

Johanna Billing  
LOOK BEHIND US,  
A BLUE SKY

---

Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum für Gegenwartskunst  
Dundee Contemporary Arts

ISBN 978-3-7757-2070-0



HATJE  
CANTZ



LOOK BEHIND US,  
A BLUE SKY



*Johanna Billing*

Support for the exhibition in Basel and its accompanying publication has been provided by the “Fonds für künstlerische Aktivitäten im Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Christoph Merian Stiftung”

Die Ausstellung in Basel und die Publikation wurden unterstützt vom »Fonds für künstlerische Aktivitäten im Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Christoph Merian Stiftung«

Johanna Billing  
LOOK BEHIND US,  
A BLUE SKY



## CONTENTS

<i>Lightning Never Strikes Here</i> <i>Anymore...</i> Karl Holmqvist	9
<i>Making Things Happen</i> Polly Staple	12
<i>More Films about Songs, Cities &amp; Circles</i> A Conversation between Johanna Billing & Helena Selder	40
<i>Forever Changes</i> A Conversation between Johanna Billing & Philipp Kaiser	70

## INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

<i>Making Things Happen</i> Polly Staple
<i>More Films about Songs, Cities &amp; Circles</i> Ein Gespräch zwischen Johanna Billing & Helena Selder
<i>Forever Changes</i> Ein Gespräch zwischen Johanna Billing & Philipp Kaiser

## Expanded Footnotes

<i>Projects for Revolution</i> Rob Tufnell 92	<i>Radio Days; Tour Diary</i> Johanna Billing, Helena Holmberg, Annie Fletcher, Tanja Elstgeest, and Frédérique Bergholtz 126	<i>Perfect Pop Pleasures</i> Jacob Wren 178
<i>Waiting for Billing</i> Maria Lind 103	<i>You Make Me Digress</i> Åbåke 150	<i>Pass the Glue</i> Volker Zander 180
<i>Some Notes on Billing, Stein, and Repetition</i> Malin Ståhl 108	<i>More Texts about Songs &amp; Buildings</i> Magnus Haglund 155	<i>The Lights Go out, the Moon Wanes</i> Anne Tallentire 185
<i>Getting There</i> Çen Tamir 112	<i>Regarding Us</i> Cecilia Canziani 166	<i>A Possible Trilogy</i> Jelena Vesic 192
<i>Editing Is Musical</i> Carole Bertinet 114	<i>Who's Going to Finish It?</i> Ivet Ćurlin of What, Where and for Whom/WHW 170	<i>City Dwellers and Seafarers</i> Kate Stancliffe 202
<i>Everyday I Am Everyday</i> Séamus Kealy 120	<i>Sentimental Season</i> Mika Hannula 173	<i>The Familiar Unknown</i> Lisa Panting 207
<i>The Secret Cousin</i> Jonatham Lethem 122		<i>Let's Go Swimming</i> James Thomas 214
Works & Projects	218	Werke & Projekte
Biography & Bibliography	239	Biografie & Bibliografie
Colophon	250	Impressum



## Lightning Never Strikes Here Anymore...

Karl Holmqvist

Most of Johanna Billing's videoworks of the last few years are meant to be seen as projections repeated in 'endless' loops, repeated incessantly like mild obsessions staying on in one's memory. There is a search for a thing, an image or phenomenon. Not a song, but the memory of a song, the lyrics of a song with a band rehearsing. These are images of learning processes and people figuring out how to do something together, to get it right, with the action on the screen somehow reflecting what will have gone on 'in reality' in front of the camera.

Captured are learning experiences or experiments, if you will, telling us that just as this has happened it might as well happen again, in the same way, in a different place, or a different way. Nothing is impossible or possible, except maybe in your mind. The fiction will have become a fantasy, and somehow you will find yourself right in the middle of it. And there you go.

*Where She Is at*, production still,  
Ingierstrand, 2001

(overleaf) *Where She Is at*, installation  
view, *Free Electrons*, Tabacalera,  
Donostia-San Sebastián 2007



# Making Things Happen

Polly Staple



*Where She Is at*, production still, Ingierstrand, 2001

In Johanna Billing's video *Where She Is at* (2001) a girl poses on a high diving board. Her whole body is tense. She is fidgeting and despondent, consumed by a chronic state of indecision. To jump or not to jump becomes an epic quandary. The girl's internal dilemma is in sharp contrast to the otherwise picturesque scene: sunny day, open air, water's edge.

The girl is pretty, and sturdy, wearing a lightly fashionable print bikini. Footage of the girl is intercut with other people who patiently watch and wait. There is a crisp photographic composition to the shots and the sound is reduced to a benign background noise of splashing and seagulls. The placid atmosphere only adds perversely to the tension. The scene slowly becomes intolerable. Eventually, she jumps.

If *Where She Is at* functions as both a study of the debilitating frustrations of performance anxiety and as a symbolic metaphor for individual action, then *Graduate Show* (1999), made several years earlier, presents an alternative scenario of collective production. A group of young people, dressed in an assortment of exercise clothes, assemble in a studio and perform a choreographed dance

In Johanna Billing's Video *Where She Is at* (2001) steht ein Mädchen auf einem hohen Sprungbrett. Ihr ganzer Körper wirkt in seiner Drehung angespannt, voller Nervosität und Mutlosigkeit. Sie befindet sich in einem chronischen Zustand der Unentschlossenheit. Ob sie nun springen soll oder nicht, wird zu einem epischen Dilemma. Der innere Konflikt des Mädchens steht in scharfem Kontrast zu der sonst pittoresken Szene, die sich an einem sonnigen Tag in freier Natur am Rande des Wassers abspielt.

Das hübsche, kräftige Mädchen trägt einen nur bedingt modischen, gemusterten Bikini. Die Figur des Mädchens wird von anderen Personen teilweise verdeckt, die geduldig schauen und warten. Die Aufnahmen weisen eine klare fotografische Komposition auf und werden nur mit dezenten Hintergrundgeräuschen von plätscherndem Wasser und Seemöwengeschrei untermalt. Die ruhige, friedvolle Atmosphäre steigert jedoch nur noch die Spannung. Die Szene wird langsam unerträglich. Und dann endlich springt sie.

Während *Where She Is at* sowohl als Studie der kräfte- und nervenzehrenden Angst vor einer missglückten Vorstellung wie auch als symbolische Metapher für individuelles Handeln fungiert, stellt die einige Jahre früher entstandene Arbeit *Graduate Show* (1999) ein alternatives Szenario einer Gemeinschaftsproduktion





*Graduate Show*, video stills, 1999

routine. The participants are Billing's fellow graduate students from Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm, and Billing dances alongside them. The performers are exuberant, awkward or just not very good. The filming and the group's cohesion, their desire to put on a show is, however, arresting. The soundtrack "Moody" (1981) by the legendary New York dance-punk

dar. Eine Gruppe von jungen Menschen in Trainingskleidung kommt in einem Studio zusammen und führt eine Tanzchoreografie auf. Die Teilnehmer sind Billing's ehemalige Studienkollegen von der Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, und Billing tanzt neben ihnen her. Die Tänzer sind ausgelassen, unbeholfen oder aber auch nicht besonders gut. Das Filmen und der Zusammenhalt der Gruppe, ihr Wunsch, eine Schau abzuziehen,

band ESG is excellent, and it keeps things moving.

Art schools are hothouse environments. Everyone strives to define their own voice, combining fierce competition to be unique with an intense pressure to perform. *Graduate Show* is Billing's response to a complex situation, a deft action operating on both real and symbolic levels. As a community project, it brings a potentially conflicted group of individuals together. The choreography is not so simple and requires group commitment to make it work. The subsequent piece is performed in an atmosphere of concentration and celebration. In *Graduate Show*, the vagaries of individual expression—here

sind jedoch fesselnd. Der Soundtrack, »Moody« (1981) von der legendären New Yorker Tanz-Punk-Band ESG, ist vorzüglich und hält die Dinge in Bewegung.

In den Kunsthochschulen herrscht eine Treibhausatmosphäre. Jeder bemüht sich, den eigenen Ausdruck besonders hervorzuheben, und tritt bei diesem Streben um Einzigartigkeit in einen scharfen Konkurrenzkampf mit den anderen, steht gleichzeitig aber auch unter dem starken Druck, seine Aufgabe zu erfüllen. *Graduate Show* ist Billing's Antwort auf eine komplexe Situation, eine geschickte Massnahme auf der realen wie der symbolischen Ebene gleichermaßen. Als Gemeinschaftsprojekt bringt sie eine potenzielle Konfliktgruppe von Individuen zusammen, die Choreografie ist nicht so einfach, und das



*Graduate Show*, installation view, Graduation Show, Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, 1999

exemplified by rhythm and dance—are productively shown to work together and to be seemingly satisfactory for all involved.

Examining *Graduate Show* for a moment longer, it is possible to discern a number of formats and scenarios consistently developed in subsequent works. It includes, for example, the use of arrival, learning, and becoming as both motif and dramatic device most



*Coming up*, trailer, installation view, Graduation Show, Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, 1999

often witnessed through a group assembling to perform, or the individual taking their place and performing a role within the group. Secondly, there is a distinct clarity to the camera work and smooth editing—what could best be described as a cinematic-art-documentary hybrid—conveying a content and tone pitched somewhere between real life and fiction. And thirdly, there is the

Gelingen erfordert von der Gruppe gemeinschaftliches Engagement. Das nachfolgende Stück wird in einer konzentrierten und feierlichen Atmosphäre aufgeführt.

In *Graduate Show* werden die verschiedenen Facetten individuellen Ausdrucks – hier veranschaulicht durch Rhythmus und Tanz – in einer fruchtbaren Synthese zusammengeführt und dies offensichtlich zur Zufriedenheit aller Beteiligten.

Nimmt man *Graduate Show* etwas länger in Augenschein, so kann man eine Reihe von Formaten und Szenarios erkennen, die in nachfolgenden Werken konsequent entwickelt werden. Beispielsweise die Ankunft, die gleichermassen Motiv und Schauspieldevise wird, für die zumeist eine Gruppe steht, die für eine Aufführung zusammenkommt, oder aber eine Einzelperson, die deren Platz einnimmt und eine Rolle innerhalb

use of a historically or socially resonant location combined with an equally loaded choice of music. In *Graduate Show*, for example, the pedagogical aura of the art school is pitched against the more rapaciously aspirant desire of the talent show and the cult status of ESG's soundtrack.

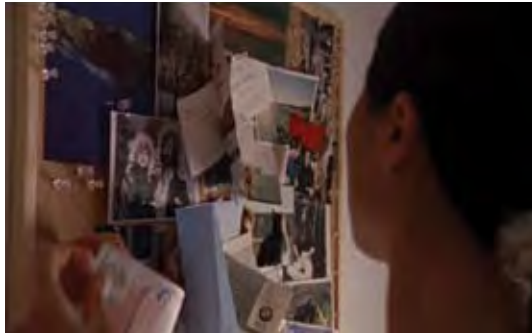
The opening 'arrival' sequence of *Graduate Show*—where students run down corridors and staircases to reach the studio—has much in common with the assembling of participants for Billing's more well-known video piece *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2003). In the latter, an individual is filmed going up an escalator to arrive at a recording studio in Stockholm where he joins forty other musicians to perform the eponymous track. A similar narrative plot device is used in *Look out!* (2003). Here, a group arrives at a luxury apartment development

der Gruppe spielt. Zweitens lassen sich eine ausgeprägte Klarheit bei der Kameraarbeit sowie klare Schnitte feststellen – was man am besten als filmisch-kunstdokumentarische Mischung beschreiben könnte –, die einen Inhalt und eine Stimmung vermitteln, die irgendwo zwischen dem realen Leben und Fiktion angesiedelt sind. Und drittens die Verwendung eines mit historischen oder gesellschaftlichen Konnotationen besetzten Schauplatzes in Kombination mit einer ebenso bedeutungsgeladenen Musikauswahl. In *Graduate Show* zum Beispiel wird die pädagogische Atmosphäre der Kunsthochschule dem so gierigen Wunsch nach der Talentshow und dem Soundtrack der Band ESG mit Kultstatus gegenübergestellt.

Die Eröffnungs- »Ankunfts« - Sequenz von *Graduate Show* – die Studenten rennen die Gänge entlang und die Treppen hinunter, um zum Studio zu gelangen – hat viel gemeinsam mit dem Versammeln der Teilnehmer für Billings bekanntere Videoarbeit *You Don't Love Me*



*Project for a Revolution*, installation view, Project 1, Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, 2002



(clockwise from top left)  
*Project for a Revolution* and  
*Missing out*, installation view,  
 Intentional Communities,  
 CAC, Contemporary Art Center,  
 Vilnius, 2001

*Magic & Loss*, video still, 2005

*Missing out*, video still, 2001

(right) *Magic & Loss*, production  
 still, 2005

in East London to be shown round; In *Magic & Loss* (2005), a group arrives at an apartment in Amsterdam and proceeds to pack up the contents. In *Magical World* (2005), the performance of—again—the eponymous song by a group of children is inter-cut with scenes of them arriving at the cultural center in Zagreb in which the rehearsal takes place.

In each case, the group gathers and engages in a process or act of transformation. Making something happen, or conversely not happen, is used as both device and theme. In two early films *Project for a Revolution* (2000) and *Missing out* (2001), for example, both plot and content hinge on the

*Yet* (2003). In Letzterem wird ein Mann dabei gefilmt, wie er eine Rolltreppe hinunter zu einem Aufnahmestudio in Stockholm geht, wo er mit 40 weiteren Musikern zusammenkommt und den Titelsoundtrack einspielt. Ein ähnlicher Handlungsablauf findet auch in *Look out!* (2003) Anwendung: Hier kommt eine Gruppe von Leuten zu einer Siedlung mit Luxuswohnungen im Osten Londons und wird herumgeführt; in *Magic & Loss* (2005) kommt eine Gruppe von Leuten in eine Wohnung in Amsterdam und schickt sich an, deren Inhalt zusammenzupacken; und in *Magical World* (2005) singt eine Gruppe von Kindern – auch hier wieder – den Titelsong, unterbrochen von Szenen, die sie bei ihrer Ankunft im Kulturzentrum von Zagreb zeigen, wo die Proben stattfinden.



gathering of protagonists caught in a moment of waiting, preoccupied by non-activity. Alternatively, in *Magic & Loss*, the group is methodically absorbed, occupied with boxing up the contents of an apartment. In each instance, the non-action/action, the waiting and the packing, are relayed by Billing in great visual detail: a man glances aside, a woman shuffles in her seat, or a man takes books off a shelf, puts the books in a box, tapes up the box, and so on. These small details, this slow accumulation of information, the gestures and nuances between people and things, become the narrative drive, and also creates specific atmosphere. The waiting, in *Project for a Revolution*, and the work, in *Magic & Loss*, are equally monotonous and repetitive, but also as carefully organized and seductive.

A defining factor of Billing's films is the transparency of the camerawork and the steady rhythm of the editing. Billing will use conventional narrative devices and cinematic strategies to set a scene: carefully posed long shots containing sweeping movement signifying arrival, for example. But these will be followed by a ponderous succession of full-frame close-ups of a particular play of light on a surface, a face, or an object. Billing's meticulously composed cinematography achieves a wonderfully luminous

In jedem dieser Fälle kommt eine Gruppe von Leuten zusammen und hat Anteil an einem Verwandlungsprozess. Etwas geschehen oder auch nicht geschehen zu lassen, wird gleichermassen sinnbildhaft und thematisch verwandt. In den beiden frühen Filmen *Project for a Revolution* (2000) und *Missing out* (2001) zum Beispiel drehen sich sowohl der Handlungsablauf als auch der Inhalt um das Zusammentreffen der Protagonisten, die in einem Moment des Wartens erfasst sind, völlig in Anspruch genommen von ihrer Untätigkeit. Als Alternative dazu werden die Akteure in *Magic & Loss* mit dem Einpacken des Hausrates einer Wohnung systematisch beschäftigt. In jedem Fall sind das Nicht-Handeln und das Handeln – das heisst hier das Warten und das Packen – von Billing mit grosser visueller Detailgenauigkeit wiedergegeben: Ein Mann blickt flüchtig zur Seite, eine Frau rutscht auf ihrem Stuhl hin und her, oder ein Mann nimmt Bücher von einem Regal, packt die Bücher in eine Kiste, klebt die Kiste dann zu und so weiter. Diese kleinen Details, dieses langsame Ansammeln von Informationen, die Gesten und feinen Unterschiede zwischen Menschen und Dingen beleben die narrative Handlungsstruktur und schaffen eine spezielle Atmosphäre. Das Warten in *Project for a Revolution* und das aktive Arbeiten in *Magic & Loss* sind gleichermassen monoton und repetitiv, doch ebenso sorgsam organisiert und verlockend.

Entscheidende und charakteristische Faktoren von Billings Filmen sind die Transparenz der Kameraarbeit und der gleichmässige

simplicity of form. This oscillation between surface and depth creates a visual tension and emphasizes the relational complexities of the conceptual content.

Billing often uses high definition video. This digital medium has a deadpan quality to its image resolution and a flexibility to its manufacture which is entirely contemporary. This is in contrast to the more precious materiality and, hence, fetishistic, dreamlike potential of 16mm or 35mm often employed by others to create a self-consciously high art effect. The presentation of Billing's films in open gallery settings on freestanding screens also resists cinematic overtones. This method of display creates a walk through encounter, more attuned to the sculptural conventions of the white cube as opposed to those of the black box. The viewer's experience of the work is underlined as active and physical. This accentuates a visceral relationship with the people and architectural spaces depicted in the films themselves.

The subsequent temporal pacing of Billing's imagery asserts an ordering system more in tune with anthropological observation, lending these entirely staged exercises a curious air of authenticity. The films are often looped, emphasizing circuitous duration. No one ever speaks directly to the camera in Billing's films and sound is usually either

Rhythmus der Schnitte. Billing verwendet immer konventionelle narrative Muster und filmische Strategien zum Aufbau einer Szene: sorgfältig in Szene gesetzte, lange Einstellungen mit schwungvoller Bewegung, die beispielsweise eine Ankunft andeutet. Doch auf diese folgt immer eine schwerfällige Abfolge von Vollbildgrossaufnahmen eines besonderen Lichtspiels auf einer Oberfläche, einem Gesicht oder einem Objekt. Billings akribisch komponierte Filmtechnik erzielt eine wundervoll leuchtende Einfachheit der Form. Dieses Oszillieren zwischen Oberfläche und Tiefe schafft ein visuelles Spannungsverhältnis und betont die Vielschichtigkeit der Bezüge des konzeptuellen Inhalts.

Billing verwendet häufig das Videoformat HDV (High Definition Video). Dieses digitale Medium schöpft bezüglich seiner Bildauflösung nicht sein ganzes Potenzial aus und ermöglicht gleichzeitig eine Flexibilität bei der Videoproduktion. Dies steht im Kontrast zu der wertvolleren Materialität und dem folglich fetischistischen, traumhaften Potenzial des 16-mm- oder 35-mm-Films, der von anderen häufig verwendet wird, um einen selbstbewusst hohen künstlerischen Effekt zu erzielen. Die Präsentation von Billings Filmen auf freistehenden Bildschirmen in offenen Galerieräumen hält auch filmischen Untertönen stand. Durch diese Ausstellungsmethode entsteht ein zufälliger Rundgang, der stärker auf die bildhauerischen Konventionen des White Cube, die im Gegensatz zu denen der Black Box stehen, abgestimmt ist. Es wird die aktive und sinnliche Werkerfahrung

real-time noise or the performance of music itself. Repetition, so important in the production of music, is used to set both rhythm and tone, as both thematic contents and formal device across Billings' entire oeuvre. The scenario of the rehearsal itself and music-making is used on multiple occasions. Billings' entire *You Don't Love Me Yet* endeavors for example stems from the repeat performance of one song and evolves into an exploration and celebration of invention, self-expression, and identity, themes developed in later projects such as *Magical World* and *Another Album* (2006).

In all of Billings' films—bar *Magical World* focusing on a children's choir—the protagonists are largely young people aged in their early twenties to their early thirties. The films are shot in locations across Europe. The visible cultural differences of these new Europeans may, at first, appear negligible. They all appear to wear the international dress code of "individualistic" young consumers: low key branded trainers, jersey cotton sweatshirts, the odd piece of quirky jewelry, a nose ring, or an asymmetric haircut. This apparent everyday uniformity, however, operates as a smokescreen to complex socio-economic relationships at the heart of Billings' work.

For example, the minimal modern décor of the characters

des Betrachters unterstrichen. Dies betont ein intuitives Verhältnis zu den in den Filmen dargestellten Menschen und architektonischen Räumen.

Das nachfolgende zeitliche Fortschreiten von Billings' Bildern dokumentiert ein Ordnungssystem, das stärker im Einklang steht mit anthropologischer Beobachtung, die diesen zur Aufführung gelangten Übungen dann vollends einen seltsamen Anschein von Authentizität verleiht. Die Filme sind häufig in Loops angelegt und betonen eine Kreisbewegung. In Billings' Filmen spricht niemals jemand direkt in die Kamera, und der Ton beschränkt sich gewöhnlich auf Geräusche in Echtzeit oder auf die Musikaufführung selbst. Das in der Musikproduktion so wichtige Element der Wiederholung wird durch Billings' gesamtes Werk hindurch beim Arrangieren von Rhythmus und Ton ebenso wie als thematischer Inhalt und formales Muster angewandt. Das Szenario von Proben und Musikproduktionen findet vielfach bei unterschiedlichen Gelegenheiten Anwendung. Billings' gesamtes Projekt *You Don't Love Me Yet* zum Beispiel basiert auf der wiederholten Aufführung eines einzigen Songs und entwickelt sich zur Erforschung und zum Zelebrieren von Erfindung, Selbstaussdruck und Identität, Themen, die in späteren Projekten wie *Magical World* (2005) und *Another Album* (2006) weiterentwickelt werden.

In allen Filmen von Billings – ausgenommen der Arbeit *Magical World*, die sich auf einen Kinderchor konzentriert – sind die Protagonisten grösstenteils junge Leute zwischen Anfang zwanzig und Anfang dreissig. Die Filme sind an



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, Coconut, live at the Lab, San Francisco, 2006

and the apartment depicted in *Magic & Loss* could superficially locate you in a confident, creative demographic anywhere from Stockholm to Tokyo. Why then do the protagonists seem to be caught up in a ritual more associated with the blunt reality of those working through grief, and that the carefully composed domestic lifestyle is rendered redundant? There is a disconcerting charge to this apparently quiet, methodical film, provoking, as it does, questions about the reality of real estate or the commitment of friends. Look a little closer. In a similar vein, you notice that the elegant modernist diving platform in *Where She Is at* is in a crumbling state of disrepair as is the cultural center in which

Schauplätzen quer durch Europa gedreht. Die erkennbaren kulturellen Unterschiede dieser neuen Europäer mögen zunächst vernachlässigbar erscheinen. Sie scheinen alle nach dem internationalen Dresscode »individualistischer« junger Konsumenten gekleidet zu sein: unauffällige Markenturnschuhe, Baumwolljersey-Sweatshirts, ein skurriles Schmuckstück, ein Nasenring und ein asymmetrischer Haarschnitt. Diese offensichtliche alltägliche Uniformität dient jedoch als Deckmantel für komplexe sozioökonomische Beziehungen im Kern von Billings' Werk.

Die minimalistische, moderne Ausstattung der in *Magic & Loss* dargestellten Charaktere und Wohnung könnte grundsätzlich an jedem x-beliebigen vertrauenswürdigen, kreativen Ort von Stockholm bis Tokio



*Look out!*, video stills,  
2003

the children perform in *Magical World* or that *You Don't Love Me Yet* is a song about unrequited love, endlessly played on repeat.

It often takes reading Billing's film notes to clarify the very specific cultural resonance of certain contextual signifiers—the relevance of *that* particular choice of song or location. This is, however, only after you will have registered a more subliminal, yet very precise effect created through the works themselves. It is those factors which, at first, might appear as touches of local color or disjointed elements muddying an otherwise clean palette, which gives the work both its social and historical charge, and crucially

zu finden sein. Warum scheinen die Protagonisten dann in ein Ritual vertieft zu sein, das man eher mit der rauen Realität derer in Verbindung bringt, die bis zum Umfallen arbeiten, und das den sorgsam geregelten häuslichen Lebensstil überflüssig gemacht hat? Es liegt eine beunruhigende Last auf diesem so scheinbar ruhigen, methodischen Film, der wie hier Fragen über tatsächlichen Grundbesitz oder über das Engagement von Freunden hervorruft. Wenn man etwas genauer hinschaut, kann man auf ähnliche Weise bemerken, dass sich der elegante modernistische Sprungturm in *Where She Is at* in einem Zustand des Verfalls befindet. Ebenso auffällig ist auch das Kulturzentrum, in dem die Kinder in *Magical World* proben. Oder man kann bemerken, dass *You Don't Love Me Yet*



*Magical World*, installation view, *Normalisation*, Rooseum, Malmö, 2006

enables the work to communicate so directly to a wide audience.

This is perhaps most obvious in *Look out!* in which the glossy new show home contrasts both with the scruffy youths who tour it and the views they guide us to of the surrounding run down area of East London. The enduring force of nature versus culture is writ large. The social strain of gentrification is conveyed most acutely by Billing's use of sound. The hollow, synthetic acoustics and sealed atmosphere of the interior spaces contrast with the more cacophonous external world.

ein Lied über unerwiderte Liebe ist, das unendlich oft wiederholt wird.

Man muss Billing's Filmnotizen oft lesen, um die sehr spezifische kulturelle Resonanz gewisser kontextueller Bedeutungen zu klären – die Relevanz *der* speziellen Wahl eines Liedes oder eines Schauplatzes –, jedoch erst, nachdem man eine stärker unterbewusste, doch sehr präzise, durch die Werke selbst erzeugte Wirkung wahrgenommen hat. Es sind diese Faktoren, die zunächst als ein Anflug von Lokalkolorit erscheinen könnten oder als zusammenhanglose Elemente, die eine sonst reine Palette beschmutzen, die dem Werk seine soziale

Transformative tensions are also evident in *Magical World*. Here, the nineteen-sixties' hippie optimism of the title song and the sentimental charge of the children's singing are at odds with their stumbling grasp of English, the drab surroundings of the unfinished cultural center contrasting with shots of the splashy advertising billboards in the streets just outside. The utopian modernist project is left incomplete as Croatia hurtles headlong toward the more showy attractions of the European free market. It is certainly not a magical world, but, for a moment, listening to the children you believe it could be.

In *Another Album* (2006), the tension between intimacy, individual experience, history, production, and real time movie is perhaps most telling. A group of Croatian friends are depicted, gathered over the course of one night in a rural garden singing a succession of pop-folk songs from the Croatian 'New Wave' movement of the nineteen-seventies to the very early nineteen-nineties. Here, the repeating of the songs is shown to be a means to retrieve memories and melodies lost during the social and political upheavals which transformed Yugoslavia and wiped out the largely state funded recording and distribution networks as much as displacing the musicians and producers themselves. Alternately melancholic and joyful, this form of recycling is

und historische Bedeutung verleihen und dieses entscheidend in die Lage versetzen, so direkt mit einem breiten Publikum zu kommunizieren.

Dies ist vielleicht am augenfälligsten in *Look out!*, wo die glänzende neue Musterwohnung in starkem Kontrast zu den schmutzigen Jugendlichen steht, die sie besichtigen, und zu dem Ausblick auf die umliegende verwahrloste Gegend im Osten Londons. Die andauernde Kraft der Natur versus Kultur wird ausgedehnt beschrieben. Die soziale Last der Gentrifizierung wird ganz genau von Billings Soundverwendung vermittelt. Die dumpfe, synthetische Akustik und hermetisch geschlossene Atmosphäre der Innenräume steht in Kontrast zu der Aussenwelt voller Misstöne. Transformative Spannungen werden genauso in *Magical World* offenbar. Hier stehen der 60er-Jahre-Hippie-Optimismus des Titelsongs und die Sentimentalität im Gesang der Kinder im Widerspruch zu deren mangelnder Beherrschung des Englischen. Die triste, graue Umgebung des unfertigen Kulturzentrums steht in krassem Gegensatz zu Aufnahmen der protzigen Reklametafeln in den Strassen draussen. Das utopische modernistische Projekt bleibt unvollendet, als Kroatien sich kopfüber auf die glänzenderen Attraktionen des freien Marktes in Europa stürzt. Es ist gewiss keine magische Welt, doch hört man den Kindern nur einen Moment lang zu, dann glaubt man, es könnte eine sein.

In *Another Album* (2006) ist das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Vertrautheit, individueller Erfahrung, Geschichte, Produktion und Echtzeitfilm

shown to bind this group—a new generation—together. If in *Magical World* the process of learning and becoming is shown in all its awkwardness, then *Another Album* is infused with a nostalgia and enduring commitment to, and rejuvenation of that which may have been lost during a period of transformation.

This theme of transition, learning, and becoming, central to Billing's work, is most specifically expressed in her very recent *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* (2007). Here we are shown in Billing's usual methodical, beautifully shot, detail the process of a group of young people learning to sail.

vielleicht am aufschlussreichsten. Es wird geschildert, wie eine Gruppe von kroatischen Freunden im Laufe einer Nacht in einem ländlichen Hinterhof zusammenkommt und eine Reihe von Pop-Folk-Liedern der kroatischen »New Wave«-Bewegung singt, die von den 1970er Jahren bis in die frühen 1990er Jahre andauerte. Hier ist das Wiederholen der Lieder ein Mittel, Erinnerungen und Melodien ins Gedächtnis zurückzurufen, die während der sozialen und politischen Umwälzungen verloren gingen. Umwälzungen, die Jugoslawien veränderten und die weitestgehend staatlich finanzierten Netzwerke für Tonaufnahmen und Vertrieb auslöschten sowie die Musiker und Produzenten selbst ablösten. Diese abwechselnd



*Another Album*, production still, 2006  
(overleaf) *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, production photo, 2007







There is a significant 'beginning' to the piece: The student, who embarks on the sailing lesson, photocopies instructions and walks to the sailing school. The film ends at the point at which the students and the boat confidently set out to sea just as a previously bubbling soundtrack reaches a gentle crescendo and the lyrics "This is how we walk on the moon..." take flight. How Billing sets a scene and builds pace can easily be taken for granted. Here, the editing is so fluid, it appears effortless, belying the struggles that the group endures.

The exploration of learning to work together, collaboratively as a group, provides the content and charge to *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*. This learning—becoming experienced, getting the boat to safely sail—is mirrored by our durational experience of the work itself. Again, Billing's use of a constant visual oscillation between foreground and background, surface and depth, mirrors the relation of the individuals to the group. The activity of sailing is shown to depend entirely on their collective enterprise. The film presents a calm order: consensus, collaboration, "if we all work together we can produce this journey." In all of Billing's work, the process of transformation is continuously shown to be transparent, non-hierarchical, and non-spectacular. Billing's world

melancholische und fröhliche Form der Wiederaufbereitung scheint diese Gruppe – eine neue Generation – zusammenzuhalten. Wenn in *Magical World* der Lern- und Entstehungsprozess in all seiner Schwierigkeit gezeigt wird, dann ist *Another Album* erfüllt von Nostalgie und anhaltender Hingabe an das und Verjüngung dessen, was während einer Zeit der Veränderung vielleicht verloren gegangen ist.

Dieses Thema des Übergangs und der Veränderung, das ein zentrales Thema in Billings Werk wird, kommt am stärksten in einem ihrer jüngsten Werke, *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* (2007), zum Ausdruck. Hier wird uns mit Billings typischer methodischer, wundervoll gefilmter Detailgenauigkeit der Lernprozess gezeigt, den eine Gruppe von jungen Menschen beim Segeln durchmacht. Signifikant ist der Beginn des Stücks: Ein Schüler, der mit der Segelschule beginnt, fotokopiert Anweisungen und geht zu der Segelschule. Der Film endet mit der Szene, als die Schüler mit dem Boot selbstbewusst in See stechen und gleichzeitig der zuvor dahinplätschernde Soundtrack zu einem sanften Crescendo ansteigt und der Liedvers »This is how we walk on the moon ...« verklingt. Wie Billing eine Szene inszeniert und Tempo aufbaut, kann leicht als selbstverständlich vorausgesetzt werden. Hier sind die Schnitte so fließend, dass es mühelos erscheint, über die Anstrengungen hinwegzutäuschen, die die Gruppe auf sich nehmen muss.

Das Lernen, als Gruppe gemeinschaftlich zusammenzuarbeiten, ist Gegenstand von *This Is How We*

operates on an even, horizontal plane implying continuous movement between the individual and the group. Here, making things happen provides both a dramatic tension, and the ethical code dramatized in the production of all her work.

One of the defining features of Billing's practice is her willingness to encourage and support others in collaborative endeavors. Billing alternately behaves as artist, director, and producer. This is evidenced in the elucidation of subtle performances of friends and associates who are involved in the production of all her films, or the ongoing collective performance project and previously mentioned, stand-alone film *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2002–07). The former is an ongoing international live tour consisting of infinite cover versions of the song "You don't love me yet" (1984) by American singer-songwriter Roky Erickson, and performed by local musicians at multiple venues from Helsinki to Chicago. This is also evidenced in Billing's role as a music producer/organizer, since 1997, alongside her brother Anders with their record label *Make It Happen* and comprehensive website for the promotion of bands, production of music and tours.

What this collaborative action means long term—its Billing's name featured here in this context remember—is a moot

*Walk on the Moon*. Dieser Lernprozess – Erfahrung zu sammeln und mit dem Boot sicher zu segeln – wird reflektiert von unserer dauerhaften Erfahrung mit der Arbeit selbst. Ausserdem spiegelt Billings Anwendung eines konstanten visuellen Wechsels zwischen Vordergrund und Hintergrund, Oberfläche und Tiefe das Verhältnis der Einzelperson zur Gruppe wider. Die Aktivität des Segelns scheint ganz offensichtlich vollständig von ihrem gemeinschaftlichen Unternehmungsgeist abzuhängen. Der Film hat einen ruhigen, klaren Auftrag: Übereinstimmung, Zusammenarbeit, »wenn wir alle an einem Strang ziehen, können wir diese Reise meistern«. In Billings gesamtem Werk präsentiert sich der Verwandlungsprozess immer transparent, nicht-hierarchisch und unspektakulär. Billings Welt spielt sich auf einer flachen, horizontalen Ebene ab und impliziert ständige Bewegung zwischen dem Individuum und der Gruppe. Hier Dinge geschehen zu lassen, bewirkt dramatische Spannung und einen ethischen Kodex, der bei der Produktion all ihrer Werke anschaulich gezeigt wird.

Ein entscheidendes Charakteristikum von Billings Verfahrensweise ist ihre Bereitschaft, andere zu gemeinschaftlichem Bemühen zu ermutigen und darin zu unterstützen. Billing fungiert abwechselnd als Künstlerin, Regisseurin und Produzentin. Davon zeugen Äusserungen über die subtile Darstellungsweise von Freunden und Kollegen, die in die Produktion all ihrer Filme involviert sind. Oder auch das laufende und zuvor erwähnte Projekt einer Gemeinschaftsaufführung, der eigenständige Film *You Don't Love Me*



*Make It Happen*, release event, Stadsteatern, Stockholm, 1998

point. I would argue, however, that Billing's work consistently both pictures the politics of participation as content *and* embodies the contradictions of collaborative, entrepreneurial enterprise through her distinct methods of production. It is precisely the arising political and symbolic tensions of both content and process which point to a wider, complex social and economic dynamic currently being played out between the individual and the collective, market and state, freedom of choice and control, competition and collaboration—all the buzzwords of Western democratic politics can be conjured here—and it is what gives Billing's work its contemporary significance.

*Yet* (2002–2007). Dieses Projekt ist eine laufende internationale Livetournee mit unzähligen Cover-Versionen des Liedes »You don't love me yet« (1984) des amerikanischen Sängers und Songschreibers Roky Erickson, aufgeführt von ortsansässigen Musikern an mehreren Schauplätzen zwischen Helsinki und Chicago. Oder Billings Rolle als Musikproduzentin und -veranstalterin, die sie seit 1997 an der Seite ihres Bruders Anders mit ihrer Plattenfirma und umfassenden Website *Make It Happen* zur Förderung und Werbung für Bands, Musikproduktionen und Tourneen einnimmt.

Was diese gemeinsame Tätigkeit langfristig bedeutet – es muss daran erinnert werden, dass Billings Name hier in diesem Zusammenhang im Mittelpunkt steht –, ist ein strittiger Punkt. Ich würde jedoch behaupten, dass Billings Werk durch die charakteristischen, entschiedenen Produktionsmethoden konsequent zweierlei in sich vereint: die Politik der Teilnahme als Inhalt darzustellen *und* die Widersprüche von Gemeinschaftsunternehmungen zu verkörpern. Es sind gerade die politischen und symbolischen Spannungsverhältnisse von Inhalt und Prozess, die auf eine breitere, komplexere soziale und wirtschaftliche Dynamik hinweisen, die sich gegenwärtig zwischen Individuum und Kollektiv, Markt und Staat, Wahlfreiheit und Kontrolle, Konkurrenz und Zusammenarbeit abspielen. Alle Schlagwörter der westlichen demokratischen Politik können hier zitiert werden – und das ist es, was Billings Werk für unsere Zeit so bedeutsam macht.



*Make It Happen on Tour 2*, "All Songs Are Sad Songs," light box and poster by Karl Holmqvist

(overleaf) *Make It Happen on Tour 1*, Park; Park the bus, live program, Momentum, Moss, 2000

**Make It Happen On Tour  
PARK: PARK THE BUS**

Make It Happen; an artist-run 'independent' Stockholm label since two years dedicated to the launching of previously unrecorded bands and/or artists working in a diy spirit - through 7" vinyl releases and arranging of live gigs combined with video screenings, readings, records, performances etc.

On Tour; the idea for momentum and park is simply to pack a bus with some of the related acts, artists, books, films, magazines, posters, records, etc to be set up in the park, outside and inside the bus and in the roundhouse pavilion.

SATURDAY 1300-1700

**Part 1.1 Saralunden**

Weimar decadence atmosphere created by musical artist Sara Lunden, performing with her sister Ida on Wurlitzer piano. For Moss and in front of the bus; a trailerpark performance.

**Part 2.1 Reala**

Screening of moving Reala: musical animations.

**Part 2.2 Karl Holmqvist**

'Are You Ready?' - Reading.

**Part 2.3 Rock Out**

Free form - scratch duo consisting of Henry Moore Seider and Niklas Korsell on drums and a turntable.

**Part 2.4 Audionom**

Electronic kraut-punk music combined with live super 8 screening.

**Part 2.5 Saralunden Show**

Saralunden show (+band).

**Part 1.2 Chihuahua**

Melancolic tunes by loosely held soundsystem with members that varies from two up to 15 depending on time and place.

**Part 2.6 Bruce Leenus & Katarina Löfström**

DJ-ing by Bruce Leenus and psychological/ physical/ geographical border installation "Lonely Planets Club" created by artist Katarina Löfström.

**Part 2.7 Boat Diamagazine**

A collective way of reading a magazine, live read slide show, dealing with art and the way it's presented, created by the duo Gratis Design: Fredrik Homqvist and Peter Thörnby (in Swedish) 75 minutes. Content no 2:

1. Martinus - Mansklihetens öde i 12 punkter
2. Miss Universum - Teres, Karlarna och äpan som förstörde allt
3. Catrina Gunnars / Anna Kindgren - På drifven med Guy, Jules och Asger
4. Gunnar Krantz / Kamilla Rydahl - Bryt Tystnaden!
5. Sören Vilks - Bennispaketet i skala 1:1
6. SPECIAL INSERT! Fia Backström presenterar ORFI (org. for returning fashion interest), foto John Scariabrick, musik Sweden.
7. Peter Thörnby - Terre Thaeamlitz
8. Camilla Haglund - Fittor
9. Gisele Schink - Oh, it's a beaver!
10. Johanna Billing / Puppemasters m fl - Make it happen
11. Karl Holmqvist - Hjalpi!
12. Andrea Geyer\_good beginning makes a good ending\_

SUNDAY 1300-1600

**Part 3.1 Boat Diamagazine**

A collective way of reading a magazine, live read slide show, dealing with art and the way it's presented, created by the duo Gratis Design: Fredrik Homqvist and Peter Thörnby (in Swedish) see content above. (75 minutes).

**Part 3.2 Karl Holmqvist**

'Are You Ready?' - Repeat Reading.

