

BRUS MUEHL NITSCH SCHWARZKOGLER



WRITINGS OF THE VIENNA ACTIONISTS

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BRUS MUEHL NITSCH SC
HWARZKOGLER WRITIN
GS OF THE VIENNA ACTI
ONISTS EDITED AND TR
ANSLATED BY MALCOLM
GREEN IN COLLABORAT
ION WITH THE ARTISTS

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ATLAS ARKHIVE
DOCUMENTS OF
THE AVANT-GARDE
NUMBER 7:
THE VIENNA ACTIONISTS

Editor of this issue
Malcolm Green

Series editors
Alastair Brotchie
Malcolm Green
Chris Allen

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THE ATLAS ARKHIVE SERIES The Arkhive series exists to examine and publish previously unavailable material relating to issues, neglected groups and pivotal figures within the avant-garde "anti-tradition" of the last 100 years. Where possible each volume takes a documentary format, an anthology edited by the group itself or one edited with the participation of members. The first six issues, on *Dada Berlin*, *French Symbolist Literature*, *Georges Bataille & Acéphale*, *Fluxus/Nouveau Réalisme*, *Erik Satie* and *The Oulipo*, are still available; they are described at the end of this book.

THIS ARKHIVE The sections devoted to Brus, Muehl and Nitsch have been edited by Malcolm Green in collaboration with the artists. Günter Brus requested that his section be based upon the survey of his actions that constitutes the eighth issue of *Die Schastrommel* (June-December 1972). Sources of texts added to this section by the editor are given in the notes. The collaborations section has been edited solely by Malcolm Green.

Editorial comments are given in italics throughout. Texts in bold are commentaries by other authors, primarily press reports.

Apart from the final statements in the first three sections, this anthology covers actions performed between 1962 and 1974 (after 1972 only Nitsch was still mounting actions).

Titles in bold on the contents page indicate that there is further material related to these actions in the *Collaborations and Joint Projects* section of the book.

The variable quality of the photographs is due to the fact that a fair proportion of the original photo-documentation has been lost and a number have therefore been reproduced from secondary sources.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHS Top left: Günter Brus, *Transfusion*, 1965; top right: Otto Muehl, *Material Action 13: Leda and the Swan*, 1964; bottom left: Hermann Nitsch, *4th Action*, 1963; bottom right: Rudolf Schwarzkogler, *Wedding*, 1965.

NOTE. We have been unable to find a UK printer who would agree to produce this book without excluding some of the photographs. This explains a few gaps in the present volume, notably that on p. 56. All the excluded photographs will appear in a special supplement to the limited edition.

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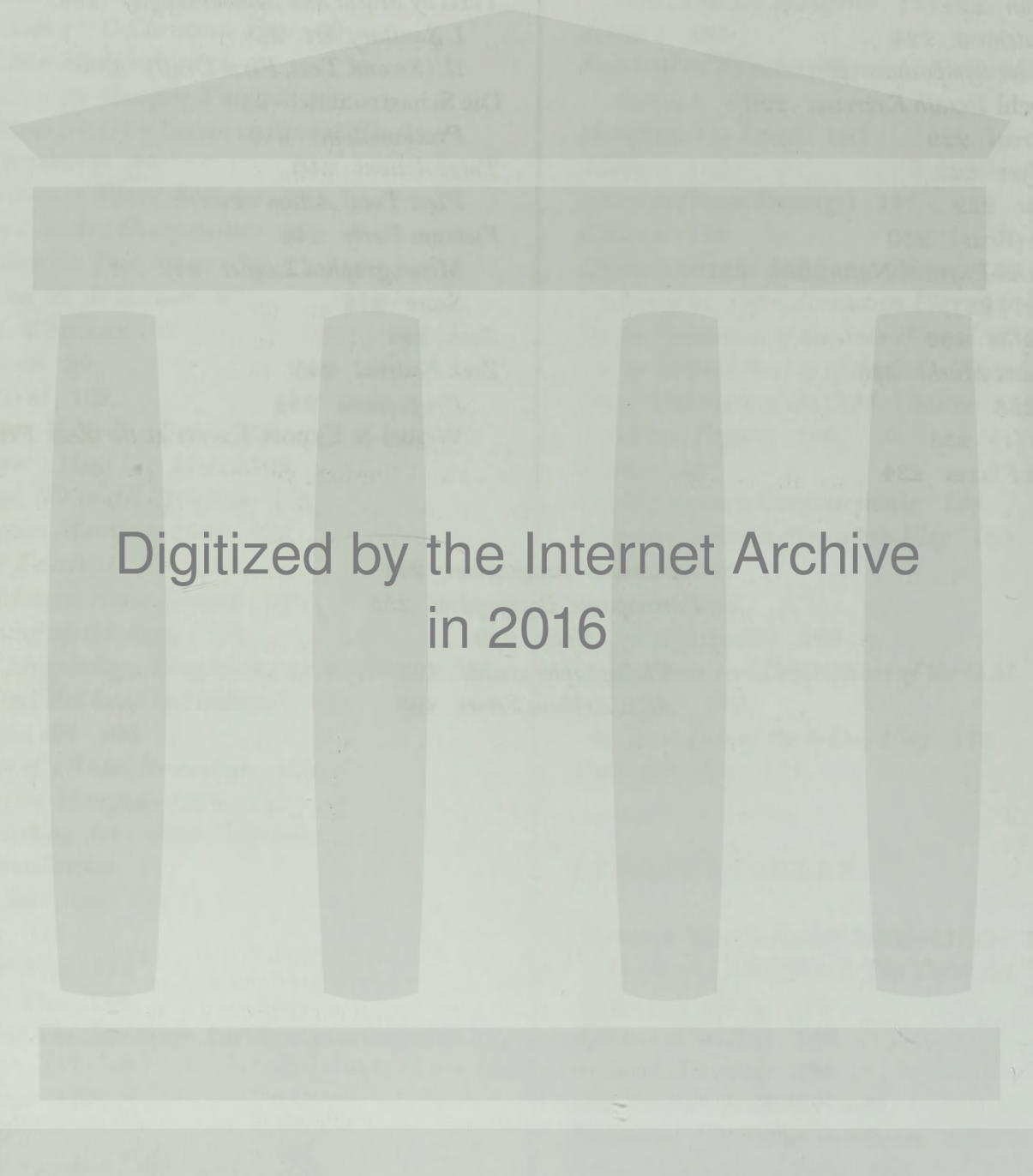
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A Hall of Mirrors

“Vienna Actionism” more or less spanned the ten years of the Sixties, a period in which Günter Brus, Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch and Rudolf Schwarzkogler performed over 150 actions that shocked, amused, fascinated and nauseated audiences in Austria, Germany and beyond. They prompted major public scandals, while the actionists themselves were variously fined, gaoled and driven into exile, they remained virtually ignored by the art critics and gallery directors of the day.¹

Despite the fact that “Vienna Actionism” is now frequently hailed as Austria’s greatest contribution to post-war art, or even as the country’s most important artistic group in that country since 1918, it is still known more by rumour than by hard fact. The image of spontaneous shock-art, of a provincial half-cousin of Happenings and Fluxus, or of morbid blasphemy and gratuitous sex and violence, still has a tenacious hold.

Indeed, while the recent *volte-face* in the critical response to the actionists — as evinced by the reactions to the large touring exhibition in 1988-9 shown in Germany (with the Austrian chancellor attending the opening), Switzerland and Austria, or their recent inclusion in the “Out of Actions” touring exhibition (Los Angeles, Barcelona, Vienna and Tokyo) in 1998-9, and major exhibitions and retrospectives for the individual artists — may have helped to transform them from *personae non gratae* into “state artists”, it has not necessarily helped to clarify their motivations. The two volumes published to accompany the touring exhibition of 1988-9 gave an excellent overview of their work and concerns in both German and English, yet they almost completely failed to reach the UK or USA, partly due to the cancellation of the planned exhibition in Edinburgh, and partly due to inadequate distribution.² And since these catalogues were *about* the actionists, it is still the case that little is known or available in either language of their *own* writings and documentation. This is unfortunate, for as the present anthology demonstrates, the actionists can be highly eloquent, witty and profound by turns: the years of “Vienna Actionism” require scant commentary beyond the narrative they themselves have provided in this book. Furthermore, publication of the actionists’ writings is necessary as a basis on which to eliminate a large number of misunderstandings and fantasies that have accrued over the years, and to redress the balance that has been tipped too long towards the (admittedly staggering) photographs and other visual work. The writings have an invigorating, sometimes wild and sometimes beautiful quality that is often lost when the scores and photographs of actions are placed in the sober setting of a museum as aesthetically reified, easily consumable documents. And without the texts, the images are susceptible to the wildest interpretations.

¹ The chronology of events can be found in the artists’ individual sections below, and is resumed in the biographies. Briefly, the history begins with Nitsch’s writings in the late Fifties, his meeting with Muehl who encouraged him to realize his plans, the first programmatic manifestos in 1962 (*The Blood Organ*), and the first joint programme in 1963 (*Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism*); the first actions of Brus and Schwarzkogler in 1964 and 1965 respectively; through years of laboratory-like experimentation and the major public events, to Schwarzkogler’s death in 1969, Brus’s departure from actionism in 1970, and Muehl’s rejection of “art actions” in the 1970s, when he founded a commune. Nitsch’s case is different, for he is still truly active, having in 1998 at last performed the 6-day play he first conceived in 1959, after 99 actions in 36 years. In comparison, Brus asserts that his work from the Seventies onwards is done “in sittings which are very similar to action processes” (“*Günter Brus*”, interview in *ND 4*, Austin, Texas, 1985, p.6), and the development of Muehl’s overtly psycho-therapeutic “action analyses”, championed by him since the Seventies, were clearly informed by his actionist experiences.

² *From Action Painting to Actionism, Vienna 1960-1965*, ed. Museum Fridericianum et al. (Ritter Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1988), and *Viennese Actionism 1960-1971*, ed. Hubert Klocker (Ritter Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1989). The first volume is now out of print. A complete survey of Schwarzkogler’s work — his actions, paintings and writings, and even cooking recipes and betting schemes — appeared in German in 1992. Brus’s writings during and shortly after his “actionist period” are unavailable in any language, and have been so for decades. The same applies to Muehl’s. A number of Nitsch’s philosophical texts and manifestos have been recently published in German, but works referring to his actual actions and many of his early texts are not freely available.

The reception accorded to the actionists has always been dogged by such misunderstandings. Contemporary newspaper reports were certainly of little help in the early years; the actions were mainly reported, in tones of sardonic disparagement, among the other “local news”. There was no response, or else nothing but studied silence, from qualified parties, despite it being clear that the actionists often sought their appraisal: the major avant-garde galleries in Vienna mostly shunned their work, being still caught up in *tachism* (i.e. abstract expressionism and its epigones), and art critics failed to engage in any form of discourse with their activities or to appreciate the obvious link between the actions and the *tachism* from which they had developed. They were constantly discredited as artists, denied an art context, and in their permanently marginalised state were frequently perceived simply as cases for the courts or for psychiatrists, as objects of ridicule or of hatred.

The private nature of much of the earlier work further exacerbated the difficulty in establishing a clear impression of the actions. The majority of them were not staged before an audience, partly due to the lack of suitable venues and the disinterest of galleries (it is telling that two of the actionists’ largest manifestations, the *Zock Festival* and the *Art and Revolution* event, were organised by student groups — Catholic and Socialist respectively), and partly because many of the early actions required an intimate setting, safe from outside intrusion. Nitsch’s “penis rinsings” are a good example of such actions, descriptions of which read more like laboratory experiments, far removed from the “happenings” with which the actionists’ work is habitually associated.³

The information gap was also widened by the glaring omissions, or misrepresentations of the actionists’ activities in a variety of “standard works”, beginning probably with Wolf Vostell’s exclusion of their works from the otherwise important books he produced or co-edited, and continuing to the present day.⁴ In fact, with the exception of Peter Weibel’s *wien. bildkompndium wiener aktionismus und film* (with Valie Export, Kohlkunstverlag, Frankfurt, 1970, a book that ended up in the courts), prior to 1988 the reader had to sift through a medley of sources,⁵ ranging from thoroughly hostile representations to the euphoric exegeses of the counter-culture, in order to gain even a basic understanding of actionism. This material consisted of an irregular spectrum of “facts”, half-truths, rumours and polemics, many of which are still repeated in the same way in which they first appeared.

Nevertheless, the material in this anthology would appear to confirm a number of these rumours and expectations. The earliest writings of the actionists are indeed provocative, but at the same time they read as somewhat abstruse and, perhaps, highly ironic. “My body is the intention. My body is the event. My body is the result” (Brus); “Charlatans, obscenity and cesspool aesthetics are the moral means I employ against conformity, materialism and stupidity. ... The M is the controlled synthesis of two asocial types: saint and sexual murderer”. (Muehl); “the pictorial construction on a surface is replaced by the construction of the pre-conditions for the act of painting as the determinant of the action field, of the space around the actor = the real objects present in his

³ Over half of Brus’s actions were performed in private settings (sometimes with guests, and almost always with a photographer), as were three-quarters of Muehl’s actions during his first three prolific years (this altered to about 30% during the second half of the Sixties). Similarly, 15 of Nitsch’s first 21 actions prior to the *Destruction in Art Symposium* in London were performed in private; and in the case of Schwarzkogler, all but his first action were restricted to one photographer and a few close friends.

⁴ A typical example is *Aktionen* (Reinbek, 1970), ed. Wolf Vostell. Brus was able to name numerous other examples in conversation.

⁵ Not least translations from third languages, with often bizarre results, as in the English translation of a section of Schwarzkogler’s text “draft of PANORAMA I/ painting in motion” that appeared in *Studio International* in 1976, and which was based on a translation by Lea Vergine in her book *Il corpo come linguaggio* (Prearo, Milan, 1974). The quote reads “the artistic nude gets out of its traditional constriction and, similar to wreckage, it finally liberates itself from the reproduction machinery used for information. the artistic nude and spectacle have by now become a single thing”. The translation in the present anthology (from the original German) reads:

10 “the actual act of painting can be freed from the compulsion to make relics its goal by performing it in front of a reproducing apparatus which attends to the data. the temporality of the act of painting becomes one with that of its performance”.

surroundings” (Schwarzkogler); or Nitsch’s words, “through my artistic production (a form of life worship) i take upon myself all that appears negative, unsavoury, perverse and obscene, the lust and the resulting sacrificial hysteria, in order to spare YOU the defilement and shame entailed by the descent into the extreme”. This is not simple provocation, and nor are they writing about colour theory and perspective... Reading further, moreover, it is astonishing to see how much thought was already packed into those first few words, and how fundamental these ideas proved to be in their subsequent work.

Their own publications also reveal a number of other surprises: we look in vain for joint manifestos by the four artists, or for documentation of collective actions or manifestations by the “Vienna Actionists”. However, this situation is perhaps more surprising than it deserves to be, for in addition to suffering from omission and disregard, the actionists were also subject to the distortions of myth-building. The term “Vienna Actionism” was first coined in 1970 by Peter Weibel, and used in the same year as the title of a lengthy essay by Rüdiger Engerth in the arts magazine *Protokolle*. Yet in neither case did the authors focus on the four actionists who have now become synonymous with the term. Weibel uses it to describe a broad field of activity, beginning in the late Forties and early Fifties with the work of Arnulf Rainer (such as his exhibition of empty picture frames in 1951, or his arrest in Germany after “over-painting” a prize-winning painting in 1961). He continues with the *Literary Cabarets* of the “Vienna Group” (the writers Friedrich Achleitner, H.C. Artmann, Konrad Bayer, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener — the latter two came to be closely associated with the actionists) in the Fifties, to arrive finally at actionism “proper”, albeit with space dedicated to some 20 to 30 other artists! Engerth’s essay begins similarly with the “Vienna Group” (devoting more than half the article to them), but differs in that “Vienna Actionism”, as it is now understood, is reduced to three names: Brus, Muehl and Nitsch.

Subsequent books and articles in the Seventies that touched on the actionists reveal all manner of inclusions and exclusions, partly it may be assumed owing to the paucity of available information, especially in Schwarzkogler’s case (the hermetic nature of his work precluded the possibility of much public exposure or awareness), partly perhaps to laxity or personal revulsion and an unwillingness to study the phenomenon at close quarters, and partly again because of a certain tendency by some writers to highlight their own particular “favourite”.⁶ It was not until the early Eighties that “Vienna Actionism” was equated once and for all with Brus, Muehl, Nitsch and Schwarzkogler — a canon that unquestionably contains those artists most indelibly linked with and responsible for Vienna Actionism, the four who by the late Sixties and early Seventies were known and achieving cult status outside the German-speaking world, and whose contributions continue to deserve international recognition.

This is not to say, however, that these four actually constituted a “group”. Indeed, according to Nitsch, “vienna actionism never was a group. a number of artists reacted to particular situations that they all encountered, within a particular time period, and with similar means and results”.⁷ This is worth emphasising: the nearest the four actionists came to forming a joint front was in 1965, when they, together with the writers

⁶ This tradition has been continued by, among others, the writers Arnulf and Franziska Meifert. Early articles by them were foremost in creating the image of an archetypal foursome (cf. for instance Franziska Meifert, “Zweimal Geborene”, in *Protokolle '90*, vol. 1, Vienna and Munich, 1990), while demoting everyone else in the Vienna scene to the level of “performance artists” (e.g. Weibel, Export), “epigones”, or mere “sympathisers” (e.g. Muehl’s Direct Art Group). Yet ultimately, in the catalogue to the Brus retrospective at the Centre Georges Pompidou in 1993, three of the foursome are thrown overboard (Muehl = feudal lord and dictator; Schwarzkogler = desperate escapist; Nitsch (slightly more respectfully) = eclectic and exponent of baroque Catholicism) to leave Brus as the sole true actionist. Similar exclusionist tendencies, in favour of one or other of the actionists, can be found in works by other authors.

⁷ Hermann Nitsch, “gedanken zur theorie des aktionismus und des o.m. theaters”, in *Aktionismus — Aktionsmalerei Wien 1960-1965*, (MAK, Vienna, 1989). In his article “Ausscheidungskämpfe” (*Die Schastrommel* 3, 1970), Brus clearly refers to himself, Nitsch and Schwarzkogler as differing from others in their use of actions as their means of expression; interestingly though, some two decades later he talks of “we — myself, Muehl, Nitsch, Schwarzkogler and others” (interview in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*, no. 412, 22 Jan. 1988, p.14).

Reinhard Priessnitz and Hermann Schürer, presented themselves in a magazine edited by Brus, *Le Marais*, as the “Vienna Action Group”. A second “grouping” came about in 1966, when Brus and Muehl formed the “Institute for Direct Art”, whose members, according to Weibel, not only included Nitsch and Schwarzkogler, but also Kurt Kren, Weibel, Josef Dvorak, Otmar Bauer, Herbert Stumpfl and Valie Export. Indeed, the lack of a group programme by the four can be further underlined by the fact that on no occasion did they all appear on the same bill (the sole exception being Nitsch’s 9th action in 1965, in which the other three participated as actors). Admittedly there were a few near misses, as well as a number of collaborations between two or three of them. Yet even in these collaborations others were often involved, people who made their own major contributions to actionism, such as Heinz Cibulka, whose involvement in Nitsch’s and Schwarzkogler’s actions cannot be overestimated, or Anni Brus, who played a singular part as the only woman in the actions of Brus and Schwarzkogler, and who collaborated with them and Muehl on the film *Satisfaction* (1968). Other names could be mentioned, other constellations arose, not least the explosive mixture that participated in the *Zock Festival* in 1967: Nitsch and Muehl, the latter’s “Direct Art Group”, and prominent members of Vienna’s literary avant-garde. Even the discussions that the four actionists agree were regular and important occurrences during the earlier part of the Sixties, and which constituted a kind of think-tank for their actions, do not cement the impression of a tight group, since other meetings and discussions (for instance with the film-maker Kurt Kren) were also vital to the developments. Early collaborations with Alfons Schilling and Adolf Frohner should also not be forgotten, two artists closely connected with the actionists during the period when they were breaking with painting.⁸

I have not tackled the question of who the Vienna Actionists were (or were not) with any intention of attacking or debunking the established canon. Rather, I have done so because the story has always been told by others — whether by the “faint-hearted carpenters and cavillers [who] are forever slaving over ‘Vienna Actionism’” (Brus⁹), or by enthusiasts and those who reckon to know the artists better than they do themselves, or by art historians who all too often have axes to grind and other movements they wish to promote at the actionists’ expense. And also because the wide range of approaches to actionism — from the early newspaper reports that the actionists often included in their documentation (some of which can be found in this book), to gushing eulogies, to the creation of the canon — reflects a process that has accompanied the actionists over the decades: everyone has always had something to say about them, with the result that they have been used as surrogates for the projection of all manner of rumours and assertions (both ugly and sugar-sweet), and been incorporated into the most disparate world views. Even when performed in private, actionism extended far beyond the four walls of the studio into a realm of hearsay and speculation, of bitter or mocking rejoinders and attacks that eventually impinged upon social, political and legal spheres.

Artists to Archetypes

Over the years a multitude of contradictory characterisations have been attributed to the actionists. The following list is by no means complete, and obviously excludes mere insults, but interestingly these characterisations rarely fit a simple dichotomy of “good” or “bad”. They range from their repeated portrayals as fascists (all but Schwarzkogler), to the people who “took the lid off Austrian fascism”; from “cynical deconstructors of political intentions”, to non-political artists, to “revolutionaries of the Sixties”, subversives, “Mao, Mao, Mao-Tse-Tung chanters”, or “noble anarchists”; from artistic reactionaries, to conservatives, to utopians; from sick perverts, to compulsive neurotics, to exhibitionists, to explorers of partial drives, to pioneers of new therapies for self and society; from noble savages, to taboo-breakers, to penetrating analysts of the

⁸ Although important, no separate mention is made in the present anthology of these two artists since they never took the step from painting to actions. Their part in the story is charted in *From Action Painting to Actionism, Vienna 1960-1965*, op. cit.

⁹ In *Aktionismus — Aktionsmalerei*, op. cit., pp.5-6.

prevailing power structures in society, to unifiers of art and life; from belated happening artists to the vanguard of body art; from godless blasphemers to saints and shamans... all this has been said about them, and it is by no means the ill-informed or the gutter press who have proved the most malicious. Individual characterisations are no less wild and varied. Nitsch, who has openly professed a mystical view of existence for over three decades, has on the one hand been variously portrayed as aggressively blasphemous, as a Satanist or even a blood-lusting devil, as an anal sadist and an anal neurotic, as an aesthetic dictator, a crypto-fascist irrationalist, or as a searing critic or parodist of religion *per se* (“favourably” by those of a libertarian persuasion) or (by those later disappointed in this hope) as “more pious than the Pope”; and on the other hand as a profound thinker, a utopian, as a modern-day Grünewald and, from certain theological quarters, as a kind of latter-day St. Francis who has brought home the central mystery of Christianity, the bloody sacrificial death of the Redeemer. All this without in most cases mentioning his *art*. Brus, to take one poignant example from the way his activities were received, was celebrated as the “most hated Austrian” and then denigrated as a sell-out and an “academic artist” when he no longer filled the role of hate-object. On occasion the most bizarre claims could be read. Schwarzkogler, who like Nitsch staged actions that investigated (among other things) the imagery of castration, was not only branded as mentally sick in a major German newspaper following the exhibition of his action photographs at the fifth *Documenta* in 1972, but also became the subject of a singularly grotesque projection: it was claimed in *Time* that the artist (who was not even included in the majority of his photographs) had committed suicide by amputating “inch by inch his own penis”.¹⁰ From researcher to victim, it would seem that “the public desire to believe his photographs as actual images of castration, violation, wounding, and hospitalization, testifies both to their quality and effectiveness as images, and to the public’s own needs at this juncture in Western history”.¹¹ This situation has been corroborated by the veritable cult that has grown up around Schwarzkogler. His images have acquired a life of their own, being used for book jackets and T-shirts, or quoted on record covers, making him into a byword and an icon for sub-cultures past and present. A final choice example of the distorting mirrors that have reflected the actionists’ work can be found in a piece of “hearsay” that appeared in *Studio International* in 1976: “Hermann Nitsch’s OM Theatre slaughters 100 sheep in castle grounds in art ritual, selected crowd of art and social elite guests watching, midsummer’s day”.¹²

Obviously the actionists were not only recruited in the cause of sub-cultural world views or used as evidence of “sickness” in the arts. However, at times the positive depictions are no less surprising, with the “blood, sex and crucifixion orgiasts” becoming magically transformed into saints, mystics and Zen masters: “Muehl is the master, the wise magician of the Orient who makes everybody happy but who also dominates everybody. ... Brus stands for the western warrior, thirsting for the martyr’s pole, while remaining calm in the face of all pain for the sake of higher glory. ... Nitsch represents the priesthood of the South, striving to save others by performing for them the deeds of ritual sacrifice. ... In Schwarzkogler we meet the individualistic mystic of the North who seeks to attain higher insights for mankind through self-control, self-domination and self-castigation...” according to the system of classification found in the introduction Konrad Oberhuber wrote to the exhibition *Viennese Actionism 1960-*

¹⁰ Cf. footnote 100 to the main text below. The appeal of the story has been illustrated most recently in the June 1999 issue of the German arts journal *Kunstzeitung*, in which Karlheinz Schmid refers to Schwarzkogler as a “renowned self-mutilator” while at the same time referring to the recent comprehensive volume of his action photographs and writings, which clearly show that there is no basis for such characterisations.

¹¹ Kristine Stiles, “Notes on Rudolf Schwarzkogler’s Images of Healing” in *Whitewalls* (Chicago, Spring 1990) p.19. A further twist in this tale can be found in Jürgen Schilling’s book *Aktionskunst* (C.J. Bucher, Frankfurt & Lucerne, 1978), in which he speculates whether Schwarzkogler’s suicide was not proof that he alone had taken the actionists’ sado-masochistic theories seriously! The new edition of *DuMont’s Künstler-Lexikon* (Cologne, 1997), a standard encyclopaedia of artists, also states that “Schwarzkogler took the total consequences of his actions when he committed suicide in 1969”.

¹² Genesis P. Orridge and Peter Christopherson, “Annihilating Reality”, Summer 1976 issue. Needless to say, no such event was ever staged.

1971.¹³ An even more astonishing apotheosis occurs in an esoteric system employed by another recent writer: the actionists are likened to the four phases of perinatal experience that Stanislav Grof divined from the reports of people who had undergone controlled experiences with LSD.¹⁴ Each actionist in the foursome (the writer strictly maintains that they were not a group) is neatly assigned a position in this system that allows the four artists to be placed together like “a four-leaved clover”.

While it is not altogether unusual for artists or art movements, particularly those with extreme tendencies, to be enlisted in support of some philosophy or personal cause,¹⁵ this plethora of interpretation has almost cut the actionists out of the picture — and that while they are still alive. It becomes almost impossible to say what their intentions actually were. Yet curiously the hate-mail they received (and were often pleased to publish) seems to offer a clue, its invective almost refreshing! “... anyone who can do such foul things is quite capable of killing a person! ... There’s only one thing left for you if ... you still feel the need to be admired: try and hang yourself unnoticed in your cell (but naked!). But first you must run the rope through your own faeces!”¹⁶ “You should be locked up in an asylum because anyone perverse enough to take public delight in flowing pig’s blood probably takes secret delight in human blood ... You should be locked away at once ... But first you should be whipped in public, naked as the day, just as you displayed yourself”.¹⁷ In a letter printed in *Die Schastrommel* 3, another writer suggests that not only should Muehl be “shitted on and pissed on from head to foot” before being incarcerated, but also “gassed” (the German word allows no doubts as to its Nazi provenance). Further examples could be quoted almost *ad libitum*, right up to the hate-mail Nitsch received in 1998 in response to the staging of his 6-day play, and including the streams of “sexual harassment” Brus received on the phone after *Art and Revolution*, the death threats reported by Muehl, and so on. The actionists’ work evidently touched a very raw nerve in the body politic, but there is more to it than that: the reader does a double-take when looking at these letters — something significant is going on. It is almost as if Nitsch’s statement from the *Blood Organ* quoted earlier (“i take upon myself all that appears negative, unsavoury, perverse and obscene, the lust and the resulting sacrificial hysteria”) is actually at work. But what exactly is it that elicits such extreme reactions?

The four actionists were not the only members of the Vienna scene to create scandals, receive fines or cause offence, simultaneously making both friends and foes, but the *way* in which this occurred seems specific to these four artists, and stems from certain elements their work had in common. It is worth considering here what the actions of the four artists did in fact share. Looking at their writings and documentation, we see first of all a general agreement that the actions developed from painting; a progression from the mimetic artwork leads to artworks based on real actions performed in real time; the actions involve the arrangement of elements of reality and the human body in ways that unsettle the observer, and in conjunction with this there is an emphasis on the human body in terms of its thingness as the subject, material and surface for performance. In addition, we can discern signs of a psychoanalytic approach, references to the great themes of birth, death, dissolution, regeneration, etc., and also the notion that these actions have a therapeutic value.¹⁸ Such intentions apart, it is well documented that the common effect of the actions consisted of provocation, bewilderment, and constant scandals.

¹³ “Thoughts on Viennese Actionism” in *Viennese Actionism*, op. cit., pp.21-22.

¹⁴ Franziska Meifert, in *Protokolle '90*, vol. 1, p.29 ff. Other matrices suggested in this essay for situating the four actionists in a common context are initiation rites and shamanic initiations, and the descent into the underworld found in classical writings.

¹⁵ The Dadas come to mind here, not because they have any intrinsic connection with Actionism, but because of the numerous academic publications that have attempted to identify the essence of Dada as a western form of Buddhism or similar.

¹⁶ Letter to Brus after the *Art and Revolution* event, printed in *Die Schastrommel* 8, and p.63 below.

¹⁷ Letter to Muehl after an action in Brunswick, p.114 below.

¹⁸ Cf. Hubert Klocker, *Viennese Actionism*, op. cit., p.48, and Franziska Meifert, op. cit., p.10 f.

As Peter Weibel has remarked in an extremely astute essay on Brus, “the scandal exploded when the naked body appeared in social space”.¹⁹ One effect of the explosion was total consternation in the law courts. The legal machinery lacked the articles to deal with the actionists’ deeds, and in several cases its rulings resorted to serious distortions of the observed facts and a total dismissal of the artists’ claims to be “doing art” in order to obtain a conviction.²⁰ Equally important was the hysteria in the press and the hate-mail letters, which was curiously unable to find any words other than those pre-empted by the actionists in their actions and statements.

The crime, it would seem, was not so much the appearance of the body in social space, but its appearance in the wrong space — which highlighted the dichotomy of what can be termed the social and the physical body. No one would have been bothered if they were simply faced with the physical body in a life-drawing class, on the surgeon’s table or in the sauna. Or indeed if it had been of the right sex, with all that that entails. The body the actionists introduced was, however, not the merely “factual” body, for unlike the body in the life-drawing class it was touched, was consenting, and allowed itself to be used as the artist’s medium with his intention clearly stamped on it. It was part of the artwork, part of the artist’s work, and also a person, in the case of Brus his own body and person. This meant that if the artist was denied his role as an artist, as he was by the courts and the yellow press, the model was similarly denied any intention, with the implication that he or she was thereby reduced to being simply a factual body, albeit now in a context that had been rendered inexplicable. Yet if the artist was to be accredited as such and conceded the rights and means of expression of his position, he had also to be conceded the power to decide in which situations bodies are just bodies and in which they are social bodies, but hitherto this had been the province of legal specialists and doctors. The actionists undermined these and other possible readings of the situation by means that were playful, ironic, but also ritualised and formal. They created situations of apparent eroticism but which denied fulfilment or contained its opposites, such as physical revulsion or injury; they examined our understanding of conventions of equality and mutual respect by performing in public and without shame such private acts as defecation or urination, which at most might be performed before peers and intimates. Paradox and ambiguity were central to many of the actions, and were used to pre-empt normal social discourse. As has already been noted, a method common to the four actionists was the arrangement of elements of reality and the human body in unsettling ways. The range of contradictory messages thus presented encompassed beguiling images of sensual pleasure and taboo; pain and beauty; the forbiddingly sweet; the fearfully rapturous; the thrillingly dangerous; humour and scorn; the grotesque and the desirable; singularity in duality; non-sequiturs in the ever-grinding mill of meanings; compulsions and desires — the embodiment, perhaps, of an individual’s typical conflicts, hopes and uncertainty within their social setting. In this way the actions immediately became a social issue, and the resultant spilling-over of art into the social sphere was epitomised by the courts attempting, and failing, to incorporate them within a legal framework. As Nitsch and his gallerist observed in a leaflet commenting on their trial in 1966²¹: “connoisseurs of the happening will recognise that this hearing is an artistic performance, the second half, as it were, of the 4th abreaction play begun in June 1966”.

¹⁹ Peter Weibel, “Zur Aktionskunst von Günter Brus” in *Günter Brus, Der Überblick* (Residenz Verlag, Salzburg and Vienna, 1986), p.45, an essay to which the present author is much indebted. Although not all of the scandals and court cases centred on the body, the way in which it triggered such reactions can be viewed as representative of the other *causes célèbres*.

²⁰ Cf. Peter Weibel, “Kunst der öffentlichen Störung” in *Im Namen des Volkes* (ed. Siegfried Salzmann, Duisburg, 1979), p.48 ff. Two examples of many analysed in this text are: Nitsch’s court case in 1966 after displaying a collage, “the first holy communion”, consisting of sanitary towels and religious symbols (on the occasion of his 19th action), resulting in a 6 month suspended sentence for “offending religious sensibilities”, although in fact no one had claimed they were offended; and various of the rulings at the trial after the *Art and Revolution* event (1968) were similarly dubious, for instance that Muehl was guilty of causing grievous bodily harm for whipping a masochist — despite the fact that the latter took part willingly, and openly admitted to his preferences and the pleasure he had experienced.

²¹ Cf. previous footnote and p.149 below.

From the beginning, the actionists deliberately placed a question-mark over social definitions, over what is art and not art, and over what is the “factual” or “physical” body and what is the “public” body. In the manifesto for the *Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism*, Nitsch wrote, “i shall give up my body to the audience to be drenched”.²² Brus demonstrated this area of ambiguity in its most extreme form in his last actions, where he actually injured his body in a bid to resolve the apparent tautologies of artist and artwork, sadism and masochism, body and agent. The actionists did not create paradoxes, they simply revealed those that were already present. As Brus writes, “the scandals attributed to Nitsch, Muehl and myself originated in the ‘outrageous’ exposure of ‘bodily delusions’”.²³ Rather than simply exposing the rift between the social and the physical body, they demonstrated the paradoxical nature of existing in both: the body as self and the body as object (capable of being soiled or injured, with or without touching the self); the body as a means of fulfilling desire, and the body as a threat or obstacle, as in the case of illness, disease, impending death, hospitalisation, imprisonment, narcosis, or the estrangement of childhood (images most hauntingly evoked by Schwarzkogler); the body as mine, and the body as yours (your slave, your property, your object in a material action); the body as I, and the body as not I (in situations where it is used to punish the “owner” — from spanking to whipping to torture); the body as proof of doing and authorship, and the body as evidence against you; the body as a non-referential singularity, and the body as a multiply encoded social referent... This provisional list captures important elements in all of the actionists’ work. And by demonstrating the paradoxical nature of being-in-the-body-in-social-space, their work automatically brings this paradox into the continuum of social discourse, which is ultimately concerned with uncertainties.

The interpenetration of these apparent dualities is underlined by Weibel in his essay on Brus, in which he remarks that “through the actual mutilation of the body, the reality of its social encoding and the mutilating function of social encoding itself are attacked”.²⁴ Here Weibel is not necessarily locating the encoding “inside” the body in some way. It seems to be one of our Western assumptions that the body has historical and ontological priority, coming before the self and the social person. Consequently the body comes to be viewed as a kind of container of past experiences and traumas, and sometimes of innate wisdom, as a vessel for the unfolding of genetic information, and is denied its singularity as a material thing and its complexity as part of the body politic.²⁵ Even if, in a recent interview, Weibel notes that there was a danger in actionism of “reducing everything to the body and drives”,²⁶ in some ways the actionists reverse this concept, to give priority to the person as doer, as one born first and foremost into the social flux, into the giving and taking of meanings, of positive and negative encodings, desired and otherwise; and only through the creation of the self, via the mediation of the mother, does the person come to discover the body as part of its world. The description of the body given by Brus in his earliest published lines found in this anthology suggests a strongly non-dualistic approach: “My body is the intention. My body is the event. My body is the result.” Not only does this statement do justice to the actionists’ explicit aim of extending art beyond the canvas into life, taking life as its material and finally dissolving the difference between the two (Muehl: “Scenes of everyday life and slices of reality are experienced as artworks”; Schwarzkogler: “the artist does not work in order to live by his work, rather for him his work is life itself”; Nitsch: “life itself is staged by the o.m. theatre”), but it also gives lucid expression to their attempts to “trash the violently imposed subject-object divide”,²⁷ and “to bring [people] to an awareness of the whole”.²⁸

²² Cf. Weibel, op. cit., p.51.

²³ Brus, “Rudolf Schwarzkogler” in *Die Schastrommel 3*, 1970.

²⁴ “Zur Aktionskunst von Günter Brus”, op. cit., p.48.

²⁵ The idea of looking for lost memories in the body, with the body as some sort of “container”, can be found in Klaus Theweleit’s book *Object-Choice* (Verso, London, 1994, p.35), where he states that “earlier experiences are stored in the body”.

²⁶ *Der Wiener Aktionismus und die Österreicher*, ed. Danièle Roussel (Ritter Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1995), p. 138.

²⁷ Brus, referring specifically to Schwarzkogler, in “Rudolf Schwarzkogler” (in *Die Schastrommel 3*).

Furthermore, it also illuminates several statements made by Nitsch that will be examined later, and which also preclude a dualistic standpoint.

The question remains of what exactly these social codes might be, and how they are attacked. A number of codes have already been mentioned: the “bodily delusions” that Brus refers to, and which I have tried to list, and various fracturing experiences imposed upon the person, most of which are traumatic in nature²⁹ (pain, wounding, in extreme cases castration and torture, but also double-binds, rejection, separation, and loss of love). As the anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano has pointed out³⁰, these moments in a person’s history of traumatisation are intensified and fixed by such elements as surprise (shock), uncertainty, guilt and denial (not least of personal agency). In turn, these can be seen as moments when the self, or a part of the self, is rewritten by others as an entity that has been removed from the social give and take of meanings and the normal flow of events, and cut off from social discourse and denied its accountability as a person. A part of the individual is designated, to a greater or lesser degree, as a “no-go” area. These parts are not so much “repressed” and hidden away as written out of the discourse, made “unmentionable” and unaccountable, and thus inaccessible.

Nitsch calls tragedy and pain “the points of departure” of his actions³¹, and has made them major themes throughout his work, as have the other actionists: castration (Schwarzogler, Nitsch) and injury, wounding, crucifixion and death (Nitsch), stifling situations of helplessness, and situations where the person is reduced to the status of mere material (Muehl writes tellingly: “a person is not treated in the material action as a person but as a body. the body, things, are not viewed as objects for our purposes, but have all purpose radically removed from them”³²). Surprise and uncertainty were also important and ever-present aspects of the actions, the ludic undermining of social situations and “waking people up” by making them “uncertain about their manifold pseudo-existence”, as Nitsch writes.³³ The uncertainty that envelops the social body is compounded by introducing the body’s own ambiguity, most readily apparent in those moments when the physical form seems to be rebelling against or redefining the social situation: birth, the breakthrough of repressed urges, synaesthetic experiences, the revelation of the hushed-up activities of the bladder and bowels, catatonic states, immobilisation and death. Separate means of emphasising social uncertainty may be identified in the incorporation of states of marginal identity, as typified by the transvestism in the work of all four, or in the arch humour found in the work of Brus and Muehl, or even in the quiet arrangements of elements of reality, as in the object actions in the work of Nitsch and Schwarzogler.³⁴

At the same time, by creating such images and by focusing on these moments or processes of uncertainty, the actionists became marginalised, outlawed, and denied their roles as artists: they became “othered” in anthropological terminology, where the concept is used to designate the cultural stranger or alien who is an outcast of a particular social group, or an intruder from outside. The “other” is also a quite everyday phenomenon though, being the counterpart of the self or, more specifically, the counterpart of those parts of the self that have

²⁸ Nitsch, “the *mysterium coniunctionis*”, p.159 below.

²⁹ The following arguments are based solely on an individual’s traumatic history. The socialisation of the infant from a “symbiosis” with the mother to selfhood mirrors many of the negative processes that will be discussed later on in this introduction, while being positively structured in such a way as to develop agency. Cf. for instance John Shotter’s *Social Accountability and Selfhood* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1984) for an approach to developmental psychology based on the assumption that “human babies are not born into any direct relation with nature, but into a home, not into a natural habitat but into a humanly created setting”.

³⁰ “Pain and Temporality”, a lecture given in Heidelberg, 26 May 1999.

³¹ Hermann Nitsch, *6-Tage-Spiel in Prinzenhof 1998* (Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, 1999) p.24.

³² *Material Action Manifesto 1964*, cf. p.87 below.

³³ *6-Tage-Spiel*, op. cit., p.14.

³⁴ Cf. for example Nitsch’s action drama dedicated to Dr. Wolfgang Tunner, p.142 ff. below.

been marginalised by others.³⁵ In the latter case, two processes go hand in hand: by denying the intentions of a person or their sense of free agency, or by pre-empting them, you are in turn liable to be viewed as inhuman or in some way incompetent as a social person (a concrete example here would be the journalists, judges and psychiatrists who denied the actionists their competency and intentions, and were attacked, often wittily, on the same level by the actionists and their supporters).³⁶ If part of a person is thus reduced to non-selfhood, by a kind of reverse process the person responsible for this reduction is simultaneously removed from social discourse, because there can be no more communication with the first person. By definition, the “other” cannot be communed with, at least in words or socially established gestures. By defining the other as “other” one becomes likewise “othered”.

The hall of mirrors that emerges from this divide is complicated. It is enough to mention that the actionists were referred to as “monsters”, “inhuman”, “unaware of what humanism means”,³⁷ “utterly sick”, or, as in the letters quoted above, “quite capable of killing a person” or people who “probably [take] secret delight in human blood”. They often defied human comprehension, and were no longer treated as accountable persons, because they had evoked the very situations in which accountability itself is called into question. Their personae had become imbued with the same uncertainty they had created, with the result that to a large part of the public they had become irredeemably “other”. Indeed, they communicated on levels excluded from normal social discourse, not least by defecating or urinating in public and by touching substances in taboo situations. If we now step further into the hall of mirrors, we can see that by becoming “other” through means such as these, the actionists stepped into the social process in which the spectators themselves were encoded. That is to say, they invoked those moments of uncertainty which are capable of transforming people into the counterpart of the “others” brought into being by their actions. Rather than somehow digging down into memories of incommunicable drives stored in the body, the actions often restaged or recalled moments of uncertainty in which the body or the person is also turned into a thing.

The exact nature of this process is beyond the scope of the present introduction, although it would seem doubtful that the actions released any repressions and brought them to consciousness on a one-to-one basis (“A” breaks a taboo and “B”, the spectator, feels the same taboo or something similar rise up inside to the level of conscious perception). Fields of perception, maybe, started to find words in response to what the actionists were doing, beginning perhaps with “this can’t be happening” or “I can’t believe my eyes”, or quite simply “crazy!” and in the broader context of the media and the spread of rumour, “did he really do that?” or “Impossible!” This rhetoric of disbelief and denial, uncertainty and surprise — not only in words, but also as manifested in the shock and pale faces the actions produced at times — is what surrounds a person’s traumas. A hushed silence was broken. But only in some quarters: the sputtering hate-mail appears to have withstood the onslaught of change. These letters are fascinating because they show, in perhaps the clearest way, how dangerous the process was. To paraphrase the anthropologist Klaus-Peter Koepping, such activities as the actionists explored involve “a game with the hopes and risks of an uncontrollable ... merger, that is both sought as well as dreaded when approaching otherness.”³⁸

In a remarkable work on art and spirit possession, Fritz Kramer has analysed instances of similar merging in

³⁵ Obviously the other is not necessarily, or simply, a negative figure: the other is essential for the personal definition of self, above all the mother.

³⁶ An extraordinary example of an ironic broadside against the experts is the series of (“pathological”) drawings of physical mutilation fantasies which Brus included in his publication *Patent Merde*, to accompany quotes from the psychiatric report made on him by Drs. Quatember and Gross prior to the *Art and Revolution* trial.

³⁷ As insinuated to Brus by the state prosecutor at the *Art and Revolution* trial.

18 ³⁸ Klaus-Peter Koepping, “The Ludic as Creative Disorder: Framing, De-framing and Boundary Crossing” in *The Games of Gods and Man*, ed. Koepping (Lit Verlag, Hamburg, 1997) p.30.

both these fields, and lucidly demonstrates that feelings of rapture, profound emotion, or of being deeply moved are the Western equivalents of spirit possession in African societies. The verbal description and cultural context is different, but the effect is the same, and is essentially mimetic in nature. Moreover, by reflecting on the encounter of Western artists with African societies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on their encounter with their own specific variety of “other”, Kramer points out that the artists’ response was no less mimetic than that of the African who is possessed (the discovery of “Negro art” led the German Expressionists to style themselves as savages; the Dadas similarly modelled themselves on those examples of the urban noble savage, the boxer and the con-man; Surrealism provides numerous examples of imitation following adoption, and the list can be extended to include Western youth sub-cultures, such as hippies and punks). In an elegant turn of the mirror, Kramer shows that his no less artistic or theatrical examples of possession in African societies are themselves triggered by the “other” — by images of persons from outside the society’s own cultural circles, encoded with strangeness and uncertainty, with what one is not supposed to be.³⁹ Once again, possession is mimetic; the mediums in the different social groups adopt, often with exaggerated theatricality, the trappings and customs of the Western explorers or unfamiliar African societies with which they have come into contact.⁴⁰ It is perhaps not overstated, given this interplay of self and other, to say that we are all continually “possessed” and constantly trying to renegotiate the attribution of otherness and agency by copying or denying. In the West this reaches an extreme manifestation when someone acts “like a person possessed” and, exactly as in the hate-mail letters, does not simply imitate the gist of the other’s behaviour, but follows the script perfectly, word for word. The actionists got under people’s skin, even when these people had not actually witnessed the acts with which they had become so obsessed.

If the arguments so far might seem tangential, they certainly appear necessary if we are to take seriously Nitsch’s words quoted near the beginning: “i take upon myself all that appears negative, unsavoury, perverse and obscene, the lust and the resulting sacrificial hysteria, in order to spare YOU the defilement and shame entailed by the descent into the extreme”. The statement shows that Nitsch realised that the process he was exploring questions the boundaries of “I” and “you”, and transcends them both. Nitsch proposes an added dimension to this conventional view of persons when he states that “the participants [= spectators] themselves are the heroes of the drama”.⁴¹ Witnessing his actions is enough to precipitate the spectator into abreaction, because they are concerned with identification and therapeutic redefinition: “the clearly grasped moment (intoxication of being) precipitates an identification with the essence of creation”.⁴² Most importantly, Nitsch goes on to describe the point where this merging becomes singularly meaningful, and not mere “obsession”: “we want to know one another, be in one another, be in the other, be in all things. your bodies are my body. you constitute my external world, just as i constitute your external world”.⁴³ A stronger evocation of a non-dualistic standpoint is hard to imagine.

The actionists have made numerous claims for the therapeutic nature of their work. Nitsch has repeatedly stressed the importance of abreaction and the release of pent-up energies for the human psyche and made its

³⁹ The close connections between mimesis, the “other” and surprise are explored in Michael Taussig’s book, *Mimesis and Alterity* (Routledge, London & New York, 1993).

⁴⁰ Most famously demonstrated in Jean Rouch’s much cited film, *Les maîtres fous* (1954–5), a documentary of the Hauka in Africa who were possessed by the spirits of the French colonial powers. Kramer examines several similar examples of possession by the white man.

⁴¹ Nitsch, *Declarations and Descriptions of the O.M. Theatre Project*, no. 84, p.175 below. Nitsch’s use of “participant” is not immediately clear to the first-time reader. Koeppling (op.cit., p.12) argues tellingly that it is “the employment of ambiguity in action through performance that has the power to transform onlookers into actors.”

⁴² Nitsch, *Declarations*, no. 47, p.173 below.

⁴³ *Ibid.* no. 35, p.172 below.

achievement a central part of his drama, and even if in later years he shifted the ultimate emphasis to a mystical awareness of the whole, he has remained true to the notion of therapy and abreaction.⁴⁴ Muehl stressed the action's ability to bring repressed layers of the psyche to consciousness and point the way to liberation and greater self-awareness. Schwarzkogler's writings moved increasingly towards the notion of an "art of painting as the art of healing", of art that regenerates the capacity for experience. More cautiously, Brus has stated that "Vienna Actionism was determined to break taboos, to point out by means of symbolic, ersatz actions the dangers that can arise from pent-up aggressions ... and together with this a self-therapy was to be effected".⁴⁵ Yet an earlier, laconic passage on the self-therapeutic result of his work is worth quoting: "With *Body Analysis I* I attempted to analyse the whole of my body, I allowed people to shit and piss and spit in my mouth. In fact it was very purifying, inasmuch as I could then get rid of the whole body analysis bullshit. And I also think that every body artist should first have someone shit in their mouth — then the problems that they pose, twist, stand straight, place at an angle and turn to the wall will all vanish".⁴⁶ Here Brus comes close to Nitsch, who has frequently stated that the ultimate aim of his excesses is to eliminate them, or indeed the very need for them. A process of forgetting, perhaps.

