

Following long birthing pains the first (double) edition of the *Notebook for Art, Theory, and Related Zones* is finally available. The Notebook is a *narrow-profile* periodical focussing on theoretical and critical *texts* which pertain to the *broader* socio-cultural context of the production, presentation and reception of contemporary art. The Notebook is not full of attractive pictures and does not present current reactions to the latest undertakings in Czech art. The core of each issue should be *translations* of texts which are essential or informative with regard to some debate currently taking place in the world of art, as well as in other possible worlds. The selection and translation of texts which have already been published is not done as a last resort, but rather to provide important reference points to foster a meaningful discussion. At the same time, we would like to confront the translated material with adequate counterparts from the *local* environs. We hope to be able to provide in each issue a partial insight into the complex field of questions and viewpoints associated with the selected topic. The Notebook is intended not only for those who are actively interested in contemporary art or share in its production, but for *everyone* who is willing to allow for the possibility that inspiring impulses for understanding our age may be found in this sphere. Last but not least we are addressing the Notebook to ourselves, because we understand the work in its preparation to be a form of *self-education*. In relation to our potential readers we are performing the role of half-illiterate mediators of knowledge, who are no more than one lesson ahead.

The theme of this issue is collaboration and participation in current socially engaged art. The initial impulse for the selection of this theme was an article by Claire Bishop “The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents” (*Artforum*, 2006), the new expanded version of which opens this volume. Bishop polemically counterposes the criteria of ethical impeccability and aesthetic impact in judging examples of collaborative art practices. Two varying interpretations of the classification, genealogy, motives and effects of these approaches are provided by Maria Lind and Christian Kravagna. In a key article in this debate, Grant Kester presents a bold thesis which states that sharing authorship among many participants marks the beginning of a new paradigm of artistic creation.

Another block of texts consists of the positions of artists, given in the form of interviews, artist statements and projects. Czech artist

Karel Mlčoch to a certain degree anticipated the relational tendencies of the nineties in his event titled *Noclehárna (Dormitory)* from 1979. He was interviewed by members of the Ládví art group, in whose site specific work ethical criteria plays a fundamental role. Ládví also contributes to this issue with two projects associated with the Prague housing estate of the same name – an advertisement and post card insert. A number of ethical and aesthetic questions encountered by artists dealing with conflict and trauma in society are raised by Patricia C. Phillips in her interview with Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar. The artist's declaration of Thomas Hirschhorn for two projects incorporating elements of participation emphasizes the autonomy of artistic work, which in his view cannot be mixed with the activity of social workers. The extent to which these two tasks can be differentiated in the approach of Czech artist Kateřina Šeda may be judged based upon the letters of participants in her project *Každěj pes jiná ves (For Every Dog a Different Master)*, one phase of which was also presented in documenta 12 in Kassel.

We close the present issue with two texts, which examine the possibility of art's social impact from the theoretical perspective of the autonomy of a work of art and (possibly) overcoming this in the avant-garde. The first is a chapter from the book of German literary scholar Peter Bürger *Theorie der Avantgarde* (1974) and the second an interview of the art-activist group Chto delat? / What is to be done? with French philosopher Jacques Rancière. These two texts also lead into the upcoming issue of Notebook, in which we would like to dedicate *ex post* to the three questions comprising this year's leitmotifs of the twentieth annual documenta exhibition: „Is modernity our antiquity?“ „What is bare life?“ and „What is to be done?“.

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