**Part 3.3 Bo Melin**

Film "Let's go bananas - or what to do on a Sunday afternoon".

**Part 3.4 Chihuahua**

Melancolic tunes by loosely held soundsystem with members that varies from two up to 15 depending on time and place.

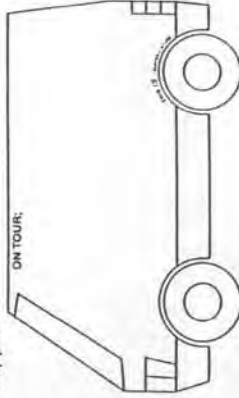
**Part 4.1 The Fire**

An DIY art/ music/ design magazine with contributions of a number of people based on the mixtape technique originally initiated by Jakob Kræjck. For Moss, a manifesto and an invitation to all eventvisitors to partake in a forthcoming project.

**Part 4.2 The Real Art (& Poetry)**

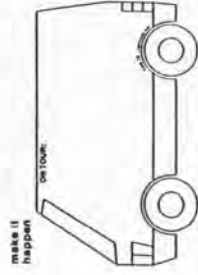
A comics/poetic lifestyle magazine. no 6 is a brand new poster edition on the subject 'poetry and ethics' made especially for Moss! With contributions from 16 artists and designers.

- r-a-p no 6:
- make it happen
- Reala
  - Dorinel Marc
  - Oskar Koråar
  - Emma Åkerman
  - Magnus Wassborg
  - Mika Pollack
  - Peo Olsson
  - Johanna Billing
  - Nille Svensson
  - Jakob Kræjck
  - Dennis Eriksson
  - Torbjörn Hellsten
  - Drack
  - Karl Holmqvist
  - Silina Astilean
  - Danielle Huthart



**Part 4.3 Lonely Planets Club Soundtrack**

By DJ Bruce Leenus. Available on cassette.



**Part 4.4 PLUS**

Back catalogues and magazines by:

**Part 4.5 Miss Universum**

Miss Universum - Magazine.

**Part 4.6 Benno**

Magazines and CD compilation with 20 Swedish alternative bands and labels.

**Part 4.7 Katzenjammer**

Magazine created by Swedish Architect/ Design/ Artist group ugly Gute.

**Part 4.8 Karl Holmqvist**

'Go Wilde' poetry, Holy Bible, Harry Hay and more, 'Aesthetic movement' wall Journal, '21 FOENS' Book+CD Com...

**Part 4.9 Make it happen**

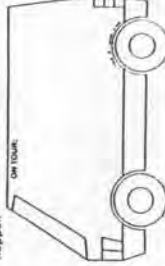
Various Make it Happen 7" singles.

**Part 4.10 PLUS**

Outside the bus:

**Part 4.11 Astrid Stenberg**

Set design by Astrid Stenberg.





## More Films about Songs, Cities & Circles

A Conversation between  
Johanna Billing & Helena Selder



*Look out!*, production still, Gainsborough Studios, London, 2003

(previous spread) *Make It Happen on Tour 1*, Park;  
*Park the Bus*, production still, Momentum, Moss, 2000

Helena Selder: **W**hy did you become an artist?

Johanna Billing: Drawing was my favorite subject in school. But becoming an artist wasn't an obvious choice for me from the beginning. I didn't know what it was. I grew up in Jönköping where there wasn't anywhere you could go to do life drawing. It's funny because that's really where the "do-it-yourself" mentality started that, I guess, has been a part of everything I've done since. In school, I stole clay and modeling stands and sat home doing model studies without a model. Then I applied to art schools with my sculptures and was admitted to one in Stockholm. One of the reasons why I started making art was that I was interested in so many different things. I wrote, I was interested in music, history, social science, philosophy and all of those things more or less to the same extent. When I had to choose an education for a career, I suddenly panicked and art became a way of taking in all of it. It was simply about choosing a way that left what I was to be more open.

HS: You later applied to the University College of Arts, Crafts

Helena Selder: **W**arum bist du Künstlerin geworden?

Johanna Billing: In der Schule war Zeichnen mein Lieblingsfach, doch es war für mich nicht von Anfang an das Nächstliegende, Künstlerin zu werden. Ich wusste nicht, was das genau bedeutete. Ich wuchs in Jönköping auf, da gab es nirgends die Möglichkeit, nach einem Modell zeichnen zu lernen. Das ist lustig, weil gerade dort die Mentalität des »Do it yourself« ihren Anfang nahm, die, wie ich glaube, einen Teil von allem bildet, was ich seitdem gemacht habe. In der Schule stahl ich Ton und Modelliergestelle; ich sass dann zu Hause und betrieb Modellstudien ohne Modell. Dann bewarb ich mich mit meinen Plastiken bei Kunstschulen und wurde an einer Schule in Stockholm angenommen. Einer der Gründe, weshalb ich begann, künstlerisch tätig zu werden, bestand darin, dass ich mich mit so vielen unterschiedlichen Dingen befasste: Ich schrieb, ich beschäftigte mich mit Musik, Geschichte, Sozialwissenschaft, Philosophie – und mit all diesen Themen mehr oder weniger in gleichem Masse. Als ich eine Ausbildung für eine berufliche Laufbahn auswählen musste, bekam ich plötzlich Panik; doch die Kunst gab mir dann die Möglichkeit, alles mit einzubeziehen. Es ging einfach darum, einen Weg zu wählen, der grössere Freiheiten für das bot, was ich sein wollte.



*Kvartssamtal*, detail of series of photos, 1994

(right) *Kvartssamtal*, contact sheet, from series of photos, 1994

and Design in Stockholm as a sculptor, but ended up working with photography and film. How did that come about?

JB: When I started at the University College in 1994, we had no teachers, and the professor was never there. We had nobody we could talk to, and a lot of our time was spent getting the situation to work as best we could. But there were some good projects at the school at that time. Among other things, Swedish artists Ebba Matz and Carin Ellberg had a project called "What I really want to do." I tried to ask myself that question and answer it as honestly as I could. What I really wanted to do was to have a discussion about what I was doing—but there were no teachers. I decided to set up a situation—

HS: Später hast du dich in Stockholm an der Kunstakademie als Bildhauerin beworben, aber letzten Endes hast du dann in den Bereichen Fotografie und Film gearbeitet. Wie kam es dazu?

JB: Als ich im Jahre 1994 an der Kunstakademie begann, hatten wir keine Lehrer, und der Professor war nie anwesend. Wir hatten niemanden, mit dem wir sprechen konnten, und wir verbrachten einen grossen Teil unserer Zeit damit, die Arbeitssituation so gut wie möglich zu organisieren. Aber es gab zu jener Zeit einige gute Projekte an der Schule. So hatten zum Beispiel die schwedischen Künstler Ebba Matz und Carin Ellberg ein Projekt mit dem Titel »Was ich wirklich tun will«. Ich versuchte, diese Frage mir selbst zu stellen und sie so ehrlich zu beantworten, wie ich konnte. Was ich wirklich wollte, das war, eine Diskussion über das zu



I called it *Kvartssamtal* (15 minute conversations about artistic practice and development, reenacting 15 minute meetings held between students, teachers, and parents in Swedish primary schools). I set up my sculptures, models, paintings, contact sheets, and ideas for installations on a table and invited the other six in my class to come in one by one. I wanted a situation where things would be connected. “Where do you come from?” “What do you do?” They were invited to sit there and question things. I showed the documentation from *Kvartssamtal*, which looked like quite dry photographs of interrogations. In spite of there being almost no information, I noticed that people at the school understood what the work was about just from the title, the photographs, and who was in them. For the first time, I had done something that meant something, both to me and for others. Something that was real, that had to do with reality. Trusting what was around me was interesting enough.

HS: You came from Jönköping to the University College, and you seem to have felt a pressure to do well. For your graduate exhibition in 1999 you made the film *Graduate Show*—a project where the graduating students at the University College were offered dance

führen, woran ich arbeitete – aber es gab ja keine Lehrer. Ich beschloss, eine Situation zu arrangieren – ich nannte sie *Kvartssamtal* [15-minütige Gespräche über künstlerische Praxis und Entwicklung dokumentieren, indem sie 15-minütige Zusammenkünfte von Schülern, Lehrern und Eltern in schwedischen Grundschulen rekonstruieren]. Ich baute meine Plastiken, Modelle, Gemälde, Kontaktbögen und Ideen für Installationen auf einem Tisch auf und bat die anderen sechs aus meiner Klasse, nacheinander hereinzukommen. Ich wollte eine Situation, in der die Dinge in einer Beziehung zueinander stehen sollten: »Wo kommst du her?«, »Was machst du?«. Die Besucher wurden gebeten, sich hinzusetzen und Fragen zu stellen. Ich zeigte die Dokumentation von *Kvartssamtal*, die wie ganz trockene Fotografien von Verhören wirkte. Obwohl es dort fast keinerlei Information gab, bemerkte ich, dass die Leute an der Schule verstanden, worum es in dieser Arbeit ging – einfach vom Titel her, von den Fotografien und den Leuten, die auf ihnen zu sehen waren. Zum ersten Mal hatte ich etwas hervorgebracht, das etwas bedeutete, und zwar sowohl für mich als auch für andere. Etwas Reales, etwas, das mit der Realität zu tun hatte. Ich hatte darauf vertraut, dass das, was sich um mich herum befand, interessant genug war.

HS: Du kamst von Jönköping an die Kunstakademie, und scheinst einen Druck gespürt zu haben, erfolgreich zu sein. Für deine Abschluss-Ausstellung im Jahre 1999 hast du den Film *Graduate Show* erstellt, ein Projekt, bei dem den Absolventen

lessons during their last semester. The students practiced together and then you made a film with a dance that you had rehearsed. On one level, the film is about how important it is for the students to perform and succeed when they graduate.



*Graduate Show*, rehearsal photo, 1999

JB: Yes, that film is informed by some idea of achieving. I always come back to that. It has to do with a “do-it-yourself” way of thinking where you don’t go to what is being served. Instead, you try to find your own way of doing things. But it also has to do with a feeling of guilt that I had when I started out in art. I thought it was the ultimate self-fulfillment, the most “egoistic” thing imaginable, and for that reason, so embarrassing and futile. That changed with *Kvartssamtal*, where I invited others so I could go outside of myself and create a dialogue. But this thing about achieving started out being about us at the Art College and

an der Kunstakademie während ihres letzten Semesters Tanzstunden angeboten wurden. Die Studenten übten gemeinsam; danach drehtest du einen Film mit einem Tanz, den du einstudiert hattest. Auf einer Ebene handelt der Film davon, wie wichtig es für die Studenten ist, gute Leistungen zu zeigen und erfolgreich zu sein, wenn sie ihren Abschluss machen.

JB: Ja. Dieser Film basiert auf einer Vorstellung von Leistung. Ich beziehe mich immer wieder darauf. Das hängt mit der Denkweise des »Do it yourself« zusammen – dass man also nicht dorthin geht, wo einem etwas bereits Fertiges vorgesetzt wird, sondern stattdessen einen eigenen Weg findet, die Dinge zu tun. Aber das hat auch mit einem Schuldgefühl zu tun, das ich hatte, als ich in der Kunst begann. Ich dachte, Kunst wäre die ultimative Selbstverwirklichung, das am stärksten egobezogene Ding, das man sich vorstellen kann – und aus diesem Grund so peinlich und nutzlos. Das änderte sich mit *Kvartssamtal*, wo ich andere einlud; auf diese Weise konnte ich aus mir selbst herausgehen und in einen Dialog treten. Aber die Vorstellung



my own problem with my role as an artist. When we left school, I suddenly saw how much society had changed, and that it wasn't only artists who were involved with self-fulfillment. Suddenly, everybody is doing the same thing. Not only do so many people want to become artists—whatever you do, self-fulfillment is somehow included, and everybody has the same amount of anxiety about performing: being happy, having the right relationship, the right home, the right career. Compared to the rest of society, the artist's role isn't as egocentric as it used to be. On the other hand, that's not such a funny thing to discover. Maybe my work is a kind of—"Hey! What's happened?"

HS: The films you made when you had graduated (*Project for a Revolution*, 2000, *Missing out*, 2001, *What Else Do You Do?* 2001) were strongly based around people and environments here in Stockholm. Has there been a big difference these last few years when you've been working almost exclusively abroad?

JB: The difference is not that big. If you compare the films you named to the films I've made abroad, they are basically about the same things. Everything is about a society that is changing and people in it. Do you notice the changes over time? Are you aware of what you are in the

von Leistung und auch mein eigenes Problem mit meiner Rolle als Künstlerin begann uns an der Kunstakademie zu beeinflussen. Nachdem wir die Schule verlassen hatten, nahm ich plötzlich wahr, wie sehr sich die Gesellschaft verändert hatte, und dass sich nicht nur die Künstler mit Selbstverwirklichung befassten. Plötzlich macht jeder dasselbe. Nicht nur diejenigen, die Künstler werden wollen, machen es – was immer man auch tut, Selbstverwirklichung gehört irgendwie dazu, und jeder hat das gleiche Verlangen danach, gute Leistung zu zeigen, glücklich zu sein, die richtige Beziehung, das richtige Zuhause, die richtige Karriere zu haben. Im Vergleich mit dem Rest der Gesellschaft ist die Rolle des Künstlers nicht mehr so egozentrisch, wie sie es früher einmal war. Andererseits ist es aber gar nicht so lustig, wenn man das entdeckt. Vielleicht ist meine Arbeit eine Art von »He, was ist denn passiert?!«.

HS: Die Filme, die du nach deinem Abschluss gedreht hast – *Project for a Revolution* (2000), *Missing out* (2001), *What Else Do You Do?* (2001) –, basieren in hohem Masse auf Menschen und Schauplätzen hier in Stockholm. Gab es in den letzten paar Jahren, als du fast ausschliesslich im Ausland ausgestellt hast, eine grosse Veränderung?

JB: Der Unterschied ist nicht allzu gross. Vergleicht man die Filme, die du eben genannt hast, mit den Filmen, die ich im Ausland gedreht habe, so geht es in ihnen im Grunde um dieselben Dinge. Alles handelt von einer sich verändernden Gesellschaft und den Menschen in ihr.



*What Else Do You Do?*, video stills, 2001

midst of? When I show my Swedish films abroad, they are about just that. But, if I try to do something that is about Sweden or Stockholm and show it here in Stockholm, it becomes sometimes too close.

HS: In the film *Where She Is at*, that you shot in Oslo (Moderna Museet project in collaboration with Oslo Konsthall, 2001), these slippery, difficult things crystallize and become very clear. The film shows a woman hesitating at the top of a diving tower and both the title and the film itself are about how one feels, where one is in life.

JB: I happened to be in this place "Ingierstrandsbadet" that is an old bath and recreational facility with a restaurant and diving tower outside Oslo. Everybody was telling us we had to go there because it was so fantastic and was probably going to be torn down. I became interested since everything in Sweden that was built in the nineteen-thirties and



Bemerken sie die Veränderungen, die sich im Laufe der Zeit vollziehen? Sind sie sich dessen bewusst, inmitten welcher Situation sie sich befinden? Wenn ich meine schwedischen Filme im Ausland zeige, geht es gerade darum. Wenn ich jedoch versuche, etwas zu machen, das von Schweden oder Stockholm handelt, und es hier in Stockholm zeige, dann fehlt manchmal die Distanz.

HS: In dem Film *Where She Is at*, den du in Oslo gedreht hast [Projekt des Moderna Museet in Zusammenarbeit mit der Oslo Konsthall, 2001], konkretisieren sich diese ungreifbaren und schwierigen Dinge und kommen sehr klar zum Ausdruck. Der Film zeigt eine Frau, die in einem Freibad zögernd oben auf einem Sprungturm steht, und sowohl der Titel als auch der Film selbst handeln davon, wie man sich fühlt, wo man im Leben steht.

JB: Ich war zufällig an diesem Ort. »Ingierstrands Bad« ist eine alte Schwimmbad- und Freizeitanlage mit einem Restaurant und einem Sprungturm in der Nähe von Oslo. Jeder sagte uns, wir müssten dorthin gehen, weil es



(clockwise from top left) *Where She Is at*, photo, 2001

Ingierstrand Bad, designed by Ole Lind Schistad and Eyvind Mostue in 1933

Loreley, Jan Billing might be preparing to jump from a cliff at the Swedish West Coast sometime in the nineteen-fifties.

*Where She Is at*, video still, 2001

I sol og vann på Ingierstrand. Print, 1934

nineteen-forties in a modernist vein has a high priority for us. It is really what we perceive and appreciate as our heritage and we would never tear it down just like that. I thought about how important it was, when Ingierstrand was built, that everyone should have access to recreation and nature, even the people living in the inner city. But apparently it's not important anymore. When I was out there, I was thinking about all this while

so fantastisch sei und wahrscheinlich abgerissen werden sollte. Ich wurde neugierig, weil in Schweden alles, was in den 1930er und 1940er Jahren in modernistischer Richtung gebaut worden war, für uns eine hohe Priorität hat. Es ist gerade das, was wir als unser Erbe



*Where She Is at*, production still, Ingierstrand, 2001

I was watching this quiet drama unfold with the girl alone at the top of the diving tower. Standing there alone with this decision whether to jump or not. It's really an individual "performance," a decision, an achievement. She stands on a tower in the shape of an "F" that becomes a symbol for all old functionalist, modernist ideas. What the political parties agree about; the great ideas, the direction a country takes—do they have any relation to the individual? I think these things are difficult to get a grip on and talk about. But in

ansetzen und schätzen, und wir würden es niemals einfach so abreißen. Ich machte mir Gedanken darüber, wie wichtig es damals war, als Ingierstrand erbaut wurde, dass jeder Zugang zu Erholung und Natur haben sollte, sogar die Menschen, die in der Innenstadt wohnen. Aber anscheinend ist das nicht mehr wichtig. Als ich dort draussen war, dachte ich über all das nach, während ich beobachtete, wie sich dieses stille Drama abspielte: das Mädchen, das sich allein dort oben auf dem Sprungturm befand. Sie stand dort, allein mit ihrer Entscheidung, ob sie springen sollte oder nicht. Es ist wirklich ein individueller »Auftritt«

a film you can connect things and look at them. Maybe it engages a physical understanding that gives you a feeling you can take with you and think about for a longer period.

HS: You were invited in a similar way by Milch (an independent art platform based in London) to make a film in London. Can you tell me a little about *Look out!* (Gainsborough Studios, London, 2003) where we follow a group of youths who visit one of the new flats in a luxury development in their neighborhood?

JB: What was interesting was the difference compared to my earlier films. I had worked in places where development has a slower pace. I thought that was interesting because it can be difficult to feel it. You notice it after a few years and then you think—How drastic! It's a small, small change every day. The Social Democrats in Sweden, for example, aren't what they were, but still you vote for them and think that they're the same party that they've always been. The difference in London, and especially East London, which has had the most extreme development in the last few years, is that the changes are so tremendous, probably because there's so much money and greater social and economic differences in the UK. I was attracted to doing something that would reflect this, but wondered how I could

– eine Entscheidung und eine Leistung. Sie steht auf einem Turm, der die Form eines »F« hat; er wird zu einem Symbol für all die alten funktionalistischen, modernistischen Ideen. Das, worauf sich die politischen Parteien einigen, die grossen Ideen, die Richtung, die ein Land einschlägt – hat das irgendeine Beziehung zum Individuum? Ich denke, es ist schwierig, diese Dinge zu begreifen und darüber zu sprechen. Aber in einem Film kann man die Dinge miteinander in Zusammenhang bringen und ansehen. Vielleicht gewährleistet er ein konkretes Verständnis, das einem ein Gefühl gibt, das man mitnehmen und über das man eine längere Zeit nachdenken kann.

HS: Auf ähnliche Weise wurdest du von »Milch« [einer unabhängigen Londoner Kunstplattform] eingeladen, einen Film in London zu drehen. Könntest du mir etwas über *Look out!* [Gainsborough Studios, London, 2003] erzählen, wo wir einer Gruppe von Jugendlichen folgen, die eine der neuen Wohnungen einer Luxuswohnanlage in ihrer Nachbarschaft besichtigt?

JB: Das Reizvolle war der Unterschied im Vergleich zu meinen früheren Filmen. Ich hatte an Orten gearbeitet, an denen sich die Entwicklung nicht so schnell vollzieht. Ich dachte, das wäre von Interesse, weil es schwierig sein kann, es wahrzunehmen. Man bemerkt es erst nach ein paar Jahren, und dann denkt man »Wie drastisch!«. Es ist jeden Tag eine ganz winzige Veränderung. Die Sozialdemokraten in Schweden sind zum Beispiel nicht mehr das, was sie einmal waren; aber man



*Look out!*, production stills, Gainsborough Studios, London, 2003

do something where everything changes so fast that it would already be old the first time it was shown. I was invited to exhibit at Gainsborough Studios, an old film studio from the thirties, where Hitchcock made his films. Gainsborough Studios is as big as a whole block and was just being developed into luxury flats. The housing company also financed an exhibition space in order to be allowed to keep the name "Gainsborough Studios." One way for me to comment on the situation was to go in and use the building as the film studio it was originally, but also to try to show what was happening in the building. At the time, it was open house for prospective buyers. What I also wanted to connect to this were my first feelings when I walked around in the area. There were lots of signs on the walls of the buildings about the developments in the area, along the lines of "New luxury flats planned here," and next to them, signs asking people to come and help at local youth centers. Before



wählt sie weiterhin und denkt, sie seien dieselbe Partei, die sie schon immer waren. In London und besonders in East London, das in den letzten paar Jahren die extremste Entwicklung durchgemacht hat, besteht das Besondere darin, dass die Veränderungen so ungeheuer sind. Das kommt wahrscheinlich daher, weil es im Vereinigten Königreich so viel Geld und grössere soziale und ökonomische Unterschiede gibt. Es reizte mich, etwas zu realisieren, das dies widerspiegeln würde. Aber ich fragte mich, wie ich etwas erschaffen könnte, wenn sich doch alles so schnell verändert, dass es bereits alt wäre, wenn man es das erste Mal zeigen würde. Ich wurde eingeladen, in den Gainsborough Studios auszustellen, einem alten Filmstudio aus den 1950er Jahren, in dem Hitchcock seine Filme gedreht hatte. Die Gainsborough Studios sind so gross wie ein ganzer Block, und man war gerade dabei, sie in Luxuswohnungen umzuwandeln. Die Wohnungsbaugesellschaft finanzierte auch einen Ausstellungsraum, damit sie den Namen »Gainsborough Studios« beibehalten durfte. Für mich bestand eine Art, diese Situation zu kommentieren, darin, das Gebäude als das Filmstudio zu

the refurbishment, Gainsborough Studios had housed a non-profit music school named “Young, Gifted, and Broke” after Nina Simone’s classic [song] “Young, Gifted, and Black”. There were clearly some very guilty feelings around. The building lies next to Shoreditch Park, which in 2003, was very run-down. At the other end of the park, there was a little canal that was in the prospectus for the flats, which advertised views of the park and the canal. The flats themselves were luxurious glass cubes, but the views showed all the problems in the surrounding neighborhood.

HS: The park is full of problems, drugs, drink you name it.

JB: Yes, and during the time I was there were several incidents. The developers at Gainsborough Studios kept saying they would help youths in the neighborhood. How? By cleaning up the park? That would only move the problem somewhere else. To comment on this, I arranged staged flat shows. Above all, I wanted to invite young people from the area to come up and look at the flats to see what they were like inside and to see their neighborhood from that perspective. It became almost like an educational visit. I think I was playing with the idea that it could almost be something that the developers could come up

benützen, das es ursprünglich war. Aber ich wollte auch versuchen zu zeigen, was in diesem Gebäude vorging. Zu dieser Zeit gab es dort für potenzielle Käufer Besichtigungen von Musterwohnungen. Zudem wollte ich eine Verbindung zu den ersten Gefühlen herstellen, die ich hatte, als ich auf diesem Gelände umherging. Da gab es viele Schilder auf den Mauern der Gebäude, die sich auf die Baumassnahmen auf dem Gelände bezogen, etwa im Stile von »Hier entstehen neue Luxuswohnungen«, und daneben gab es Schilder, die die Leute aufforderten, in den örtlichen Jugendzentren mitzuhelfen. Vor der Luxussanierung war in den Gainsborough Studios eine gemeinnützige Musikschule untergebracht; sie trug den Namen »Young, Gifted and Broke« nach Nina Simones klassischem »Young, Gifted and Black«. Dabei gab es ganz klar einige starke Schuldgefühle. Das Gebäude liegt gleich neben dem Shoreditch Park, der im Jahre 2003 sehr heruntergekommen war. Am anderen Ende des Parks gab es einen kleinen Kanal; er war in den Prospekten für die Wohnungen zu sehen, die mit dem Ausblick auf den Park und den Kanal warben. Die Wohnungen selbst waren luxuriöse Glaswürfel, der Ausblick zeigte jedoch all die Probleme in der näheren Nachbarschaft.

HS: Der Park steckt voller Probleme. Drogen, Alkohol, was auch immer.

JB: Ja, und während der Zeit, als ich da war, gab es dort auch einige Vorfälle. Die Planer der Sanierung der Gainsborough Studios sagten immer, sie wollten den

with, to help local youths—a kind of misguided and totally illogical youth activity. You won’t see it in the film, except that they look a little too young to be in the position to actually purchase a flat. But just by attending a viewing they have, at least formally, a chance.

HS: You boil down a tendency, something in the air, into a situation and then you channel that through people who often have a connection to that situation. It becomes a way of concretizing this *Zeitgeist* and making it manifest.



*Look out!*, video stills, 2003

JB: I would never want it to become a generalization. I prefer to invite people and explain to them what I am interested in. After that, it becomes their improvisation that we follow. Something that happens and not something that I direct. I think a lot of things come out even if the people don’t talk. It’s hard to believe [that] one doesn’t usually give people the freedom just to “be” in a film, but I really feel I get a lot out of it, especially when trying to

Jugendlichen in der Nachbarschaft helfen. Wie? Indem sie den Park »säubern«? Das würde das Problem nur an einen anderen Ort verlagern. Als Kommentar dazu arrangierte ich inszenierte Wohnungsbesichtigungen. In erster Linie wollte ich junge Leute aus der Gegend einladen, herzukommen und die Wohnungen zu besichtigen; sie sollten sehen, wie diese innen aussahen und ihre Nachbarschaft aus dieser Perspektive wahrnehmen. Dieser Besuch wurde nahezu zu einer Art Lehrveranstaltung. Ich glaube, ich spielte mit der Idee, dass es fast etwas sein könnte, was sich die Planer der Sanierung einfallen lassen könnten,



um den Jugendlichen dort zu helfen – eine Art törichte und völlig unlogische Jugendaktivität. Man wird es in diesem Film nicht sehen – nur dass sie ein wenig zu jung aussehen, um in der Lage zu sein, sich wirklich eine Wohnung kaufen zu können. Aber gerade dadurch, dass sie bei einer Wohnungsbesichtigung dabei sind, haben sie zumindest formell eine Chance.

HS: Du resümierst eine Tendenz, etwas, das in der Luft liegt, zu einer Situation, und dann kanalisiert du es durch

work with things that are hard to pinpoint or verbalize.

HS: It's very telling how one of these youngsters in the film impatiently walks up to the sink and turns on one of the elegantly designed taps.

JB: Yes, they're a little bit uncomfortable. I want to make films where there is constant activity, with people who are occupied with something, maybe not what they usually do, but something that they've been made to do. That makes them think about why and how they're doing it and in what situation. Then we watch it, and maybe we think about the same things. Then when the film is projected large in a room, a physical communication is created. The films are constantly sliding between different positions. At first, the film might resemble fiction film because it has a cinematic quality. Then it turns into a documentary, but suddenly, it gets theatrical and then, once again, it changes into something that seems to be a documentation of a performance. You can't really relax and think, "Okay, I'm watching a film and now I'm going to focus on the plot." I want all these layers to be active all the time. It's like a camera that keeps zooming back and forth, failing to find its focus. It's sometimes hard to make films like that because

Menschen, die oft in einer Verbindung mit dieser Situation stehen. Dies wird zu einer Art und Weise diesen Zeitgeist zu konkretisieren und ihn greifbar zu machen.

JB: Ich möchte niemals, dass es eine Verallgemeinerung wird. Ich ziehe es vor, die Leute einzuladen und ihnen zu erklären, worum es mir geht. Danach wird es zu ihrer eigenen Improvisation, der wir dann folgen. Etwas, das geschieht – jedoch nicht etwas, das von mir gelenkt wird. Ich glaube, dass viele Dinge auch dann deutlich werden, wenn die Leute nicht sprechen. Es ist kaum zu glauben, aber man gibt den Leuten normalerweise nicht die Freiheit, in einem Film einfach nur zu »sein«; ich glaube aber wirklich, dass ich damit viel herausholen kann. Besonders wenn ich versuche, mit Dingen zu arbeiten, die schwer auf den Punkt zu bringen oder zu verbalisieren sind.

HS: Es ist sehr aufschlussreich, wie einer dieser jungen Menschen im Film ungeduldig zum Spülbecken geht und einen dieser elegant designten Wasserhähne aufdreht.

JB: Ja, sie fühlen sich ein klein wenig unbehaglich. Ich möchte Filme drehen, in denen es eine konstante Aktivität gibt. Mit Menschen, die sich mit etwas beschäftigen – vielleicht nicht mit dem, was sie normalerweise tun, sondern mit etwas, das man ihnen vorgegeben hat. Das bringt sie dazu, darüber nachzudenken, warum und wie sie es tun und in welcher Situation. Dann schauen wir es an, und vielleicht denken wir über dieselben Sachen nach. Wenn man dann den Film

you frustrate the audience by not serving them anything "finished." On the other hand, maybe they are films about frustration.

HS: You made *Magic & Loss* (2005) on invitation from Dutch "Smart Project Space" and shot it on location in Amsterdam. It's, if possible, even more open-ended and abstract than *Look out!* In the film we follow a group of people as they pack up somebody's apartment.

JB: Well, it's a sort of choreography and it's very formal in a way. At the same time, it's a documentation of something that is actually happening. From the beginning, I had the title of the Lou Reed album, "Magic and Loss", as a working title. He released the record after a period when several of his friends had passed away. I had it in mind in the beginning of the process of the film because I first started to think about it when I was invited to create a work for an exhibition about the sinking of the Estonia<sup>‡</sup>, that focused on disappearance.

‡ The Estonia was a big passenger ship that travelled between Sweden and Estonia. It sank at sea taking nearly 900 passengers with it in 1994.

I started to think about, quite practically, what happens when there are large-scale catastrophes

grossformatig in einem Raum projiziert, wird eine physische Kommunikation geschaffen. Die Filme wechseln ständig zwischen unterschiedlichen Positionen. Zuerst könnte der Film vielleicht einem Spielfilm ähneln, weil er die Qualitäten eines Kinofilms hat. Dann verwandelt er sich in einen Dokumentarfilm – aber plötzlich wird er theatralisch, und dann wieder verwandelt er sich in etwas, das die Dokumentation einer Performance zu sein scheint. Man kann sich nicht wirklich entspannen und denken »Gut, ich schaue mir einen Film an und konzentriere mich auf die Handlung«. Ich will, dass all diese Schichten während der ganzen Zeit aktiv sind. Es ist wie bei einer Kamera, die ständig hin und her zoomt, ohne dabei die richtige Einstellung zu finden. Manchmal ist es schwierig, Filme wie diese zu machen, weil man das Publikum dadurch frustriert, dass man ihm nichts »Abgeschlossenes« vorsetzt. Andererseits sind es vielleicht aber auch Filme über Frustration.

HS: Du hast *Magic & Loss* [2005] auf Einladung des niederländischen »Smart Project Space« gemacht und diesen Film in Amsterdam gedreht. *Magic & Loss* hat – sofern dies überhaupt möglich ist – ein sogar noch offeneres Ende und ist noch abstrakter als *Look out!*. Wir folgen in diesem Film einer Gruppe von Menschen, die eine Wohnung für den Umzug leer räumen.

JB: Ja, das ist eine Art Choreografie, und es ist in gewisser Hinsicht sehr formalistisch. Zugleich ist es aber auch

like the Estonia. It's not only one or two people missing; it's entire families, circles of friends and—in the case of the Estonia—whole villages. Strangers without that nostalgic relationship arrive to pack up the deceased persons' homes. I got obsessed with the idea and I was curious to see what it would look like. While I was thinking about it, the Estonia exhibition was cancelled. That only made it easier for me to really go on and explore this isolated event of the ongoing packing and the relationship between the people and the objects being packed.

When the exhibition was cancelled I was in Amsterdam and, as I was there, I started to think about how it could be relevant there. All the Dutch people around me kept talking about flats, changing, moving, and improving the situation of living. I've read that Sweden tops the list of countries with the highest amount of single households per capita, but I wouldn't be surprised if the Netherlands came in second. It's possible economically and it's something that people view positively in our part of the world. While walking around Amsterdam you see a lot of these big hooks that are used when people move houses. You are constantly made aware of all the people moving because of the sort of public play that is enacted with the hook, the ladders, and the machines. The lowering of

eine Dokumentation von etwas, das tatsächlich geschieht. Am Anfang hatte ich den Titel des Lou-Reed-Albums »Magic and Loss« als Arbeitstitel. Er veröffentlichte die Aufnahme nach einem Zeitraum, in welchem mehrere seiner Freunde gestorben waren. Das ging mir am Anfang des Filmprozesses durch den Kopf – ich begann zuerst, daran zu denken, als ich eingeladen wurde, für eine Ausstellung über den Untergang der Estonia\* ein Werk zu schaffen, das sich auf das Thema des Verschwindens konzentrieren sollte.

\* Die Estonia war ein grosses Passagierschiff, das zwischen Schweden und Estland fuhr. Es versank im Jahre 1994 im Meer und nahm fast 900 Passagiere mit sich in die Tiefe.

Ich begann, ganz praktisch darüber nachzudenken, was geschieht, wenn sich eine grosse Katastrophe wie die der Estonia ereignet. Da verschwinden nicht nur ein oder zwei Personen, sondern ganze Familien, Freundeskreise und – im Falle der Estonia – ganze Dörfer. Fremde Menschen ohne diese nostalgische Beziehung kommen und räumen die Häuser der verstorbenen Personen leer. Ich war wie besessen von dieser Idee, und ich war neugierig zu erfahren, wie es aussehen würde. Während ich darüber nachdachte, wurde diese Estonia-Ausstellung jedoch abgesagt. Das machte es mir noch leichter, weiter voranzukommen und dieses isolierte Ereignis des fortwährenden Ausräumens und Wegschaffens sowie die Beziehung zwischen den Menschen und den Objekten, die weggeschafft werden, zu untersuchen.



furniture became a performative ingredient in the film once it had been moved and took place in Amsterdam.

HS: You once said that your films start as images, dreams, or songs that you've thought about for some time before you start to construct a work around them. *Magical World* was shot in a cultural center outside Zagreb and is connected to the song "Magical World." The film depicts a group of children as they're about to rehearse that song.

JB: Yes, "Magical World" was a song which had been with me for many years that suddenly popped up in my head when I was on a residency in Croatia during autumn 2004. When I was there, I was invited by the group WHW



*Magic & Loss*, video stills, 2005

Als die Ausstellung abgesagt wurde, war ich gerade in Amsterdam, und da ich mich eben dort befand, begann ich, darüber nachzudenken, wie es an diesem Ort relevant sein könnte. Alle Niederländer in meiner Umgebung sprachen ständig von Wohnungen, Wohnungswechsel, Umzügen und von der Verbesserung der Lebenssituation. Ich habe gelesen, dass Schweden an der Spitze der Liste von Ländern mit der prozentual höchsten Anzahl von Single-Haushalten steht, und ich wäre nicht überrascht, wenn die Niederlande an zweiter Stelle kämen. Es ist ökonomisch möglich, und es wird von den Leuten in unserem Teil der Welt als positiv angesehen. Wenn man durch Amsterdam geht, sieht man eine Menge dieser grossen Hebevorrichtungen, wie sie für Umzüge verwendet werden. Man wird ständig auf all die Leute aufmerksam gemacht, die umziehen – durch diese Art von öffentlichem Theaterstück, das mit den Hebevorrichtungen, den Leitern und den Maschinen aufgeführt wird. Das Herablassen des Mobiliars wurde in diesem Film zu einer performativen Bestandteil nachdem diese bewegt wurden und fand in Amsterdam statt.



(clockwise from top left) *Magic & Loss*, installation view, "More Films about Songs, Cities & Circles," Marabou Park, Stockholm, 2006  
*Magic & Loss*, research photos, Amsterdam, 2005

(What How and for Whom) to be a part of *Normalisation*, an exhibition about the hurried adjustment to the European Union that Croatia is undergoing. I had travelled before in Albania, Serbia, and Romania, but not in Croatia. I don't think it was a coincidence that this song appeared, but I wasn't sure that it would be relevant there and then. I had an image in my mind and I felt that I had to bring it out to

HS: Du hast einmal gesagt, dass deine Filme ihren Ausgangspunkt in Bildern, Träumen oder Liedern haben, die dir eine Zeit lang durch den Kopf gegangen sind, ehe du dich daranmachst, um diese herum ein Werk aufzubauen. *Magical World* wurde in einem Kulturzentrum in der Nähe von Zagreb gedreht und steht mit dem Lied »Magical World« in Zusammenhang. Der Film zeigt eine Gruppe von Kindern, wie sie damit beschäftigt ist, eben dieses Lied einzustudieren.

understand it. I heard, instead of the singer Minnie Riperton's original version, a young boy singing the solo chorus.

"Magical World" was recorded by a group called Rotary Connection and written by Sidney Barnes in 1968. It's interesting because it seems very personal, but I also think it's a song about transformation. Minnie Riperton sings, "Why do you want to wake me from this dream, I'm not interested." There's a very sad feeling in the song and, at the same time, it's got a very proud and cocky "Don't come here trying to change me, I am who I am" kind of attitude. What is also interesting is that when [the song] was released, Rotary Connection was one of the first racially mixed bands. Their music wasn't explicitly political but, in retrospect, it has become political just by being by a mixed group who made all these personal songs about change in a time of great upheaval. I was interested in the possibility of being able to express something personal with a voice of one's own in the midst of a rapid course of events. The song is performed by a group of children in a cultural center in Dubrava outside Zagreb. The building was designed by one of the experts of similar cultural centers in former Yugoslavia, and the construction was initiated under an economically prosperous period during the nineteen-eighties. When war broke

JB: Ja, »Magical World« war ein Lied, das mich über viele Jahre hinweg begleitet hat; ganz plötzlich kam es mir wieder in den Sinn, als ich mich im Herbst 2004 zu einem Arbeitsaufenthalt in Kroatien befand. Als ich dort war, wurde ich von der Gruppe whm (what, how & for whom) eingeladen, an der Ausstellung *Normalisation* teilzunehmen, die den übereilten Prozess der Angleichung an die Europäische Union, den Kroatien durchläuft, zum Thema hatte. Ich hatte vorher Reisen durch Albanien, Serbien und Rumänien unternommen, nicht aber durch Kroatien. Es war gewiss kein Zufall, dass dieses Lied auftauchte, aber ich war mir nicht sicher, ob es an jenem Ort und zu jenem Zeitpunkt relevant sein könnte. Ich hatte ein Bild in meinem Kopf, und ich fühlte, dass ich es nach aussen bringen musste, um es zu verstehen. Ich hörte, wie statt der Sängerin Minnie Riperton der Originalversion ein kleiner Junge den Refrain sang.

»Magical World« wurde von einer Gruppe mit dem Namen Rotary Connection aufgenommen und von Sidney Barnes im Jahre 1968 geschrieben. Es ist reizvoll, denn es scheint sehr persönlich zu sein; aber ich finde auch, dass es ein Lied über Umgestaltungsprozesse ist. Minnie Riperton singt »Warum willst du mich aus diesem Traum aufwecken? – Es interessiert mich nicht!«. In diesem Lied steckt ein sehr trauriges Gefühl, und es zeigt zugleich eine sehr stolze und anmassende Einstellung: »Komm nicht her und versuche, mich zu ändern. – Ich bin wie ich bin.« Es ist auch hervorzuheben, dass die Rotary Connection, als das Lied herauskam, eine



*Magical World*, video stills, 2005

out, the architect moved to Africa and started up a new career. The center still isn't finished, and is basically falling apart.