To portray the actionists simply as (auto-)therapists would be to miss the point entirely: their self-image as artists was central to their work in more ways than have been examined here, and they had too much destructive glee, too much verve and downright humour, or too much aesthetic power to be passed off as mere social workers. The dauntless assaults by Brus on "the idea of the body" that we see in his *Breaking Test* are all too over-emphasised in the literature at the expense of the sheer humour of his action *Tricks* or such films as *20 September*, for example. Muehl's Ubuesque parodies of the "little man" entrapped in his sexual hypocrisy likewise spring to mind, and Nitsch too incorporated the "parodic" in his large action scores. On the other hand, the image of pure spontaneity in their work is also erroneous. The actions were frequently discussed for months in advance in order to gauge their likely effect and "rightness": "Art theorists shift the spontaneous character of our actions far too much to the fore", as Brus stated in a recent interview⁴⁷. "Schwarzkogler never worked like that at all. Nitsch always worked according to strict directions from his scores, and this was also the case for Muehl and myself, if in a slightly more relaxed manner. Likewise the art theorists often over-emphasise the protest character of our works in order to demote Vienna Actionism to a kind of vernacular art".⁴⁸ Their work was always art, but not always "therapy". Form and aesthetics were constantly given prominence, for otherwise the work would "lapse into a morass without any contrast, a total blood-bath",⁴⁹ according to Nitsch. Indeed, Nitsch has always stressed that without artistic form, abreaction would be a dangerous affair. The international importance now accorded to Vienna Actionism has come about because it produced a unique synthesis of aesthetic form and exploration that yielded sustained effects, not because of the shock attested to by its public reception. It was also a synthesis that included the traditions of turn-of-the-century Vienna — Freud, Expressionism, and the Vienna School. It is one of the great strengths of Vienna Actionism that, although it was born from a development of, and break with, abstract expressionism, and initially gained great stimulus from contemporary European and American artistic movements, it could draw on such an important aesthetic and cultural tradition. This ability is anything but a sign of provincialism; it testifies rather to the breadth of vision, and the aesthetic richness of Vienna Actionism. For was not the question of whether defecating is art (put to Brus at the *Art and Revolution* trial) also one of aesthetics, if only the judges had known?

⁴⁴ *6-Tage-Spiel*, op. cit., p.12.

⁴⁵ In *Aktionismus — Aktionsmalerei*, op. cit., p.5.

⁴⁶ *der Löwe*, No. 1, 31 May 1974, Bern, p.13-14.

⁴⁷ In Roussel, op. cit., p.20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

20 ⁴⁹ Nitsch, quoted in Peter Friedl, "Der zerissene Dionysos — Annäherung an Hermann Nitsch" in *Vom Anderen Theater*, ed. Wiener Festwochen (Vienna, 1982) p.48.

In Great Britain

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BRUS

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FLOWER PIECE

for günter brus

the tulip shits on the lawn
the violet farts into the gardener's hand
the forget-me-not vomits into tissue paper
the carnation slimes on its stem
the orchid masturbates between the girl's fingers
and spatters into her sleeve
the rose stinks of sweat and menstrual blood
the lily of the valley snots on to the fresh table-cloth
the lily pisses in the vase
the hyacinth burps

Gerhard Rühm (19.4.1969)





DIE SCHASTROMMEL

*"Organ of the Austrian Government
in Exile", edited by Günter Brus.*

*No. 8a: Actions 64-66. Five
hundred copies. Bolzano, June 1972.
(Actions 67-68 appeared in no. 8b,
December 1972, Actions 69-70 in
8c, December 1972.)*





24 BRUS

REMARKS ON ANA¹

My actions developed from action painting, from the urge to give it a more "spatial" form and not exclude the painter from the resulting work. After an involuntary nine-month stay in military barracks, I plunged into a state of creative crisis marked by resignation and depression. Fortunately, during this period of despondency I met Anni, my wife. Also fortunately for me, while paralysed by the worst possible financial hardship, I received the sum of 5,000 schillings from the Institut zur Förderung der Künste [Institute for the Advancement of the Arts] thanks to the intervention of Herr Ati von Auer, in order to produce a cycle of large-scale paintings in a cellar. (This was the only financial assistance of any note that I was to receive before fleeing to Berlin in 1969.) I covered the walls of the two basement rooms with calico, a cheap substitute for canvas, stretched strings back and forth across the rooms, and attached lengths of brown paper to them that extended from the floor to the surface to be painted. My aim was to create a labyrinth which would help me avoid determining a compositional idea too early on. I had the idea of working on all of the walls more or less simultaneously so as to form an "all-round-painting", and achieve a kind of "decomposition" by constantly wandering through the labyrinth.

After an involuntary six-month stay in a hotel in St. Moritz — my wife and I were working there as dish-washers — I returned to Vienna and found the basement empty. The painted lengths of calico lay in wild disarray in a gloomy alcove. During my absence the owner of the basement, a psychologist and journalist, had rented out the rooms to a student club.²

Throughout this period I rationalised my distraught state of mind, my uncertainty, by drifting further and further into an "Art-is-dead mood", which I sometimes dressed up in an arrogant "Rimbauduchampism". Numerous discussions with Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch and Rudolf Schwarzkogler greatly contributed to my breaking out slightly from my state of self-encapsulation, at least here and there. Muehl managed to pick the lock with which I had incarcerated myself. He introduced me to the experimental film-maker Kurt Kren, who was immediately enthusiastic about my plan for a film action that I outlined to him in the Café Sport.

The action took place in Muehl's flat in Obere Augartenstrasse. I set to work on elaborating the "plot" and "scenery" with great zeal. Despite the scanty means at my disposal, I wished to immerse the room, along with a large number of selected objects, in white-on-white. The interior was to be denied any specific sensual quality radiated by the objects it contained. Ultimately it was simply a classic white canvas extended into the third dimension.





Within this setting I rolled my body, wrapped in white cloths like an unruly parcel, diagonally across the room. The lengths of cloth unwound themselves from my tensed body, which for a long while remained motionless in a catatonic position, with the soles of both feet seemingly stuck to the wall.

I had planned a body painting as the second stage of the “plot”. Here at least a self-critical view of *ANA* is due. I first tipped black paint over the white objects, and then over Anni with the aim of creating a “living painting”. But gradually a kind of uncertainty crept in, which was intensified by a jealous argument between two photographers, which ended with one of them leaving the place, steaming with anger.

Kurt Kren managed to focus all his energies and keep his 16 mm camera trained on the work, despite all the disturbances.³ The note of discord even increased when I began to notice shortcomings in my “score” — or, assuming it had none, shortcomings in the way I was translating it into concrete action. When I realised this, I succumbed to a fit of painting, as if some inner drive were breaking through. I jammed myself inside a step-ladder that had toppled over, on which I had earlier performed the most appalling physical jerks, and smeared the walls in frantic despair — to the point of exhaustion. An abstract art work at the eleventh hour! With cruel comments Muehl mocked my relapse into a “technique” that I was trying to overcome. He ended up having an unsavoury argument with Kren, who agreed that I had aborted my objective.

Looking back at these events, I would say that Muehl’s criticisms were very largely justified — and necessary, as were all the other issues that were thrashed out inside our “Action Group”. My first action was partly an intellectual blunder. But it was also a breakthrough which aimed directly at what later came to be called “body art”. I admit that I was unable to co-ordinate running an event in a pre-set space with my own inner needs. But one way or another I kicked my way free, and hit upon new spaces and hopes.

ANA introduced a phase of growing awareness. And not merely a phase of growing self-awareness. It ended, so far as the artistic technique known as the “action” is concerned, with *Breaking Test* (Munich 1970), before an audience, and *Body Analysis* (Berlin 1970), which took place in a studio setting.





SELF-PAINTING: Film Action
> Studio Sailer, Vienna, December 1964

REMARKS ON SELF-PAINTING⁴

After my first action [*Ana*], I soon realised I would have to keep away for the time being from dynamic courses of action (monodramas). Before anything else, it was necessary to set down the ABC of my self-presentationallanguage. And this consisted of self-painting, derived from abstract painting.

I viewed my body and the act of painting once again as a kind of "picture", composed of my actions and observed by the camera. I described my plans to John Sailer, who allowed me to use his studio.

I arranged the action in three parts:

1. Hand painting
2. Head painting
3. Total head painting

Analogous to Arnulf Rainer's "Overpaintings", but extended by my own actionist means, the painter's head was to become incorporated into the picture surface, become one with the picture and disappear into the picture. "Birth from obliteration," as I wrote in a slightly different context, many years later. Admittedly my total head painting was only a partial success because it led to a distortion in my vision of myself (and of the painting). I was annoyed later by this shortcoming, for I realised that I had not demonstrated enough perseverance during the celebration. Generally speaking I always attempted to correct any errors in an action during the next one, when inevitably new ones would crop up. In my defence it should be said that "Direct Art" never afforded me the opportunity of improving a work at some later date, as was possible with normal working methods. It was thus necessary to put up with the weaknesses of a work and go along with them. This was all the more bitter for me when the piece was staged before an audience. However, putting myself in such an exposed situation was a deliberate aspect of my theoretical ideas. It helped me bring the fruits to ripeness.





30 BRUS

1965

SELF-PAINTING: Photo
Action > Perinet
Cellar^s, Vienna,
January 1965



BRUS 31



SELF-MUTILATION:
Film Action
> Perinet Cellar,
Vienna, January 1965



32 BRUS

REMARKS ON VIENNA WALK⁶

In 1965 the Galerie Junge Generation (Börsenplatz, Vienna) decided to risk a half-hearted attempt at bringing "Vienna Actionism" out of the underground. I was given the chance to perform a self-painting on their premises. Admittedly the event was viewed more as a spectacle for the opening of my exhibition "Painting — Self-Painting — Self-Mutilation". The exhibition consisted of paintings from my "Painting in a Labyrinthine Space" from 1963, a few drawings, and numerous photographs of my actions by Ludwig Hoffenreich. To round it all off a discussion with a "panel of experts" took place after the action.

The preparations for this action were accompanied by more or less intense nervousness on my part. Otto Muehl helped paint me from head to toe. Ludwig Hoffenreich sighed from time to time: "Oh goodness, this will end in prison or the madhouse!" I admit I was not completely free of such visions. John Sailer transported the living picture from the Perinet Cellar to Heldenplatz, with me ducking down every time we stopped at a traffic light. My wife and a couple of friends followed the events, agitated, at a suitable distance. Hoffenreich and Ronald Fleischmann photographed them, Muehl and Schwarzkogler filmed them with an 8 mm camera. Naturally the press were loath to find any deeper meaning in this action. They viewed it as an amusing publicity stunt for my exhibition.

The day before the exhibition opening, when the action and discussion were to take place, I decided to prevent the venture from seeming like a compromise and to make my artistic intentions clearer. The Janus-faced nature of the gallery's activities drove me from the rats' cellars on to the street, as it were. I decided to walk as a living picture through the inner city of Vienna, past numerous historically significant buildings. The starting point for my stroll was the Heldenplatz. My route was to take me through the Burgtor, past the Spanish Riding School and the Dorotheum, and finally to St. Stephan's Square. I refrained from telling myself what would happen there, for I correctly sensed that the watchful eye of a defender of the public peace would not be long in spotting the living painting and arresting it. This occurred on the corner of Bräunerstrasse and Stallburggasse. A policeman led me to a nearby police station, much to the merriment of the passers-by. There my particulars were noted down and a cab called for me.





I am an artist! Ever since I was six years old. That was when I first consciously painted myself in order to go on the war-path against the boys from the next tower block, the Comanches.

And before that I had already painted myself with spinach and semolina, but that was unintentional and counts for less. Be that as it may, I can be proud in retrospect of this unintentional budding genius in me, and the later, conscious act. Unfortunately society was stronger. It undermined my artistry by forcing me to adopt its conventions, according to which self-painting is, from a certain age onwards, the privilege of the female part of humanity. (Which is quite delightful if done with subtlety.)

But, my friends! Some among us are more fortunate, for they have maintained their childhood urge to paint themselves well into their puberty and, moreover, are able to prolong their puberty into their late twenties. Since Pub(ertal) Art sounds rather dismissive, and yet the phenomenon must be given a name, they subsume their activities (now described as art) under the term "Happening". The day before yesterday I had the indescribable pleasure of being officially invited to such a "happening", as representative of the newspaper's arts section. Not being a philistine, I went along.

Günter Brus is the name of the man who is no longer content to paint on canvas and thus lays hands on himself. So he besmears himself, simultaneously hinting at self-mutilation, and he and Vienna's five happening specialists state that this is art. The only art involved though is in claiming this to be art, or the art of revolting against one's own inability to produce art. If for one reason or another Mr Brus is angry with himself and uses these means to transform his suicide into a substitute activity, then the whole business has a moral function and is worthy of praise. But that may be just one motive; others are no doubt infantile in nature, and yet others share the spirit of Nero as he set fire to Rome in happening fashion, or the Marquis de Sade as he conjured up "happenings" (not to mention humanity's more recent self-mutilations which are all too present in our minds); and I am beset by a horrified pessimism about civilisation, and my childish spinach paintings no longer fill me with joy, even if they were not a substitute for self-mutilation and arson.

BRUS 35

Bundespölitzeidirektion Wien
 Bezirkspolizei-Commissariat Innere Stadt
 Wien I, Deutschermeisterplatz 5 / Tel. 347601
 Zustellung zu eigenen Händen!
 Wien, am 7. Juli 1965

Post 6400/65

Strafverfügung

An Herrn Günter BRUS freischaffender Künstler,
 in Wien 9.

Sie haben am 5.7.65 18 in der Zeit von 11.30 Uhr bis 12.00 in Wien I, Stalburgg. - Bräunerstr. weiß indel. Sie mit weißer Farbe bemalt waren, ein Verhalten gesetzt, welches geeignet war, Argernis zu erregen und bei den Passanten auch tatsächlich erregt hat, wodurch die Ordnung an einem öffentl. Orte gestört war

und dadurch eine Verwaltungsbestrafung (Art.) VIII (1) a EGVG begangen

Gemäß (Art.) VIII Schlussatz EGVG

Wird - werden - gegen Sie in Anwendung des § 47 des Verwaltungsstrafgesetzes eine Geldstrafe(n) von 80,- in der Ueberschneidung der Geldstrafe(n) tritt an deren Stelle eine Ersatzarreststrafe(n) in der Dauer von 12 Stunden

Zugleich werden gemäß § 47 des Verwaltungsstrafgesetzes die mit 80,- bestimmten Bauschlüsse des Verwaltungsstrafverfahrens zu ersetzen.

Gegen diese Strafverfügung können Sie binnen einer Woche nach der Zustellung schriftlich, telegraphisch oder mündlich beim Amte Einspruch erheben. Im Einspruch können Sie sich rechtfertigen und zugleich die Ihrer Verteidigung dienlichen Beweismittel vorbringen.

Wird kein Einspruch erhoben, so haben Sie binnen 7 Tagen nach Ablauf der Einspruchsfrist den Strafbeitrag und die Bauschlüsse mittels des beiliegenden Erlagscheines einzusenden oder unter Vorweisung der Strafverfügung bei diesem Amte einzuzahlen, widrigen die zwangsweise Eintreibung veranlaßt werden würde.

Paragraf 44 in § 48 VStG (Strafverfügung)
 Leber Nr. 101 - Amtsdirektion der Bundespolizeidirektion Wien.
 (Unterschrift)


To Herr Günter Brus, freelance artist
 "By being painted with white paint, (you) acted in a manner liable to cause offence, and which you actually did do to passers-by, thus disturbing the peace in a public place."

Fine: 80 ATS.

(Charge made after Brus's arrest)

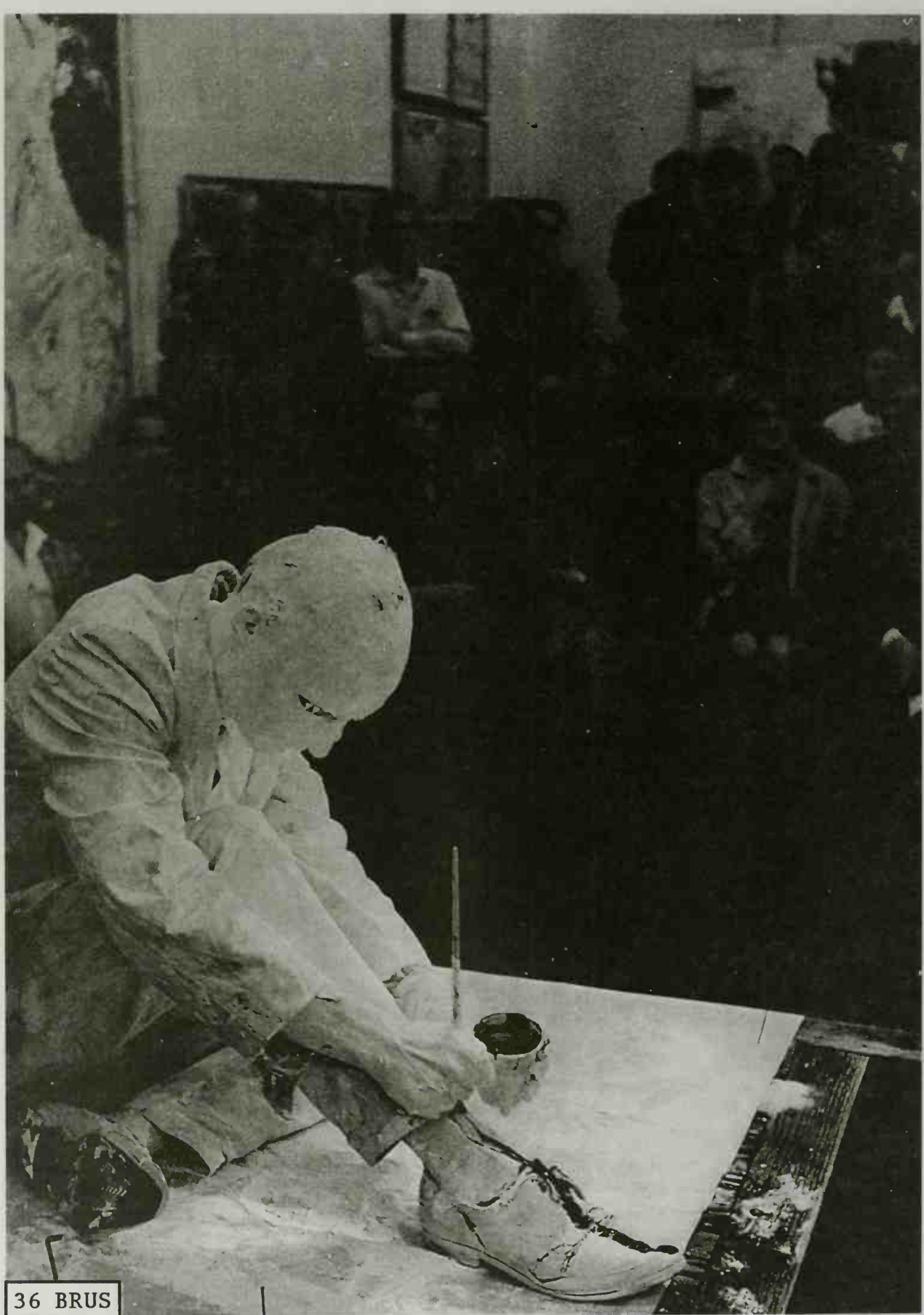
SELF-PAINTING - SELF-MUTILATION >
 Galerie Junge Generation, Vienna,
 6-25 July, 1965

BRUS



6. - 25. 7. 1965
 ERÖFFNUNG: 6. 7., 19 UHR

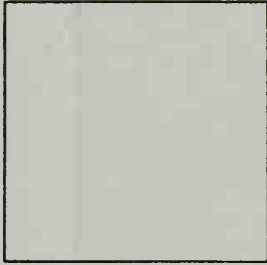
GALERIE JUNGE GENERATION
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36 BRUS

das fieber

magazin der
•wiener aktionsgruppe•



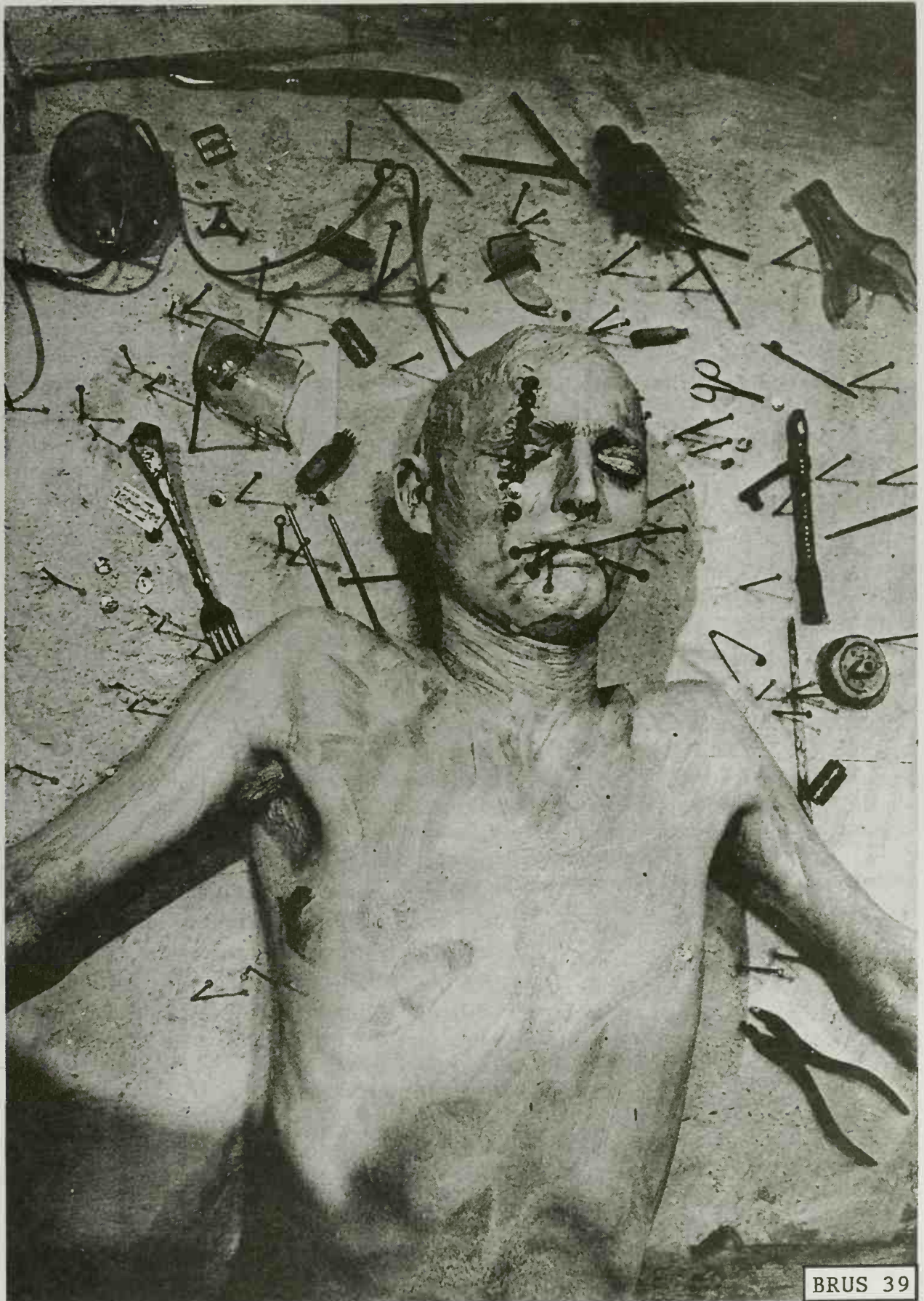
**FEVER: Unpublished
magazine (cover
design by Schwarz-
kogler), 1965**

(Following pages)

**TETANUS: Film Action >
Perinet Cellar,
Vienna, 1965**

**TRANSFUSION: Film
Action > Perinet
Cellar, Vienna, 1965**

HOSPITAL — The sex killer drives a panel pin into his ear-hole — STERILISATION — Kill the blind — The suture of the testicles — Slash it open with a razor blade — The butcher's bolt gun — The imbecile sits in his COT — A glass of SPERM has fallen over — Kill the neighbours with an AXE — KNIVES and fingers lying around — The eyelids have been sewn together — the outer ears were removed — A bent galvanised nail looms out of the small navel-shaped hole — Murder — A seam runs along the middle of the skull — STAPLES — HARELIP — The fingers crumble and fall off — a butcher's hook juts out of the stump — The IDIOT strangles himself with BARBED WIRE — SHOCK — The model railway is beneath the cot — The hacked-off foot is in the high-heeled shoe — ABORTION — The room in the institution is painted white — I plunge the knife into the FONTANELLE — The consumptive sticks the asparagus in his ear — WHITE — TORTURE — A bent nail juts out from the ball of the foot — HIGH VOLTAGE CURRENT — I roll across the room — Lemon-coloured dough gushes out of the slit-open bags — The lemon-coloured man sticks a number of drawing-pins into his spine — He slices off his FORESKIN with a RAZOR — From time to time there is a short shrill noise — Hanging on the walls are fifty identical pictures at equal intervals — ROPE — The nostrils have healed over — SIPHON — Whitish SPITTLE flows from his veins — He saws off his mother's prick — The invalid sits motionless in his COT — MANSLAUGHTER — QUICKSILVER — CIRCUMCISION — WHITE — ABORTION — The index finger sinks into the spittle — The IMBECILE is surrounded by whitish SLIME — A glass of lemonade is knocked over — I split my head in two with the AXE — Somebody tugs the cord — The arm falls out of its joint — I knife down the CRIPPLE — BLOODLESS — SELF-MUTILATION — The invalid's tongue sticks to the ice-cold steel — Once the skin of the tongue tautens after pulling the body away it is severed with a sharp blade — TACKS — The lemon-coloured idiot drives a NAIL through his knee-cap — STIGMA — STRANGULATION — ELECTRICITY — CAUTION — A little dust rises — I fall out of the cot — I crawl backwards across the white room — The clockwork jumping frog hops along the table-top and falls on to the floor — WHITE — YELLOW FEVER — The eunuch hugs the bowl — Lying in the white wash-bowl are splinters of glass — The strangled man's semen drips on to the whitish dust — The glass containing white emulsion is knocked over — The white SEX KILLER rolls in the whitish dough — STERILE — Whitish spittle flows out of his ear-hole — Someone lifts his left hand with a SNARE and lowers it again — The gas chamber is painted white — The white imbecile stuffs wire wool into his mouth and sews his upper and lower lips together with a needle and thread —





FILMS BY BRUS AND
MUEHL > Pop-Club,
Belvederegasse,
Vienna, 21 January
1966

POP-CLUB INVITATION

Günter Brus: Self-mutilation

My body is the intention. My body is the event. My body is the result.

Otto Muehl: the material action arose from the destruction of painting (easel painting) it is painting that has grown beyond the surface everything can be used as the material the material action's effect comes about through destruction. this destruction is directed against the slimy ideas with which we patch together our reality.

its aesthetics are those of vomiting, slaughtering, torturing, gasping and roaring.

the material action uses various media:

photo documentation

acting with objects and material before a camera

film, the action is drawn up as a filmscript

performances with audiences (material theatre) actions in the open (on the streets)

Film documentation:

Otto Muehl: *Materialaktion*

Günter Brus: *Selbstverstümmelung*

Josef Dvorak: *zur Sozialpsychologie des Happenings*

Rowohlt Pocket Book No. 45, ATS 146,50, 471 pages (including index) is devoted to documenting recent art (or in fact anti-art) movements: Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme and Happenings. Otto Muehl, one of the spokesmen and central figures of this movement, renowned above all for his Material Action XIII (Balloon Concert, performed 9.10.1964 in Vienna), is given space for both himself and his material actions.

Vienna 4, Belvederegasse 1
Friday, 21 January 7:30 p.m.

In order to convey more of this phenomenon to the interested visitor, Otto Muehl and Günter Brus may be seen in several of their films of material actions.

Following the introductory talk by Josef Dvorak there will be a public discussion with the actors.

POP

happe
ning

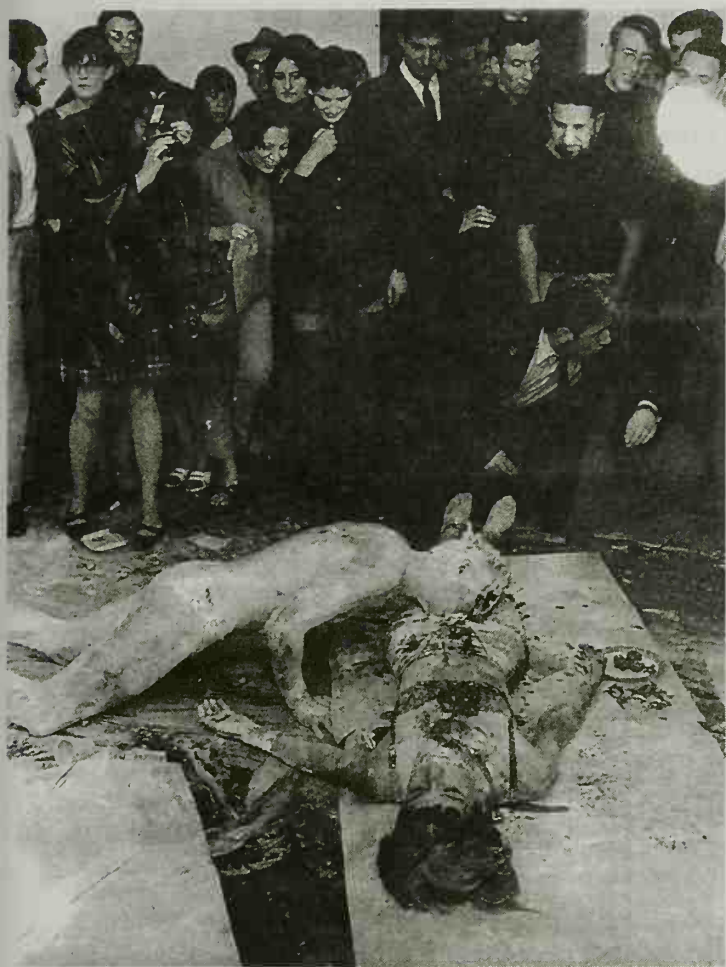
Günter Brus:
Selbstverstümmelung
Josef Dvorak:
zur Sozialpsychologie des Happenings
Otto Muehl:
Materialaktion XIII
(Ballonkonzert)

Filmdokumentation:
Otto Muehl: Materialaktion
Günter Brus: Selbstverstümmelung
Josef Dvorak: zur Sozialpsychologie des Happenings
Rowohlt Pocketbook 45, 50
146,50, umfasst auf 471 Seiten (einschließlich Register) Kunst- (oder eigentlich Anti-Kunst-) Bewegungen neueren Datums mit dokumentarischen Filmen, Pop-Art, Nouveau Réalisme und die Happenings. Otto Muehl, einer der Wortführer und Hauptaktoren dieser Bewegung, bekannt vor allem durch seine "Materialaktion XIII" (Ballonkonzert) vom 9.10.1964 in Wien, hat hier einigen Raum für sich und seine Materialaktionen.
Wien 4, Belvederegasse 10
Freitag, 21. Januar 1966, 19.30 Uhr
Im Interesse dieses Phänomens naherzubringen, stellen wir Otto Muehl und Günter Brus mit einigen ihren Filmen von Materialaktionen im POP-Club vor.
Nach dem einführenden Referat von Josef Dvorak folgt eine Publikumsdiskussion mit den Akteuren.

Otto Muehl: die Materialaktion ist aus der Vernichtung der Malerei (sofortbild) hervorgegangen sie ist über die flüchtige hinausgewachsen malerei zum material kann alles werden die Materialaktion wird durch die destruktiven Antriebe werden die scheinbaren Ideen aus denen unsere Wirklichkeit gebildet ist. die Isotetiv ist die des erte obene, schlachten, foltern, rohen und Brillens.
die Materialaktion bedient sich verschiedener Medien: Fotodokumentation, Agieren mit Objekten und Material vor einer Kamera.
Ein Publikum (materialaktion in freien Räume)

40 BRUS

SECOND TOTAL ACTION, with Muehl
> Galerie Dvorak, Vienna, 24 June
1966



Text of Invitation

GÜNTER BRUS OTTO MUEHL

performance of their 2nd TOTAL ACTION (which should not be without significance for sensible mental cases). GALERIE DVORAK vienna 3, lagergasse 2, 24 june 1966, 7 p.m.

total action (direct art) is a synthesis of otto muehl's material actions and günter brus's self-mutilations. the 1st total action (ornament is a crime) was performed by günter brus and otto muehl on 2 june 66 in the adolf loos villa vienna 13, elsslergasse 9.

the total action is a further development of the happening and combines the elements of all art forms, painting, music, literature, film, theatre, which have been so infected by the progressive process of cretinisation in our society that any examination of reality has become impossible using these means alone.

total action is the unprejudiced examination of all the materials that make up reality.

total action takes place in a consciously delineated area of reality with deliberately selected materials. it is a spatial, dynamic occurrence in which the most varied materials and elements of reality are linked, swapped over, turned on their heads, deformed and destroyed. this procedure creates the occurrence. the actual nature of the occurrence depends on the composition of the material and the actors' unconscious tendencies.

anything may constitute the material: people, animals, plants, food, space, movement, noises, smells, light, fire, coldness, warmth, wind, dust, steam, gas, events, sport, all art forms and all art products.

all the possibilities of the material are ruthlessly exhausted. as a result of the incalculable possibilities for choices that the material presents to the actor, he plunges into a concentrated whirl of action, finds himself suddenly in a reality without barriers, performs actions resembling those of a madman, and avails himself of a fool's privileges, which is probably not without significance for sensible people.

old art forms attempt to reconstruct reality, total action occurs within reality itself.

a total action is a direct occurrence (direct art), not the repetition of an occurrence, a direct encounter between unconscious elements and reality (material).

the actor performs and himself becomes material: stuttering, stammering, burbling, groaning, choking, shouting, screeching, laughing, spitting, biting, creeping, rolling about in the material.

VIETNAM PARTY, with Muehl >
Perinet Cellar, Vienna, 4 July
1966

Text of Invitation⁸

GÜNTER BRUS

OTTO MUEHL

VIETNAM PARTY

wednesday, 6 april, 6 p.m., vienna XX. perinetgasse
1/basement near gaussplatz, by the danube canal,
invited guests only, a contribution towards expenses
is requested. costumes obligatory!

MOTTO: WE ARE

CRIPPLES

costume suggestions: bloody bandages covered in
ketchup (gauze strips), head bandages, chest/arm/
leg/belly bandages. corsets, bodices, surgical collars,
splints, artificial limbs, plaster casts, elastoplasts and
bandaids, grey eye-patches, iodine stains. uniforms of
every kind: salvation army, US army, red cross coats,
police, night-watchmen, ambulance drivers, uno and
vietcong.

imitation of various skin diseases, tropical sores,
abscesses, scabs and leprosy with the aid of cream
cakes, jam, whipped cream, carnival articles, luncheon
meat, hair.

we recommend that each person brings 2 kg of flour
to be stirred into the great vietcong dough tub and
various foodstuffs suitable for the artistic depiction of
torture and cruelty: cream cheese, cocoa, preserves
and juices of every kind (in canteens).

IMPORTANT!

old clothes and a coat for travelling back home.

PROGRAMME:

PORTRAYAL OF THE DESTRUCTION AND
MUTILATION OF MANKIND

SLOGAN:

FROM EYE TO EYE MORE JOY

Günter Brus

Otto Muehl

GÜNTER BRUS

OTTO MUEHL

VIETNAM - PARTY

mittwoch, 6. April 18 uhr, wien XX. perinetgasse 1/Keller
beim gaussplatz, am donaukanal, nur geladene gäste, um
einen ebesenbeitrag wird gebeten. koetümswang!
DEVISE: W I R S I N D

K R Ü P P E L

koetümsvorschläge: blutige ketchupwundverbände (mullbinden)
kopferverbände, brust-arm-bein-bauchbandagen. korsette, mie-
der, nackenetützen, echiemen, prothesen, gipferverbände,
leuko- und hancoplast, graue augenklappen, jodflecken.
uniformen jeder art: heilearme, US-army, rot-kreuz-kittel,
polizei, nachtwächter, rettungs, uno und vietkongkostüme.
darestellung verechiedener hautkrankheiten, tropische ge-
schwüren, abseeseen, echorf und auesate mit hilfe von
cremschnitten, marmelade, e Schlagobere, feschingsartikel,
Käsefleischwuret, haare.

es wird empfohlen pro pereon 2 kg mehl zum anrühren dee
großen vietkong-teigbottiche mitzunehmen und verechiedene
lebenamittel, die sich für die Küneterliche darstellung
von folter und grausamkeit eignen: topfen, kaakapulver,
konfitüre und eäfte aller art (in feldflaschen).

W I C H T I G !

alte kleidung und einen mantel für e nachhausegeben.

PROGRAMM:

DARSTELLUNG DER ZERSTÖRUNG UND VERSTÜMMELUNG DES MENSCHEN.

PAROLE:

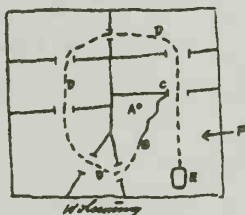
V O N A U G Z U A U G M E H R F R E U D E

3 DIDACTIC DRAMAS OF DIRECT ART
ART 27.9.1966: Press
conference with Muehl and Nitsch
> Oswald Wiener's Flat, Juden-
gasse, Vienna

3 LEHRSTÜCKE DIREKTER KUNST
27.9.1966

1 GÜNTER BRUS

- A: Glocke zum Umhängen
- B: Leine an den linken
Fuß gebunden
- C: Leinende an Türstock
befestigt
- D: Weg, um in den Sack zu
kommen
- E: Sack, hineinkriechen,
von innen zubinden
- F: Raum für Zuschauer



2 OTTO MUEHL "HAUSFRAUEN ACHTUNG"
szenikalisches Lehrstück JOSEF HAUER
gewidmet

...mach dir eine tasse guten bohnenkaffee
reibe die bohnen mit der elektrischen mühle
verwende eine kaffeemaschine mit vielen geräuschen
rauche zwischendurch eine sigarette
trinke eine tasse kaffee mit milch und zucker
iß ein etück keks
laß vielleicht auch einen anderen von deinem kaffee kosten

3 HERMANN NITSCH "ROHES FLEISCH + ZUCKER"
lehrstück für wien

jedem registrierten objekt bsw. vorgang haftet neben dem elementa-
r sinnlichen ein assoziationspektrum an. diese eindruckswerte
können im formalen sinn zueinander in beziehung gesetzt werden.
die wirklichkeit ist gestaltungsmittel. die natürliche und selten
bewußt serlegte eindruckskraft der umweltbestandteile wird inten-
siviert und übersichtlich anschaulich, wenn sich handlungen außer-
halb ihrer üblichen realitätssphäre ereignen, wenn sie aus ihren
üblichen sinnzusammenhang in einen neuen übergeordneten sinnzu-
sammenhang der form gebracht werden. durch den aufeinanderprall
der symbolkraft der verschiedensten wirklichkeitsteile entstehen
verwertbare spannungsfelder.

3 DIDACTIC DRAMAS OF DIRECT ART

1 GÜNTER BRUS

- A: Bell to hang round shoulders
- B: Cord tied to left foot
- C: End of cord attached to door-frame
- D: Route to get into sack
- E: Crawl into sack, tie from inside
- F: Space for audience

(Drawing): Flat

2 OTTO MUEHL

"watch out housewives"
Musical didactic drama
dedicated to JOSEF HAUER⁹

...brew yourself a nice cup of coffee
grind the beans in the electric grinder
use a coffee machine that makes lots of noise
in between smoke a cigarette
drink a cup of coffee with milk and sugar
eat a biscuit
perhaps give someone else a taste of your coffee

3 HERMANN NITSCH "RAW MEAT AND SUGAR"
didactic drama for vienna

every object or occurrence that is registered by the senses has not only its own sensual properties, but also a spectrum of associations. these impressions can be placed in relation to one another in a formal manner. reality is the material for creation. the natural power of the components of the environment to create impressions — a power that is divided up in a rarely conscious way — is heightened and made clearly visible when actions take place outside their customary sphere of reality, or when taken from their normal context and placed in a new, superordinate context of forms. the collision of the symbolic power inherent in the diverse components of reality creates fields of tension that may be explored.

REMARKS ON ACTION IN A CIRCLE¹⁰

On 2 September 1966, Muehl, Nitsch and I held a press conference to announce our participation at the 1st DESTRUCTION IN ART SYMPOSIUM (DIAS) in London (9 to 11 September 1966). Each artist carried out a short action. Only one art critic responded to our invitation, Johann Muschik from the daily newspaper *Neues Österreich*. The performance took place in the Perinet Cellar. My contribution was the ACTION IN A CIRCLE, which was documented by the photographer Ludwig Hoffenreich.



D I A S

DESTRUCTION IN ART SYMPOSIUM - LONDON SEPTEMBER 1966

Activities by members of the Institute of Direct Art, Vienna

Symposium - Africa Centre

Teilnahme an der Dokumentationsausstellung. Brus, Mühl, Nitsch waren vertreten mit Fotos, Manifesten und theoretischen Texten.

Symposium - Africa Centre, 10.9.66

Peter Weibel: Lecture - Direct Art

Otto Mühl: "Translation - Action for two Voices"

Günter Brus: "Head-Destruction"

Hermann Nitsch: Lecture, Discussion - O.M. Theatre

Symposium - Africa Centre, 11.9.66

Kurt Kren: 13 Films, 16 mm

Conway Hall, 12.9.66

Concert by Brus and Mühl: "Breath - Exercises"

St Brides Institute, 13.9.66

Brus and Mühl present Direct Art: "Ten Rounds for Cassius Clay"

Africa Centre, 15.9.66

Films by Kren, Nitsch, Mühl, Brus

Slides by Mühl, Nitsch, Brus

Simultaneous - Action by Günter Brus, Otto Mühl, Hermann Nitsch, Peter Weibel, Al Hansen (USA)

St Brides Institute, 16.9.66

Hermann Nitsch: Action O.M. Theatre (5.Abreaktionspiel)



BRUS & KAHN DEMONSTRATING DIRECT ART

Here's carrots in your eyes.

oil blockade was supposedly already in force, but Rhodesia had somehow always managed to get plenty of oil. In the end, there was not much the Commonwealth could do about it. Before they went home, however, the leaders of 16 former British possessions in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean broke ranks with Wilson, made use of the official conference communiqué—traditionally a bland document saying nothing—to register their disagreement and disgust.

GREAT BRITAIN

"Beautiful, Jean-Jacques"

Scene: a junk-filled empty lot near London's seedy Portobello Road. Rain clouds. Children swinging from a rope tied to a tree. A crowd of corduroy jackets and miniskirts respectfully watches a German painter named Werner Schreiber tack a huge picture of Ludwig Erhard to an easel, then set it afire. "It's a spiral of erisis," he explains. France's Jean-Jacques Lebel strolls through the crowd, inviting each spectator to close one eye. He holds up a pornographic picture to the other eye, strokes the closed eye with a feather, then invites the spectator to change eyes, holds up a postcard of Queen Elizabeth, and strokes the closed eye with a carrot. "Beautiful, Jean-Jacques," murmur the spectators.

With such anti-Establishmentarian overtones, it could almost have been an international congress of anarchists. It was merely part of the week-long "Destruction in Art Symposium," a festival of happenings being staged across London by 40-odd (some very odd) artists from ten countries. The symposium was dedicated to the sobering proposition that "society will ignore the manifestation of destruction in art at its peril." London took it more or less in stride. The only public outcry was raised when it was learned that Spain's Juan Hidalgo

was invited. His specialty is cutting the heads off chickens and flinging them at the audience. YOU CAN'T KILL A CHICKEN IN THE NAME OF ART, screamed a headline in the Sun. Hidalgo settled for eating an apple "in homage to William Tell."

Egg & Beer. Not to be outdone by the foreign competition, Britain's Ivor Davies staged a complex, explosive demonstration that involved a picture of Robert Mithum and a male anatomical model with a heart that bled and realistic genitalia. Japan's Yoko Ono had a fey Zen variant on the dominant theme: she spread out a cloth on which she drew the outlines of people's shadows, then folded it up to take their shadows prisoner.

Nonetheless, top honors of the show undeniably went to four Viennese men from something called the Institute for Direct Art. Black-shirted Hermann Nitsch gave a demonstration of his popular *Blutorgie* (blood orgy), in which he tore apart the cadaver of a freshly slain lamb, also gave a learned lecture on the "liberation of violent urges through catharsis." His colleagues, Otto Mühl and Günter Brus, held an audience of 100 spellbound in St. Bride Foundation Institute when they smeared Susan Kahn, a visiting New York schoolteacher clad only in a black strapless bra and black panties, from head to toe with flour, crushed ripe tomatoes, beer, raw egg, brightly colored powdered paints, cornflakes, half-chewed raw carrot, bits of melon and melon seed, milk, and tufts of moss and grass. Concluded the critic for the London Times, trying very hard to be broad-minded about it all: "The visual arts today are a kind of brothel of the intellect, and nobody can write a report on a brothel while primarily standing outside the door. The idea that he knows precisely what art is, and what it is not, is, it seems to me, the only one which the conscientious art critic cannot afford to give a hearing to."

Time, 23 September 1966.



(Following pages)
 DIRECT ART FESTIVAL, with Muehl
 > Porrhaus, Treitlerstrasse, Vienna,
 9 November 1967

3 FILMS > Riemer-
 gasse, Vienna, 1967

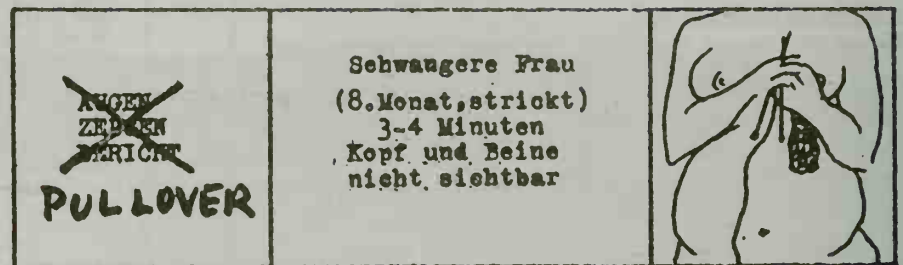
1
 EYE Pregnant woman
 WITNESS (8th month, knits)
 REPORT 3-4 minutes
 head and legs
 PULLOVER not visible
 16 mm black and white

2
 REPRESSION Prostrate male
 body
 painted white,
 white ball
 OSMOSIS between legs, air
 slowly escapes
 16 mm black and white

3
 INHALING Male body painted
 white,
 & BREATH breathes regularly
 EXHALING head and legs not
 visible
 16 mm
 black and white

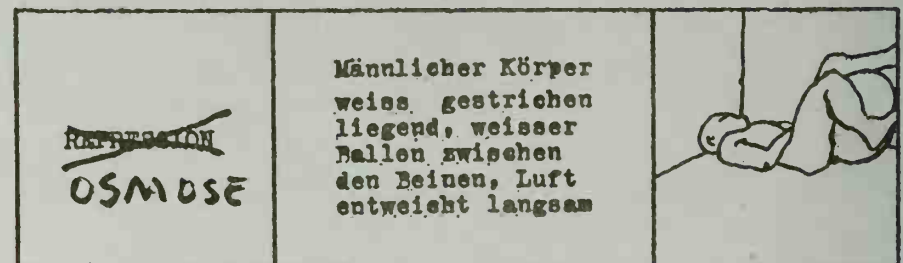
3 FILME

1



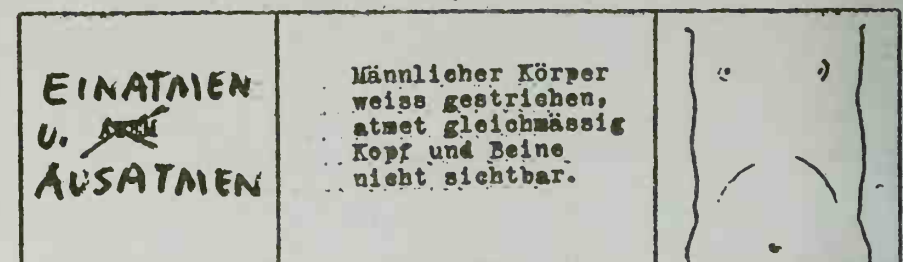
16 mm schwarz-weiß

2



16 mm schwarz-weiß

3



16 mm schwarz-weiß

Der helle Wahnsinn

● Letzter Schrei der Wiener Avantgarde: Die „Direkte Kunst“

Niemand glaubte mehr, daß die beiden Wiener Päpste des Unsinn, die Herren Günter Brus, 29, und Otto Mühl, 34, noch steigerungsfähig seien. Doch dieser Tage bewiesen sie's im Porrhäus auf der Wieden:

Sie produzierten vor zahlendem und höflich klatschendem Publikum zwei Stunden lang an der Spitze ihrer Laienspielgruppe den nackten Irrsinn...

