nature of the ways in which

262. Manfred Schneckenberger to Ulrich Gregor, February 9, 1977, Communications in "Kino der 70er Jahre," Box d6, Mappe 68 "Arbeitsgruppe," documenta Archiv, Kassel. Translation by the author.

experimental film performed as cinema was a recognition of the strange way that film and cinema had become allocated as divergent medium-concepts in the exhibition event. Shortly after expressing this observation to Hein, Schneckenburger wrote again, this time to Ulrich Gregor, co-organizer of the Cinema working group's program, asking: "Do you see no possibility to dedicate a subsection [of the "Film in der 70er Jahre" program] to these filmmakers, at least as far as they were not extensively represented at earlier documentas? Would we not then close a noticeable gap between Hein's puritanical program and your exquisite feature film program?"[263] Schneckenburger's relatively last minute concern for this "noticeable gap" may have been a byproduct of the working group format, which divided up labor in such a way as to obscure commonalities and outright overlaps between the medium-concepts, particularly when it came to divergent industry practices. In any case, his request to Gregor was successful and sections on Andy Warhol and his Factory and film cooperative groups from Brazil, France, and the United States, were added to the Cinema working group's program.

Such inclusions were discussed at length by Peter Jansen, Gregor's co-organizer of the Cinema program, in his essay "Difference and Disintegration: Film of the 1970s." Speaking directly to shifts in production/process of manufacture [*Herstellungverfahren*] and reception (most directly, the growing prevalence of television), Jansen proclaimed that the resulting decline of the film industry [*Kinoindustrie*] had driven forth the emancipation of film from cinema [*der Emanzipierung des Films von Kino*] in its conventional feature-length narrative form. The influence of these developments had become so pervasive, Jansen continued, that they

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263. "Sehen Sie keine Möglichkeit, diesen Filmemachern, wenigstens soweit sie nich ausführlich auf früheren documenten vertreten waren, eine Subsektion zu widmen? Würden wir damit nich eine spürbare Lücke zwischen dem puritischen Programm der Heins und Ihrem vorzüglichen Spielfilm-Programm schließen?" Translation by author. See untitled letters for "Kino der 70er Jahre" (dated 08. März 1977), Mappe 68 "Arbeitsgruppe," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

had begun to influence the emergence of new film industries identified as "off-Hollywood" and/or "new Hollywood." The impact of this was a change in the concept of the narrative, which became more of a reflection process, and the function of the filmmaker, who became an author as in the "originary case" (Jansen claimed) of New German Cinema. Cases like the New American Cinema Group (the FMC in New York) or Warhol's Factory were leading examples of this change, performing an "about-face to the commercial usability of film" [*eine Kehrtwendung zur kommerziellen Verwertbarkheit*] in cinema. They were two very different models of counter-industry and yet both re-negotiated funding structures of cinema, eventually producing economies of circulation for such work. That both were now in documenta within the Cinema working group made this clear.

For all that Birgit Hein had written about the funding structures and industry standards for noncommercial film, which Jansen's essay recounted, the Experimental Film working group program reflected little of this. Instead, it focused on the artist/filmmakers individual projects and the place of experimental film "as a new medium of art."[264] Hein's essay, "Film about Film" [*Film über Film*], outlined the historical development of this experimental film form, suppressing a discussion of the economies of circulation in favor of a focus on the lineages tethering film to painting, beginning with figures from the historical avant-gardes like László Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, Fernand Léger, and Hans Richter, and moving up to postwar production of artists and filmmakers like Tony Conrad, Malcolm LeGrice, Kurt Kren, Nam June Paik, and Michael Snow. Hein's primary goal seemed to be to uphold a distinction between commercial and noncommercial spheres of film by situating experimental film as a form of cinema performed in the visual arts sectors. From the early twentieth century, she argued, the focus had been on

264. Birgit Hein to various artists, c. 1977, communications for "Experimentalfilm," Box d6, Mappe 69 "Arbeitsgruppen," documenta Archiv, Kassel.

distinguishing film from literature and theater, but by the 1970s the focus had shifted to distinguishing commercial film from (noncommercial) film in visual art. The artists mentioned above and others who were included in the Experimental Film program, thus, were described as engaging with film as a pure visual system [*als rein visuelles system*] and exploring its functionality [*untersuchen dessen Funktionsweise*] as a kind of abstract framework therein. In this process, "the conditions of the medium [became] its materiality" [*Bedingungen des Mediums werden seine 'Materialität'*][265]—an idea that had animated the development of structural film and subsequent Expanded Cinema practices and reflected by the *ad hoc* screening event forms through which they circulated.