I perceive this situation to be particular to Croatia; when independence came, one system was changed for another overnight. For many, this was a traumatic process where everything old, without discernment, was tossed out. When I arrived there, the first season of the TV-series "Idol" was launched. It was the exact same thing—everybody had to adjust and be compared to each other. And everybody had to be able to speak English—and this is Croatia where they've just recently been allowed to speak their own language. It was extremely hard and time-consuming to realize *Magical World*. Many people thought that it would

der ersten rassistisch gemischten Bands war. Ihre Musik war nicht explizit politisch, aber zurückblickend betrachtet ist sie politisch geworden – einfach dadurch, dass gerade eine gemischte Gruppe all diese persönlichen Lieder über Veränderung in einer Zeit grosser Umwälzungen hervorgebracht hat. Es ging mir um die Möglichkeit, mit einer eigenen Stimme etwas Persönliches inmitten einer raschen Abfolge von Ereignissen ausdrücken zu können.

Das Lied wird von einer Gruppe von Kindern in einem Kulturzentrum in Dubrava in der Nähe von Zagreb vorgetragen. Dieses Gebäude wurde von einem der Experten für derartige Kulturzentren im früheren Jugoslawien entworfen, und mit dem Bau wurde in einem ökonomisch florierenden Zeitraum während der 1980er Jahre begonnen. Als der Krieg ausbrach, zog der Architekt nach Afrika und begann dort eine neue

be impossible for the children to sing the song in English. I myself thought it was complicated to make them do it. But that was also one of the interesting aspects. If I was to come back in a year or two, I'm sure the situation would be completely different.

HS: In your exhibition at Marabou Park in Stockholm, the documentation from the *You Don't Love Me Yet* project was also shown, which was a long-term collaboration with Index (the Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation). It's an unusual project that includes the film *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2003) that shows a group of people during a recording of Roky Erickson's song "You don't love me yet" from 1984, and a tour where local artists are invited to perform a cover of the same song.

JB: It all started in autumn 2002 when I invited twenty artists to perform covers of "You don't love me yet" in the basement of Index in Stockholm. In theory, a ridiculously simple form that during the course of the evening, while the artists, one after the other, repeated the song, created a very special, indescribable atmosphere. This project also began with me having a song in my head. I wasn't so fond of this song, but it stuck in my mind, and I kept thinking about it because it's

Karriere. Dieses Zentrum ist noch nicht fertiggestellt, und im Grunde löst es sich in seine Bestandteile auf.

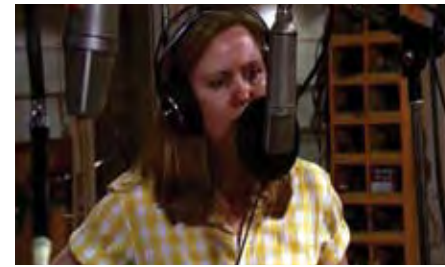
Ich sehe diese Situation als für Kroatien bezeichnend an. Als die Unabhängigkeit kam, wurde das eine System über Nacht durch ein anderes ersetzt; für viele Menschen war dies ein traumatischer Prozess, bei dem alles Alte unterschiedslos weggeworfen wurde. Als ich dort ankam, wurde der erste Teil der TV-Serie »Idol« gestartet. Es war exakt dasselbe – jeder musste sich angleichen und sich mit jedem anderen vergleichen lassen. Und jeder musste in der Lage sein, Englisch zu sprechen – und das in Kroatien, wo man den Menschen erst kürzlich erlaubt hat, ihre eigene Sprache zu sprechen. Es war extrem schwierig und zeitaufwendig, *Magical World* zu realisieren. Viele Menschen dachten, dass es für Kinder unmöglich wäre, das Lied auf Englisch zu singen. Ich selbst dachte, dass es schwierig wäre, sie dazu zu bringen. Aber dies war auch einer der faszinierenden Aspekte. Wenn ich in ein oder zwei Jahren dorthin zurückkommen sollte, wäre die Situation eine völlig andere, da bin ich mir sicher.

HS: In deiner Ausstellung in Marabou Park in Stockholm zeigst du auch die Dokumentation des Projektes *You Don't Love Me Yet*, welches eine langfristige Zusammenarbeit mit Index [Schwedische Stiftung für zeitgenössische Kunst] war. Dieses ungewöhnliche Projekt umfasst den Film *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2003), der eine Gruppe von Leuten während einer Aufnahme von Roky Ericksons Lied »You Don't Love Me Yet« von 1984 zeigt, sowie





*You Don't Love Me Yet*, documentation material on DVDs, from Tour 2002-2005, installation view, "Songs, Cities & Circles," Basis, Frankfurt am Rhein, 2006



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, video stills, 2003

so hard to get one's head around. It fit into a disillusioned feeling that I had that, not only do we have to achieve a successful life, we also have to achieve successful relationships. Should one postpone living together with a partner until one has accomplished one's own "thing"?—Live alone or live together?—That is the question. How can one speak about these things without making it a boring problem? How can I catch that feeling without having to say it? More than any other film, *You Don't Love Me Yet* was a catalyst. A project, in the shape of a cover, that deals with getting out of oneself. That these things can melt together by setting up a situation where people, by their participation, can themselves experience what it means.

eine Tournee, bei der örtliche Künstler gebeten werden, eine Cover-Version eben dieses Liedes vorzutragen.

JB: Es begann alles im Herbst 2002, als ich 20 Künstler einlud, Cover-Versionen von »You Don't Love Me Yet« im Kellergeschoss von Index in Stockholm vorzutragen. Eine in der Theorie lächerlich einfache Form, die im Verlauf des Abends, als die Künstler einer nach dem anderen das Lied wiederholten, eine sehr besondere, kaum zu beschreibende Atmosphäre erschuf. Auch dieses Projekt begann damit, dass mir ein Lied durch den Kopf ging. Ich mochte das Lied nicht so besonders, doch es war in meinem Kopf, und ich musste immer daran denken, weil es sehr schwierig ist, so etwas zu begreifen. Es passte zu dem Gefühl der Desillusionierung, das ich hatte: Es muss uns nicht nur gelingen, ein erfolgreiches Leben zu führen, wir müssen auch noch erfolgreiche Beziehungen haben. Sollte man es hinausschieben, mit einem Partner zusammenzuleben, bis man sein eigenes »Ding« zu Ende gebracht hat? – »allein leben oder zusammenleben?«, das ist hier die Frage. Wie kann man über diese Dinge sprechen, ohne ein langweiliges Problem daraus zu machen? Wie kann ich dieses Gefühl einfangen, ohne es aussprechen zu müssen? Mehr als jeder andere Film war *You Don't Love Me Yet* ein Katalysator. Ein Projekt in der Gestalt einer Cover-Version, bei dem es darum geht, aus sich herauszugehen und diese Dinge miteinander verschmelzen zu lassen. Indem man eine Situation arrangiert, in der die Leute durch ihre Teilnahme selbst erfahren können, was das bedeutet.



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, production still, Atlantis Studio, 2003

The event from Index was then repeated in fifteen different cities including Östersund, Ystad, Chicago, Helsinki, and Utrecht, where local artists continued to interpret the song, which now exists in a maddening 150 versions. The project developed in such a way as to allow the venues to arrange the event themselves, which turned the event itself into a cover. The film *You Don't Love Me Yet*, with a version of the song recorded by a group of artists together in Atlantis Studio, was my "version" of the song, where I got to arrange the song. In music, covers are made all the time, and I like the way they're made as declarations of love and how this enables the artists to offer their inspiration and their references to the audience. In the art world, you have to keep showing how unique

Diese Veranstaltung von Index wurde dann in 15 verschiedenen Städten wie Östersund, Ystad, Chicago, Helsinki und Utrecht wiederholt, wo lokale Künstler weiterhin dieses Lied interpretierten, welches jetzt in der schier unglaublichen Zahl von 150 Versionen existiert. Das Projekt hat sich in einer Weise entwickelt, die es den Veranstaltungsorten erlaubt, dieses Event selbst zu arrangieren, wodurch das Event selbst in eine Cover-Version verwandelt wurde. Der Film *You Don't Love Me Yet* – mit einer Version des Liedes, die von einer Gruppe von Künstlern im Atlantis-Studio gemeinsam aufgenommen wurde – war meine »Version« des Liedes, zu der ich gelangte, um das Lied zu arrangieren. In der Musik gibt es ständig Cover-Versionen, und ich mag die Art, wie sie als Liebeserklärungen gemacht werden und wie sie es den Künstlern ermöglichen, dem Publikum ihre Inspiration anzubieten

you are. If you ask artists about which artists they've been inspired by they'll often say, "Oh, I never look at art." It's something artists are not generous with. If an artist makes a tribute or a paraphrase, it's usually something that is being theorized or problematized.

HS: But paraphrases and homages can be loving even if they problematize.

JB: Absolutely. But apart from that, I think it's very interesting, not only because of the declaration of love, but because the letting go of oneself musically often results in music that is more interesting than the music the artist normally creates.

HS: Paradoxically, the uniqueness of the artist often becomes even more manifest in a cover. Speaking of references and tributes—my last question is usually what inspired the artist I'm interviewing.

JB: Before I moved to Stockholm, I visited the city and went to see a Sophie Calle exhibition at Kulturhuset in 1991. I think it's still one of my strongest art experiences.

HS: Did any Swedish artists inspire you?

JB: Ola Billgren was one of my early favorites. Apart from that, I really like diverse artists like

und ihre Verehrung zu erweisen. In der Welt der Kunst muss man ständig beweisen, wie einzigartig man ist. Wenn man Künstler danach fragt, von welchen anderen Künstlern sie inspiriert worden sind, werden sie oft antworten: »Oh, ich achte nie auf Kunst!« Das ist ein Thema, bei dem Künstler sehr zurückhaltend sind. Wenn ein Künstler einem anderen Anerkennung zollt oder eine Paraphrase ausführt, ist das gewöhnlich etwas, worüber man theoretisiert oder das man hinterfragt.

HS: Aber Paraphrasen und Hommagen können liebevoll sein, selbst wenn man sie hinterfragt.

JB: Absolut. Aber abgesehen davon glaube ich, dass das sehr aufschlussreich ist, nicht nur wegen der Liebeserklärung, sondern auch wegen des musikalischen »Sich-gehen-Lassens«, das oft zu einer Musik führt, die ausdrucksvoller ist als die, die der Künstler normalerweise hervorbringt.

HS: Paradoxe Weise wird die Einzigartigkeit des Künstlers in einer Cover-Version oft greifbarer. Da wir gerade von Verehrung und Wertschätzung sprechen ... meine letzte Frage ist gewöhnlich, was den Künstler, den ich gerade interviewe, inspiriert hat.

JB: Bevor ich nach Stockholm gezogen bin, besuchte ich einmal diese Stadt und ging in eine Sophie-Calle-Ausstellung im Kulturhuset, das war im Jahre 1991. Ich glaube, dass das noch immer eine meiner intensivsten Kunsterfahrungen ist.



Notice board in the studio, photo, 2004

Magnus Bårtås, Karl Holmqvist, Ola Pehrson, and Aleksandra Mir. John Cassavetes, the director, is a huge source of inspiration for me. All his films are about humanity and how we live, how complex it is, that people often live in a way that they might not want to. Maybe one doesn't see the inspiration from Cassavetes explicitly in what I do, but that's what I keep coming back to, how does one want to live?

HS: There are a lot of people stuck in things that they try to get out of in Cassavetes films. People in your films are stuck in looped events.

JB: Yes, I can't get away from these loops. It all began with *Project for a Revolution* where the loop became an important part of the content with, in time and space, the revolving idea of revolution.

HS: Hat dich irgendein schwedischer Künstler inspiriert?

JB: Ola Billgren war einer meiner frühen Lieblingskünstler. Abgesehen davon mag ich wirklich unterschiedliche Künstler wie Magnus Bårtås, Karl Holmqvist, Ola Pehrson and Aleksandra Mir. Der Regisseur John Cassavetes ist für mich eine riesige Inspirationsquelle. In all seinen Filmen geht es um das Menschliche und darum, wie wir leben, wie vielschichtig unser Leben ist – dass die Menschen oft auf eine Weise leben, die sie eigentlich gar nicht wollen. Vielleicht wird in dem, was ich erschaffe, die Inspiration von Cassavetes nicht offensichtlich, aber ich beziehe mich immer wieder darauf: »Wie will man leben?«

HS: Es gibt in Cassavetes Filmen eine Menge von Menschen, die in Dingen feststecken, aus denen sie herauskommen wollen. In deinen Filmen stecken die

The main character in the film leaves and comes back while the others remain. At the same time, the loops convey a pattern, an ongoing activity, like in *Magical World* where there is an ongoing process of learning and adaptation. I'm obsessed by circularity and retrospection in general.



Photo from the show, "More Films about Songs, Cities & Circles," 2006

Menschen in sich endlos wiederholenden Ereignissen fest.

JB: Ja. Ich kann von diesen Loops nicht wegkommen. Es fing alles mit *Project for a Revolution* an, wo der Loop zu einem wichtigen Teil des Inhaltes wurde – der sich in Zeit und Raum ständig wiederholenden Idee der Revolution. Der Hauptdarsteller dieses Films geht weg und kehrt zurück, während die anderen dableiben. Gleichzeitig vermitteln die Loops ein Muster einer andauernden Aktivität wie etwa in *Magical World*, wo ein andauernder Lern- und Anpassungsprozess stattfindet. Ich bin ganz allgemein von kreisförmig verlaufenden Bewegungen und einer zurückblickenden Sichtweise besessen.



*Another Album* preparations, photos, Zagreb, 2005

# Forever Changes

A Conversation between  
Johanna Billing & Philipp Kaiser



*This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, production of window display signs for the accompanying music program, curated by Emily Roff, Tracer Trails, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, 2007

Philipp Kaiser: **T**he early video work *Where She Is at* (2001) seems to be prototypical for your work. The antagonistic configuration of the individual and society as well as the dialectic structure of their dependence is a recurring theme. In other pieces, the individual is isolated through close-ups or given the role of the singer, as in *Magical World* (2005). What interests you in this constellation?

Johanna Billing: This dialectic structure that you refer to is not always so consciously planned, but I guess it is something I apply as a kind of tool in order to make other

Philipp Kaiser: **D**ie frühe Videoarbeit *Where She Is at* (2001) scheint für dein Werk geradezu prototypisch zu sein. Die antagonistische Anordnung von Individuum und Gesellschaft sowie deren dialektische Abhängigkeitsstruktur ziehen sich wie ein roter Faden durch deine Arbeit. In anderen Werken wird der Einzelne durch Close-ups isoliert, oder aber ihm kommt wie in *Magical World* (2005) die Rolle des Sängers zu. Was interessiert dich an dieser Konstellation?

Johanna Billing: Diese dialektische Struktur, auf die du dich beziehst, ist nicht immer so bewusst geplant. Aber ich denke, sie ist etwas, das ich sozusagen als Werkzeug einsetze, um andere Dinge



*Magical World*, video still, 2005

things visible. By setting up quite simple double configurations as a kind of frame, such as now and then, or the individual in relation to the collective, I can allow myself to concentrate on what is in-between, this huge gray area that is too often left out. In today's

sichtbar zu machen. Wenn ich ganz einfache Doppelkonfigurationen als eine Art Rahmen aufbaue oder das Individuum in einen Bezug zum Kollektiv setze, kann ich es mir erlauben, mich auf das zu konzentrieren, was sich dazwischen befindet, auf diesen riesigen grauen Bereich, der allzu oft weggelassen wird.

media driven world, where society demands a quick categorization of everything, things get simplified and generalized. It's either "yes" or "no," but there is no room for "I don't know." On another almost sub-conscious level, I recognize that, in order to understand the here and now, I look behind me and start counting backwards to track the changes that have led us to where we are today.

PhK: In your work, a song is often performed, but also, a specific ability or skill. In silent choreography, what appears to be programmatic behavior patterns are developed according to invisible rules. So, in *Magical World*, the Croatian children sing a song by the American singer Sidney Barnes from Rotary Connection—that is, on the one hand, they appropriate what is for them a barely understandable language, and on the other hand (so to speak), the song sings the children. How would you describe the delicate balance between determinism and hopeful self-improvement?

JB: I think in my work, within the rules I have put up for myself, there is always room for free will. The work even depends on free will, nobody is forced to do anything and the same goes for the children. In fact, it was particularly important to me in relation to this work. But as you said, it is

In der heutigen, von Medien gelenkten Welt, in der die Gesellschaft eine schnelle Kategorisierung von allem fordert, werden die Dinge vereinfacht und verallgemeinert – es gibt entweder ein Ja oder ein Nein, aber keinen Raum für ein »Ich weiss nicht«. Auf einer anderen, fast unterbewussten Ebene gebe ich zu, dass ich, um das Hier und Jetzt zu verstehen, hinter mich schaue und rückwärts zu zählen beginne, um die Veränderungen zu verfolgen, die uns dahin geführt haben, wo wir uns heute befinden.

PhK: In deiner Arbeit wird oftmals ein Song aufgeführt, aber auch eine spezifische Fähigkeit oder Fertigkeit. In stillen Choreografien entfalten sich nach unsichtbaren Regeln Handlungsmuster, die wie programmiert erscheinen. So singen die kroatischen Kinder in *Magical World* zwar den Song des amerikanischen Sängers Sidney Barnes von Rotary Connection, das heisst, sie eignen sich einerseits diese für sie kaum verständliche Sprache an, andererseits, so liesse sich sagen, singt der Song die Kinder. Wie würdest du die delikate Balance zwischen dem Determinismus und der hoffnungsvollen Selbstentfaltung beschreiben?

JB: Ich denke, dass es in meiner Arbeit, innerhalb der Regeln, die ich für mich selbst aufgestellt habe, immer Raum für den freien Willen gibt. Die Arbeit ist sogar vom freien Willen abhängig. Niemand wird gezwungen, irgendetwas zu tun, und das gilt auch für die Kinder, was für mich bei dieser Arbeit wirklich besonders wichtig war. Aber es handelt sich, wie du



*This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, installation view and stage for the accompanying music program, curated by Emily Roff, Tracer Trails, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, 2007

a delicate balance because the specific situations that people get invited into often involve activities they are not totally used to, so this can sometimes cause skepticism and feelings of insecurity. Although these situations and activities are never risky in any 'real' way, they can possibly be experienced as such, since the older we get, the more resistant we become toward situations where we have to learn things from scratch, and where we are left a bit blank or at a loss in the eyes of others, and also in the eyes of ourselves. But I think that

gesagt hast, um ein labiles Gleichgewicht, weil die spezifischen Situationen, in die die Leute hineinversetzt werden, oft Tätigkeiten mit einbeziehen, an die sie nicht unbedingt gewöhnt sind, weshalb dies bisweilen Skepsis und Verunsicherung verursachen kann. Obwohl diese Situationen und Tätigkeiten niemals riskant sind, können sie auf eine »reale« Weise eventuell in diesem Sinne erlebt werden. Denn je älter wir werden, umso resistenter werden wir gegenüber Situationen, in denen wir wieder ganz von vorn etwas lernen müssen und wir in den Augen der anderen und auch in unseren eigenen Augen ein wenig ratlos oder

by putting ourselves through this perhaps uncomfortable feeling we can find out something. This kind of self-improvement, if you like, is perhaps not about the kind of skills that you are referring to, for me, it is about connecting to something temporarily lost within.

PhK: In many works, music generates a sense of belonging, a simple form of collectivity. Why this affinity with music?

JB: I have worked in parallel with art and music for as long as I can remember, so working with music is really a part of what I do, although I don't perceive it as playing a bigger part in my work than other genres that also inspire me, such as film, sculpture, choreography, and architecture. for instance. On the other hand, music is a very powerful medium, so whenever you invite it, there is always a risk that it will dominate. One of the reasons to why I decided to start working with film as a medium was the simple fact that sound is half of its consistency. So, it was a straightforward way to incorporate one of my biggest interests and, at the same time, be able to continue working within, what I consider to be, an experimental field. I also think that when trying to communicate and portray certain situations, feelings, and atmospheres, sound becomes one of the most powerful tools

verlegen dastehen. Aber ich denke, dass, wenn wir ein vielleicht unangenehmes Gefühl auf uns nehmen, wir etwas herausfinden können. Wenn man auf diese Weise, wenn du so willst, an sich selbst arbeitet, handelt es sich nicht um die Art von Fähigkeiten, auf die du dich beziehst; für mich geht es darum, Kontakt zu etwas herzustellen, das in unserem Inneren vorübergehend verloren gegangen ist.

PhK: Musik generiert in vielen Arbeiten eine Zusammengehörigkeit, eine einfache Form der Vergemeinschaftung. Warum diese Nähe zur Musik?

JB: Ich habe in der Kunst und in der Musik parallel gearbeitet. Denn solange ich zurückdenken kann, bildet diese Form von Arbeit mit Musik wirklich einen Teil von dem, was ich erschaffe, obwohl ich nicht der Ansicht bin, dass sie in meiner Arbeit eine grössere Rolle spielt als andere Genres, die mich ebenfalls inspirieren, wie zum Beispiel Film, Bildhauerei, Choreografie und Architektur. Andererseits ist die Musik ein sehr mächtiges Medium, deshalb besteht, wenn man sie mit einbezieht, immer das Risiko, dass sie dominant wird. Einer der Gründe, weshalb ich beschlossen habe, mit dem Medium Film zu arbeiten, lag in der einfachen Tatsache, dass der Ton die Hälfte seines Wesens ausmacht. Auf diese Weise führte ein direkter Weg dorthin, eines meiner grössten Anliegen einzubeziehen und gleichzeitig in der Lage zu sein, weiterhin innerhalb dessen zu arbeiten, was ich als ein Experimentierfeld betrachte. Ich denke auch, dass der Ton, wenn ich versuche, gewisse Situationen

available. I find that in working with sound and music, I manage to get closer to what I want to grasp. If you look at my silent films they are also about music in the way that the story is told and how the editing is structured according to specific rhythms in both sound and image.

PhK: In *Another Album*, (2006) music is also inscribed as a horizon of the recent past. Can you elaborate on *Another Album* in relation to *Magical World*?

JB: There are so many consequences of the dramatic events of the nineteen-nineties that people are now dealing with, in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia, and so many serious ones, of course. Working with the film *Magical*

und Atmosphären zu kommunizieren und zu porträtieren, zu einem der mächtigsten Werkzeuge wird, die es gibt. Ich bin der Ansicht, dass es mir gelingt, wenn ich mit Ton und Musik arbeite, dem näherzukommen, was ich begreifen möchte. Was meine Stummfilme angeht, so haben auch diese mit Musik zu tun – und zwar in der Art, wie die Geschichte erzählt und wie der Schnitt spezifischen Rhythmen entsprechend von Ton und Bild strukturiert wird.

PhK: Insbesondere in *Another Album* (2006) ist der Musik ebenso ein zeitgeschichtlicher Horizont eingeschrieben. Wie siehst du *Another Album* in Bezug auf *Magical World*?

JB: Es gibt so viele Konsequenzen der dramatischen Ereignisse der 1990er Jahre, die die Menschen in den Ländern des



*Another Album*, production still, Krapanj, 2006

*World* certainly brought up a lot of these things in different ways. What was interesting to me, having spent some more time there, was also finding out about smaller issues which are still of great importance to people, things that are affecting their personal and everyday lives in a very emotional way. In this case, I was struck by the fact that the rock scene in Croatia, which was very vivid and flourishing during the nineteen-seventies and eighties, seemed yet to have recovered from the disrupting events of the nineties. During the process of making the film, it became interesting for me to connect back to music journalism that I was involved in, in the nineties. Perhaps this project would never have happened if I had not had this background which taught me a certain way to listen and take in music, and to feel curiosity about its whole existence: How it came about; Why? When? Where it came from, its reason, and so on. For *Another Album* I ended up including some of my research, which became liner notes that accompany the film. Through a closer reading of the liner notes, that detail a mix of the origins of songs the group in the film is reciting, their personal interpretations and the more trivial discography facts of the bands and their respective musical careers, a history of a 'scene' is revealed.

During this so-called "New Wave" era, the whole of Yugoslavia

ehemaligen Jugoslawien jetzt beschäftigen, so viele ernste Konsequenzen. Die Arbeit an dem Film *Magical World* hat sicherlich eine Menge von diesen Dingen auf unterschiedliche Weisen zur Sprache gebracht. Nachdem ich dort noch einige Zeit verbracht hatte, lag mir daran, Näheres über die kleineren Probleme herauszufinden, die für die Menschen noch immer von grosser Wichtigkeit sind – Dinge, die auf ihr persönliches und alltägliches Leben in einer sehr emotionalen Weise Einfluss ausüben. In diesem Fall war ich von der Tatsache beeindruckt, dass die Rockszene in Kroatien, die in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren sehr lebendig war und florierte, sich anscheinend noch nicht von den Ereignissen des Umbruchs in den 1990er Jahren erholt hatte. Während des Prozesses, als ich an diesem Film arbeitete, hatte ich die Idee, wieder eine Verbindung zum Musikjournalismus herzustellen, mit dem ich mich in den 1990ern beschäftigt hatte. Vielleicht wäre es nie zu diesem Projekt gekommen, wenn ich nicht diesen Hintergrund gehabt hätte. Er lehrte mich eine bestimmte Weise, Musik zu hören und einzubeziehen sowie eine Neugier bezüglich ihrer ganzen Existenz zu entwickeln: wie sie entstanden ist, warum, wann, woher sie kam, ihre Gründe und so weiter. Für *Another Album* bezog ich letzten Endes einiges von meinen Untersuchungen mit ein: Es entstand ein Begleitheft zum Film. Durch eine eingehendere Lektüre des Begleitheftes – eine Mischung aus den Ursprüngen der Lieder, die die Gruppe in diesem Film spielt, ihren persönlichen Interpretationen und den trivialeren



*Another Album*, folder, accompanying the film, 2006



boasted some of the most diverse and progressive rock music in Eastern Europe. State-run record labels generated an enormous amount of rock recordings, which were distributed and promoted throughout the republics. With the 1991 break-up of the pan-Yugoslavian market, however, large-scale record production and distribution was suppressed. A lot of bands had to break up and move to different countries. It has also been much more difficult for bands to tour as frequently as before, and for the music itself to even exist sometimes within some of the countries. So, when we see the group of people in *Another Album*—some of whom I met while working on the *Magical World* project sitting even today for hours together, singing some of their favorite songs from this period, to me this is not only nostalgic, but it also says something about their loss, which few people talk about today.

PhK: In the end of the nineties, you founded, together with your brother, the music label *Make It Happen*. To what extent are the two contexts of music and art differentiated for you?

JB: When talking about the artistic production of music and art works, there is, for me, no difference. It is more the systems and their different forms of presentation and distribution that treat the outcomes

Daten der Diskografie der Bands und ihrer jeweiligen musikalischen Karrieren – wird die Geschichte einer »Szene« enthüllt.

Während der Ära der sogenannten »New Wave« rühmte sich das gesamte Jugoslawien, eine der vielfältigsten und progressivsten Rockmusikszenen in Osteuropa zu haben. Staatlich geführte Schallplattenlabels produzierten eine enorme Anzahl von Rockaufnahmen, welche überall in allen Teilrepubliken verbreitet und vertrieben wurden. Mit dem Zerschneiden des gesamtjugoslawischen Marktes im Jahre 1991 wurden jedoch die massenhafte Schallplattenproduktion und -verbreitung unterdrückt. Eine Reihe von Bands musste sich auflösen und in verschiedene Länder gehen; es wurde für Bands auch viel schwieriger, so häufig wie früher auf Tournee zu gehen, und für die Musik selbst war in einigen der Länder manchmal ihre bloße Existenz gefährdet. Wenn wir deshalb die Gruppe von Menschen in *Another Album* sehen – einige von ihnen traf ich, während ich an dem Projekt *Magical World* arbeitete –, wie sie sogar heute noch stundenlang zusammensitzen und einige ihrer Lieblingslieder aus jener Zeit singen, so ist das für mich nicht nur nostalgisch, sondern es sagt auch etwas darüber aus, was diese Menschen verloren haben und worüber heute nur wenige sprechen.

PhK: Ende der 1990er Jahre hast du gemeinsam mit deinem Bruder das Musiklabel *Make It Happen* gegründet. Inwiefern unterscheiden sich die beiden Kontexte Musik und Kunst für dich?



*Make It Happen on Tour*, compilation CD, "All songs are sad songs", 2001



*Make It Happen*, various event posters, 1998–2000



*Make It Happen*, Vega 7" vinyl, 1999



*Make It Happen*, Hell on Wheels, 7" vinyl, 1998



*Make It Happen*, Chihuahua, 7" vinyl, 1998



*Make It Happen*, Revlon 9, 7" vinyl, 1999



*Make It Happen on Tour 2*, live event, Superflex Studio, Copenhagen 2001



*Make It Happen on Tour 2*, live event, Rooseum, Malmö, 2001



*Make It Happen on Tour 1*, Park the bus, Momentum, Moss, 2000



*Make It Happen* featuring Distro, production still, "Baltic Babel," Rooseum, Malmö, 2002

so disparately, and that can sometimes create filters between listeners and viewers. When we started the label in 1997, there was suddenly a renewed interest in performance expressed by the art world, which also embraced music in a wider sense. I sometimes had the impression that people wanted the music to sweep through the galleries and institutions with fresh air and life—and with parties of course! So the label was often invited to be part of shows and events, and it was, of course, fun and fruitful to arrange music events for different audiences, on different stages. But our label stopped taking part, after a while, because one of the implications of these collaborations with the art world was that often the label was treated as something interesting: “Look, an artist also working with a record label! How fascinating!” But the music we put out tended to be treated as a representation of music rather than on its own merit, which was, of course, the opposite of what we were trying to pursue with the label.

PhK: Virtually all your works show situations in which something has been changed or transformed. However, your videos are looped so that in any case, in the course of time, all changes become irrelevant.

JB: A friend of mine also recently found the loops to be about a

JB: Hinsichtlich der künstlerischen Produktion von Musik und Kunstwerken besteht für mich kein Unterschied. Es sind vielmehr die Systeme und ihre unterschiedlichen Präsentations- und Verbreitungsformen, die die Resultate so ungleich behandeln, und dies kann manchmal Filter zwischen Zuhörern und Zuschauern aufbauen. Als wir im Jahre 1997 mit diesem Label begannen, gab es plötzlich ein erneuertes Interesse an Performance, das von der Kunstwelt zum Ausdruck gebracht wurde und das auch Musik in einem weiter gefassten Sinne mit einbezog. Ich hatte manchmal den Eindruck, die Menschen wollten, dass die Musik wie ein frischer Wind mit neuem Leben – und natürlich mit Partys! – durch die Galerien und Institutionen fegt. Deshalb wurde das Label häufig dazu eingeladen, an Shows und Veranstaltungen teilzunehmen; natürlich machte es Spass, und es brachte auch gute Resultate, für unterschiedliches Publikum auf unterschiedlichen Bühnen Musikevents zu organisieren. Aber unser Label machte nach einer gewissen Zeit nicht mehr mit, weil eine der Auswirkungen der Zusammenarbeit mit der Kunstwelt darin bestand, dass das Label oft wie etwas Interessantes angesehen wurde: »Schau, ein Künstler, der auch mit einem Label arbeitet! Wie faszinierend!« Aber es bestand die Tendenz, die Musik, die wir herausbrachten, eher als eine Darstellungsform von Musik als aufgrund ihres eigenen Wertes zu betrachten, was natürlich das Gegenteil von dem war, was wir mit dem Label zu erreichen versuchten.

refusal to end stories. And I guess the loops to some extent are about a way for me to leave things open ended. We are back again to the desire to stay a bit longer in this in-between place and not forcing the work too quickly to a conclusion. But in some of the films, the loops are also about the feeling of being stuck in something, a way of doing, thinking, or living that you cannot get out of. Even though we, at times, chose these situations ourselves, they can keep us prisoners in our own lives. But the looped repetitions are not always about something negative and I do not perceive them as making changes irrelevant, as you mention. The pace that comes with the format of the loop can create a break with the rapid everyday. So, although the loop in itself is never-ending, it carries the potential to break with its surrounding the loop provides a way of creating a temporary room, a ‘timespace’ from which the work then communicates.

PhK: Is your work utopian?

JB: No. I think the set up for art, in general, can be perceived as utopian, but the more specific settings that I create for the different films, regardless if they are more true to reality or more constructed or ‘unreal,’ are not utopian, but can refer to situations that are dysfunctional and

PhK: Nahezu alle deine Arbeiten zeigen Situationen, in denen sich etwas ändert oder verändert hat. Sämtliche deiner Videos sind jedoch geloopt, so dass im Laufe der Zeit alle Veränderung hinfällig wird.

JB: Einer meiner Freunde fand kürzlich auch, dass es sich bei den Loops um eine Weigerung handelt, die Geschichten zu einem Ende zu bringen. Und ich meine, dass es bei den Loops in gewissem Masse um ein Verfahren geht, die Dinge für mich unabgeschlossen zu lassen. Da sind wir wieder bei dem Wunsch, ein wenig länger in diesem Zwischenbereich zu verweilen und die Arbeit nicht zu schnell zu einem Abschluss zu zwingen. Aber in einigen der Filme geht es bei den Loops um das Gefühl, in etwas festzustecken – in einer Art des Handelns, Denkens oder Lebens –, aus dem man nicht mehr herauskommt. Obwohl wir uns diese Situationen manchmal selbst aussuchen, können sie uns in unserem eigenen Leben gefangen halten. Bei den geloopten Wiederholungen geht es jedoch nicht immer um etwas Negatives, und ich bin nicht der Ansicht, dass dadurch Veränderungen hinfällig werden, wie du gesagt hast. Das Tempo, das das Format des Loops vermittelt, kann eine Unterbrechung des eiligen Alltags bewirken. Deshalb trägt der Loop, obwohl er als solcher niemals endet, das Potenzial in sich, einen Bruch mit seiner Umgebung zu bewirken – der Loop bietet eine Möglichkeit, einen zeitlich befristeten Raum zu erschaffen, einen »Raum in der Zeit« –, von dem aus die Arbeit dann kommuniziert.



*This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, installation process, window display signs, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, 2007

frustrating. I think that sometimes people assume that my work is somehow utopian simply because they portray people in groups.

PhK: Perhaps some of my questions are misleading insofar as they suggest that your work describes exclusively collective processes. However, *Where She Is at*—the exposed young woman on the diving platform—as well as your MFA project at Konstfack in Stockholm [University College of Arts, Crafts and Design] recall how very much, at least, your early work was marked by a self-reflexive dimension, by considerations of your own role as an artist. Has this self-reflection fallen by the wayside?

PhK: Ist deine Arbeit utopisch?

JB: Nein. Ich denke, dass die Umstände für die Kunst ganz allgemein als utopisch angesehen werden können. Aber die spezifischeren Ausstattungen, die ich für die verschiedenen Filme realisiere – unabhängig davon, ob der Realität treu oder eher konstruiert oder »irreal« –, sind nicht utopisch, sondern können sich auf Situationen beziehen, die gestört und frustrierend sind. Ich denke, die Leute nehmen manchmal an, dass meine Werke irgendwie utopisch seien, einfach weil in ihnen Menschen in Gruppen porträtiert werden.

PhK: Vielleicht sind meine Fragen insofern irreführend, als dass sie suggerieren, deine Arbeit würde ausschliesslich kollektive Prozesse

JB: I don't think so myself. I think you ask because the earlier works are made in more local contexts within which it is perhaps easier for others to locate me as a person, both geographically, and in terms of a certain stage in life. The more recent works come from a mixture of personal experiences, memories, and things I'm dealing with. Even when my projects are made in other countries, I always try to enter them in a personal way in order to avoid, as much as possible, a situation where I'm standing on the outside looking in.

PhK: Your most recent work *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* (2007) shown at *documenta 12* began with the invitation by the Collective Gallery's "One Mile" program, to do a project in Edinburgh which was supposed to take place within the one mile radius from the gallery. Could you sketch out the process; how the work came together and how you invited local musicians to learn how to sail? Where do you get your ideas and how do you proceed with a new piece?

JB: Even before going there I had listened to a lot of the bands from this area, such as King Creosote, James Yorkston, Unpoc, Pictish Trail. Many of them write about the life at sea, sailors and captains, shipwrecks and lighthouses, directions and navigation. So, as

beschreiben. *Where She Is at*, die exponierte junge Frau auf dem Sprungturm, wie auch deine Abschlussarbeit an der Konstfack in Stockholm erinnern jedoch ebenso daran, wie sehr zumindest deine frühen Werke von einer selbstreflexiven Dimension, von Überlegungen deiner eigenen Rolle als Künstlerin geprägt waren. Ist diese Selbstreflexion verloren gegangen?

JB: Ich selbst glaube das nicht. Ich denke, du fragst das, weil die früheren Arbeiten in lokaleren Kontexten realisiert wurden, innerhalb derer es für andere vielleicht einfacher ist, mich als Person sowohl geografisch als auch hinsichtlich einer bestimmten Lebensphase zu lokalisieren. Die neueren Werke entstammen einer Mischung aus persönlichen Erfahrungen, Erinnerungen sowie Dingen, mit denen ich mich beschäftige. Auch wenn meine Projekte in anderen Ländern durchgeführt werden, versuche ich immer, auf eine persönliche Weise in sie hineinzugehen, um so weit wie möglich eine Situation zu vermeiden, in welcher ich aussen stehe und von dort aus hineinschaue.

PhK: Deine neueste Videoarbeit *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* (2007), die auch auf der *documenta 12* gezeigt wurde, kam durch eine Einladung der Collective Gallery in Edinburgh im Rahmen des Programms »One Mile« zustande. Es ging darum, ein Projekt zu entwickeln, welches sich im Radius einer Meile von der Galerie entfernt abspielt. Könntest du den Arbeitsprozess erläutern und erzählen, wie es war, lokalen Musikern das Segeln beizubringen? Woher kommen überhaupt

Pictish Trail from the Fence Collective playing live in Cellardyke, Home game Festival, Anstruther, 2007



soon as I got to Edinburgh for the first visit, my immediate desire was to find out where the sea was. Not being able to see it at first, I became a bit obsessed with finding it, and, at first, it struck me as almost a bit strange that the city was hiding away from the sea, even though it was, obviously, out of respect for the hard weather conditions of the North Sea. Later, after having lived there for a while, I found out that most of the people who wrote these songs, and also many people from the area, in general, had never been onboard a boat! I found this quite fascinating and peculiar, why and how this practical distance existed, and this became some kind of a starting point for me. During my period of research, there were, in Edinburgh, as in many other cities at the moment, new developments, housing complexes, here called the “Waterfront” being built practically on the shore. All of a sudden, it is very desirable for people to live extremely close to the sea. So, what I wanted to explore in the making of the film was perhaps this distant romantic idea, the very strong

deine Ideen, und wie gehst du bei einer neuen Arbeit vor?

JB: Sogar schon bevor ich nach Edinburgh fuhr, hatte ich eine Menge von den Bands aus dieser Gegend gehört wie beispielsweise King Creosote, James Yorkston, Unpoc, Pictish Trail. Viele von ihnen schreiben über das Leben auf See, über Matrosen und Kapitäne, Schiffswracks und Leuchttürme, Himmelsrichtungen und Navigation. Als ich zu meinem ersten Besuch nach Edinburgh kam, war es aus diesem Grund mein erster Wunsch, herauszufinden, wo das Meer war. Da ich es zunächst nicht entdecken konnte, wurde ich ein wenig davon besessen, es zu finden. Anfangs machte es auf mich einen etwas seltsamen Eindruck, dass sich die Stadt vor dem Meer versteckte, obwohl es offensichtlich war, dass dies auf die ungünstigen Wetterbedingungen der Nordsee zurückzuführen ist. Später dann, nachdem ich eine Zeit lang dort gelebt hatte, fand ich heraus, dass die meisten Leute, die diese Lieder schrieben, und auch ganz allgemein viele Menschen aus dieser Gegend niemals auf einem Schiff gewesen waren! Ich fand es ganz faszinierend und eigenartig, weshalb und wie diese

presence that the sea seems to have in the culture and in peoples’ minds and how that related to a physical connection to it.