Sie nennen es „Direkte Kunst“ und spielen den Leuten eine Art Schlangengrube vor — wo Männer sich ernstlich einbilden, ein Kind zu gebären (der Gebärt wird in aller Deutlichkeit vorgeführt), wo Burschen entkorkte Bierflaschen schütteln und minu-

tenlang schreiend Bierschaum ins Publikum spritzen, wo die ganze Gruppe minutenlang wie Hunde vor Boden frißt, wo die Wirkung von Elektroschocks breit ausgespielt, wo unverständlich gebrüllt, konvulsivisch gekrampft und geröchelt wird.

„Das ist ein exklusives Programm“, sagen die Leiter der Gruppe. „Damit gehen wir jetzt auf internationale Tournee: München, Berlin, Wuppertal, London...“

The latest rage of Vienna's avant-garde: "Direct Art".

No one thought that the two Viennese popes of nonsense, Messrs Günter Brus, 29, and Otto Mühl, 34, could go any further. But during the last few days they proved us wrong at the Porrhäus:

For two whole hours they and their amateur theatre group indulged in sheer lunacy before a politely applauding paying audience...

They call it "Direct Art," and present the spectators with a kind of snake pit — where men seriously imagined they were giving birth to a child (the act was presented in all clarity); where young lads shook opened beer bottles and sprayed the froth for minutes on end into the audience, screaming; where the whole group ate off the floor like dogs for minutes on end; where the effects of electro-shock therapy were graphically enacted; where people roared incomprehensibly, fell into convulsive spasms and emitted death-rattles.

"It's an exclusive programme," said the group's leader. "We will now take it on an international tour to Munich, Berlin, Wuppertal, London..."

An act of birth

< performed by Günter Brus (here pressing a lump of meat to his belly) and assisted by midwife Otto Mühl...

(Press report)

BRUS 47



Ein Geburtsakt

vorgeführt von Günter Brus (der an seinen Bauch ein Stück Fleisch preßt), wobei ihm Hebamme Otto Mühl assistiert...

PORRHAUS

9. NOV. 1930
67

muehl & brus

WIEN 4.
TREITL-
STR. 3

BRUS-DESIGN (M)



DIREKTE
KUNST

IDA

DIRECT ART FESTIVAL: THE I.D.A.¹² SPACE THRILLER, PIECE FOR AN ELECTRONIC DOG WITH LUMINOUS EYES

A black-and-white painted man on a walking apparatus takes an electronic dog for a walk.

The I.D.A. SPACE THRILLER

STÜCK FÜR EINEN ELEKTRISCHEN HUND MIT LEUCHTRAUMEN



*Ein weiß-lackiertes Mann auf
seinem Geh-Apparat führt
elektronischen Hund Operation.*

DIRECT ART FESTIVAL: THE UNICUM¹³

5 stage actions

1. The unicum plays alone with a ball of wool and makes a noise with his toy. He moves about on all fours and emits short whistles. Then some ten to twenty people approach from all sides, pursue the unicum and jump on him, tear off his clothes and drag him from the stage.

2. The unicum composes an anthem. Direct presentation of the genesis of a musical composition before the audience.

1. The composer concentrates in circular fashion.
2. An idea slowly wells up.
3. Desperate wrestling with the form.
4. Assistance is drawn from the flag and rotten apples.
5. The idea bursts forth.
6. Final version of the anthem.
7. Première performed by a men's choir.

3. The unicum's auto-operation.

1. Snipping open clothes and exposing the right thigh.
2. Marking the region to be treated with blue chalk.
3. Disinfecting the skin and the instruments.
4. Performing the surgical operation.
5. Dabbing the bleeding sutures with cotton wool.
6. Bandaging the site of the operation.

4. The unicum has been painted white. He scuttles backwards, creeping on all fours, from stage right to stage left, dragging a pillow behind him by his teeth. His movements are very measured. Sudden locomotory inhibitions make his body tremble.

5. The unicum is white from head to foot. He does not move. After 5 minutes a man comes up from the audience and shakes the unicum by the hand, whereupon the latter breaks out in a screaming fit and thrashes about on the floor like a madman.

DAS UNICUM 5 Bühnenaktionen.

1. Das Unikum spielt allein mit einem Wollball und macht mit dem Spielzeug Geräusche. Es bewegt sich auf allen vier Füßen und emittiert kurze Pfeiffe aus. Da kommen von allen Seiten etwa zehn bis zwanzig Personen und verfolgen das Unikum schreiend sich darauf, worrauf sie seine Kleider und seinen an ihm zerreißen.
2. Das Unikum komponiert eine Hymne. Darstellung des Entstehungsprozesses eines musikalischen Werkes direkt vor dem Publikum.
 1. Kreisförmiges Verlaufen des Komponisten.
 2. Langsames Aufwallen einer Melodie.
 3. Verwirrliches Hin- und Hergehen.
 4. Aufnahme der Flage und anderer Asszet.
 5. Durchbruch der Idee.
 6. Endgültige Fassung der Hymne.
 7. Umföhrung durch einen Männerchor.
3. Selbstoperation des Unicum.
 1. Aufschneiden der Kleidung und Freilegen des rechten Oberschenkels.
 2. Bezeichnung der zu behandelnden Oberfläche mit blauer Kreide.
 3. Desinfektion der Haut und der Instrumente.
 4. Durchföhrung des chirurgischen Eingriffes.
 5. Abstopfen der blutenden Stellen mit Watte.
 6. Verbinden der Operationsstellen.
4. Das Unikum ist weiß gestrichen. Es bewegt sich im Kriechgang auf allen vier Füßen kriechend, von der rechten Bühnenseite zur linken und zieht mit dem Mund einen Kissen hinter sich her. Die Bewegungen sind sehr abgemessen. Plötzliche aufstrebende Hemmungen bringen den Körper zum Krächzen.
5. Das Unikum ist von Kopf bis Fuß weiß. Es bewegt sich nicht. Nach etwa 5 Minuten kommt ein Mann aus dem Publikum auf die Bühne und gibt dem Unikum die Hand, worauf er in einem Schreikrampf ausbricht und sich am Boden wie ein Wahnsinniger aufschlägt.



DIRECT ART FESTIVAL 9. NOV. 67

PROGRAMM

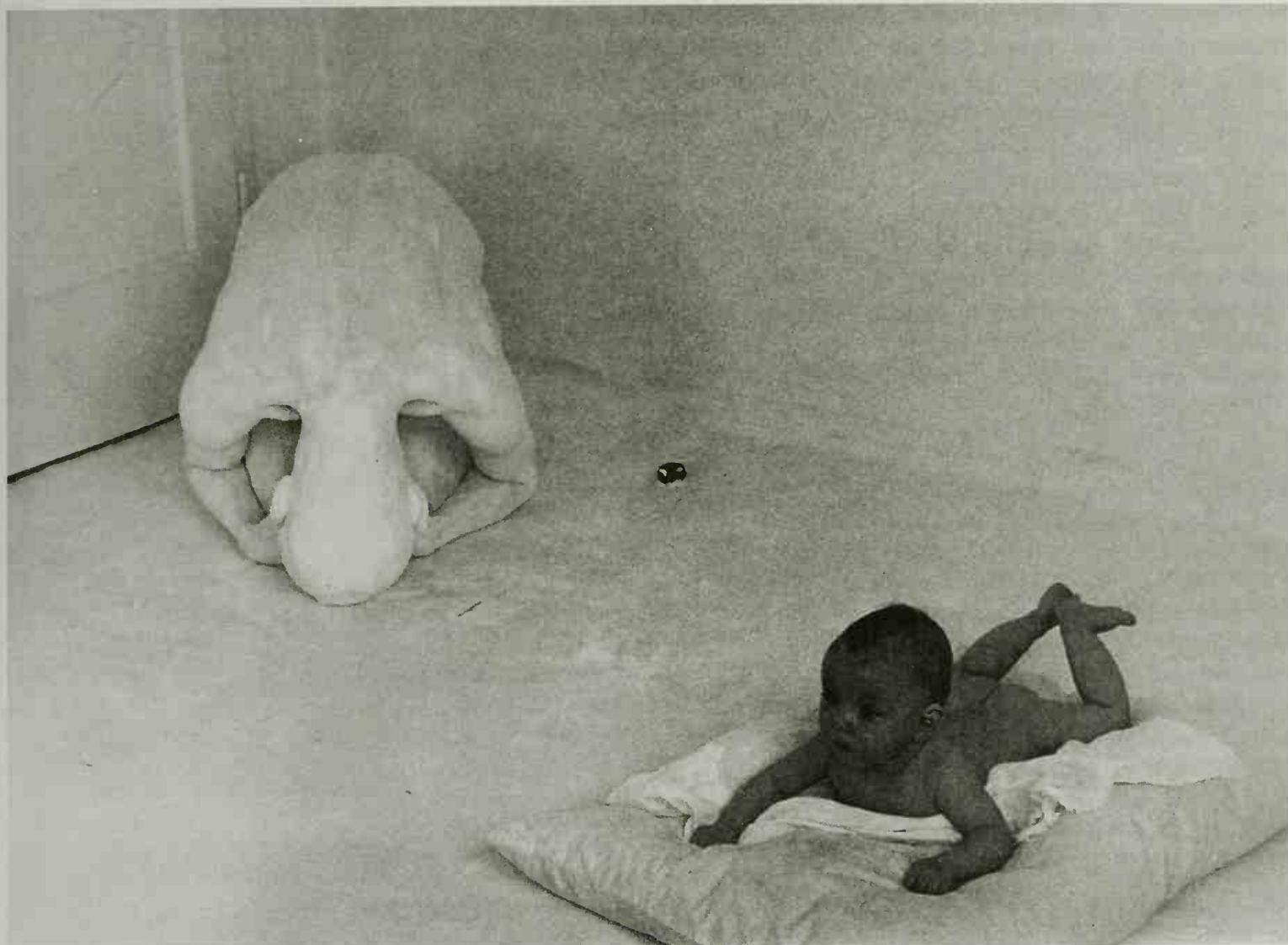
1. Die Möglichkeit, zum Schluß ein bestimmtes Lied zu singen. BRUS & MUEHL
2. Wer sich rührt wird abgeknallt MUEHL
3. Aus der Mappe der Menschlichkeit BRUS
4. Muehl's Schüler zeigen den Grad ihrer Verdorbenheit O. BAUER & H. STUMPFL
5. kill yourself and cry kikeriki MUEHL
6. Den E-Schock bitte, ich kann nicht mehr BRUS
7. Perverser Versuch mit einem Sacktuch BRUS
8. 3 GESCHLECHTSLOSE GESÄNGE komponiert + dirigiert v. MUEHL
9. Abwegiges Spiel eines Verschrten mit einem Hund BRUS
10. Was Knaben machen, wenn es ihnen langweilig ist. MUEHL und seine Schüler
11. Ich hack Dir den Schädel im Hausflur ab, Gabriela BRUS
12. Versöhnung um der Kinder willen MUEHL
13. Versuche mit unnützer Tierwelt MUEHL & Schüler
14. ABRAHAM'S WURSCHTKESEL BRUS
15. Führt DIRECTE KUNST in den Wahnsinn? MUEHL & Schüler und
16. Du bist an Allem schuld, Mutti BRUS
17. Muehl bringt seinem Lieblingsschüler das Fliegen bei und wirft ihm ein Kipferl nach, was sehr schön von ihm ist. MUEHL und seine Schüler
18. I LOVE YOU YES I DO BRUS

PERKHAUS WIEN IV. TREITLSTR 3
GÜNTER BRUS & OTTO MUEHL

OTMAR BAUER + AUGUST FRÖHLICH + DIETER HAUPT + FRIEDHELM
HUBER + MICHAEL WALTER PÜHRINGER + HERMANN SIMBÖCK +
HERBERT STUMPFEL + KURT ZEIN (DIRECT ART GROUP)

DIRECT ART FESTIVAL: Programme

1. The possibility of singing a certain song at the end
BRUS & MUEHL
2. Anyone who moves will be shot MUEHL
3. From the dossier on humanity BRUS
4. Muehl's pupils show the extent of their depravity
O. BAUER & H. STUMPFL
5. Kill yourself and cry cock-a-doodle-do MUEHL
6. The electro-shock, please, I can't take it any more
BRUS
7. Perverse experiment with a handkerchief BRUS
8. 3 SEXLESS SONGS composed + directed by
MUEHL
9. Eccentric doings of an invalid with a dog BRUS
10. What boys do when they're bored
MUEHL and his pupils
11. I'll chop off your head in the hallway, Gabriela
BRUS
12. Making up for the sake of the children MUEHL
13. Experiments with the unnecessary animal kingdom
MUEHL & pupils
14. ABRAHAM'S SAUSAGE BOILER BRUS
15. Does DIRECT ART lead to madness?
MUEHL & pupils
- and
16. It's all your fault, mummy BRUS
17. Muehl teaches his favourite pupil to fly and tosses
him a bun, which is very nice of him
MUEHL and his pupils
18. I LOVE YOU YES I DO BRUS



20 SEPTEMBER: Film
by Kurt Kren

BODY ANALYSIS¹⁴

In the summer of 1967 (I was employed at the time as a manual worker, fetching books, by the firm Georg Prachner & Son) I got "tanked up" almost every evening after work in the former Art Centre II, on Hohenstaufenstrasse. This ended one day in a dance excess

that I celebrated on a marble-topped café table. As I was about to herald the grand finale with a few hefty stomps, the marble top shattered. Vienna, renamed Sigmund-Freud-Town by the municipal sewer brigade, has often enough tossed unfinished pieces on to the stage in the course of the centuries; indeed, thanks to Schubert it has made the concept of the "unfinished" socially acceptable. Is it any wonder then that I couldn't

accept such a fragment of a body and soul symphony like this, that it was at the very least the chain of association "marble plate – marble cake – mummy cake¹⁵ – tummy cooking – belly = shit" that made me drop my trousers and force out my bladder and belly refuse. The urine almost always won the race, whereas half way through the shit fell completely by the wayside. Perhaps there wasn't a sufficiently large

quantity for me to be able to exert the right pressure. This was probably because no raw material whatsoever had been consumed, in keeping with Vienna's folksy equation: art = pinching and starving, art = Mozart biography etc.; new art rarely meets with favour.

So, since the turd failed to appear, the "unfinished" raising its head again, I grabbed a piece of broken glass and set to — Freud and sorrow Sacher Hotel and Masoch's mass-fed ox Schnittger's death-blood gapingthighcunt — to get under my flesh and see what it looked like inside. What concern is it of yours, Otto, and the humanists of the party stopped me and held me firmly — out of my senses: the unfinished!

Days, weeks, yes two or three weeks later I spoke to Kurt Kren in the Art Centre about my plan to demonstrate pissing and shitting without any excessive lead-up, to capture these excretions photographically, the way Hitchcock did with the sweat on Cary Grant's forehead. Kren made the (surprising, given the situation at the time) suggestion to capture the events on 16mm film, rather than just photos.

The first sitting on a Saturday went awry. My inner being knocked my plans on the head — my piss-flute set up a merry tune, but my abdominal bass fell silent. We boozed, laughed and hoped until darkness fell, and continued boozing and hoped the following day would be better.

Our hopes were fulfilled: "It's coming, Kurt," crick-crack and there I was

squatting on a chair, with Kurti already lying on his back under my crater as silent as a stalking hunter. Now... the first dollop, a miserable gem, sent ahead as a scouting party... and then the main platoon in the form of a magnificent slimy sausage which landed splash in the bucket. Anni (intimate friend 1) and Kurti (intimate friend 2) and I (suffering from human dignity, suffering from reality, evacuator) stifled our laughter so that nothing would get blurred, perhaps also to give in this way vivid testimony to Freud and his pupils. Telepathizing with Diter Rot, the sausages fell one after another into the bucket and, just as when we were children, we called the last to reach the mark in long-distance piddling competitions a weary Willy.

Since it was my birthday on 27 September and we had celebrated it with faecal matter, we christened the film simply "20 September" (= Kren's birthday!!).

TRANSVESTITE ACTION:
Photo Action > Brus's
House, Vienna,
September 1967





SHEER MADNESS
> Reiff Museum,
Aachen, February 1968



SHEER MADNESS¹⁶

In February 1968 I accepted an invitation from G. Vorhoff and Abolin to perform an event at the Reiff Museum in Aachen (which cost me my job, without being given notice, at Georg Prachner & Son). Before I departed I said to Muehl: "I don't really know whether I should shit and piss as well." Muehl countered without much pause for thought: "You're no longer my friend if you return with a full belly and guts and a full bladder!"

My performance in Aachen was entitled "Sheer Madness", and ended with my incising my chest with a Gillette blade, pissing in a bucket and shitting on the floor — and as an encore there were charges from the public prosecutors in Aachen, accusing me of infringing section 5 of the law book. Obviously I had not only ravaged human dignity, but I was also guilty of causing bodily harm because several spectators only managed to save their rising gorges for the basins of the toilet by putting in brilliant sprinting performances, and because one spectator had fainted. The crime squad, dispatched to the Reiff Museum to secure the evidence, corpus delictised a number of carrot shreds and goulash particles into the plastic bags they had brought with them and deposited the evidence in the county court. Later the charges were withdrawn because the questioned vomiters denied or disavowed any queasiness during my action — perhaps because they weren't law or psychology students, and instead had their eye on the shit-heap-gloria of the new town-planning and new architecture.

**Technical College Protests
Against Happening**

Reason: moral feelings injured.

Aachen, 8 Feb. The directors of the Technical College in Aachen issued the following statement on Thursday evening following our report entitled "Consummation in a Square" (report of 8 February):

"The press reported yesterday on an event in the building of the Architecture Department, during which the performer Günter Brus carried out actions that were bound to injure normal moral feelings. The press reports have created the impression that the event was staged with the consent of the Department for Architecture. This is not so. For some time now the students of the department have been staging events in the premises of the Reiff Museum on their own responsibility. These events are of general interest in connection with their architectural training and contemporary art. The fundamental trust of the department has proven justified to date, for the events have been within the limits of the defensible. The department was not aware of the content of the performance by Mr Brus, which was not attended by any of the teaching staff. The staff sharply condemns the occurrences described in the press, and will undertake every necessary step to prevent any repetitions. The college has initiated steps to call the persons responsible for staging the event to account."

(Press report)

BRUS 53

Spectators Turned White Viennese Artist Simulated the Origins of Life

Aachen. Günter Brus certainly failed to do good business at the till on Tuesday evening at the Reiff Museum. But the audience later got to see how the happening artist, who was invited by the student gallery "Neue Pforte," does a certain other kind of business. For one mark they could see how Brus attempted to simulate or show natural processes. His business.

Brus, a 30-year-old Viennese, demonstrated for the first time in Germany what he understands by his term "Direct Art." This was so direct that at least half a dozen spectators fainted or left the scene of the direct action looking white as sheets. Their stomachs were turned by processes that in Vietnam take place in "reality" and are everyday occurrences.

Brus tied his left foot to an (umbilical) cord that was attached to the floor. Then he drew the outline of a womb around himself. He placed his head on a plate. He breathed a raw egg on the plate in and out: the origins of life. During the event the actionist stuffed a packet of meat into his trousers.

Amid fierce spasms and screams he then plunged a pair of scissors into it and violently tore the meat out. No signs of displeasure among the student audience, but a few more white faces than at the start. Revolted, they watched an act that in Vietnam is the order of the day. Brus, who no longer wishes to work by the beautiful blue Danube because his opportunities there have been curtailed, inflicted incisions across his upper body with a razor blade. Blood trickled down him. In conclusion he demonstrated to the few spectators who were left that one can also attend to the calls of nature in public.

(Press report)



CITIZEN GÜNTER BRUS STUDIES HIS BODY¹⁷

After my action "G. Brus Studies his Body" (17 May 1968), attended by several of my colleagues, in which I used the opening bars of Beethoven's fateful symphony as background music while the excrement emerged (Ronald put the second movement on by mistake, so I quickly had to force my intestinal gatekeeper to intervene until the right notes rang out), and in which an attempt to vomit by the finger-down-the-throat-method produced an extremely unpleasant physical aftermath, I was told: You shouldn't grasp fate by the throat. The trail of faeces led to lecture theatre 1 at Vienna University. It was there that I wanted to tear art and revolution from their historical job lot, and present man as the basis of art and revolution. No sooner was man grabbed by his ape than the experts of pre-history, and all the other butchers, pimps, Darwin scholars, presidents, knife-grinders, theatre specialists, veterinary and human physicians, botanists and local football fans, tram conductors and the members of their families, citizens, farmers and chestnut collectors who, 'pon my soul, seized my body and cast it into a cell, and then selected twelve sworn Austroviks out of their round dance, men who previously had cheered the brown-shirted shit that promised them blood and soil through golden wheat and blue skyiness, bodily shyness, eyes a brighter blue and gauleiters too, so long as they weren't gypsy-jews or plutocrats, the shits.

Direkte Kunst

Gurkenglas wurde zum Nachttopf

● Happening-Künstler schockierte Anhänger

Sein tollstes Stück als Happening-Spezialist leistete sich in der Vorwoche der 30-jährige Günther Brus — einer der drei bekannten Wiener Happening-Spezialisten, der in der Adalbert-Stifter-Straße 31 in der Brigittenau zu Hause ist.

Bei seinem in einem finsternen Kellerlokal am Judenplatz abgehaltenen Happening „Staatsbürger Günther Brus betrachtet seinen Körper“ gab es Peinlichkeiten am laufenden Band.

Sogar seine langmähnige Anhängerschar — einige Dutzend Männlein und Weiblein — war nachher schockiert...

Nur mit einem Hemd, einem Damenschlülper und faltenwerfenden Nylonstrümpfen bekleidet, nahm der schlaksige, blondschmächliche Jünger der „direkten Kunst“, halb nackt auf dem Tisch stehend, ein leeres Gurkenglas zur Hand.

Er schüttete zwei Eidotter hinein, gab ein paar sich selber abgeschnittene Schamhaare dazu und ritzte sich dann mit einer Rasierklinge den Oberschenkel und die rechte Brustseite ein.

Das hervorquellende Blut ließ er ins Gurkenglas tropfen und leerte es vor dem schockierten Publikum. Dann machte er ins Glas...



Direkter Künstler Brus: Ritzen mit der Klinge

Direct Art

A Pickle Jar Became a Chamber-Pot

Happening Artist Shocked Supporters

Last week the 30-year-old happening specialist Günther Brus — one of three renowned Viennese happening specialists, who lives at the Brigittenau, Adalbert-Stifter Strasse 31 — performed his most outrageous piece.

There were no end of painful scenes during his happening "Citizen Günther Brus Studies his Body", which occurred in a gloomy basement bar at Judenplatz.

Even his flock of long-haired supporters — several dozen men and women — were shocked afterwards...

Dressed only in a shirt, women's panties and baggy nylons, the blond, skinny, gangling apostle of "Direct Art" stood half-naked on a table holding an empty pickle jar.

He poured two egg yolks into it, added a couple of pubic hairs he cut from his body, and then gashed his thigh and the right side of his chest with a razor blade.

He let the streaming blood drip into the pickle jar and then emptied it in front of the shocked audience. Then he relieved himself in the jar...

(Press report)

The SÖS Presents
Art and Revolution
8 p.m. Friday, 7 June 68

A Talk
Brus Muehl Weibel Wiener &
Laurids*
Discussion: Peter Jirak, Christof
Subik, Herbert Stumpf

New Institute Building Vienna 1

* Kaltenbäck

INVITATION FROM
THE SÖS

our assimilatory democracy main-
tains art as a safety valve for
enemies of the state. the schizoids
it creates manage to maintain
their mental balance thanks to art
— and so remain this side of the
norm. art differs from “art”. the
consumer state drives a wave of
“art” before itself; it attempts to
bribe the “artist” and thus to reha-
bilitate his revolutionising “art” as
an art that supports the state. but
“art” is not art. “art” is politics
that has created new styles of
communication.

SÖS VERANSTALTET

**KUNST
UND
REVOLUTION**

20 h
FREITAG
7. JUNI
68

EIN VORTRAG

**BRUS·MUEHL·
WEIBEL·WIENER·
& LAURIDS**

DISKUSSION: PETER JIRAK
CHRISTOF SUBIK, HERBERT
STUMPF

NEUES INSTITUTSGEBÄUDE WIEN I.
UNIVERSITÄTSSTR. 7

* KALTENBÄCK

Die Karte des Unglücks reißt nicht ab: Im Zusammenstoß mit dem Bus gränkte Kennedys fandon gestern drei Menschen den Tod.

Sie hatten mit hunderten anderen drängte die Menge vor, daß die drei 2-Wagen zumal mit dem Sonntag mit der letzten Kennedy erwartet. Als der Zug vorüberkam, Zeit war außerde

Pastor Kings A

Gestern vormittag verhafteten Beamte des Scotland Yard in London Earl Ray, 40, den Mann, der seit 60 Tagen wegen Mordes an dem amerikanischen Hauptführer Martin Luther King gesucht wird. Ray war beauftragt und besaß zwei falsche Pässe. Er wollte nach Brüssel weiterfliegen. Ray ist bereits des Mordes an Pastor King angeklagt. Seine Auslieferung an die USA ist in die Wege geleitet. (Seite 2.)

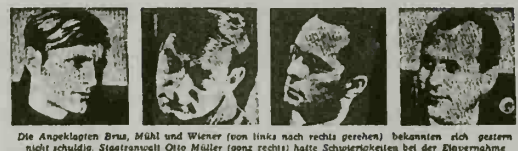
Sonntag, den 9. Juni 1968
Nr. 2187
Jahrgang 1968
ÖSTERREICH AN P.V. SCHWEIGER & CO.
ITALIEN 80 Lira - JUGOSLAWIEN 100 Dinar
L. & A. KAMBERG, SONNENSTRAßE 1
Wien, Telefon: Vertriebsamt 66 62 50
Telefon: Anzeigenamt 66 62 51

Beispielloser Skandal vor 500 Personen Freitagabend an Wiener Uni

Beispiellose Vorfälle ereigneten sich am vergangenen Freitagabend in einem Hörsaal der Wiener Universität. Rund 500 Personen waren zu einer Veranstaltung der SDS, einer linksradikalen Studentenvereinigung, gekommen. Die Beschimpfungen von Mitgliedern der Kennedy-Familie, die mit Befehl quittiert wurden. Dann entzündeten sich sechs junge Burden der Klasse. Völlig nackt vollführten sie vor den Zuschauern Handlungen, die den Beschimpfungen von Mitgliedern der Kennedy-Familie, die mit Befehl quittiert wurden. Dann entzündeten sich sechs junge Burden der Klasse. Völlig nackt vollführten sie vor den Zuschauern Handlungen, die

Logik

Salle 10 Kronen-Zeitung



Die Angeklagten Brus, Mühl und Wiener (von links nach rechts gesehen) bekannten sich gestern nicht schuldig. Staatsanwalt Otto Müller (ganz rechts) hatte Schwurgerichten bei der Elvernahme

Exzesse in der Universität: „Wir zeigten direkte Kunst“

Als ein Zug der modernen Kunst beschloß gestern der Österr. und Nordosterr. Schüler Brus seine widerwärtigen exzessiven Darbietungen in der Wiener Universität; auch der Mitangeklagte Otto Mühl, der damals vor 400 Studenten eben jungen Menschen mit einem Lederriemen verprügelte, erklärte vor dem Schwurgericht: „Wir sind aus unserer Kunst begeistert.“

Es war am 7. Juni, als im Hörsaal I der Wiener Universität unzufriedene Studenten eine Versammlung abhielten. Vor Ende der Kundgebung tauchten plötzlich im Hörsaal der Wiener Literatur Oswald Wiener und die beiden „Kunstler“ Günther Brus und Otto Mühl auf. Wiener begabte sich mit einem neubehaltenen Vortrag über die „Psychologie des Denkens und des Sprechens“, Mühl und Brus

aber boten den Studenten ein Schauspiel, wie es auf akademischem Boden noch nicht dagewesen war. Brus zog sich spitzenackert aus, sang die österreichische Bundeshymne und schoderte (vor allem die anwesenden Studentinnen) mit unästhetischen Handbewegungen. Zum Abschluß seiner künstlerischen Darbietung gab er noch auf den Hörtisch auf und empfahl sich in einer Wolke von Gestank. Kollege Mühl peitschte inzwischen mit zitterndem Rücken bekleidet, einen jungen Menschen aus, der, um nicht erkannt zu werden, das Gesicht mit Verbandmull verhüllt hatte. Er war ein Riesenwirbel: Brus sang die Bundeshymne und das „Gaudium“, Mühl prägte knusprige Membranen, Oswald Wiener versuchte, eifriges Lautsprecher selbst Parolen an den Mann zu bringen und im Auditorium brüllten die Studenten teils: „Bravo!“ teils „Schweine!“ Die drei Akteure wurden ver-



Die direkte Kunst des Günther Brus. Schwärzener

Die Neue ZEITUNG

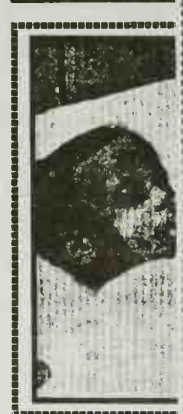
Freitag, 28. 6. 1968 Nr. 264, 2. Jg.
ITALIEN: 80 Lira - JUGOSLAWIEN: 100 Dinar

Nackt-Orgie beim Prozeß

Gericht

hat Angst vor den Uni-Ferkeln!

Bericht Seit

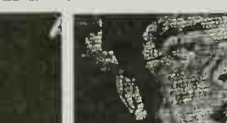


Staatsanwalt sperrt Uni-Provokführer der Ekel-Orgie keine S

§ 299 a
Wer vorsätzlich auf eine Art, die die Verletzung der öffentlichen Sicherheit bedeutet, die öffentliche Sicherheit zu gefährden, ist mit Freiheitsstrafe bis zu drei Jahren bestrafbar, wenn die Handlung die öffentliche Sicherheit gefährdet.

§ 305
Wer auf die in § 284 beschriebene Weise die öffentliche Sicherheit gefährdet, ist mit Freiheitsstrafe bis zu drei Jahren bestrafbar, wenn die Handlung die öffentliche Sicherheit gefährdet.

§ 411
Vorsätzlich und die bei Beschuldigung vorgetragene Beschuldigung sind zuzurechnen, wenn sie sich durch die Handlung nachweislich als wahr erweisen lassen.



OTTO MUHL, 43

OSWALD WIENER, 33

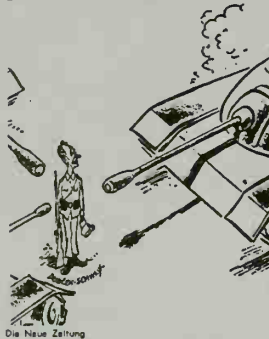
Hintergründe von Erwin Alges Rücktritt (S. 19)

Mittwoch, 26. Juni 1968
Nr. 2192 - 66. Jahrgang
UNABHÄNGIGE
Kronen Zeitung
GEGRÜNDET 1906
ÖSTERREICHS
größte Tageszeitung

Anklage gegen die Uni-Ferkel wurde sehr rasch erhoben

Wien (ED). Das Justizministerium hat ganz im Sinne der Öffentlichkeit diesmal schnell reagiert: Gegen die Anführer jener linksradikalen Gruppe, die durch ihr beispielloses Verhalten am 7. Juni im Auditorium maximum den Abschluß der gesamten österreichischen Bevölkerung erzielt hatte, wurde gestern von der Staatsanwaltschaft die Anklage erhoben. Bekanntlich hatten diese „Uni-Ferkel“ im Rahmen einer Demon-

stration auf Universitätsboden öffentlich ihre Mordurft verrichtet und andere Schwärzereien begangen. Bei den Anführern handelte es sich um Günther Brus, Oswald Wiener und Otto Mühl, alleamt keine Studenten. Diese drei Rädelführer — sie befinden sich in Haft — werden nun wegen Vergehens der Herabwürdigung österreichischer Symbole, Verletzung der öffentlichen Sittlichkeit, Gubehung ungesetzlicher, beziehungsweise unästhetischer Handlungen, letztere bezogen auf die Durchführung von „Peitschenaktionen“, vor Gericht stehen. Im Falle einer Verurteilung drohen ihnen saftige Strafen.



Die Neue Zeitung

Freies Afrika...

Dem Völkermord von Biafra sieht die Welt so teilnahmslos zu wie es und ja. Auch Außenminister Dr. Waldheim wie auf dem, die ganze Menschheit beunruhigenden Vorkommnissen hin angesprochen, zurückhaltend darauf hin, daß man mit Nigeria diplomatische Beziehungen habe. Humanitäre Maßnahmen würden aber in Erwägung gezogen.

Bild: Die registrierte Feststellung, daß die Afrikaner, die der weiße Mann ihnen schenkte.

Lokales



Bezeichnenderweise auf die Stirn tippte sich Günther Brus bei einem Happening vor einem Jahr im Porrhau. Rechts hinter ihm, im weißen Hemd, der nun gleichfalls verhaftete Otto Mühl.

Polizei sagt: Uni-Ferkel sind keine Studenten!

Wien — Die Behörden trug man endlich der erregten öffentlichen Meinung über die Festsetzung auf Universitätsboden Rechnung und verhafteten Mittwochabend drei Hauptakteure jener skandalösen Verfalls. Der 33-jährige Günther Brus, der 33-jährige Schriftsteller Oswald Wiener und der 44-jährige Otto Mühl wurden Donnerstag in das Landesgefängnis Wien eingeliefert, um sie nach auf ihren Prozeß vorzubereiten. Internationalerweise handelt es sich bei den Verhafteten nicht um Studenten. Die Festnahme erfolgte auf Verlangen der Staatsanwaltschaft wegen Verabredung- und Verleumdungsgeld. Tatsächlich hatte Oswald Wiener bei einer Pressekonferenz erklärt: „Wir werden übliche Veranstaltungen bald wieder machen.“

Bei den Exzessen am 7. Juni waren 400 Studenten nicht nur Zeugen eines Vorkommnisses gewesen — ein Aktverstoß mit einem Maßstab des Gesetzes.

PHOTOS: KURT MARTINK



In Exzesse wand sich Günther Brus damals auf dem Boden.

Autoeibrecherbande erwisch

Wien — Auf Autoeibrecherbande spezialisiert hatten sich die 24-jährige Beschäftigte Waltraud Praxelwitzer, der 29-jährige Kraftfahrer Konrad Baril samt Gattin Gertraude (28) aus der Jägersfeld und die 33-jährige Agnes Pesal aus Meidling. Sie konnten am Mittwoch nach langwieriger Ermittlung von Beamten des Kommissariats Josefstadt festgenommen werden. Anklage brachten Praxelwitzer und Pesal die Beute dem Ehepaar Baril das diese im Keller ihres Wohnhauses lagerte. Seit zwei Monaten nahmen die beiden ihren Auto aktiv an den Diebstählen teil. Insgesamt wurden ihnen im Wert von 40.000 S beschlagnahmt. Wie hoch der angelegte Schaden tatsächlich ist, ist noch nicht geklärt worden, da sich alle Beteiligten entschwiegen.



Höhepunkt der „Kunstdarbietung“ vor einem Jahr im Porrhau: Brus trägt ein weißes Polster mit den Zähnen.

das Wetter

Im westlichen Bundesgebiet sowie im Süden einzelne Gewitter, sonst wechselnd bewölkt. Im Donauraum und im Alpenraum teils heiler, teils wolkig. In den Bezirken vorwiegend warm. Gewitter: Wien aus Ost bis Süd Frühwetter 7 bis 13 Grad, Tagelicht bis 18 Grad, Südwesten 15 bis 18 Grad, im Norden und Westen 12 bis 15 Grad.

58 BRUS

Unprecedented Scandal Friday Evening at Vienna University Before 500 People

Outrageous incidents occurred in a lecture room at Vienna University last Friday evening. About 500 people had gathered for an event by the SÖS, a radical leftist student organisation.

The topic was supposed to be "Art and Revolution". The evening turned into a scandal.

First, shameful insults were hurled at the Kennedy family, which met with applause. Then six young men undressed.

Completely naked, they performed actions that cannot be described in detail.

Excesses at the University: "We Were Showing Direct Art"

Yesterday the onanist and excreter Günter Brus described his revolting exhibitionist presentations at the Vienna University as a branch of modern art: fellow defendant Otto Muehl, who whipped a young masochist with a leather strap before 400 students, stated to the civil court: "We are really excited about our art!"

The events occurred on 7 June, when dissatisfied students held a meeting in lecture room 1 of the Vienna University. Before the end of the rally the Viennese man of letters, Oswald Wiener, suddenly appeared in the lecture room with the two "artists" Günter Brus and Otto Muehl.

Wiener contented himself with a woolly lecture on the "Psychology of thought and speech";

but Muehl and Brus presented the students with a spectacle the likes of which were hitherto unknown in the halls of academe.

Brus stripped naked as the day, sang the Austrian anthem and shocked (above all the female students) by making obscene gestures. At the conclusion of his artistic presentation he squatted on the lecture table and made his farewells in a cloud of fumes.

Meanwhile, colleague Muehl whipped a young person dressed in a bright red bathrobe, whose face was bandaged to protect his identity.

There was an enormous commotion: Brus sang the national anthem and "Gaudeamus", Muehl's whipping boy screamed pitifully, Oswald Wiener attempted to convey his slogans by means of a loud hailer, and the students in the auditorium roared, in some cases "Bravo!" in others "Filth!"

A few days later the three actors were remanded in custody and yesterday they were brought before the civil court. They were charged with defaming Austrian symbols, defaming the institution of marriage and the family, actual bodily harm and offence to public morals. The first charge meant that the trial could be held at the civil court.

Oswald Wiener, accused of calling for a "march on St. Stephan's Square" in order to continue the obscene presentations in the cathedral, denied the charges. Brus and Muehl admitted the facts but explained that they had merely presented a form of "Direct Art": "We are painters, but have long since liberated ourselves from the canvas. The focus for us is the human body. For those who are pure everything is pure, everything

we showed is permissible from an artistic standpoint!"

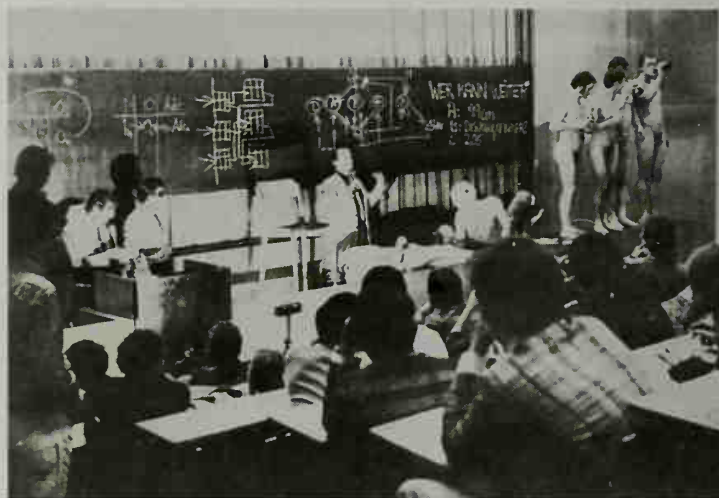
Public prosecutor Otto Müller called vehemently for the exclusion of the public from the proceedings. The court (president Dr. Scheday) dismissed his petition: "The accused performed their deeds in public, so there is no reason for us to hear the case behind closed doors!"

Doubtless the exclusion of the public would have been to public prosecutor Müller's advantage: it would have hidden the difficulties he had in asserting himself during the proceedings. His questions and comments during the examination, — such as: "How d'you manage that, Mr Brus, how d'you manage to excrete to order?" which brought forth the pithy response: "Art depends on talent!" — not only provoked laughter in the public gallery, but also the president's displeasure. When the public prosecutor demanded Brus be fined for an "impudent reply", the president dismissed his request. "The accused simply gave an appropriate answer to your question!"

Brus was sentenced to 6 months, Muehl to 4 weeks. Wiener was discharged.

(Headlines)

- Leaders of the Revulsion Orgy Are Not Students!
- Police Say: Uni-Pigs Are Not Students!
- The University-Pigs Arrested At Last!
- Swift Charges Pressed Against the University-Pigs
- Naked Orgy During the Trial? Court is Scared of the Uni-Pigs!
- Public Prosecutor Gaols the Uni-Provocateurs



COURT FINDINGS

The accused, Günter Brus, born 1938 is charged with

- 1) disturbing the public peace
- 2) public indecency

as a result of behaviour liable to cause offence, and which caused actual offence, to wit emptying his bowels in a state of nudity while singing the national anthem, smearing his body with his excrement, urinating and performing masturbatory actions.

Bundespollzeidirektion Wien
 Bezirkspolizeikommissariat Innere Stadt
 Wien 1, Deutschermeisterplatz 3
 Zustellung zu eigenen Händen!

GZ. Pat 7630-3/68/Dr.H1 Wien, am 11.6.1968

Straferkenntnis

Der — Die — Beschuldigte(n) Günter Brus, geb. 1938
 hat — haben — am 7.6.1968 in der Zeit von 20.00 Uhr bis 22.00 Uhr
 in Wien 1, Universitätsstraße 7 (Hörsaal I) durch ein Verhalten,
 das Ärgernis zu erregen geeignet ist, und auch tatsächlich erregt hat
 nämlich (Verrichten der großen Notdurft im nackten Zustande unter Abzingen
 der Bundeshymne, Beschmieren des Körpers mit seinem Kot, Urinieren
 und onanistische Handlungen # 1) die Ordnung an einem öffentl. Or-
 gestört 2) den öffentlichen Anstand verletzt. Er hat

und dadurch eine Verwaltungsübertretung(en) nach §
1) Art VIII lit 1 a EGVG 1. Fall
2) Art VIII lit 1 a EGVG 2. Fall

begangen.

Gemäß § 21 des Verwaltungsstrafgesetzes wird dem — der — den Beschuldigten eine Verurteilung
 erteilt.
 Gemäß § 1) Art VIII (1) Schlußsatz EGVG
 2) Art VIII (1) Schlußsatz EGVG

wird — werden — gegen den — die — Beschuldigte(n) eine Geldstrafe(n) von S
1) 70
2) 70 zus

Arreststrafe(n) von 1) 14 Tagen 2) 14 Tagen verhängt.

Im Falle der Uneinbringlichkeit der Geldstrafe(n) tritt an deren Stelle eine Ersatzarreststrafe(n) in der
 Dauer von S 140
 Zugleich werden gemäß § 64 Abs. 2 des Verwaltungsstrafgesetzes für verfallen erklärt.
 Der — Die — Bestrafte(n) hat — haben — gemäß § 64 Abs. 2 des Verwaltungsstrafgesetzes als Bei-
 trag zu den Kosten des Strafverfahrens 10 v. H. der verhängten Strafe — mindestens jedoch 5 S — (ein Tag
Affekt ist gleich 50 S), d. s. 1) 70
2) 70 zus
 zu bezahlen und gemäß § 64 Abs. 3 des Verwaltungsstrafgesetzes die mit S 140
 bestimmten Barauslagen des Strafverfahrens sowie gemäß § 67 des Verwaltungsstrafgesetzes die
 Kosten des Strafverfahrens zu ersetzen.

Formular 37 zu § 66 VStG. (Straferkenntnis)
 Lager Nr. 192. — Amtsdirektion der Bundespolizeidirektion Wien

Grounds:

The punishable facts of the case are deemed proven on the basis of the statements given by the witnesses and an account given by the defendant that may be regarded as a confession. The punishments seem appropriate in the light of the accused's private and economic circumstances, his misconduct and the guilt incurred.

The following circumstances were deemed aggravating:

A comparable previous conviction for misdemeanour, a court sentence, and the fact that the transgressions occurred before approx. 400 people of both sexes, on an academic ground, and under the profession of being a cultural event.

No mitigating circumstances were found.

Given the aggravating circumstances and the fact that the incriminating acts were performed in an exceedingly provocative and exceptionally undignified manner, none other than the maximum penalties could be imposed.

Begründung:

Die strafbaren Tatbestände sind durch die Aussage der vernommenen Zeugen und die einem Geständnis zu wertende Verantwortung des Beschuldigten als erwiesen erachtet. Die Strafen erscheinen den persönlichen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnissen des Beschuldigten, seinem Verschulden und den Verwaltungsübertretungen angemessen. Als erschwerend wurden folgende Umstände gewertet:

Eine gleichgelagerte Verwaltungsvorstrafe, eine gerichtliche Verurteilung und der Umstand, daß die Übertretungen vor ca 400 Personen beiderlei Geschlechter, auf akademischen Boden unter Vorgabe einer Kulturveranstaltung begangen wurden.

Als mildernd konnte kein Umstand gewertet werden.

In Anbetracht der obenstehenden Erschwerungsumstände und der Tatsache, daß die inkriminierten Handlungen in einer äußerst provozierenden und ausgesprochen menschenunwürdigen Art gesetzt wurden, konnten keine andere als die gesetzlich vorgesehen Höchststrafen verhängt werden.

Der Auspruch der Kosten stützt sich auf die zitierte Gesetzesstelle.

Der — Die — Beschuldigte(n) kann — können — binnen einer Woche nach Verkündung — Zustellung der schriftlichen Ausfertigung — die binnen drei Tagen verlangt werden muß — bei diesem Amte Berufung schriftlich, telegraphisch oder mündlich einbringen. Schriftliche oder telegraphische Berufungen müssen einen begründeten Berufungsantrag enthalten.

Wird keine Berufung eingebracht, so hat — haben — der — die — Beschuldigte(n) binnen 10 Tagen nach Verkündung — Zustellung der schriftlichen Ausfertigung — des Bescheides dem Strafbescheid und die Kosten des Strafverfahrens mittels der beiliegenden Erlagscheine einzusenden — oder bei diesem Amte einzuholen, widrigen die zwangsweise Eintreibung veranlaßt werden würde und die Arreststrafen ha. auszutreten.

(Unterschrift)
 Dr. K. HICKL
 Oberpolizeireis

BRUS 61

IN THE NAME OF THE REPUBLIC

1st Question

Is Günter Brus guilty of singing in a deliberately malicious manner at an event open to the general public on 7.6.1968 in Vienna, namely a student meeting consisting of several hundred people under the motto "Art and Revolution" in Lecture Hall 1 of the new institute building of Vienna University, the national anthem and whilst doing so in a state of complete nudity evacuating his bowels and smearing the excrement on his body and masturbating for a lengthy period?

8 votes of "yes"

The other main questions were:

2) *Whether Otto Muehl had similarly defamed the national anthem by singing the anthem while repeatedly beating and injuring the naked upper body of an as yet unknown man, who spoke of the introduction of a member into his rectum?*

8 votes of "no"

3) *Whether Günter Brus had offended public morals and created a public disturbance by lying on a table for a lengthy period in a state of nudity and masturbating?*

8 votes of "yes"

4) *Whether Otto Muehl was guilty of causing actual bodily harm through inflicting repeated blows with a leather strap on the body of an as yet unknown man, and producing visible signs?*

8 votes of "yes"

5) *Whether Oswald Wiener was guilty of inciting the participants to march on St. Stephan's Cathedral and to "shit there", and attempted to incite, encourage and mislead people to an immoral and legally prohibited action?*

8 votes of "no"

6th and 7th additional questions) *For all main questions that are affirmed: Was Günter Brus's or Otto Muehl's mind disturbed at times while committing the deed?*

In both cases 8 votes of "no"

62 BRUS

After a résumé of the deeds for which Brus and Muehl were found guilty, Brus was sentenced to six months' close arrest, Muehl to four weeks' confinement plus payment of the costs.

Muehl was acquitted of the other charges, as was Wiener.

The sentences were based on the following grounds:

Günter Brus

Mitigating: his confession.

Aggravating: his previous conviction and the combination of an offence with a breach of the law.

Otto Muehl

Mitigating: his spotless conduct, his partial confession, the consent of the injured party.

Aggravating: none.

LETTERS FROM THE PUBLIC (1)

Dear Madam,¹⁹

If you get into any financial difficulties as a result of your husband's arrest, you and your child can come and eat here every day. (Milk, semolina dumplings, everything is available)

Good cuisine.

Yours faithfully,

Terry Vaihan
Dreimäderlhaus Inn

p.s. What your husband did I have done in my thoughts 20,000 thousand times.

“Mr” Günter Brus! We have found out everything about you! You are a work-shy individual, but undressing like an ape in front of young girls (at the university) and playing with your genitals, you have no problems doing that! You allow your child to starve because you don’t bring home any money, but you open your bowels publicly in a place of culture!