The next step in this development, Hein continued, was "film work that no longer stays fixed within the photographic projection but plays with light and shadow, actions in front of the projection, and the extension of the projection into space."[266] Such a historical overview had also been present in Hein's 1970 *Film im Underground* but there, as "underground" activity, aesthetic concerns were folded together with the economic ones suppressed in the documenta catalog essay. This focus on aesthetic materiality reframed questions of economic circulation as "installation" costs rather than "distribution" ones; this much was evidenced in the binders of correspondences exchanged between Schneckenburger and Hein in regard to the film programs. Logistically, as a series of communications from Hein explained, there were multiple expenditures involved in and technologies necessary for the production of an experimental film

265. See "Film über Film," Mappe 68 "Arbeitsgruppe: Kino der 70er Jahre," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

266. "diese Arbeit mit Film bleibt nicht mehr auf die fotographische Wiedergabe und die Fixierung auf die Leinwand beschränkt, sonder sie schließt Lichtprojektionen und Schattenspiele, Aktionen vor der Leinwand und die Ausweitung der Projektion auf den gesamten Raum…" See "Film über Film," Mappe 68 "Arbeitsgruppe: Kino der 70er Jahre," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

event that highlighted the installation elements (reserving rooms for the presentation of special programs which required specific screening conditions), the filmic screening elements (a projection screen versus a white wall), and the scheduling elements (arranging filmmaker on-site visits, including provisions for airfare and accommodations, as well as a shifting scale for honoraria depending on the status of the filmmaker). Hein's d6 daily program, as her prospective budget showed, required 4000DM alone for projectors and more for the special-built projection walls, making film prints for the permanent program component of the working group's display, as well as the stipend and travel support.[267] There were many more moving parts than were necessary in the Cinema working group program, which happened exclusively in the black box theater next door to the Fridericianum. The Experimental Film program, though, happened only in part in the movie house where a daily screening schedule (including Kren's *29/73 Readymade*) accompanied intricate installations spread out across two floors of the Fridericianum's galleries. These installations, like those of the Material Environments working group, were Art.

Hein's choices in leaving out a discussion of distribution were certainly strategic. One the one hand they reflected her own interests in establishing practices from underground cinema within the history of art (which had been her own field of training); and, on the other hand, they reflected the ethos of the cooperatives, which centered the filmmakers—a part of the co-ops that could not be accounted for in a schematic outline of industry standards and funding structures as Jansen had laid out. Rather than focus on such infrastructures, here Hein chose to foreground this

267. For instance, numerous documents appear in regard to reservations for the Apollosaal in the Fridericianum-adjacent Orangerie for Michael Snow's work, which needed a projection screen; in this case, the white walls in the Fridericianum galleries were sufficient for short films but not for longer projects that needed a separate space per the filmmakers' specifications. Moreover, in correspondences, a sliding scale of fees were negotiated: Heinz Emigholz requested a 500DM honorarium, Snow 1000DM plus airfare, and Peter Gidal 900DM. Hein also working with other institutions to arrange screenings and in-person appearance in other German cities as well, which would have helped to offset some of the costs. See untitled letters in "Experimentalfilm," Mappe 69 "Arbeitsgruppen," documenta VI, documenta Archiv, Kassel.

set of artist-filmmakers and their role at all stages of the work, from production to screening, given the specificity of the projection situation. It was this 'projection situation' that had in part changed the ways cinema was being performed (its technologies of organization), but that connection was not ever quite made explicit because of the division of cinema across medium-concepts. It was an attempt to draw out that context that must have prompted Schneckenburger to describe Hein's as a "puritanical program" and seek ways to make present the technologies of organization that had been informed by the formal shifts, which Hein went to great lengths to isolate and highlight.