Walking around in the seaside area the constant tide movements were very present, and that is something that I am not used to seeing where I live. I found it quite amazing and powerful somehow—our connection to the moon and its tidal forces, and the way it affects everyday life. And this is how the old eighties Arthur Russell song “This is how we walk on the moon,” which I had listened to a couple of years earlier, popped up in my head again. Suddenly, the idea to work with this song and its quite sparse lyrics, together with musicians on string instruments—somehow made sense. It connected both to Russell’s original music and to the physical sounds of the boat and its surroundings. Again, my idea for this film was about being in an uncertain situation, taking small steps in unknown territory, which

konkrete Distanz existierte, und dies wurde für mich zu einem Ausgangspunkt. Während der Zeit meiner Untersuchungen gab es in Edinburgh – wie gegenwärtig auch in vielen anderen Städten – neue Wohnkomplexe, die hier »Waterfront« genannt werden und die praktisch auf dem Ufer erbaut werden. Ganz plötzlich ist es für die Menschen sehr wünschenswert, extrem nahe am Meer zu leben. Was ich untersuchen wollte, indem ich diesen Film drehte, war deshalb diese ferne romantische Idee, diese sehr starke Präsenz, die das Meer anscheinend in der Kultur und in den Köpfen der Menschen hat, und wie dies mit einer physischen Verbindung mit ihm zusammenhängt.

Wenn man in der Gegend am Meer herumgeht, sind die konstanten Gezeitenbewegungen sehr präsent; das ist etwas, das ich dort, wo ich lebe, nicht zu sehen bekomme. Ich fand das ganz erstaunlich und irgendwie beeindruckend: unsere Verbindung mit dem Mond und seinen Gezeitenkräften und die Art, wie sich das auf das alltägliche Leben auswirkt. Und so kam mir der alte Song von Arthur Russell aus den 1980er Jahren

*This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, soundtrack recording with Andreas Söderström, production still, Up and Running Studio, Stockholm, 2007

(overleaf) *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*. Installation view, *documenta 12*, Kassel, 2007





simultaneously poses the question what a big step could be today. As I have mentioned elsewhere, the big leaps forward that we take nowadays, can sometimes be things we do on a very personal level, like finding some basic knowledge in our lives that we had temporarily lost contact with.

I was also interested in sailing because, as a form of transportation, it is something that we are not depending on, at all, anymore. Though totally unnecessary, it still provides one of the most unusual settings, in which you are in direct contact with the elements. It creates such an intense feeling being totally dependent on and connected to the winds and the weather around you. You get the feeling that you are, for a small fraction of time, in control of life.



*This Is How We Walk on the Moon,*  
research photo, 2006

PhK: A lot of your works seem to be close to experiments that deal with the loss of control in general.

»This is how we walk on the moon« plötzlich wieder in den Sinn, den ich einige Jahre früher gehört hatte. Auf einmal bekam die Idee, mit diesem Lied und seinem ganz kurzen Text zu arbeiten – zusammen mit Musikern, die auf Saiteninstrumenten spielen –, einen Sinn. Es entstand eine Verbindung sowohl zu Russells ursprünglicher Musik als auch zu den konkreten Geräuschen des Schiffs und seiner Umgebung. Bei meiner Idee für diesen Film ging es wieder darum, sich in einer ungewissen Situation zu befinden, kleine Schritte in einem unbekanntem Territorium zu unternehmen, womit sich gleichzeitig die Frage stellt, was denn heute ein grosser Schritt sein könnte. Wie ich an anderer Stelle erwähnt habe, kann der grosse Sprung nach vorn, den wir heutzutage machen, manchmal in Dingen bestehen, die wir auf einer sehr persönlichen Ebene ausführen – wie etwa eine gewisse grundlegende Erkenntnis in unserem Leben zu finden, zu der wir vorübergehend den Kontakt verloren hatten.

Mich faszinierte auch das Fahren mit Segelschiffen, weil es als Transportmöglichkeit etwas darstellt, auf das wir heute in keiner Weise mehr angewiesen sind. Obwohl es überhaupt nicht mehr notwendig ist, bietet es noch immer eine der ungewöhnlichsten Umgebungen, in der man sich in direktem Kontakt mit den Elementen befindet. Es ruft ein derart intensives Gefühl hervor, von den Winden und dem Wetter, die einen umgeben, völlig abhängig und zugleich damit verbunden zu sein. Man bekommt das Gefühl, für eine kurze Zeit die Kontrolle über das Leben zu haben.

JB: I realize more and more that, on the one hand, my work can be seen as conceptual, but at the same time, it can be looked at on a more abstract and experimental level. When I say experimental, to me, this means that the work is, to a large extent, a result of things happening in a situation that I cannot control. I would never reject footage, even if it wasn't exactly what I had imagined, I always work with what I have got. This is also about trust, as I have said before, trusting that what is around me is interesting enough. Even if I have set up a conceptual frame before setting out to film, I want to allow myself to not analyze the work in theory before it has been made. I don't want to get stuck in my own rules. So, it is about entering the room of uncertainty and to stay there even though, for a control freak like me, it can, at times, be quite painful.

PhK: Viele deiner Werke scheinen Experimenten ähnlich, die ohnehin von einem Kontrollverlust geprägt sind.

JB: Mir wird mehr und mehr klar, dass mein Werk einerseits als konzeptuell angesehen werden kann, aber gleichzeitig kann man es auf einer abstrakteren und experimentellen Ebene betrachten. Wenn ich experimentell sage, dann bedeutet dies für mich, dass das Werk in hohem Ausmass das Ergebnis von Dingen darstellt, die in einer Situation geschehen, die ich nicht kontrollieren kann. Ich würde das aufgenommene Filmmaterial niemals ablehnen, auch wenn es nicht exakt das war, was ich mir vorgestellt hatte; ich arbeite immer mit dem, was ich erhalten habe. Das hat auch, wie ich vorher gesagt habe, mit Vertrauen zu tun: darauf zu vertrauen, dass das, was sich um mich herum befindet, interessant genug ist. Sogar wenn ich einen konzeptuellen Rahmen aufgestellt habe, bevor ich mich ans Filmen mache, möchte ich es mir selbst erlauben, das Werk vor seiner Verwirklichung nicht theoretisch zu analysieren, denn ich will nicht in meinen eigenen Regeln gefangen sein. Deshalb geht es darum, den Raum der Ungewissheit zu betreten und dort zu verbleiben – auch wenn das für einen Kontroll-Freak wie mich manchmal ganz schmerzvoll sein kann.

## EXPANDED FOOTNOTES

---



*Project for a Revolution, photo, 2000*

## Projects for Revolution

Rob Tuffnel



*Project for a Revolution*, video still, 2000

In one of those conversations, a fellow writer once said to me that for him the height of the Modern movement was The Beatles' first performance of "All you need is love," with lyrics which include, "there's nothing you do that can't be done," broadcasted live via a series of satellites as part of the world's first global telecast.

This event was a perfect synthesis of technology, culture, and secular belief. John Lennon had written the song especially for the June 25, 1967 event. In the twenty-six nations who took the feed, it is estimated that as many as six hundred million people watched the two hour, black-and-white broadcast, titled "Our World." The makers announced their project: "The magic of space-age electronics to flash sound and visual images across lands, seas and time zones, fusing 'yesterday,' 'today' and 'tomorrow' into a globe-encircling 'now.'" In addition to the Beatles' performance, highlights included Franco Zeffirelli speaking from the set of his film adaptation of "Romeo and Juliet" in Verona, Leonard Bernstein and Van Cliburn playing their pianos in New York, and an astronomer in Australia describing the most distant known object in the universe.

Amidst this utopian moment, however, many things were, of course, in a state of upheaval. In protest against the West's response to the outbreak of the Six-Day War, the Soviet Union pulled out of the project days before transmission, taking Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany's

contributions with them. The planned screening of a visit by Yuri Gagarin to a children's camp in Odessa, and a live shot of Earth from a Soviet weather satellite were scrapped.

If the height of Modernism was the evening of the June 25, 1967, then its sorry end was, I would argue, not the demolition of George Hellmuth's and Minoru Yamasaki's Pruitt-Igoe social housing development in St. Louis, at 3.32 pm on July 15, 1972 (as architectural historians will have us believe), but with the release, as a radio commercial, of "I'd like to buy the world a coke" by the New Seekers on February 12, 1971:

'I'd like to buy the world a home and furnish it with love...  
I'd like to buy the world a Coke and keep it company...  
It's the real thing, Coke is what the world wants today.'

An accompanying television advertisement featured 500 teenagers standing on a hillside outside Rome lip-syncing the song. The apparently sincere belief in the transformative power of 'love' of the late nineteen-sixties had quickly been appropriated by advertising executives and transformed into something that could be purchased ('I'd like to *buy* the world a home and furnish it with love'). Richard Nixon liked the song so much he invited the Anglo-Australian band to perform at his Presidential inaugural ball in 1973. Within a few years, Coca-Cola wasn't only the world's best selling soft drink, but executives of the soft drink company were advising the US Government on its foreign policy. Two Coca-Cola executives were, later, appointed to Jimmy Carter's cabinet.

The failure of the Modern movement or, less specifically, the marriage of the individual and the collective is a subject explored in the work of the contemporary artist Johanna Billing. A short film by the artist *Project for a Revolution* (2000) takes its inspiration from the opening sequence of Michelangelo Antonioni's film "Zabriskie Point" (1969). Billing's film opens with a shot of a photocopier running, churning out sheets of blank paper. In another room, a group of young people sits in an institutional space apparently waiting for something to happen, drinking coffee, and biting their nails. The camera then cuts to a man running down a flight of stairs, leaving a building. Eventually, the man arrives in the room where the group has assembled, picks up a sheet of paper from a chair and





*Project for a Revolution*, video still, 2000

leaves. The film loops and we see the photocopier again. There is no music or dialogue, just ambient sound. Billing has said of the work: “It was our parents’ generation who brought the revolution. They took care of all that for us and we were told that now everything had been done and it wasn’t something we need be bothered with.” The work describes something of the erosion of social democracy in Billing’s native Sweden. It is not a film about apathetic youth, but should perhaps be seen as the opposite—a pacifistic, silent protest against the ultimate failure of the Modern world. Many artists explore similar themes by scrutinizing design icons and art histories. Billing has explored this territory with a number of works involving music.

*You Don’t Love Me Yet* is an ongoing project by Billing that invites people to reinterpret the song of the same name written by Roky Erickson in 1984. Erickson’s song is one of unrequited love, but is unusually optimistic, ending:

‘I just won’t forget because you don’t love me yet.’

The message is not, as we might expect in such songs, that the protagonist will “get over it,” but instead, that the object of his affection will eventually capitulate. In October 2002, Billing invited musicians to perform covers of the song at a live event in Stockholm. The participants were encouraged to be themselves within this collective event and collectivity in what has been described as “a tragic-comic, manic litany about the social demands that weigh heavily on people.” From Stockholm, similar events have taken place in, amongst other cities, San Sebastián, London, Helsinki, Chicago, Timisoara,

Milton Keynes, Utrecht and Leiden—the project spreading like a virus. To date, more than 100 versions have been performed. *You Don’t Love Me Yet* has also been made into a film that documents a performance of the song by a large ensemble of musicians and singers in an analogue recording studio in Stockholm. This recording has since been made freely available on CDs distributed from galleries where the film was screened or can be downloaded, free of charge from the internet ([www.makeithappen.org/johannabilling.html](http://www.makeithappen.org/johannabilling.html)). Thus, the evangelical nature of the project is redoubled.

In the context that Billing sets the song, looking at wider society rather than at a dysfunctional relationship between two people, Erickson’s own story is particularly poignant. Erickson was a leading figure in California’s music scene of the late nineteen-sixties, as lead singer of the 13th Floor Elevators. Today, Erickson suffers from an ongoing psychological illness as a result of his use of psychedelic drugs and from electric shock “therapy” (the latter inflicted upon him during his incarceration for drug related offences). He is, in some ways, somewhat of a martyr to the counter-cultural cause.



*Magical World*, production still, 2005

A more recent work by Billing adopts another neglected song: Sidney Barnes’s “Magical World.” Barnes, describes himself on his own website as a singer, songwriter, producer, and sculptor. In forty years, Barnes has worked with Alice Cooper, Jimi Hendrix, Marvin Gaye, Parliament/Funkadelic, Iggy Pop, The Rolling Stones, Kenny Rogers, The Supremes, The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, and Led Zeppelin, among others. Barnes is one of those characters in popular culture who transcends the narrow brackets of genre. “Magical World” was first released as a double A sided single (together with a track called “Aladdin”) in 1968, performed by his band, the Rotary

Connection, with Minnie Riperton on lead vocals. This obscure slice of self-conscious psychedelic soul was resurrected by Billing in 2005 in a music class in Zagreb, Croatia.

Billing's six-minute film opens with views of a dilapidated cultural center in the Dubrava district. Panels of marble cladding have fallen away in places to reveal a rough concrete superstructure. Inside the building, the camera captures ripped vinyl upholstery and a kitsch clock, its swinging pendulums taking the form of a ballerina's legs. A group of young children and teenagers are assembled in a large room with a polished parquet floor where they perform a slightly subdued version of Barnes's song accompanied by a piano, guitars, and a flute:

'Why d'you want to wake me from such a beautiful dream, can't you see that I am sleeping... I live in a magical world...'

Clearly sung in a language that the children barely understand, the song has a strange, plaintive quality that operates as a metaphor for the awkward translation of Eastern block socialism into a Western free market economy. However, by engaging children born after the collapse of the Yugoslavian Federation, and the resulting wars, there is a sense of optimism long lost from the surrounding architecture.

The music industry has long subsumed all emotive language so that every heightened personal experience we have, happy or sad, is invaded by some terrible tune. Both collectively and as individuals, music shapes our recollections of the past and inspires our futures. Recorded music is thus, as dangerous as it is positive. As the media theorist Marshall McLuhan wrote in 1964: "The phonograph is an extension and amplification of the voice that may well have diminished individual vocal activity." For all the people empowered by music, many are silenced—their personal thoughts numbed or drowned out. Johanna Billing's works recognize both the constraints and strengths of this aspect of popular music. Her work aspires, perhaps, to reassert the traditional values of music (largely lost after the establishment of the recording industry) when music was a real and constructive means of individual self-expression, leading to collective understanding.



*Magical World*, production still, 2005





(previous) *Magical World*,  
production still, 2005

*Magical World*,  
production still, 2005



*Magical World*, production still, 2005

## Waiting for Billing

Maria Lind

In Johanna Billing's short looped films, speech is far removed from a narrative trajectory. Instead, her narration flow is primarily constructed from quietly seductive images and music. There are, however, some words including lyrics. They have a decisive role in building atmospheres. Shortened phrases really can emphasize life-changing messages. It is her deployment of these techniques in relation to the groups of young and stylish (but still everyday) people on screen that determine whether the work succeeds or fails. They obviously have a communal task at hand.

The songs that Johanna Billing selects have a specific nostalgia—music that has accumulated a patina through time in relation to the artist's own childhood and teenage years. They tend towards morose romanticism. This is one of her specializations, and it lends an emotional charge to the films, especially in terms of the evocation of indecision and melancholy. This atmosphere is unmistakable for those of us who grew up in Scandinavia in the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties. It creates an atmosphere reminiscent of situations experienced at kindergarten, playtime, school, summer camp, in youth centers, community music schools, or sports clubs. All these 'institutions' were products of the social welfare state. Today, they only exist in partial form, and when they do, they are often fee-paying activities.

Deep-seated intrigue is missing in these films even if they are loosely bound to "young people doing things together." They are about group activities that shape the individual and vice versa. Even if the group is emphasized, the individual is used as a mirror again and again, their faces captured in close-ups like female leads in the melodramas of nineteen-thirties' cinema. But mostly, the films involve groups of young or younger people that unite in a common, sometimes puzzling activity. Is it a waiting room for an audition we are looking at? A relaxation exercise? Perhaps a swimming lesson or boot camp by the sea? The participants don't seem to have initiated their own pursuits, but instead, they seem to enact a task decided by someone else that carried out together. They engage in

some kind of community that seemingly enjoys collaboration. However, this is not collective action—as this would imply group decision-making, culminating in a communally performed task.

Who comes out on top, the individual or the group? Hard to say, it is probably a bit of both. Usually, somebody breaks free from the group dynamic to go off on their own. Rather than engage in a lively debate, those left behind seem to appreciate their mutual if quiet understanding. They wait, hesitate, move or learn something entirely new. Each time something is about to happen, it doesn't. Nothing is the way we supposed it to be. There is no real resolution and the films just continue to loop.



*Project for a Revolution*, production stills, 2000

(overleaf) *Project for a Revolution*, production still, 2000







## Some Thoughts on Billing, Stein, and Repetition

Malin Ståhl

“Play, play everyday, play and play and play away, and then play the play you played today, the play you play every day, play it and play it. Play it and remember it and ask to play it. Play it, and play it and play away. Certainly everyone wants you to play, everyone wants you to play away, to play every day, to play and play to play the play you play every day, to play and remember it and ask to play it and play it and to play away and to play every day ...” Gertrude Stein

Gertrude Stein, the queen of repetition, is perhaps best known for her line *a rose is a rose is a rose*. Although time, space, and medium keep the work by Johanna Billing and Gertrude Stein apart, a bringing together of the two is not as farfetched as it might at first sight appear. Although Stein was a writer, she is known to have likened her prose to film. Stein said in *How Writing is Written* that her repetitive and minutely differentiated prose is similar to the almost identical pictures that one encounters on a rolling strip of film.

When speaking of repetition, in terms of Billing’s films, one speaks of several different kinds of repetition. The first and most obvious kind lies within the formal aspect of the work. Since the making of *Project for a Revolution* in 2000, many of Billing’s films have been made as loops—with no beginning and end. By avoiding telling a linear story both Billing and Stein keep their viewers/readers in a present time. The loop or the repetition allows the film and the poem to remain open and unfinished; the viewer/reader has to imagine his or her story line.

*Project for a Revolution* and *Missing out* are perhaps the two works that are most structurally similar to some of Stein’s poems. Both “loops” consist of a number of carefully chosen compositions of people, each frame separated from the next through a series of cuts. Stein worked with words, but she used the words in such a way that they ceased to symbolize; the words became object-like. In her texts, Stein plays around

with these object-words, she tries out different combinations, juxtapositions, and rhythms. Billing works with people but she never psychoanalyzes her protagonists. As a result, the viewer never gets to know them, and they too become object-like. Billing and Stein both make visible an inter-object relation—it is as though they are saying, “look what happens if this is placed next to that, or that.” The aesthetic of such arrangements is both beautiful and rhythmic. In both instances, the constellations could almost be sung.

However, the songs would be very different. Stein’s song would be happy and humorous because she uses repetition in her poetry to celebrate life and the present moment. For Stein, repetition is a device that can be used to reveal difference; repetition keeps you in present time and difference makes you feel alive. Billing’s films, on the other hand, sing a more uncertain melody as they convey an almost claustrophobic experience of repetition. In both *Missing out* and *Project for a Revolution*, the calmness and beauty encountered in the composition is disturbed by a young man who tries to break free from the uniformity of the rest of the group. This young man stops the viewer from sinking into a purely aesthetic contemplation of the film, he knows of something else, he longs for a different existence, and this realization fills the viewer with anxiety. The anxiety grows stronger as each attempt to break free results in his return to uniformity, this action or non-action gets repeated through the loop, like a wave that rages on the surface of the sea, only to break at the shore and timidly sink back into the calm movement of the sea, again and again.



*Missing out*, video stills, 2001





*Missing out*, video stills, 2001



(right) *Project for a Revolution*, photo, 2000



## Getting There

Chen Tamir

Like M.C. Escher's drawings, Billing's works loop incessantly. They have no beginnings or ends, only twists and coils. And like the famous architectural contortionist, Billing tends to use staircases as both structural and symbolic elements in her works.

The motif of stairs is a rich one. Traditionally signifiers of a higher plane, when ascending, or, a lower plane, when descending, steps are the symbols of mountable hierarchy. They are two-way conduits, going both up and down. Staircases themselves, though, are liminal zones, transitory spaces. Billing's use of stairs aids in creating a narrative loop that operates in the same way Escher used stairs in his drawings—to connect disparate sections and bind them into a seemingly narrative whole.

*Project for a Revolution* is the first video Billing made that employs the loop. Inspired by the Latin root of the word "revolution," *revolutio*, meaning "to turn around" or "roll back," Billing looks at a generational shift. By mimicking the opening scene of Antonioni's famous film *Zabriskie Point* of 1970, she highlights today's apparent malaise amongst her contemporaries. In *Project for a Revolution*, a group of languishing Generation "Xers" has gathered. One young man that, at times, sits with the group is shown climbing and descending stairs. We never know if he has just arrived or has just left the group on the other floor of the building. By defying the paralysis, keeping his peers in a quiet purgatory, he literally reaches a different plane. It is a clear example of how Billing uses stairs to both connect and confuse the order of things.

In many other silent works, Billing foregrounds an individual set apart from the rest—participating in, but somehow distinct from a cohesive group of young people lacking any hint of impetus to do something. For instance, in *Where She Is at*, a young woman perpetually mounts the ladder of a high diving board, only to languish at the top. By giving *Where She Is at* its title, Billing forces us to consider the question of where this young lady is, which, in effect, is nowhere: She is in limbo—not diving, but also not descending

the ladder. Another case in point is *Magic & Loss*, the subjects of which, laden with the contents of someone's apartment, climb steep Dutch steps to clear out all of his or her possessions. The rhythm of their climbing keeps in check with the tempo of methodic, silent packing. And *You Don't Love Me Yet* opens with a man proceeding up a steep escalator, presumably heading to the recording studio, where he joins others in singing a song. Since the video loops perfectly, however, viewers see his ascent not necessarily at the beginning, but at various points throughout their experience of the piece.

All of Billing's videos include shots of people *en route* to the works' main settings. They often show the protagonists driving, walking, or biking over to where a strange, collective yet somewhat private action is to unfold. The stairs in these works are not only structural lubricants or conduits for action, but also dividers; they separate a personal state from a more public one and provide a distancing from street level. Ultimately, the fine balance between these two functions becomes a cycle with no end, leaving viewers in a state of perpetual discontinuity and anticipation, forever climbing the same steps.



(clockwise from top left) *Magic & Loss*, video stills, 2005 (above) *You Don't Love Me Yet*, video still, 2003

## Editing Is Musical

Carole Bertinet

**E**editing is a discourse

At first sight, Billing's videos could be perceived as documentaries, not only because of their contents, but also by her way of working. However, Billing is interested in moving beyond the parameters of documentary editing, and is, therefore, reluctant to call her films documentaries. "It's a lot about constructing a set, allowing something to happen, but then accenting the atmosphere in the editing." With her close-ups, she expresses "how to be both part of a group of people and be an individual," the paradox of being together and alone. This is particularly visible in *Project for a Revolution*, with short close-ups of faces, one individual in motion, no one looking at each other, no clearly defined common space... "In the editing I always make some kind of fiction... It can sometimes be true to say that it can be a documentary about the atmosphere that was in the actual room while we were filming... Sometimes though, there are always some parts that are a bit more staged and directed, and also a bit more narrative."

This introduction of fictional elements creates an ambiguous feeling. Instead of adding external narratives to documentary material, she is "modeling" the material to turn it into a fiction. She then uses effects close to the jump cut or the "wrong cuts:" something between two cuts that you cannot see but feel—like opening a space but without even being able to say where it is. And this also concerns her definition of time and space units, defined by her method of editing.

**E**editing is a spatial and temporal construction

In traditional editing, the space has to be as real as possible, even though different shots were not filmed in the same location. *Project for a Revolution* shows exactly the opposite: There is no common space between the protagonists. Editing clouds the issue, creating something frustrating and uncomfortable.

The choice of loop emphasizes a non-ending story. This spatial aspect and temporal game in the works is linked to their presentation. "I prefer not to be in a cinema space. I think

my films need to be shown in open rooms as the films show some kind of ongoing activity, you can enter whenever and stay as long as you like."

**E**editing is musical

Sensual atmospheres are made by rhythm in the works. *Project for a Revolution* has no soundtrack. The rhythm comes from mundane sounds: the photocopy machine, the street, the footsteps on the stairs, and the moments of silence. Johanna Billing explains that she prefers "to edit in a rhythmical way, so it almost becomes a bit like music. Or, with its rhythm, the editing can trigger the same emotional effect the way music can, the way music is still almost superior in how it portrays atmospheres and feelings. That is what I am interested in trying out in the editing process."



*Project for a Revolution*, installation view, *Dialectics of Hope*, 1st Moscow Biennale, Lenin Museum, Moscow, 2005

(overleaf) *You Don't Love Me Yet*, production still, 2003





# Everyday I Am Everyday

Séamus Kealy

The music project and video projection *You Don't Love Me Yet* by Johanna Billing appropriates the 1984 song of the same title by American singer-songwriter Roky Erickson. Billing was listening to this song on the radio as she was reading in the newspaper that Sweden has the greatest amount of single-dwelling homes in the world. Billing relates the impetus of this project to contemporary problems associated with the Swedish identity, such as isolation and the institutionalized nature of Swedish social democracy, where consensus tends to be privileged over dissension. All the participants in Billing's video belong to her generation, a younger demographic that is often accused of indifference and apathy, in contrast to the previous generation that is often (self)-heroicized as active in transforming society during the nineteen-sixties. Billing focuses on this younger demographic, to employ these characteristics of indifference and apathy as cliché, yet as reality, as assessment, and yet, as a means of evoking emotive characteristics that often seem waning in the golem of contemporary youth. The result is very direct—"warm"—as Billing calls it, especially in what she sees as its address to a non-gallery audience. This raises a number of issues.

Firstly, this exploration of emotion via a re-rendering of an almost forgotten pop song, while emphasizing repetition, becomes a whirl of affective obsession. The experience of blank, young faces engaged with this mournful, catchy melody that repeats again and again, evokes a conundrum of contemporary subjectivity (or subjectivity in general) as an endless, empty spiral around key emotive terms, which are held upon desperately as a means of defining inter-relation and individual consciousness as it glimmers in the spotlight of a "thing called love." The rhapsody of this melody begins as melodrama, transforms into reflexive parody (the indestructible melody of the 1984 Band Aid tearjerker "Do They Know It's Christmas"), then peaks as a nightmarish circular coil.

Billing speaks to this in terms of artists and their competitive egos, particularly in terms of their desire to be loved (by seeking successful careers). She contrasts this by pulling together a "harmonious collective of individualists" as a "viable

reality." As such, the work operates as an examination of social behavior, especially in terms of group dynamics within a social whole held together by repetitive music, a ritualistic intervention. However, the strange distancing the work enforces from the viewer, and the insufficiency of the music, participants, and especially the lyrics, lament, and circumnavigate the expectations of being happy and finding love. The work offers no conclusion, but dispels some fantasies, remarks upon others, and begins from the ordinary and everyday to create glimpses into profundity, madness, and imaginings of the future.



(previous spread and this page) *You Don't Love Me Yet*, production still, Atlantis Studio, 2003

# The Secret Cousin

Jonathan Lethem

My connection to Johanna Billing's *You Don't Love Me Yet* is both slight and odd, but I'm pleased by it, nonetheless. In 2006, I finished a novel about a rock band, which bore the provisional title "Monster Eyes." My publisher asked me for a different title (this happens to me often). Since the novel centered on issues of collaboration, plagiarism, and the reuse and recirculation of cultural materials, I decided to find a title which, in the healthy tradition of pop music, 'didn't belong to me.' For many years—decades, actually—I'd loved two completely different songs with the same title: "You Don't Love Me Yet" by The Vulgar Boatmen, and "You Don't Love Me Yet" by Roky Erickson. After I'd settled on this as my title, in this age of Google, it was easy to discover that I wasn't the third artist, but the fourth (at least!) to use that phrase as the name of a project.

I only know Johanna Billing's project indirectly, by the evidence I've discovered on the internet, and so it would be tempting to suggest that I don't love it yet. But I feel that I love it already. The photographic clues and the stirring cover version of Roky Erickson's song both make me feel that Johanna's project is a kind of secret cousin to my novel. Certainly, both fetishize the way a popular song may be the act, not of some single "genius" author, but instead, arise from a kind of willfully amateurish collective. Both projects emphasize how collaboration can blur the difference between art and life. And both are rather warm and silly. The simultaneous existence of the two artifacts ratifies, it seems to me, many of the themes of my book. I hope Johanna feels the same way.

*You Don't Love Me Yet*, chords and lyrics by Roky Erickson (1984), production notes from the recording session, Atlantis Studio, 2003

YOU DON'T LOVE ME YET

Intro:

D : D : D : D :  
G : A : Hm : E : G : A : D : Dsus D :

*synth lead*  
*fool*

G A  
Lightning never strikes anymore  
Hm E  
but I can't make it rain  
G A D Dsus D  
because it would only lightning again  
G A  
Lightning never strikes anymore  
Hm E  
but I can't make it rain  
G A D Dsus D  
because it would only cause me pain

*Shera + Lisa*

D Hm  
cause you don't love me yet  
D A  
you don't love me yet  
G Hm G A D Dsus D  
I just won't forget because you don't love me you don't love me yet

*my right*

G A Hm E  
I have my start but I never have begun  
G A D  
because without you my life is unsung  
G A Hm E  
I have my start but I don't have a part  
G A D  
because without you it only breaks my heart

*pedal*  
*fusion fan*

D Hm  
cause you don't love me yet  
D A  
you don't love me yet  
G Hm G A D Dsus D  
I just won't forget because you don't love me you don't love me yet



instrumentalvers:

G : A : Hm : E :  
G : A : D : Dsus D :  
G : A : Hm : E :  
G : A : D : Dsus D :

)] mangel

D Hm  
cause you don't love me yet  
D A  
you don't love me yet  
G Hm G A D Dsus D  
I just won't forget because you don't love me you don't love me yet

~~Börn Varden~~

tyg G A (Lotta + ~~Anders~~) kinger  
To be or not to be (Lotta + ~~Anders~~)  
Hm E (Lotta + ~~Anders~~)  
like that's the question unceasingly (K-), Magnus) kinger  
G A D  
alla but without you I would long to be yours to be ↑ SH 202  
G A Albina  
tyg cause without you I'm not a king (Sam + Lina)  
Hm E  
like cause without you it will never do (Frode, Henry, Per)  
G A D Dsus D  
alla cause I can't think what life would be like without you

D Hm  
cause you don't love me yet  
D A  
ff you don't love me yet  
G Hm G A D Dsus D  
I just won't forget because you don't love me you don't love me yet

BLSM

slutvända

G : A : D : Dsus D : # 35 ror + 1 stat

mangel lossande  
slutvänder  
rap  
Adam Alshet  
Börn Varden  
i slutet

instrumentalvers:

G : A : Hm : E :  
G : A : D : Dsus D :  
G : A : Hm : E :  
G : A : D : Dsus D :

D Hm  
cause you don't love me yet  
D A  
you don't love me yet  
G Hm G A D Dsus D  
I just won't forget because you don't love me you don't love me yet

G A  
To be or not to be  
Hm E  
like that's the question unceasingly  
G A D  
but without you I would long to be yours to be  
G A  
cause without you I'm not a king  
Hm E  
like cause without you it will never do  
G A D Dsus D  
alla cause I can't think what life would be like without you

D Hm  
cause you don't love me yet  
D A  
you don't love me yet  
G Hm G A D Dsus D  
I just won't forget because you don't love me you don't love me yet

slutvända

G : A : D : Dsus D :

## Radio Days; Tour Diary

Johanna Billing, Helena Holmberg, Annie Fletcher,  
Tanja Elstgeest, and Frédérique Bergholtz

In her long term project *You Don't Love Me Yet*, which has been touring to different international cities between 2002 and 2005, Johanna Billing invited musicians to play a live version of a song by Roky Erickson, according to their own interpretation. "If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution" organized the Dutch part of the tour in 2005, which travelled from Utrecht to 's-Hertogenbosch, and finally, Leiden.

In this project, Johanna Billing made herself as an artist almost invisible. Behind the scenes, though, she organized the event as precisely as possible. For example, by choosing a location, that normally, is not used as a music podium, or, proposing an afternoon to stage the event instead of an evening, she consciously tried to break through existing patterns of behavior in both the music and visual arts scene. As an artist, she facilitated a collective experience where individuality expressed itself in the different artistic interpretations of the song, where the performing musicians were invited to listen to each others' presentations, and where the audience was witness to the potential of repetition, as the event offered a wide range of versions of this sole song text. Each event had its specific line up of performances by rock bands, choirs, laptop musicians, professionals, amateurs or impromptu get-togethers, mainly coming from the local scene. All the concerts ended with the video screening of the studio recording of *You Don't Love Me Yet*, a work made by Johanna Billing, together with a group of Swedish musicians.

On various occasions, Johanna Billing expressed her ideas and thoughts about the project as well as explaining how this project came into being. The following text is a compilation of quotes extracted from an interview with Helena Holmberg in September 2003, published in the Swedish magazine *Nifca Info*. The main part comes from a talk Johanna Billing presented on the occasion of the project *Radio Days* in De Appel in Amsterdam, broadcasted live on Saturday March 30, 2005. The after note stems from email correspondences in April 2006 between Johanna Billing and the curators of



*You Don't Love Me Yet*. Live event, Index — The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, 2002

*If I Can't Dance... Why Johanna Billing chose this specific song:*

"I think I first heard the original version of the song in 2001. It is written and performed by the American singer songwriter—and I guess you can say, icon—Roky Erickson in 1984. Roky Erickson is perhaps most known for his work with the psychedelic rock group 13th Floor Elevators in the nineteen-sixties. He had a solo career later and released many songs, though this specific one is not the most well known."

"I cannot remember if I liked it very much in particular in the beginning, but it really got stuck in my head. I spent a lot of time wondering about it. I guess it puzzled me a bit. I was really curious to put together an almost manifesto type of event. Coming together around something that was very slippery and vague and ambiguous, I wanted to see if coming together would help to pin down the core of the song, what it was about, or could be about..."

*How the project originated:*

"My main idea at the beginning of 2002 was to gather musicians and artists from many different groups to join in a studio for a recording of a version together. Index, the institution in Stockholm that had invited me to work on this project, did not

have very much money, so just to get some things started, I invited all these groups to come down to the basement of Index to perform one version of the song after another—twenty bands in a row from four in the afternoon till eight in the evening. It was not meant to be anything more than a kind of a starting point for something else. I never dared to think that this extremely simple set up could actually turn out to be something quite magical in the end, because while the concert was going on, and the song, after a while, started to repeat itself, it created an incredible atmosphere that I still cannot really describe.”

*How the project proceeded:*

“Okay, so the concert was a success! It could have ended there, but the reason why all the groups took part in the concert in the first place was because they were promised that they could do the big version in the studio later on. So I had to continue and already then I started to feel a bit manic. Should I really take this any further? But apparently it was just the beginning! So in June 2003, eight months after the first live event, we managed to get the funding and were able to enter the wonderful, prestigious old Atlantis studio in Stockholm where, for example, Abba made some of their first recordings. I got help from the amazingly talented musician and composer Ida Lundén to arrange the song with strings, horns, and choir



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, production stills, Atlantis Studio, 2003  
(right) The musical arranger Ida Lundén





*You Don't Love Me Yet*, production stills, Atlantis Studio, 2003

arrangements. These arrangements were made very flexible and were invented in the studio whilst people were playing. This was because we could not control beforehand who would come and what instruments people would bring. I am still amazed that it sounds quite planned! The version from the studio, where altogether forty five musicians took part, was put on CD, distributed and handed out for free during the tour. I also made a film from this recording session.”

“But what about this tour? How did it come about? It actually happened because of a major misunderstanding. In order to get funding for the filming and the recording in the studio, Mats Stjernstedt and Helena Holmberg of Index had contacted all these smaller art institutions around Sweden, asking them if they were willing to contribute to the project. And then we would screen the film and make exhibitions with them in all the different cities. Further, my idea was to have a local band or artist make one more contribution in every city. But many months into the process, I realized that I had totally misunderstood what Mats and Helena had told me: It turned out that all these smaller cities did not want to make anything less or smaller than the event we did in Stockholm, so they were all in for making the huge live event with many bands. I think at first I kind of panicked! We were talking about arranging a really big tour with live events in ten cities within only a couple of months. Luckily, it was too late for me to say anything and the whole tour thing was already starting to happen.”

*Johanna's ideas about the notion of the cover version:*

“I had been thinking about the idea of making cover versions a lot and was interested in working with that. Personally, I really love cover versions and I have always envied musicians because they can work with them. When you do a cover version, you pay a tribute to something, in a loving way; you might even reveal your influences by doing that.”

“I guess another reason why I like the cover version is that it implicates that you have to step outside of yourself and focus on someone else, enter someone else's world. You are making



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, production still, Atlantis Studio, 2003

something maybe not about yourself, or if it is a tribute, not even for yourself, but, to me, that does not make the result any less personal. On the contrary, I think when you work with cover versions you sometimes let your self go and experiment even more. And to let go of oneself, no matter if it is in a love relationship or in a collaboration, is, I think, what this project is about.”

“Working with cover versions as a format for this project has served a bit like a catalyst. In this case, you are invited to take part, not to play your own song, but another person’s song, and you might ask yourself for what and for whom? These questions and how you relate to them are very important ingredients in this project.”

“Related to the idea of the cover version, is this other important element within the initial concept, namely repetition. The fact that *You Don't Love Me Yet* is repeated time and time again, in different forms, is almost like an incantation. But this repetition cannot just be about doing something again. I hope everyone feels that it’s about extending the project and that the new versions work as additions and commentaries.”

*About the encounter of different styles and communities:*

“During these events, the set up worked almost like a trick—even though not deliberate—to get people to listen with equal concentration to different types of music. And that is something that has been so revealing for me working with this project. Since I normally arrange a lot of music concerts with the record label that I also work with, my experience is, often, that when it comes to music, people are very specific about their taste, and about what kind of music concerts they go to, not quite as open as people who are interested in art and visit art shows.”

“Many of the performers, no matter how established they are, said they had never been as nervous as in these specific concerts. I guess that is because there was this extremely intense listening experience. You sit down, it is totally quiet, no beer drinking and talking, as is normal in other

concert situations. And, of course, you start to listen for the small things that are different in the songs. Or if you are a performer, you might even sit there and compare your own version to the others before going up to play and that is perhaps what made so many of performers so nervous.”

“That it is possible to arrange a concert with the toughest hip hop guys playing together on the same stage with, for instance, classical guitar students, and that it can feel like a very natural thing, only because you have something else to focus on has been a really amazing experience.”

“I think it has helped a lot that the audiences were extremely mixed. The mix of both the performers and the audience came, I guess, out of a very practical setup we tried to establish in all the cities we went to. In every city we wanted the local



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, guitar sounds, live at Norrköping Konstmuseum, 2003

(right) *You Don't Love Me Yet*, play list, Frieze Art Fair, London, 2003

art institution to collaborate with a local music institution or venue. And, many times, this happened for the first time, often with a lot of skepticism and hesitation. Could this be something good? Nobody wanted to lose any of his or her integrity of course in the process. There was a fear sometimes that the music would not be taken seriously enough in the art museum context and vice versa. The funniest thing that actually happened in many of the cities, was not that people came up afterwards and said how good it was but instead, they were often a bit surprised that it actually happened at all!”

**You don't love me yet (LIVE!)**

5.00	pm	Neil McGonagle
5.10	pm	Norweigan Lady
5.20	pm	Åbäke
5.30	pm	For My Brain
5.40	pm	Lillan
5.50	pm	Secondo
6.00	pm	Deliberate
6.10	pm	Karl Holmqvist
6.20	pm	<i>You don't love me yet</i> , video 2003

As don't love me yet (2003) DVD (74:41)  
Concept by Johanna Billing  
Cinematography by Marcus Lindvall  
Production by Marcus Lindvall  
by Ida Lindvall. Recorded and edited by  
2003. Photography by Elisavind Åsböck.

Organized by Elisavind Åsböck och Mats  
Sjögren, i samarbete med Index i  
Spermann, Indien. Produced in co-operation  
between Nifca, The Nordic Institute for  
Contemporary Art and the  
Contemporary Art Foundation. Collaborating  
partners: Inter Biblioteka Konstnämnen,  
Kunstmuseet i Gäddede, Konstnämnen i  
Landslag, Norrköpings Konstnämnen,  
Västra Götalandsregionen och Ystad,  
Konstmuseet.

As don't love me yet, Frieze (2003) designed  
by Åbäke.