What a shame they did not respond to your suggestion (at the university): “Let’s go to St. Stephan’s and do it all again!” (the monstrosity of it!), because you would have been killed at the church and thus saved the court its work! The very thought of you desecrating the church with your nudity is so monstrous that we are sad that corporal punishment has been abolished. But we do know people who will catch you and thrash the living daylight out of you after your prison sentence. We will bet anything that you will never show your stinking naked body again after that thrashing! And don’t think that we are afraid to sign this letter — no, but we are convinced that you will later lie in wait for us and shoot us down like dogs because you said that you have a pistol and “sufficient ammunition” at home. And nobody allows themselves to be shot dead by a filthy swine like you, for anyone who can do such foul things is quite capable of killing a person! So we remain anonymous! Your little daughter will have plenty of nice things to see and learn from you, but we will find ways of removing her from your care, because you are a danger to the child. We shall prove that in any case you do not look after your child, because you allow yourself to be supported by your wife like a pimp. And you are worse than a pimp, because he at least wouldn’t ruin his child if he had one!

Hopefully you will find an understanding judge who lands you the maximum penalty and then expels you from Austria. A filthy pig like you cannot be an Austrian! There’s only one thing left for you if despite everything you still feel the need to be admired: try and hang yourself unnoticed in your cell (but naked!). But first you must run the rope through your own faeces! Only then will death be content to receive your precious body!!

The present state of affairs is hard to believe and even harder to grasp.

It is also hard to believe that Austria can still be counted among the more or less civilised states of the world.

It is puzzling why we have a police force. Or a minister for the interior from Burgenland who is so morally upright that he had a well-known political magazine harassed by restricting its circulation, simply because on one occasion this magazine happened to publish a postage stamp-sized picture of a bare-breasted lady.

For it was not a bare-breasted lady that was presented in Lecture Hall 1 of the honourable Vienna University last Friday; rather, six cheeky naked brats from the Socialist Students’ Association of Austria who showed off with a programme previously unknown outside third-rate pornographic writings from the nineteenth century, and never performed in reality, let alone before 250 male and female spectators!

The six dirty dogs deposited their ordure on the desk of the lecture hall before 250 spectators. Some also urinated. And all this according to the pretty motto: who can go furthest. And who can do the most.

These were only small and comparatively harmless preliminaries, however. They were followed by public masturbation, public mutilation by means of a razor blade, and a public whipping. The motto this time: something for everyone.

Wasn’t that enough?

Not at all. It was followed by the suggestion to repeat it all in St. Stephan’s Cathedral.

Da capo! Da capo, they cheered.

This led effortlessly into the political arena. The political part of the evening consisted of an enthusiastic recital of the wisdom of Mr Mao-Tse-Tung.

So far so bad. It will never be possible to eliminate aberration from human life. As long as there have been human beings there have been sexual neurotics, exhibitionists, child molesters, sex murderers and the like.

Society provides them with BRUS 63

prisons, hospitals, mental asylums and work-houses. And that should be the end of the matter.

But what has happened and what will happen to the six perverts who exhibited themselves openly in Lecture Hall 1 of the honourable Vienna University last Friday?

Absolutely nothing has happened to them yet. They are still free to walk the streets. And all that has happened since last Friday is that the various authorities have conferred and discussed the matter. The actions of these six pigs have been sharply condemned, and a disciplinary committee has been set up and is currently discussing rustivating the six students.

Discussing!

Staberl asks quite simply: what is there to discuss? No measures can possibly be considered apart from calling in the police! Wake up, Minister for the Interior! Stop dreaming up steps to take against the morally damaging *Spiegel*! Look at what has to be done in our own country!

What happened last Friday — but more than that, what has not happened since last Friday — is a slap in the face for the entire population whose taxes pay for the university. And also a slap in the face for the normal students.

Stop your discussions,
Staberl demands!

FROM THE PSYCHIATRIC REPORT: Dr. Gross +
Dr. Quatember

Mr Brus's personality reveals a psychopathia, which is to say he is unable to deal with his inner tensions.

In addition there are very strong indications of over-developed aggressive mechanisms and a massive proclivity to enter into conflict with his surroundings, the milieu and society.

With regard to the field of endeavour Mr Brus represents, he conveys the picture of an intellectually average personality.

Mr. Brus has somewhat undifferentiated neurotic personality reactions which can be especially perceived in a heightened readiness to trigger conflicts in the sexual sphere.

This heightened readiness to trigger conflicts in the sexual sphere should by no means be viewed as the expression of a morbidly disturbed mentation; it conforms with his psychopathic nature.

Although Günter Brus is the least talented among his accomplices, his intellectual powers are amply sufficient for him to acknowledge and admit to the wrongfulness of the actions with which he is charged.

Slight indications of suppressed anxieties.

He denies having been under the influence of drugs of any kind.

The examination yielded no indications that the accused's mind was either deranged or disturbed during the course of the actions he is charged with.

Although his general abilities to curb, control and guide his actions are diminished, this is not to such an extent that Brus would be seriously hindered in using his powers of reason and mentation.

His personality reveals no signs of mental disorder, no indications of schizophrenia, and no signs of any organic impairment of his central nervous system.

The manner in which Brus exhibits himself corresponds, however, with his heightened readiness to trigger conflicts in the sexual sphere, as shown by the test.

Günter Brus's presentations inevitably have a markedly provocative as well as aggressive character, because they contravene society's current norms.

Brus's affects range from labile to impulsive.

His range of concentration is average.

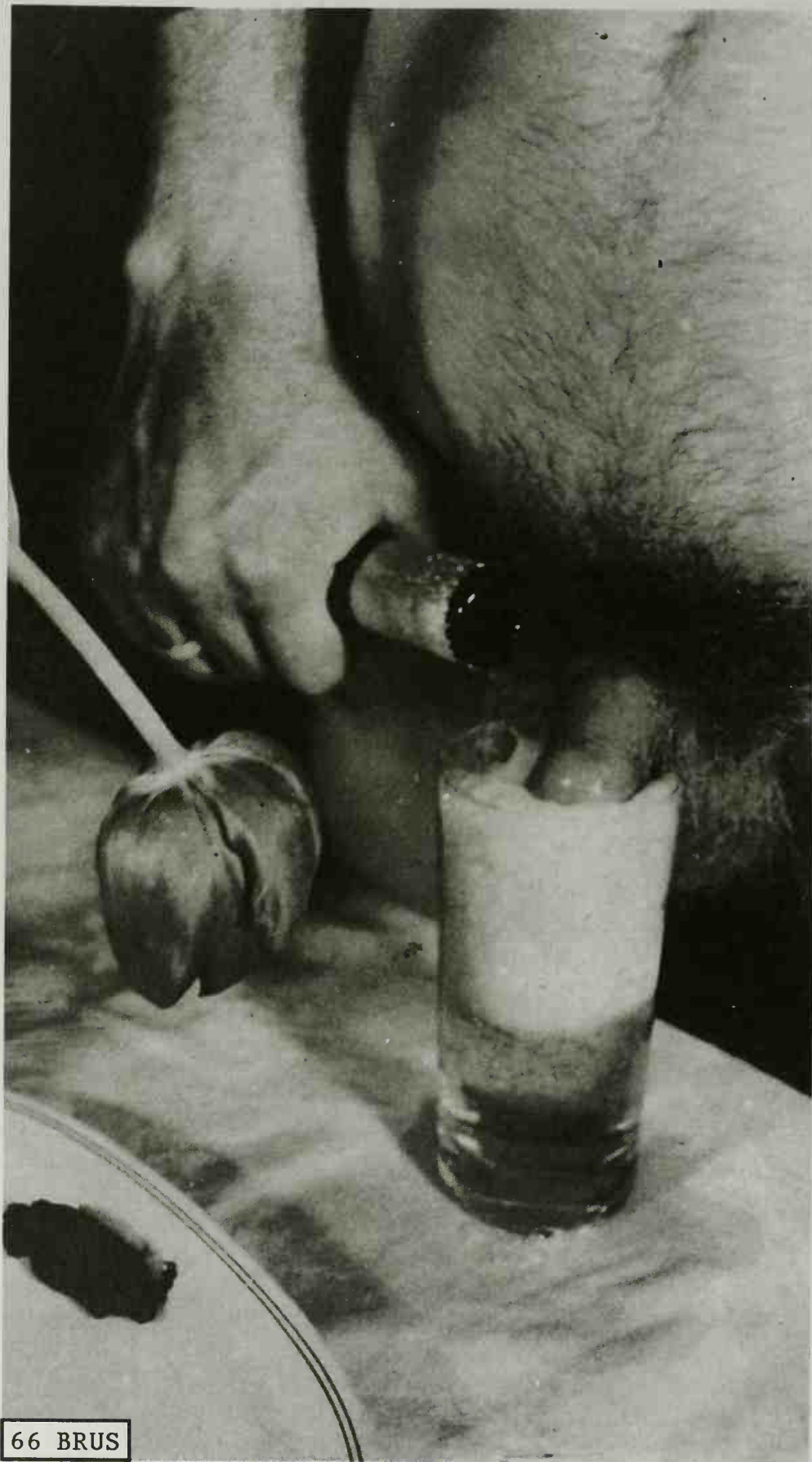
Thus we are not dealing here with an excess, for instance, such as occasionally results from acute tensions, even though the actor entered a kind of ecstasy after being encouraged by the behaviour of the masses whom he provoked. It is thus impossible to assume a reduction of his ability to repress the incriminating impulses.

The conclusion of this report is that Günter Brus is neither mentally nor emotionally disturbed.

TRICKS²¹ > Studio
Muehl, Praterstrasse,
Vienna, November 1968

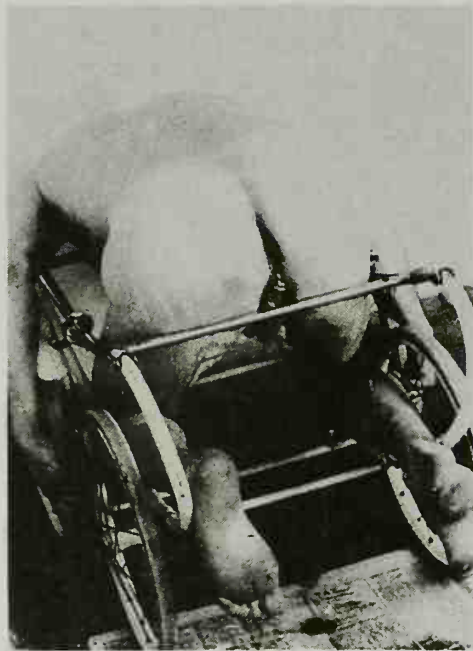


BRUS 65





SATISFACTION: Film
with Muehl and
Schwarzkogler >
Brus's House,
Adalbert-Stifter
Strasse, Vienna, 1968



REPORT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL (Summarised)

Brus attempted to reduce his sentence to the minimum of one month, and raised several points:

Contrary to his initial statement that he was supported by his wife and his later, "less credible" statement that he earned his money by occasional work, he was able to prove that he was employed since late February by the Gallup Institute. This point alone led to a reduction in the term of the sentence.

Brus's other objections were flatly dismissed. He claimed that insufficient allowance had been made for the fact that he had made a confession; that his actions were artistic and aimed at bringing such secret acts as excretion to general awareness; that he had, as stated in the psychiatric report, "psychopathic tendencies"; and that his environment and the people who staged the event were partly to blame.

The court emphasised in its report the "monstrousness" of the deeds committed, the fact that they took place at the university and were thus "likely to damage the esteem of the Republic of Austria abroad," and that as a result he had "defamed one of the symbols of the Republic of Austria, a state situated between the political East and West."

Brus's sentence was reduced to five months' close arrest, but exacerbated by the addition of two days' on a hard bed and two days' fasting each month.

Body Analysis 0: The plan, as intimated by the number 1, was for a sequence, a cycle, of which I had no clear-cut picture. Perhaps to create a filmed lexicon of so-called perversions, or such like...

Body Analysis 1: Already during "Art and Revolution" I had smeared my body with crap (this was the sole element in my contribution that came spontaneously without previous planning). I knew about crap-gobblers and urine-swiggers from hearsay and literature. Whatever the situation was, hand on my heart, could I let it pass?

Statistics: The question of how many snot-gobblers there are in 100 people has yet to be settled. It is the exception for those who are observed or allow themselves to be caught in the act to give any information, such as that snot tastes bland or salty, never sweet or sour. Ear wax tastes bitter, like bile, while the sleep in your eyes tastes less bitter. Or they divulge nothing. How many crap-gobblers, spittle-lickers or urine-swiggers there are in 100 people is debatable. It might be as easy to delude oneself here as it was for America's psycho-experts when making their forecasts for the shock test, in which 65 out of 100 normal citizens were willing to virtually dispatch their fellow human beings into the beyond, and in Germany 85 out of 100 were ready to sacrifice their test partner in order to ensure the

success of a scientific experiment.





BRUS 69



O God, There They Were

Club Bastion and the
programme of Friday the 13th

This time Club Bastion was not so sure of itself: apart from the date, the notes for the programme on Friday evening with Ossi Wiener, Gerhard Rühm and Günter Brus consisted of only a series of dashes and question marks. The title was "O God, here they are!"

This exclamation at least made it evident that something like a bugbear of the middle classes was being presented at this cultural, literary and political club. Those who are acquainted with the material will know the actions of the Vienna Group, and

will not be unfamiliar with Ossi Wiener. He is the author of "The Improvement of Central Europe", and shows no little talent in the way he dismantles the images contained in our puffed-up language.

But on this evening he failed to strain his intellect: he read from Oskar Panizza's *Psychopathia Criminalis*, published in 1898, in which the fantastic new proposal is made to lock up everyone who opposes the authorities, the monarch and other heads of state, in a mental asylum so large that it "stretches from the Rhine to the Neckar." There they are to be cured by means of baths and other such treatments.

Gerhard Rühm showed considerably more stature with his poems, which are quite simply not poems in the normal sense, but rather montages of sounds and language. A casual remark of his made me think: "I am no longer interested in poems," a distaste which in the end, and like Wiener, is intended to lead to "a departure from society."

Günter Brus seemed to amplify all this with his action... He cut off several tufts of his hair, placed them in a circle, sat in the middle of them, urinated in a glass, over half a loaf of bread, cut off a slice and ate it, and drank the contents of the glass. He undressed — all but

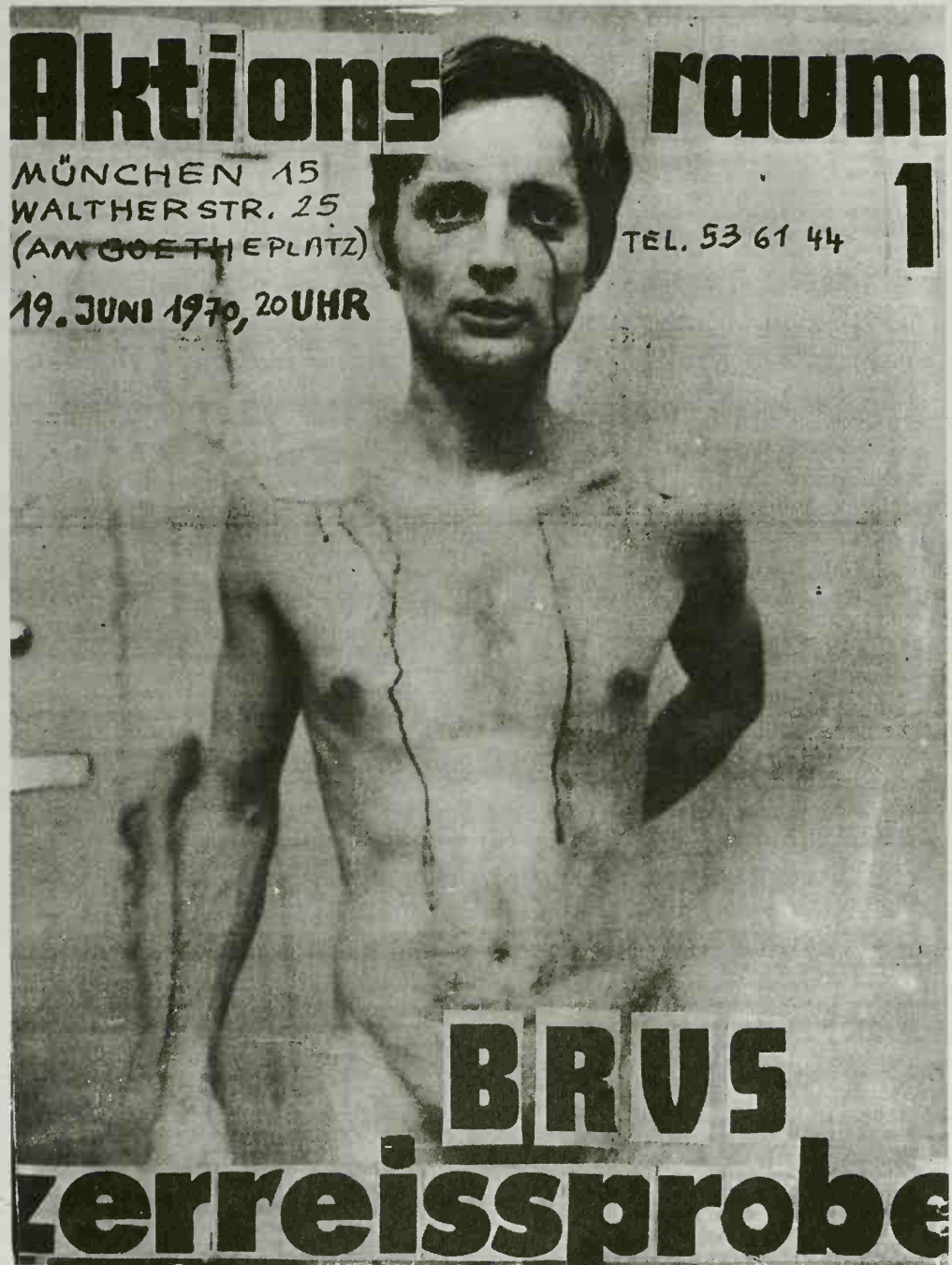
his shirt — cut his left side with a razor blade, screamed and gasped and then lay still in a state of exhaustion.

Those are the facts. In my opinion it is not possible for someone to "free themselves from society" in this manner. It may not be to everyone's taste, but was the intention here to raise a protest? At any rate: Brus is neurotic.

Wiener and Rühm fended off the questions directed to Brus. According to them, he was not in a state to account for this action, which evidently was aimed at an altered state of consciousness. In plain terms, it was primitive.

The action met with no response: nobody booed, and none of the youngsters undressed and emulated Brus. So what's the point? Basically we have grown beyond the point where we need a bugbear in order to comprehend matters of political concern to society. The Club Bastion should think back to the programme it once presented to enthusiastic friends in the Ötlinger Cellar (as well as the Bastion). The way things look, all that prevails now is the temperature of the cellar, and no longer its atmosphere, which was once full of explosiveness, humour — and wit.

(Press report, 18 March 1970)



Aktionsraum

MÜNCHEN 15
WALTHERSTR. 25
(AM GOETHEPLATZ)

19. JUNI 1970, 20 UHR

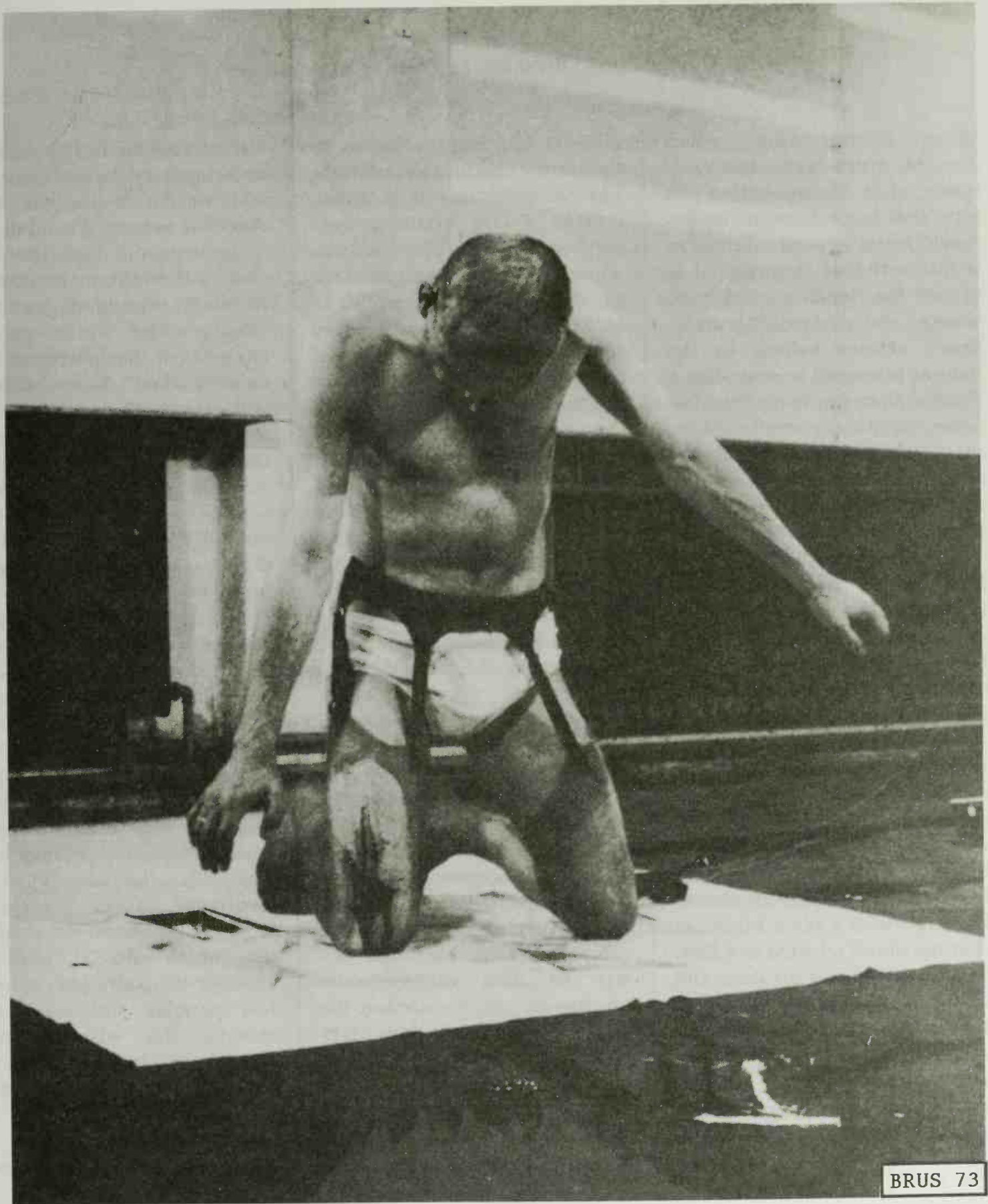
TEL. 53 61 44

BRUS

zerreissprobe

Notes on the action: it concerns several dramatic situations (psycho-dramalets). An attempt will be made to skin the skeleton from the billowing body of drama, to concoct a body-and-soul extract. The actions are curtailed, condensed. The actor's body is put to a hard test — producing muscular tremors and gasping breath, underarm and other kinds of sweat and visual disturbances with reddened eyes... The pauses are not fill-ins, not the practicalities of a formally preconceived scenario. The pauses are there to take a breath. The starting points are simple actions like reading, walking, lying, etc. The actor directs various aggressions towards himself and towards the surrounding objects, thus triggering appropriate actions: self-injury, gasping sounds, quasi-strangulations, castigation, tetanic movements and so forth. A breaking test of the nerves entails sudden changes in the direction of an action, the abrupt termination of an action in progress. Shock-like impulses are to be emitted which may at first confuse the spectator, but which are later transformed into a beneficial resolution of conflicts. I rule out audience participation from the outset, even though it is often called for: the results of such endeavours are shallow (reasonably acceptable results are produced at the most by song and dance undertakings). I do not dismiss such endeavours out of hand, but feel that more far-reaching measures are indispensable. These are not to be expected though from those who try to expand theatre. Useful results cannot be produced by an amalgam of technical dilettantism, indo-philosophical humbug, pseudo-Dadaism and audience participation pling plong street-theatre-Socialism. Useful results can only develop with time. The action operates largely outside of language or what have you — at any rate outside of customary linguistic usage. Descriptions, explanations, theories, etc. are paltry crutches. The action is directed against psychology-terror. The voluntarily self-injuring, voluntarily over-exerting actor does not illustrate professions of psychological faith, does not pursue masochism and sadism as some leisure pursuit. Such prefabricated hack words, such buckled-on rucksacks stuffed full of concepts and definitions form a barrier that prevents open, sensitive access to the action. There must be a reason why psychologically drilled phrase-farters are unable to resist squeezing All and Everything into their systems. Straight-forward thinking, dragging behind it a trail of alphabet letters and a supercilious patientism. The proof: the striking conservatism, for instance, of the psycho-experts (at the top of the suicide statistics) who stammer their tedium at symposia, like the one on "Art and Mental Illness". At any rate, the examples that were put forward for this topic fail to extend beyond imitations of the artistic scrawls of the mentally ill. This scene is determined by the art-market-madman approx. colour crayon and Dubuffet. Such homespun armchair experts are dumbfounded when confronted by proper examinations of an unconventional kind and, like a local psychiatrist who is well known in Vienna, stammer: "Generally speaking I have only encountered such displays in the case histories of severely disturbed personalities." Science acknowledges that an artistic appraisal of the topic of madness is of the utmost importance. The question arises: why are extremely qualified statements not given precedence in the service of research, but on the contrary are incriminated with the verdict of guilty and handed over to the trap-setting moral guardians.

The cartel of expertise runs like hell when new things cannot be wrapped up in categories. So long as the tables are not turned — so long as artists who approach the topics of madness and perversion can be hounded by vulgar smear campaigns in the press — expert reports, however friendly and pleasing reading they make, will remain nothing more than light novels — time-fillers for culture-mannerists slavering for reading matter house-mouse Tom and Jerry. Art has finally caught up with sheer madness. In the twinkling of an eye depression is depressionism. Psychology as commonly plied creaks at every joint. Customary linguistic usage is useless for lending validity to events. (Which is why it is not concerned with psycho-dramalets.) Sadly such blathering is the only point of departure for journalest opinion-makers who do not see what they see, but see what they have been made to think. They dissect the sensually manifest images into speech- and linguistic-syllables — and piece them together into tirades against the actor. My chervil grows elsewhere.



BRUS 73

A Mono-Action

Günter Brus's "Breaking Test" at the Aktionsraum 1

What Günter Brus does demands a new word: one must speak of a "mono-action", a term that has echoes of "monologue" as its opposite. But Brus is distrustful of language; it is useless for "lending validity to events," and is "a paltry crutch." Brus's actions belong in the field of attempts to revitalise a theatre that for many has become tepid and sterile. With this, theatre will not simply act as a mental cosmetic make-over and educational event, but trigger intense, shock-like experiences in the spectator. Brus is an actor who has reduced his instruments of expression to his own self (apart from a few utensils). He is the sole actor in the monodrama he has invented.

He stepped on to a large white cloth and knelt down, dressed only in suspender belt, stockings and underpants. He concentrated, and slowly began his "breaking test" with slow, laborious movements: he nicked his thigh with a razor blade, so that the blood trickled in a fine, beautiful line over his knee and dripped on to the cloth. He tugged the slit in the stocking apart with cords, which looked as if he was tearing the sides of the wound apart. He undressed himself, cut up his underpants,

allowed bluish-green urine to flow over his wound (which, however odd this may sound, created a very aesthetic contrast to the red blood on the white cloth); then with his back to the audience he made an incision in his shaven head so that yet another fine stream of blood flowed, this time down his back. He staggered about the room, his feet in small bathtubs, lay gasping on the floor, whipped himself with a leather belt and produced unexpected nuances when he asked in a gentle voice for a glass of water, or asked for a window to be closed and, a fraction of a second later, gave a dramatic yell. The action was over after thirty minutes, whereupon Brus left the room, exhausted.

The interesting thing here is not so much the subjective, psychological aspect (Why does he do that? Why does he injure himself?), because the psychological explanation for the fact that a person writes, paints, composes, acts, etc., and the way he does so, generally touches on just the surface: the material, subjective side. More important is the aesthetic question, the way what was done — in this case Brus's "Breaking Test" — is to be judged in objective terms, how,

for instance, it fits in with the contemporary theatre scene.

It seems to me that Brus does not convey a content, but triggers painful, beautiful experiences that affect one directly. Although his actions are calculated — he works on the anxieties of the spectators who, as in "normal" theatre, identify with the performer — he no longer sublimates theatre to theatricality. He does not stab an opponent histrionically with a rubber dagger, instead he cuts himself with a razor blade. And that gets under your skin, as he intends.

In this performance, Brus showed concretely what theatre critics love to say metaphorically: last night was once again a "breaking test" for the actors, who gave "their all" and "exerted themselves to the utmost." He exemplifies, so it would seem, what happens when metaphors are taken literally. What he does must be mentioned in the context of Otto Muehl's "material actions" (to which Brus's work is superior thanks to his choice of less popular and sensational means), and with Hermann Nitsch's "Orgies Mysteries Theatre", to whose sensuality Brus's actions provide the ascetic counterpart.

Jörg Drews

In 1964 I applied the final brush-stroke of abstract art to my own body. Later I became increasingly involved in "Body Analysis", a term coined by me, and all that this entailed. I brought these manifestations to an end with the action *Breaking Test* at the Aktionsraum 1 in Munich in 1970. This ended a series of "mono-dramas" (Jörg Drews) that I had inaugurated in 1964/65.

Any continuation of them would inevitably have led me to uncreative variations and into the area later dubbed "extreme actionism", which I view as a kind of illustration for textbooks of pathology.

After my appearance at *Art & Revolution* I fled from Vienna and a pending five-month prison sentence to Berlin, where shortly after I was contacted by the Frankfurt publishers Kohlkunstverlag, who asked me to put together a book on my actions.

I used photographs of the actions and also created a montage of texts and drawings that was thematically quite different from the photographs. After I had come up with the title of *Irrwisch*²⁴ for the book, I designed the cover and sent the first results to the publishing house. The publisher, who was evidently taken by my new creations in the field of literature and drawing, suggested I dispense with the pages of photos, which was exactly my feeling all along.

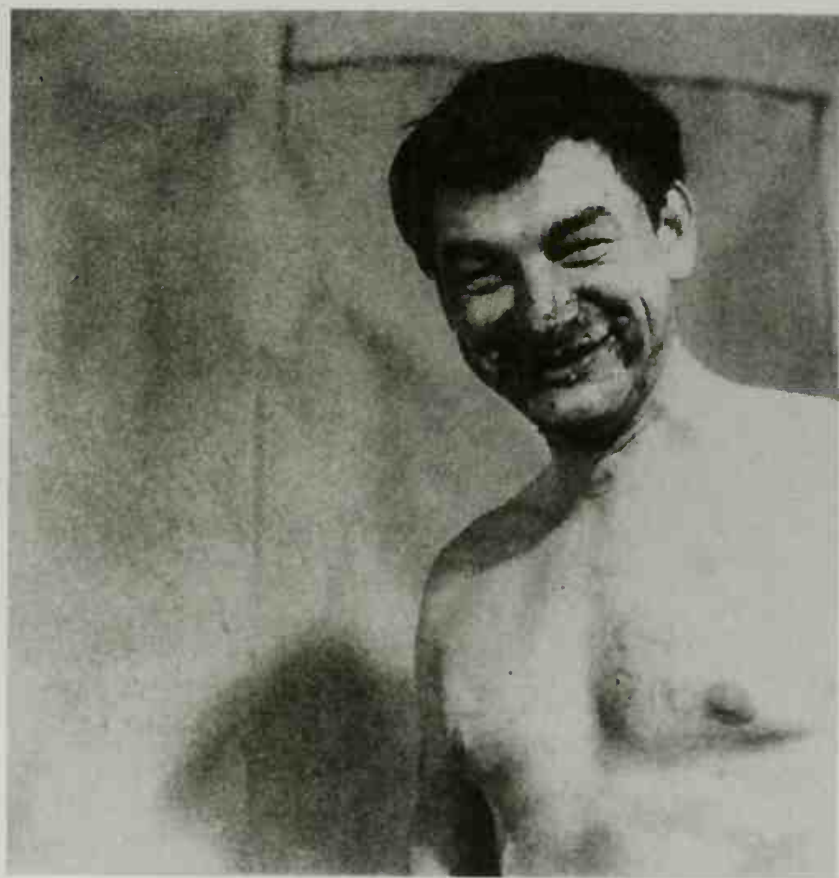
With my work on *Irrwisch* I cured myself of actionism, but without really knowing then how I should proceed from there. Looking back I can say that the problem was solved by *Der Balkon Europas*,²⁵ a box of unsellable drawings and unsolicited texts that the publisher, Armin Hundertmark, put to good use. Still fairly unstable but now with a goal, this allowed me to embark on a new approach whose impetus has endured up to the present: the Picturepoems. Whereas my crazed bumbf, my *Irrwisch*,²⁶ had allowed me to draw and write my way out of "self-liberation" and "painting analyses" — with all their therapeutic tendencies — *Der Balkon Europas* was a fan that gradually opened up to reveal a new kind of actionism: the impetuous resolve to put an end to "art education for modern artists."

The oh-so progressively-minded art critics (especially in Austria, where my "art" used to be the subject of scorn) responded largely with silence, consternation or malice. Their slogan was: "A madman has been tamed!"

Although other artists, colleagues from the Happening and Fluxus scene, had already bade farewell to their theatres of personal style, and flaunted objects, installations, and experiments aimed at social reform, I had to carry the can as "reactionary of the month", a traitor who had failed to slice off his ear. A substitute was nurtured: Vincent van Schwarzkogler, who was made to plunge from a window as an "artwork to end all art."

As far as anyone can judge, art has given the majority of fleeting phenomena from the past their most concrete form — and history can be construed as the "natural history of artists." So it is necessary to think carefully about the dictum "A madman has been tamed!" coined by people with few gifts and little faith.

MUEHL



1961, it was spring, the sun was shining outside, on that particular day i noticed, roughly about 2 p.m. — i had been vainly daubing away at a stretched canvas — that something was not quite right about it all. either i lacked talent as a painter, or daubing a canvas is itself half-witted. i decided on the latter. i fetched a kitchen knife, slashed the canvas, tore it apart with both hands. consistency demanded that i couldn't stop at the stretcher. i took an axe and chopped it to bits, then threw the whole lot on the floor, stamped about on it, poured paint over it, twisted wire round the whole tangle and hung it back on the wall. i had unwittingly become a "sculptor". my picture slashing led to a visit one morning; two inconspicuously dressed men were standing in front of my door: police detectives. i was under suspicion of having raped and murdered a dancer from the vienna state opera. luckily i had a watertight alibi: i was employed at the time as an art therapist at a home for maladjusted children...²⁸

soon i began to search for new and rewarding objects for my destructive desires: pots, stove-pipes, bikes, prams, radios, fridges, chairs, tables, cupboards. my aim was to buy a whole set of furniture and destroy it in public, but i was prevented from shoving a kitchen dresser filled with jam out of a 4th floor window on to the street and destroying it with an axe — i ended up with a fortnight in gaol, which resulted in me becoming completely fed up with "sculpture". i set my sights on the human body, and realised that things were moving at last (1963). during my first material action i soiled a female body with mud, paint, rubbish and paste, and tied it up in old rags and ropes dipped in mud. for my next actions i employed food: hen's eggs, bread-crumbs, flour, jam, tomato ketchup, etc. when i performed my first public material action in a night-club, the place was closed down and the owner received a sizable fine. the mayor of vienna's 1st district called it: "a disgrace to a cultural city like vienna." the fact that the streets of his district were host to the largest swarms of prostitutes every evening, and that simultaneously a dancer in a night-club inserted the length of her cigarette holder into her vagina and allowed the visitors to smell it, was thoroughly acceptable to this sterling man with his Spanish Riding School.²⁹

In June 1962 Muehl, together with Nitsch and the artist Adolf Frohner, organised the first proto-actionist event, entitled The Blood Organ. This text by Muehl, taken from the manifesto of the same name, still relates to plastic art but indicates the direction he was to take later.

THE BLOOD ORGAN: THE M-APPARATUS³⁰

My apparatuses are of general interest and are generally comprehensible thanks to the primitive instincts that are manifested in them.

It is the ethical concern of my apparatus to profess openly the actual creative drives involved: sadism, aggression, perversity, craving for recognition, avarice.

Charlatans, obscenity and cesspool aesthetics are the moral means I employ against conformity, materialism and stupidity.

I am opposed to social rules that no longer accord with any kind of reality.

When I swing my axe I close my eyes (as in a road accident).

I find the points on the surface and in space while burbling from my spinal marrow.

There are two outlooks that can do justice to our times: that of the schizophrenic or that of M.

M-ing is an unbroken chain of violence and blasphemy.

As soon as the Austrian stirs inside me, I switch on the M-apparatus to avoid getting ulcers.

The M is the controlled synthesis of two asocial types: saint and sexual murderer. Amen.

I use rusty, dilapidated junk because I have already been demolished by upright citizens.

I attend to the rest.

I am the ender (the M-er).

The functioning of a mental apparatus does not depend on the durability of the material.

The gentle M takes place on the surface: total maltreatment ending in sludge, in monochromy.

Spurting, dousing, drenching, spattering, defiling, slopping, splashing, daubing, scraping, scratching, etching, erasing, over-painting, smudging, smearing, stirring together, crawling around in the picture, rolling in the paint, shooting out of the picture.

The picture comes into being in a hollow space: everything runs riot in and through and over itself, bursting space asunder.

Tangling, ensnaring, ensnarling, hooking, weaving, piling up, tearing apart, slashing open, perforating, knocking in, breaking through, drilling, splintering, shattering, smashing, dismembering, carving up, amputating, battering, buckling, forcing together, hurling together, chucking at the wall, tearing down, trampling on the sculpture, hammering flat, tormenting, violating, torturing, throttling, eviscerating, mowing down, nailing down, crucifying.

It is not by chance that the apparatus has made me meek and mild. I am the great M of our times, I live under the permitted little M and I still don't consider the idea of revolution, I am against insurrectionists and violent criminals of every kind, love animals and people and am incapable of tearing the eye from a fly.

My M is the catastrophe apparatus.

I apparate everything that is beaten in and crest-fallen, shot to bits, dilapidated, all that has exploded, rusted and come apart at the seams.

I regard this as something positive and necessary.



80 MUEHL

In June 1963 Muehl and Nitsch staged a second event, now termed a "Happening", under the title Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism, for which Muehl planned his action with a kitchen dresser.

They produced a programmatic manifesto which clearly shows Muehl's development from creating artefacts to real actions, and his typical irreverence.

FESTIVAL OF PSYCHO-PHYSICAL NATURALISM > Perinetgasse Studio,
Vienna, 28 June 1963

The Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism stems from the need to give a dynamic public presentation of the insights that Muehl and Nitsch have derived from their works, transposed into a temporal occurrence.

Psycho-Physical Naturalism claims the right to extreme self-realisation.

We work by means of madness, horseplay, eternal puberty, destruction, implosion, pulping, foedation, defilement, and with these materials create a life-affirming, orgiastic festival of the creative.

In this way we produce an antidote to the languor and cultural decay that surrounds us.

What Otto Muehl and Hermann Nitsch have to say about the art pig-sty:

Otto Muehl: Anyone who carries out dim-witted ideas against his better judgement, smears them on walls or places them in front of them, anyone who pays for his sexual needs and for raising his young by means of "art works" should take a walk (Daddy Hunger!).

Hermann Nitsch: My lust needs no patronage, it is inexhaustible. I love my mutilated lamb more than the minister for education.

Our OTTO HAPSBURG³¹ should come at last and let all hell loose.

Otto Muehl: Psycho-Physical Naturalism spells the end of the present art and culture business and its beneficiaries. The vermin that nowadays flutter from continent to continent and city to city, singing, dancing, performing acrobatics, conducting, fooling about, yodelling, acting, directing, should have been stamped underfoot some time ago.

Otto Muehl: On Genuine Naturalism (Real Naturalism)

I. *Psychic Naturalism*

Registration of a mental stimulation. The body driven by this stimulation moves about in the material.

II. *Physical Naturalism*

Registration of a real occurrence or sequence of actions.

The result of a traffic accident is fixed. Registration of a pig being slaughtered on a surface. Scenes of everyday life and slices of reality are experienced as art works.

Setting up of a Museum of Physical Naturalism.

III. *Psycho-Physical Naturalism*

Invention of dynamic occurrences and their fixation in material, or presentation before an audience. The planned creative catastrophe.

Destruction is experienced as positive, as a game which generates extreme energies. The new Naturalism knows no tragedy, material assumes the role of victim.

Directions for performing Psycho-Physical Naturalism:

Complete disinhibition according to the principle of honesty. There are no secrets between you and me. I not only portray my existing wicked desires (self-reproach and revelation must be savoured to the utmost extreme), but also those that do not yet exist. Through my "self-sacrifice" the audience will be purified of its secret dirty doings. Violent criminals, scoundrels, sadists — who riddle everything with holes, chop it up, stamp it flat, tear it apart and maltreat it — masochists, who shamelessly enjoy being crucified, grubby tykes who soil and dirty everything and spit pus, pigs who wallow in the mire, betrayers of the people, the asocial, the godless who injure the "holiest of feelings", perverted swine, schizophrenics, the abnormal, those idiots who always tell the truth — these are the leading figures of Psycho-Physical Naturalism.

Living in a technically civilized world, I sometimes feel the need to wallow in mud like a pig. Every smooth surface provokes me to defile it with intensive life. I crawl over them on all fours and cast filth in all directions. I work until the surface is all used up.

A creative lack of inhibitions and conscience allows the realisation of the intreme. I tear open the skin of the surface and crawl beneath it into the intreme.

When I am in heat I leave all my vents open and expel the entire stench of my soul in people's faces. Thus I bring about the salvation of my contemporaries and the generations to come.

I do not produce art works but intrements instead. May people choke on them. My intrements compete directly with nature and its catastrophic manifestations. Morasses, swamps, rubbish, gravel and scrap heaps, demolition sites, piles of filth, traffic accidents, earthquakes, disastrous floods, gas explosions, mutilated warsapes and corpses, and rotting cadavers provide the models for my intrements.

The surface of the picture is not some prison of formal, compulsive ideas, but rather the platter for intremistic orgies. My vertical tendencies force me to disembowel television sets. I

love to intremise holy figures and drag the slime from their bowels. With my intrements I flush innermost cravings into the open. (Not art patronage but lust patronage.) For this reason they do not belong in a museum, but in a church. People should pray to them.

Through continuous intremising, through unceasing excesses and exorcisms I shall slowly wear myself out, become holy, like an old, lung-like rag. I begin to amalgamate with the material. I slime through my intrements into the intreme.

Halleluuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuujah



In 1963 Muehl announced that he would perform an action entitled Degradation of a Venus. A version of this, his first material action, was realised in the autumn of that year (pictured left), followed in quick succession by some thirty others staged under his sole direction over the next two-and-a-half years. Most of the action scripts, action sketches and manifestos that follow were published by his own private press.



**MATERIAL ACTION 3: BREAD-
CRUMBING A WOMAN'S BACK-
SIDE**³³ > Obere Augartenstrasse,
Vienna, 26 February 1964

a slim girl with an above-average sized backside
kneels on a chair and bends the top of her body
forwards so that her backside towers up like a
monument in the room
i soil her backside with various liquids (washing-up
water, chicken soup, cold runny tomato sauce)
i dust it with flour
i crack open 10 hen's eggs over her backside and slap
them together with the egg-shells on to the girl's
buttocks
i sprinkle bread-crumbs and allow them to fall on to
her backside
i rub in the bread-crumbs
i bite one of the buttocks
i now tip and throw food (jam peach preserves
cucumber salad mustard goat's milk boiled egg
noodles squashed oranges) at random on to her
backside
i part her glued-up pubic hair wearing rubber gloves
and reveal her vagina and anal opening



Muehl's first publication, Materialaktionen (1964), contained a total of twenty-eight actions, some very short:

ACTION SCRIPTS

- XXIII. 2 kg of pork dripping is smeared over an old woman, who is then covered with a sandwich wrapper
the paper is pressed firmly to her body until it is completely soaked in fat and the old biddy can be seen
through the paper
- XXIV. i spread artificial honey on an old grandmother and then allow her to be attacked by 5 kg of flies that i
had previously starved for 7 days in a box
i then kill the flies on her wrinkled skin with a fly-swatter
- XXVIII. an 80-year-old grandmother is tied to an easy chair 13 m away from the lens of a film projector
an experimental film (16 mm) prepared with ddt e605 blue vitriol poisoned wheat and fly agaric powder
is projected on to the wrinkled old bag
the old grandmother passes away in the poisoned flickering of the experimental film

Muehl's first public action took place in a Vienna night club called Chattanooga, as part of a series of events organised to celebrate its opening. It was also the first action to be filmed by Kurt Kren. The invitation includes a brief résumé of the action, which he called "Chattanooga, Destruction of a Female Body by Foodstuffs". Muehl was fined 1000 ATS because the action had been prohibited beforehand. Förster, the organiser, was banned from the club premises by the landlord.

MATERIAL ACTION 6: CHATTANOOGA

UZI FÖRSTER invites you on
 tuesday 14.4.64 at 10 p.m. to
 NUGERL (CHATTANOOGA
 vienna 1 graben 29a)
 to a H A P P E N I N G (material
 action)
 by O T T O M U E H L
 stuffing a female body and stuffing
 IT into a plastic sack
 the cast: soda water curds 50 eggs
 cow's lungs summer frock sour
 goat's milk chicken soup warmed
 to 40 degrees spaghetti roof
 battens 5 toilet rolls 4kg flour
 plastic sack rags jam squashed
 oranges cotton wool gauze
 bandages string ropes balloons
 and a female body
 the sounds: balloons

UZI FÖRSTER lädt ein
 dienstag 14.4.64 um 22h im NUGERL (CHATTANOOGA wien I graben 29a)
 zu einem H A P P E N I N G (materialaktion)
 von O T T O M U E H L
 ausstopfung eines weiblichen körpers und abfüllung in einen plastiksack
 die personen: sodawasser topfen 50 eihühnereier rindsbeuschel sommerkleid
 saure ziegenmilch 40grad erwärmte hühnersuppe spaghetti dachlatten 5 ro
 llen toilletpapier 4kg weizenmehl plastiksack fetzen marmelade zerquet
 schte. orangen watte. mullbinden schnüre stricke luftballone und ein weib
 licher körper
 die geräusche: luftballone



Asked about the motives behind his action, Muehl replied that he had taken part in the Rundstedt offensive as a young soldier, and seen all but 13 of approximately 150 comrades fall in action. The memory of the frosty winter day on which he set eyes on their bodies, frozen solid and covered in blood and mud, had stuck in his mind in all its "ghastly beauty".³¹

The continued kinship of Muehl's material actions to traditional painting is underlined by a series of four actions he performed using a table top, which produced a "painting" very much like that on an ordinary canvas. The following action, which met with enthused laughter and shouts from the audience — to which Muehl replied — was performed in Düsseldorf and Vienna, in May, June and July 1964.

**MATERIAL ACTION 9: STILL
LIFE, ACTION WITH ONE
FEMALE, ONE MALE AND ONE
OX'S HEAD³⁵**

two holes are cut in the top of a large table, and a man with a bald head and a woman with long hair push their heads through so that only the heads and necks are visible above the table top. the table is covered with a white table-cloth.

set out on the table are: a horse's or cow's head, a vase containing artificial or real flowers, talcum powder, washing-powder, toilet paper, 1 kg bread, hen's eggs, tomatoes, jam, gherkins, milk, oranges, lettuce, spinach, spaghetti, egg noodles, flour, potting soil, skin cream, toothpaste, toothbrushes, plastic flies and vermin, a set of false teeth made of plastic, shampoo, pots full of runny and thickened paint, powder paints, a large gherkin glass filled with red paint, a balloon filled with runny paint, an inflated balloon filled with bed-feathers, a blow-torch, and hanging above the table are balloons filled with flour, paint, beans, bread-crumbs and bed-feathers.

the table is then covered with a plastic sheet, on top of that a thin canvas.

actions:

the canvas is slowly pulled off the table.

the plastic sheet is torn open in several places, balloons are inflated through the openings.

the plastic sheet is tied to the heads and various objects with cords.

the balloons are burst using a glowing knitting needle; the plastic sheet is removed from the table.

i tear up the flowers, lettuce and spinach and scatter them over the table.

i crack an egg over the bald pate and smear it over the head and dust the heads and the whole table with talcum powder.

jam is spread over the heads.

i rub the heads with skin cream and place plastic vermin on their faces.

the set of plastic teeth is placed in the mouth of the bald-headed man.

i brush his teeth with a very foamy toothpaste.

i make him gargle and spit on to the table.

i brush the horse's teeth.



i pour paint from a watering-can over the woman's head and wash her hair with shampoo.

i squash oranges over the heads.

i squirt milk over the table.

i burst open the balloons with their various contents using the blow-torch.

i pour 3 kg of flour over the table, crush gherkins, crack open 5 eggs and splash the yolks around.

i take a jute sack dipped in paint and beat the table with all my might.

i put breadcrumbs on the balloon filled with runny paint, cover it with a white cloth and slit it open with a knife, so that the contents spill over the entire table.

i climb on to a swing fixed above the table, swing over the table and, using a pair of scissors, burst the balloons filled with feathers and beans.

i fall from the swing on to the still life, roll about on a balloon and burst it under my weight.

i scatter red, blue and black powder paint, and toss white gooey paint on to the table.