This move was grounded in a debate over content initiated two years earlier at the Edinburgh Film Festival's "Avant-Garde Event." The festival event included screenings, as well as a seminar and panel discussion. Discussants included Hein, Peter Wollen, Joyce Wieland, and Marc Kalin, and other presenters ranged from Yvonne Rainer to Annette Michelson. For the panel Hein presented the essay "Avant-Garde and Politics," which steadfastly refuted narrative-based film as political: "It is one of the most important and most necessary steps, in a discussion about the social function of art, to free it from demands it cannot fulfill, and which lies beyond its range of work." These demands, Hein went on to assert, were for content-based social function. Citing El Lissitszky's 1913 statement regarding the revolutions "needed in order to free artists from the obligations of moral, [and] the narrative…" against a 1967 statement from East Germany on the arts as "irreplaceable spiritual means in a society," Hein made the point that moral content cannot be the measure of politics in film. This, it is clear, was a debate over Leftist politics as they were informing not just discourse, but also screening sites like, for instance, the Hamburger Film Festival, which in 1973 had, instead, become a hub for political, primarily documentary, film, which many media reviews cited as a shift away from the "aesthetic"

concerns that had dominated in previous years.[268] Her position against such "political" moves recalled much of the critical-political task of the XSCREEN Studio, which had navigated interests between the state and activist forces in a politic informed by mistrust of instrumentalization. Ironically, in spite of all her organizing work in those years with arts institutions—the Underground Explosion collaboration with the Cologne Art Fair stands as a clear example of this—Hein seemed to overlook that leaving behind one institutional order behind meant entering another.

Conclusion
"Film Als Film" and Cinema's Performances

Hein moved forward with this position. A year after d6, in 1978, Wulf Herzognerath, the curator of the Kölnischer Kunstverein (where Szeemann's "Happenings and Fluxus" show had happened in 1970), invited her to collaborate with him on an exhibition of the experimental film form that the Experimental Film working group had exhibited. The exhibition, "Film as Film: From 1910 to Today" [*Film Als Film: Von 1910 bis Heute*], adopted the title of Peter Jansen's d6 catalog essay, trading in the "about" [*über*] of Hein's own d6 essay for the "as" [*als*]. The show featured screenings and film performances, alongside installation of cameras, film prints, contact sheets, editing scores, and so forth. These objects appeared on the walls, in vitrines, and in display boards set up around the museum's interior. As Hein later reflected, this was just one possibility that countered, perhaps most visibly, film as Hollywood (or other) movie house

268. For instance, see reviews such as Wolf Donner's "Broschüren und Analysen," *Die Zeit*, June 8, 1973, and Claudia Klaussen's "Monotone Strickmuster der Agitation: 'Anti-kommerzielles' auf Hamburger Filmschau," *Die Welt*, June 6, 1973, both of which are in box 4, folder "Propaganda (c. 1971–77)," Birgit Hein Papers, Marzona Collection, Archiv der Avantgarden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

narrative. Another possibility, she continued, would have been permanent film screenings.[269] In bringing film into the museum in this way, she helped to rigidify a form-based approach to the moving image and modes of exhibitionary display possible over extended durations. Such modes of display would become a staple of the exhibitionary model decades later; in the meantime, though, this transition shut down the underground cinema network altogether or, at least, rendered it an above ground set of distribution sites—museums, after all, could also rent from cooperatives—for experimental film.

Abstracted as experimental film, Kren's work—like Hein's programming—took on different valences, his editing techniques coming to take precedence over the media cultures he was so often recording. Nowhere was this more apparent than in his canonical works of structural filmmaking, all of which were featured in the d6 screening program and the "Film Als Film" exhibition. *31/75 Asyl* was the first of these films, the others being *32/76 An W+B*, which was shot from the window of the Heins' apartment, and *33/76 Keine Donau*, a portrait of the changing weather in the interior of an apartment block in Cologne. Shot at a house in the countryside outside Cologne owned by Hans-Peter Kochenrath and made over a period of twenty-one days between mid-March and early April, the eight-minute silent film mapped out the weather changes in a twinkling, mosaic-like field. At its start *31/75* is a blank, black screen, but within a few seconds two disconnected and extremely desaturated whitish-blue spots pierce through the blank screen in the upper left corner—it is, at this point, hard to know if these spots are a recording of something or an accidental exposure of the film stock to the light. Two more spots appear, now along the bottom edge of the frame; then two more in the upper right corner. And wait. One of the spots in the upper left has also changed: it has grown and transformed