A project by Johanna Billing  
Frieze Art Fair, The Auditorium, Saturday 18 October, 5 pm

*You don't love me yet*, video is also part of “Studio Works”  
Milch, Gainsborough Studios, 1 Poole Street, London N1 5EB  
The exhibition is open until the 2 November

For further information please visit Nifca's stand (M15),  
designed by Åbäke and Martino Gamper or visit  
[www.indexfoundation.nu](http://www.indexfoundation.nu)

*You don't love me yet*  
t-shirt  
£6 from  
stand M15

**nifca**

*About what this long-term project entails:*

“For me it feels natural working with a project for a long time and it is exciting having so many components in a project and, at the same time, activating something so open and motley. The collaboration between the organizers is also interesting, as they now make ‘cover’ versions of the first concert in their respective towns. Obviously, there’s a double emotion connected to it, but still that is what the project has been about since the start. I find it exciting—and quite right—that, in part, even I must relinquish control over the way I work with exhibitions and events. Of all the various parts of this project, I think that is the most exciting: trying to create a more flexible form for how things are shown while maintaining the content.”

*How the project further developed:*

“From the cosy candlelit concert in the old citizen’s house in Östersund, it was a totally different atmosphere setting up the event at the Frieze Art Fair in Regents Park in London in October 2003. When we were doing the soundcheck in the temporarily built lecture room that the concert was going to take place in, the directors of the fair got a call from the gallery booth next to us where the owner of the gallery was very upset and shouting that he could not hear what his client was saying. So, it was all very different trying to fit something in to a context where you feel like you make a big contrast just by being there—even though this, of course, was an art project to begin with.”



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, live at Sjömanskyrkan, Gävle, 2003



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, live at Frieze Art Fair, London, 2003



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, Karl Holmqvist live at Frieze Art Fair, London, 2003

“After the event at Frieze I think Mats, Helena, and I started to feel more confident and relaxed now that the project had been made in five cities: Stockholm, Eskilstuna, Norrköping, Östersund, and London. It was all going great! We might even have thought that this concept could never go wrong...”

“But then a month later we went to Vara, a very small town in the middle of Sweden. There, the project was incorporated into a big cultural youth camp where young kids from the Baltic countries came to the concert house in Vara and took part in all kinds of cultural workshops for a week. And *You Don't Love Me Yet* was one of the projects they were supposed to work on. What made the whole experience so different (and difficult), was that they were told to do these versions by their teacher, and they had no choice. I think it is very important for this project that it is about choice, and that you bring something with you in the process, the fear of what you might lose or the speculation of what you might win, or whatever other reason you might have for taking part. But still, it is up to you!”

“Next stop was outside of Sweden again: Helsinki, Finland. There, all my prejudices about the Finnish music scene were proven right when all the Finnish performers came to the soundcheck with their hands full of all kinds of electronic equipment: game boys, synthesizers, and homemade computers. There were not even enough electrical outlets in the end to set up everything and the concert was delayed for hours.”

“Coming closer to Roky Erickson, in March 2004, we went to the US, to Chicago, where the event was organized by Kristen VanDeventer, a music enthusiast working at Vedanta Gallery, with a lot of contacts to some of the finest musicians in Chicago. When doing the events in smaller cities around Sweden, many of the participating bands had not heard of Roky Erickson before. Still, they took part. Some knew of my record label perhaps as some kind of security, and some took part for other reasons, for the song itself. But one nice thing with the Chicago event was that this time nobody knew who I was. Instead, everybody knew of Roky Erickson, so the event there got to be a lot about a tribute concert to Roky Erickson, which was very beautiful and a bit different from the previous events.”



(above) *You Don't Love Me Yet, The Lay All Over Its*; Jason Ajemian and Nori Tanaka live at Vedanta Gallery, Chicago, 2004

(right) *You Don't Love Me Yet*, Rebecca Gates live at Vedanta Gallery, Chicago, 2004



*You Don't Love Me Yet, The Bitter Tears* live at Vedanta Gallery, Chicago, 2004

“The Chicago event was supposed to be the final stop ever. For many, also very practical reasons, I could not make any new work and started to feel a bit trapped. So, for the next couple of months no events happened and we turned new proposals down. In Timisoara, in Romania though, there was a remix version being made in October 2004 by the Romanian group Makunochi Bento. And while I was in Romania listening to their version, I got a call from Michael Stanley who is working in Milton Keynes, a city outside of London, asking if we could do it again. Having the song in my head again, I could not say “no.” So in March 2005, there was another concert held in Middletown Hall, the shopping mall of Milton Keynes, a new city, only 35 years old, that you could say basically centers around its shopping mall.”

“Sitting on the floor there in the middle of the shopping mall, for me, the event suddenly got to be a bit strange, because right in the middle of the performances, all of a sudden, this memory popped into my head from when I was a teenager in the small town of Jönköping and was singing in a religious choir, mostly because there was nothing else to do in your spare time. Anyway, suddenly I saw myself very clearly on this choir trip up to Stockholm and how we were standing in the middle of a big shopping center in the south of Stockholm, singing for people passing by. So, to be doing this kind of event in a public place like this, suddenly freaked me out! So, maybe for me it all comes down to this thing again: the choice you also have as an audience member to take part in this or not.”



---

IF I CAN'T DANCE, I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF YOUR REVOLUTION -

**YOU DON'T LOVE ME YET # 14**

---

LIVE AT VEENFABRIEK, LEIDEN 27th OF NOVEMBER 2005

A PROJECT BY JOHANNA BILLING (ORIGINAL SONG BY ROKY ERICKSON 1984)

- 17:20 X JERRY CAN
- 17:30 X HENK THE SPY AND JERKSTATION
- 17:40 X WORLD STANDARD DAY
- 17:50 X KREMERS & THE MARK ( STARRING BERG BERGEN KÜCHLEIN )
- 18:00 X GERMEN BERGERVOET
- 18:10 X HENRIK ANDERSSON —
- 18:20 X HELSINKI
- 18:30 X JAN SCHELLINK
- 18:40 X SOME WEIRD SIN
- 18:50 X KEONI HAWAIIANS
- 19:00 X DEVENS AND RAMSES
- 19:10 X SUGAR COATED MIND BOMBS
- 19:20 X YVONNE ACHTERKAMP
- 19:30 X DE ROTTE HERDERS
- 19:40 X ELECTRIC LANE AND THE VEENFACTORY —
- 19:50 X PIERSON PUPPETEERS
- 20:00 X MAJOR B
- 20:10 TÉMY ANGKOR PHEM
- 20:20 INGRID EN DE MOTORZAGEN
- 20:30 LOVE AKTION MACHINE
- 20:40 RENE SG
- 20:50 JSBRAND VAN'T ZANT EN & MARIJN MOERBEEK
- 21:00 PANIC IN DETROIT
- 21:10 KARL HOLMQVIST
- 21:20 NANOLOOPS
- 21:30 SCREENING OF "YOU DON'T LOVE ME YET, 2003, DVD, 07:43

A film by Johanna Billing, Cinematography by: Manne Lindwall, (Original song by Roky Erickson, published by R.Erickson 1984)  
 Musical arrangements by Ida Larsén, Recorded and mixed by Pontus Olsson in Atlantis Studio, Stockholm June 2003.  
 Produced by Index - The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in collaboration with NISCA, Helsinki. You don't love me yet tour  
 2002-2003: Index, Stockholm, 4/10 2002, Eskilstuna Art Museum, Eskilstuna, 23/8 2003, Norrköping Art Museum, Norrköping  
 27/9 2003, Tingshuset, Östersund 4/10 2003, Frieze Art Fair, London 8/10 2003, Vera Concert House, Vera 9/11 2003, Bar  
 Alahone, Helsinki 4/12 2003, Sjömannalykan, Gäddede 5/12 2003, Ystad Art Museum, Ystad 24/1 2004, Vedanta Gallery,  
 Chicago 30/4 2004, Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes UK 15/3 2005, Utrecht 19/5, 2005, s-Hertogenbosch 8/2005  
 For more information about the project: <http://www.makethappen.org/ydl032.html>

If I Can't Dance, I Do Not Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution. You Don't Love Me Yet Nederlandse tournee 2005 met: Festival  
 a/d Werf, Utrecht augustus; Theaterfestival Boulevard, s-Hertogenbosch november [www.festivalboulevard.nl](http://www.festivalboulevard.nl) Veenfabriek, Leiden  
[www.veenfabriek.nl](http://www.veenfabriek.nl) If I Can't Dance, wordt geproduceerd door Festival a/d Werf, Theaterfestival Boulevard en de Veenfabriek  
 Met speciale dank aan: Mondriaan Stichting en Fonds voor beeldende kunsten, vormgeving en bouwkunst, Amsterdam

“It is funny to sit here and talk about this in Amsterdam because, as I speak, the plans for setting up three new *You Don't Love Me Yet* concerts here in the Netherlands are being made at this very moment and they will happen in Utrecht, on May 19, at Festival a/d Werf, then in August at Theaterfestival Boulevard in Den Bosch and finally, at De Veenfabriek in Leiden in November later this year. So for all you listeners in Holland, consider this an open call, if you want to join this project and make a cover version in any of these cities, contact Annie Fletcher, Frédérique Bergholtz, and Tanja Elstgeest who are organizing these events together.”

*Epilogue:*

“From talking to doing, and now, finally sitting here writing about it. We did make the three events in the Netherlands as I said. It went really well. In fact it went so well, the first time in May at Festival a/d Werf in Utrecht, that I almost felt a bit weird about it. Where did all the nervous tension go? The anxious and subdued atmosphere, where you could sense the mixed feelings of reluctance and enthusiasm and the worries in between the songs, about what was going to happen next, was completely gone! The event in Utrecht was enjoyable and easygoing: It was an atmosphere allowing people to clap their hands, sing along, and even make jokes and laugh! I was amazed. I later realized that this was perhaps just my first encounter with the easy and relaxed Dutch way of socializing, doing things together with absolutely no inherent



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, Gigant, live at Festival a/d Werf, Utrecht, 2005  
 (left) *You Don't Love Me Yet*, play list, Veenfabriek, Leiden, 2005



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, De Rotten Herders, live at Veenfabriek, Leiden, 2005



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, Love Aktion Machine, live at Veenfabriek, Leiden, 2005



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, Jerry Can, live at Veenfabriek, Leiden, 2005



*You Don't Love Me Yet*, Devens & Ramses, live at Veenfabriek, Leiden, 2005

struggle or problem, collaborating for the fun of it! Just like that! It was great, but weird to feel that maybe the functions I was aiming for the project to have, did not really apply here. I started to think that there was maybe not really the same need for doing the project in Holland. But then on a rainy afternoon in August, when the summery festival spirit all of a sudden seemed very far away, I did get back to the more harsh moods together with the smaller and more hesitating crowd on the second floor of the foyer of Theater aan de Parade in 's-Hertogenbosch. The atmosphere gradually evolved though, each time a song was performed. And amazingly in the end, people just did not want to stop playing: encores, again and again.

And finally on the November 27, 2005, what was to be announced as the final stop ever of the *You Don't Love Me Yet* tour, took place in Leiden. It was the most massive set up so far, with around twenty seven bands performing during a couple of extremely cold hours in the freezing Veenfabriek, that was not yet fully renovated. Before the bands started to perform, in my introductory speech, I was stressing the uniqueness of the event, talking about how *final* it was. At the same time, I felt kind of stupid, standing there and saying all this, though knowing that this whole Dutch tour, for example, never even should have happened, because the stop before, the one in Milton Keynes—no actually, the one in Chicago, or even the one in Ystad was the *real* final stop originally...! And this is something I have found so striking about the project; to realize eventually, that maybe I just cannot stop it. It is not longer my project and, of course, not my song. Anybody can come along and do it, and maybe do it even better.

And that was also one of the more interesting conversations we had when talking about whether the *You Don't Love Me Yet* project could get this 'other chance' again, and be turned into a Dutch tour, after the final stop in Milton Keynes last year. We started talking about the differences in making performance and art projects in the art world compared to the theater world, or the music scene. A play, a concert, or a tour, just gets better the more it is interpreted, played, or seen, the more it travels and the more people get the chance to get involved, all over the world. Also, in the art world, there is sometimes a feeling that it is okay to repeat

some things, in fact, that it is good! But just not too many times, then the project can face a risk of loosing its credibility or value, its uniqueness, perhaps as an “art object/project.”

One of the other more interesting parts of working with this project in the “If I Can’t Dance...” frame was the notion of repetition. To take an already repeating project and repeat it three times within itself almost, and within such a small area, and on top of that, within only a couple of months, turned out to be very fascinating and challenging. And I am not only also so happy to have the same performers coming again and again to the different cities in the Netherlands, like the fabulous fishermen choir De Rotte Herders, who, the second time around, took their version even further and transformed themselves and the song from a traditional folk tune sung in a specific Den Bosch’ dialect, to the coolest rap version (still in Dutch though!), but for me, it has also been great to have the opportunity to work with the same fantastic group of people, with, for example, the concert arranger Joris Tideman and his great way of finding and working with the musicians, not only for one event, as in the other cities, but again and again, and to have the possibility to not only look at things as a one of a kind experiment, but to have the chance to redo things, and work on them, taking the bad experiences into consideration and making them better the next time.

So, now that it is over, and especially since the last event was so nice, I cannot stop thinking of the somewhat vague but intriguing suggestion I heard the other day, which was that somebody told me to “just think about the possibilities” of perhaps setting up a *You Don’t Love Me Yet* concert in San Francisco and imagine “how many great musicians there are over there. Just one more time....”

PS: The event in San Francisco took place in November 2006 and in February 2007 another concert with Spanish musicians covering *You Don’t Love Me Yet* was hosted by Madrid Abierto in Madrid

(right) *You Don’t Love Me Yet*, play list, Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, 2007

(overleaf) *You Don’t Love Me Yet*, Hot Drop, live at Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, 2007

# You don't Love me yet

LIVE AT CÍRCULO DE BELLAS ARTES, MADRID 12th OF FEBRUARY 2007

20:10	HOT DROP
20:20	DARKY NENAS
20:30	SWEET SALIVA
20:40	GAYUMBOS ON FIRE
20:50	LAB
21:00	CLIMA
21:10	PAULA FOULKES
21:20	CUTTING CUBE
21:30	LA PACHIONE ESPAÑOLA
21:40	ME DAIS POCA
21:50	MR. OSO
22:00	JAM SESSAMO
22:20	SCREENING OF “YOU DON’T LOVE ME YET, 2003, DVD, 07-43

A project and film by Johanna Billing. Cinematography by Marco Lindvall. (Original song by Ricky Erickson, published by R.Erickson 1984)  
Musical arrangements by Ida Linderén. Recorded and mixed by Poeman Glasson in Atlantic Studios, Stockholm June 2005, produced by Indes - The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in collaboration with Niika, Helsinki. You don't love me yet tour 2002-2003: India, Stockholm, 4/10 2002; Eskilstuna Art Museum, Eskilstuna, 23/8 2003. Norrköping Art Museum, Norrköping 27/9 2003, Tingstuguet, Östersund 4/10 2003, Friese Art Fair, London 8/10 2003, Vera Concert House, Vera 9/11 2003, Bar Alabastro, Helsinki 4/12 2003, Sjömanskyrkan, Gäddede 6/12 2003, Vataal Art Museum, Vataal 24/1 2004, Vedanta Gallery, Chicago 20/4 2004, Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes UK 15/3 2005, Utrecht 19/3, 2005, 2-Herengroenbosch 5/8 2005, Leiden 27/11 2005; The Lab, San Francisco 16/11, 2006. More information: [www.makethingsopen.org/ydlm02.html](http://www.makethingsopen.org/ydlm02.html)

MADRID ABIERTO 2007: Director: Jorge Díaz, Comisario: Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes, Comité de Selección: Jorge Díaz, Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes, Ramón Parramon, Guillermo Díasangre, Cecilia Andriessen, Asesor Audiovisual: Arturo Rodríguez, Asesor Arte Sonoro: José Igna. Organizadores: Asociación Cultural Madrid Abierto, Producción: Fundación Abierta, Área de Gobierno de las Artes del Ayuntamiento de Madrid, Consejo de Cultura y Deportes de la Comunidad de Madrid, Colaboran: Fundación Telefónica, La Casa Encendida, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Radio 3-RNE, ARCA, Canal Metro, Comuna, Centro Cultural de la Villa, Ministerio de Cultura, Bono y Mediasera, Agrupación: Metro Coordinación General: RMS La Asociación, Producción y Programación: Ciertas Producciones. Del 1 al 28 de febrero: [www.madridabierto.com](http://www.madridabierto.com)



## You Make Me Digress

Abäke

On a Saturday in 2003, we are standing in front of Johanna but she isn't alone. With her are what seems like millions of people—more likely fifty—who came to listen to covers of “You Don't Love Me Yet”, one of which is ours. On this little stage at the Frieze Art Fair, we think of the discussions with Johanna which led us to do this. We are no singers nor musicians. Our smiles are forced and it lasts forever. Right then, we all wish to be somewhere else, yet there is the feeling that Johanna had made us do something which we wouldn't have thought of. We are in pain but strangely grateful. Thank you J.

On a Tuesday in 2004, we receive a mixed-CD from Johanna. It contained the following songs:

1. *Open Field* 2. *Tropical Iceland* 3. *Broken Joystick* 4. *The Coooco Bird* 5. *Dear Dad* 6. *I Want* 7. *Surprise Me* 8. *All Good Naysayers, Break up! or Forever* 9. *Run into Flowers* 10. *Our Anniversary* 11. *Portrait Song* 12. *Hey, Who Really Cares* 13. *Don't Let Me Down* 14. *Terrible Angels* 15. *Old Pal of My Heart* 16. *It's a Party* 17. *All Shook Up* 18. *Baby I Love You* 19. *Honey Moon Suite* 20. *Panis et Circences* 21. *Baby Jane* 22. *Das Wort* 23. *Diet* 24. *Eigentlich Glücklich* 25. *Silverdagger* 26. *Go and Tell Your Father* 27. *Classic Unknown* 28. *The Drum* 29. *Horses* 30. *Rocketship* 31. *Maria Bethania* 32. *St Elmos Fire* 33. *It's Rough* 34. *Back Street Luve* 35. *Joppa Road* 36. *On My Mind* 37. *Karl Blau* 38. *Memo to My Son* 39. *Hotcha Girls* 40. *Help the Band* 41. *Worry Worry* 42. *Up in the North* 43. *Ukulele Speghetti* 44. *Night Nurse* 45. *Disco D'oro* 46. *Helicopter* 47. *Such Great Heights* 48. *Up With People* 49. *I Don't Feel too Steady on My Feet* 50. *Track of the Cat* 51. *Sinnerman*.

This list sounds like one of her exhibitions.

On a Saturday of September 2005, we are in a large room with a hundred other people. Most of us are singing: “Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, dear Johanna.” She blushes but it is fun. Most people there know (of) her, but have not come to Iaspis Studios in Stockholm for the yearly



*Look out!*, production still, Gainsborough Studios, London, 2003

celebration. This is no birthday party, but a rather serious seminar on collaborative practices organized by Lars Nilsson, Maria Lind, and Johanna Billing. We have been invited to take part and couldn't resist the coincidence of the date. After all, Johanna always seems to mix life and work.

On a Tuesday in 2003, Johanna has a show in East London where we live (*Studio Works*). The place is new and it is hard to think that the whole area is changing faster than perhaps it should. Surely, the news of a dismembered body found in a suitcase is horrible, and luxury flats are to be preferred to any nicknames such as “the murder mile.” That being said, her film is about and shown in the ground floor of an all new luxury flat complex. Just outside is the Buddha-like metal sculpture of Alfred Hitchcock's head. It is enormous and somehow commemorates the site of Gainsborough Studios. The building kept the name and erected an effigy of its most famous director. The same year in the same area, we worked with Apolonija Šustersić (*Community Research Center*), then Ella Gibbs and Amy Plant (*Laburnum Pilot*). This is not the place for details, but they all have something in common with Johanna's work. Please consider this as a [hyperlink](#).

On a Sunday in 2007, we do nothing the whole day, together.

On a Thursday in 2005, we take Johanna Billing, the founder of the music label *Make It Happen* and Karl-Jonas Winquist, a.k.a. Blood Music (on *Make It Happen*) to Epping Forest in London to show them the site where we built a wooden-wicker man for Blood Music's artwork. Most of the wooden humanoid is still there and despite the cold, we manage to have a picnic. Between dishes, Johanna spontaneously grabs a camera and starts filming a trailer for the Blood Music album (she is working).



Revisiting Epping Forest, the making of “Sing a Song Fighter!”, 2005



*Magic & Loss*, production still, 2005

## More Text about Songs and Buildings

Magnus Haglund

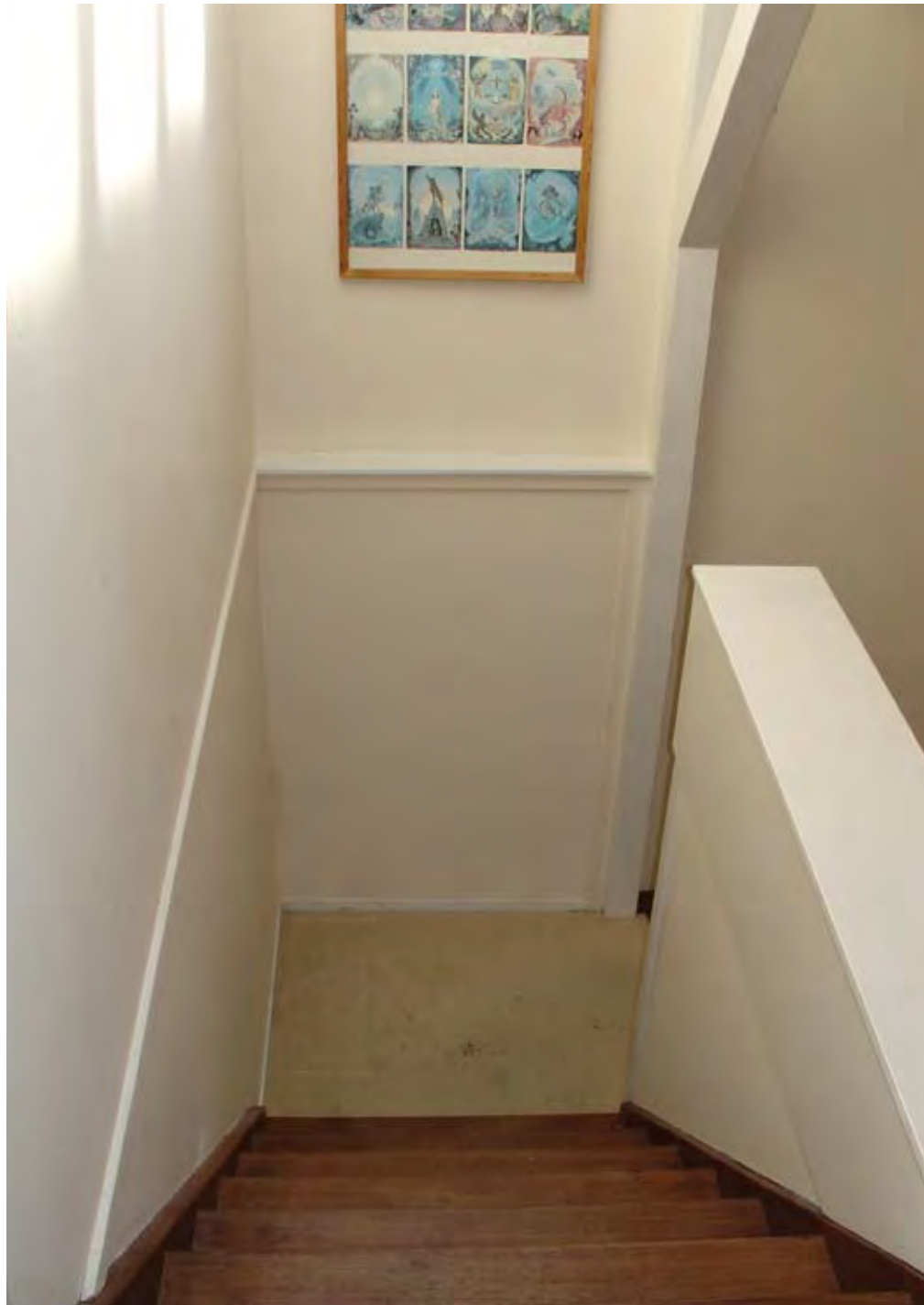
What is to be heard and what is to be seen, in comparison to what is not to be heard and what is not to be seen? Maybe we ought to be a bit more careful in deciding what it is that makes a piece of art valid and mysterious?

The curious combination of controlled action and hidden romantic feeling in Johanna Billing's works has as much to do with the poetry of absence as with ongoing social rituals. There is a musicality to be found in the silent videos *Project for a Revolution* (2000) and *Magic & Loss* (2005). No one says anything, nothing is explained, but inside the reluctant and introspective silence, a particular kind of melody can be heard. It is the music of going up the stairs, moving a leg while leaning against a radiator, carefully wrapping porcelain in protecting paper, the melodies of non-spectacular but significant events. Listen carefully, prick up your ears, and these sweet and precise sounds will come to you. It is a bit like reading a letter from a close friend; you know the nuances of particular words, the subterranean dreams connected with certain moments, the sorrows that have been shared. You have to listen to these sounds as a friend. Then you will recognize the beauty of them, how precious they are.

Why call a film, however, about the removal of an absent person's furniture from an old apartment in Amsterdam, *Magic & Loss*? What has it to do with the famous Lou Reed album of 1992, made in honor of two close friends that had recently died? The film is secretive about its codes and meanings, and part of the quality is to be found in the interpretative freedom it leaves for the viewer. But the almost ritual handling of the material, with a deep and mysterious silence ringing through the activities, turns the increasingly empty flat into a metaphysical state of mind, as if the people participating were reading Buddhist sutras or the Kaddish to themselves.

In the peculiar silence, the building itself starts to resonate and becomes a big vessel or sound-tank. You enter the house built by the partnership of Houdini and Joseph





Cornell, later on, changed and reconfigured by Gordon Matta-Clark. You walk up the stairs, experience the strange escapism of the rooms, and maybe you even fall through the illusionary trapdoors.



*Magic & Loss*, production stills, 2005





*Magic & Loss*, production still, 2005

(right) *Magic & Loss*, production notes, 2005

### Magic & Loss – packing list

#### Upstairs

##### **Toilet**

Throw away toilet brush  
Pack bottle  
Leave lamp

##### **Bathroom**

Pack shower curtain  
Throw away bath mat  
2 small cupboards – take down Monday  
Pack scale, fish & duck  
Mirror stays

##### **Bedroom**

Corner cupboard:  
Printer stays  
Big wooden planks stay

##### Clothes cupboard:

Pack clothes in boxes  
Pack shoes and two white shoe racks  
Keep clothes on hangers and put in boxes  
Pack blankets

Leave bed and sheets – pack on Monday

Leave stuff in Indian box

Books go with rest of books in the house into boxes

Carefully wrap & pack astrology chart on stairway

#### Downstairs

##### **Living room**

Be careful with computer & scanner

Pack moving boxes

Pack 4 fragile chairs carefully

Careful with speaker box with hand painting – put on lift Monday

Pack hammock and silver ring

3 couches – take down Monday

Roll up and pack white carpet and black slip proof material under it

Throw away dead plant

Pack up TV and attachments (can disconnect cords)

Throw out TV table

Pack DVDs with other DVDs and videos into boxes

Lamps on wall stay – but we can detach them for the film if we put them back on

Pack stereo but connections must stay intact – very important

Antique chest – empty and tie up to take down on slide – Monday

#### Study

Laptop will not be there

Pack printer

Table comes apart in two pieces and folds – do Monday

Pack speakers – disconnect them from stereo

Two wooden planks stay

Pack lamp

Vase and angel on bookshelf are fragile – pack carefully

Books – pack properly in boxes

CDs pack properly

Pack small candle holders – fragile

Pack wooden mask on stairway

Throw away drying rack

Pack dolphin picture

Pack mirror

#### Toilet

Pack pictures and precious frames – very carefully

Throw away toilet brush

Pack pinboard

Lamp stays

Carefully roll and pack ‘North Korean’ poster and ‘Communekind’ poster

#### Kitchen

First cupboard:

Pack vases

Leave paint

Carefully pack ‘Groentewijzer’ poster

Leave Weesperzijde poster

Antique cabinet cast:

Note to antique dealer: misplaced drawer is on top of cabinet cast

Pack three black boxes on top

Pack three tins

Pack anything laying underneath the cabinet cast

Satellite stays

Cat scratcher – maybe throw out

Black chair throw out

Antique magazine holder – move carefully

Kitchen table stays

Pack chairs

Pack bowl on table and put contents in small box



*Magic & Loss*, production still, 2005

(left) *Magic & Loss*, production notes, 2005

Plank stays  
 Pack mandala (with other paintings)  
 Carefully move plant – Monday  
 Pack glasses, wine and phonebook  
 Move table next to fridge – Monday  
 Carefully pack moon clock on top of fridge  
 Pack tray and bin  
 Wine cupboard stays  
 Leave empty bottles  
 Take cat food  
 Pack all kitchen utensils and appliances and food

**Hallway cupboard**

Pack everything on right wall except for paint and floor polish  
 Pack carpet  
 Movers to move washing machine and dryer – Monday  
 Pack everything on left shelves except: two boxes at bottom stay  
 Pack garden table  
 Pack vacuum cleaner  
 Net frame stays  
 Leave shelves  
 Take bag with bags

**Stairway front door**

Pack all coats  
 Large cloth painting with glass – movers wrap in blanket and carry down Monday  
 Pack metal plate and put contents in small box  
 Standing cupboard can be taken by anyone who wants it – if not then take it out Monday



*Magic & Loss*, production still, 2005

(left) *Magic & Loss*, production notes, 2005

(overleaf) *Magic & Loss*, production still, 2005



## Regarding Us

Cecilia Canziani

In my parents' house, there was a reproduction of a famous painting in which a girl with braids and blue eyes was standing in front of a dark background. Despite the fact that the girl was much older than I was, and that my hair was very short and I didn't have braids until the age of four, it was my deepest conviction that the depicted person was me, and I couldn't understand why nobody could see it. This story came into my mind while I was looking at another girl with braids and blue eyes on whose delicate features the camera in Johanna Billing's video *Magical World* rests. What stays in my memory in relation to her works are the people she depicts in the act of singing, or breathing in unison, and performing in front of the camera the ritual of getting together. There are a series of portraits of individuals, at the same time, naturally acting themselves and being staged, and who contribute with their experiences, their bodies, and the expression of their faces to the result of the project. Discussing the portrait, Jean Luc Nancy uses the verb *regarder*—it looks at us—regards us. On the threshold between the picture plane and the real, they seem to talk to us, to invite us in. While exploring the tensions between the demands of society and the needs, habits, and desires of the individual, Billing's characters remind us that a group is not an abstraction, but a multitude of singularities. The camera in her videos singles out individuals she invites to partake in an action—there is never an *a priori* collectivity: Participation, Johanna teaches us, cannot be imposed, but exists when people gather together to share an activity. Such is, for Hanna Arendt, the space of the political, a place that exists as an in between, a fleeting potential “we,” that needs to be created over and over again. In Billing's work, this notion exceeds the limits of the performance, and expands it in the space occupied by the spectator: The people on the screen seduce us, and desiring to be part of the group that is taking form, we are transformed from viewers to potential participants. The portrait of a person acts as catalyst: It fosters—as I felt almost too well as a child—identification, the desire to be part of that scene that takes place in front of one's eyes.



*Magical World*, “Creativity Studios with Children” workshop, Galeria Posibila, Bucharest

(overleaf) *Magical World*, production still, 2005



**NOKIA**  
JE BAŠ SIMPA!

Uključeno 500 kn na Simpo račun!

NOKIA 6110	748 kn
NOKIA 6110i	799 kn
NOKIA 6110c	849 kn
NOKIA 6110d	899 kn
NOKIA 6110e	949 kn
NOKIA 6110f	999 kn

**NOKIA**

236 STOCK

TAJEDU 52

YKE



## Who's Going to Finish It?

Ivet Ćurlin of What, How and for Whom/WHW

Just as in any other city—one does not go to the suburbs of Zagreb unless one lives there, not without a very specific reason, and Dubrava is no exception. Known as the city's most notoriously 'uncultured' suburb, supposedly full of immigrants, mobsters, hard-core nationalists, and soccer fans, this legendary area of "tough and rough boys" is not nearly as dangerous as this urban mythology would like to suggest. It is just far away from the recently spruced-up and touristy center. Johanna stumbled upon it by accident, while looking for a thing one would least expect to find there—a children's choir. The Dubrava Cultural Center, where she found the choir, is a huge multi(dys)functional building, constructed during socialist times, as one of the biggest of numerous cultural centers, built in a line of public projects designed to foster the cultural 'emancipation' of workers in different city districts. However, being built during the economically volatile nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties, when on the one hand, the country was still experiencing economic growth, and on the other, IMF and World Bank loans (lavishly spent in previous decades on consumer goods and social peace) were becoming due, the building was never finished. Today, the building is overburdened with expectations that never became fulfilled, and its continual unfinished status perpetuates, and pinpoints, the feeling of uneasiness with the current state of affairs in the cultural policies of Croatia.

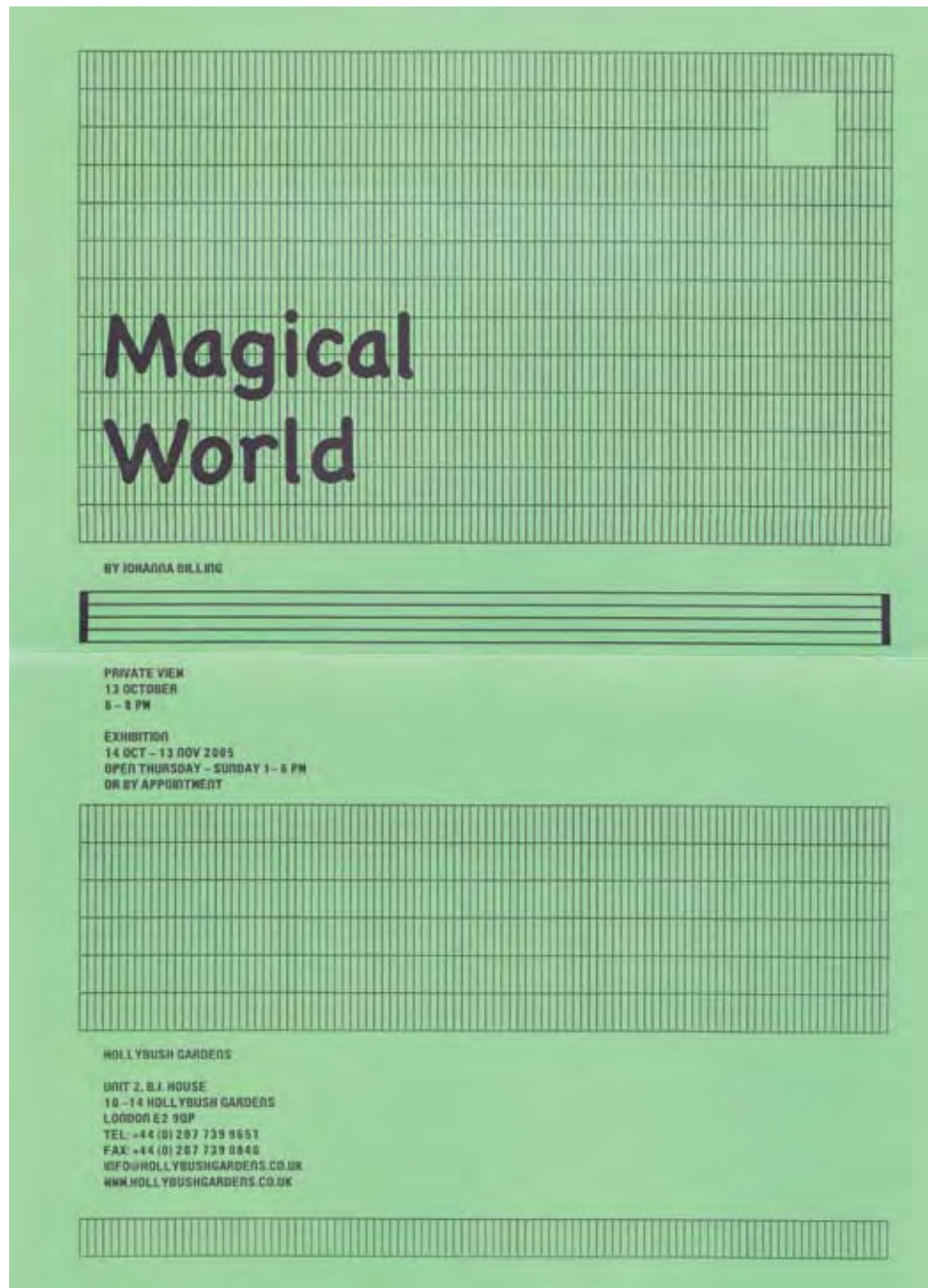
*Magical World* was filmed in the Dubrava Cultural Center during one summer day in 2005, and the worn out surroundings of the center, combined with the sentimentality and sweetness of the tune sung by kids in patchy English, brings out the melancholy that surfaces in almost every frame, of pensive children's faces, summer in Zagreb, and the deserted hallways of the Center. And yet, there is magical effect, as suggested by the title, which continues to linger long after, along with the music and the lyrics of the song that one just can't get out of one's head. The site of the video is so obviously dated, so out of

the past, that one cannot help but revisit one's own memories from the period when the Center and many of its counterparts were still believed to be "in the process of completion." Today, we only hear about plans of turning the Dubrava Center into a shopping mall with (maybe even!) a multiplex cinema. The ghost geography of so-called Eastern Europe is rushing to adapt to the 'normal' European standards of the West. In *Magical World*, the loop of the video accents the feeling of understatement, continuous repetition, and the erasure of boundaries between the beginning and the end, so that we are not quite sure whether the musicians that are accompanying the kids pack their instruments back into the car or take them out. The question that the video poses most strongly is about the future of the singing children. Is the erratic and confusing process of building over? Or is there sufficient collective imagination (and enough clout) that can renegotiate the present circumstances and rethink the ways in which we are determined by seemingly unavoidable current geopolitical and economical positions?



*Magical World*, production still, 2005





*Magical World*, invite, 2005

## Sentimental Season

Mika Hannula

In the far left corner on the ground floor at the old tobacco factory site of this year's biennial (2005), we find something strange, something that somehow does not fit in. We are confronted with a solemn and beautiful video loop focusing on a group of children practicing and playing a very particular song.

What we see is something most of us deliberately wish to avoid and not pay attention to. It is a sentimental season during which, basically, everyone is, all of a sudden, looking for a handkerchief. We have a surprised audience with slightly wet eyes and certainly a warm heart.

But hold on? What is going on? Did I say a children's music group? It is a set up of, "oh, so lovely kids," rehearsing an uplifting song in a cultural center that could be located anywhere and everywhere. We see their puzzled, but incredibly serious faces. We sense their excitement, the awkwardness of trying to perform in a language which is not theirs. We follow the movement of the camera, we adjust to the style of editing that borrows so nonchalantly from classic pop/rock videos. The linear narrative is broken, but the wholeness of the event is framed and secured by the factual duration of the song. There is a beginning and an end—and the never-ending repetition of the loop. And yes, in between, you notice the process slowly building up, brought together with an almost caressing kind of editing that smoothly flows from one face to another, one significant detail to the next.

Is this not a little too much? Is this not too close to something that, for good reason, is labeled "social pornography"? Is this not too much like a product made for granddads and grandmas in the imaginary public sphere?

With her film *Magical World*, Johanna Billing has managed to create something of a fail-free heartbreaker, a real deal tearjerker. But contrary to our deep-seated cynical inclinations, there is absolutely nothing wrong with her style, her attitude, and the result: a film. On the contrary, it gives us a wonderful example of how contemporary art can steal back themes and moments that we thought were forever lost.

The crucial difference between Billing's work, and the flood of sentimental images connected to children we have no choice but to witness, day in day out, is the following point: Whereas the mainstream images of children are mostly instrumentalized for commercial use, Billing's piece is not a product. She is not desperately trying to sell us anything. She does not promote anything. She does not articulate a social issue or a political agenda. Her film is a work of art.

As an art work, *Magical World* is not holy, it is not above us. It is not detached from our daily realities. It is "here and now." It is here and now in a way that is simply amazing. It does not shout, it does not beg. It is a film that achieves a rare atmosphere of its own kind and make. It is unique in its means of having the courage to get closer and closer to the sentimental season it wants to address and cherish.