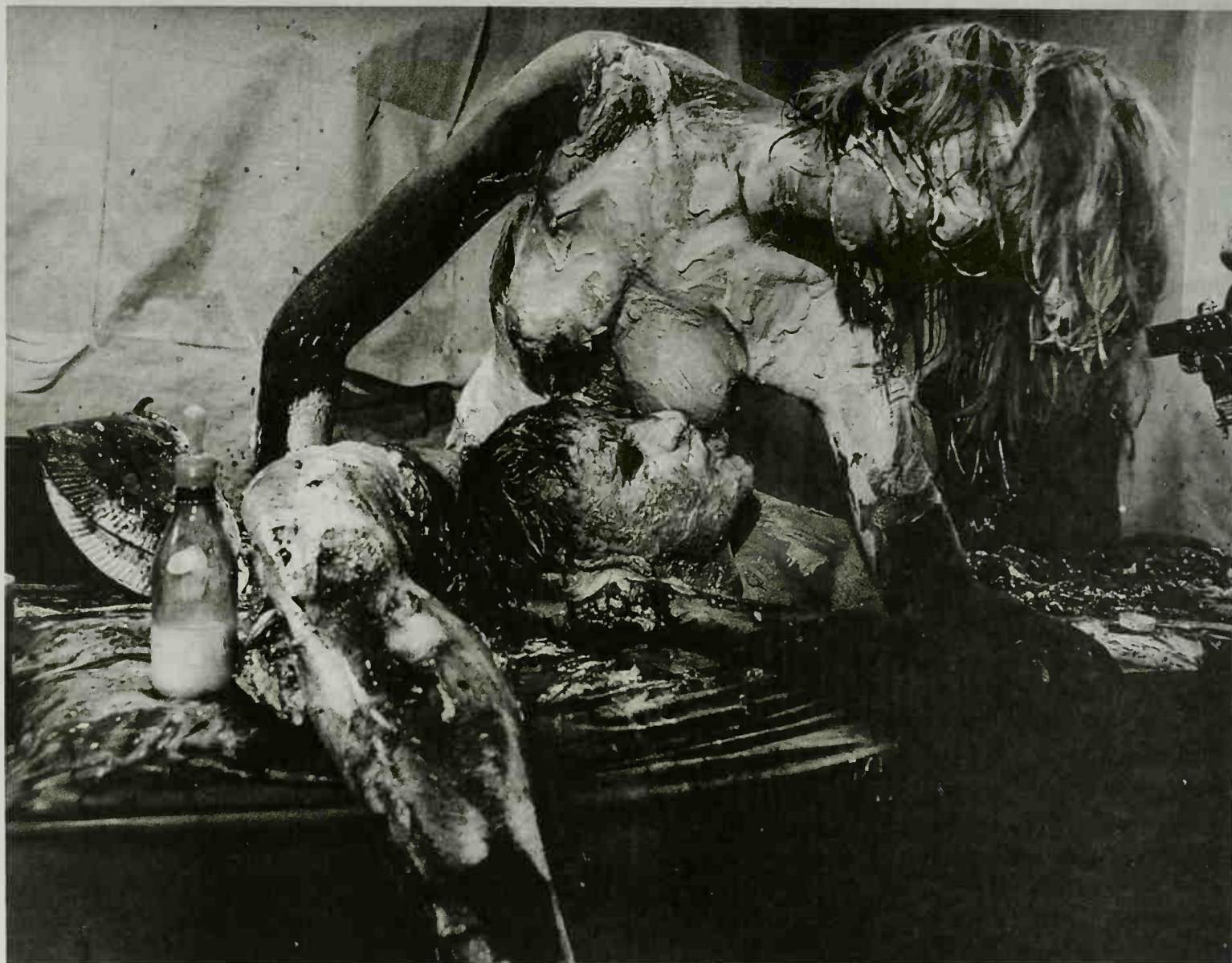
i put the bread in the large gherkin glass, then pour in washing-powder, and knead the bread until the red liquid turns frothy.

i cut off one of the horse's ears.

i melt down a wax candle using the blow-torch.

i place metal buckets over the heads and, using the blow-torch, ignite 20 sparklers and magnesium flares on top of them, so that all the balloons are destroyed in the flames.

MATERIAL ACTION 12: MAMA AND PAPA, Filmed by Kurt Kren > Perinet
Cellar, Vienna, 4 August 1964



Muehl's publishing extended beyond his action scripts and included new manifestos. The 1964 manifesto material action, the title he used for many of his actions, appeared in Omo Super Material Action. Omo Super was one of Muehl's stage names.

MATERIAL ACTION MANIFESTO 1964

material action is painting that has spread beyond the picture surface. the human body, a laid table or a room becomes the picture surface. time is added to the dimensions of the body and space.

the material action works with symbols (its difference from theatre), which in themselves constitute the storyline, a consecutive series and mingling of symbols as self-existing realities. they do not aim to explain anything, they are what they appear to be, a reality that transpires on its own terms. slicing a cucumber over a human body means nothing more than what occurs, requires no explanation and speaks for itself. the fact that one will think one's own thoughts is understandable. performing any normal occurrence before an audience voids the occurrence of purpose, transforms it into a material action.

a person is not treated in the material action as a person but as a body. the body, things, are not viewed as objects for our purposes, but have all purpose radically removed from them. everything is understood as form. the human being is not seen as a human being, a person, but as a body with certain properties. material action extends reality.



MATERIAL ACTION 13: LEDA AND THE SWAN³⁶ > Perinet Cellar, Vienna, 20 August 1964

leonardo places leda, naked, on a table.
he rubs salad oil into her skin.
he tips a jelly-like paste over her.
he places plastic insects on the paste.
he scatters paper-clips over her.
he attaches cotton wool to her body with elastoplast and tips jam over her.
he slaps a custard pudding on to her belly.
he attaches cooked noodles and doughnuts to her body with sticky tape and pours whipped cream over them.
leonardo laps up the whipped cream and bites the noodles.
leonardo grates a large cucumber over leda with a grater, squashes 10 tomatoes and cracks 5 eggs on her.
he places a bottle containing a rose between her legs.
he scatters bread-crumbs and coffee powder over her.
leda sets her upper body upright and draws in one leg.
leonardo places a large, uninflated plastic swan between her legs.

Leda and the Swan was the second material action filmed by Kurt Kren. Various scores exist for this piece; the following was the first version published by Muehl.



MATERIAL ACTION 14: BALLOON
CONCERT, Score and photograph³⁷

LUFTBALLONKONZERT					GRAPHISCHE DARSTELLUNG.						
II	A	B	C	D	E	I	A	B	C	D	E
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16



he tips red paint, paste and bed feathers over the swan.
 he drops cigarette papers over leda and the swan.
 he covers leda with a plastic sheet and crawls under the plastic, and inflates a balloon filled with bed-feathers until it bursts.
 leonardo inflates the swan and pulls the plastic sheet away.
 leonardo jumps on to the table and rains bed-feathers down on leda and the swan.
 leonardo gives leda a baby's bottle to drink from.
 leda places the swan's beak in her mouth and sucks at it.
 leda's upper body is tied by a rope to the ceiling, as is her left knee.
 leonardo turns the swan's neck round and ties it to leda's chest.
 leonardo throws flour over leda and pours blue paint over her from a watering-can.
 leonardo draws the swan, which is tied to a cord, up to the ceiling so that it hovers above leda.
 leonardo bends the swan's neck downwards and places it between leda's legs.
 he douses the swan from a watering-can and squirts soda water over it.
 leda turns over and supports herself on her forearms and knees, with her backside facing the audience.
 leonardo tips paint over her backside and sticks bed-feathers on it.
 leonardo sticks the swan's neck between the cheeks of her backside.
 leonardo removes the swan from the ceiling and ties it to leda's backside.
 leonardo lets the air out of the swan and then reinflates it.
 leonardo removes the swan from leda's backside.
 leda lies down with her stomach on the swan and allows the bird's neck to peer through her thighs.
 leonardo lets the air out of the swan and then reinflates it.
 leda rolls from this position on to her back, leonardo crushes eggs, tomatoes over them both and pours flour over them.
 a real dog, which leonardo dusts with talcum powder, approaches and sniffs leda and the swan.

From late 1964, Muehl's material actions often focused on the male genitalia, and were sometimes referred to explicitly as Penis Actions. An example can be found in the following action, filmed by Kurt Kren.

**MATERIAL ACTION 17: O
CHRISTMAS TREE³⁸ > Perinet-
gasse, Vienna, December 1964**

A female
B male
christmas tree
candles sparklers meat eggs bread rolls milk cartons
condoms cotton wool
B lies before the christmas tree sticks his penis and
testicles through a length of perforated fibreboard on
which aluminium foil has been glued
raisins apples eggs nuts smoked herring cracked open
egg oil beetroot juice custard pink powder colour
copper vitriol
A stands before a wall that has been sprayed white
with a spray-gun
a balloon filled with bed-feathers explodes above the
christmas tree
B with fibreboard in front of belly gets up materials
flow
B sprayed white
A in front of white wall is sprayed yellow
A breast B penis squeezed through perforated back of
a suitcase
case is opened smoked herring are placed inside
between breast and penis
oil beetroot juice jam
A sprayed green in front of the white wall
rain of bed-feathers over christmas tree
bread roll on blue aluminium foil
penis through bread roll
oil tomato juice egg
green A in front of yellow wall sprayed green
case opened breast hand
hand kneads breast
sprayed green
rain of flour over christmas tree
penis through aluminium foil fir twig
tied on to it

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washing-powder soda water sprayed away
green A sprayed blue before white wall
penis through plastic pitchfork painted with silver
oven paint
penis through roll of foam rubber blue ink
cotton wool ink over the christmas tree
blue A sprayed red before white wall
red A before green wall
christmas tree sprayed red
penis through plastic pitchfork
christmas tree oil egg paste flour bread-crumbs
penis through pitchfork

cigarette end brushed on to dustpan
egg oil
A's breast through pitchfork
oil paste egg
case: breast foot
case: head penis
head in case plastic dentures in mouth tooth-brushing
milk eggs peas oil custard flour beetroot juice
sauerkraut
B spreads legs A kneels between them penis to one
side in mouth
A B sprayed red pelted with flour sprayed red pelted
blue sprayed red pelted yellow pelted black
penis through aluminium foil into plastic beaker
eggs cracked until beaker overflows
penis on aluminium foil reading-glasses placed on it
penis through pitchfork tips
A buttocks to one side plastic dentures between
buttocks lips with lipstick
eyes nose stuck on
backside-face sprayed black
A B faces to white wall sprayed black from side
case: backside
between buttocks: egg
alarm-clock
electric light bulb
A B roll on the floor: sprayed black pelted white blue
green red
B leaps from table on to balloons sprayed pelted with
flour
A B gymnastic exercises pelted sprayed
christmas tree between A's buttocks candles sparklers
B urinates with spray-gun on christmas tree
B sprayed black before red wall
B and A coital movements
christmas tree covered with cotton wool lighter fuel
set on fire
A and B sprayed black before christmas tree

Muehl constantly revised his theoretical works, as in the following version of material action (which also appeared in slightly amended form in the magazine Le Marais edited by Brus in 1965). This version appeared in Muehl's own publication, Omo Super Material Action; it contains a dig at Nitsch in the last paragraph.

MATERIAL ACTION MANIFESTO 1965

material action is portrayed painting, auto-therapy made visible with foodstuffs. it seems like a psychosis, produced by the mingling of human bodies, objects and material. everything is planned. everything can be used and worked as material.

everything is employed as substance.

paint not as a means of colouring, but as goo, liquid, dust. an egg not as an egg, but as a slimy substance.

the associations of certain materials — whether on account of their form, their customary usage or their meaning — are utilised.

real occurrences are reproduced and mixed with materials, real occurrences can be mixed with other occurrences, as can real with unreal, artificial occurrences, as well as with every kind of material, just as the time and place of the occurrence can be interchanged:

a symphony orchestra plays naked in a swimming-pool which slowly fills with jam.

paint and foodstuffs are sprayed, tipped over and thrown at an opera performance. the singers are instructed to stick it out till the end. interminglings, interchanges, transformations can be employed for state receptions, the trooping of the colour, parades and other ceremonies in everyday life.

real occurrences are reproduced: car accidents, floods, conflagrations, mixed with material and other events. mingling and mixing are performed according to the logic of dreams.

events of a deeper significance come into being.

jam, corpses, road construction machines.

occurrences are remoulded, material penetrates reality, loses its normal validity, butter becomes pus, jam blood, they become symbols of other occurrences.

the associative assumes a large place in the delineated possibilities.

if the audience joins in it becomes either material or accomplice. in order to avoid instincts breaking out, the action will resemble a gym lesson.

hands:

bound crosswise to a surface: nail, dough, clay, oil

action: tip paint

pray: squeeze out dough between fingers

shake hands: spray flour

fight with hands: tip powder paint

face:

elastoplast

plastic dentures

oil beetroot juice

tampon into mouth

pubic hair into face

push wings of nostrils upwards with fingers

push in cheeks from both sides

pull cheeks out on both sides

push eyebrows upwards

make fat squiggles of paint on them with a paint tube

vanilla custard

balloons tied to ears

face lying flat:

eyes with dough dabbed on them

potatoes pressed on to them with presser

ears filled with paint with a funnel

mouth filled by means of a funnel

wide metal clasp tied to forehead

stop-light into mouth

tin pole bent sideways over nose

head wrapped in gauze bandages

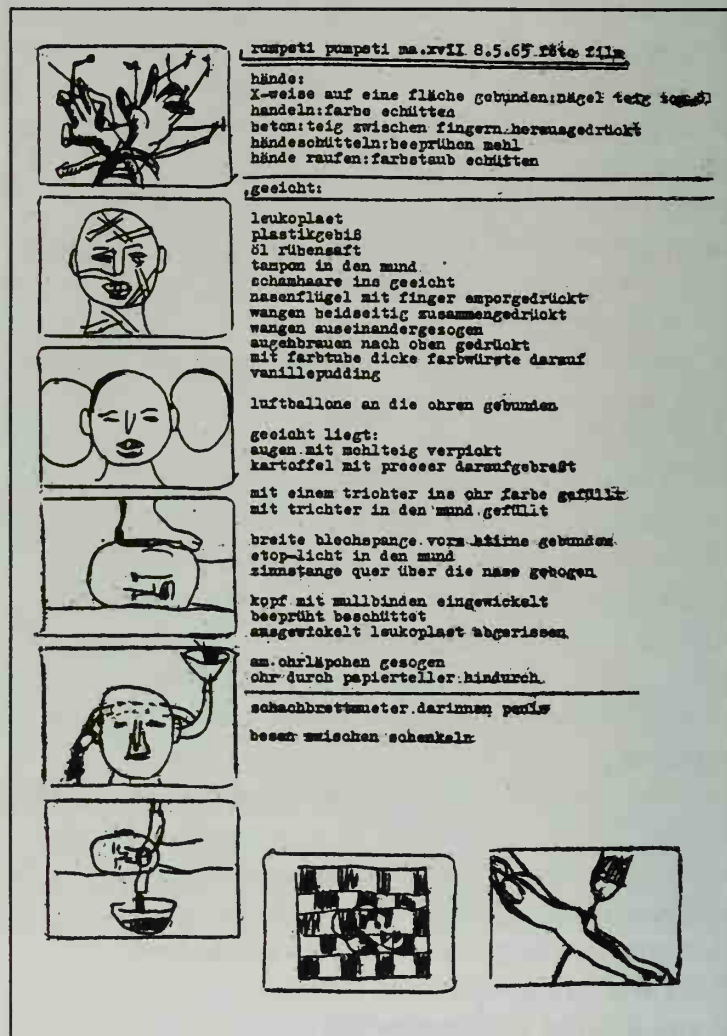
paint sprayed/poured on

unwrapped elastoplast torn off

tugged by ear-lobe

ear through paper plate

chess-board pattern with penis in it



face in the target:

dots painted on
knife scissors chopper whisk bathroom plug
key-ring fork alarm-clock eggs stuck into target
lips lifted with wire
sieve put in front of face
weight hung on wire
worked over with paint clay flour sand

standing male figure:

dots painted on
plastic dentures
elastoplast
oil eggs beetroot juice painted white-green yellow
sprayed blue
remove elastoplast

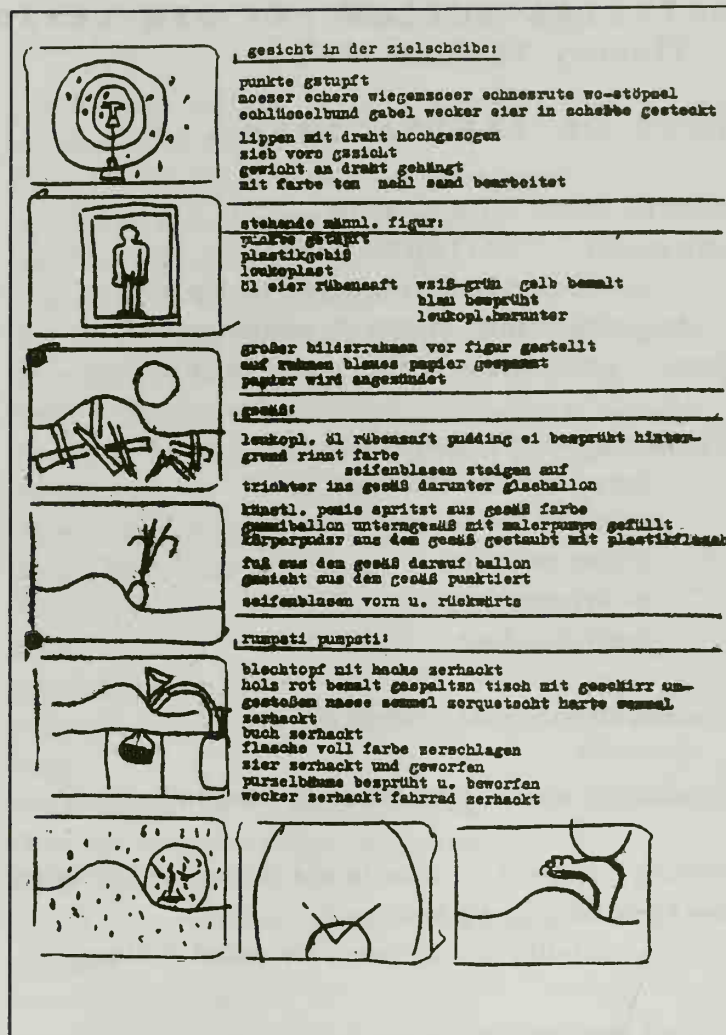
large picture frame placed before figure
blue paper stretched across it
paper is set alight

backside:

elastoplast oil beetroot-juice custard egg sprayed
background colour trickles down
soap bubbles float up
funnel into backside glass bulb beneath
artificial penis spurts colour from backside
rubber balloon under backside is inflated with spray
pump
talcum powder from backside dusted down with
plastic bottle
foot from backside with balloon on top
face from out of the backside dotted
soap bubbles to front and back

rumpsti pumpsti:

tin pot hacked apart with axe
wood painted red chopped table with china knocked
over wet bread-roll squashed hard bread-roll chopped
to bits
book chopped to bits
bottle full of paint smashed
somersaults sprayed and things thrown
alarm-clock chopped to bits bicycle chopped to bits



MATERIAL ACTION 24: GYM LESSON IN FOODSTUFFS > Perinet Cellar,
Vienna, 24 June 1965

TEXT OF INVITATION ⁴⁰

material action GYM LESSON

otto muehl IN FOODSTUFFS

performance thursday, 24.6.65 8 p.m.

in the perinet cellar: vienna 20 perinetgasse 1

(next to gaußplatz near the danube canal)

i. presentation of action films:

- bread-crumbs and eggs
- leda and the swan
- mama and papa
- o christmas tree
- body-building

ii. material collages (exhibition)

iii. material action: gym lesson in foodstuffs

visitors are asked to come in old clothes and to bring
one kg of flour and a hen's egg
no responsibility will be taken for soiled clothing

invited guests only

The score of Gym Lesson was circulated as a mimeographed leaflet. As with many of these scores, it is not identical with the events that actually took place.

gymnast stands upright
lips painted, ear-rings
dentures into mouth
stamped and inscribed using japanese ink
hand-print on upper body
similarly foot-print while he lies on floor
insulating tape: stuck vertically and crosswise
balloons tied to neck
tie made of paper
photos, crossword stuck on
sheet of paper printed with material action muehl is
stuck on

TURNSTUNDE IN LEBENSMITTELN	
FAUSTEL	beckt herab, kreist um den kopf des turners, stößt mit kopf und hand danach bis er platzt.
LUFTBALLON	kriecht auf allen vieren, macht kopfstand
KRAWATTE AUS PAPIER	beobachtet kniebeugen
SOLIERBAND	springt senkrecht in die höhe schlägt purzelbäume
TASCHENTUCH	hopst
SCHUH	geht, läuft durch die gasse, die das publikum bildet
INKASTASCHE	turnt mit den expander mit dem faustel
KÜNSTL. PENIS	hängt sich an das seil und schwingt durch den raum.
PHOTOS	schnurpringen
FUSSABDRUCK	übungen an den ringen
KREUZWORTPUZZEL	setzt sich auf das fahrad, das von der decke herabhängt und tritt fest auf die pedale, an das sich drehende hinterrad werden bettfedern und flüssige farbe gehalten.
BUCH	der turner wird durch eine 10m lange bahm auf der überwachensind mahl, marmelade, sammelbrösel, farbe, kleister und teig aufgetragen oind, gerollt.
GEWEBEFELT	der turner hängt in den seilen, davor wird ein großer bilderrahmen, der mit packpapier verklebt ist, gestellt und angesündet. währenddessen wird der turner mit lebensmitteln, bettfedern und farbe beschüttet und beworfen.
turner steht aufrecht	
schnurknäuel der lippen, ohrringmahl	
gebiss in den mund	
geostempelt, beschriebenen mit japanischer tinte.	
handabdruck auf oberkörper	
ebene fußabdruck liegt dabei auf dem boden	
isolierband, senkrecht und quer auf geklebt.	
luftballone an den hals gebunden	
krawatte aus papier	
photos, kreuzworträtsel auf geklebt	
materialaktion mühl auf papier gedruckt wird auf geklebt.	
plastiktasche, künstl. penis, ein damenschuh, ein buch werden an den körper gebunden.	
schwarze filzkappe, gefüllt mit dicke farbe wird aufgesetzt.	
ein faustel zwischen die zähne sieht sich kurz an den ringen hoch.	
blaue seilenblasen an den hals, liegt auf dem boden autoketten über das publikum wirft mahl.	
luftballone mit farbiger tinte	
kleber gezeichnete stange von der	

Drawing captions:

- FELT CAP
- DUMB-BELL
- BALLOON
- PAPER TIE
- INSULATING TAPE
- HANDKERCHIEF
- SHOE
- SHOPPING BAG
- ARTIF. PENIS
- PHOTOS
- FOOT-PRINT
- CROSSWORD PUZZLE
- BOOK
- STAMP



plastic bag, artificial penis, a woman's shoe, a book
are tied to his body
black felt cap filled with thick paint is put on
dumb-bell placed between his teeth
pulls himself up briefly on rings
soap bubbles blown at him
lies on ground, car chains on top of him, audience
throws flour
balloon filled with coloured liquid hangs from ceiling,
circles g's head, hits it with his head and hand until it
bursts
crawls on all fours
does a headstand
dive roll
knee-bends
jumps up vertically
does a forward roll
hops
walks along aisle formed by audience
does exercises with chest-expander
with dumb-bell
hangs on to rope and swings round room
skipping
exercises on rings
sits on bike suspended from ceiling and cycles
furiously. bed-feathers and liquid paint are poured
over the spinning rear wheel
the gymnast is rolled along a 10 m long path
covered alternately with flour, jam, bread-crumbs,
paint, paste and dough
the gymnast suspends himself from the ropes, a large
picture frame covered with wrapping paper is placed
in front of him and set on fire. meanwhile, food, bed-
feathers and paint are tipped and thrown over the
gymnast



In 1966 Muehl redefined his concept of the material action during an intensive phase in which he collaborated with Brus and they founded the Institute for Direct Art.

i. material actions still belong to the realm of painting inasmuch as the surface of bodies (in place of the picture's surface) is altered by means of material (instead of paint). they belong to sculpture since bodies are placed in spatial configurations and altered and transformed by the addition of other bodies. the material can be anything: liquids, solid objects, dust, gas, steam.

the emphasis is not on the action but rather on the result produced by the action.

little movement, production of static spatial situations. body and space instead of the picture's surface. material instead of paint. the action is directed against body and space and destroys them with the aid of material. the result can be registered visually and documented by photographs and film.

the material action has replaced painting on a surface (easel painting). painting will only continue to exist in this form.

ii. noise actions (acoustic actions)

the results of the actions cannot be registered visually, but only acoustically.

destruction of objects to produce certain noises. the actions are determined by the quality of the intended sound. the vocal cords may also be the object of a noise action (action with mouth and vocal cords). someone who is very ticklish is tickled for 10 min. noise actions are the contemporary form of instrumental music.

iii: total action

combines all art forms. noises, movement, space, objects, material, light, smells are the means of the total action. no "pictures" are produced, as in material actions, but events instead. the action dominates. nothing is spilled on to the material, it is itself spilled. the direction in which something is thrown is not important, but rather the fact that it is thrown. the action does not produce a result that is to be taken in visually. material actions are actions using material against bodies (objects), total actions are pure action.

total actions are the end of literary and musical theatre (monstrosities of

our civilisation). talking and singing only continue to exist in total actions as stuttering, gargling, hissing, wheezing, screaming and bellowing. material actions and noise actions are still artificial. spaces, objects are taken from reality and put at the disposal of the action. total actions contain the possibility of stripping away all artifice and of breaking in on reality as "pure action", as super-action without any prior announcement. formal models for super-actions are day-to-day occurrences in our civilisation. organised festivals, sight-seeing, parades, mass sporting events, mystery tours, parlour games, parties, mountain hikes, manoeuvres, bank robberies, mass pile-ups, annihilation of all senior citizens on one day, detonation of all mountain peaks, bombardment and setting on fire of important architectural monuments, razing of all churches and cemeteries, diversion of the danube down kärntner street, shooting the singers during an opera performance, extermination with poison gas of the philharmonic including the conductor during beethoven's 9th, shooting down all the old mothers during mother's day celebrations, etc., etc. a point would be reached where art and reality coincide.

everever action

sleeping and waking is action, eating, drinking, digesting is action, talking to someone is action, shopping, stealing, earning money, begging, sitting in gaol — everywhere action. writing, not writing, comma or none, action! also action and also not action or actiumnjtir spellinggonetorot money borrow and return not back give backwards lend back and forth work no wages and no work accept the job and don't go, you're a tram driver and leave it standing at a crossing, be a locomotive mative, motive and jump from the moving train. sling the tree out of the window and land in your aeroplane, just so that you are you somewhere else. buy a flat, drill a hole through to the neighbours downstairs for christmas and appear to them as the baby jesus. the following, creep into a church and up to the altar on all fours dressed as a bishop, visit an orphanage as a general and steal something, lie on the street as if injured, with

bandages and artificial wounds, and wait for what happens. as a negro get up to mischief with a blonde in the middle of the street, hand out sweets and chocolates to children in parks, put on a romper-suit and ride down the street on a tricycle, dress up as a woman and have yourself brought in an ambulance to the emergency ward and try to give birth, and that on christmas eve, call your son jesus, form a nazi party, side with the people, 'blood and soil', the homeland and the fatherland and become a mountain climber, stand for right, morals, order, popular sentiment, for the poor, for flood victims, donate vast sums to cripples, to the blind, and be amoral in that way, found a charity and do not abscond with the proceeds, write letters to the holy father and ask for an autograph, likewise write constantly to other highly-placed personages. send bills or reminders to unknown persons, write love letters to an old lady's cat, address strangers by their first names and friends with titles, insult everyone for one whole day, another day be friendly, make gifts, smile, lie, steal, and do it all at once, make actions within actions.



Muehl performed a version of his noise actions at the Destruction in Art Symposium, London, 1966, with Juan Hidalgo.⁴²

**TRANSLATION FOR TWO VOICES
> Africa Centre, London,
10 September 1966**

- A) performs the following actions with his mouth:
1. mouth movements without noises
 2. mouth movements with soft noises
 3. mouth movements with louder noises, such as mneh, mneh
 4. mneh, mneh ... the performer simultaneously runs his forefinger under the base of his nose
 5. mouth movements as if eating something with gusto, smacking noises
 6. the smacking noises grow louder, other noises mingle with them
 7. loud screams and gobbling movements.
 8. uninterrupted roars
- B) translates by interrupting A at brief intervals and reading out individual words from a travel guide

During the Destruction in Art Symposium the actionists befriended the Fluxus performer Al Hansen. On their return to Vienna, Muehl staged his action concert for al hansen in the Galerie Nächst St. Stephan with the cream of Vienna's avant-garde, including Nitsch, Schwarzkogler, Peter Weibel, Kurt Kren, Attersee, Dieter Haupt, and Oswald Wiener (pictured left), with unplanned additions by Kurt Kalb and Dominik Steiger. Brus was originally going to take part as well, but declined at the last moment. Muehl described the event in his diary (draft of a letter to Al Hansen):

LETTER TO AL HANSEN⁴³

dear al hansen,
many thanks for the brochures you sent me. i am very interested in these things. my action concert for al hansen is now over. the galerie st. stephan, in which it took place, is the

best gallery here in vienna. it was the first time they put on something like this, so the event was quite a sensation for vienna. no galleries up to now have dared to put on anything by nitsch or myself. (...) i hope the concert did you proud. it was a real al hansen mix-up. over 200 people turned up, the gallery was filled to bursting. i even made money on it. the actions did not take place in front of the spectators but right in their midst, in all of the rooms. the following actions were performed simultaneously at every location in the free spaces:

combing and dressing the audience's hair.

a large crate was pushed continually around the rooms.

wheat grains and bed-feathers were thrown over the audience.

swinish insults were whispered into people's ears.

ossi wiener (a writer) delivered a non-stop speech through a megaphone:

there are several million gnomes⁺⁺ on this planet. what we need are more corpses.

i climbed a ladder, bellowed and threw bed-feathers.

weibel wrote blindfold on a typewriter and

gave a speech denouncing art and friedrich schiller.

we welcomed the people with tick-tock, peek-a-boo, ping-pong.

initially nitsch, who i am getting to like more and more, wanted to do something with a lamb. i persuaded him to use a duck instead,

frozen in a transparent plastic



wrapper, which he pulled constantly through the audience on a five-metre-long rope.

another person had three chairs tied to his feet, crawled with them through the audience, fried two alarm-clocks with eggs in oil.

to conclude i brushed the audience out of the door with a besom while a friend of mine (kurt kalb) fired five shots with a tear-gas pistol. the audience finally

left the gallery in tears.

kurt kren wrapped the audience with several hundred metres of film and threw wheat(?) over them.

this was all accompanied by short-wave radio noises, speech noises (*translation* with hidalgo), beat music and projections of alpine landscapes and a film about flowers and bees.

when i stood on the ladder and gave my roar concert the audience began to roar along in unison.

From now on, Muehl's work was performed more and more in collaboration with other artists, either individuals or in groups. Of key importance here was "Zock", founded in 1967. Zock was introduced to the world by a

manifesto, now lost, written by Wiener, but others were to follow. On 17.4.1967 Muehl, Weibel and Wiener performed Zock Exercises, a warm-up for the great Zock Festival four days later, in which Wiener, Weibel, Dominik Steiger, Gerhard Rühm, Nitsch, Wolfgang Bauer and others participated. An extract from Muehl's first published manifesto from 1967 epitomises the spirit of Zock.

1

all civil servants will be fired and incorporated into the production process. the administration will be attended to by machines.

there will be no more policemen, lawyers, judges, priests, teachers, postmen, post officials, no gas or electricity meter readers, no health insurance and tax offices, no pensioners or senior citizens.

there will be no property, no marriage and family, no religion.

in ZOCK there will only be public transport. that gnome-vehicle, the car, will no longer exist.

ZOCK has enough means for abreaction at its disposal to reimburse the gnome⁴⁶ fully for his darling car.

the gnomes' hankering for security, state positions and pensions will be unnecessary under ZOCK. gnomes need no longer struggle for security in the autumn of their lives. ZOCK will give them all they need.

10 hours' work a week and he receives a bus pass that entitles him to lead a life on level I. accommodation, food, drink, and use of all public institutions to a sufficient degree.

if the gnome works 25 hours a week he will live life at level II. better food, living conditions + pocket money.

life at level III begins with 40 hours of work per week.

the level III gnome already leads the life of a spendthrift. whereas one can occasionally drink beyond one's thirst at level II, the gnome on level III can afford drugs.

ZOCK-actions that are suited to shake the world view of the billions of gnomes on this planet:

first of all, everything that the gnome considers valuable will be destroyed:

every city, such as florence, rome, venice, etc., and favoured holiday resorts will be razed. tourist attractions will be removed. historical monuments such as cathedrals, temples (the acropolis), tombs

(the pyramids) and palaces will be cleared away.

call to ZOCK youth to flatten all the cemeteries.

gigantic mother's day celebrations with old mothers: feed the mothers cakes and drugs and show the intoxicated mothers dancing on tv.

call for the elimination of useless animals. useless animals on land, sea and in the air will be eliminated.

zoos will be devoured.

(monkeys, lions, tigers, zebras, bears, kangaroos).

only useful animals will remain: goats, sheep, cattle, hens, deer, pigs, geese, ducks, herrings, whales, squids, sardines, etc.

elimination of useless plant species.

chopping down of all forests. planting of forests made of plastic.

all that will remain are the plants required for nutrition.

furthermore, ZOCK plans to remove the mountains, to blow up their peaks and roof over the mountain ranges. this will put an end to the deplorable customs of mountain climbing and skiing.

the right to commit suicide, the conscious, uncompromising planning of one's public (televised) departure from society is a fundamental, inalienable right of the ZOCK person.

all-out chemical war against insects.

space research will be postponed until

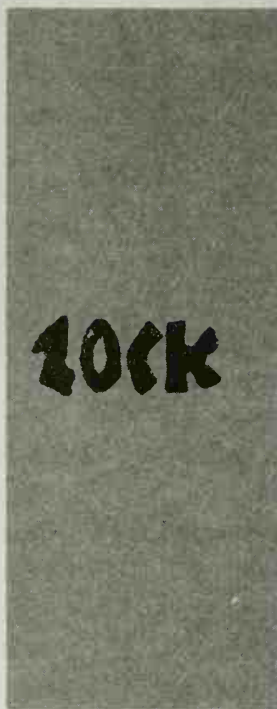
the last beetle is destroyed.

(...)

elimination of the distinction between town and country. all villages, towns, individual houses will be removed. in their place will be built enormous housing towers, evenly distributed over the entire country.

the family as the basic unit of gnomedom will be eliminated.

all religious communities will be



dissolved. priests may be put to death by means of a blow-pipe while performing their ministries during major religious festivals.

judgements, sentences and their execution will be attended to by suitable machines.

ZOCK does not allow the death penalty.

anyone who transgresses ZOCK laws must donate blood.

criminal elements will be sent to the blood donor colony in walsertal⁴⁷ as permanent blood donors.

the blood silo and the blood donation machines are a favourite place for excursions for ZOCK people.

stored blood and frozen corpses will be exported by ZOCK to all corners of the globe.

apart from which, the permanent blood donors will constitute a fairly respected group. like children, the mentally ill, the infirm, they are excluded from ZOCK public life.

they are not permitted to leave walsertal, but otherwise live freely and receive good food and maintenance.

sexual intercourse between high blood-producers will be looked on favourably.

the mentally ill also serve ZOCK as blood donors, as long as they are incapable of any other useful work and their health permits.

glass towers for the mentally ill will replace the zoo for ZOCK youth.

ZOCK will remove the race problem by very simple means:

1. general prohibition of sexual intercourse between people of the same colour.
2. ZOCK women will be sent on pregnancy safaris to countries with people of a different colour.
3. ZOCKs may only visit female tourists of different colour.

the colour of future ZOCK people will be grey.

ZOCK is the invention of GARTH (with extra meat power) and OMO SUPER.*8

(...)

ZOCK = Zealous Organisation of Candied Knights.

ZOCK, this label is like a medal.

ZOCK is really great.

hats off to ZOCK.

ZOCK meets our tastes and those of the world.

ZOCK, the peak of maturity.

ZOCK's horses set the pace.

ZOCK is gentle, indescribably gentle.

we, the gentle and half-gentle people from ZOCK.

ZOCK! people, forks at the ready! for me ZOCK is closer than you think.

ZOCK is cosmetic, but from inside.

ZOCK means: serve yourself.

ZOCK means an uninterrupted holiday orgy.

ZOCK is in a class of its own, exclusive.



ZOCK, ideal.

ZOCK, male, discerning, elegant, international.

ZOCK, it has always been slightly more expensive to have good taste.

ZOCK and above all easily digested.

that demonstrates its quality, the quality of ZOCK.

ZOCK has been manufactured for years by GARTH (with extra meat power) and OMO SUPER, this experience backs up every ZOCK action. consequently GARTH and OMO SUPER have friends the whole world over.

pamper yourself with ZOCK quality.

ZOCK, pleasure in the style of the modern age.

ZOCK, fresh breath, which everyone loves.

ZOCK, a touch of exclusiveness.

ZOCK-problem: should children see their parents naked?

ZOCK: should adultery be punished?

ZOCK walks strange paths.

ZOCK is in love with violet.

(...)

development of ZOCK:

stage I mobile architecture, mobile production centres circle the globe. the planet is levelled and sprayed with a coat of synthetic foam.

stage II of ZOCK man lives in symbiosis with machines⁴⁹ which attend to his nutrition and stimulate his feeling of well-being.

the ZOCK man no longer needs to know anything, he is served by machines.

stage III reduction of human beings to nerve fibres and brain. cultivation of nerve colonies in nutrient solutions, nerve cultures.

stage IV mobile production centres shoot into space. the earth is blown up afterwards.

stage V clearing away the universe. all heavenly bodies are blown up: suns, moons, stars. attempt to cave in the universe.

ZOCK's awkward phase

up till now, every revolution has made the mistake of not destroying utterly the institutions it has been bequeathed. they always allowed the remnants of old institutions to survive and thereby gave reaction the opportunity to warm up its old stew.

ZOCK will avoid this error.

ZOCK will destroy without exception all institutions that are more than one minute old. the civil service apparatus, which until now has survived all vicissitudes, will be totally smashed, down to the last sleeve protector.

ZOCK will also not shy away from chopping off every finger that has ever bashed a typewriter key.

the first years of ZOCK rule will be dedicated solely to the annihilation of handed-down values.

ZOCK's entire fury will be unleashed immediately wherever the tiniest seed of order can be seen. its initial aim is to create total chaos.

everything else will arise of its own accord.

ZOCK has no dread of chaos, rather it fears forgetting to annihilate something.

everything connected with teaching and education will be annihilated. all schools and universities.

all books (the national library will be blown up), all art works and all musical instruments will be annihilated.

all places of production will be annihilated.

the famine that ZOCK will cause by ravaging the economy is a welcome event that will realise ZOCK's most drastic aims.

once the famine has reached a certain point, ZOCK will give the word that people should use their fellow human beings as food.

in order to throttle tradition, ZOCK will not only prohibit writing, but also speaking — until everyone has forgotten their own language. even communication by means of eyes and hands will be forbidden for a long period. (it would be all too easy for a remnant of language to be conserved for a later date.)

the deaf and dumb constitute a special danger to ZOCK's development on account of their sign language, likewise the use of braille by the blind.

for this reason ZOCK will earmark the deaf and dumb, the hard of hearing and the blind for consumption once the famine has reached its peak.

a particular problem is presented by the aged and mentally ill, due to their penchant for bygone things. they will also be devoured, assuming their flesh is still edible.

woman as the guardian of the family and of tradition is ZOCK's enemy no.1.

every woman who has already had children will be slaughtered and eaten by the ZOCK youth at enormous mother's day events.

on father's day fathers may use their sons and daughters for their sexual pleasure.

through these actions ZOCK will succeed in shattering the family as a major element in the upholding of the state.

The Zock Festival, held on 21.4.1967 in the public rooms of a Viennese inn, the Gasthaus Zum grünen Tor, proved to be almost as anarchic as the manifesto; hidden aggression between the performers manifested itself on stage, the audience was pelted with dumplings, and the ensuing chaos was finally brought to an end by the intervention of 200 police-officers. A subsequent issue of Zock included scores for Muehl's contributions to the festival.

OMO SUPER & HIS BIG BAND⁵⁰

10 actors destroy a whole suite of household furniture within 5 min, using axes, sledge-hammers, files, saws, pincers and crow-bars.

simultaneously 50 kg of flour is thrown over the actors.

the band leader shouts slogans and rallying cries into the microphone.

a colour film is projected on to the "curtain of flour".

everything is sprayed from above with red paint.

the actors roll, bellowing, into the auditorium.

OMO SUPER'S HENS LAY MORE⁵¹

he holds a live hen between his legs, hidden inside his trousers.

he allows the hen's head to peer out of his flies.

he tries to feed the hen.

he cuts off the hen's head.

while the blood spurts from his flies the actor crows: cock-a-doodle-do!

DEAR GOD, WE'RE ALL EPILEPTICS⁵²

OMO SUPER and 5 actors sit on chairs.

OMO SUPER steps up to the microphone:

"dear god, i am deaf and dumb and an orphan. please give me a small donation for an ear operation. thanks everso."

"dear god, i've been made pregnant by persian students. please give me a small donation for the abortion. thanks everso."

(inflates a balloon under his shirt and then bursts it with a pin.)

"dear god, we're all epileptics. please give us a little assistance to reproduce. thanks everso."

OMO SUPER sits down again among the actors.

1. straighten up convulsively.
2. open eyes wide, twitch limbs.
3. allow foam to form on lips
(using sherbert powder).
4. groan, gasp.
5. increase limb-twitching, shake about on chairs.
6. fall over with chairs.



7. thrash and twitch across to the footlights.
8. crawl among the spectators.
9. the spectators throw foodstuffs at the epileptics.
10. stand up and run about bellowing.
11. fall to the ground and remain still.

12. OMO SUPER speaks into the microphone:
"dear god, we feel better again now. thanks everso."

Also included in this publication was a suitably Zock material action manifesto.

MATERIAL ACTION MANIFESTO

1967⁵³

material action is a profession of faith and foodstuffs. instead of destroying hens' eggs, instead of beheading chickens, our digestive tracts must be fleeced, along with the resulting philosophy. in reality there is no real reality.

nor anyone who doesn't slaver as soon as the eggs are whacked into the professions of faith.

material action promises the direct pleasures of the table.

material action satiates.

far more important than baking bread is the urge to take dough-beating to the extreme.

destruction of the digestive apparatuses and the cookery recipes they produce.

the entire world must be transformed into foodstuff by means of beheading, slaughtering, chopping up, cooking, roasting, frying and smoking.

it is already possible now to cook with everything; everywhere.

it all boils down to new possibilities of eating or not eating.

everything that is and eats is food. there's nothing more wretched than a stomach in which accidentally devoured wasps buzz about.

the culinary dishes that are currently propagated correspond in their simplicity, uniformity, wretchedness and lack of fantasy to the acidic stomach of a civil servant.

down with foodstuffs based on the feebleness of gastric juices!

down with corrupt recipes which refuse to accept us as food, which seek to downgrade us into mere gut machines!

ignore your digestive tracts, throw your hens' eggs in the actors' and ministers' faces, slurp them up and spit them on to the nipples of freshly impregnated women, bite off their nipples, vomit up the chicken-embryos mixed with regurgitated chicken meat, and discover a new realm between eating and puking.

At the time of the Zock Festival Muehl founded his Direct Art Group, a team of performers who were to assist him in various combinations over the next four years. Some went on to form the core of his AA commune (actions-analytical commune) in the early Seventies, founded on free love, shared property, art, personal development and educational reform. The commune lasted some two decades, with several satellite groups in other countries, and eventually numbered several hundred members. Muehl created two actions solely for the Direct Art Group in spring 1967, the Psycho-Motoric Noise Concert, which included a version of the "epileptics" action, and Toughening up the Army.

The Psycho-Motoric Noise Concert, now renamed What Boys Do When They Get Bored, was later included in the Direct Art Festival in November 1967, which Muehl staged with Brus.

PSYCHO-MOTORIC NOISE CON- CERT (Excerpt)⁵⁴



everyone sits in a row with an open beer bottle in their hand. everyone shakes their beer bottle while holding the top closed.

everyone accompanies this with rhythmic calls (groans) of "aonh".

groans and rhythm constantly mount, they fall from their chairs while simultaneously allowing the beer to spurt out. soda water is squirted and flour thrown from the side.

material: bottles of beer, soda water, 2 kg flour.

TOUGHENING UP THE ARMY

ORAL MORPHOLOGY: TOUGHENING UP THE ARMY⁵⁵

mouth open mouth closed
 tongue out tongue in
 move towards each other
 move apart
 mouth open and closed
 tongue out and in
 tongue out and in sideways
 turn to each other
 turn inwards and then out
 alone (kiss on both cheeks)
 in company
 alone (tongue)
 in company a second person's behind

rocking

tongue out tongue in
 mouth open mouth closed

move apart

2nd profile at the back moves downwards

lower profile is pulled away

upper face swivels forwards
 lower face swivels forwards

one upside down straight

both profiles turn to front
 both profiles turn away

(colour)

- lots of fingers with material before face (paste, eggs, jam, etc.) (lies on ground, eggs, paste, flour, paint)
 - tremble and gasp for air + material is constantly edited into the film (white paint, red paint pot)
 - bends over, head behind bites neck, raspberry juice
 - kiss, devour each other, material
 - dough between them (at the end point) (down feathers/yellow dough)
 - plastic dentures, keep going at each other
 - mouth eats rose
 - the two are tied together with gauze bandages, sellotape, dough (flour, paste, water, paint)
 - both lie on floor, material tipped on them (keep biting, writhe in pain)
- (1-9 fixed angle, each 15 secs. long)



ORALE MORPHOLOGIE
WEHRRERTÜCHTIGUNG

	mund auf mund zu		zunge raus und rein
	mund auf mund zu		mund auf mund zu
	zunge raus, zunge rein		zusammen auseinander
	bewegen sich aufeinander zu		2. profil dahinter bewegt sich nach unten.
	bewegen sich weg		unteres profil wird weggezogen
	mund auf und zu		1. oberes gesicht dreht sich nach vorne unteres gesicht dreht sich nach vorn
	zunge raus und rein		2. einer verkehrt. gerade
	zunge seitlich raus und rein		beide profile drehen sich nach vorn beide profile drehen sich weg.
	drehen sich gegeneinander 1	color	
	drehen sich nach innen und nach ausen. 2		1. viele finger mit material vor dem gesicht (kleister, eies, marmelade usw. kleber, schokolade, etc.)
	allein 3		2. schnappen ritternd nach luft + material wird immer wieder in den film geschnitten wichtig, nicht fester
	zu zweit 4		3. neigt sich, kopf dahinter beißt in kals, himbeersaft.
	allein 5		4. küssen, sich auffressen. material
	zu zweit 6		5. teig zwischen ihnen, in silber farbe.
	zu zweit 7		6. betteln um (gelbe farbe) plastikgebiss, immer wieder aufeinander zufahren
	allein dahinter e. r. zweiter 8		7. mund frisst rose.
	pendeln 9		8. beide sind mit mullbinden zusammengebunden, tixo, teig.
			9. beide liegen am boden und werden mit material verschüttet.