269. From conversation with the author, April 17, 2017.

shape. Something is becoming visible. The desaturated whitish-blue spots are tree branches against a pale, cloudy sky. Once that is apparent grass also becomes recognizable in the elongated spot along the bottom edge of the frame. Several seconds later even more spots appear, revealing more information: Those are definitely trees along the top. The grass is greener. There is a fence that is at once edged with the grass and with snow. More and more information accumulates; sometimes it is new and others it is the same details but with greater focus: there are trees with branches and more branches and now a trunk. The blank screening is slowly changing, slowly getting filled in. This reveal is not picking up speed though. It plods along at a steady pace, and as the image piece-by-piece gradually appears it becomes easier for a spectator's eye to fill in the blanks, to connect the spots. A pastoral landscape appears at times with snow falling upon it and, at the same moment, with the green of the grass glimmering under an overcast but brilliant sky.

As A.L. Rees explained in his description for the London Filmmakers' Cooperative distribution catalog:

> every day for twenty-one days, a landscape is shot from a fixed position with the same three thirty-metre (100ft.) lengths of film. A different mask, with four or five small apertures, is placed over the lens each day. All twenty-one masks and their apertures, when combined, make up a complete picture. Despite the continual refilming, the systematic changes of mask allow only parts of the film emulsion to be exposed on any single run through. […] The unmanipulated, unmasked landscape is seen towards the end of the film.[270]

In what Rees went on to call this "ghostly drift" time was both compressed and distended—it compresses in terms of chronological time but distends in terms of perceptual intake. The rapidity and excess of the mescaline-induced recording strategy in a work like *23/69*

270. Rees's description for catalog was cut out by Kren and pasted into his notation notebook, alongside his drawings that map out the plan for the "spots" or masks over the aperture. See Kurt Kren Estate, Ordner 2, Synema, Vienna.

Underground Explosion is traded in for an almost meditational in-camera editing. The slow mosaic-like build-up of visual information in the aperture in *31/75* is unlike any of Kren's other films examined in this study. It places emphasis on form more directly, quietly yielding to the internal constraints of the camera and the external constraints of the fluctuating weather conditions of early spring. Sometimes there is sun, sometimes there is snow, and the two conditions hold space together. This holding space together from a fixed position was relatively new.[271] Formal manipulation and experimentation with perception had long been part of Kren's practice, no doubt, but fixity and the duration of time in *31/75* was crucial. This is an experiment in film form, which had in other works been held in tension with experiments in content and context—the content of bodies-in-action or of performance, the context of an event, and so forth. The ease with which Rees and other film critics were able to focus on the filmic technique is telling: they are absolved of reckoning with the messy collaborations that constituted works like *23/69*, or *24/70 Western*, or *6/64 Mama und Papa*, or *30/73 Coop Cinema Amsterdam*. Where those were about parallel conditions of multiplicity, from the camera eye to social space and back again—where those were, in other words, about the conditions of looking and seeing and moving and being; of knowledge production—*31/75* is about film as an abstraction, the aperture and the screen as a fixed palimpsest rather than a moving active force.

From its fixed position, to its durational time, and the material stability required for both, *31/75 Asyl* raises questions regarding form and temporality—primary concerns of this chapter. In particular, the film's technique manifests a certain turn away from the underground and toward the experimental. What do I mean by this? It is crucial to keep in mind that, as stated above, the primary mode of circulation was at this point vis-à-vis the college circuit; this was quite distant

271. The in-camera editing was certainly not new—some of Kren's earliest works, such as *3/60 Bäume im Herbst*, showed him working with such techniques, but the duration was something new to his practice.

from the interventions into educational institutions like those I discussed in the first chapter of this study. In Vienna, Kren's *6/64* used rapid edit cuts of a flicker film. Abruptly disrupting spectator's security in moving image-based knowledge production, the film's technique paralleled interrogations into the possibility of knowability and education being taken up by various artist meeting formations at the time (and in which Kren participated). In Cologne, Kren's *23/69* took up the "trip" as an editing structure, capturing the audience, the stage, and the media in a dizzying swirl of motion. The film's attention to these constituencies foregrounded the uneasy (and equally vertiginous) collaborations between the state, the commercial market, and various counterculture and activist forces that made the underground event possible. Across these works Kren's techniques and the subjects he chose to film led back, however circuitously, to questions of cultural, geopolitical, and economic forces at play in non-, counter-, and anti-institutional cinema and media practices. These are questions of the underground; such questions are all but absent in work like *31/75 Asyl*. Yes, the film is an experiment in seeing, but to what end? A similar question might be asked of the exhibition-as-event model.