I believe *Magical World* is a very brave work. It is an example of civil courage that goes against the tide of our times. It does not oppose commercialization of our life-worlds. However, neither does it passively just stand-by to be bought, sold, and recycled. Instead, Billing offers us an alternative. She shows us how it is, indeed, not only possible, but even preferable to deal actively with these major concepts and feelings that seem to be so cute and phony, but nevertheless, important. We need them back. We need these sensations and words for our use right here, right now. We need to have alternative ways of defining what is hope, seen both individually and collectively. We have to be able to provide alternative versions of love and hate, misery and pleasure, versions which are not flat, one-sided slogans, but entities characterized by inner tensions and loving conflicts.

The extra special effect of Billing's film is obviously the song she chose to cover. With her choice, Billing is following, funnily enough, the steps of that rather famous director called Tarantino. Both of them re-activate songs from the past that deserve to be heard again and recognized. With Billing's work, the original song was written by black American singer Sidney Barnes in 1968. A song that definitely deserves to be born again, a song that forces me to ask for help. It is a wish. Someone somewhere out there. Please, please Mr or Mrs postman.

Does anyone have a copy to spare or borrow of the original version of *Magical World*?

## Magical World

as sung by Minnie Riperton and Rotary Connection

Sidney Barnes  
1968

triplet feel  
beat on eights

chorus: I live in a ma-gi-cal world, in a ma-gi-cal world,

in a ma-gi-cal world I live in a ma-gi-cal world,

in a ma-gi-cal world, in a ma-gi-cal world,

solo: why you wan-na wake me from such a beau-ti-ful dream

can't you see that I am slee-ping So why don't you leave me a-

lone For life is so ex-ci-ting, on the is-land in my room and

as I sing and dance a-long the sha-dows of the moon chorus: I

20  $E^{\flat}m$   $B^{\natural}$   $A^{\flat}m$

live in a ma-gi-cal world, in a ma-gi-cal world in a ma-gi-cal world

23  $E^{\flat}m$   $G^{\flat}$   $D^{\flat}add9/F$   $E$   $E^{\flat}sus$   $E^{\flat}$

solo: the frag-rance of sweet flo-wers is fil-ling the air

26  $A^{\flat}m$   $G+5$   $B^{\natural}/G^{\flat}$   $D^{\flat}7/F$   $B^{\flat}m$

peace of mind is de-vas-ta-ting so why I want to go

29  $E^{\flat}m$   $Cm7-5$   $E^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m/G^{\flat}$   $B^{\natural}maj7$   $A^{\flat}m$

home? for no one here can tell me I'm not good e-nough to share and

32  $E^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m/G^{\flat}$   $B^{\natural}maj7$   $A^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m$

a-ny-one I want to love, I love and no one cares I live in a ma-gi-cal world,

35  $B^{\natural}$   $A^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m$

in a ma-gi-cal world in a ma-gi-cal world

38  $G^{\flat}$   $D^{\flat}add9/F$   $E$   $E^{\flat}sus$   $E^{\flat}$

solo: I am not as-king you to un-der-stand me

40  $A^{\flat}m$   $G+5$   $B^{\natural}/G^{\flat}$   $D^{\flat}7/F$   $B^{\flat}m$

cause you can't change my way of gi-ving oh I, and what I can

43  $E^{\flat}m$   $Cm7-5$   $E^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m/G^{\flat}$   $B^{\natural}maj7$   $A^{\flat}m$

feel so I fool my mind up in a yel-low sub-ma-rine and

46  $E^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m/G^{\flat}$   $B^{\natural}$   $A^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m$

gli-ding down the sha-dows that was left of last night's sleep solo: I

49  $E^{\flat}m$   $B^{\natural}$   $A^{\flat}m$

live in a ma-gi-cal world, in a ma-gi-cal world in a ma-gi-cal world

52  $E^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m$   $B^{\natural}$

chorus: I live in a ma-gi-cal world, in a ma-gi-cal world

55  $A^{\flat}m$   $E^{\flat}m$

in a ma-gi-cal world

## Perfect Pop Pleasures

Jacob Wren

Earlier this year, I interviewed the Finnish writer and curator Mika Hannula. In an unpublished section of that interview, speaking of the things, which continue to inspire and give energy, Mika recalls buying the vinyl re-issue of the classic Curtis Mayfield album *Curtis*: “If I need a helping hand in lifting the spirits, this is where I look. This is my context. This is my discourse. And yes, of course, there is a sentimental season, very much so. Opening the foldout album cover, I find a huge picture inside of Curtis having, assumedly, his daughter, around three to four years old, sitting on his shoulders, holding her hands around his chin. And what does this make me feel? Not quite real, but it makes me feel alive, connected and inspired.”

*Sentimental Season*<sup>‡</sup> is also the title of Mika’s text on Johanna Billing’s video *Magical World*, a video I recently saw for the first time in Canada. It was a video that immediately drew me in and, in retrospect, I realize the degree to which the song pulled me into the work. At the time, it didn’t occur to me to investigate further, but I was to learn more, anyway, since Mika’s text ends with him tracking down the CD re-issue of the original 1968 version by Rotary Connection.

It is odd that I didn’t attempt to search out the song myself since these moments of tracking down records, obscure records both old and new, are so familiar and powerful for me. I am almost embarrassed to think about how much time I spend chasing after music and what a central role such songs play in my daily life. However, when Mika speaks of feeling “alive, connected and inspired,” for me, it is only one side of the story. Every time I buy a new record, the purchase is accompanied by a slight feeling of guilt, a strange sort of hangover, as though Adorno was peering over my shoulder and reminding me that my love of music, which does, in fact, give me a great deal of pleasure, also contributes to the perpetuation of our society’s continuing barbaric condition, to our lack of autonomy in the face of products and systems in which we have little or no say. The connection between our pure pop pleasures and the sins of corporate advertising culture—how our connection to the

music that means the most to us is always *also* a consumer condition—is somehow never far from my thoughts.

Perhaps there is also something else about Billing’s *Magical World*. The children who gather to sing are not consumers of this music. They are participants. Before the invention of recordings, people would gather and sing. The fact that we no longer sing together, that such an idea would seem quaint and old-fashioned to many of us (especially in the art world), is yet another symptom of our endlessly refined and surprisingly pleasurable isolation. It is this isolation I feel when I am searching for some new record, the isolation from which I would not have escaped when I finally track down that Rotary Connection re-issue. And yet, the video *Magical World* suggests a brief moment in which things might be otherwise.

‡ Cf. from Mika Hannula, *The Politics of Small Gestures: Chances and Challenges for Contemporary Art*, Istanbul, 2006



*Magical World*, production still, 2005

## Pass the Glue

Volker Zander

Music can be adhesive. Songs, especially, can be sticky—and, in particular, certain parts of songs. They can glue onto you, play repeatedly in your mind, and become inner soundtracks that guide you through life.

I first saw a small selection of Johanna Billing's film works at Basis art space in Frankfurt am Main in October 2006. The videos *You Don't Love Me Yet* and *Magical World* were the most prominent works within the exhibition, simply because they featured songs in their soundtracks, following you throughout the two-story deep cellar.

What I took home, above all, from this exhibition was music spinning in my head. Hook lines and melody fragments of both songs started to trigger strong effects in my daily routines. My use of “yets”—the magical word that adds, to negation, the twist of hope—increased exponentially. And this Motown-ish Supremes-like outcry in the verse of *Magical World* (when a boy about ten years old sings “So, Why...”) became my inner ring tone for the stepping-stones in daily life (“...don't you leave me alone?”).

This was the moment when the idea appeared to release Johanna Billing's music on a record. I wrote her, and asked, and the answer was “yes.” She had thought about this herself. She wrote back, curious to find out what would happen to the music if it was extracted from the video.

In conversation, Johanna emphasizes her fascination of cover songs. *You Don't Love Me Yet* (originally by Roky Erickson from 1984) and “Magical World” (written by Sidney Barnes for the Rotary Connection in 1968) had—as she puts it—“worked” on her “for a long time.” It seems to me these sticky pieces “worked” until the moment when a conceptual cinematic idea appeared, strong enough for her to pass on the glue.

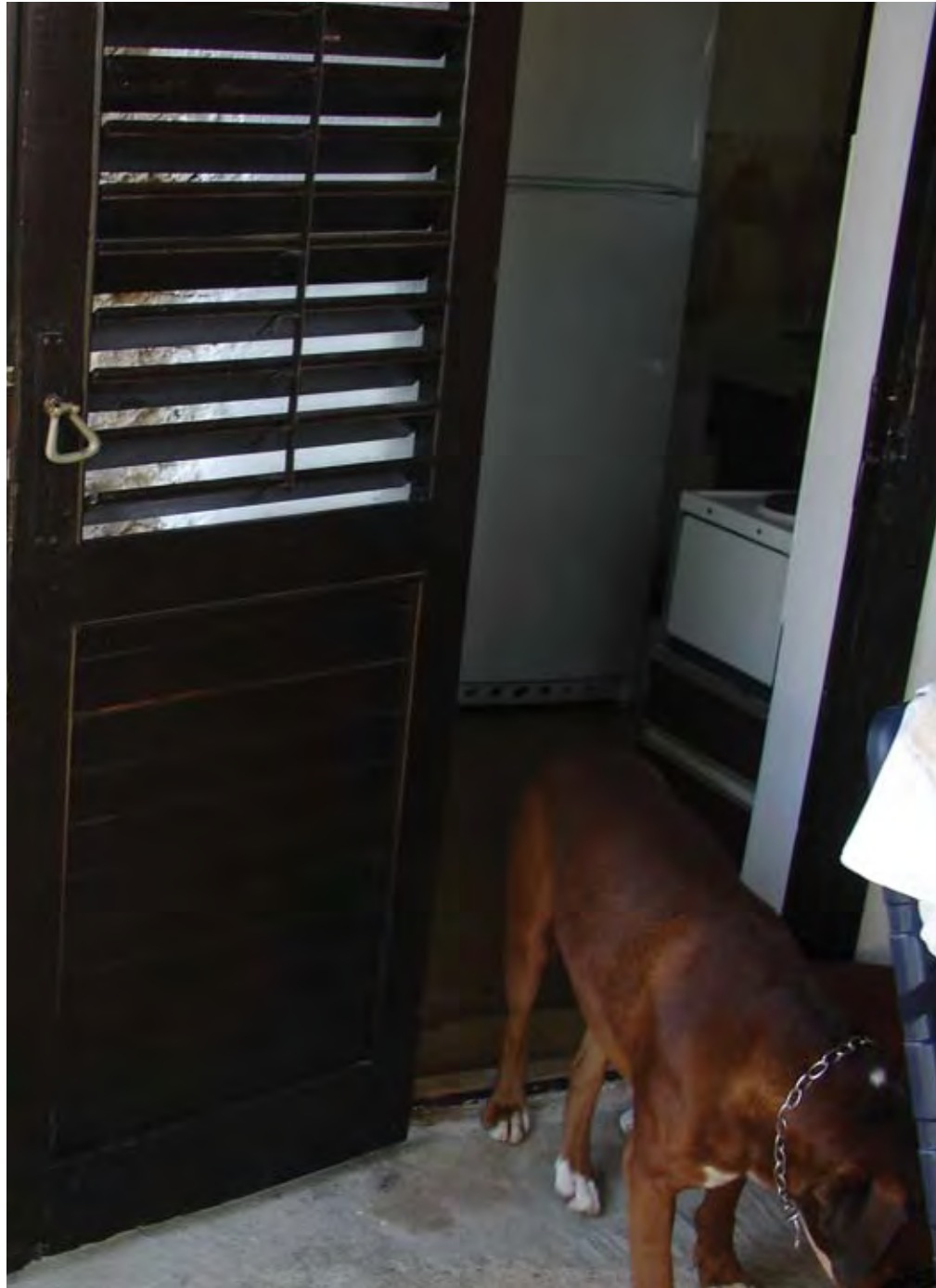


Johanna Billing Original Soundtracks, *Magical World / You Don't Love Me Yet*, 12" vinyl, Apparent Extent, 2007



*Another Album*, production stills, 2006





*Another Album*, production still, 2006

## The Lights Go out, the Moon Wanes

Anne Tallentire

Some people are sitting on a bench watching the large screen, placed opposite, at a diagonal, in the gallery—Hollybush Gardens, London, January 2007. There is an animated, yet relaxed atmosphere. The crowd is milling around watching and talking as is customary at an exhibition opening. The conventions of one group activity are engaged around the depiction of another.

At the beginning of the film, people arrive in fairly small boats. The sun is just beginning to go down. Seagulls squawk and hover over the narrow stretch of water between the shore and islands beyond. A young man approaches a gate. He passes under a vine and walks toward a summer house where his friends are milling about, preparing for the evening, lighting a barbecue, strumming guitars, carrying a table from the veranda to the garden. They bring chairs, bottles of wine, food, light candles and, eventually, begin to sit down to eat. A strong breeze is blowing through striped towels hanging on a line from the trees above. The garden is saturated with color against a deep blue sky. A brown dog mooches.

Soon, most have gathered at the table, and the singing begins. As convention has it, turns are taken leading the songs. First verses and chorus lines are sung with confidence whilst there is also a struggle here and there to recall a line or a chord before breaking into a hum and fading away. The presence of a microphone, lights, and the camera make clear that the event has been staged. However, the participants act normally. There is constant, yet unobtrusive movement to and from the table, back to the house, or to other parts of the garden. The guitar is passed around and, in parallel, the camera constantly shifts view, moving between and around the tables, the house and the trees framing moments of both engagement and disengagement and making vivid a process of collective memory, its agency and affect. Documentary, home movie, or travelogue genres that may be momentarily brought to mind



*Another Album*, video stills, 2006

(right) *Another Album*, production still, 2006

are undermined through the construction of a pragmatic visual language that rigorously and eloquently resists one overbearing singular narrative.

The acoustic improvised evocations of another time and place (Novi Val (New Wave) from ex-Yugoslavia of the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties) inevitably, through the course of the evening, find moments of discordance and harmony. I begin to imagine I know some of the tunes remembered from a bus journey in 1978, but, unable to decipher the words, I find identification is, in the end, often stronger with those who do not know the words or those who opt out of a song. Twenty-seven songs later concerning love and life, the friends retreat back to the house still singing. The lights go out, the moon wanes, the dog settles, and the viewer is left as if it were outside to watch the dawn, listen, and reflect upon how, through this work, we have become implicated in questions concerning who we become and how we live in relation to each other.



*Another Album*, production still, 2006





*Another Album*,  
production still, 2006

(overleaf) *Another Album*,  
installation view, "Stages,"  
l'Espai Montcada,  
La Caixa Forum, Barcelona, 2007



# A Possible Trilogy

Jelena Vesić

A few weeks ago, Johanna Billing came for a dinner at my lovely attic at the Arthotel in Stockholm (of course, very temporarily mine, but I managed to give it an ambience that felt like home). After some glasses of wine and a chain of small chats about this and that in Stockholm and Belgrade, about music, risotto and soup, art, film, and people we know, the wine-nostalgia really hit me, and I started to tell her how much I love her *Magical World*. It was past three o'clock in the morning. A bit drowsy, Johanna said "Cheers" once again, and took four LPs from a project I had not seen from her large bag. She gave me the vinyls to deliver to friends in Belgrade, and a DVD with a film called *Another Album*. "Watch it, and tell me what you think," she said. It was already bright daylight, as if it were 9 am. I walked her downstairs where she jumped on her bicycle.

Ten days later, it was raining incessantly in Stockholm. I stayed on the sofa all day, reading the Russian magazine *Chto delat* (What is to be done) and watching *Another Album* a few times between several snoozes. What a luxurious day!

In the recognizable manner of Johanna Billing, but always somehow different and told all over again, this video shows a group of young people in slow and dispersed action. The story in the foreground tells of everyday situations and small daily actions, but in the background, it reconstructs some significant times of the past, times that those young people cannot remember, though they try, trapped in some painful and uneasy space between memory and oblivion.

This is an entourage of young people from Zagreb, who have come on holiday to a small and isolated island somewhere on the Croatian coast. Arriving by boat on the beach, they set up house in a picturesque Mediterranean stone cottage where they will stay overnight. This is the visible storyline, but it unfolds very slowly through an endless, dedicated preparation of food, serving dinner, playing guitars, and singing.

Actually, those young people are not really singing, but rather, rehearsing a particular kind of music produced in Yugoslavia during the nineteen-eighties, going through all the songs that they, somehow, more or less "know."

The people in *Another Album* might be remembering on purpose, dedicating themselves to memory. But they might have

also been placed into a staged situation that only looks real. Johanna's films will never reveal which of the two it is, unless we wish to violently break into the backstage. She forces us to balance on that evasive line between reality and fiction, to deal with the uncertainty as to who is telling us the story. We really do not, however, want to break those ambivalences, because the story itself might also break.

*Another Album* is definitely a powerful film. It almost emanates the smell of that warm and dry Mediterranean air. Images of trees, glimmering and shimmering in the wind together with the sound of the crickets still resonate in my head, maybe because the rain in Stockholm never stopped... This is the last shot, and then the day starts again. Johanna often uses loops as an aesthetic and programmatic part of her films. Here, it plays an important role. It speaks about their days: easy, actionless, and unchanging. And it bears that unbearable effect of being stuck in the story, one and the same story, again and again.

But what is it that these nice young people are singing? This music comes from the end of the nineteen-seventies and the early nineteen-eighties, mass-popular songs, generally accepted (and connoted) as Yugoslav, even today. I do not remember these songs from the original context of their making, but I do remember well that they were, inextricably, from the very end of the nineteen-eighties, tell-tale signs of the culture of that time, performed by young people on the Adriatic beaches who stayed late at night stocked up with alcohol, smokes, and guitars, evoking an image I would call "quasi-beatnik, dominantly male-deterministic, and potentially, alcoholics." They sang about love and passion, about unhappy and unlucky people. The songs of their choice were full of pathos and always carried that existentialist, from-the-gut depiction of 'real life,' bare life, the one that people liked to imagine, maybe exactly because under the circumstances of the Yugoslav welfare state in the nineteen-eighties, they had no chance of experiencing it firsthand. They often addressed sentiments or alluded to broken relationships and break-ups... And they were sung with a feeling that now, just now, everything will have to fall apart (*a ballad about Pishonja and Zhuga goes, "for love you need to have a soul... all that will be, my dear, covered by rosemary, snow, and reed..."*). Determinism



is the prevailing spirit of these songs: Their protagonists accept the inevitable with boundless grief but without resistance; they are simply mesmerized and petrified by what is happening just now, overwhelmed with the impossibility of changing the outcome. Applied to the fall of Yugoslavia, this implicit ‘acceptance of the inevitable’ hangs in the air, accurately describing the attitude of the Yugoslav elite at the beginning of the nineteen-nineties. They were shocked by the barbarism and the brutality. At the same time, however, they were sure that it had to happen and there was nothing that could be done to avoid or stop it. This is the music we call Yugo-nostalgic. It does not make the attempt to rethink or reconstruct the political project of Yugoslavia by any means. Rather, it is marked by some apolitical (but by all means, anti-Communist) moan for the good old times, times of welfare, and small petit bourgeois pleasures. Interestingly enough, some of the performers who sang these popular songs later supported the nationalist regimes in their respective ex-Yugoslav republics, through the lyrics of their new songs.

This Yugoslav, Yugo-nostalgic music from the nineteen-eighties was less present as real concert-performed music. It is rather sung, and thus maintained and preserved, at get-togethers and parties. Johanna’s video *Another Album* refers to that cultural practice. However, the troupe of young musicians in her video repeats these festivities almost under museum-like conditions. The music is not part of their lives and lifestyles as might have been the case with their parents. In the nineteen-eighties, they had, barely, just been born. In comparison to the original ways of partying in which those songs were sung, these young people appear as neutral, flat, and gentrified. They are borrowing voices from other people’s memories, but maybe it is precisely that remoteness and repetitiveness that gives their performance added meaning. In this sense, *Another Album* is a likable but at the same time like a terrifying postcard from the holidays.

Johanna Billing made two videos in former-Yugoslavia so far: *Magical World*, which many people loved so much, and *Another Album*, which has yet to be understood or rejected. Both deal with transitional states—one “before,” and another “after.” If *Magical World* is about an isolated micro-community building home-grown ideals, resisting the fact that the “old”

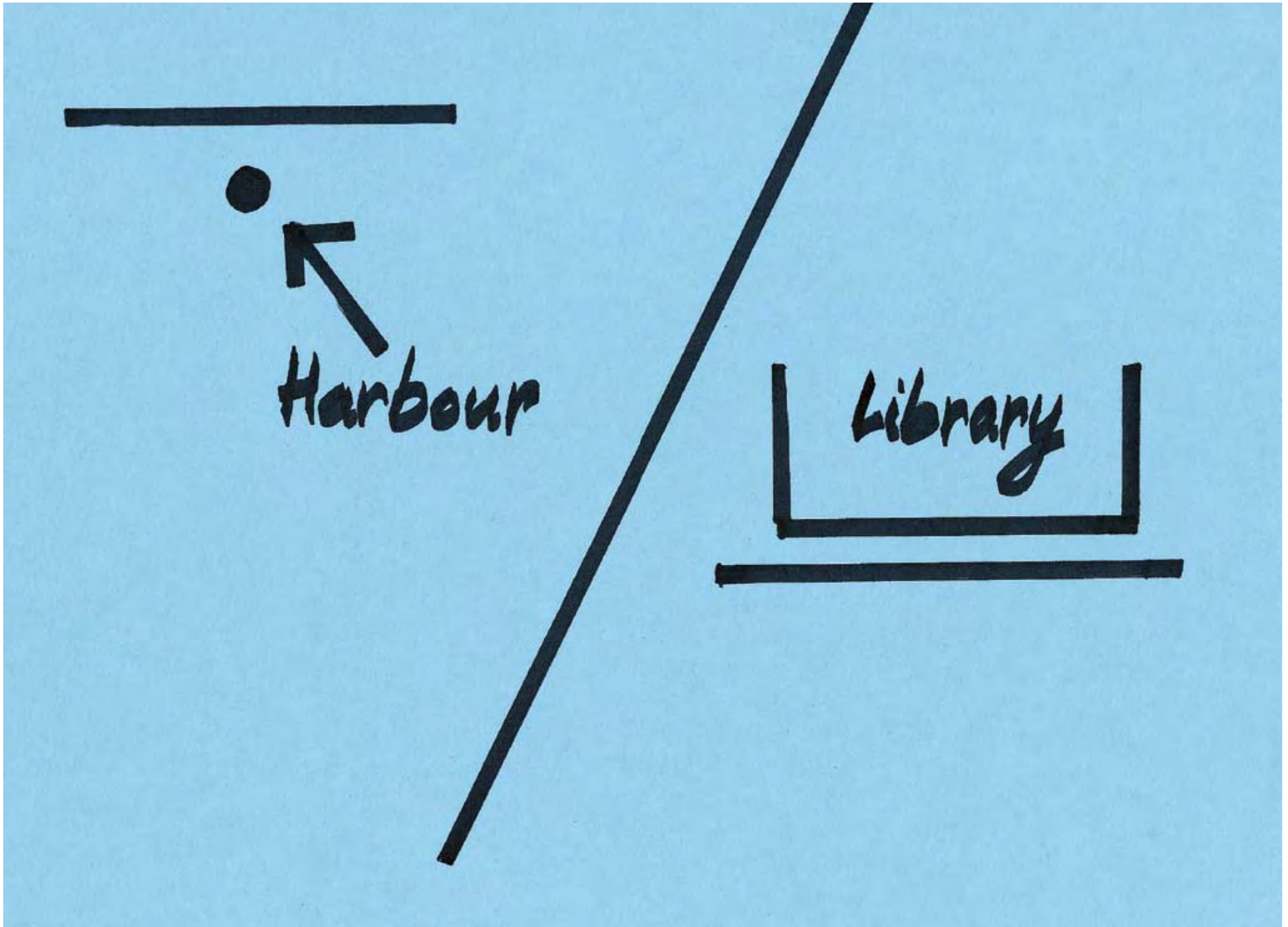
institutions and values are being torn down by the expansion of liberal capitalism and the head-long mass stampede towards the EU, then *Another Album* displays a community which uses some sterile sentiment to renew the story about conservative, reactionary times, times which have already begun to dismantle society from within. If Johanna’s early work speaks of the experience of Sweden, its ideological projects, and its generational conflicts, *Another Album* is a similar parental failure. But still, we should say that this is not the final victory of pessimism and doom.

Many artists today are making work that bears witness to the appearance of global cognitive tourism. This was not the case with Johanna. Intentionally or unintentionally, rationally or intuitively, she has managed to touch upon important moments in Yugoslav history. I think that Johanna should go back again, and make a third video—a video that will penetrate deep into the pores of a Yugoslav emancipatory project and open up a space for new possibilities. If that doesn’t happen, we could easily accuse her of post-modern melancholy and call her a poetess of nostalgia... Although a magnificent poetess, indeed.

(previous spread) *Another Album*,  
soundtrack from film, 12” vinyl LP, Hollybush Gardens, 2007

(overleaf) *Another Album*, production still, 2006







## City Dwellers and Seafarers

Kate Stancliffe

*This Is How We Walk on the Moon*<sup>†</sup> is a twenty-seven minute loop that documents the progress of a group of Edinburgh-based musicians, all of whom are connected by their inexperience of sailing and their city of origin. The film charts their journey from dry land into open sea as they embark on their first journey out into Edinburgh's Firth of Forth during a single blustery, changeable day. Accompanied by a soundtrack that covers a multitude of moods—from the euphoric to the melancholic—the music reflects the changes in weather, and the shifting confidence of the novice sailors.

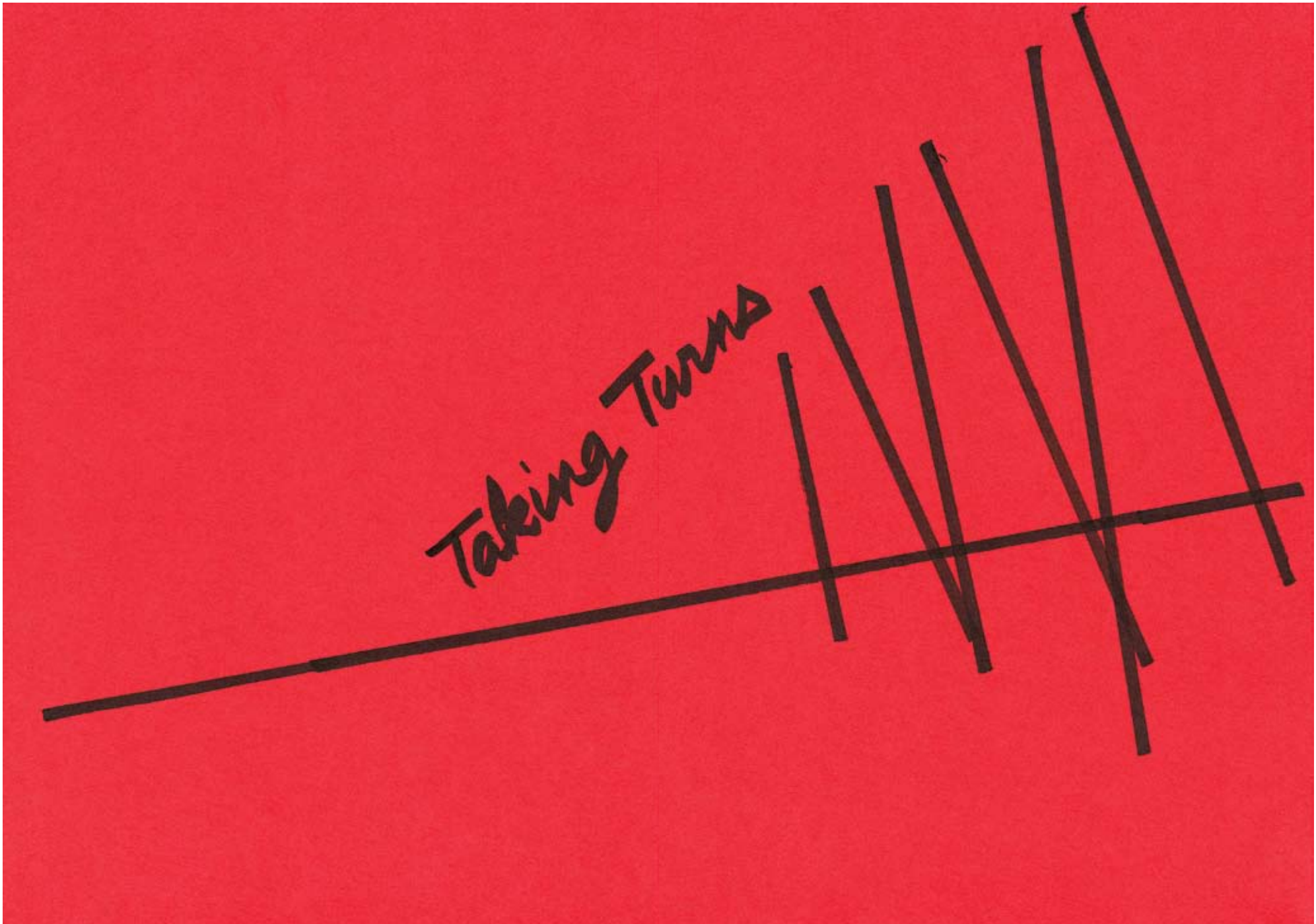
The film appears to be a poetic guide to plain sailing, adopting a somewhat pedagogical structure comprising short cuts that focus on different elements of the scene, and punctuated by “chapters” that take the form of graphic diagrams which simplify the complex procedures, from wind movement to the art of tacking. This is a lesson in motion, where the novice sailors are, as it were, thrown in at the deep end, and against the backdrop of constantly changing weather, their progress slowly becomes visible. The instructive tone of the film extends into the gallery, adopting a sense of a basic classroom, with crudely constructed wooden benches, and a basic white projection screen, reminiscent of an inverted blackboard. The title is suggestive of the slightly educative tone of the film whilst alluding to the romantic notion of venturing into new territory.

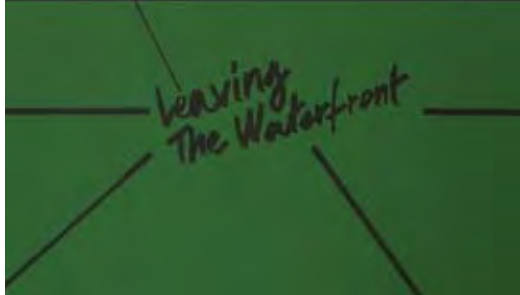
Arguably *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* is first and foremost a study of collective human activity, and furthermore, the struggle of each individual as they attempt to take control of an unfamiliar situation. Yet, underlying the film is a desire to portray a very specific locality that represents a distinct relationship between the city and the sea. Billing captures the undeniably unique and picturesque horizon line of the city of Edinburgh, whilst symbolizing a certain ignorance or fear of the sea depicted through the tentative actions of first-time sailors, despite their having lived in such close proximity to it. They seem to represent the characteristic resident of Edinburgh, as a city-dweller, not seafarer. For them, urban



*This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, video stills, 2007

(previous spread and overleaf) *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, title cards, 2007





*This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, video stills, 2007

Edinburgh as they have always experienced it, becomes a faint memory seen at a distance and as a point of reflection. As if to confirm this, the city and its landmarks frequently slide into the shot and then out of view, sometimes in focus and sometimes as a blur in the distance; but above all, it provides the constant setting and point of reference throughout the film. As the participants venture into uncharted waters, a sense of understanding is collectively achieved, not merely through a visible improvement in the task at hand, but in a newfound awareness and relationship to their native city.

‡ “This is how we walk on the moon” is a song from nineteen-eighty-four by experimental New York-based musician Arthur Russell.

## The Familiar Unknown

Lisa Panting

I am walking with haste through the newly constructed Aue Pavilion in Kassel, looking for Johanna’s new film. In the first instance, I can’t find it and am struck by how the spatial organization reminds of some sort of architectural showcase. Next, I see something familiar, an outline of a chair, first seen on Broadway Market in East London, but now transformed into part of the installation for Johanna’s new film *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*. This building of spaces has become a device in her recent displays, often inspired by shapes encountered in the everyday, and part of the overall sense of how we navigate ourselves in front of her freestanding screens. The chairs and benches have been built to mirror the shape of a sail, and we are cast adrift as we sit into the vistas of *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*. Whilst being a film that, on some levels, might appear restrained and structured, it is also expressive. It displays a stoicism used as a device to paint a picture of the landscape of Edinburgh’s coastline, but also the internal struggle and space for reflection that the great outside can provide. This offers a point of identification, and because of that, enables one to have an experience that can take you to a place of your choosing.

In this sense, I’m brought to a quality in Johanna’s work that strikes me often in reviewing other pieces. Johanna’s films are quite familiar to me, but “familiar” does not mean the same thing as “known,” and this points to an enduring quality that one could equate with the similar appeal of a poem or a song—that, in repetition, it does not exhaust itself... yet.

A different temporal relation is, in fact, demanded, putting the viewer into another register. How this is achieved or more aptly, why this is achieved, seems to be of some significance—it speaks on a broader level about the way in which moving image can be used simultaneously as a vehicle for expression and experience. Johanna’s work addresses the taking of something small and creating a slow mediation within time and space. First in *Another Album* (2006) and then in *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* (2007)—longer works are being tested. Although the logic from previous works is carried forward, *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, in particular, plays

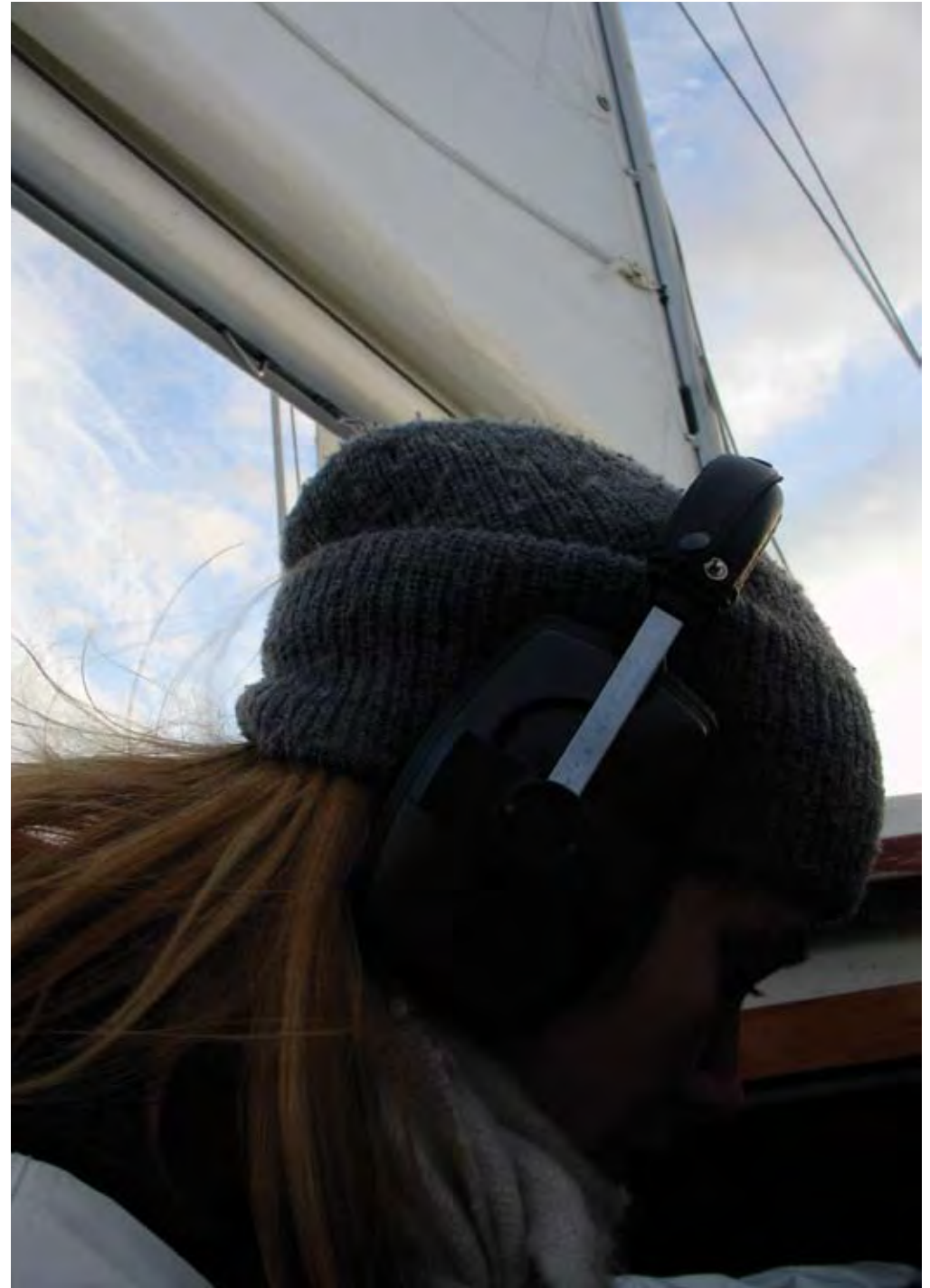
more assertively with duration and the crescendo that sound can provide. The work creates a moment that allows you to almost reach a fervor, but carefully draws you back at the last moment—as though you too have been asked to journey along, but pulled back, and thus reminded that you have become part of the spatial set up, both in and out at the same time.

No matter what is said, no matter how the work is encountered, there is the potential for renewal because the intention of the artist and the interpretation of an audience meet somewhere in the middle, and fold with difficulty into clear-cut resolution. For me, at least, a breathing space has been created that allows for the insecurities, not only of the viewer, but also of the artist.