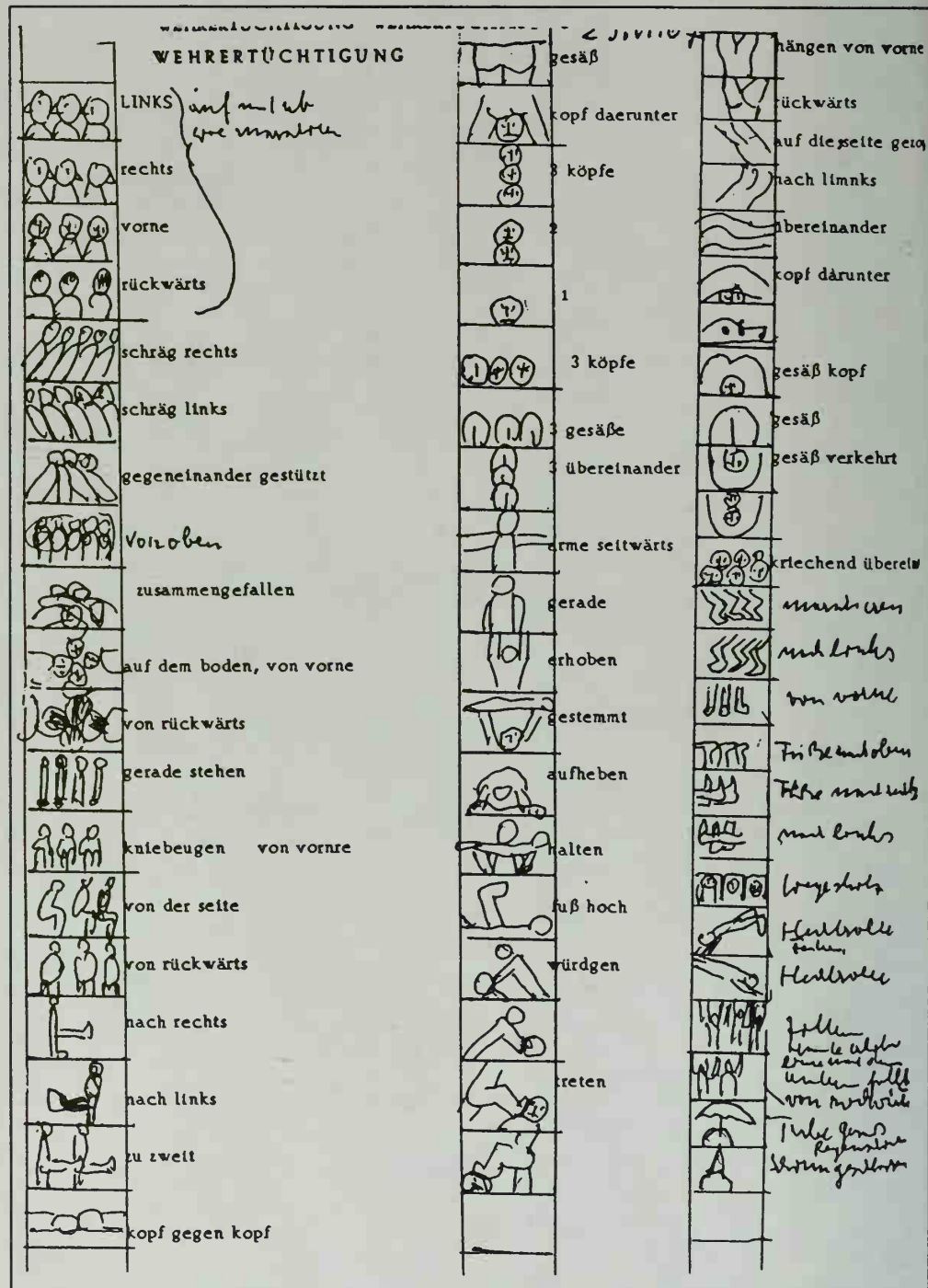
1.00 ... 1/4 Monate



LEFT
 right (marching back and forth)
 front
 back
 leaning to right
 leaning to left
 resting on each other
 from above
 collapsed
 on the floor, from front
 from behind
 standing straight
 knee-bends from front
 from the side
 from behind
 to the right
 to the left
 two together
 head to head

backside
 head beneath
 3 heads
 2
 1
 3 heads
 3 backsides
 3 above one another
 arms out to sides
 straight
 raised
 lifting
 picking up
 holding
 leg raised
 strangling
 kicking

hanging from front
 from back
 pulled to one side
 to the left
 on top of one another
 head beneath
 backside head
 backside
 inverted backside
 crawling over each other
 (marching)
 (to the left)
 (from the front)
 (feet raised upwards)
 (feet to the right)
 (to the left)
 (press-ups)
 (forward roll)
 (down feathers)
 (trembling, hands raised)
 (fall down one after another, from behind)
 (paint backside umbrella)
 (umbrella closed)



Muehl also concentrated increasingly on film during this and the ensuing period, often incorporating his Direct Art Group, as in the film of Toughening up the Army, described in this leaflet.

CINEMA DIRECT ART⁵⁸

1. Grimuid⁵⁹

2. Toughening up the Army

OTTO MUEHL, the maestro of morbidezza, has set his artistic foot on foreign soil, in the vital, vibrant world of film.

previously kurt kren (*mama and papa, leda and the swan, o christmas tree, cosine alpha*) and ernst schmidt (*body-building*) made films of otto muehl's material actions. that was some years ago. in the meantime OTTO MUEHL has become vienna's CINE-MAGUS. before the fixed camera, a state of emergency is revealed within the affluent state.

with his films, 1. *Grimuid* and 2. *Toughening up the Army*, he enters once again into the anxieties and doubts of our sham existence — what he discovers in the strata of the soul — and projects this on to the screen in key images; the meaning remains obscure.

the tortuous visions of MUEHL, the pastor's son, can be explained in any way one desires. MUEHL's films are more for the eyes than the head; in fact it is asceticism in a good cause.

OTTO MUEHL punishes austria with grim visions, *Toughening up the Army* shows vienna bestialised after the dropping of the A-bomb; *Toughening up the Army* shows the coming seizure of power by the DIRECT ART COMPANY.

as an idol of violence, MUEHL lets the masses rage.

using the manipulated austria of the future, slimy show-biz thugs, hypocritical clerics and a mass hysteria of the kind demonstrated at the nuremberg party rallies, director MUEHL conjures up a DIRECT ART VARIÉTÉ that often dazzles and confounds.

the POP MESSIAH MUEHL looks within himself and, seeing nothing there, curses managers and flees to the woods.

108 MUEHL



In 1968 Muehl published his *Burg Theatre Stuffed* (Zock Press 68/2) for the occasion of the Vienna Festival Week. Apart from the action script *King Oedipus* (his irreverent reworking of themes dear to Nitsch, also published in an earlier version as *King Otto*), it contained a revised version of the Zock manifesto, including the new sections below, as well as a new material action manifesto which paves the way for Muehl's later, more overtly body-oriented actions, and several projected actions.

ZOCK, ASPECTS OF A TOTAL REVOLUTION

nothing is so extreme that it cannot immediately be realized through ZOCK.

freedom to orgy holds sway in ZOCK. the orgy is the strongest means for de-gnomification. secret, so-called intimate orgies are prohibited (gnome orgies). without exception every orgy will be televised, orgies between criminals, the feeble-minded, children, old fogies with animals. at once the orgies will make up for the gnomes' losses of property, allotments, cars, families, religion, forests, meadows, mountains, love of animals and the gnome-holiday on the med.

what ZOCK does not want:

the babbling of the gnome-leaders, gnome-press, gnome-television, gnome-economics, gnome-medals, gnome-pensions, gnome-marriages, gnome-families, gnome-laws, gnome-religion, gnome-animal-love, gnome-peace, gnome-money, gnome-affluence, gnome-holidays, gnome-sport, gnome-cinema, gnome-theatre, gnome-baby-jesus, gnome-easter-bunny, gnome-psychological-dramas, gnome-sex,

gnome-fashion, gnome-rights and gnome-duty. every gnome has the right to the self-gnomification of his gnome-life. the right to gnome-upbringing, gnome-education, gnome-faith, gnome-suffrage, gnome-free-market.

the gnome's ability to feel at home in the most miserable surroundings.

gnome-sense-of-beauty, gnome-dignity, gnome-manners, the sound gnome-sense-of-propriety. the gnomes' love of pork and beef.

the esteem the gnome feels for the horse.

ZOCK WILL PUT AN END TO GNOME-CULTURE.

every opera-house, theatre, museum and library will be razed to the ground. all picture daubers, sculptors, actors, singers, dancers, conductors, theatre designers, theatre directors, museum directors, the entire culture-rabble will be unable to get over their sea-sickness as soon as ZOCK swings the rudder about. also those gnomes who regularly visited these institutes, e.g. who bought season tickets, collected autographs, often visited the cinema, bought paintings and sculptures and thus supported the idiot-economy, won't have it that easy under ZOCK.

ZOCK will proceed with particular vigour against everyone who has made their name in television or radio, who were responsible for the countless idiocies they never ceased unleashing. the winners of state prizes, decorated artists and scientists will also get a bit of stick, likewise life-savers and major names from sport.

(...)

in addition ZOCK will make a note of: mao-tse-tung, general westmoreland, lyndon b. johnson, guerilla-strategist giap, rudi dutschke, prince charles, dayan, nasser, de gaulle, ho-chi-minh, the shah of persia, hans niederbacher, charlie chaplin, jean-claude killy, u than, fritz hundertwasser, kiesinger, axel springer, udo jürgens, fidel castro, pope paul, karajan, che guevara, the beatles, doctor barnard, günter brus and hermann nitsch.

all these gnomes show their deference in their respective hobbies to a line that no gnome would cross of his own free will. their absence would be no loss, on the contrary, it would save us a lot of bother.

rule for ZOCK artists: everything will be shown directly.

ZOCK ART = DIRECT ART, ZOCK ART propagates the goals of ZOCK.

(...)

AFTERWORD

our present system is based on the fact that every newborn child is raised to be a system-idiot (gnome). this educational method is arranged in a criminal manner by the state and the church.

after 20 years' dressage by the family, school, church, television, films, the press, literature, music and art, the gnome is perfected.

this upbringing ensures that the gnome feels most at home where his liberty is most severely curtailed.

violent gnomes cloak their criminal natures in the roles of guardians of order, as policemen, judges, priests, civil servants, teachers, statesmen, high church dignitaries, public personalities, while billions of gnomes applaud and agree with everything. the gnome wants just one more thing: enough to eat, a bit of sport as substitute for revolution, and peace and comfort. he does what the super-gnomes demand of him: works industriously, keeps quiet and behaves nicely. to be concluded by a pension and then death.

freedom for all members of the human and animal body.

from now on, the audience will not be duped by anything. all that exists will be presented directly.

coitus, murder, torture, operations, decimation of people and animals and other objects are the only theatre that is really worth seeing. everything else is bunkum. INNER LIFE WILL BE REDUCED TO ITS BODILY FUNCTIONS.

art conceived in this manner cannot fail to have an effect on society. people must open their eyes at last.

the world-wide cretinization of the masses by the pigs of art, religion and politics can only be halted by the most brutal use of all available materials. pornography is a suitable means for healing our society of its genital panic. it banishes the witches and moral-madness that rampage in billions of gnome-brains.

anyone who utters the words filth, trash, debauchery or immoral will be dispatched to the madhouse at once.

proposal for a moral theatre-piece: 5 actors masturbate, the first to come wins.

volunteers step up from the audience and masturbate in a race.

a young girl presents herself and allows herself to be fucked by an old man.

the audience will be invited to piss on one another.

ART IS WHAT YOU MOST LIKE DOING.

(...)

direct art knows only the body and does everything which can be performed with the body.

THE BASES OF FUTURE ART: eating, drinking, shitting, pissing, fucking and killing people.

these are ticklish matters in our times, which are endlessly repressed and have yet to be mastered.

MURDER AS ART.

in times gone by, animals and people were ritually tortured and killed. nowadays, animals are slaughtered en masse in order to fill the billions of gnome-stomachs. masses of gnomes allow themselves to be slaughtered for politically senseless objectives.

NO! DIRECT ART DEMANDS THE TOLL OF LIVES THAT IS ITS DUE!

(...)

at the turn of the century artists adopted the styles of the mentally deranged in order to create a mentally deranged environment. now we work with the fantasies of perverts in order to deliver the billions of perverted gnomes a sound kick up the arse.

perverts are sympathetic victims of our castrating social order, they reveal society's vulnerable points — in contrast to criminals, who imitate and brutalize the style of the ruling powers.

PAEDO-GERONTO-ZOOPHILIA, passive and active ALGOLAGNIA, EXHIBITIONISM and VOYEURISM, PAEDICATION, SATYRIASIS, NYMPHOMANIA, FLAGELLANTISM, NECROPHAGY, UN DINISM, UROLAGNIA.

the pervert reveals society's defects.

perverse art drives away gnome-stench and gnome-fug.

RULES FOR SELECTING ART COLLEGE PROFESSORS ⁶¹

(elimination of favouritism)

1. selection is to be made before the assembled students.
2. exercises are to be performed in the college assembly hall.
3. short race with a paint-brush dipped in red paint. the first to paint a red spot on the tip of the rector's nose is the winner. 5 points.
4. tube-biting. the first to bite open 10 tubes of lead white: 6 points.
5. a plastic swimming pool, 2.5 metres deep, is filled with blue ink. on the bottom of the pool is a paint-brush and a set of water-colours. the person who manages to fish out the brush, with yellow paint on it: 10 points.
6. whoever paints all of a 10 x 10 m canvas the fastest, using their tongue as the brush, receives 15 points.
7. whoever manages to milk a goat the fastest: 7 points.
8. penis weighing: the person with the heaviest penis receives 8 points.
9. the first to bore through a canvas with his penis receives 11 points.
10. defecation competition. whoever makes the most beautiful pile, in terms of form, colour, weight, is awarded 19 points.
11. vomiting on a picture surface lying on the ground. the best picture will be awarded 21 points.
12. test of courage: the candidates are invited to cut off their left ear. anyone who succeeds in accomplishing this is immediately disqualified. he is not suited to the vocation of art college professor.
13. the candidates are invited to paint the federal president with red paint. whoever follows this instruction will be taken directly to the court-room; anyone who refuses receives 500 points; however, anyone who prevaricates and then attempts to kill himself will be immediately elected professor, even if he has the smallest prick.
14. students grab the happy victor and roll with him through a lengthy trail of bread-crumbs and hens' eggs.

Muehl's actions at the celebrated (or notorious) Art and Revolution performance on 7.6.1968 included a version of the "beer bottle" action and a "how far" pissing competition, both performed with Direct Art Group members, plus the following incendiary speech about the death of Robert Kennedy, montaged with quotes from the daily newspapers (including the death of a balloonist who had floated into a tall building).

ANOTHER ZERO LESS ⁶²

the revolting perversity of our society is revealed in its hypocritical outcry at stupid robert's death. a guileless pig — who wanted to buy power over us with the millions he had swindled rather than crawl into his hole and keep his mouth shut — he was topped by a crazed arab. this randy robert has fucked a dozen children into the world with the help of his millions; he was, by the way, a catholic. but we lack the money for an abortion. o.k., and what about all the poor idiots who die on our streets every easter and whitsun?

who installed the "suicide skewer" on the danube tower on which the hot-air balloon exploded yesterday? three cheers for the projuventute movement! student died alone while giving birth, dead man lay on the rails, mystery surrounds woman's mummified corpse, bathtub murder: sentence today, death as reward, did his wife climb on to the beer bottle? small child drank petrol, died shortly after. damn it all, who is guilty for this heap of shit? OKAY BOBBY!

and now it's time to gun down jackie!

Muehl's productivity was further restricted in the aftermath of the Art and Revolution event. It became impossible for him to work in Vienna, so his output was mostly limited to private actions in his flat, filming, and to the few invitations he received to perform abroad at underground festivals. However, 1969 saw the publication in Germany of *Mama & Papa*,⁶³ his first book not published by himself. Richly illustrated, it gave the first overview of his work to date, including several previously unpublished scores for material actions and new manifestos. It was later confiscated by the police after Beate Uhse, the owner of a mail-order firm for sex aids and hard-core literature and films, reported him to the police. The following essay on his film actions illustrates vividly the tension between the two opponents.

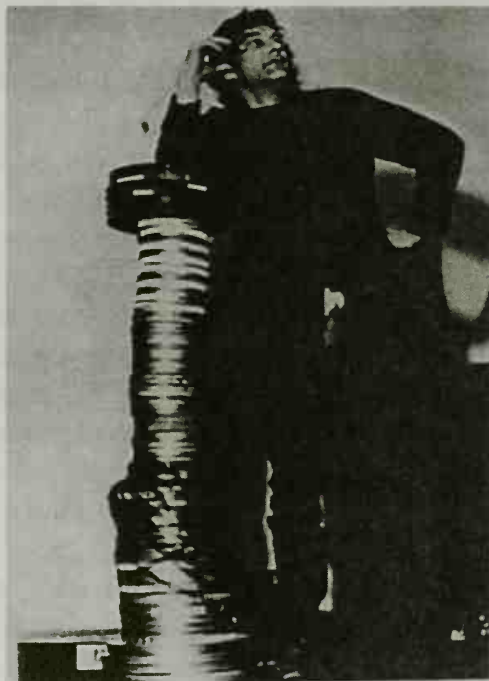
FILM ACTION (Excerpt)

for 6 years i have been experimenting with the human body and materials (material action). i have experimented with every part of the human body. over the last year i have concentrated chiefly on the sexual organs. there is a good reason for this. i have noticed that the state attorneys really get the hots for this, more than for murder and manslaughter, because the latter are normal, everyday things for them. the case is clear: i am for debauchery, for demythologizing sexuality. sexual intercourse not as a sacrament that upholds the state, but as a purely bodily function. i am against the petty bourgeois porn-film, against the pornography of the profiteers, the greengrocers and confectioners. i view pornography as a vital foodstuff for sick sexual diabetics. the production of pornography should be taken over by the health service. but i for one will not produce diet food.

THE STATE SNATCHES AT YOUR MEMBER AS WELL!

when i shoot a film, this is not in the least because i feel the desire to do so or because it is necessary for me, but in order to cause a scandal.

i do not shoot my films for myself, but for the audience, which is perverted in a traditional, conventional way, for those suffering from mental stagnation, for the masses bogged down in conformity. i restrict myself to



casting feed before the beasts — may they choke on it. i have no scruples, i have no problem in jumping from one ideological level to the next, even when the systems are morally and artistically in opposition.

i earn my living by a lively trade in corpses' eyes. during the last 7 months i removed 2 to 3 pairs of eyes a week from 7 corpses. the sockets are filled with gas, the lids sewn together.

The following example of Muehl's planned film-work is taken from Burg Theatre Stuffed.

BATTLE IN PARADISE

R, naked, hands the naked V a bunch of narcissi in an overgrown orchard.

V hits R in the face with the narcissi until they are destroyed.

V escapes through the garden, R pulls her into the grass and copulates with her.

F1, 2 (females) beat R with canes.

U stands in a tree and urinates.

R runs through the garden and is knocked down twice by F1, 2.

explosive devices have been buried at various places in the garden. they explode and tear up the grass and ground.

V sits at the top of a tree and shits on U, who is masturbating.

S hangs a calf upside down from a tree branch and slits its throat.

V lies beneath the calf and catches the blood with her labia.

F1, 2 bind R's feet and hang him upside down from a tree. they whip him.

S slices the calf's belly open.

U copulates with the dead calf and tears out its intestines.

F1, 2 tear the calf's liver to pieces with their teeth.

R places his penis between V's bloody labia.

S sodomises R.

F1, 2 chase chickens through the garden and bite through their necks.

F 2 whips R with the calf's intestines.

a building-crane standing outside the garden uproots a fruit tree and raises it up in the air.

a haystack begins to burn, explosive devices send burning straw flying through the air.

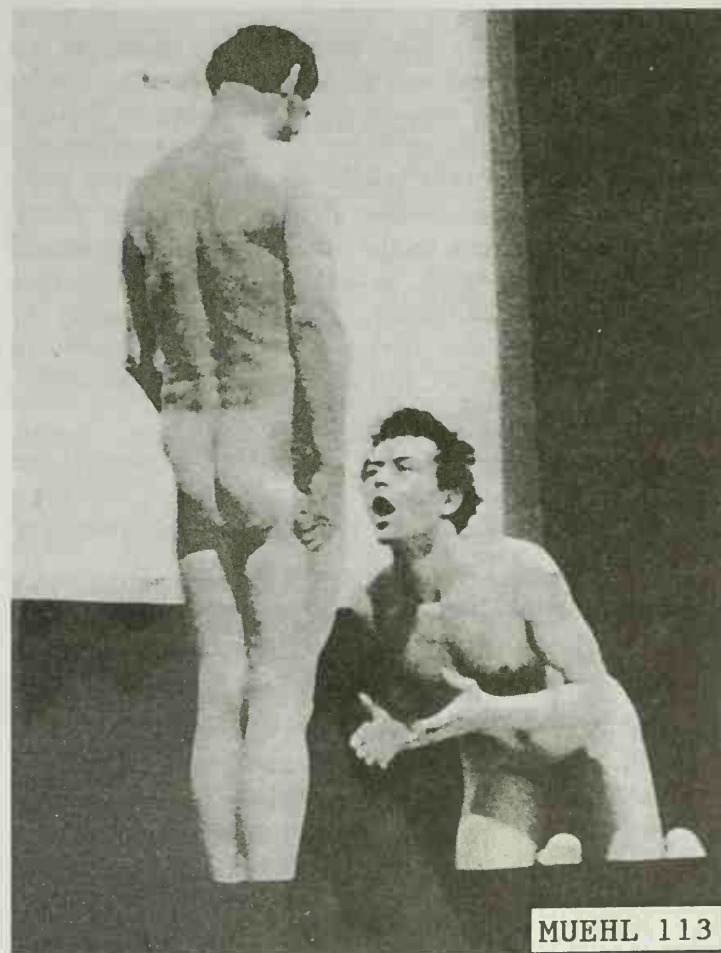
a smoke bomb fills the garden, constant explosions from bombs. fruit trees fly through the air.

Despite the enthusiastic response to his films, Muehl had few scruples about provoking scandals at their screenings. During their presentation at the Occam studios in Munich on 7 September 1968, Muehl climbed on to the stage and urinated in the mouth of his colleague, Anastas (opposite). The audience called for more, the scene was repeated, and as a final encore Muehl lay down on his back and urinated in his own mouth.

At the Cologne Art Market on 15 October 1969, Muehl and his group staged The Death of Sharon Tate, which included his first public sex act, performed with Waldtraud Stieglitz in front of 200 spectators, at the end of an action that was heartily applauded. Other highlights of this action included an actor vomiting over the pair and then into the audience, pissing actions, and the sight of Otmar Bauer with a mouthful of live worms which he tossed into the audience. Muehl's films were confiscated, attempts were made to press charges (causing a public nuisance by committing obscene acts), but dropped a year later because nobody complained and no offended spectators could be found.

His public actions during 1969-70, up to the formation of his commune, were also the cause of major scandals. His action O Christmas Tree (= Silent Night) at the Art College in Brunswick, Germany, 17.12.1969, a satire on marital life and the triviality of Christmas celebrations ("the festival of pious songs, gluttony and a brief ceasefire in Vietnam") put on before 300 spectators, provoked vociferous protests from the local citizens and a fierce debate in the German newspapers. An 18,000-strong petition in Brunswick (hardly any of whom had attended Muehl's piece) entitled "Human Dignity" demanded draconian reprisals. The issue was seized upon by politicians and the Church, and led to questions being raised in parliament and a minister asserting that the government would "do everything to prevent a repetition."

The rector of the university resigned. Other actions, including one planned elsewhere in Germany by Nitsch, were banned more or less as a direct result. Charges were laid against Muehl for disturbing the peace, committing obscene acts, and even for infringing the regulations for



meat inspection! Film and photographic documentation of the event was confiscated. The charges were subsequently dropped, however, because Muehl had not acted in an overtly sexual manner, and no spectators had left. There was also a counter-reaction from 36 people, including 5 theologians, who in a newspaper advert objected that, although "the action went beyond aesthetic bounds, it offended neither normal probity nor human dignity."

O Christmas Tree began with the naked Muehl reading an anti-Vietnam war poem. The audience was then informed twice over the tannoy system as to what it could expect, and the offer of a refund was made to those choosing not to watch. A pig was slaughtered by a professional butcher, and to the sound of Christmas carols a naked woman was showered with blood, urine and faeces. The reaction to the event was fairly lukewarm, however, and the second, longer part of the action was abandoned. Afterwards a critical discussion raised doubts about the effectiveness of Muehl's methods.

The following letters from protesters are taken from the documentation published by the college students:

Calling you a "filthy pig" would be an insult to an innocent and harmless animal. You are a beastly villain, spewed out of Hell's deepest gorge by Satan in person! You should be locked up in an asylum because anyone perverse enough to take public delight in flowing pig's blood probably takes secret delight in human blood. The step from the one to the other is small. You should be locked away at once, in order to protect humanity from new sexual criminals. That is the category to which you belong. But first you should be whipped in public, naked as the day, just as you displayed yourself.

This Muehl belongs in the jungle or the desert, for there is no Christmas there! Perhaps Muehl will even receive a grant. I'm speechless. (A mother of 4)

The couple should have been killed, not the pig.

Bravo for progress! You swine! There was once a time when short work was made of so-called "artists."

O CHRISTMAS TREE⁶⁴

cast: a choir of around 10 students, one male and one female actor, a butcher and a pig.

material: christmas tree, a bed with covers, bed-feathers, a bathtub, a stand on which to hang the slaughtered pig, various foodstuffs.

1. a christmas tree is standing on the table
2. a pig is tied by the legs and placed on the bed, accompanied by the choir singing "silent night..."
3. the butcher slaughters the pig in the bed
4. the choir simultaneously chops up numerous items of furniture and bellows "silent night..."
5. the pig's blood spurts on to the actress lying on the floor next to the bed
6. the actress, now covered in blood, creeps around among the spectators and is then put in the bed beside the dead pig
7. roses and foodstuffs are thrown at her and the pig by the audience
8. the pig is rubbed down with rosin and thrown into a bathtub full of hot water. the students scrape off its bristles with spoons
9. the actress is hung upside down from a stand and milk, egg yolk and salad oil is poured over her
10. the scraped pig is put back in the bed, the actors urinate over the pig
11. the pig's belly is opened up, the actress shits into the pig's opened belly. a record plays the refrains of "silent night..."
12. the audience is requested to sing along
13. the intestines are cast over the actress, she rolls about in them, later everything is thrown over the christmas tree. the christmas tree candles are lit
14. an actor takes the tree and smashes it over the pig while roaring

Wo hört der Spaß auf?

Freitag, 16. Januar 1970

Von DIETMAR GAISER

tz München
Den Ausdruck Happening hat jeder schon einmal gehört. Gesehen haben nur wenige eine solche Veranstaltung. Um es gleich vorweg zu sagen: Viele Happenings sind es auch nicht wert, daß man sie sieht. Da gibt es Happening-Spezialisten, die Straßen bemalen oder federn. Darüber kann man noch lachen oder wenigstens lächeln. Da gibt es aber auch Happenings, bei denen Schweine geschlachtet, in aller Öffentlichkeit die Notdurft verrichtet und ähnliches mehr getan wird. Ist das auch noch zum Lachen? Oder hat es einen tieferen Sinn?

Wir versuchten dieses Problem anhand des derzeit bekanntesten Happening-Spezialisten, nämlich des Wieners Otto Muehl (44) zu untersuchen. Muehl hält Happenings für eine modernste Sache. Er findet es beispielsweise besonders wertvoll für die Volkserziehung, wenn vor meist jugendlichem Publikum ein Schwein geschlachtet wird, mit den Inneren des Tier-

res ein nacktes Mädchen „dekoriert“ und dann noch über die ganze Angelegenheit uriniert wird. Der angeblich glücklich verheiratete Herr Muehl glaubt, damit gegen die Auswüchse in unserer Konsumgesellschaft protestieren zu müssen und zu können.

Er veranstaltete beschriebenes Happening in der Eulenspiegelstadt Braunschweig, erreichte aber keinen „Boycott“ der Geschäfte, sondern einen Proteststurm, der seinen Ausdruck in mehr als 17 000 Briefen an eine Braunschweiger Zeitung fand. Die Bürger der Eulenspiegelstadt hatten wenig Sinn für das „Ereignis“ (so heißt Happening wenn man es ins Deutsche übersetzt). Die braven Niedersachsen forderten vom „öffentlichen Auspeitschen“ bis „den Raubtieren zum Fraß vorwerfen“ so ziemlich alles, was sich ein Mensch an Grausamkeiten für seine Feinde ausdenken kann.



Foto: Gebhardt



Muehl-Happening in Braunschweig

Foto: Wesemann

Zwei Deutungen

„Hat Muehl damit seinen Zweck erreicht, hat er die Öffentlichkeit angegriffen? Oder waren dieses und seine vorausgegangenen „Ereignisse“ die Abreaktion perverser Gefühle? Beide Deutungen werden gegeben und es stimmt nicht, wenn jemand glaubt, nur die Jugend wäre für und das Alter gegen solche Veranstaltungen.“

Wir versuchten deshalb Antwort auf diese Fragen von einem „Fachmann“, nämlich dem Münchner Neo-Kommunisten Rainer Langhens zu bekommen. Er war bei einem der bekanntesten Münchner Modellografen zu erreichen und

schien auch sonst die Sturm- und Drangzeit schon weitgehend überwunden zu haben. „Ich kann Ihnen dazu nichts sagen, da ich noch nie bei einem Happening von Otto Muehl war.“ Eine überraschende Antwort für

eine Diskussion in Gang kommt. Außerdem sehe ich nicht ein, warum man Muehl dafür bestrafen soll. Schließlich ist es auch pervers, wenn jemand jeden Abend vor dem Fernsehschirm sitzt — und er wird

besser weg. Außerdem bekommt man für Kunstaktionen leichter einen Raum zur Verfügung gestellt.“

Auch der Macher (selbstgewählte Berufsbezeichnung) HA (Spezial-Vorname) Schull, der vor einiger Zeit in München die Schackstraße mit Teer bestrich und dann federte, sieht einen Sinn in Happenings à la Muehl: „Der Protest bei der Braunschweiger Zeitung beweist, daß sich die Leute über ein normales Ereignis (gemeint ist Schwein-Schlachtung, nates Mädchen und urtieren) mehr als beispielsweise über tägliche Vietnam-Berichte aufregen.“

Die tz interessiert auch Ihre Meinung: Was halten Sie von Happenings, bei denen Schweine geschlachtet, Hühner geköpft und Beischlafversuche unternommen werden? All das ist vorgekommen! Schreiben Sie uns Ihre Meinung, wir veröffentlichen die interessantesten Zuschriften.

einen Mann, der viel Wert auf seinen Ruf als Etabliert-Gegner legt.

Peter Nemetschek vom „Aktionsraum 1“ (Künstlervereinigung in München) dagegen hatte schon eine Meinung: „Die Aktion hat eine Funktion — ich vermeide das Wort Sinn! —, weil

nicht bestraft. Allerdings wehre ich mich dagegen, daß solche Happenings als Kunst bezeichnet werden. Wenn das dennoch getan wird, hat das oft einen verwaltungstechnischen Grund: Veranstaltungen, die unter dem Begriff Kunst lauten, kommen beispielsweise bei der Steuer

Die 26jährige Sekretärin Gunna Jensen ist da anderer Meinung: „Das ist eine Schweinerei und ich verstehe nicht, wie sich ein Mädchen dafür hergeben kann. Mit Kunst hat so ein Happening gar nichts zu tun.“ Eine ähnliche Meinung vertritt Ulrich Metzner (Soziologiestudent). War meina Sie?“

When Has The Joke Gone Too Far?

...There are some happenings specialists who paint streets or bounce up and down. One can laugh at that, or at least smile. But there are also happenings where pigs are slaughtered, bowels evacuated in public, and even more. Is that still a joke? Or does it have a deeper meaning?

We tried to investigate this problem with the help of the most renowned happening specialist at the moment, Otto Muehl of Vienna (44). Muehl regards happenings as a deadly serious matter. He thinks it is particularly valuable for national education, for instance, when a pig is slaughtered before a mainly young audience, its innards used to “decorate” a naked girl, and someone urinates over the whole business. Muehl, who claims to be happily married, believes he must and can do this to protest at the excesses of consumer society.

(Press report)

Newspaper headlines (next page)

The Pig From Brunswick ... Outrage At Happening: Pig Slaughtered And Naked Woman “Decorated” With Blood And Guts! ... “Action Human Dignity” In Brunswick ... Muehl Is Bone Of Contention ... Art School Board Resigns, Regional Bishop Appalled By “Happening” ... Pig Slaughtered In Bed ... First Consequences Of Piggish Event ... Art School Rector Requests Leave ... Langeheine Summons Rector ... Border Zone Of Aesthetics ... Naked People Slaughtered Pig And Acted Like Pigs ... Sadistic Exhibitions At Advent Play ... Outrage Over Bloody Happening ... “Bed Scene” Repercussions For Minister Of Interior ... Government Regrets Happening At College ... Bloody “Happening” ... Human Dignity Down The Drain ... Still No Peace In Brunswick ... Mockery Of Christmas ... Brunswick Citizens Outraged By Bloody Happening ... Pig Bled To Death In Bed ... Is This Art? ... Denounced By 12,000: Revolting ... “Happening” Triggered Sheer Outrage

MUEHL 115

Das

Schwein

von

Braun-

schweig

Statt Happening Schweinerei

Arbeitszeugnis für Kunstschule — Bevölkerung empört

Empörung über blutiges Happening

Wiener Happening-„Künstler“ Inszenierte Orgie in Braunschweiger Hochschule

Die Bundesregierung bedauert

das Happening in der Hochschule

Blutiges »Happening«

Schwein geschlachtet — Frau mit Blut übergossen — AStA lud dazu ein

Die Menschenwürde in der Klo

Skandalöse „Happening“

keine Ruhe in Braunschweig

„Blutiges Happening“ führt zu Dienstaufsichtsbeschwerde

Schwein geschlachtet und
nackte Frau mit Blut und
Eingeweiden „verziert“!

„Aktion Menschenwürde“ in Braunschweig!

„Aktion Menschenwürde“ in Braunschweig!
„Aktion Menschenwürde“ in Braunschweig!
„Aktion Menschenwürde“ in Braunschweig!

Dank an jeden, der uns schrieb:

Muehl-Steine des Anstoßes

Senat der Kunsthochschule zurückgetreten

Landesbischof entsetzt über „Happening“

in Schwein im Bett geschlachte

Empörung in Braunschweig über blutiges Happening

Schweinerei hat erste Folgen

Rektor der Kunstschule Braunschweig bat um Beurlaubung

Langeheine zitierte Rektor Voigt zu sich

Braunschweiger Jugendverbände protestieren gegen „Happening“ in der Kunsthochschule

Grenzbereiche der Ästhetik

Hochschulbeirat soll „Schweine-Schlacht-Happening

Dienstaufsichtsbeschwerde gegen den

Rektor nach einer Riesenschweinerei
in der Staatlichen Kunsthochschule

Nackte schlachteten Schwein und benahmen sich wie Schweine

Verhöhnung des Weihnachtsfestes

Braunschweiger empört

Blutiges Happening

Hier bellt BULLI

Schwein verblutete im Bett



Ist das Kunst?

Empörung in Braunschweig über blutiges Happening

12 000 prangern an:
Das war abscheulich

„Happening“ löste
helle Empörung aus

Senat der Kunsthochschule trat zurück

Kunsthochschul-Rek geht vorerst in Urla

1970 was to see the last public actions by Muehl, including Oh Sensibility! The action's second performance⁶⁵ is described here in a letter dated 3.9.70, and published in the third issue of Brus's Die Schastrommel.

OH SENSIBILITY!



dear fritz, first of all greetings from elke and mica. the 2nd evening in frankfurt started off with difficulties with adam seide. he didn't want to let us in any more. and after we had forced open the door we caught him freeing the goose. as of now we are enemies, mr. seide, i shouted, do you realise what this means? he opened his mouth as if to answer. satisfaction, pistols, duel and then we really began to get up full steam with our action. mica and elke tried to pull off the men's trousers and actually managed to return with two new nudes who joined in right till the end. i roared into the audience: filthy pigs, dogs,

voyeurs, etc. i launched myself at the women, grabbed under their skirts. one had a screaming fit, 10 people left the room full of consternation and revulsion. now everything was going perfectly, enormously relaxed, everything was possible. you slut, i said to the woman screaming, it's all just fun. instead of me she now hit mica with the leather strap. do you know jesus christ? sorry, i don't, he doesn't work for our group. mica hit me and, surprised, i responded by jumping up and down. it was serious, i grabbed at the strap, she didn't stop, i stuck my tongue in her mouth and that gave her the opportunity to back down. things were getting lively. several people said the new nudes spoil the action with their awkwardness. as if awkwardness wasn't one of our goals. one of them wanted to fuck mica, that wasn't exactly why she was there, as she said later, so i pissed on the bloke's back. malicious joy and laughter from the audience. why? i tugged the second of them away from elke by the hair. he squeezed his lips shut to ward off my tongue, and when a woman from the audience wanted to stick the rolling-pin up his arsehole he covered it with his hands. i snatched at his hard-on and he leapt back. laughter: the tables had been turned! when i started to satisfy elke with the rolling-pin everyone approved. i did it to the rhythm of a cheesy piece of music. our lads spread her legs for her and sublimated: zig-zag, great fun, all one big family. the 2nd goose wasn't as gentle as the 1st. it had spent the day in seide's playpen as a plaything for his child. i hypnotised it. someone said i'd hypnotised the audience as well. how did austria ever end up with ö3⁶⁶? astonishing business! it was too much for one of the lads when the goose-blood spurted on to him. i grabbed the goose and stuffed its bleeding stump of a neck into mica's hole, she screeched lasciviously, i had rolled a condom over the neck beforehand. i swung the goose over my head, roared — people stepped back, startled — and flung it at the wall.



The public reaction at Brunswick and problems he had with his use of animals at Frankfurt were repeated at most of Muehl's final public actions. Plans for an action in a gallery in Germany were called off after the gallerist received threatening letters; a sheep he intended slaughtering at an action entitled Advent, in Bremen, was stolen before it had even begun, and the audience of 1000 responded to the action by throwing eggs at Muehl and his two colleagues, storming the stage and breaking up the performance.

ADVENT > Bremen, 13 December 1970

Freitag 11 Dez. 70. 20^{Uhr} in der
 Pädagogischen Hochschule ^{Bremen} Lange Reihe

advento advent!

mano-
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Sa 12. II.
 Diskusio
 um 11^{Uhr}
 in der PH.
 mit: Becker,
 DAVLMANN
 ADRIAN +
 MUEHL.

Fr+Sa.
 23^{Uhr} im
 CINEMA
 OSTERDA
 MUEHLT
 ME-NEI

VERANSTALT
 ASTAPH.
 Bremen

otto muehl

herbert stumpfl
 mica most romilla doll




OZNEWS

International Film Festival Supplement OZ30 Oct 70

FOUL PLAY AT FREE FILM FESTIVAL



Underground Chickens out

The first International Underground Film Festival ended in chaos when a German film maker was banned from killing a chicken on stage. The bloodbath was planned as part of Otto Muehl's expanded cinema event, Oh Sensibility.

Muehl, noted for his pornographic happenings (See *Crazy Otto Sheds his Guilt* in OZ 27) was to have killed the chicken at the National Films Theatre after the screening of his feature film, *Sodoma*. But Muehl was told that he could not perform his live happening because it contravened the NFT's licence. The NFT manager and his staff would also lose their jobs, it was claimed.

Yet Jeff Keen, Carolee Schneeman, Valie Export and Peter Weibel all performed actions that contravened the NFT licence and were not stopped.

An attempt to have Muehl perform in the New Arts Lab was foiled by John Hopkins & David Curtis who refused to allow the Arts Lab theatre or cinema to be used for the action. This censorship by underground people following upon establishment censorship pointed up the sham position of the English underground which has failed to establish any real alternative to authoritarian capitalism.

Pap copout

Progressive Art Productions (PAP) the German backers of Otto Muehl failed to make any effective protest against the censorship in what was promised to be a festival free from any interference. They did not support Otto in a defiant action nor withdraw his films from the festival, which contrasts greatly with their position in Germany as staunch opponents of censorship.

Benevolent otto

Muehl claimed he did not perform his action in defiance of NFT rulings because it would have meant that the projectionists would have lost their job. This copout bullshit is surprising coming from Otto who has several times been imprisoned in Vienna for performing his work, and last year in Germany so outraged the inhabitants of Braunschweig that 10,000 people signed a petition demanding his arrest. But other factors than fear of police seem to have been behind Otto's decision to accept the NFT ban.

Heavies were scattered through the audience in preparation for a physical assault on Muehl. It was the only occasion when the NFT board (including Stanley Reed) attended the festival. Many of them took surreptitious notes and conferred with other assorted heavies, believed to be plainclothesmen.

Audience in dark despite 'Fuses'

Carolee Schneeman, New York expanded cinema artist lately living in London announced she would present her event *Times Crawling* outside the NFT on the Thames bank. NFT officials persuaded her to present it inside instead and avoid 'probable' police action. Carolee was seen fucking in Steve Dworkin's *TIMES FOR* shown on the first day of the festival (banned in Edinburgh a week before) and rumours

circulated that her expanded cinema event would include strong erotic activity. The cinema was packed for the event, given apparent importance by the presence of many photographers and underground trends. Feelings were already at fever pitch after Otto Muehl had kept onstage during Jeff Keen's event to assault Mrs. Keen. But Schneeman's scene was ill lit and too factual. It featured pretty people in pastel underwear clammering over seats and striking poses on stage. Meanwhile, Carolee's fucking aroused. At the end of the live event, one of the participants - believed to be from the staff of Friends newspaper - sobbed to friends: 'Carolee is nothing but a slut. If I see her I will tell her to her face. I feel so ashamed'.

Jeff Keen, ex-people show and established kinetic artist, showed his films to a receptive audience, then made the mistake of extending this into an expanded cinema event, involving his wife, cavorting in a G-string with a youth in a boiler suit topped by a pair of red flashing eyes. While the audience yawned, Otto Muehl acted, bounding onto stage and ripping off Mrs Keen's G-string and preparing to go down on her. Meanwhile his two well-trained girls divested the youth of boiler suit, flashing lights and underwear, and set up a blow-job. Only NFT programme manager Waschlin's intervention saved the audience from a demonstration of 'Direct Art'.



Dopescope

Mattias Weiss Blue Velvet pushed the extremes of institution financed films. Made as part of a course at Munich Film School it shows the travels of big German dope dealers - Cadillac and Opium in the night, secret rendezvous far from the autobahn. So subtle that you wouldn't know what it was about unless you'd been told, undisturbed by a literal sound track, it's widescreen color images lead you into curvaceous German preoccupations - desperation, isolation, cadres and wants.

There were also loud protests, this time from young people, at Muehl's intention to kill a duck at the Amsterdam Wet Dream Festival. Heathcote Williams intervened and stole the bird. A similar controversy surrounded his intention to kill a chicken as part of an "expanded cinema event" at the 1st International Underground Film Festival, London, in 1970. Muehl responded with this statement:

OTTO MUEHL

Wien, 25. November 1970

STATEMENTS

for the International Underground Festival in London, 16th. September 1970

why?

Not art
Not medium like film,
expanded cinema
happening

but IOW

I am embarrassed:

HUMAN BEINGS ARE
against any kind of institution
against the superpresence of systems,
his original executors,
all the pigs, who inside the system
satisfy their criminal wishes.

JUDGMENT
CARRIED
FOR JUDGMENT
CARRIED
BY THE

I slaughter beasts which they eat tomorrow anyway.

IF I WOULD BE A VEGAN FOR ME TO

SLAUGHTER A BIRD FOR PAUL

then a chicken.

If it would not be so difficult, I would go vegetarian.



An Omega does more than just tell the time

Schwein slaughter stirs sausage seller

Hysteria broke loose during Kocherath's film of a Muehl action 'Silent Night', which features a pig being slaughtered, gutted, and the entrails thrown over a natural blonde. Muehl then goes down on the gore splattered mons veneris. This proved too much for one female spectator, who shouted abuse at the (understandably) silent audience, - 'you're all inhuman' - then retired to the refreshment area, sobbing.

Somehow recovered, she assailed a passing German film-maker who attempted to back off. Kracht, yet another German filmer tapped the side of his head to warn his fellow countryman that the girl was unbalanced, but this in turn outraged a tall Scot who was running the sandwich concession. 'Don't do things behind someone's back' he roared, and punched Kracht. Pork sandwich prices stayed stable.

In November 1970, the photo-documentation of Muehl's work was removed from the walls of his stand at the Happening and Fluxus event and exhibition in Cologne, where he performed two actions, Manopsychotic I and II (pictured right), the second in collaboration with Charlotte Moorman. In this general climate, a talk given by Muehl at the Happening and Fluxus event indicated the beginnings of his inner break with art practice. The Manopsychotic Institute was in many ways an early version of the AA commune founded by Muehl a few years later.

We have founded an institute in Vienna, namely the Institute for Manopsychoticism. Today we shall perform an action entitled: "The Wanton Wotan".

The idea of this action is to show the utmost extreme of sexual filth, not for fun but to reverse a 2000-year-old mental illness. When we say sexual filth, we from the Austrian Institute for Manopsychoticism, with its Minister of Potency H. Stumpf and President Anti-Pope Alfi (who is absent), do not, however, mean normal fucking.

Obviously we reject *Happening and Fluxus* for this very reason.

We from the Institute for Manopsychoticism have nothing to do with this shit called *Happening and Fluxus*. When I reported to our Anti-Pope Alfi that someone here had exhibited a cow, I received a telegram: "Establish relations with cow immediately stop milk fuck and slaughter stop."

We from the Institute view the Happening as totally middle-class art, as simply art.

We want to overcome this imbecilic art.

The Happening is nowadays completely conformist, carried out by idea-artists who feed their ideas to those in our society who can afford them.

We have no wish to provide this society with anything, but to apply our actions at those points where we can loosen it up, wear it down, soften it. In the final analysis the Manopsychotic Institute aims at destroying the state and all of its institutions. At destroying the culture which is its figurehead. And in our opinion this state and all its inmates are manopsychotics, but they have one fault: they don't know it.

I feel restricted on all sides. Wherever I turn I see an arsehole or some state henchman, some president or some other idiot, who hinders me in my simplest human actions.

(...)

And precisely in this exhibition we feel and sadly I am forced to see, that precisely these people who make *Happening and Fluxus* are the ones who collaborate with the state, and respond to its manipulations and are simply idiots creating entertainment. And view themselves vainly as revolutionary or as the so-called shitty avant-gardists.



In 1971 Muehl turned his back on formal art practice, and founded the prototype of his AA commune. In 1975 he explained his reasons in a text published in issue 13 of Brus's review Die Schastrommel (now renamed Die Drossel), which Brus entitled "Catastrophe Measurement". Muehl outlined the development of a new utopia:

CATASTROPHE MEASUREMENT (Excerpts)

am i being arrogant when i maintain that i already measured my catastrophe long ago? one thing's for certain: i began to do it while i was an artist. first on paper, then on canvas, i stepped through the canvas the moment i destroyed it. i found myself in space and then time began for me in the literal sense of the word. i note that i am referring to my birth. that was in 1961. so, apparently, now in 1974 i am an artist aged 13, and thus in the midst of puberty. it is hardly credible.

between 1961 and 1971 i surveyed my catastrophe. ten years. i came up with an unassuming name for it: MATERIAL ACTION.

the whole business became well known under this name.

i slapped foodstuffs on to naked women's bodies and often achieved indescribable effects, which frequently quite astonished people.

as it later turned out, i was illuminating my catastrophe, and not without an internal logic.

although i was a real artist while doing this, in reality i hadn't a clue what i was doing. i conceived of it as art, i judged the results by formal criteria, and by the ecstasy which sometimes seized me during the process.

i was a great artist because i did everything i could to make the artist unacceptable to society. and i totally succeeded, not only with society, but also myself. yet i couldn't prevent this making me, of all people, one of the most famous artists of our times.

i placed myself in the hands of perverts, for instance, allowed myself to be strapped down and shitted on, they forced me to eat

their shit by stuffing it into my mouth and showed no mercy, and although i vomited they sexually abused me. i felt i was jesus. i sacrificed myself for art. i sacrificed myself for the sick. what artist ever did that?

i know of no artist who has managed to master his catastrophe by means of art. the best that could possibly emerge from it is freezing the catastrophe. i didn't even manage that. my catastrophe continued to roll along, underground. the harder i lashed out at art, the softer i became. i was not even up to cutting off an ear. i always envied artists who were mad. but i was happily married. then one day friedl said to me: i've had enough of it now, otto. and that was precisely what i wanted to prevent. for i had done it all for her. thus a five-year-long trash novel came to an end.

i find it extremely embarrassing to think back on my old material action days. to prevent any misunderstandings: i am not ashamed of the actions, but of the conditions in which we vienna actionists lived. utterly wretched. the stupidity and dullness was quite simply oppressive and we were part of it with our old-fashioned wives round our necks, but we couldn't live without them because we too were old-fashioned. we were the artist suffocating in the private mire of his genius. the artist constantly depicts his own catastrophe in order to sell it.

i had my first major feelings of discomfort in 1968. i was saved by the outcry from the citizens of brunswick when i slaughtered a pig in a bed as a



christmas celebration to the tune of "silent night". i had no doubts that i had slaughtered the pig in other people. later i realized that it was my own pig. it was my own mother that i allowed to be slaughtered to the sounds of christmas.

in bremen a sheep was abducted by a psychopath.

(...)

the sheep that i intended to kill in bremen was none other than my father. my father, that poor old sheep, was slaughtered in the urals in 1945. i felt sorry for the sheep, i let it go, an unforgivable artistic error.

in 1971 i proclaimed that art actionism was over. simultaneously i explained that the role of the artist, based on the structure of the nuclear family, was over. what had happened? i had developed art actionism, which from now on i would like to term theoretical actionism, into practical actionism.

PRACTICAL ACTIONISM is action that has grown beyond the time and space in which it is normally presented.

(...)

practical actionism is action that has extended into everyday life. practical actionism should not be mistaken for some art movement. the reality of practical actionism, which is hard as nails, demands the utmost from its artists. for this reason practical actionism will bring forth a different kind of artist from previous ones. to become a star of practical actionism one not only requires artistic talent, which everyone will soon have, but bravery in the face of reality. by that we mean the capacity to jump over one's own shadow.

in may 1970 i began an action of practical actionism in a 120 m² flat, which has continued without interruption until now, october 1974. the action is currently into its 5th year, and continues permanently, day and night. no one can leave to go home, and by now a unique artwork has come into being. it is no surprise that the male and female actionists involved begin to confuse the action with life, but as the founder and director of practical actionism i must insist:

IT IS ART.