EPILOGUE

Something Else Still

Their theory is beautiful, radical and timely, but they didn't mingle or take the leap into the everyday or address the reality here. Circumstance is what humbles theory and makes art as important as real life.

—Nadja Argyropoulou, Athens-based curator[272]

By the 1980s Kren and Hein had largely gone in different directions, both leaving the art world for other sites. In the place of the underground cinema networks emerged new and different stages and screens for collective performances of cinema. These sites—somewhere between a cinema of attraction for the nuclear age and multimedia concert events like the 1969 Underground Explosion—included bars, clubs, student centers, punk and experimental music venues, and, a little later, mobile cinemas in places as diverse as Houston, Pittsburgh, West Berlin, and Zagreb. After a decade of experimentation in visual arts institutions during the 1970s, the market power of painting returned to the fore accompanied by a new interest in photography; the "expanded arts" receded. In the 1990s, a range of practices began to return to those expanded roots—like those discussed by Erika Balsom and Kate Mondloch—and a renewed interest on the part of museums led to exhibitions of historical time-based practices, such as the pioneering 1993 "In the Spirit of Fluxus" and the monumental 1998 "Out of Actions." (Not until 2011 did the massive thematic retrospective "Expanded Cinema: Art Performance Film" appear.) At the same time, exhibitions of contemporary practice like the 1996 "Traffic" and 1997 "Performance Anxiety" shows marked a turn in the new time-based museum. By 2006 the Museum of Modern Art New York had established the first Department of Performance and Media, and the time-based, experiential turn in exhibition practice is today ubiquitous.

272. Nadja Argyropoulou quoted in Helena Smith, "'Crapumenta!' … Anger in Athens as the blue lambs of Documenta hit town," *The Guardian*, May 14, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/may/14/documenta-14-athens-german-art-extravaganza>.

While all of these shifts were happening inside visual arts institutions and the practices they exhibit, out in the world the Berlin Wall came down, the second wave of the nuclear disarmament movement happened (this time with a new focus on environmental issues), Germany was reunified, and the Soviet Union was undone, apparently marking the defeat of communism (or at least state socialism) by a liberal democratic capitalist system and its internationalist politics of inclusivity. Around the same time, the World Wide Web went live in its recognizable form, launching an ostensibly extra-territorial zone in which inclusion and distribution access on a global scale was hyper-frontloaded. And just a few years after this fall and rise, in 1993, Cold War Europe was transformed into the European Union, a federation of member states, including Austria and Germany, bound together by economic interests with the power of its central bank located in Frankfurt. The terms of this union have always been tentative at best, as has been made clear since the 2008 economic crisis and the unevenness with which member states have been affected by the fallout. The conditions briefly sketch here have produced larger and larger networks of distribution and spheres of economic interest on the part of both state and commercial markets, each concerned with securing an identity (visibility)—and some modicum of power (legibility)—in a new "global" world. Sites like documenta, along with the well over 100 other festival exhibitions and biennials like it that have appeared in the last two decades, have taken up this logic of expansion, creating a robust marketplace for the circulation of time-based work well beyond what could have been imagined by those working in the underground cinema networks examined in this study.

Nonetheless, understanding those earlier performances of cinema as concrete, geo-located instances in which critique and convening were happening simultaneously in arts programming across continents during the Cold War, I contend, helps bring into focus the

importance of these histories for our current situation by centering "leaps into the everyday" as was suggested by Greek curator Nadja Argyropoulou in the quote above. No matter how beautiful, radical, or timely, a theory that is evacuated of concern for concrete material conditions, or "circumstances," is a dangerous move. At the end of last chapter I asked of Kren's *31/75 Aysl*—and the exhibition-as-event model that supported it—a question of ends. One the one hand, this would appear to risk seeking instrumentalized means; but, on the other hand, it seems vital to continue asking to what end works like *31/75*, or any other object of aesthetic production, gain legibility in systems of distributions—systems like the global art festival and biennial circuit. To return to histories of distribution and their links to sites like documenta, as I have done throughout this study, is to map a particular set of conditions through which, per Jodi Dean, political struggles of the streets undergo an aesthetic displacement in favor of political affects in the galleries; or, to put in another way, when underground cinema becomes experimental film.[273] Such a process of displacement and its stakes were the lesson that, it should come as no surprise, documenta had to offer once again, this time more recently in 2017.