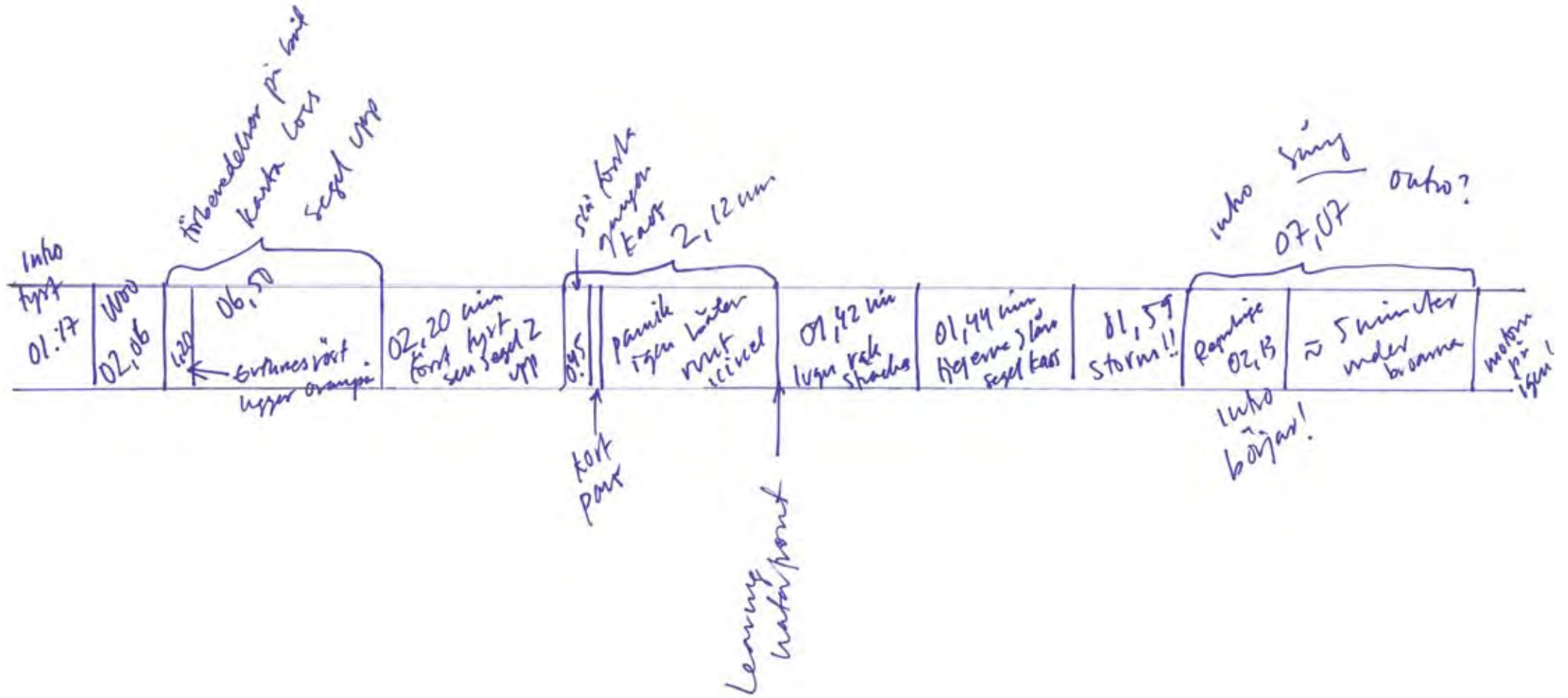
*This Is How We Walk on the Moon,*  
production still, 2006

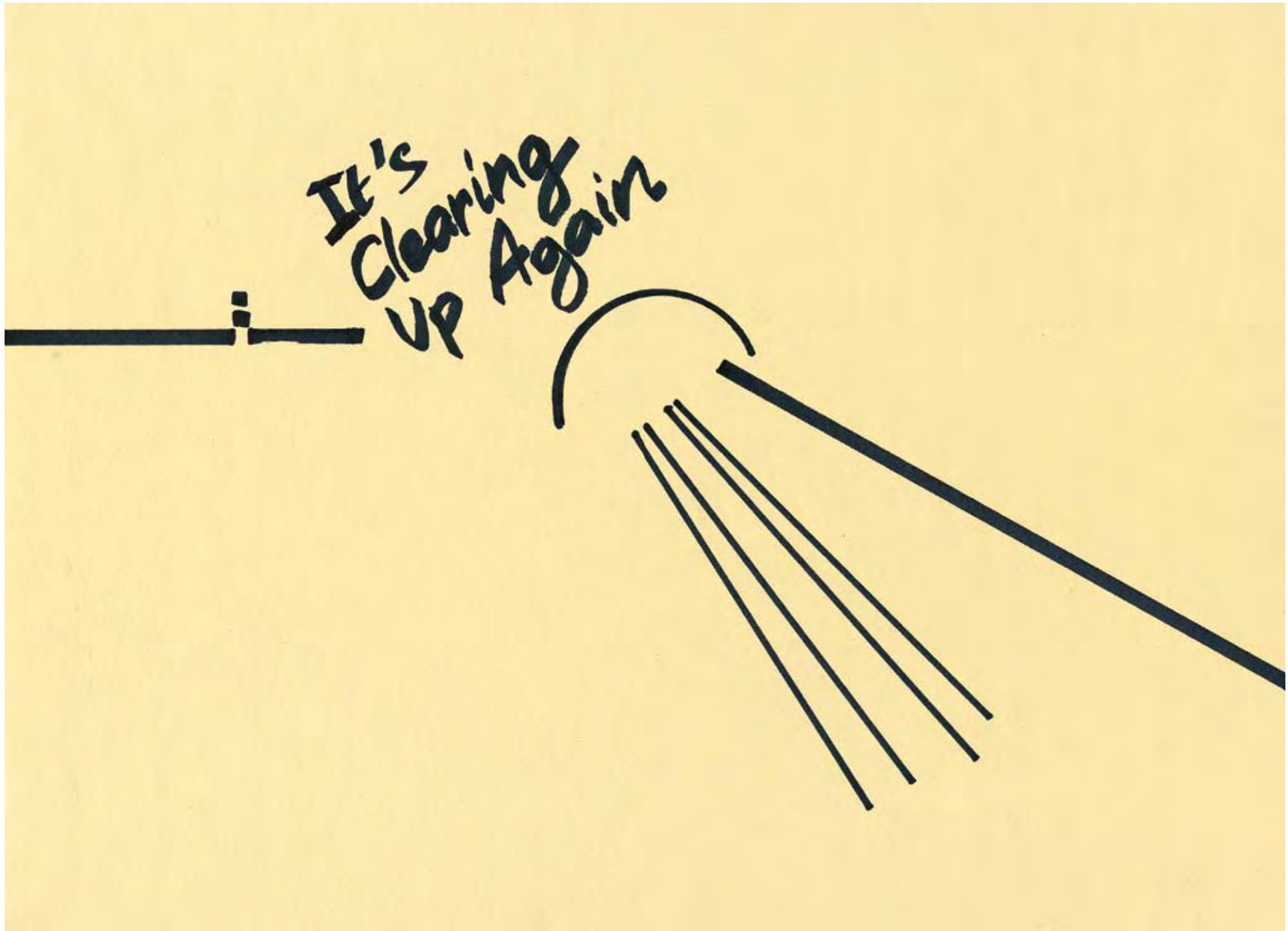
(overleaf) *This Is How We Walk on the Moon,*  
soundtrack score, production notes, 2007

(overleaf, overleaf) *This Is How We Walk on the Moon,*  
title cards, 2007



≈ 28 min





## Let's Go Swimming

James Thomas

I remember getting out of New York City one very hot weekend a few years ago. I packed some camping gear and the obligatory crate of books into my old Dodge pickup truck and drove with my girlfriend to New England to meet our friend Rebecca Gates (Rebecca appears elsewhere in this history, delivering a truly great performance for Johanna Billing's *You Don't Love Me Yet* project in Chicago in 2004). A friend had given me a mix for the truck that included a number of tracks by Arthur Russell. It must have been around 2004, because there was a sudden renewed interest in Russell, no doubt related to the number of reissues were being released.

There is a picture going around of Arthur Russell, taken by his father sometime in the early nineteen-seventies, when he was still living in the Midwest. It is before Arthur Russell "the Buddhist," before Arthur Russell "the esoteric gay disco hero," before Arthur Russell "the unsung avant-garde, dub-delay wonder." He's sitting shirtless, in jeans, playing the cello next to a lake. There is a beat-up looking canoe nearby. You can see a single wave crashing, not even really crashing, more like inching up on the shore. Since it is a lake, the wave is probably the result of a small boat going by—something simple, like a little fishing boat trolling along. Russell found a whole world in places like this unremarkable lake, which he dove in, sometimes opting to turn the tiniest wave into something huge, at other times, preferring to linger in luxurious immediacy, playing close and small. In the picture, nothing is happening, but everything is happening: A dialectical image in standstill. The reality is that Russell is making the wave and it is coming down through the chair, through the sand, and out into the water, then coming back to him, like someone who fills a bottle, throws it out to sea, and waits patiently for its inevitable return. Arthur Russell is playing the lake is playing Arthur Russell is playing the lake.... Delay and dub starts to make a lot more sense after you look at this picture long enough.

Johanna Billing's 2007 film, *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* is informed by Russell, but also shares something of Walter Benjamin's understanding of the dialectical standstill,

which grew out of Shakespearean scenes, where characters "enter, fleeing," suddenly making the audience aware of tension. In Billing's film, a group of young people learn how to sail, their actions and gestures shot in quick, fleeting cuts, glimpses of gloved hands and faces, alternately, conveying uncertainty and determination. Even the title of Russell's song suggests an interrogation of the unfamiliar and uncharted—through an act of learning. The slight turn of the clause "this is how" lends itself to not only learning, but also to an awareness of the process of acquiring knowledge itself: a passage not unlike a trip out of the harbor, a moment communicating anticipation, entrance/exit, something about to happen (a tentative "we're sailing!" when the wind kicks in), yet never releasing its grip on the potential of nothing happening, of precisely the possibility of *not* making it out of the harbor. The tension—here, a potentially literal standstill—is perhaps most palpable in the female character (the protagonist?) who is seen alone, isolated from the team, beneath deck for a moment. This instant passes quickly, but the seed is planted, and upon repeated viewing (like a number of Billing's films, *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* is looped), an incongruous "this is how" moment appears in the last minute of the film, where the same figure stands in a library, copies pages, and goes home for the evening—or is the day just starting? The dull sunlight of moment links this passage to the first scenes, but the film loops suddenly and slyly, before one can discern where the loop (or the day, or learning) begins, and where it actually ends. This complication begins to reveal Johanna's subtle and nuanced interest in learning, her interest in the dialectical passage out of the harbor.

We arrive at our destination: a big lake. It looks a lot like the lake where Arthur once sat, a kind of beat up, rocky shore. Rebecca is swimming. It is the usual fare: a few families, some teenagers building a bonfire and sneaking beers, lots of mosquitoes. We change and join her, the water is dark and kind of muddy, but it feels great after driving in the heat. You can feel the mud being kicked up and, once in a while, fish and other unknown things touch you. In this moment nothing is happening and everything is happening.



*This Is How We Walk  
on the Moon,*  
production still, 2006



*Kvartssamtal, 1994*

Series of photographs that document the process of 15 minute conversations about artistic practice and development, reenacting 15 minute meetings held between students, teachers, and parents in Swedish primary schools. Performed by Johanna Billing, Filippa Dandenell, Mimmi Larsson, Andrea Sjöström, and Gunvor Plougsgaard at the sculpture department at Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design.

Serie von Fotografien, die den Ablauf 15-minütiger Gespräche über künstlerische Praxis und Entwicklung dokumentieren, indem sie 15-minütige Zusammenkünfte von Schülern, Lehrern und Eltern in schwedischen Grundschulen rekonstruieren. Dargestellt von Johanna Billing, Filippa Dandenell, Mimmi Larsson, Andrea Sjöström und Gunvor Plougsgaard in der Abteilung für Bildhauerei an der Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design.

*Are You a Fox or a Hedgehog?, 1996, 2005*

A taxonomy showing the result of an exchange project where Johanna Billing gave the task to a student of Umeå Art Academy in 1996 to start dividing the fellow students into foxes and hedgehogs. In 2005, the same title was used for another exchange project, "Do ut des; I give so that you may give" in the magazine project "Happy Pappy," where Billing gave away, as a present, the book *The Hedgehog and the Fox—An Essay of Tolstoy's View of History* (1953) by Isaiah Berlin to the artist Tonico Lemos Auad.

Eine Taxonomie, die das Ergebnis eines Austauschprojekts dokumentiert, bei dem Johanna Billing 1996 einem Studenten der Umeå Art Academy die Aufgabe stellte, seine Studienkollegen in Füchse und Igel aufzuteilen. 2005 wurde der gleiche Titel dann für ein anderes Austauschprojekt, »Do ut des; I give so that you may give«, im Rahmen des Magazinprojekts »Happy Pappy« verwendet, bei dem Billing das Buch *The Hedgehog and the Fox – An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (1953) von Isaiah Berlin dem Künstler Tonico Lemos Auad als Geschenk überreichte.

*Are You a Fox or a Hedgehog, in Happy Pappy Magazine, 2005*

# Are you a fox or a hedgehog ?



"The Hedgehog and the Fox" by Isaiah Berlin will soon be in the mail for you!

*Make It Happen*, 1997–ongoing

A Stockholm-based record label that works with unestablished groups and artists. Since it began in 1997, the label has put out 16 records on CD and vinyl, by Chihuahua, Revlon 9, Autohorse, Rock Out, Blood Music, SaraLunden etc. The label has produced a number of live tours and events. For example, *Make It Happen on Tour 1 & 2* (Momentum, Moss, Norway, 2000, Superflex Studio, Copenhagen/Rooseum, Malmö, 2001, the latter produced in collaboration with Karl Holmqvist).

Eine Schallplattenfirma mit Sitz in Stockholm, die mit noch nicht etablierten Gruppen und Künstlern zusammenarbeitet. Seit ihrer Gründung im Jahr 1997 hat die Firma 16 Aufnahmen auf CD und Vinyl-Schallplatten herausgebracht. Unter anderem Chihuahua, Revlon 9, Autohorse, Rock Out, Blood Music, SaraLunden usw. Ausserdem hat die Plattenfirma eine Reihe von Livetourneen und Events veranstaltet. Zum Beispiel *Make It Happen on Tour 1 & 2* (Momentum, Moss, Norwegen, 2000, Superflex Studio, Kopenhagen/Rooseum, Malmö, 2001, Letztere in Zusammenarbeit mit Karl Holmqvist produziert).



*Make It Happen on Tour*, “All Songs are Sad Songs”, preparations together with Karl Holmqvist, 2001

*How Are You Connected to Me?*, 1997

Launch event of an interactive web project also displaying a three dimensional structure of the individual links between the html pages using warp threads and helium balloons. The project was based on the concept and theories of the “Six degrees of separation,” and the experiments made in 1967 by the social psychologist Stanley Milgram.



Einführungsveranstaltung eines interaktiven Webprojekts, das auch eine dreidimensionale Struktur individueller Links zwischen HTML-Seiten aufweist, die Kettfäden und mit Helium gefüllte Ballons verwenden. Das Projekt basierte auf dem Begriff und den Theorien des Kleine-Welt-Phänomens (engl.: Six degrees of separation = Sechs Stufen der Trennung) und den 1967 von dem Sozialpsychologen Stanley Milgram durchgeführten Experimenten.

*Straight from the Hip*, 1998

Photographer: Jan Nordberg  
Slide projection and interview magazine at Ynglingagatan 1 Gallery, Stockholm. This project looked at the way in which hype produced by uncritical journalism can generate interest. A publication was produced for the exhibition, where texts written by young cultural critics reflected the respective activities of the contributors. The work points to the disparity between the roles of the producer and consumer within the world of the media.

Fotografie: Jan Nordberg  
Diaprojektion und Interview-Zeitschrift in der Ynglingagatan 1 Gallery, Stockholm. Dieses Projekt beschäftigte sich damit, wie durch unkritischen Journalismus ausgelöster Medienrummel Interesse wecken kann. Für die Ausstellung wurde eine Publikation gemacht, für die junge Kulturkritiker Texte über die verschiedenen Tätigkeiten der Mitwirkenden schrieben. Das Werk zeigt in der Gesamtheit die Unvereinbarkeit der Rollen von Produzent und Verbraucher in der Medienwelt.



*Straight from the Hip*, in interview magazine, 1998

*A Great Day in Stockholm*, 1998

Photographer: Jan Nordberg  
A group portrait, featuring Swedish disc jockeys on the steps of Medborgarhuset (Citizen's House) in Stockholm. The work is among other things referring to the famous photo of New York Jazz Musicians by Art Kane *A Great Day in Harlem* (1958).

Fotografie: Jan Nordberg  
Ein Gruppenporträt von schwedischen Discjockeys auf den Stufen des Medborgarhuset (Bürgerhaus) in Stockholm. Das Werk verweist unter anderem auf das berühmte Foto von Art Kane mit dem Titel *A Great Day in Harlem* (1958), das New Yorker Jazz-Musiker zeigt.



*A Great Day in Stockholm*, 1998

*Graduate Show*, 1999, Beta/DVD, 3 min. 20 sec.

Director Henry Moore Selder ×  
Cinematographer Manne Lindwall •  
Choreographer Anna Vnuk \*

Performed by graduate students at Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design 1999

Dance video performed by graduate students at Konstfack in Stockholm.

For her graduation project, Johanna Billing invited her graduating fellow

students from the various disciplines to rehearse a dance number created by the invited choreographer Anna Vnuk to the soundtrack by ESG's track "Moody" (1981).



Aufgeführt von Absolventen der Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. Tanzvideo einer Aufführung von Absolventen der Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. Für ihr Abschlussprojekt bat Johanna Billing ihre Studienkollegen des Abschlussjahrgangs

aus den verschiedenen Disziplinen, eine Tanznummer in einer Choreografie der eigens eingeladenen Choreografin Anna Vnuk zu dem Soundtrack »Moody« (1981) der Band ESG einzustudieren.

*Christmas with You*, 1999

A site specific project made in the small town of Eslöv in the south of Sweden featuring a 7" red vinyl recording of the Christmas song "Christmas with You" by the temporary pop group Ace Leaf. The vinyl was distributed free of charge within in the project called "Eslövs Christmas Tale" in December 1999. The cover work included collaborations with (the graphic design group) Reala's Jonas Williamsson and photographer Jan Nordberg.

Ein regionales, in der kleinen Stadt Eslöv in Südschweden durchgeführtes Projekt, für das die Popgruppe »Ace Leaf« eine rote 7"-Vinyl-Schallplatte mit dem Weihnachtslied *Christmas with You* aufgenommen hat. Diese wurde dann im Rahmen des Projekts mit dem Titel *Eslövs Christmas Tale* im Dezember 1999 gratis verteilt. An der Plattenhülle arbeiteten auch die Grafikdesigngruppe Reala's Jonas Williamsson und der Fotograf Jan Nordberg mit.



(above) *Graduate Show*, production photo, 1999

(right) *Christmas with You*, production photo, 1999

*Keep on Doing*, 2000

Poster and videotape with unedited and previously not presented documentation material featuring footage of over sixty different live concerts from the alternative music scene in Stockholm, recorded by Christian Pallin 1997–2000. Poster design by Reala (see overleaf). The project was first presented at the Färgfabriken in Stockholm in 2000.

Poster und Musikvideoarchiv mit unveröffentlichtem und niemals zuvor präsentem Dokumentationsmaterial von insgesamt über sechzig verschiedenen Livekonzerten aus der alternativen Musikszene in Stockholm, das von Christian Pallin zwischen 1997 und 2000 aufgenommen wurde, Posterentwurf von Reala. Das Projekt wurde erstmals im Jahr 2000 in den Färgfabriken in Stockholm vorgestellt.

*Project for a Revolution*, 2000

DVD 3 min. 14 sec./loop

Cinematographers Johan Phillips, Henry Moore Selder  
Sound Mario Adamsson

*Project for a Revolution* takes as its departure a moment in *Zabriskie Point* (Antonioni, 1970), but is set in present day Sweden. In the video, the camera pans through a room where a large crowd of young people are assembled, but not yet interacting or talking to one another. Instead, they seem to be caught in a moment, seemingly waiting for something.

DVD, 03:14 Min./Loop

Kamera  
Ton

*Project for a Revolution* bedient sich als Ausgangspunkt einer Momentaufnahme aus dem Film *Zabriskie Point* (Antonioni, 1970), spielt jedoch im Schweden unserer Tage. In dem Video schwenkt die Kamera durch einen Raum, in dem eine grosse Schar junger Leute versammelt ist, jedoch nicht um zu interagieren oder gar miteinander zu sprechen. Stattdessen scheinen sie in einem Moment festgehalten zu sein, in dem sie ganz offensichtlich auf etwas warten.

*Missing out*, 2001

DVD 3 min. 14 sec./loop

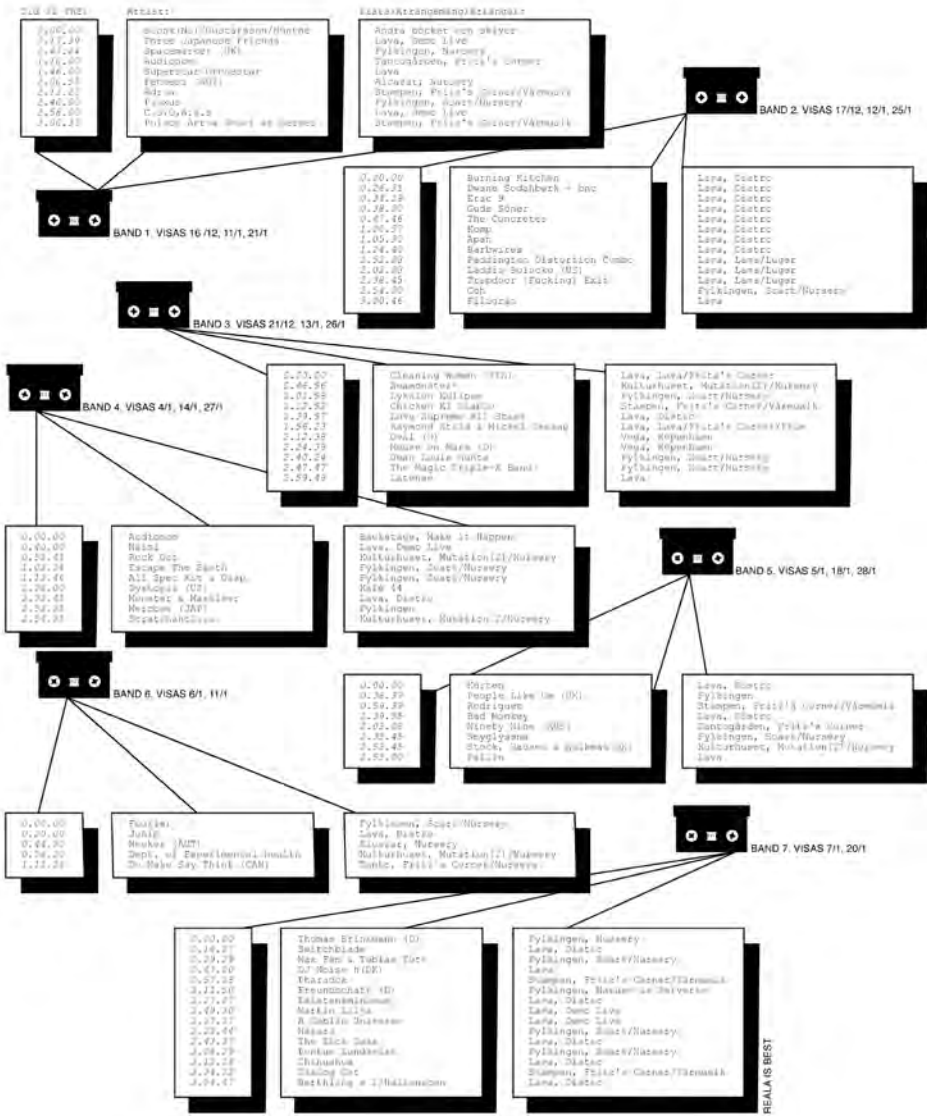
Cinematographer Manne Lindwall  
Co-producer Rooseum

The film begins with a bird's-eye view sequence where a group of people lie sprawled over a floor in an irregular formation. No activity is in progress. Instead, one gets the impression of having landed in one of the more innovative photo sessions of a fashion photographer. The highly staged

DVD, 03:14 Min./Loop

Kamera  
Koproduktion

Der Film beginnt mit einer Sequenz aus der Vogelperspektive, bei der eine Gruppe von Personen unregelmässig über einen Flur verteilt ausgestreckt liegt. Es findet keinerlei Aktivität statt; man bekommt eher den Eindruck, in einer der innovativen Fotosessions eines Modefotografen gelandet zu sein. Für die stark inszenierten Bilder



images inspired by a vivid childhood memory of the artist, a collective relaxation exercise (a kind of group activity commonly found in schools and kindergartens across Sweden in the nineteen-seventies), has suddenly and illogically turned into a kind of achievement-demanding activity. The experience of always having to be there, ready to perform and participate, is constantly present in the work, which, in itself, forms a thought-provoking mirror of the age.

hat die Künstlerin ihre Inspiration aus einer speziellen Kindheitserinnerung bezogen: eine kollektive Entspannungsübung (einer Form der Gruppenaktivität, die in Schulen und Kindergärten in den 1970er Jahren überall in Schweden verbreitet war), die sich plötzlich und unerwartet in eine Aktivität mit Leistungsdruck verwandelt hat. Die Erfahrung, immer dabei sein zu müssen, immer zum Proben und Mitmachen bereit zu sein, durchzieht das ganze Werk, das einen nachdenklich stimmenden Spiegel unserer Zeit darstellt.

*What Else Do You Do?* 2001

DVD 5 min.

DVD, 05:00 Min.

Cinematographer

Manne Lindwall

Kamera

Music

Andreas Söderström & Pallin

Musik

Co-producer

Panacea Performance Festival 2001

Koproduktion

Members of the audience take turns to perform in a video about performance made for the Panacea Performance Festival in Stockholm. The film was shot and shown in the auditorium of Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Among other things, the film investigates the process of performance and its attendant anxieties.

Personen aus dem Publikum treten abwechselnd in einem Video auf, das sich mit einer Aufführung für das Panacea Festival in Stockholm befasst. Der Film wurde im Auditorium des Moderna Museet in Stockholm gedreht und gezeigt. Unter anderem untersucht der Film den Aufführungsprozess und die damit verbundenen Ängste.

*Where She Is at*, 2001

DVD 7 min. 35 sec./loop

DVD, 07:35 Min./Loop

Cinematographer

Henry Moore Selder

Kamera

Producers: Moderna Museet Projekt and Oslo Konsthall

Produktion des Moderna-Museet-Projekts und der Oslo Konsthall

*Where She Is at* was shot at Ingierstrand Bath, designed by Ole Lind Schistad and Eyvind Mostue in 1934, and one of the few remaining pieces of functionalist architecture in Oslo.

*Where She Is at* wurde in dem 1934 von Ole Lind Schistad und Eyvind Mostue entworfenen Strandbad »Ingierstrand Bad« gedreht, das eines der wenigen erhaltenen Beispiele funktionalistischer Architektur in Oslo ist. In

In sharp contrast to the ideals of the nineteen-thirties about health and well-being, Ingierstrand Bath is now run down. In the film, a young woman climbs up the diving tower, but instead of jumping, she stands wavering at the edge where she faces a physical challenge and her own apprehensiveness.

einem scharfen Kontrast zu den Gesundheits- und Wohlstandsidealen der 1930er Jahre befindet sich das »Ingierstrand Bad« heute in einem heruntergekommenen Zustand. In dem Film steigt eine junge Frau einen Sprungturm hinauf, doch anstatt zu springen, bleibt sie zögerlich am Rand stehen, wo sie sich mit einer körperlichen Herausforderung und ihrer eigenen Furcht konfrontiert sieht.

*Follow Me, 2002*

A special project for Stockholm Art Fair 2002 consisting of a fair guide/magazine featuring self-designed “adverts” by invited artist-run spaces and initiatives. A special installation and display for the magazines, in form of a corridor was designed at the fair by set designer by Astrid Stenberg.

Es handelt sich um ein spezielles Projekt für die Stockholmer Kunstmesse 2002: Ein Messeführer bzw. -magazin besteht aus »Hinweisen« auf Filmvorführzeiten und Initiativen, die von den eingeladenen Künstlern selbst entworfen wurden. Eine spezielle Installation und Auslage für die Magazine in Form eines Korridors wurde von der Bühnenbildnerin Astrid Stenberg für die Messe entworfen.



*Follow Me*, Alternative Fair Guide, publication 2002

*You Don't Love Me Yet, 2003*

DVD 7 min. 43 sec.  
Cinematographer  
(Original song by Roky Erickson, published by R. Erickson in 1984)  
Musical arrangements  
Recorded and mixed by  
Pontus Olsson in Atlantis Studio, Stockholm June 2003

Manne Lindwall

Ida Lundén

Producers: Index—the Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in collaboration with Nifca, Helsinki. Co-producers and collaborative partners for the film and tour are Eskilstuna Konstmuseum (with Balsta Musikslott), Norrköping Konstmuseum (with Allmän Kultur, Norrköping), Konstkonsulenter in Jämtlandslän (with Mångkulturkonsulenter and UKM), Konstkonsulenter in Västra Götalandsregionen (with Vara Kommun), Gävle Konstcentrum (with Musikhuset and Kultur och Fritid) and Ystad Konstmuseum. The Dutch part of the tour was produced in collaboration with the performance tour festival. *If I Can't Dance I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution* and the Madrid event were staged in collaboration with Madrid Abierto.

The *You Don't Love Me Yet* project consists of both a film and an ongoing live tour (2002–06) in which local musicians in different cities were invited to cover the 1984 song “You Don't Love Me Yet” by the Texan singer-songwriter Roky Erickson. The film *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2003) depicts a group of musicians

DVD, 07:43 Min.

Kamera

(Originalsong von Roky Erickson, von Roky Erickson 1984 veröffentlicht)

Musikarrangements

Aufgenommen und gemischt von

Pontus Olsson im Atlantis Studio,

Stockholm, Juni 2003

Regie: Index – the Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in Zusammenarbeit mit Nifca, Helsinki. Koproduzenten und Partner für den Film und die Tournee sind Eskilstuna Konstmuseum (mit Balsta Musikslott), Norrköpings Konstmuseum (mit Allmän Kultur, Norrköping), Konstkonsulenter in Jämtlandslän (mit Mångkulturkonsulenter und UKM), Konstkonsulenter in Västra Götalandsregionen (mit Vara Kommun), Gävle Konstcentrum (mit Musikhuset und Kultur och Fritid) und Ystad Konstmuseum, der holländische Teil der Tournee wurde produziert in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Performance Tour Festival *If I Can't Dance I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution* und das Madrider Event in Zusammenarbeit mit Madrid Abierto.

Das *You Don't Love Me Yet*-Projekt besteht aus einem Film und einer laufenden Livetournee (2002–2006), bei der ortsansässige Musiker in verschiedenen Städten dazu aufgerufen wurden, den 1984 entstandenen Song »You Don't Love Me Yet« des texanischen Sängers und Songschreibers Roky Erickson zu covern. Der Film *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2003) zeigt, wie eine Gruppe von Musikern den Song im Atlantis-Tonstudio in Stockholm aufnimmt, und schlachtet ein bühnergerechtes Wiederholen von Melodie und Liedtext zum Entwirren populärer Auslegungen von

performing the song together in Atlantis recording studio in Stockholm. The film exploits a dramatic repetition of melody and lyrics to unravel popular constructions of love, while presenting an evaluation of the formation of contemporary subjectivity.

*You Don't Love Me Yet* tour 2002–07  
Index, Stockholm, October 4, 2002; Eskilstuna Art Museum, Eskilstuna, August 23, 2003; Norrköping Art Museum, Norrköping, September 27, 2003; Tingshuset, Östersund, October 4, 2003; Frieze Art Fair, London, October 8, 2003; Vara Consert House, Vara, November 9, 2003; Bar Alahuone, Helsingfors, December 4, 2003; Sjömanskyrkan, Gävle, December 6, 2003; Ystad Art Museum, Ystad, January 24, 2004; Vedanta Gallery, Chicago, April 30, 2004; Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes, March 15, 2005; Festival a/d Werf, Utrecht, March 19, 2005; Festival Boulevard, s'-Hertogenbosch, August 5, 2005; De Veenfabriek, Leiden, November 27, 2005; The Lab, San Francisco, November 16, 2006; Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid Abierto, Madrid, February 12, 2007

*You Don't Love Me Yet* T-shirt, 2003  
Designed by Åbåke, with their font *You Don't Love Me Yet*, a cover version of the typeface previously used for the project.



(left) *You don't love me yet*, T-shirt, designed by Åbåke, 2003

(right) *Are You Curious Enough to Try Some Flexibility Exercises*, A4 collage, 2004

Liebe aus, während er gleichzeitig auch die Entstehung zeitgenössischer Subjektivität bewertet.

*You Don't Love Me Yet-Tour*, 2002–2007  
Index, Stockholm, 4. Oktober 2002; Eskilstuna Konstmuseum, Eskilstuna, 23. August 2003; Norrköpings Konstmuseum, Norrköping, 27. September 2003; Tingshuset, Östersund, 4. Oktober 2003; Frieze Art Fair, London, 8. Oktober 2003; Vara Consert House, Vara, 9. November 2003; Bar Alahuone, Helsingfors, 4. Dezember 2003; Sjömanskyrkan, Gävle, 6. Dezember 2003; Ystads Konstmuseum, Ystad, 24. Januar 2004; Vedanta Gallery, Chicago, 30. April 2004; Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes, 15. März 2005; Festival a/d Werf, Utrecht, 19. März 2005; Festival Boulevard, Hertogenbosch, 5. August 2005; De Veenfabriek, Leiden, 27. November 2005; The Lab, San Francisco, 16. November 2006; Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid Abierto, Madrid, 12. Februar 2007

*You Don't Love Me Yet-T-Shirt*, 2003  
Entwurf von Åbåke, mit dem Schriftzug »You Don't Love Me Yet«, einer Cover-Version des zuvor für das Projekt verwendeten Schriftzugs.



## Are you curious enough to try some flexibility exercises?

Musical notation for the piece 'Are you curious enough to try some flexibility exercises?'. It consists of several staves of music in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various chords (G, Ab, A, Bb, B, C, Db, D, Eb, F) and rhythmic patterns indicated by numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) and plus signs (+). The piece concludes with a double bar line.

### Variations in Rhythm:

Musical notation for 'Variations in Rhythm'. It shows a single staff of music in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The notation features various rhythmic patterns and rests, illustrating different ways to play the same notes.

In the Swedish Social Democratic Guidelines for 2004, the word curious is used when talking about adjusting to changes. We need to be curious to be flexible in order to adapt to the changes in society and in our own lives. Flexibility then sounds not only as a mere positive thing, but at the same time also very stressful to the individual, are you curious enough? Image (AiBild) from the Swedish Social Democratic Info PDF 2003. Flexibility exercises notes by Henk Haverhoek Music 2002. **Johanna Billing, December 2004**

*Look out! 2003*

DVD 5 min. 20 sec./loop		DVD, 05:20 Min./Loop
Cinematographer	Henry Moore Selder	Kamera
Shot in and around Gainsborough Studios, London, October 2003	Gedreht in den und in der Umgebung der Gainsborough Studios, London, Oktober 2003	
Producer: Milch, London	Produziert von Milch, London	
The video takes, as its starting point, the changing urban landscape around Gainsborough Studios in East London, fall 2003, while the old film studio was in the process of being turned into a luxury apartment complex. In the film, an estate agent shows an incongruous bunch of youngsters around a new luxury development. The work highlights the process of gentrification by contrasting dilapidated council housing and public spaces with the newness and unaffordability of the development.	Ausgangspunkt des Videos ist die sich verändernde Natur rund um die Gainsborough Studios im Osten Londons im Herbst 2003, zu der Zeit, als das ehemalige Filmstudio gerade in einen Komplex mit Luxuswohnungen umgebaut wurde. In dem Film führt ein Immobilienmakler einen Haufen junger Leute, die von ihrem Äusseren und ihrem Auftreten mit den Örtlichkeiten nicht vereinbar sind, durch das neue Luxusquartier. Das Werk wirft ein Schlaglicht auf den Prozess der Gentrifizierung, indem es auffällige gemeindeeigene Sozialwohnungen und heruntergekommene öffentliche Plätze dem neuen, unerschwinglich teuren Apartmentkomplex gegenüberstellt.	

*Are You Curious Enough to Try Some Flexibility Exercises?, 2004*

An A4 collage, part of the "makeover" project, a glossary in response to "Europe: The Third Way" (1999) by Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder. A project initiated by Jan Verwoert and Sören Grammel together with students of the Academy of Fine Arts Umeå Project Group. Presented in the show <i>Whatever Happened to Social Democracy?</i> at Rooseum, 2005.	Es handelt sich hier um eine DIN-A4-Collage, Teil des »Übereignungs«-Projekts, ein Glossar als Antwort auf »Europa: der dritte Weg« (1999) von Tony Blair und Gerhard Schröder. Das Projekt wurde von Jan Verwoert und Sören Grammel zusammen mit Studenten der Academy of Fine Arts Umeå Project Group initiiert und 2005 in der Schau <i>Whatever Happened to Social Democracy</i> im Rooseum gezeigt.
--	--

*Magic & Loss, 2005*

16 min. 52 sec./loop, 16mm film transferred to DVD		16-mm-Film auf DVD überspielt, 16:52 Min./Loop
Cinematographer	Nina da Costa	Kamera
Camera Assistant	Bas Tiele	Kameraassistent
Sound	Marjo Postma	Ton

Music Participants	Karl-Jonas Winqvist Pia Sandström, Audrey Weeren, Seon-Ja Seo, Jan Mech, Remco Kwik, Chris van Zyl, Par Strömberg, Magnus Monfeldt, Liesbeth Sijzling, Karina Bakker	Musik Mitwirkende
--------------------	--	----------------------

Co-produced by Smart Project Space (production assistants: Astrid Schumacher and Mutaleni Nadimi-Mbumba) with support from The Arts Grants Committee, Sweden. *Magic & Loss* was filmed in Amsterdam in 2005, and shows a group of people packing and removing the contents of a seemingly pleasant apartment. The methodical movements of people packing boxes, carrying the apartment's contents to the street, and hoisting the furniture to the ground with ropes and pulleys, silently creates a mysteriously choreographed narrative. The owner of the flat is not present, and the unemotional detachment of the movers emphasizes the question of what has happened to the person or persons who once lived there. The title references an album by Lou Reed, recorded at a time when he was dealing with the loss of several people around him.

In Koproduktion mit Smart Project Space (Regieassistenten: Astrid Schumacher und Mutaleni Nadimi-Mbumba), mit Unterstützung von The Arts Grants Committee, Schweden. *Magic & Loss* wurde 2005 in Amsterdam gedreht und zeigt eine Gruppe von Leuten beim Packen und Abtransportieren des Hausrats einer anscheinend freundlichen Wohnung. Die methodischen Bewegungen der Menschen, die Kisten packen, den Inhalt der Wohnung auf die Strasse tragen und die Möbel mit Seilen und Rollen nach unten befördern, erzählen stillschweigend eine einer Choreografie folgende, geheimnisvolle Geschichte. Der Wohnungsinhaber ist nicht anwesend, und die emotionslose Gleichgültigkeit der Möbelpacker wirft die Frage auf, was mit der Person oder den Personen, die hier einmal gelebt haben, geschehen ist. Der Titel des Films bezieht sich auf ein Album von Lou Reed, das zu einer Zeit aufgenommen wurde, als er mit dem Verlust mehrerer Menschen aus seinem unmittelbaren Umfeld fertig werden musste.

*Magical World, 2005*

DVD 6 min. 12 sec./loop

Cinematographer

Musical Arrangements

Original Song by Sidney Barnes in 1968

(Chevis Music publishing Corp, BMI)

Participants

Manne Lindwall

Petra Jezutković

Petra Jezutković,

Sonja Borić,

Tadej Horvatić-Cajko,

Mara Matić-Soldan,

Ena and Sara Anićić,

Lenka, Martin and Josip Mestrić,

Klara and Lucija Petrać,

Ivana Leksić,

Nikolina Penić,

Zvonimir Retkovic,

Mane Galović,

Tomislav Djurinec

Co-producer: WHW/Rooseum

Production Assistant: Sonja Borić

This film is a collaboration made with a group of children from a cultural center outside Zagreb, Croatia. The direct subject is the children's rehearsal of the song *Magical World*, originally written by the black American singer Sidney Barnes in 1968. A personal transition is expressed by the song that could also be said to allude to the fast-paced development taking place in a relatively young country facing European Union demands for future integration into the group of member states. This is further articulated as the children struggle to handle the arrival



*Magical World*, production photo, Dubrava Cultural Centre, 2005

DVD, 06:12 Min./Loop

Kamera

Musikalische Arrangements

Originalsong von Sidney Barnes 1968

(Chevis Music Publishing Corp, BMI)

Mitwirkende

In Koproduktion mit WHW/Rooseum.

Regieassistentin: Sonja Borić

Dieser Film ist in Zusammenarbeit mit einer Gruppe von Kindern des ausserhalb von Zagreb, Kroatien, gelegenen Kulturzentrums entstanden. Unmittelbarer Gegenstand des Films ist das Einstudieren des Liedes »Magical World«, das ursprünglich 1968 von dem afroamerikanischen Sänger Sidney Barnes geschrieben wurde. Es spielt auch eine persönliche Komponente in den Song mit hinein, der – so kann man behaupten – auf die schnelle Entwicklung anspielt, die sich in einem relativ jungen Land vollzieht, und zwar hinsichtlich der Forderungen der Europäischen Union zur zukünftigen Integration in die Gruppe der Mitgliedsstaaten. Dies kommt

of the international use of English, and as such, follows the meaning of the lyrics. The song is, at times, both melancholic and existential, and is conceivably at odds with their tender age. The rehearsal is interwoven with life outside, leading up to an intimate performance by the children in their music class.

auch zum Ausdruck, wenn die Kinder sich mit der Verwendung des international gebräuchlichen Englisch und somit auch mit dem Sinn des Liedtextes abmühen. Der Song ist melancholisch und existenziell zugleich und steht im Widerspruch zu ihrem jugendlichen Alter. Die Probenzenen sind verwoben mit Szenen des Lebens ausserhalb des Probenraums, was zu einer intimen Schilderung der Kinder in ihrer Musikklasse führt.

*Another Album, 2006*

DVD 28 min. 12 sec./loop

Cinematographers

Featuring

Manne Lindwall, Johanna Billing

Marin Golub,

Jurica Golub,

Lana Protega,

Vedran Parać,

Ida Grbić,

Jura Ivanović,

Raša Čop,

Petra Jezutković

DVD, 28:12 Min./Loop

Kamera

Mitwirkende

Producers: Momentum Nordic Festival for Contemporary Art, Moss, with kind support from Iaspis, International Artist Studio Program in Sweden Set against the backdrop of singing cicadas and barking dogs, *Another Album* takes place between sunset and dawn on the island of Krapanj on the Croatian coast. *Another Album* is a staging of what is, for this group of students and musicians, a regular coming together to play and sing songs from the Novi Val (New Wave) era in music of the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties in former Yugoslavia.