(that is intended as a hint to the materially potent collector that he should avail himself of our vein of gold.)

in parndorf heath, close to lake neusiedel and near the iron curtain, where the hungarian puszta begins, we have erected an actionistic environment of enormous dimensions using new methods. the project involves 60 people, 40 pigs, 4 cows, 300 chickens, 8 buses, a lorry, a tractor, a generator, a machine shop, a joiner's workshop, 300 m² of stables, 700 m² living space and 6 acres of land. these are the materials of our actionist environment. within the environment of practical actionism even art in the old sense — but stripped of the professional roles stemming from the nuclear family — has its place as a therapeutic product, as a means of documentation in every media, as self-presentation, as direct self-presentation during ACTION ANALYSIS, an instrument of psycho-physical renunciation. ecstasy as a basis of knowledge.

action analysis generates new impulses for the environment and conditions the actionists within the perspective of mutual action.

in essence, action analysis is unrestricted self-presentation, the training centre for directors of practical actionism.

(...)

anyone who can behave actionistically towards his surroundings can be termed healthy. the action analysis has, over its two-year development, long since left psychoanalysis behind and become direct self-presentation. action analysis is a technique for actionistic self-presentational ecstasy, which anyone can learn. this ecstasy not only helps heal the mentally damaged, but is also a form of training to keep fit and healthy.

(...)

the elimination of two-person relationships, unrestricted sexuality, unrestricted communal property, and the abolition of money have already been realized and are the essential conditions for the success of the futurological action. in this manner we have succeeded in eliminating every form of aggression and in bringing creative communication within the environment to a peak that obviates the need for those ersatz means of communication within the society of the nuclear family: television, football, art, theatre, novels, poetry, newspapers, cinema, cafés, hobbies, travelling, etc.

with the help of trance and ecstasy the artist arrives at the secret picture library of his imprinting phases. the artist escapes the state-run process of cretinisation in an anarchic striptease tango. the daubing actions, so admired by the experts, that charlie the chimp performs on canvas with his own shit were elected artwork of the year. charlie is now a lecturer and gives courses at the summer school in boulouris. subject: painting actions using the body's own juices and materials.

picasso - matisse:

P: i was always for experimenting with art, but i don't think it's a joke any more when these daubings are flogged off as avant-garde art.

M: not to mention the copy-cat criminals, everyone these days is grossing out.

P: ready-made-king duchamp lured the chief ape from slovakia, uncle scrooge, and the coyote from kleve⁶⁹ on to the greasy pole of iconoclasm.

BECOMING AN ARTIST IS VERY HARD

BUT IT IS NO LONGER HARD TO BE ONE

RECIPES FOR THE ART SNARE

place a white primed canvas on the pavement in the rain. unsuspecting passers-by will provide the priming coat with their muddy shoes.

the artist is fastened by a rope to the window-frame (the actionist rudolf schwarzkogler plunged to the pavement and met his death during a flight simulation from the 4th floor, because he wasn't on a rope). legs braced against the window ledge, the artist evacuates arse-outward the runny contents of his bowels on to the picture 30 metres below.

on video: the slap of faeces as they land, in slow motion.

a fine drizzle of particles back and forth creating dust and shadows.

M: did he really shit on the painting, pablo?

P: of course.

M: and didn't crap off target, pablo?

P: no, henri! apart from which he had diarrhoea.

M: you mean he had the runs, pablo?

P. of course, all according to plan, even the consistency of the material, thanks to Bekunis Laxante Drageias.⁷⁰

M: that's what's known as concept art.

P: art from pissing or crapping, reality transformed into art or art into reality, idea, theory, practice, it's all the same.

conjuring trick: reality, real, real estate, really there, been there, has been. wasn't there, missed the loophole into real being. slipped away into non-being, sprang forth from the void. what does one do without talent?

everyone can be an artist, every object, put on a plinth, hung on a wall, placed on the floor, is art.

shit corners are the typical territorial scent marks of the coyote from kleve.

the excesses of the düsseldorf mass murderer are revealed by the deformed object. you have to have seen the mutilated corpse of the butchered victim — beaten to a pulp and lying face down in a pool of blood — to gauge the extent of these brutal excesses. bombarded by adrenalin when suddenly there's a power cut in the brain, and the blockhead swept away by the spring tide of hate lets loose, stabs, chops, saws, burns, vomits and shits in a violent frenzy of reality: the filth, the straw, the damp earth mingles with blood and excrement... "if you carry on like that, otto, you'll end up starving, there's nothing left of the action for you to sell. you're simply craving for sensation, that's got nothing more to do with art."

124 MUEHL "what do you actually want as an artist, do you want success and recognition? with those kinds

of performances you'll simply end up on the wrong side of the law."

"people like you used to be burned in public."

monsignore maurer:⁷¹

"your actions forebode the seductive splendour of hell with its reek of sulphur. mark my words, i shall soon be visiting you in prison."

psychiatrist dr. spiel⁷² (1968):

"no, these actions are nothing new to me, my patients at steinhof⁷³ do much the same every day. this man's seriously disturbed. this otto was obviously having an attack."

1960: the more i worked myself up the less this got shown on the canvas.

i fetched the kitchen knife and stabbed away: blood-thirsting frenzy — victim ripped and carved up!

raping and murdering the picture, primal sin, big bang, have you had a nibble at the tree of knowledge? bones shattered, stretcher splintered, surfing without falling across the blood-splattered, slippery floor. the tread of my climbing boots, which stick to the smooth rock face like leeches, make it possible: with my body jutting, right-angled, from the rock face, my arms flailing, walking to and fro like a gecko on a ceiling.

hailed effusively as a rock-painter, i felt a pressing need to relieve myself.

in pressing situations you may shit wherever you like.

hovering in the air, my mountaineering breeches dropped to my knees, i opened fire, stuffed the cheerer's gobs full: "cum 'ere you dirty bastard, we'll kill ya, leave ya lika dog to rot!"

innards crushed, guts torn out.

killing the picture is what makes the actionist.

unleashing the creative energies.

actionism in every medium. as self-presentation therapy, cabaret, fashion show, theatre, film, musical, opera, dance, song, film, painting.

in 1944 i marched through frankfurt as a soldier in a company of the german wehrmacht. the streets had been flattened by allied carpet-bombing. ruins, heaps of rubble, empty facades, stage sets erected in ghostly fashion before the night sky, the moon shining through vacant windows. a nightmare. "one, two, three, a song!" the sergeant bawled, and we sang: "the hazelnut is darkest brown, just as I am too," or "a flower is growing on the heath, erica is her name," and so on.

dismembered corpses, people on fire as the bullets of the english aircraft riddled the train that was to take us to the front. that was the 28th of august. i remember the date exactly because we had read poems by goethe during the train journey. the 28th of august was goethe's birthday. we were chased into a field by low-flying aircraft that didn't give a damn about goethe's birthday. the forest we fled to was several hundred metres away. the aircraft swung round and strafed us three times at low altitude, guns rattling. one of us, hit by a bullet, hopped and jiggled across the field on all fours. a half-empty fuel tank jettisoned by one of the fighters as a bomb exploded on top of the railway engine. a sheet of flame leapt up. the engine driver, covered in aviation fuel, ran screaming past us like a blazing torch, hands held high. he was wrenched to the ground by his comrades and rolled through the grass to extinguish the flames. one of us wanted to hold the engine driver by the hand, but his scorched skin detached itself. this and similar experiences did not give rise to actionism, although i did centre on these destructive experiences in a number of actions.

actionism is the synthesis of various creative methods:

1. the spontaneous use of paint and material demonstrated by the abstract expressionists
2. duchamp's concept art and work with objects
3. the social critique of the dada nihilists
4. the irrational object collage of the surrealists.

in 1970 the phase of actionist art was over. the extension of art into an ongoing project for creating ways of living is for me an actionistic imperative.

i founded the flat-sharing commune at praterstrasse 34, vienna, and developed it into a commune based on an actionist approach to life, aimed at investigating and realising basic human needs. at times up to 700 members were involved. the majority came from west germany and france, a few from norway and sweden, and one or two from holland, england, austria, denmark and the usa.

it was an experiment in creating a society with communal property, free sex, joint child-rearing, private education, and instruction and training for both children and adults in the performing and visual arts: music, song, dance, theatre, feature films, self-presentation, painting, actionist art, work in our own businesses and firms. it turned out that communal property is not a basic need. proudhon said "property is theft." to conclude from this that private property is criminal and thus inferior to communal property is wrong. emperor vespasian said "money does not stink" when he introduced the latrine tax.

where everyone has the same, everyone has in fact nothing. it does not belong to him, it belongs to the collective ghost. just as a person might say that money does not belong to you but to the holy ghost. parallel to humankind's ability to make cultural and social achievements, it has an equally innate tendency to criminal and asocial behaviour, such as the latent readiness to steal. after twenty years the majority of the high-earning male members were fed up with the idea of collective property and yearned once again to have private property. in addition, the idea of personal self-determination and the patriarchal desire to appropriate one or more women reawoke in them. the collective was experienced as an external constraint, and with that the ethical foundations were thrown out of the window. the community was disbanded. the women were not only economically independent, but also superior to the men when it came to education, art, organisation and child-raising. but now they have been forced back into the role of housekeepers in nuclear families, made dependent on a nuclear family gnome who is beneath their level.

NITSCH



INTRODUCTION

In the afterword to his book the fall of jerusalem,⁷⁴ Nitsch related themes in his work to events from his childhood:

i was 5 or 6 years old when vienna was bombed by “enemy” aircraft. previously i was seized by a happy-anxious state of religious horror at tales of fire-spewing volcanoes, earthquakes, the existence of galaxies and so on. the same feelings were aroused when i saw a low-flying aircraft, or indeed any aircraft. in 1943 the inhabitants of vienna made their way to the spitzer park in floridsdorf, to see the first bomb craters. soon this lust for sensation was transformed into a permanent state of mortal fear that became more acute with every air raid. i can still remember being fully aware of this mortal fear in myself during the daily raids, and sadly it completely dominated the days of my youth. after the all-clear we were once again presented with a surreal landscape. the middle-class world had become totally alien. in place of roads were enormous heaps of earth and bomb craters, buildings were destroyed, furniture and other household goods lay shattered in the streets. the sky was darkened by enormous clouds of black smoke climbing from burning factories. the adults were distraught and despairing, but as a child i was nevertheless attracted to these unfamiliar situations. (...) once the war was over, everyone heaved a sigh of relief and none wished, in all sincerity, to have anything to do with war again. now and then i had anxiety dreams, it was war once again, aeroplanes were once more bombing vienna. each time i woke up happy that the war was over. these dreams pursue me to this day, and the sound of an air-raid warning, an air-raid siren, struck me to the core, and still does. a ghastly agitating sound-formula penetrates my mind, penetrates deeper than could any verbal formulation. my increasing distance from these terrible experiences of bombardment was accompanied by a curious, perhaps even dangerously sweet form of optimistic recollection. the swarms of silver aeroplanes that flew several thousand metres above us were beautiful. beautiful, too, the strange droning sound of the “enemy” aeroplane engines that enveloped everything and set it all in gentle vibration. the word “enemy” is essential, for it lent this noise its threatening, dangerous quality and, in the end, its sweetness. the beauty of all these ghastly events becomes more and more evident. all i mean to say is that despite the suffering brought by war, or perhaps precisely because of it, war can assume an aesthetic appearance, and the compulsion exerted by war to live life intensely, albeit in a world of suffering, is also undeniable.

In 1959, shortly after the completion of his studies at the School of Applied Arts in Vienna, Nitsch began planning his Orgies Mysteries Theatre, which has been, and remains, his life-work. In a move away from painting, he began writing a series of playscripts.

inspired by richard wagner’s music dramas, greek tragedy and georg trakl’s poetry, and urged on no doubt by youthful impetuosity, i wanted to outdo all that theatre had previously achieved. i wanted to expand drama to epic dimensions. i knew the monumental paintings of the 16th and 17th century masters, and was interested in life-size representation on stage. i asked myself why the playing time of 5 hours set by wagner could not be overstepped. i entertained the idea of writing a drama which would take days to perform. the result was the draft of a play that required 6 days to enact, analogous to the story of the creation in the old testament.

i attempted in this drama to depict the entire history of mankind (the story of creation). not its outward history, with its wars, struggles for power and regicides, but its true historical or dramatic process: the development of our psyche and consciousness. i strove to show in dramatic form that our psyche is built up in layers, comparable with those in geology. with the help of chains of linguistic associations, and through my handling of language, i strove to plumb the depths, the unconscious regions, in order to bring deep-lying psychic layers to awareness, to activate them and make them manifest. my knowledge of freud’s and jung’s depth psychology intensified these endeavours and paved the way for my theory of abreaction, which was of importance for my later dramatic concept of action theatre (drama = abreaction).⁷⁵

every myth, every religion in the world, was to be given dramatic form in my theatre. various myths and redeemers from various religions were compared with one another, and merged to become figures in the play. archetypes became dramatic leitmotifs, and i devoted my attention to the way old myths and gods are replaced by new ones in a manner that corresponds to the respective stages of man's development. of especial importance here was the formula of death and resurrection that is prevalent in so many myths.⁷⁶

Nitsch's poetic drama not only strove to encompass the history and development of human consciousness, but also attempted to find new means of evoking various inner states by "maltreating language". He soon reached the point where these means seemed inadequate, and realised that the audience should be given direct sensual experiences rather than mere descriptions of tastes, scents and the like. At this point, in the late Fifties, Nitsch's interest in painting was rekindled by a visit to the first exhibition in Vienna of works of abstract expressionism, including works by Sam Francis, Yves Klein, de Kooning, Pollock, Georges Mathieu, and others. This was to be the second formative influence on his theatre:

just as i was beginning to work the direct arrangement of reality into my theatre project, i came into contact with tachism, which was just passing its peak at the time. i at once grasped this phenomenon in all its implications: it corresponded with all the results of my work with language and came close to its dynamic dramatic expression. no longer was anything depicted or represented. the action of painting, the productive event that took place in time, became vital. an event that took place in time was in fact a dramatic event. i discovered the link to theatre, to my theatre.⁷⁷

Late in 1960, Nitsch embarked on a series of eight "painting actions" in which he variously tipped, threw, daubed, slapped and poured red paint, water and dye over large prepared surfaces. The ritual character of the actions was underlined from the fourth onwards by the white, habit-like shirt Nitsch donned for the occasion. The seventh of these actions was staged at an event in Muehl's basement studio in Vienna.

frohner, muehl and i decided to put on a demonstration exhibition in protest against the reactionary state of contemporary austrian art. to this end we went into seclusion. we had ourselves walled in for three days in muehl's cellar in the perinetgasse. during these three days frohner and muehl produced junk sculptures. i attempted to advertise my o.m. theatre project by painting a 9 m long and 2 m tall picture with red paint, pouring blood over it and nailing a slaughtered, flayed, eviscerated lamb upside down to one wall of the cellar. after the three days the wall was knocked down and the general public allowed to visit the exhibition.⁷⁸

This somewhat matter-of-fact score belies the intensity of the action: the dead lamb was maltreated before being nailed to the wall, and the "composition" was completed by Nitsch hitting offal laid beneath the carcass with the blunt edge of an axe, sending blood spurting up the walls. More importantly perhaps, the action went beyond simply producing a painting that registered the inner urges like a seismograph, for the inclusion of the lamb broke once and for all with the confines of flat, two-dimensional painting.

THE BLOOD ORGAN: SEVENTH PAINTING ACTION⁷⁹

> Perinet Cellar, Vienna, 1-4 June 1962



red paint is painted, tipped and sprayed over a 2 x 9 m white-primed canvas. a flat, broad brush is dipped in red paint and pressed and slapped against the canvas. the paint trickles down, paint flies from the brush on to the picture's surface. a sponge is dipped alternately in red paint, water or dye and each time pressed against the vertical surface.

CRUCIFYING A SLAUGHTERED LAMB

white cloth is stretched on a vertical wall in a room, a white table covered with a white table-cloth is set directly before the wall. a slaughtered, flayed lamb (head down) is nailed as if crucified to the wall. bloody innards and intestines are placed on the white table-cloth and blood and hot water poured over them. blood and serum trickle down across the table-cloth and drip to the floor.

it is not the action that is essential here but the concrete objects that are displayed.

painting (the "sacrifice" loses its moral significance, so that a deliberately conceived abreaction occurs). art must actively affirm everything that expresses that state of renunciation automatically perceived by the individual. wherever the force of human sensual feeling overflows directly into art, being conveys itself in a direct and concentrated way — even when this enormous surge of feeling reaches the heights of perversion. a product of worship and meditative experiences in life becomes manifest. the warmth of life, organic growth within the womb, the extremes of sexual intensity and mysticism, the process of existence in its totality, must be grasped at their core and rendered visible. this almost perverse ecstasy of our feelings puts our minds in a state where tensions are released — a state which, prior to its discovery, was primarily abreacted in mythical excess-situations and sado-masochistic paradoxes (such as the cross, the rending of dionysos, his castration, the blinding of oedipus, the totemic meal, etc.). my concern is to go beyond the orgiastic extremes of the senses whipped up by painting, and to penetrate deeper into states of sado-masochistic stimulation. tachism is eclipsed by analytically penetrating the ecstasy cultivated by painting.

STATUTES

I. the profession of faith in the practice of art is the priesthood of a new outlook on existence. art turns towards its primary task, worshipping life in every form (meditation, prayer, synthetic liturgy), and becomes the vehicle of a more intense and profound rapture within life. it must be intensified to the point of a shameless, analytical exhibitionism that demands the sacrifice of total self-abandonment. i am an expression of all the guilt and lust of the world. i want to know myself in the joy of the resurrection.

II. the ORGY is a sacrament of existence.

III. the establishment of the orgies mysteries theatre in the *weinviertel* at prinzendorf an der zaya must become everybody's most pressing concern.

IV. the burg theatre must be closed and the STATE GRANT it has so far received must be used to set up the o.m. theatre. my theatre project is not some UTOPIA. indeed, it could easily be established six

times over if people stopped wasting money on the army and training sportsmen.

V. the o.m. theatre will breed its own cattle. no animal is to be killed on my account. in the o.m. theatre, only animals that have died of old age or have had to be put down will be disembowelled and rent.

VI. i wish to liberate humanity from its animal instincts.

the *orgies mysteries theatre* continues humanity's notion of redemption in a scientific manner. man will liberate himself from myth. a regenerated humanity can recognise itself through its profound inner play. this is a new form of existence and self-adoration, one that causes and necessitates an enthusiasm for all of life's experiences, all apprehension of existence, which can be heightened to the mysticism (intoxication) of being.

lust is dissolved in the PRIMAL FESTIVAL! the FESTIVAL will present life in its most concentrated form (the celebration of the orgy is the allegorical satisfaction of inner drives, performed by sublimation). everyone blessed with reason must be summoned to a religious concentration of their energies on the ENJOYMENT of perceiving existence. the course of events in the o.m. theatre is a symbolic sacrament for the positive development of our vital forces.

the o.m. theatre has nothing to do with conventional theatre. i want to give the world its profoundest FESTIVAL (a FESTIVAL of rejoicing, a universal FESTIVAL, the liturgical realisation of the life FESTIVAL) and bring back an awareness of our deepest religious symbols. by means of this theatre the intellectual sanctification of art will be made manifest. for the first time in history a constructed, ritual FESTIVAL will be brought into being with the help of the principles of depth and mass psychology. being creates for itself a celebration of purification and abreaction.

being a form of life worship, the play conveys certain rules of conduct and forms of meditation. the condensed, con-

centrated rite that is practised and presented by the o.m. theatre must extend throughout the entirety of life and become a systematic guide to mysticism. man becomes *more firmly rooted in his existence* through a conscious, analytic recognition of self and being. his feelings are pervaded by a primal meaning. his relationship with the course of creation becomes enthused and in harmony with it. in the o.m. theatre, states of renunciation are experienced directly (we shall also hold processions of rejoicing). by means of the blasphemous desecration of myths, and the celebration of extreme situations that are to be registered to the most sensually intense degree, i shall bring the entire audience to ecstasies that relieve their inhibitions to the point of excess. secretions will be tipped, smeared, sprayed and splashed about (the ritual moistening and soiling).

excerpt from the list of liquids (secretions) and solids employed in the o.m. theatre:

egg yolk
lamb's and bull's blood
red dye — vermilion — warmed to 40°
water in which meat has been washed
wine and bread soaked in lukewarm water
white bread (wheat bread) dipped in red wine
beer, vinegar, cotton wool, honey, sugar water,
saccharine water, valerian tea, skimmed milk, etc.

excerpt from the list of abreaction rites of the o.m. theatre:

tea-roses are sliced on a glass plate with a razor blade
blood-filled pig's bladders are pierced
fruit and grapes are torn apart and crushed
ecstasies are created by producing the loudest possible noise
raw meat will be torn apart (all this is performed by the spectators)
the power of speech is reduced to liberating cries of lust
etc.

the choice of liquids and ritual objects forms a scale of stimuli which can produce a meditative and prodigiously sensual feeling in the individual. the term dionysian was coined for this (the dionysian signifies the need for abreaction, whose awakening leads, with a relentless inevitability that stems from the economy of inner urges, to orgiastics, to the longing for pain, sacrifice, the cross).

all of the mysteries of feeling that are activated by the o.m. theatre come together in the process of painting (which is liturgical abreaction). the most pre-eminent point in the analytical celebration is the primal excess (the evisceration of the lamb) experienced during the play. the evisceration of the lamb is the symbol of the primal excess experience celebrated in the o.m. theatre. the sensually real sado-masochistic act of rending is symbolic of the profound intoxication of being that demands ecstatic abreaction, in which pain and desire are forced together (during the process of disembowelment, boys waft the smell of syrian incense).

the analytic leitmotif of the orgies mysteries theatre, concerning situations stemming from the primal excess

- I. transubstantiation, last supper (behold, this is my flesh, this is my blood)
- II. mount of olives
- III. crucifixion
- IV. orgiastics and sacrifice of dionysos, his rending
- V. killing of orpheus
- VI. adonis's mutilation by the boar
- VII. isis and osiris
- VIII. attis, agdistis
- IX. blinding of oedipus (castration symbol)
- X. ritual castration
- XI. animal sacrifice in general (animal sacrifice as a substitute for human sacrifice and as object of identification)
- XII. totemic meals (the rending of the totemic animal)
- XIII. the primal excess (the evisceration of the lamb in the o.m. theatre is an allegorical substitute for the primal excess experience), likewise, liturgical painting penetrates to the primal excess

Six months later, Nitsch staged his first action proper, using a living, moving body (himself, with Muehl assisting).

this action was aimed at showing that the as yet unperformed productions of my theatre could indeed be realised. we were fascinated by the emergence from the picture surface. no longer was paint tipped and sprayed over a surface; instead, a coloured liquid (blood) was poured over a living, moving body. the blood streamed down its face and on to the white shirt. for the first time a real occurrence has been staged (by me): we were astonished by the result, and i was particularly impressed after seeing the photographs. from now on, my new field of work was that of placing certain parts of reality in relationship with other parts of reality.⁸²

ACTION 1 > Muehl's Flat, Obere Augartenstrasse, Vienna, 19 December 1962



a twenty-year-old, dressed in a white shirt like a habit, is tied to the wall of a room as if crucified (rings have been attached to the wall). blood is poured and squirted over the bound man's head from small containers and a colonic irrigator. the blood runs in thick streams down his face and white habit.

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On 28.6.1963, Nitsch and Muehl staged their second joint event at Muehl's studio in Vienna, the Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism. The two artists planned their own separate programmes, and Nitsch commenced his 3rd action:

after my action had run for about three-quarters of an hour the police arrived and closed the event. the action went wonderfully, an enormous number of people had come. only when i was forced to stop by the police did i see what was happening: a large crowd had gathered in the street, police and squad cars were standing in front of the building, people were looking at us from the windows of the neighbouring buildings. a whole detachment of police was busy closing our event and expelling the spectators from the cellar. i stood in the street in wet bloody clothes, not believing my eyes. (...) but the event was a success. we won a lot of people over.⁸⁵

The event earned Nitsch and Muehl prison sentences of 14 days each for causing a public nuisance and disturbing the peace.

Nitsch's section of the 16-page programme for the Festival consisted of a lengthy script for his action (given here in full), along with theoretical texts that "give an insight into the sensory and psychic excitement induced in me by each of the actions, as well as into the inherent realms of associations i register during them."

ACTION 3: FESTIVAL OF PSYCHO-PHYSICAL NATURALISM



1. production of a painting together with otto muehl. i tip, stain, daub, smear and spray blood (red paint) on the surface. then i stamp about in the resulting pool of colour, splash my hands and wallow in it.

2. a bed covered with a white sheet, a white duvet and a similar pillow (the bedding has been used for 6 nights) is placed on the pavement of the street. i lie down on the bed fully clothed, cover myself and remain there during the ensuing action by otto muehl in the cellar.

3. i enter the cellar, in which a flayed, dead lamb is hanging (head down) by a rope from a meat hook in the centre of the ceiling. a freshly laundered white cloth has been spread beneath it. i cast tea-rose petals dipped in vinegar and sugar solution, hairs from a fourteen-

year-old girl that have been dipped in vinegar, damp cotton wool, greasy sandwich wrappers, entrails, the fat from the entrails, inner organs, and tip lukewarm water, wine, greasy dish-water, sour milk, etc. on to the cloth. then i wind the hair of an eleven-year-old girl round an udder and some raw meat, slice and mangle these with a pair of scissors and likewise throw them on to the cloth. during the action, a tea-rose soaked in sweet wine is placed in my mouth. i bite and chew it until i spit out the sweet flesh of the rose (wet with sweet saliva). simultaneously a bouquet of strongly-scented, wet, freshly cut jasmines is pressed into my face at frequent intervals. a gentle smell of incense is produced. i tip blood, greasy serum and lukewarm water over the lamb, the cloth and the objects lying on it, and begin to swing the wet, dripping carcass about the entire room, while simultaneously hitting the animal's head



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several times with a cramp-iron over a lengthy period. finally i trample about on the objects on the cloth for some time. the visitors can then view the results of the action. i step out of the cellar on to the street (pavement), turn back the duvet, pour a bowl of urine over the sheet, place a white paper handkerchief on the ensuing urine stain, place wet hairs on it and, taking a pair of scissors, cut up a number of tea-roses that have been rinsed and freshened with lukewarm water. then i cast entrails, the fat from the entrails, inner organs, and bloody cotton wool smeared with egg yolk on to the sheet,

and pour over it sour milk and greasy serum. i then lie down on the bed fully clothed, and cover myself with the duvet. fellow actors stuff the entrails, the fat from the entrails, inner organs, bloody mucus mixed with egg yolk, cotton wool wet from dish-water, moist raw meat and boiled poppies, etc. into the bed. the actor who stuffs the objects under the duvet first dips them in hot water (exception: egg yolk, bloody mucus). this is done for all the spectators to see. further-

more, warm jasmine tea, vinegar solution, lukewarm water in which roses have been rinsed, warm blood serum, etc. are tipped over me under the duvet. this continues until the bloody water trickles over the edge of the bed and drips on to the street. i remove the duvet and stand up on the bed. my clothes are completely soiled. i am washed down with lukewarm water and cotton wool. after i have been cleaned, i wallow about again in the damp bed covered with the various objects. i tear the sheet from the bed, carry it and the objects on it into the cellar

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and slap and throw the more solid

objects at the walls and floor. i step on pieces of meat and entrails, causing intestines to burst, and trample once again on the remains lying on the sheet. a strong smell of incense is produced.

gradual mounting of the sensory stimulation produced by the actions, occasional upsurges of destructive, sado-masochistic needs.

blasphemous associations are triggered towards the sexual symbols that appear in dreams, and towards the inner worlds of early childhood relating to the oral and anal stages of development.



4. i release the lamb from its bonds, take it by the hind legs and beat it several times forcefully against the wall, then hit the dead animal's head on the edge of a table covered with a white cloth. finally i throw the flayed carcass on to the floor, kick it, push it along in front of me and kick and stamp on it. i sink my teeth into tea-roses which are held before my face in a bowl (primal excess situation).

(...)

i throw raw pieces of meat and entrails

dipped in greasy blood serum ecstatically at the walls and floor.

i pick the lamb up off the ground, lie down on the bed with the animal (the damp sheet on the bed has been replaced), kiss the carcass and nail and fasten it as if crucified to the bed.

the apparently blasphemous association of two extremes, sexual intercourse and the cross (sacrificial death on the cross). (sexuality, unmastered urges as the origin of all needs to sacrifice and of all mythical and ritual excesses. dionysos, who sacrificed himself on the path of orgiastics, as a preliminary stage of christ.)

“christ stepped forth from a chamber as groom anticipating his wedding, went out into the wide world, went joyously like a giant, finally reached the marital bed of the cross, and by mounting it consummated his marriage. he felt the creature sigh and exhale its last, and lay down his life in pious exchange in place of his spouse.” (from an alchemical text.)**

here death on the cross is seen as sexual union, as intercourse with nature, as descent into hell, as dissolving in nature with the aim of renewal. as such it is a symbolic allegory of the actual mental situation of the primal excess and of all cases of excessive abreaction. a state of ecstatic excitement produces a momentary diminution of consciousness. chaotic, creative urges gain the upper hand and elicit a “descent into the subconscious”. the individual sinks into the shelter of nature with the purpose of renewal, which produces the cathartic function of all abreactive excesses — an increase in awareness.



i sit up in bed. i am handed a bowl containing 5 tea-roses dipped in sweetened wine, i bite and chew on them and spit them out on a cloth held before me.

i am repeatedly given sweetened wine to drink. i rinse my mouth with it and spit it on to the cloth held before me. raw meat is placed in my mouth, which i bite, chew on, and spit it on to the cloth held before me.

bread is placed in my mouth, which i bite, chew on, and spit out on to the cloth held before me.

i am given a drink of vinegar solution. i rinse my mouth with it and spit it out on to the cloth held before me.

the spat-upon cloth is carried through the audience for all to see close up.

i release the lamb from its fastenings, wash and rinse it of blood and dirt with lukewarm water, and place it back on the bed. white unprimed cloth is stretched over one wall of the cellar, and brown paper and white primed jute are spread over the floor. the lamb is placed at one end of the painting surface and covered with brown paper. i tip and spray red paint over the picture, uncover the lamb carcass, tip blood over it and, taking the dead animal by its hind legs, beat it ecstatically against the wall covered with canvas (so that blood stains appear on the material) and throw it to the floor.

i dip both hands in the paint material (blood), go to the centre of the stretched canvas, press myself against it (face to the canvas) and extend my arms as if crucified. if space allows, i repeat the procedure to the left and right of the handprints at the centre, so that the ensuing handprints could have been produced by three people crucified with their faces to the wall.

taking fresh blood, i stain, soil and daub an oval surface beneath the central handprints — making it look somewhat like a butcher’s apron — then take the lamb and crucify it, face down, on the damp, bloody patch on the cloth. i whip the crucified animal, hammer it with my fists, slap it about the head, sink my teeth into its flesh, throw heavy stones, entrails and pieces of meat at it, and tip blood serum over it. i stain, splatter, soil and soak several white sheets with blood (like butcher’s aprons) and attach them to the large canvas surface, tear the lamb from its fastenings, throw it to the floor where i give it

several kicks, and then hang the largest of the wet bloody cloths at the spot where the lamb had hung.
sensual self-excitation by means of painting (stage 2).
sensual self-excitation by handling concrete objects (action), commencement of sado-masochistic actions.
the blasphemous realm of associations inherent to the acts — leitmotif of the o.m. theatre.
the lamb as a symbol of christ.
analytical-tachistic maltreatment and rending of the lamb carcass analogous to christ's passion (cross-bread-wine) the rending of dionysos (castration).
ritual regicide (patricide), the lamb's body as the father's ravaged body.
rending of totemic animals.

primal excess

holding it by its hind legs, i beat the dead lamb ecstatically against all the walls of the cellar, throw the animal to the floor, hit it with my fists, kick it and shove it with my feet, trample on it, begin to tear open its body, thrust my hand in the damp bloody cavity of its chest, press my knee inside and sink my teeth into the raw flesh of the carcass.

*In 1964, Nitsch "managed to arrange an exhibition and action in the galerie junge generation, vienna, which was one of the better avant-garde galleries. the exhibition consisted primarily of relic montages, picture montages and bloody sanitary towels. also included was a bed that had been slept in, with an egg cracked on the sheet. (...) the gallery director was appalled. he tried to drape the bloody sanitary towels with paper handkerchiefs before the opening. not only that: the gallery was associated with a theatre that put on performances every evening. the actors were so ashamed of my montages that they hung theatre costumes over them."*⁸⁵

The exhibition was closed after two days on the orders of the mayor and deputy mayor. A manifesto was issued to coincide with this, his 6th action, and to mark the 32nd International Biennale in Venice.

MANIFESTO THE LAMB

recent developments in art have tended towards the use of reality as a direct means of creation. art has become automatic, transformed itself into the pure contemplation of reality, freed from the narrower horizons of consciousness involved in the traditional production of artworks. creativity has become an active shaping of the environment, and has turned into a mystical approach to animate existence.

an expanded, more conscious and refined sensual registration of the environment is combined with the registration of the symbolic content inherent in all concrete objects or concrete events, i.e. all the possibilities for association that are released by the elements of reality selected by art are not only activated, but systematically analysed and brought to awareness. a highly analytical aspect of art — one informed by the sensual means of tachism that tempt one towards regression — activates the subconscious. working with concrete means entails more contact than ever before with the lower strata of the psyche, whose phenomena become the actual subject of representation. the concrete objects involved are simply ciphers of an inner psychic reality, whose depths can be plumbed to arrive at the underlying, archetypal, collective phenomena of the psyche. the human condition comes to be conceived of as

Nitsch's 7th action was staged on the invitation of his friend, Wolfgang Tunner, to celebrate the award of his doctorate. This 3-hour action — a quiet, ritualistic event which ultimately involved all present — was the first in which Nitsch encountered no problems from the authorities. It ended in a party lasting 12 hours, which in many ways foreshadowed the relaxed feasts Nitsch later incorporated into his actions. Also new were the religious and theoretical texts that were handed out as additional stimuli for the action, the large array of objects, liquids and foodstuffs laid out on tables as synaesthetic studies, and the concluding action performed outdoors. These were all to become established parts of Nitsch's later actions.

Space prohibits all 14 pages of the mimeographed script from being given here; this selection, performed in the last two of the six rooms used for the action and then outdoors, indicates how Nitsch used the rooms and tables to create installations for slow, meditative actions with objects. Nitsch was also at this time gradually systematising his actions with the lamb, in this case by the introduction of the side wound. The action was assisted by Schwarzkogler, who performed his own small actions with the material (final picture).

ACTION 7: ACTION-DRAMA
DEDICATED TO DR. WOLFGANG
TUNNER > Nitsch's Studio and Flat,
Vienna, 16 January 1965

V. Bathroom:

1. Slipper-bath.

a. A sanitary towel (over which egg yolk and blood have been poured).

b. Pubic hairs on a piece of rubber cloth.

c. A sponge lying on a soap-dish. On the sponge is a piece of elastoplast (inner side facing upwards).

On the elastoplast is a lump of sugar.

2. Hanging above the bath-tub is an inflated plastic coat hanger on which the blouse of an eleven-year-old girl is hanging. Attached to the blouse is a sanitary towel.

3. Hanging above the bath-tub is a bloody hand towel.

4. A wash-stand.

a. A sanitary towel on which an elastoplast has been placed (inner side facing upwards).

b. A sanitary towel partly dusted with icing sugar.

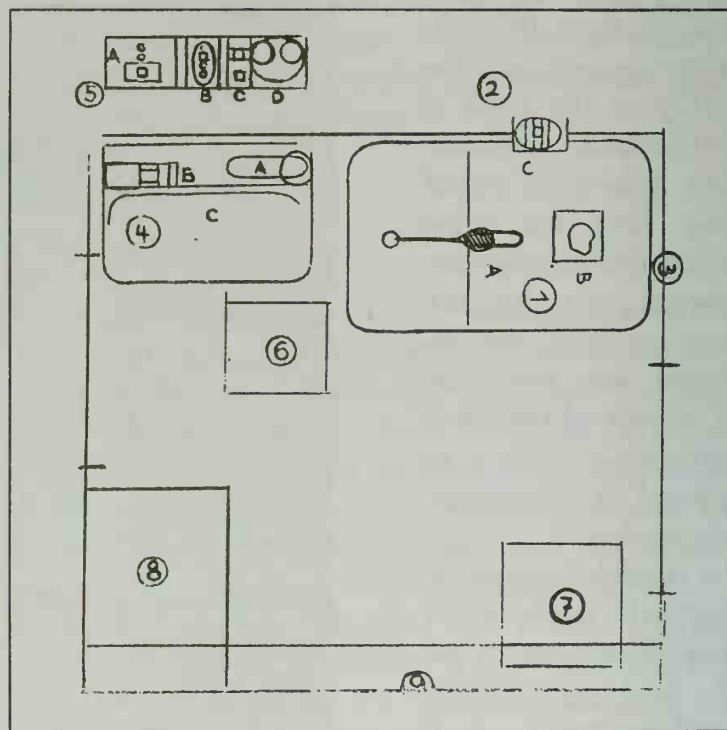
c. A sanitary towel on which a lump of sugar has been placed.

d. A length of bandage on which an elastoplast has been placed (inner side facing upwards), on top of which is a piece of sanitary towel bearing a lump of sugar.

e. The wash-basin is full of blood and intestines.

5. Above the basin is a plastic shelf (for toothbrushes, etc.) on which the following objects have been placed:

a. A paper handkerchief smelling of menthol. On the paper



handkerchief are two aspirins and a folded handkerchief smelling of menthol on which lies a lump of sugar.

b. A cloth on which an ellipse has been drawn in lipstick. Inside the ellipse is a saccharine tablet, a lump of sugar and two aspirins.

6. Bloody intestines on a white sheet. Hot water has been poured over them.

7. Bloody intestines on a white sheet. Hot water has been poured over them.

8. A table covered in objects.

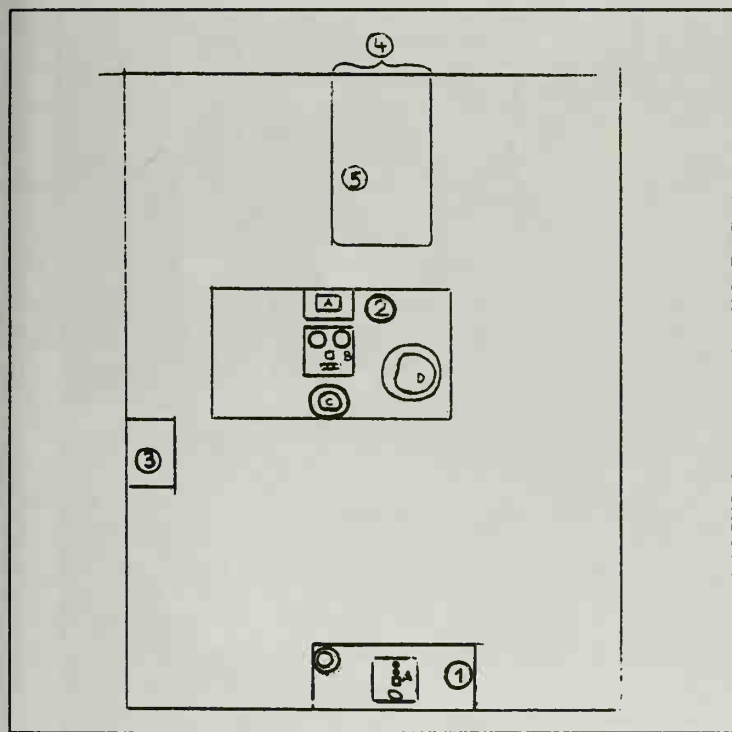
9. A sanitary towel nailed to the wall.

Actions:

Blood, hot blood serum, egg yolk, oil, purple aniline dye, sour milk, urine, red wine, red and blue ink, etc. are poured over the sanitary towel in the bath-tub.

Warm blood serum, purple aniline dye, red ink, blood, egg yolk and blue ink are poured over the sponge in the soap-dish and the bread on top of it.

Warm blood serum, egg yolk, hot water, red ink and purple aniline dye are poured over the intestines lying on the floor.



VI. Study:

1. A small table covered with a white cloth, on which are:
 - a. A paper handkerchief smelling of menthol. On the paper handkerchief are two aspirins and a sugar cube that has been dipped in lukewarm blood serum. In addition, a little white wine diluted with water has been dripped on to the handkerchief.
 - b. A lump of cotton wool dipped in ether, around which a circle has been drawn in red lipstick (ether is poured constantly over the cotton wool).
2. A table covered with a white cloth, on which are:
 - a. A folded handkerchief smelling of menthol, on

top of which a length of sterile bandage has been placed. Blood has dripped on to the bandage.

- b. A paper handkerchief smelling of menthol. On top of this are a glass filled with sugar solution, a glass filled with saccharine solution, a sugar cube and a piece of elastoplast (inner side facing upwards). On the sticking-plaster is a tablet.

- c. The yolk of a freshly cracked raw egg, around which a circle has been drawn in greasy red lipstick.

- d. A circle has been drawn on the table-cloth with a pink greasy lipstick. Aniline dye with a powerful colouring action is poured inside the circle.

3. Lying on the floor are leaflets bearing the following text:

The deacon pours enough of the hot water in the sign of the cross into the holy chalice to warm the holy blood.

Concentrated sugar solution is poured into ether.

4. A lamb is nailed as if crucified to an area of wall covered in canvas. (Head down, the head is suspended 1.10 cm above the floor.)

5. Set beneath the lamb is a bed covered with a white sheet.

Actions:

A side-wound is cut in the lamb's chest. The wound is opened wide and the blood is rinsed from it with cotton wool and lukewarm water. Aniline dye with a powerful colouring action is poured into the wound. The wound is constantly rinsed clean. Ether is tipped over the cotton wool on the table.

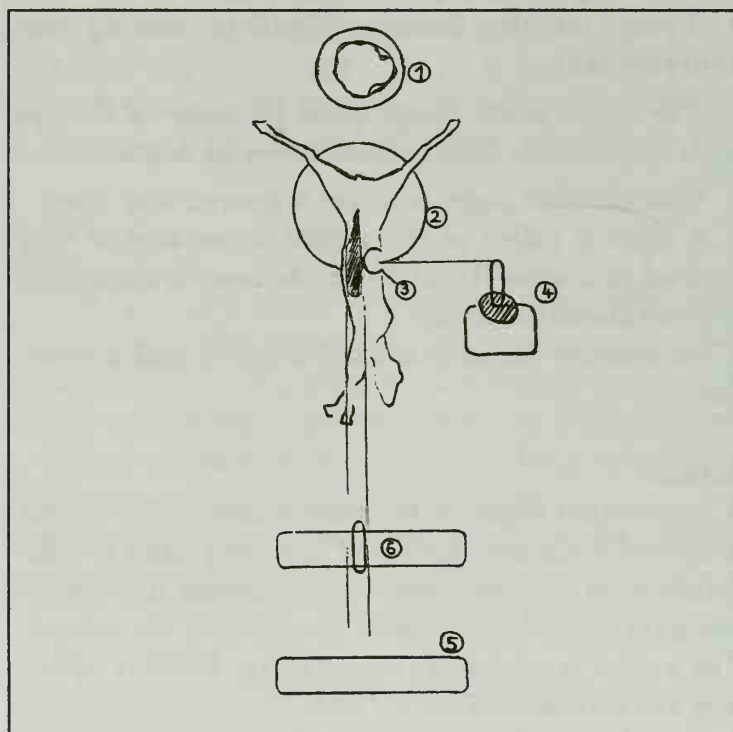
1. A circle is drawn on the canvas covering the wall. Entrails dipped in hot water are hung up inside the circle.
2. A circle is drawn in lipstick.
3. A circle is drawn in lipstick around the side-wound of the lamb.
4. A sanitary towel partly covered in spilt blood is nailed to the wall. A pillow is then nailed to the wall beneath this.
5. A rectangle with rounded corners is drawn on the canvas. A sanitary towel is hung in the centre.
6. Standing beneath this is the bed.

VII. The spectators go out into the

open and pass between the bordering fields. Each spectator is given a blazing torch.

The following liquids are tipped into the snow: warm blood, warm blood serum, hot greasy dish-water, hot water, warm urine, cooking oil, purple aniline dye, jasmine tea, lemon-yellow aniline dye, blue aniline dye, laundry blue, printing-pad ink, runny red oil paint, violet aniline dye and egg yolk.

The liquids are carried in buckets to the fields by the spectators. They then trample about on the entrails and raw meat.



Nitsch's 8th action (performed in his flat on 22.1.1965, largely on the Nitschs' marital bed) was the first of seven actions over the next nine months in which he worked directly with the naked male body. These "chamber pieces", pioneer actions of what was later called body art, lasted up to 8 hours⁶ and were often attended by no more than a single camera-man. On this and two subsequent occasions, the passive actor was Schwarzkogler, on the others Heinz Cibulka, who was to assume a vital position in Nitsch's work and become a lasting friend. Here Nitsch explored the "visual grammar" (Cibulka) of the O.M. Theatre, its themes of mytho-religious injury, sado-masochistic sexuality, castration and, as is especially evident here, transvestism.

after the majority of the actions, the genitals and the other body parts covered in fluids are rinsed clean using cotton wool with warm and lukewarm water, and any objects lying on the body are removed.

schwarzkogler is undressed. a sanitary towel is affixed lengthwise to his chest with strips of sticking-plaster. the sanitary towel and schwarzkogler's chest are probed with bloody hands. blood is tipped from small containers on to the sanitary towel. the sanitary towel becomes saturated with blood. blood trickles down over his pubic hair and penis and flows and drips in rivulets down his legs to the floor.

schwarzkogler lies down naked on a bed covered with freshly laundered white sheets. damp bloody brains from freshly slaughtered cattle are placed on his stomach above his pubic hair and on his pubic hair. a creamy, almost transparent gruel (flour paste), lukewarm water, lukewarm dish-water, lukewarm blood serum, blood and warm water are poured over them.

a sanitary towel is inserted under the testicles of schwarzkogler, who is lying on the bed. damp bloody brains from freshly slaughtered cattle are placed on his stomach and pubic hair. creamy, almost transparent flour paste, lukewarm water, lukewarm dish-water, lukewarm blood serum, blood and warm water are poured over the damp bloody brains and genitals. the gruel and other liquids seep into the sanitary towel beneath schwarzkogler's testicles. (blood seeps into the sanitary towel.)

a sanitary towel is placed 2 cm above schwarzkogler's pubic hair in the region of his navel. his penis and testicles are lifted gently while a 50 cm length of bandage is placed beneath them. (the bandage extends across schwarzkogler's thighs.) a 10 cm strip of sticking-plaster is placed directly on top of the bandage beneath his genitals (so that his penis comes to rest on the yellow cellulose wadding).

blood
warm blood serum
egg yolk

warm greasy dish-water
and warm water are poured over sanitary towel, pubic hair and genitals.