For the first time in its history, the hundred-day exhibition was split across two sites: its traditional home in Kassel and the Greek capital city of Athens.[274] documenta XIV (d14) was seen by many as a symbol of German imperial domination, transposed from the financial sector into the cultural one. Such a sentiment of suspicion towards Germany has long been widely held given that the nation-state was written into the E.U. constitution as controller of the European Central Bank—a governance power that has repeatedly been flexed by way of mandated

273. See Dean, *The Communist Horizon* (New York: Verso, 2013). Also see Vijay Prashad, Prabir Purkayastha, B.T. Ranadive, and Sitaram Yechury, eds., *Red October: The Russian Revolution and the Communist Horizon* (New Delhi: LeftWord Books, 2017).

274. The closest it had come to this was in 2011 when chief curator Okwui Enwezor established satellite platforms in global cities around the world to accompany the documenta XI (d11) exhibition.

austerity measures since the 2008 financial crisis. These uncomfortable links between financial and cultural control were made that much more evident by the order of events leading up to the opening of documenta in Athens on April 8, 2017. The day prior, April 7, streets around the city were blocked off, some by protestors demonstrating against the new measures signed that day by Greek and E.U. finance ministers, and some by security details preparing for the German president's official visit to the documenta exhibition. The new austerity package marked the country's third bail out in anticipation of a July 2017 deadline for repayment of state debts in excess of €6 million. Meanwhile, as a final audit from November 2018 has since revealed, the d14 exhibition that opened the next day went €7.6 million over budget—something that that the exhibition curator complained about, claiming that the €37 million allocated was inadequate.[275] But now counter this financial situation with what described as a "fiery and combative" press conference for the d14 opening at which curators "pledge[d] to fight Neo-Fascism,"[276] and perhaps the reader can begin to see more clearly the rifts between "beautiful, radical, and timely" theory and "the leap into the everyday" referred to by Argyropoulou. This fraught situation of the arts institution combatting fascism with democratic ideals and the rhetoric of inclusivity should sound familiar from the Austrian Film Museum's defense of its own exhibitionary practices in 1969; and, as the AFMC protest there asserted, the two remain interminably linked—as much today as in 1969.

The documenta institution has responded to critiques of the 2017 exhibition by naming as curator of the next edition an art collective; and, what is more, an art collective from outside the

275. Catherine Hickley, "Documenta deficit caused by Athens Overspending Widens to €7.6m in Final Audit," *The Art Newspaper*, November 30, 2018. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/documenta-deficit-caused-by-athens-overspending-widens-to-eur7-6m-in-final-audit>.

276. Nate Freeman, "Documenta 14 Opens in Kassel with Fiery, Combative Press Conference as Curators Pledge to Fight Neo-Fascism,"*Art News*, June 7, 2017. < http://www.artnews.com/2017/06/07/documenta-14-opens-in-kassel-with…ombative-press-conference-as-curators-pledge-to-fight-neo-fascism/>.

boundaries of the European Union. It remains to be seen if turning, or, rather, returning, to this model of collectivity can or will prompt the "leaps into the everyday" needed. Regardless of what happens with this high visibility platform, though, there must be ways to generatively contribute to critiques of art as a market commodity without dismissing the critical work of underground networks, which are vital for the convening of communities brought together by their shared illegibility in the distribution marketplace at local levels, as well as across national borders. Looking to past leaps into this everyday, it is my hope, can offer traction on how to move forward with such a project of remembering to not forget the kinds of collective performances, of cinema and, more broadly, of ways of seeing and of being together, possible in the underground. Such a hope may perhaps seem misplaced, but to return to Bloch and to that something else—that something that is missing—which I referenced at the start of this dissertation: "If it could not be disappointed, it would not be hope. That is part of it. Otherwise, it would be cast in a picture. It would let itself be bargained down. It would capitulate and say, that is what I had hoped for. Thus, hope is critical and can be disappointed. However, hope still nails a flag on the mast, even in decline, in that the decline is not accepted, even when this decline is still very strong."[277]

277. Adorno and Bloch, "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing," in *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, 1–17 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 16–17.

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