Produktion des Momentum Nordic Festival of Contemporary Art, Moss mit freundlicher Unterstützung von Iaspis, International Artist Studio Program in Sweden *Another Album* findet vor dem Hintergrund von zirpenden Grillen und bellenden Hunden zwischen Sonnenauf- und Sonnenuntergang auf der Insel Krapanj an der kroatischen Küste statt. *Another Album* ist eine Inszenierung dessen, was für diese Gruppe von Studenten und Musikern ein regelmässiges Treffen bedeutet, um Lieder der Novi Val (New Wave)-Ära in der Musik der 1970er und 1980er Jahre im ehemaligen Jugoslawien zu spielen und zu singen.



*Another Album, 2007*

12" vinyl LP

Featuring

Marin Golub,  
Jurica Golub,  
Lana Protega,  
Vedran Parać,  
Ida Grbić,  
Jura Ivanović,  
Raša Čop,  
Petra Jezutković

Producers: Johanna Billing,  
Hollybush Gardens (London),  
Petra Jezutković, and Åbäke  
A vinyl soundtrack of the film *Another Album*, featuring a selection of garden recordings on Krapanj island, July 2006, including songs from the golden Novi Val (New Wave) era in ex-Yugoslavia and extra material from the same recording session.

12"-Vinyl-LP

Mitwirkende

Produziert von Johanna Billing,  
Hollybush Gardens (London),  
Petra Jezutković und Åbäke  
Ein Vinyl-Album mit dem Soundtrack des Films *Another Album*, einer Auswahl von Gartenaufnahmen von der Insel Krapanj im Juli 2006, einschliesslich Songs aus der goldenen Novi Val (New Wave)-Ära in Ex-Jugoslawien sowie zusätzlichem Tonmaterial aus der gleichen Aufnahmesession.

*You Don't Love Me Yet/Magical World, 2007*

12" vinyl

Featuring in *Magical World* (2005)

Petra Jezutković  
Sonja Borić,  
Tadej Horvatić-Cajko,  
Mara Matic-Soldan,  
Ena and Sara Anić,  
Lenka, Martin and Josip Mestrić,  
Klara and Lucija Petrać,  
Ivana Leksić,  
Nikolina Penić,  
Zvonimir Retkovic,  
Mane Galović,  
Tomislav Djurinec

Featuring in *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2003)

Andreas Söderström,  
Frode Fivel,  
Lisa Lundqvist,

12"-Vinyl-Schallplatte

Mitwirkende in *Magical World* (2005)Mitwirkende in *You Don't Love Me Yet* (2003)

Lina Selleby,  
Sara Lunden,  
Steven Cuzner,  
Ida Lunden,  
Magnus Wikström,  
Per Lager,  
Karl-Jonas Winqvist,  
Erik Bünger,  
Henry Moore Selder,  
Åsa Sohlgren,  
Marcella Svensson,  
Adam Kammerland,  
Björn Carlberg,  
Vijaya,  
Emely Ahlsen,  
Anders Norman,  
Märta Myrstener,  
Valdemar Gezelius,  
Hanna Jensen,  
Aina Myrstener,  
Christian Hörgren,  
Paola Cederberg,  
Marcus Palm,  
Stefan Zschernitz,  
Albion Venables,  
Ayesha,  
Per Gäfvert,  
Eric Beyond,  
Vejde Gustavsson,  
Patrik Anderson,  
Martin Linder,  
Magnus Henriksson,  
Jakob Hallberg

Producers: Åbäke, Apparent Extent  
(Munich), Kavi Gupta Gallery  
(Chicago) and DCA—Dundee  
Contemporary Art Centre.

Produziert von Åbäke, Apparent Extent  
(München), Kavi Gupta Gallery (Chicago)  
und DCA-Dundee Contemporary Art Centre.

*This Is How We Walk on the Moon, 2007*

DVD 27 min./loop		DVD, 27:20 Min./Loop
Cinematographers	Manne Lindwall and Johanna Billing	Kamera
Sound	Pia Patté	Ton
Featuring	Johnny Lynch, Emily Roff, Joe Collier, Jenny Gordon, Guthrie Stewart	Mitwirkende

Musical soundtrack arranged by Johanna Billing and performed by Johnny Lynch, vocals, Karl-Jonas Winqvist, vocals, Sara Wilson, vocals, Andreas Söderström, guitar and melodica, Christian Hörgren, cello, Henry Moore Selder, guitar and bass, Tuomas Hakava, guitar and organ, recorded by Tuomas Hakava in Up and Running Studio 2007, except for the opening song "The Western," written and performed by Woo (Independent Project Records 1989). Original version of "This is how we walk on the moon" written by Arthur Russell (Point Music/Orange Mountain Music, 1984). Soundtrack mixed and mastered by Joachim Ekermann, Make Wave. Title cards design by Åbäke. Recorded on the Firth of Forth and at Port Edgar Marina, South Queensferry, Edinburgh. Co-produced by the Collective Gallery's "One Mile" program, lead artist Kate Gray, co-ordinators Kate Stancliffe and Siobhan Carroll, production assistant Jill Brown, with support from the Scottish Arts Council Lottery Fund and The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and by *documenta 12* with support from Iaspis, International Artist Studio Program in Sweden.

Musikalischer Soundtrack arrangiert von Johanna Billing, mit Johnny Lynch (Gesang), Karl-Jonas Winqvist (Gesang), Sara Wilson (Gesang), Andreas Söderström (Gitarre und Melodica), Christian Hörgren (Cello), Henry Moore Selder (Gitarre und Bass), Tuomas Hakava (Gitarre und Orgel), aufgenommen von Tuomas Hakava im Up and Running Studio, 2007, mit Ausnahme des Eröffnungsliedes "The Western", das von Woo geschrieben und eingespielt wurde (Independent Project Records, 1989). Die Originalversion von »This is how we walk on the moon« wurde von Arthur Russell geschrieben (Point Music/Orange Mountain Music, 1984). Soundtrack gemischt und gemastert von Joachim Ekermann, Make Wave. Entwurf der Titelfarte von Åbäke. Aufgenommen am Firth of Forth und in Port Edgar Marina, South Queensferry, Edinburgh. In Koproduktion mit The Collective Gallery's »One Mile Programme«, künstlerische Leitung: Kate Gray, Koordination: Kate Stancliffe und Siobhan Carroll, Produktionsassistent: Jill Brown, mit Unterstützung des Scottish Arts Council Lottery Fund, der Paul Hamlyn Foundation und der Documenta 12 mit Unterstützung des Iaspis, International Artist Studio Programm in Sweden.

## Special thanks to

Karl-Jonas Winqvist,  
Andreas Berthling,  
Henry Moore Selder,  
Jan Billing,  
Guthrie Stewart,  
Kate Gray,  
Kajsa Ståhl,  
Maki Suzuki

## Besonderer Dank gilt

Set on the Firth of Forth with its iconic bridges this new film centers on the sea and on the experiences of sailing. Intrigued by the contradiction of Edinburgh's proximity to the North Sea and the apparent disconnection of the majority of the population to it, Billing invited a group of local musicians on a sailing trip. Events unroll from the preparations on land through to the journey under the Firth of Forth Rail Bridge, the students' first awkward steps in unknown territory. The commensurate soundtrack: "This is how we walk on the moon," takes a song from the nineteen-eighties by experimental New York-based musician Arthur Russell, in an interpretation rendered by Billing and her collaborators, using voice and stringed instruments.

Schauplatz dieses neuen Films ist der Firth of Forth mit seinen Brücken mit Kultsymbolcharakter. Im Mittelpunkt stehen das Meer und die Erfahrung des Segelns. Billing war fasziniert von dem Widerspruch, dass Edinburgh in unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft zur Nordsee liegt, die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung jedoch offensichtlich überhaupt keine Affinität zu dieser hat. Daher lud sie eine Gruppe ortsansässiger Musiker zu einem Segeltörn ein. Es werden die Ereignisse von den ersten Vorbereitungen an Land bis hin zur Fahrt unter der Firth-of-Forth-Eisenbahnbrücke hindurch dargestellt: die ersten unbeholfenen Schritte der Segelschüler auf unbekanntem Territorium. Der entsprechende Soundtrack "This is how we walk on the moon", nimmt einen Song des experimentellen, in New York lebenden Musikers Arthur Russell aus den 1980er Jahren wieder auf, der hier von Johanna Billing und ihren Kollegen in einer Neuinterpretation mit Gesang und Streichinstrumenten präsentiert wird.



Production of *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* title cards with Abäke

Born 1973 Geboren  
in Jönköping  
Sweden Schweden  
Lives and works in Stockholm Lebt und arbeitet  
in Stockholm

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

(selected)

## EINZELAUSSTELLUNGEN

(Auswahl)

- 1996 *Är du lik en känd person?* . . . . . Galleri Service, Stockholm  
 1998 *Straight from the Hip* . . . . . Ynglingagatan 1, Stockholm  
 1999 *Coming Up* . . . . . 149A, Kungl. Konstakademien, Stockholm  
 2000 *Project for a Revolution* . . . . . Galleri Flach, Stockholm  
 2001 *Where She is at* . . . . . Moderna Museet Projekt, Stockholm/  
 . . . . . Oslo Kunsthall, Oslo  
*Keep On Doing* . . . . . Sub Bau, Gothenburg  
 2002 *Where She Is at* . . . . . Bild Museet, Umeå  
 2003 *You Don't Love Me Yet* . . . . . Index, Stockholm  
*Studio Works*. . . . . Milch at Gainsborough Studios, London  
 2004 *You Don't Love Me Yet* . . . . . Vedanta Gallery, Chicago  
 2005 *Look out!* . . . . . Kavi Gupta Gallery, Project Room, Chicago  
*Magical World* . . . . . Hollybush Gardens, London  
 2006 *SubUrban: Johanna Billing* . . . . . Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville  
*Magical World* . . . . . P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York  
*Magical World* . . . . . Standard, Oslo  
*More Films about Songs*  
*Cities & Circles* . . . . . Marabouparken, Stockholm  
*Magic & Loss* . . . . . Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago  
*Songs, Cities & Circles* . . . . . Basis, Frankfurt am Main  
 2007 *New Media Series: Johanna Billing*. Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis  
*Another Album* . . . . . Fundacio la Caixa, Barcelona  
*Another Album and Another Album*. Vinyl LP Release, Hollybush Gardens, London  
*Magical World* . . . . . Galeria Posibla, Bucharest  
*Magic & Loss and other films* . . . . . Joan Prats Gallery, Barcelona  
*This Is How We Walk on the Moon* . . . . . Collective Gallery, Edinburgh  
*Another Album & other films* . . . . . Jönköping Konstmuseum, Jönköping  
*Forever Changes*. . . . . Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel  
*Keep on Doing* . . . . . Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

(selected)

- 1998 *Index Edition Multiple Show*, Galleri Index, Stockholm | *Performance, An Art Brothel*, Herkulesgatan, Stockholm
- 1999 *Eslövs Julsaga*, Eslöv | *Light Show*, Signal, Malmö | *Dummy*, Catalyst Arts, Belfast
- 2000 *I'll Never Let You Go*, Panacea Festival, Moderna Museet, Stockholm | *Onufri '00' In and Out*, National Gallery of Tirana, Tirana | *Lost in Space*, Färgfabriken, Stockholm | *My Generation*, Kulturhuset, Stockholm | *Viva Scanland*, Catalyst Arts, Belfast | *Swe.de*, Rikstutställningar; Uppsala Konstmuseum; Sandvikens Konsthall; Jönköpings Museum; Röda Sten, Gothenburg
- 2001 *The Path of Resistance*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm | *Intentional Communities*, Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius | *VI—Intentional Communities*, Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö | *Projects for a Revolution*, Le Mois de la photo à Montréal, Montreal
- 2002 *Baltic Babel*, Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö | *P\_A\_U\_S\_E*, Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, Korea
- 2003 *The Principle of Hope*, Three Colts Gallery, London | *Pipshow #6*, Fabrikken, Oslo | *The Edstrandska Foundation Prize*, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö | *Socialism—A Love Letter*, Fia Backstrom, New York | *The Peripheries Become the Center*, Prague Biennale 1, Prague | *Delays and Revolutions*, 50th International Venice Biennale, Venice | *Vinyl Sky*, Intro, Vilnius
- 2004 *Collect Call*, H.arta, Timisoara | The VI Yugoslav Biennial of Young Artists, Vrsac/Belgrade | *Delayed on Time*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb | *Green Box*, Trafo Gallery, Budapest
- 2005 *Art that Works / Catch Me!*, 49th October Salon 2005, Belgrade | *Istanbul*, 9th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul | *Rock Music* (dedicated to Igor Zabel) Gallery P74, Ljubljana | *ADAM*, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam | *With or Without*, cultural center, Belgrade | *Blava narrow focus*, Tranzit, Bratislava | *Do Not Interrupt your Activities*, Royal College of Art, London | *Dialecticts of Hope*, 1st Moscow Biennale, Moscow | *New Art Event*, Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita, Kansas | *Revolution is on hold*, L'Associazione Isola dell'Arte, Milano | *Normalisation*, Nova Gallery, Zagreb | *The Gravity in Art*, De Appel, Amsterdam
- 2006 *Sprung ins kalte Wasser*, Shedhalle, Zürich | *No More Reality* (Crowd and Performance: Re-enactment, public space and collective utopia) curated by Jelena Vesic and Clare Staebler, Center For Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade Summer Festival, Belgrade | *Fantom*, Charlottenborg Exhibition Hall, Copenhagen | TBA, Time-Based Art Festival, PICA, Portland | *Belief*, Singapore Biennale, Singapore | *Try again. Fail again. Fail better*, Momentum—4th Nordic Festival of Contemporary Art, Moss, Norway |

## GRUPPENAUSTELLUNGEN

Auswahl)

- I (Ich) / Performative Ontology*, Secession, Vienna | *Group Dynamics*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen | *Don Quijote*, Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam | *Outside the Living Room*, GB Agency, Paris | *Everyday Every Other Day*, Blackwood Gallery/The University of Toronto, Mississauga | *Normalisation*, Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö | *The Moderna Exhibition 2006*, Moderna Museet Stockholm, Stockholm | *biennale cuvée. Weltauswahl der Gegenwartskunst*, OK Offenes Kulturhaus Oberösterreich, Upper Austria
- 2007 *Held Together with Water. Kunst aus der Sammlung Verbund*, MAK, Vienna | *Silence. Listen to the Show*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino | *L'œil-écran ou la nouvelle image*. 100 vidéos pour repenser le monde, Casino Luxembourg—Forum d'art contemporain, Luxembourg | *Free Electrons. Lemaître's video collection*, tabacalera, International Contemporary Cultural Center of San Sebastián, San Sebastián | *Love Addiction, Practices in Video Art from 67 to the present*, Galleria Comunale, d'Arte Contemporanea, Monfalcone | *Some Time Waiting*, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris | *Confined Innocence*, Artcite, Windsor, Canada | *The Eventual*, Frac Bourgogne, Dijon | *Dreamlands Burn*, Muscarnok—Kunsthalle Budapest, Budapest | *Re-*, Site Gallery, Sheffield

## SCREENINGS AND PROJECTS

## AUFFÜHRUNGEN UND PROJEKTE

- 1997 *Big City, Bright Lights, Cool Cool People (Everybody I Know Can Be Found Here)*, K, Stockholm | *How Are You Connected to Me?* Ynglingagatan 1, Stockholm
- 1996–
- 1998 *Musik för mig, kanske för dig*, Musslan bar, Stockholm, 1998 | *Index Lounge Special: Make It Happen*, Featuring Chihuahua, Index Stockholm
- 1998–
- 2000 *Make It Happen*, Backstage, Stadsteatern, Stockholm | *2000 Park; Park the Bus—Make It Happen on Tour*, Event Weekend, Momentum, Moss, Norway | *Make It Happen on Tour*, Real Work, Werkleitz Biennale, Tornitz | *Make It Happen on Tour*, Model 4, Büro Friedrich, Berlin | *Make It Happen on Tour*, Signal, Malmö
- 2001 *Snowflakes*, Bangkok Experimental Filmfestival, Project 304, Bangkok | *Zwischenräume der Architektur*, Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg | *BLICK—New Nordic Film & Video 2001*. Exh. cat. Moderna Museet and Nifca, Stockholm and Oslo | *Future Perfect*, Adam Street, London | *Le Bonheur*, L'Etoile de Belleville, Paris | N.E.W.S. Exhibition, Roxy Cinema, Visby; Bornholm Museum, Bornholm | *Rotation ú Utrydningstruet Elefant*, Nifca and Morgenbladet, Oslo | *Make It Happen on Tour*, Superflex Studio, Copenhagen; Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö
- 2002 *Result*, video compilation, KPD, Chicago | *Room for a Revolution*, Deluxe Projects, Chicago | *Unter Uns*, Kunstverein Celle, Celle | *Es ist schwer das Reale zu Berühren—1. Videofestival*, Kunstverein Munich, Munich | Uppsala Short Film

Festival, Uppsala | *Coming*, Swedish Embassy, Tokyo | *Right About Now/Beyond Paradise*, National Gallery in Bangkok | *Snowflakes*, Göteborg Film Festival, Gothenburg | *Follow Me*, Stockholm Art Fair, Stockholm

- 2003 *The Spirit of Portraying*, DAE, San Sebastián | *Biennale De L'image*, Centre pour l'image contemporaine, Geneva | *Recontres Internationale* Berlin and Paris | *Courtisane* Filmfestival, Ghent Belgium | *Look of Love*, Elverket, Stockholm | *Här och Nu*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm
- 2004 *Video Zone*, International Video/Art Biennial, Tel Aviv | *Criss-Cross*, program by Nifca Kino, Lund/ Andorra Cinema, Helsinki | *Slim Volume*, Poster Publication 2004 | *Tranzit*, Magazine Project, Respekt/ der Standard in collaboration with Maria Crista
- 2005 *Makeover, What ever happened to Social Democracy?*, Umeå Konsthögskola Project at Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö | *Happy Pappy*, "Do, Ut, Des; I give so that you may give," Publication, London | *Pastor Bonus*, Publication, Bogota/ Oslo/ Mexico | *Taking the Matter into Common Hands*, A symposium put together with Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson, Iaspis, Stockholm
- 2002–
- 2007 *You Don't Love Me Yet*, Film and live tour: Index Stockholm, Eskilstuna Konstmuseum, Norrköping Konstmuseum, Tingshuset Östersund, Frieze Art Fair, London, Vara Konserthus, Nifca Helsinki, Sjömanskyrkan, Gävle, Ystad Konstmuseum, Vedanta Gallery Chicago, Milton Keynes Gallery, *If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution*, Festival a/d Werf, Utrecht, Festival Boulevard, 's-Hertogenbosch, The lab, San Francisco, Madrid Abierto, Madrid

## GRANTS AND RESIDENCIES

## AUSZEICHNUNGEN UND STIPENDIEN

- 1999 Iaspis International Artists' Studio Program in Sweden
- 2001 Swedish Arts Council, Working Grant
- 2003 The Edstrandska Foundation Prize
- 2004 West Balkan Air, Nifca Recidency Program, What, How and For Whom, Zagreb Stockholm Stad Kulturstipendium
- 2005 49th October Salon Award, Belgrade
- 2006 Swedish Arts Council, Working Grant

## EDUCATION

## AUSBILDUNG

- 1994–
- 1999 Konstfack International College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES  
AND BOOKS  
(selected)AUSSTELLUNGSKATALOGE  
UND BÜCHER  
(Auswahl)

- 2000 *Lost in Space*. Text by Eva Broberg. Exh. cat. Färgfabriken, Stockholm | *Real (work)*. Edited by Corinna Coch and Christiane Mennicke. Exh. cat. 4. Werkleitz Biennale, Halle. | *In & Out*. Exh. cat. National Gallery of Art, Tirana. | *Swe.de*, Rikstutställningar, Stockholm.
- 2001 *The Artist, the Individual and the Community*. Texts by Maria Lind and Mats Stjernstedt. Exh. cat. Moderna Museet Projekt, Stockholm. | *Projects for a Revolution*. Exh. cat. The Power of the Image: Le Mois de la Photo, Montréal. | *BLICK—New Nordic Film & Video 2001*. Exh. cat. Moderna Museet and Nifca, Stockholm and Oslo. | *I'll Never Let You Go*. Exh. cat. Panacea Festival, Moderna Museet, Stockholm.
- 2002 *Project 1, Pause*. Exh. cat. Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea.
- 2003 *Cream 3*. Texts by Charles Esche. Edited by Phaidon Press, London. | *Johanna Billing Works 3*. Texts by Helena Holmberg, Lisa Panting & Mats Stjernstedt. Edited by Lisa Panting, Milch. | *The Peripheries Become the Center*. Exh. cat. Prague Biennale 1, Prague. | *Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer*. Edited by Francesco Bonami. Exh. cat. The 50th International Art Exhibition—La Biennale Di Venezia, Venice.
- 2004 *Delayed on Time*. Text by Nada Beros. Exh. cat. Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb. | *Untitled (As Yet)*. Exh. cat. The VI Yugoslav Biennial of Young Artists, Vr. ac/Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro. | *Svensk Konst Nu*. Text by Sophie Allgård, Stockholm.
- 2005 *Istanbul*. Edited by Charles Esche. Exh. cat. Ninth Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul. | *Dialectics of Hope*. Text by Jan Verwoert. Exh. cat. First Moscow Biennale, Moscow. | *Do Not Interrupt Your Activities*. Text by Gair Boase. Exh. cat. Royal College of Art, London.
- 2006 *Suburban: Johanna Billing*. Text by Dana Self. Exh. cat. Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville. | *Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better*. Exh. cat. Momentum—Fourth Nordic Festival of Contemporary Art, Moss, Norway. | *Belief*. Exh. cat. Singapore Biennale, Singapore. | *Konst som Rörlig Bild*. Exh. cat. SAK/Filmforum, Stockholm. | *Modernauställningen*. Text by Magdalena Malm. Exh. cat. Moderna Museet, Stockholm. | *No More Reality, Crowd and Performance: Re-enactment. Public Space, Use of Body*. Text by Jelena Vesic. Exh. cat., Belgrade. | *Did Somebody Say Participate?: An Atlas of Spatial Practice*. Edited by Markus Miessen, London. | *Frieze Projects, Artists' Commissions and Talks 2003–2005*. Edited by Polly Staple and Melissa Grönlund, London. | *If I Can't Dance I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution*. Edited by Frédérique Bergholtz, Tanja Elstgeest, and Annie Fletcher, The Netherlands. | *Here and Now Real, Not Yet Concrete...* Text by What How and For Whom. Exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, Ljubljana. | *Autobiographies*. Edited by Vit Havranek. Transit Catalogue, Secession, Vienna.

- 2007 *The Screen Eye or the New Image, 100 Videos to Represent the World*. Edited by Régis Michel. Exh. cat. Casino Luxemburg, Luxemburg. | *Look Behind Us, A Blue Sky*. Interview by Philipp Kaiser, Helena Selder, text by Polly Staple, et al. Exh. cat. Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Dundee Contemporary Arts. | *documenta 12*. Text by Susanne Jäger. Exh. cat. documenta, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel. | *Another Album*. Exh. cat. La Caixa, Barcelona. | *Taking the Matter into Common Hands, on Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*. Edited by Johanna Billing, Maria Lind, and Lars Nilsson. Iaspis, Stockholm. | *Held Together with Water. Kunst aus der Sammlung Verbund*. Text by Philipp Kaiser. Exh. cat. MAK, Vienna.

ARTICLES  
(selected)ARTIKEL  
(Auswahl)

- 1999 Allerholm, Millou. "Vart tog omvärlden vägen?" *Dagens Nyheter*. June 4. | Bergman, Liv-Marit. "Konstprojekt i samtiden." *Kombi 1*. | Jönsson, Dan. "Hur mycket Vilks tål Skåne?" *Dagens Nyheter*. December 4. | Olsson, Emma. "Kladdiga elever showade." *Dagens Nyheter*. May 19. | Sokolow, Paulina. "Ömsint och lekfullt flirtande konst." *Svenska Dagbladet*. May 23.
- 2000 Allerholm, Millou. "En vibrerande kantig klump eller?" *Dagens Nyheter*. May 7. | Allerholm, Millou. "Generation oo." *Dagens Nyheter*. August 12. | Cavallin, Petter. "Full filofax." *Nöjesguiden*. October. | Chan, Suzanna. "Belfast." *Circa* 93. | Engström, Ulrika K. "Stockholm Hjältar." *Dagens Nyheter*. December 22. | Ericsson, Lars O. "Uppror ur Unga ögon." *Dagens Nyheter*. April 13. | Eriksen, Mette. "Kjaerlighet och kunst." *Moss Avisen*. May/June. | Gardell, Hanna. "Den svåra konsten att komma hem till jul." *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*. November 5. | Hansson, Annika. "oo-tal presenterar." *00-tal* 23.
- 2001 Allerholm, Millou. "Välhängt av nybakade curatorer." *Dagens Nyheter*. January 5. | Cornell, Frida. "Make It Happen." *Organ* 6. | Delgado, Jérôme. "Pas de Révolution." *La Presse*. October 15. | Frigstad, Gard Olav. "På vei mot tvilen." *Aftenposten*. September 6. | Lévesque, Maroussia. "Le Pari de la Révolution." *Coucours, Les Lauréats de la 5<sup>e</sup> édition*. | Kanakura, Liv. "Dialog och Reflektion." B-uppsats/diss., Stockholms universitet. | Ninacs, Anne-Marie. "Just do it: on a few ethical models proposed by the practise of art." *Commensaux, when art becomes circumstance*. SKOL Center des arts actuel. | Lehman, Henry. "Videos Pushing Stills Out of Photo Fest." *The Montreal Gazette*. September 15. | Nacking, Åsa. "Det kollektiva som en möjlighet." *Rooseum Provisorium* 2. | Ouatik, Bouchra Hanna. "Projet d'une non-revolution." *Coucours, Les lauréats de la 5<sup>e</sup> édition*. | Petrovskaja, Jelena. "Med en känsla av lätt melankoli." *Out/in the Cold*. Valand and Institute of Contemporary Art Moscow. | Sandell, Joanna. "Konsten revolterar i Tirana." *Dagens Nyheter*. January 8. | Schaffer, Per Henrik. "Kick för konsten." *Vi* 12. June 7.
- 2002 Grammel, Sören. "Es ist schwer das Reale zu berühren." *Newsletter Kunstverein München*. | Larsen, Lars Bang. "Vi-Intentional Communities." *frieze* 64. | Panting, Lisa. "The Innocence Has Evaporated." *Untitled Magazine*. | Stjernstedt, Mats. "The Artist, the Individual and the Community." *Moderna Museet Projekt*.
- 2003 Holmberg, Helena. "You Don't Love Me Yet." *Nifca Info*. November. | Karlsson, Lena. "Edstrandska Stiftelsens Stipendiater." *Konsten*. September. | Paulsson, Paulsson. "Band Aid för de utbrända." *Autodidakt*. July. |
- 2004 Camper, Fred. "Critic's Choice." *Chicago Reader*. May. | Cascella, Daniela. "Eyes Wide Shut." *Blow Up Magazine* 72. | Jansson, Anders. "An Interview with Johanna Billing." *E-CART*. May 4. | Olevik, Josefín. "Goda Möten med stora risker." *Dagens Nyheter*. January 29. | Plender, Olivia. "After the Rehearsal." *frieze* 81. | Sandqvist, Gertrud. "A New Wave of Political Consciousness." *Frame* 1. | Yokoyama, Ikko. "Lovely Place—Art Tour Vol.5." *Studio Voice* #345.
- 2005 Arndtzen, Mårten. "Turkiskt Koncept." *Expressen*. September 21. | Behrman, Pryle. "1st Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art." *Art Monthly* 284. March. | Bokern, Anneke. "Bedingungsloser Körperinsatz." *Artnet*. | Heiser, Jörg. "Istanbul City Report." *Frieze* 95. | Kopenkina, Olga. "The Logics of the 'Neglected' Center." *Art Margins*. | Pollack, Barbara. "Russia's Jump-start." *Art in America*. June/July. | Riff, David. "Face-control." *Moscow Art Magazine*. 1993/2005 | Strandberg, Marit. "Tidningen." *Norrlandsoperans*. | Wigh, Rebecka. "Istanbulbiennalen 1." *Konsten*. October 10.
- 2006 Andersson, Fred. "Politiska Verk imponerar." *Svenska Dagbladet*. March 25. | Arndtzen, Mårten. "Johanna Billing på Marabouparken." *Kulturnytt*. P1, Sveriges Radio. February 22. | Blom, Ina. "Failure as Good Taste." *Frog* 4. | Ekholm, Rikhard. "Begrifligt utan komendium." *Svenska Dagbladet*. March 11. | Cornell, Frida. "Biennialernas tid." *Konstperspektiv* 2. | Forsberg, Nils. "Europa finns i Malmö." *Expressen*. April 27. | Forsberg, Nils. "En förtrollad Värld." *00-tal* 22. | Golonu, Berin. "The 9<sup>th</sup> Istanbul biennial." *Zingmagazine*. July. | Hawkins, Margaret. "Video Takes Us for Brief Stay in Kids' 'Magical World.'" *Chicago Sun-Times*. April 14. | Olofsson, Robert and Johan Idesjö. "How are you doing today?" *Vidvinkel*. | Grönlund, Melissa. "Moss, Norway." *Frieze* 103. November. | Hebert, Niels. "Slagord är modernt." *Arbetarbladet*. March 22. | Lytal, Benjamin. "Art in Pursuit of Reality." *The New York Sun*. April 13. | Johansson, André. "Att möta verkligheten i Sundbyberg." *The Jet Set Junta*. February 12. | Kaiser, Phillip. "Magical World. Johanna Billing's Video Work." *Parkett* 76. | Knockaert, Tineke. "Anywhere Anyone." *Urban Mag*. | McKinnon, John. "Johanna Billing, Kavi Gupta Gallery." *Flash Art*. July. | De Wachter, Ellen Mara. "Momentum." *Map Magazine* 8. | Montigny, Britte. "Tankeväckande tolkningar." *Hallandsposten*. May 6. | Netter, Ulrike. "Ihr liebt mich doch." *Welt kompakt Rhein-Main-Neckar*. November 17. | Orden, Abraham. "The Windy Apple." *Artnet*. May 18. | Ravini, Sinziana. "Vildsvin, Playboy och Nordiskt Vemod." *Göteborgs Posten*. September 6. | Robinson, Walter. "Weekend Update." *Artnet*. May 12. | Schütte, Christoff. "Warten auf die Revolution." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

November 17. | Selder, Helena. "More Films About Songs, Cities & Circles." Interview, exhibition guide, essay, and map. February/March. | Sholis, Brian. "Normalization." *Artforum; Critic's pick*. October 4. | Stahre, Ulrika. "Normalt? Det här?" *Aftonbladet*. March 23.

2007 What, how and for Whom. "Magical World, These Days." *What is to be done?* 16.  
 | Antognoli, Paolo Emilio. "Il Magico Mondo di Dubrava." *Around Photography* 10.  
 | Herbert, Martin. "Another Album." *Art Monthly*. March. | Moss, Ceci. "The Waiting Room." *A Million Keys*. April 18. | Ghaznavi, Corinna. "Documenta." *Akimbo*. June 21. | Kynaston, Michael. "This Is How We Walk on the Moon." *The Skinny Magazine* 27. June.

## AUTHORS

Philipp Kaiser, curator at the Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel since (2002–2007). Appointed curator MOCA, Museum for Contemporary Art, Los Angeles 2007.

Helena Selder, curator of Marabouparken, Stockholm.

Polly Staple, curator and writer based in London, and is editor at large of *frieze magazine*.

---

 A Project by Double agents

A project initiated and edited by Lisa Panting, a member of the research group Double agents based at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London. Co-convenors of the group are Anne Tallentire and Graham Ellard.

---

 EXPANDED FOOTNOTES AUTHORS

Carole Bertinet is an editor working for TV and cinema based in Paris.

Cecilia Canziani is an independent curator and founding member of the curatorial platform 1:1 projects, based in Rome.

Ivet Ćurlin, member of curatorial collective What, How and for Whom/WHW, based in Zagreb.

Magnus Haglund is a critic and writer based in Gothenburg, currently writing a book on the Swedish writer and sound artist Åke Hodell.

Mika Hannula, professor for Artistic Research at the Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Gothenburg. He is a writer, lecturer, critic, and curator based in Berlin. His text is taken from *Politics of Small Gestures—Chances and Challenges for Contemporary Art* (Istanbul 2006).

Karl Holmqvist is an artist and writer that lives and works in Berlin and Stockholm.

Séamus Kealy is curator of the Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga, in Canada. The text is from the exhibition text “A Few Notes on an Exhibition: Everyday Every Other Day,” for the exhibition “Everyday Every Other Day,” held at the Blackwood Gallery, May 17–June 18, 2006, which included Johanna Billing, Ivan Grubanov, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Phil McCrum, and Marina Roy.

Jonathan Lethem is a novelist based in Brooklyn, New York. His novel *You don't love me yet* is published by Doubleday (2007).

Maria Lind is a curator and writer, presently the director of Iaspis (International Artists and Studio Program in Sweden), Stockholm.

Lisa Panting is a member of Double agents and a director of Hollybush Gardens, London.

Malin Ståhl is a director of Hollybush Gardens, London.

Kate Stancliffe is an independent curator based in London.

Anne Tallentire is an artist based in London.

Chen Tamir is a curator and art critic based in Toronto, Tel-Aviv, and New York.

James M. Thomas is a freelance curator, writer, and musician. He is currently a graduate student in the Art History department at Stanford University, and is also working on an exhibition about the musical and artistic legacy of Arthur Russell.

Rob Tufnell is a director of Ancient and Modern, London.

Jelena Vesić is an independent curator, art critic, and editor of *Prelom* (Journal for Images and Politics) based in Belgrade.

Jacob Wren is a writer based in Montreal. His latest book is *Families Are Formed Through Copulation* (Pedlar Press) and he writes about art for *C Magazine*.

Volker Zander is based in Munich, Germany. He plays bass in the US rock band Calexico and runs a record label called Apparent.

Åbäke is a graphic design group based in London.

“Radio Days; Tour Diary” was previously printed in “If I can't Dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution,” edited by Frédérique Bergholtz, Tanja Elstgeest, Astrid Schumacher, and Annie Fletcher (Rotterdam 2005).



Johanna Billing  
*Look Behind Us, A Blue Sky*

This book is published in conjunction with the exhibitions  
 Diese Publikation erscheint anlässlich der Ausstellungen

Johanna Billing  
*Forever Changes*

Part 1 8 September–28 October 2007

Part 2 30 October–30 December 2007

Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel

Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum für Gegenwartskunst  
 mit Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung  
 St. Alban-Rheinweg 60  
 CH-4010 Basel  
 www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch

EXHIBITION AUSSTELLUNG

Kunstmuseum Basel

Director	Bernhard Mendes Bürgi	Direktor
Curator	Philipp Kaiser	Kurator
Curatorial assistance	Jacqueline Uhlmann	Wissenschaftliche Assistenz
Press, Communication	Christian Selz	Medien, Kommunikation
Installation	Käthe Walser, Christian Schöni	Ausstellungstechnik

Johanna Billing  
*Keep on Doing*

Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee  
 15 September–4 November 2007

Dundee Contemporary Arts  
 152 Nethergate  
 DUNDEE DD1 4DY  
 www.dca.org.uk

EXHIBITION AUSSTELLUNG

Director	Clive Gillman	Direktor
Curator	Anne-Marie Watson	Kurator
Curatorial assistance	Valerie Norris	Wissenschaftliche Assistenz
	Liz Shannon	
Press, Communication	Jan McTaggart	Medien, Kommunikation
	Katie Holmes	
Installation	Ewan Wilson	Ausstellungstechnik

CATALOGUE KATALOG

Editor	Philipp Kaiser	Herausgeber
Editing	Malin Ståhl, Lisa Panting, Jacqueline Uhlmann	Redaktion
Copyediting	Sylvia Bargstedt	Lektorat

(German Deutsch)

Alix and Bish Sharma

(English Englisch)

Translations	Klaus Roth	Übersetzungen
--------------	------------	---------------

(Interview Ph. Kaiser, Interview H. Selder)

Ewa Dewes

(P. Staple)

List of Work Werkbeschreibungen

Elizabeth J. Tucker

(Preparation interview Ph. Kaiser)

Graphic design	Åbåke, London	Grafische Gestaltung
Typesetting	Åbåke, London	Satz
Typeface	Cardigans	Schrift
Printing	Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, Ostfildern	Druck
Paper	115 s/qm Munkun Print Extra, 1.5	Papier
Binding	Verlagsbuchbinderei Dieringer, Gerlingen	Buchbinderei

© 2007 Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum für Gegenwartskunst;

Dundee Contemporary Arts Limited;

Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern,  
 and authors und Autoren

© 2007

for the reproduced works of  
 Johanna Billing by the artist  
 für die abgebildeten Werke von Johanna  
 Billing bei der Künstlerin

PUBLISHED BY      ERSCHEINEN IM

Hatje Cantz Verlag  
 Zeppelinstraße 32  
 73760 Ostfildern  
 Deutschland/Germany  
 Tel. +49 711 4405-200  
 Fax +49 711 4405-220  
 www.hatjecantz.com

Hatje Cantz books are available internationally at selected bookstores and from the following distribution partners:

USA/North America – D.A.P., Distributed Art Publishers,  
 New York, www.artbook.com

UK – Art Books International, London, www.art-bks.com

Australia – Tower Books, Frenchs Forest (Sydney),  
 www.towerbooks.com.au

France – Interart, Paris, www.interart.fr

Belgium – Exhibitions International, Leuven,  
 www.exhibitionsinternational.be

Switzerland – Scheidegger, Affoltern am Albis, www.ava.ch

For Asia, Japan, South America, and Africa, as well as for general questions, please contact Hatje Cantz directly at sales@hatjecantz.de, or visit our homepage at www.hatjecantz.com for further information.

Trade edition:

ISBN 978-3-7757-2070-0

Museum edition:

ISBN 978-3-7204-0172-2

Printed in Germany

Cover illustration

Åbåke, London

End papers      Vorsatzpapier

*Make It Happen on Tour 1*, Park; Park the Bus, Momentum, Moss, 2000

Back cover      Umschlagabbildung

*Magical World*, production still, 2005

---

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

DANK

Sponsor Museum für  
 Gegenwartskunst Basel:  
 Fonds für künstlerische Aktivitäten  
 im Museum für Gegenwartskunst der  
 Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der  
 Christoph Merian Stiftung

**DCA**

Dundee Contemporary Arts is supported by:



Additional support for the publication  
 from Double agents, London:

**: Double agents**

## PHOTO CREDITS

## FOTONACHWEIS

All photos by Johanna Billing except for:

Jan B Christensen (8, 12, 49)

Ricardo Iriarte (10–11)

Karl-Jonas Winqvist (27, 75, 82, 85, 182–184, 186–188, 198–199)

Åbäke (40, 51, 77, 91, 111, 151, 181, 194–195, 221, 226, 228, 238)

Mimmi Larsson (42)

Cem Yüçetas (62)

Emanuel Almborg (64, 116–119, 121, 128–130, 132)

Jonas Jörneberg (67)

Siobhan Carroll (73)

Alex Mahan (84)

Manne Lindwall (95, 97)

Johanna Löwenhamn (104–107)

Sinziana Ravini (115)

Henry Moore Selder (137)

Sal Kroonenberg (141–144)

Gabriela Grech (148–149)

Jordi Nieva (190–191)

Anders Billing (220)

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

The Conversation between  
Helena Selder and Johanna Billing  
was made in December 2005 for the  
exhibition and publication “More  
Films about Songs, Cities & Circles”  
at Marabou Park in Stockholm,  
February 10th–March 26th, 2006

## THE ARTIST WOULD LIKE TO THANK

Katrina Brown, Anne-Marie Watson, Lisa Panting, Malin Ståhl, Felix Rühöfer,  
Annie Fletcher (If I Can't Dance I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution), Manne  
Lindwall, Helena Selder, Karl-Jonas Winqvist, Åbäke, Miki Tsuganuma, Carolina Grau,  
Silvia Sauquet, Volker Zander, Philipp Kaiser, Jacqueline Uhlmann, Collective Gallery,  
and all writers and photographers contributing to this book



