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Curatorial Concept and Background of Exhibition Programme POW 2015

POW (Post-Otherness-Wedding) and the Knowledge embedded in an Object

A Yearlong Programme of Exhibitions and Performances

One of the most characteristic things that happens when peoples – between whom a kind of difference¹ exists – meet, is a kind of ritual, a kind of movement around concepts and understandings of objects.

This holds true for places like Yeoville, Brooklyn, Sé/Brás or Wedding.

When people participate in societies, they bring with them objects that are introduced and then circulate within the social or commercial space, acquire new meanings as they pass from one hand to the other, or as they sojourn within a specific space. Objects, like individuals, bring along histories into specific contexts and demand a language and a space through which they could be articulated.

An expanded Notion of Objects and Objectivation

Reading society and culture through objects is an age-old concept and cornerstone of anthropology, ranging from Mauss' „The Gift“ (1954) to Appadurai's „The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective“ (1986); to name just two prominent examples. Still, efforts to understand human interactions in societies, especially those enriched by a conglomeration of multiple cultures, through objects stands out as an ever interesting field to be explored.

The relationship between language and objects is pivotal in the way objects are understood and how their meanings are conveyed, as non-linguistic as well as linguistic signs and interpretations are essential in the articulation of objects and object cultures. Like everything that lies under the weight of space and time, objects are subject to gravitational and other natural forces, as well as temporal influences, as they change, get modified, or wear.

„...objects (are) important, not because they are evident and physically constrain or enable, but often precisely because we do not `see' them. The less we are aware of them the more powerfully they can determine our expectations by setting the scene and ensuring normative behaviour, without being open to challenge. They determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so.“²

But because objects are not and should not be reduced to physical entities with a particular form and tangibility, it would be important to stretch out the concept of the object. From a traditional grammar point of view the object in a sentence is the entity that is directly or indirectly acted upon by the subject. Thus is the case with every encounter... be it human

1 Difference here should be seen in the context of Edouard Glissant's understanding of difference, i.e. a fundamental part of relations, especially as expressed in the 2009 interview with Manthia Diawara. The following quotes open a door to Glissant's cosmos of difference: “I believe that Relation is the moment where we realize that there is a definite quantity of all the differences in the world. Just as scientists say that the universe consists of a finite quantity of atoms, and that it doesn't change — well, I say that Relation is made up of all the differences in the world and that we shouldn't forget a single one of them, even the smallest. If you forget the tiniest difference in the world, well, Relation is no longer Relation.”

Longer interview here: http://commons.gc.cuny.edu/?get_group_doc=458/1364758838-oneworldinrelation2.pdf

2 Daniel Miller, “Materiality: An Introduction”. In Materiality, Duke Press 2005

**Bonaventure Soh Bejeng
Ndikung and Solvej Helweg
Ovesen**

Curators of Galerie Wedding –
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or otherwise. The role of the acting entity and the entity acted upon are distributed within every encounter of peoples. A problem but arises if the understanding of the object as a grammar entity acted upon shifts to objectification, whereby an individual is treated as a worthless thing. An individual is objectified when he/she is

instrumentalised, stripped of his/her autonomy, violated or if the individual's right to subjectivity is denied, as vividly elaborated by Martha Nussbaum in *Objectification* (1985).

For the year-long exhibition and performance program entitled POW and suggested by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung and Solvej Helweg Ovesen for Galerie Wedding, the following considerations are of particular interest: How can art objects and concepts be developed that contribute to the rephrasing of objects of cultural significance? How can stories and knowledge in which objects are embedded be told? Finally, we are also interested in an elastic object concept beyond materiality. On the human level, what simultaneously concerns us, is the key question – how can we accept the idea of otherness as a part of normality and explore the potential of post-otherness?

POW – Post-Otherness-Wedding

By naming the curatorial program POW (Post-Otherness-Wedding), we intend to channel a discourse towards a concept of „Post-Otherness“ coined by Prof. Dr. Regina Römhild. In a joint article by Römhild and Ndikung „The Post-Other as Avant-Garde“, the notion of the „Post-Other“ is expatiated upon:

„In that paradoxical moment, the figure of the „Post-Other“ emerges, a figure still bearing the signs of historical Othering while at the same time representing and experimenting with unknown futures beyond it. In the shadow of the dominant political imagination a cosmopolitanized reality of convivial struggles unfolds, speaking and acting against that imagery. The moment of the „Post-Other“, however, is still in the state of emergence: it unfolds in the everyday practices of the 'unconscious' kind when, e.g., the anonymity of urban life allows for infinite examples of everyday cosmopolitan interactions. (...) Such practices are still waiting to be united and made visible.“⁴³

In the context of the Berlin district Wedding, a former labourers district with a more than 75% migrant population, the concept and figure of the „Post-Other“ seem to be an omnipresent but unrealised concept and figure. In this way it also seems appropriate to go through the various understandings of object cultures to understand the status-quo of the „Post-Other“ in this space.

The art space will host four solo exhibitions with Satch Hoyt, Ilja Karilampi, Emeka Ogbon and Sol Calero and a series of performances and interventions in the local public space. The reason we as curatorial team present four solo exhibition comes along with the vision to create a series of radical spatial captivations, transformations in the exhibition space, which is lay-outed architecturally similar to a vitrine. With each exhibition the space will change completely and create a new image space when seen from outside, but also when experienced as a space of art and action from the inside. The artists presented in the solo exhibition and in the performance programme are all based in Berlin.

3 R. Römhild & B. Ndikung, „The Post-Other as Avant-Garde“. In *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, p. 206–225, eds. Daniel Baker, Maria Hlavajova, BAK – basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht and Valiz, Amsterdam

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