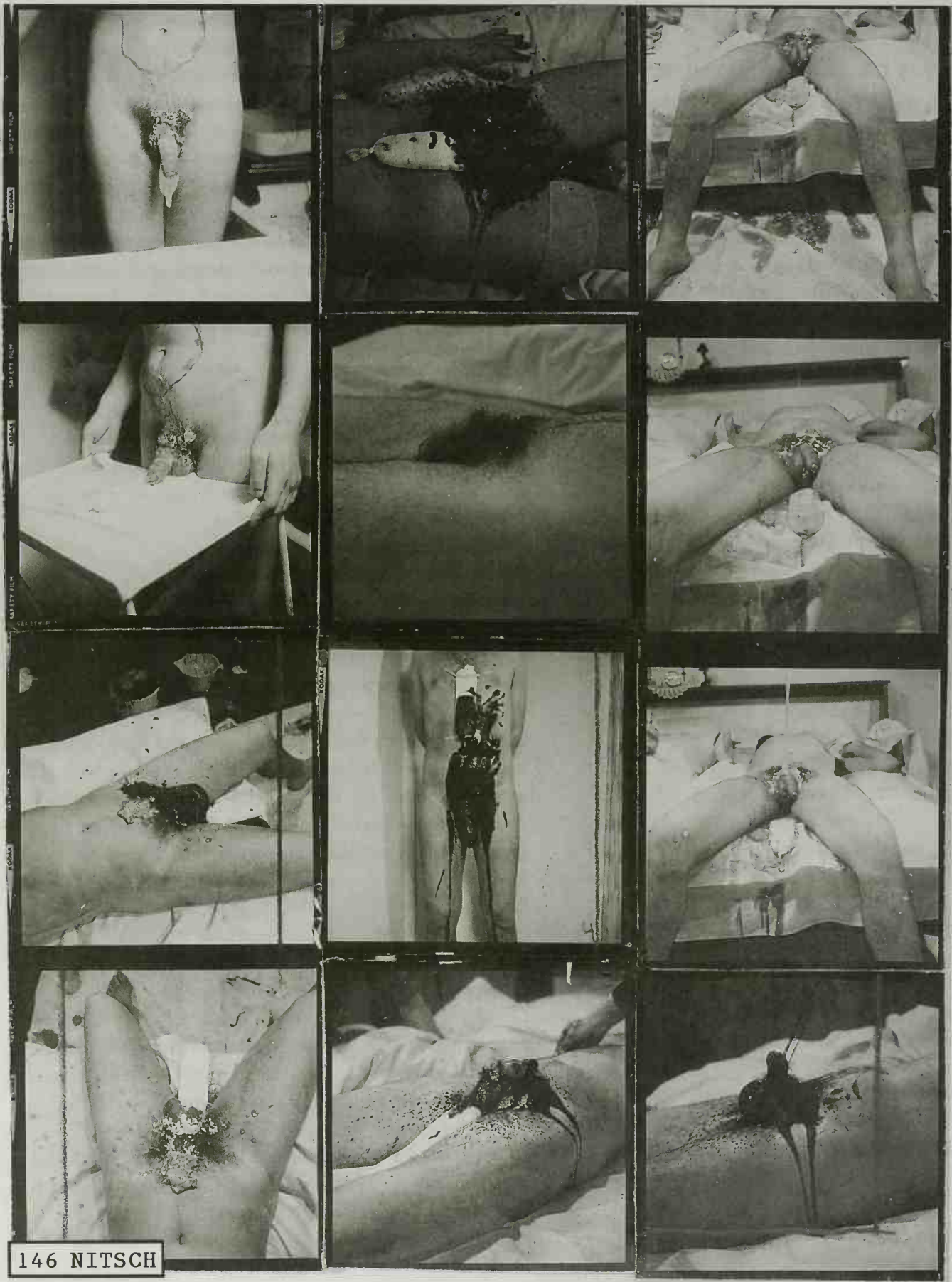
as in the previous action, the bandage is located beneath schwarzkogler's genitals. the sanitary towel rests on the region above the navel. pink, strongly-scented talcum powder and icing sugar mixed with powdered incense are sprinkled over the sanitary towel and schwarzkogler's genitals. then:

flour paste
egg yolk
lukewarm water
water in which lilac blossoms have been washed
warm water in which vanilla sugar has been dissolved
warm water
warm saccharine solution
sweetened lukewarm blood serum
a runny, strongly-scented ointment (chrism)
jasmine tea
and lukewarm water are tipped from small containers over the sanitary towel and schwarzkogler's genitals.

schwarzkogler's testicles and penis are lifted up and a sanitary towel is inserted beneath them (so that his genitals come to rest on the sanitary towel). the damp bloody brains of freshly slaughtered cattle are placed on his stomach in the region above his pubic hair.

flour paste
lukewarm water
lukewarm blood serum
vinegar
blood
and warm water are poured over the damp bloody brains and genitals. the liquids seep into the sanitary towel beneath schwarzkogler's testicles.

schwarzkogler's testicles and penis are lifted up and a 2nd sanitary towel is placed with one end under his testicles and the other end beneath his buttocks. the damp bloody brains of a freshly slaughtered cockerel are placed on



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his stomach in the region above his pubic hair.

flour paste

lukewarm water

lukewarm blood serum

vinegar

blood

and warm water are poured over the damp bloody brains and genitals. bloody slime and slimy bloody brains seep into the sanitary towel wedged beneath the testicles and flow downwards.

schwarzkogler's testicles and penis are lifted up and a sanitary towel is inserted beneath them. a few of schwarzkogler's pubic hairs are torn out. the actor plunges his hands into the intestines, kneads, presses and squeezes them while body-warm blood is poured over them. he rubs down schwarzkogler's genitals and pubic hair with the bloody intestines, makes the latter burst, and smears the bloody excrement over schwarzkogler's genitals and pubic hair.

egg yolk

warm blood serum

vinegar

sour milk

and body-warm blood are poured over the genitals and intestines.

finally the actor smears a yellow, strongly-scented antiseptic ointment over schwarzkogler's genitals and pubic hair and the intestines lying on top.

schwarzkogler's testicles and penis are lifted up while several 50 cm-long strips of bandage are placed beneath (lengthwise across his thighs). the actor takes a sharp knife and cuts a large piece of meat in such a way that it gapes open like a fruit; he places it on the bandaging beneath schwarzkogler's genitals. he inserts schwarzkogler's penis into the gaping flesh so that the penis remains tightly in place. the actor pours:

egg yolk

warm water

and blood over the penis lodged in the meat. schwarzkogler's penis and testicles are lifted while a sanitary towel is inserted beneath. the actor loops a thin cord around schwarzkogler's penis and testicles, tautens it in such a way that the genitals are lifted

upwards towards the navel and, taking an irrigator, simultaneously sprays the genitals with:

blood

and warm water.

schwarzkogler edges forward a fraction on the bed, splays his legs and bends them until his soles touch the floor. his upper body remains all the while resting on the bed. his penis and testicles are lifted up, a sanitary towel is inserted beneath them, and the bloody damp intestines of a freshly slaughtered cockerel are placed on his stomach and pubic hair.

body-warm blood

egg yolk

water mixed with wine

lukewarm dish-water

red wine mixed with warm water

lukewarm water

hydrogen peroxide

red ink

water in which roses have been rinsed

a warm, runny white ointment smelling of narcissi and purple dye are poured over his genitals and the intestines.

a circle is drawn around schwarzkogler's stomach with a soft, greasy, jasmine-scented lipstick. schwarzkogler rolls a lubricated condom over his penis. lying on the edge of a table covered with a freshly laundered white cloth is a sanitary towel. schwarzkogler places his testicles and his penis with the condom on the sanitary towel. test-tubes full of:

lukewarm water

egg yolk

flour paste

ether

sweetened water

blood

warm blood serum

and spirits of wine are poured from the level of his navel over his penis and belly.

after each liquid has been poured, his penis is rinsed and cleansed with warm water and cotton wool.

On 12.6.1965, Nitsch staged his first outdoor action (nō. 9), using several passive actors simultaneously. It was the first action in which Heinz Cibulka participated, and it is also the only action in which all four actionists participated, along with their respective wives and several other important names for Vienna Actionism. The ten-hour action was rounded off by a lengthy drinking session in a tavern garden and by the roasting and eating of the sheep.

ACTION 9



On 15.12.1965 Nitsch staged his 16th action (with Cibulka as model) before a small audience. It was filmed by Stan Brakhage, who included sequences from the action in his film *The Songs*; its format was similar to no. 7. Brakhage's film was frequently screened in Europe and above all in the USA, where it helped Nitsch become more widely known.

On 16.6.1966 Nitsch performed his 19th action (the *Fourth Abreaction Play*) at the *Galerie Dvorak*:

everything was under a bad sign. it was exceptionally difficult to get the permission to stage the performance. i had to go from one authority to the next, where i variously received threats and vague assurances that permission might be given. right until the performance began i was unsure whether the event had been properly authorised or not, although it was a matter of indifference to me. more seriously, cibulka came by on the day of the performance and said that circumstances prevented him from performing. a disaster. cibulka was attuned to me and i was attuned to him. i have yet to meet a better passive actor. (...) the action was framed by an exhibition. the dampness of the cellar meant that all of the photos in the exhibition had buckled by the opening and looked awful. (...) a completely inadequate passive actor (although this was no fault of his own) jumped in. he understood everything incorrectly and in his panic failed to perform the most simple operations. after 2 hours of the action i felt exhausted and sobered and gave up. all my toil and effort and the commitment of my wife had ended in nothing. (...) once again i had made an utter fool of myself before the viennese, who were in any case uninterested in me. i was also sad that schwarzkogler missed my event because he had gone to the races. (...) but there was worse to come: i was charged with "offending religious sensibilities" on account of a montage, *the first holy communion*, which included a bloody sanitary towel, and received a six-month suspended sentence. the police also felt it necessary to lock me up for 5 days because i had staged a theatre performance in a gallery.**

The court hearing (incidentally the charges of "ridiculing and denigrating the teaching and institution of the Roman Catholic Church" were also laid before Dvorak) was a farce of conservative bigotry. A pamphlet issued by Nitsch and Dvorak noted that "connoisseurs of the happening will recognise that this hearing is an artistic performance, the second half, as it were, of the 4th abreaction play begun in June 1966." The high point probably came when the judge, while giving the grounds for his judgement, pointed out that the "doubtless highly intelligent and successful statesman and currently retired minister president of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, observed on a public occasion that if the tails of monkeys and cows were dipped in paint, they would create the same products on canvas as those people who refer to themselves as modern artists."



Nitsch's 21st action, which was performed at the London Destruction in Art Symposium (see Collaborations section), saw the introduction of a scream choir and above all "noise music", both permanent components of almost all Nitsch's subsequent actions. It was also the first time that Nitsch performed before an international audience, and two spectators, Yoko Ono and especially Al Hansen, were later instrumental in spreading word of his work in America and in having him invited there. Nitsch's action, performed by a fine mixture of Vienna Actionists and Fluxus artists, was interrupted by the police shortly before the end. However, the action was a complete success, as well as being Nitsch's first outside Austria.

**ACTION 21, FIFTH ABREACTION PLAY: DESTRUCTION IN ART
SYMPOSIUM > St. Bride Institute, London, 16 September 1966⁸⁹**

cast:

passive actor: h. nitsch

1st actor: h. nitsch

2nd actor: g. brus

3rd actor: o. muehl

4th actor: al hansen

5th actor: k. kren

6th actor: r. page

scream choir (10 persons)

orchestra (16 persons)

orchestra:

2 clarinets

3 flutes

2 whistles

1 trombone

1 piano

1 pair of cymbals

1 pair of pot lids

2 drums

1 jerry-can

2 large football rattles

(the instruments in the orchestra are used solely to produce the greatest possible noise. suggested choice: pot lids, wooden drums, cymbals, flutes, rattles, violins, metal canisters, trombones, tubas, whistles, etc.) the choir and orchestra are grouped loosely in front of the rear wall.

a large white sheet has been spread out in the middle of the room. lying near the sheet are intestines, plus several buckets of blood. in front of one of the long walls is an 8 mm film projector. between the actions an 8 mm film

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(penis rinsings) is projected on to the opposite wall, which has been covered with a white sheet. later, the lamb will be nailed as if crucified to this section of wall. (the film will thus be projected on to the lamb during the action.) a member of the orchestra blows a whistle after each action has reached 3 minutes. then the lights are turned off, the action stops, and the film is projected for one minute. the event continues in this manner until it is concluded.

content of the film: the bloody brains of a cow are placed on a 20-year-old man's penis and pubic hair. a cord is wound round his penis, and used to move it while blood, warm water and egg yolk are poured over the brains and his penis.

(the instructions for actions that run parallel to each other are given separately and marked by letters.)

the lamb is brought into the room and thrown on the floor.

noise II from the choir and orchestra. (there are three noise levels, which are indicated by roman numerals.)

a) no.0 throws entrails (intestines) on to the floor, draws a chalk circle around them and pours blood on top.

b) no.1 walks round the room, inserts his hand in the top of his trousers and sticks his index finger out of his flies.

c) no.2 lies on the floor, stuffs intestines into his trousers from the top and pulls them out through his flies while the rest of the actors pour blood over them. constant noise from a wooden rattle, loud screams III from the choir and noise III from a trombone as the index finger and the torn-out intestines become visible.

a) the actors nail the lamb as if crucified to the section of wall covered by the white sheet. screams III from the choir.

no.1 cuts a 4 cm-long wound in the flesh of the lamb's breast. he opens the wound up wide and inserts the index finger of his left hand. then he pulls the skin covering the solid flesh several mm away from the incision and rinses the wound with cotton wool and lukewarm water. finally he empties blood over the wound from a test-tube. (the blood runs vertically down the lamb's body and drips on to the floor.)

the moment the side-wound is made, blast III from the whistle.

b) two actors walk back and forth between one wall and the one opposite, and scream whenever they meet.

c) no.4 becomes disorientated and tries to touch the lamb's side-wound with his eyes blindfolded. if no.4 manages to insert his finger in the side-wound, screams from the choir and noise from the orchestra III.



the spectators are handed test-tubes full of blood. they form a procession and tip and empty the blood from the test-tubes over the lamb's side-wound. the blood flows down the lamb's body. the lamb is eviscerated. blood and hot water are poured over and inside the lamb's gaping body while the intestines and inner organs are torn out.

noise from the orchestra and screams from the choir III.

the lamb is attached (head down) to a rope hanging from the ceiling. spread out beneath the lamb, on the floor, is a white sheet. no.5 lies down on the white sheet beneath the lamb. no.0 pours blood over the lamb and over no.5 lying beneath.

screams from the choir III while the blood is poured.

no.0 and no.1 swing the lamb back and forth on its rope, from one to the other, and lash out at it with masonry hooks.

screams from the choir and noise from the orchestra III each time the animal is hit and the masonry hook strikes its flesh.

a) no.1 places himself against the wall on which the lamb had originally been nailed (as if crucified). no.0 grabs repeatedly at no.1's genitals until he grasps hold of them. no.1 emits ecstatic screams at each contact.

b) no.2 and no.3 scuffle in the middle of the hall.

blast of a whistle III.

no.0 and no.1 run to the lamb hanging on

the rope, tug at it while emitting ecstatically loud cries III, tear pieces of flesh and the remaining entrails out of its cleaved-in chest, hang on to the carcass and swing around on it until the rope breaks or the lamb comes loose.

screams from the choir III.

no.1 tussles, amid convulsive jerks and screams, with the lamb lying on the floor. he then gets up and beats the lamb — which he holds by the hind feet — ecstatically against the walls and floor.

screams and stamping from the choir III. no.1 is dragged by the legs across the room on his back by no.0 and no.2. during this no.1 screams III. simultaneously no.3 tips a bucket of red paint over him. noise from the orchestra III.

the lamb is thrown on to the white sheet in the middle of the room. this is followed by intestines, viscera and lumps of flesh. blood and hot water are poured over the pile of flesh and the lamb carcass. finally the pile is covered with a white sheet. at the sound of a whistle no.0 runs to the covered pile and jumps and tramples on it.

screams and stamping from the choir III, noise and stamping from the orchestra III.

this is repeated until all of the actors have trampled on the lamb. the spectators may also join in.

all of the actors trample on the covered flesh and scream. screams and stamping from the choir III.

the bloody white sheet is removed so that the carcass, the pieces of flesh and the intestines are exposed. screams and stamping from the choir III, and noise and stamping from the orchestra III the moment the burst trampled intestines and the bloody crushed flesh come into view.

the actors and spectators all crowd to the middle of the room and trample on the bloody slimy intestines and the cadaver while clapping their hands and screaming. in addition, no.0 attempts to mutilate the lamb while lying on the ground and screaming.

most intense noise of the play screams, stamping and clapping from the choir noise III, stamping and clapping from the orchestra III, exaggeratedly loud beat music and alpine brass music issues from loudspeakers.

Despite elaborate preparations (Nitsch had amassed 8 students from a Catholic student association as actors, a ten-man scream choir and a 20-piece noise orchestra), Nitsch's contribution to the mammoth Zock Festival in April 1967 was dwarfed by the general mayhem that erupted on all sides (see Collaborations section). This was his last public action in Vienna for several years. After the events surrounding the 19th action in Vienna Nitsch felt the need to perform outside Austria. In the summer of 1967, a film that was being made about Vienna Actionism and Nitsch was stopped by the chief of the television company, after Nitsch had staged an action expressly for the purpose. After a public argument with the chief, Nitsch left post-haste for Munich, to join the woman who was later to become his wife and who would buy Prinzendorf Castle: Beate Koenig. Shortly after leaving Austria, Nitsch received an invitation from Peter Kubelka and Jonas Mekas to stage an action in New York.

The 25th action, at the Cinematheque on Wooster st. on 2.3. 1968, was performed with Jon Hendricks, Al Hansen and Ralph Ortiz, among others; George Maciunas lent Nitsch the musical instruments for the orchestra.

After two more actions in New York, Nitsch travelled to Cincinnati to stage an action at the University on 4 April as part of its Spring Arts Festival. He met with ideal conditions, but also some resistance from the University authorities, who banned the performance at the rehearsal stage.

Eventually the action was allowed to go ahead after the students staged a demonstration, and a sheep had been illegally imported from a neighbouring state. The action, in the Great Hall, was a "very great success", as evinced by the standing ovation Nitsch received two days later when he entered a concert hall where the Fugs were playing.



In 1969, the German publishers März Verlag brought out a Nitsch reader entitled Orgien Mysterien Theater. This was the first book of Nitsch's writings to appear outside of his own publishing venture. The texts, ranging from a manifesto dated 1962 to his most recent writings, included these two essays. The first is taken from King Oedipus, Nitsch's first book-length didactic play (published in 1964), which "constituted my closest approach to psychoanalysis";⁹⁰ it attempts a Freudian analysis of the "side-wound". The second essay reflects Nitsch's later theoretical standpoint.

ON THE SYMBOLISM OF THE SIDE-WOUND

Since myths can be compared with humanity's collective dreams, through which the reality of the wish-dream principle can be recognised, Christ's side-wound constitutes a paradoxical symbol of an erotic ebullition, the break-through of the phallic at the climax of excessive repentance (the cross) for the original sin (incest with the mother).

The death on the cross, its final affirmation, ends with the introduction of the phallic symbol of the lance that was thrust into Christ's side. The ensuing wound, which is often depicted in the visual arts as wide open, or with the apostle Thomas holding his finger to the scar, can be seen as a symbolic representation of the female genitals. Paradoxically, at the end of the masochistic sacrifice on the cross — which is aimed at the retraction and annulment of the sexual act with the mother — the original goal of the dream, the mother's genitals, forces its way once again to the fore.

The generally suppressed incest-wish, which is transformed into castration anxiety and further transformed into the collective-neurotic mythical self-punishment, as represented by death on the cross (the retraction of the sexual act with the mother), is openly displayed in Jesus Christ's side-wound, which depicts the mother's genitals as the true (subconscious) goal of the dream. The phallic origin of all sacrificial excess becomes evident. Even the most extreme sacrificial excess is simply a neurotic substitute for intercourse with the mother, an indirect attempt to repeat the "first" act of incest.

The appearance of Christ's side-wound as a symbolically couched desire for the mother's genitals, in connection with the reconciliation with the father achieved by death on the cross, also expresses the wish for identification with the father.

ON THE SENSUAL REALITY OF THE SIDE-WOUND

The side-wound (of the lamb), which is often introduced into the actions, should on no account be understood simply and superficially in terms of its vulgar symbolism. Rather, the (formal) stimulatory factors of the side-wound conveyed in the actions can be divided into two groups, which achieve their effect by merging together. These are, firstly, a specifically sensual effect and, secondly, the symbolic connotations which are grasped associatively, and which enrich the sensual aspect. In order to avoid any one-sided emphasis being given in my actions to symbolic interpretations, it is important to tease out the side-wound's specifically sensual aspect and as far as possible separate it from its symbolic associations.

The non-literary use of the side-wound in an animal cadaver has to be justified, and the real underlying reason for using the side-wound underlined.

... one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. The issuing blood and water is sensually very compelling and intense. The bright red blood is an intensely coloured substance which man, by his very nature, responds to strongly, indeed it compels him to do so. (The life-warm, body-warm blood signals death or injury, blood issues when the flesh is penetrated invasively.)

The intensity of the impression made by the wound is further heightened by the water that issues. Not only blood but water flows from the wound, the body into which the lance was thrust was already dead, had already begun to decompose, had almost bled dry. This state of decomposition is shown by the fact that the last blood and remaining water flows from the damp, wet wound that was inflicted in the almost bloodless (bled) flesh. Apart from the liquids flowing from the

wound, the moist wound itself, the incised flesh (the gaping edges of the incision) has an intense sensual effect. Finally, the act that caused the situation, the act of stabbing the body (this time without any procreative phallic symbolism) must be mentioned, for it too is perceived in a strongly sensual way. At first the flesh resists, then the sharp tip of the spear pierces the skin, cuts gently into the flesh and glides softly into it.

It is not only important to explain the side-wound as regards its use in my action plays, but also to examine why it is so often depicted in painting in the process of being opened. Once again this is an action that produces a strong sensual reaction: soft moist flesh being opened up. An incision exposes the interior of the flesh, and simultaneously triggers the association of pain resulting from the torn-open flesh. A finger inserted into the wound has a comparable effect. A finger is inserted into the soft flesh of the moist wound. (Once again, the emphasis should be on the sensual act, not on phallic symbolism.) In short, we are concerned

here with basic sensual stimuli that can be triggered by realities (substances, objects, actions), so that they can be brought into the mind and exploited for art.

It can perhaps also be assumed that the side-wound has such a strong symbolic character precisely because

it creates such an intense sensual effect. It also seems reasonable to

assume that the actual formation of symbols is linked to intense sensual impressions. Since tachism, the basic sensual stimulus has been grasped and exploited in painting. Tachism realised that the spraying, pouring, splashing, trickling and smearing of paint taught us that the liquids flowing from the wound are strong stimuli. FONTANA demonstrated through his slit-

pictures the sadistic act of stabbing and cutting (he inflicted a wound on the painting). Once brought to aesthetic awareness, the breakthrough of suppressed anal and sadistic sensuality becomes an essential means for creating the actions of the O.M. Theatre.



(Photograph from the 5th action, Vienna, 1964.)

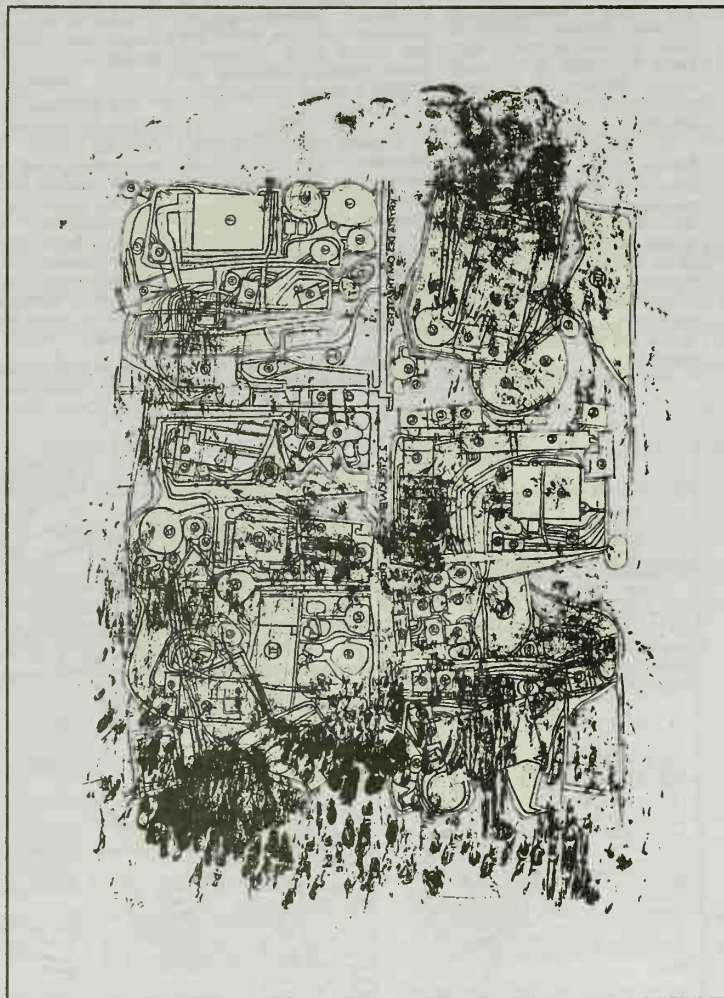
An article written by Nitsch in 1969, and first published in Die Schastrommel 6 in 1972, not only shows the breadth of his vision and his desire to base his theatre at Prinzendorf Castle, but also testifies to the O.M. Theatre's roots in this rural idyll.

the o.m. theatre will be built in prinzen-dorf an der zaya, in the *weinviertel*, lower austria. the vineyards, orchards, pastures and fields, and the alleys bordered by wine cellars around prinzen-dorf, with their odour of wine, are well suited to the processions and experiential actions of the o.m. theatre. the countryside of the *weinviertel* has had a decisive effect on my work, and the countryside for many miles around is the setting for the o.m. theatre festival.

the starting point for establishing the theatre is castle prinzen-dorf. the region around prinzen-dorf shall not be altered by the construction of the theatre.

underground architecture
i can no longer stand the sight of modern architecture, it bores me to tears and disgusts me. society is in such a shitty state and contemporary commercial buildings are revoltingly ugly. since i have no desire to deface the world any further, and since the world should no longer be defaced by such loathsome contemporary architecture, i intend to construct the o.m. theatre underground, and show that this is the only tenable form of building today. there is room enough in the ground. warrens dug in the subterranean realms are a creative way of rejecting humanity's inability to experience with intensity. the harnessing of introverted regions produces new actualities. the

plant-like forms these corridors deliberately imitate in vulgar, symbolic fashion should remind us that we live in a biologically determined world, and this fact should be acknowledged with more biological honesty.



action and architecture
in 1965, i began to design the rooms in which my 6-day play was to take place. my intention is to build an underground theatre in prinzen-dorf an der zaya to accommodate all the actions that do not occur in the open or in the castle rooms. the uterine darkness of underground passages and rooms exerts a great attraction on me, as does vegetative life sheltered in the lightless womb. the germinant sleep of death takes place in the subterranean realm, in the grave, in the earth. the analytical descent into the unconscious vegetative region to which my actions aspire, has now a genuine equivalent in spatial and architectural structures. the descent will

be made into subterranean caves, catacombs and burial chambers.

(Lithograph of the second level underground, the crypt of the O.M. Theatre.)

the aesthetics of butchery

by Yon Klemptner

Herman Nitsch wandered about the room like a melancholy dwarf, crying "Blood! Giva more Blood!"

I took a vial of blood and poured it on a brain. I hoped to feel my hidden emotions coming out. To feel catharsis. Savagery. Abandon. It didn't work. I felt bored. One guy slowly poured green paint onto a fung and then cracked an egg onto it. Fingerpainting. Mud-pie. A girl looked with fascination at her hands drenched with blood a la Lady Macbeth. I asked them if they felt their hidden emotions coming out. They said yes.

Mr. Nitsch had said that after it was all over we would roast the lamb and have a banquet. But after they threw it on the floor, after they covered it with pink paint and latines, after they trampled it into the ground with their bloody shoes, I knew it could never be used for food.

Should you use dead animals for art? Should you kill them for art? How about people? That might be better art.

Mr. Nitsch wrestled with the carcass. Ha grimaced with savage joy. The people watched. Solemn, unsmiling. Peter Kubelka stood on a table, looking over the heads of the crowd. Grinning. A knowing grin.

Then it ended. People ambled toward the door. I asked them what they thought. They said yes. It was art. They said it was really good. Much better than hanging around the dorms getting bored. Everyone had seen some kids who had really gotten into it.

Like one girl. There was blood drying on her eyelashes. Hair dripping with red. Sweatshirt stained crimson. "Was it fun?" She couldn't speak. She was sobbing. She shook her head.

I'd seen her before. Lying on the floor while they poured blood all over her. I'd seen the way she tried to shield her face with a fold of the backdrop. The tormented motions of her head when it became drenched with blood. A kid told her he understood exactly how she felt. She just sobbed. She couldn't speak.

Someone cracked an egg on Nitsch's head. I got into that.

Rutgers Students
Join Artistic
'Blood Bath'

Nische: art of killing

By PAULA DEVARNEY
The gathering was small in Hickman 138 yesterday. Forty to fifty students waited to hear Hermann Nische lecture on his work. One student was as a prelude to his performance last night. Dressed completely in black, the Austrian-born artist began to speak in a heavy accent, defining his particular performance art and its intrinsic principles.

He began. "Drama is the Festival of life. The fact of our being and existence, (and) the comprehension of our being, is the only tangible reality." Stating his basic beliefs in what art is and accomplishes, Nische explained that reality is the "consciously festive form of experience," and that "art can function as an extension of this reality."

The medium through which

Nische expresses his ideas is the ritual of sacrifice; his art is contained within the structure of a sacrificial performance, beginning with the slaughter of an animal and progressing to its complete destruction. The participants in this drama tear the animal apart with naked hands, smearing, splashing and bathing in bloody remnants.

Throwback

Primarily, this type of art is a throwback to the religious ceremonies in ancient times. The presentation's meaning is ritualistic, deep, and powerful. It answers the fundamental questions of man's relationships to death and to God, and it explores life and "the mystery of existence brought to consciousness."

Nische maintains that his art is a necessary, total release of

man's inhibitions. As a psychoanalytical method, it frees man of his instinctive urge to kill. The "intoxification" created by the blood and the ripping apart of raw flesh should be satisfying and enjoyable as it relieves man of his suppressed desires.

Intense

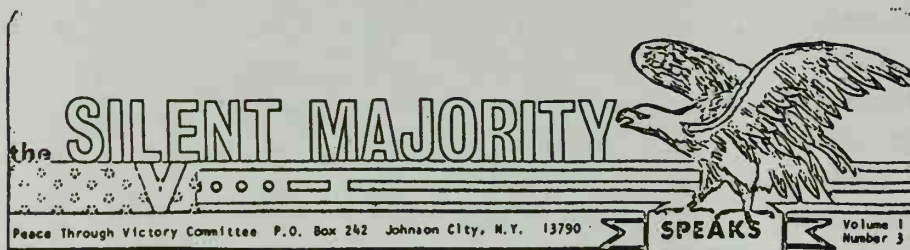
The experience of killing is extremely intense as "the subject goes into the surrounding world to destroy." Nische contends that the killing of the animal is a strong self-experience of one's existence. Repression by society of this experience is a lack of understanding of man's need for expression. "Killing was, and is, beyond all moral judgements," he argued.

Nische further stated that the sacrifice "should not glorify or

induce killing (as its) purpose is to free and satisfy man's destructive urge, and to bring lasting mystical unity.

Slides

After showing slides of various performances, Nische opened a question period. Much of the student reaction was a general impression of having experienced the bizarre. "It was like a nightmare. It horrifies me," one student commented. Some students expressed the feeling that the drama was a rationalization of one's criminal tendencies. A few decided to attend the evening performance, for, as one student explained, "the only thing that is more terrifying than the act itself is the possibility of its repetition and the occult."



The Hermann Nitsch Exhibition Orgies Theater

Education 1970

The pictures on this page speak for themselves. What lies beneath them is the total degeneration of the human spirit. The spectacle has been called "art" and "educational" by members of the SUNY administration and faculty, as well as the participants, but in truth it is the lowest form of perversion. Enacted in the Harpur Social Room one evening last week, it was produced by the warped mind of Hermann Nitsch, titled "The Hermann Nitsch Exhibition Orgies Theater."

Mr. Nitsch slithered out of Chicago and into New York State (which eventually attracts most of the degenerates in the country) to give his production a trial run for a six-day "feast" that is to take place in New York City in the spring of 1971. He found a ready market for his "play" on the SUNY campus, complete with eager participants from the audience who in some perverted way thought that they could rid themselves of the desire to kill humans by venting that desire on a dead lamb. On the contrary, if the participants or audience really felt any desire to kill humans, this act can only be viewed as the first step in the making of another Charles Manson, or a

whole gang of them. It reeks of blood cult and the Satanic rites of devil worship. How large a step is it from a lamb carcass to the body of a child?

If this act is one of the pinnacles of higher education, then we are past the peak of the mountain called human knowledge and are on a one-way slide to oblivion. How close are we to the human sacrificial altars of the ancients, and how soon will we return to the blackness of the cave, worship the demons of darkness, and quake in fear of "things that go bump in the night?" If our State University is destined to become the host for this breed of degenerates we are far along the road back to that day when man will again join his brothers in the tree tops, and only God will know the difference between what once was man and what has always been animal.

The participants in this act can condemn the Vietnam war as immoral and yet, by some strange twist of illogic, can call this unspeakable act "educational." The pity of it all is that they don't even know the difference between war and perversion. If they possess such a thing as that elusive force

called a soul, then one day, sad to say, they will awaken to the fact that they have profaned God. And may God help them when the realization of their own doom, both in this life and in any that may follow, falls on their childish minds with its full force.

Little doubt remains that this time they have gone too far, and the next step lies up to the people who make the University system possible. The administrators and faculty members responsible for this outrage in the name of "education" must be removed. Not that we would advocate a shotgun approach to this action, for it is of overriding importance to avoid so great a disaster for our educational processes. The majority of decent faculty members must not be placed in jeopardy for the madness of the few. But it will also be a great disaster if those who are clearly implicated are allowed to remain on the Harpur campus. Citizen action will be essential in the coming weeks to make known the depth of our disgust with these persons. Will the downward slide continue, or will we have the strength to counter the force? Only the citizens of this state can answer that all-important question.

The gradual move away from an almost positivist Freudianism to a far more mystical vein became increasingly prominent in Nitsch's work in the latter part of the Sixties and thereafter, as demonstrated by the following section from his second major collection of writings, published in Italy in 1976.⁹²

BALANCE

during the mid-sixties, the theoretical analysis of the basic excess-experience was determined by a psychological, or at best a narrow phenomenological view of things. the basic excess-experience can, however, be construed in a different, more fundamental way. the basic excess-experience brings about an intensely pleasurable break-out from mediocrity and the laws it produces. the human capacity for perceiving existence releases itself from all its bonds and normative channels, allowing a million-year-old conditioning to be erased and reversed. an intense experience of being takes place, beyond human evaluation and linguistic concepts, and beyond the narrow perceptual frameworks determined by language. our senses are provoked, the pain of perception is mixed with a blissful contentment on this side of life. something quite essential touches us. a power permeates, flows through, pumps through, quakes through our sensory channels, takes possession of us. the power of this creative interplay of energies — which flow eternally and elude language — can be equated with all that came before human, animal and vegetable existence, before our own particular world existed. before every sun and all the billions of galaxies came into being. with the word “before” i am succumbing to a rational temporal evaluation. i mean that power (the word “power” being an inadequate and all too frequently used paraphrase), i mean that state of things, that dynamic constellation called being, which permits being and universes to come into existence, can be destroyed and brought back into existence throughout the infinite dimensions of eternity. the VOLUPTUOUSNESS of the excess, the excessive orgiastic mode of perception, provokes in us a state in which pain and extreme pleasure mingle intimately, where the states of death and life appear to manifest themselves simultaneously in us and no difference may be seen between them. in daily life, death and life act as

separate states solely as a result of the human perceptual framework. the excess inherent in the mystical experience of being, the basic excess-experience, approaches the truth of infinite being. birth, procreation, death, the death on the cross and the resurrection are all experienced simultaneously. within us is both the anxiety and lust of the murderer and the mortal fear of the victim, we are simultaneously killer and killed; in our elated, raging pain provoked by an intense realisation of existence, we identify with being's innate powers of change, which simultaneously produce constant construction, destruction and reconstruction. we fall into the abyss of darkness and into an abyss of light. we suffer universes of death and universes of cruelty while speeding through universes of immeasurably bright radiant dazzling white light and the experiences of happiness it brings. raw bloody damp flesh rent by the dionysian excess greets the taste of fruit on the morning of the resurrection. the double abyss of light and darkness is BEING.

we have fallen free of every system, a sacred madness with no attachments spawns our great triumph in the naked space of infinity. language becomes speaking in tongues. the techniques of the o.m. theatre have delved deep into being.

Exemplary perhaps of one particular strand in Nitsch's increasingly complicated “mysticism of being” is the following essay, which also appeared in 1976 in the same collection as the previous text.⁹³

the o.m. theatre project comes close to alchemy, or better still, its origins were determined by the same subconscious influences that determine alchemy. with the basic excess, a dramatic occurrence was achieved using the means of contemporary theatre that is not dissimilar to the alchemical *mysterium coniunctionis* (union of opposites).

the alchemists, who did not work according to our present-day scientific premises, projected mythical symbols from the collective unconscious on to the alchemical procedure, so that this procedure was determined by the symbols' power. the substances assumed the role of mythical figures and followed, as it were, the paths of their destiny. substances were placed in relationship to one another on the basis of mystical considerations, and were made to reconstruct the paths of the mythical figures assigned to them. thus, as a rule, substances were melted down during the *mysterium coniunctionis* in order to achieve rebirth, to allow a new substance to come into being, which was supposedly gold. the *coniunctio*, the union of opposites, closely resembles the sacrificial procedures of mythology: ritual murder, castration and the most diverse forms of sacrificial death and extinction of the personality — which aim at the attainment of an often supernatural renewal. the union of opposites can be equated with the nocturnal sea-voyage, the descent into the pit, into the grave, into hell, the underworld or the subconscious. the *coniunctio* is identical with the central occurrence that pervades most myths when the figure of light is sacrificed, sacrifices himself, disappears or descends into a seemingly negative realm in order to undergo regeneration and renewal. death and the descent into the lower realms, into chaos, is followed by resurrection. a typical example is the passion of jesus christ and his resurrection (sweating blood on the mount of olives, drinking the cup of sorrow, his imprisonment, his chastisement, the crown of thorns, death on the cross, his descent into hell and his rising again on the third day). this need for masochistic sacrifice, for diving into the subconscious and chaotic, is not only to be found in myths, but also projects itself into alchemical procedures.

(...) the *mysterium coniunctionis* has not only the greatest resemblance to the dramatic situation of the basic excess but, strictly speaking, proves absolutely identical to it inasmuch as both the *mysterium coniunctionis* and the basic excess of the o.m. theatre are a union of opposites, a process of dissolution. the basic excess is a descent into our own subconscious depths for the purpose of renewal, and this descent is tantamount to a break-through of the instincts, which can then be held in check by the analytical dramatic techniques employed within the confines of the play. pent-up energies and aggressions are made manifest by this excessive break-through, neutralised, and brought to consciousness by means of form. this catharsis has a regenerative effect. the basic excess can rightfully be equated with the nocturnal sea-voyage, the descent into the pit or the underworld, and with the subsequent regeneration and resurrection achieved by bringing subconscious conflicts to awareness and liberating oneself from them with the aim of a new, more conscious place in one's world.

before i became familiar with and understood the conjunction, as expounded by c.g. jung, my analytical dramatic technique developed towards something i termed the basic excess-experience, which i saw as a heavy collision between the conscious and the subconscious. the subconscious dictate, the mental set which forced the collective unconscious into my work, was so strong that my project became imbued with the mythical schema of descent for the purpose of renewal — the *mysterium coniunctionis*. i discovered that those sado-masochistic energies that led to the myth of the cross could break out in my theatre. the surge of instincts in the basic excess corresponded with a dissolution of conflicts, which in turn contributed to a partial release from the unconscious dictates of the mythical. the foundations of the excessive myth of the cross were brought to awareness.

apart from the way the *mysterium coniunctionis* reflected itself in my work, countless other unconscious influences determined my creative processes in ways similar to those by which alchemical processes are determined. perhaps the reason why this particular

influence from the collective unconscious was so strong was because i had taken the entire realm of the psyche and the stratum of myth as my field of work. i was searching for something akin to the gold of the alchemists, a state of oneness with the whole, the self-realisation promised by myth. this search for redemption and deeper realities is undertaken by every single participant in the play. the attainment of selfhood (in almost exactly the way c.g. jung understood this) distinguishes my work — again similar to the case of the alchemists. once the excessive has been overcome, the freed, pacified, meditative, sublimated flow of the instincts or energies wishes for a mystical state of being and the attainment of selfhood. the mysticism of being that is aspired to, and achieved, through my play is intended to bring the human to an awareness of the whole, so that the individual may contact and identify with it.

Nitsch's 32nd action, the Seventh Abreaction Play, was performed in the Aktionsraum, Munich, on 28.2.1970. It was his third action in the city in just over a year. The Aktionsraum was founded in 1969 and became, in Nitsch's words, "a home for actionism", as well as the venue for Brus's last and most memorable action, Breaking Test. In the atmosphere of complete freedom and support created by the centre and its organisers, Nitsch was able to develop what he described as "one of my most important and successful actions, ... one of my wildest and most intense", without, however, avoiding the almost inevitable problems with the authorities, and doubts over whether it could ultimately be staged. An hour before the action was due to begin, a large police contingent arrived and encircled the Aktionsraum to prevent the spectators from entering. Futhermore, a number of the actors and musicians had gone outside to eat and were now unable to get back in. It was clear that the action, if staged, would result in a direct confrontation and possibly Nitsch's expulsion from Germany. However, two of the Aktionsraum organisers spread the message by word of mouth that the action would take place the next morning at 10 a.m., a time when the police would not be watching the venue. Nitsch was sceptical, but the next morning everyone managed to arrive and the action took place under cover of daylight, as it were, before an invited audience of around 40 and a television team. A similar confrontation with the Munich authorities, nineteen months later, proved less fortunate.

The Seventh Abreaction Play (invitation: left) was preceded by an extremely intense 10-minute action by Brus, who subsequently participated in Nitsch's piece. It was also the second occasion on which Hanel Koeck participated as passive actress. Koeck ("a beautiful, magnificent and generous woman" according to Nitsch) had participated in actions by Muehl, had actively contributed scenes to Nitsch's action 11 weeks previously, and undoubtedly encouraged the provocative, explicitly sexual nature of this action. The course of the action was worked out in detail beforehand; the handwritten score provides a working outline.

———— N I T S C H ————

7. ABREAKTIONSSPIEL (in der Festsaison)
27. Februar 1970 20 Uhr Eintritt 5DM



AKTIONSRaum 1 Tel. 53 61 44
München 15 Waltherstr. 25 (am Goetheplatz)

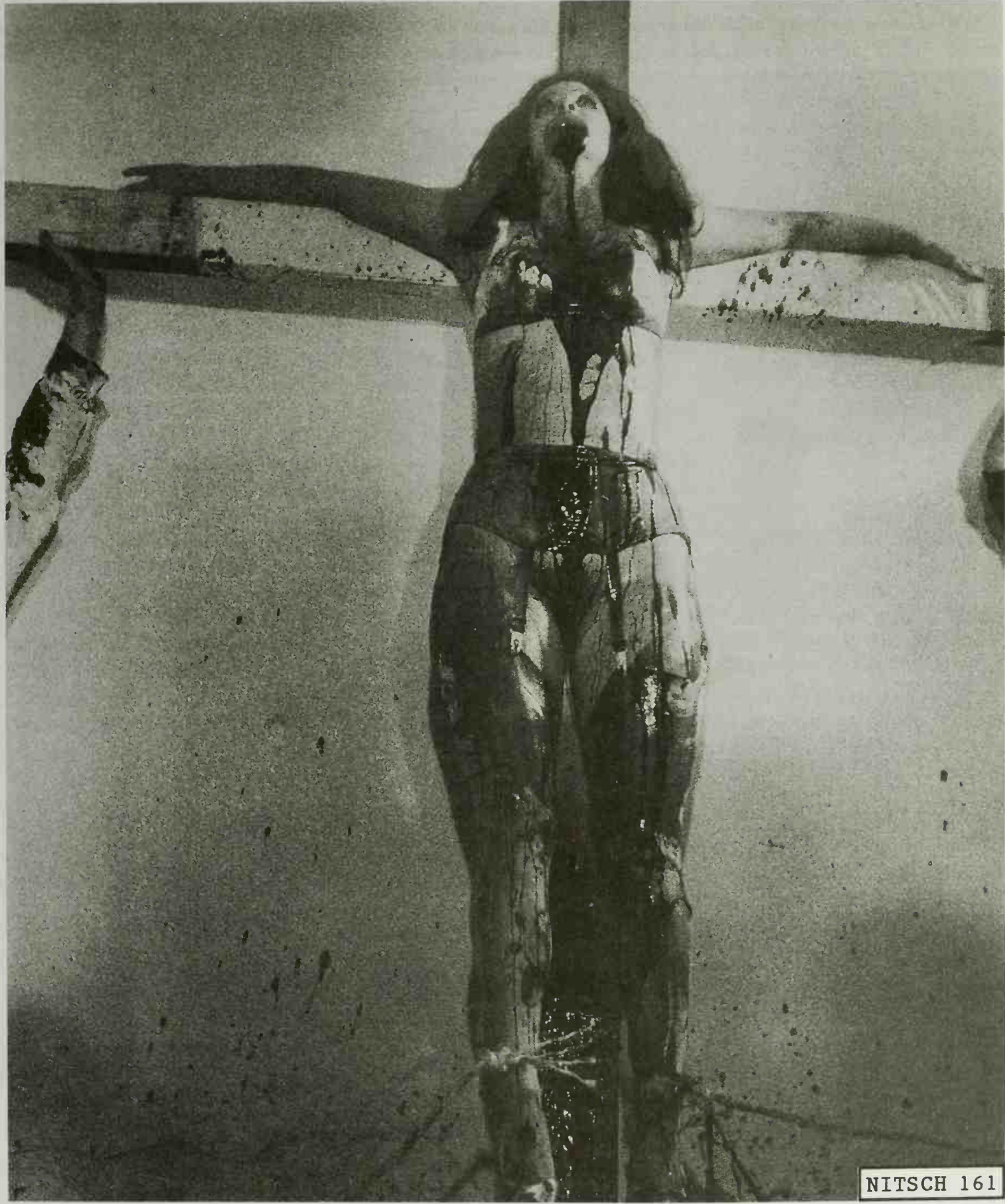
ACTION 32, SEVENTH ABREACTION PLAY: SCORE

quiet actions, sugar, chalk lines
 liquids are tipped over intestines on the floor
 quiet actions
 contact with sexual organs, screams from actors
 blood and intestines are tipped over the reclining woman
 quiet actions
 action 1st lamb side-wound (end wall)
 audience inundates the side-wound
 disembowelment of 1st lamb
 the man lying beneath the lamb is dragged away
 lamb is opened up wide
 actions with the side-wound in the 2nd lamb
 simultaneously lamb 1 is attached to ropes
 disembowelment of lamb 2
 opened up wide
 quiet actions
 inundation of the man lying in the bed
 he gets up and is further inundated
 quiet action
 woman on cross on floor is inundated
 copulation with the opened-up lamb lying on the woman
 erection of cross
 BEAT group plays own number
 washing and opening of the woman's sex
 COPULATION
 the lambs are thrashed back and forth (noise at each blow — beat music)
 actor runs to the lambs and tears them down
 concluding noise, greatest climax, concluding tussle

The musical score is given on the right-hand side:

rattle
 harmonium
 whistle
 screams
 ländler*
 brass instruments
 noise orchestra
 beat music

Stille akthionen, zucker, Kocidestriche					
am boden liegende gedärme werden beschüttet					
stille akthionen					
gucklochschlierenbildung genähe der akteuse					
liegende frau wird mit blut u gedärme beschüttet					
stille akthionen					
aktion 1. lamm seitenwunde (stirnwand)					
zuschauer beschütten die seitenwunde					
ausweiden 1. lamm					
der unter dem lamm liegende wird weggeschleift					
aufklaffen					
aktion mit der seitenwunde des 2. lammes					
gleichzeitig wird das 1. lamm an seil befestigt					
ausweiden lamm 2					
aufklaffen					
stille akthionen					
der im bett liegende mann wird beschüttet					
er steht auf wird weiter hind beschüttet					
stille akthion					
frau am liegenden kreuz wird beschüttet					
aufgeh lafftes lamm auf der frau wird begattet					
auf richten des kreuzes					
eigene nummer der BEATgruppe					
waschen u aufklaffen der guckloch/teiler der frau					
BEGATTEN					
lammern hien u her schlagen (bei jeder treffen laff)					
akteur rennt zu den lammern u reut sie unter					
Schlusslärm kirchliche steigerung					
Schluss balgerei					



NITSCH 161

The 43rd action, performed at the Modernes Theater, Munich on 15.1.1974, was described by Nitsch as a "kind of standard action ... which afterwards i was able to stage in various european cities and in los angeles in slightly different variations." It featured Nitsch as the 1st actor and simultaneously as the orchestra director, and lasted three hours. Nitsch managed to assemble a "star cast" (Nitsch's words) of passive actors, including Brus who, according to Nitsch, "performed actions which related to the overall course of the play. we were thrilled by his contribution." As ever, the action was stopped by the police, shortly before the end, on charges of disturbing the peace.

ACTION 43

cast

passive actors

h. cibulka

gioia meller-marcovitsch

kipper kid 1

kipper kid 2

g. brus took part independently

1st actor: h. nitsch

2nd actor: h. vogel

6 additional actors

orchestra

15 whistles

10 flutes

1 clarinet

1 horn

1 trumpet

2 trombones

3 tenor tubas

4 pairs of cymbals

10 rattles

2 drums

1 beat group

2 beat guitars

2 bass guitars

3 drums

a slaughtered, flayed sheep (sheep 1) hangs above the centre of a square, open stage in the round. it is suspended by its hind legs on two ropes attached to the ceiling. the ropes splay the sheep's legs wide apart. the sheep's chest is 1 m above the floor. large, freshly laundered sheets have been spread beneath the sheep. ropes have been attached to the two side walls and to the flesh of the sheep in such a way as to pull open its chest.

almost all of the actions take place on the 6 x 6 m stage.

the only stretch of wall that can be reached from the stage is covered with a white sheet. nailed as if crucified (head down) to this section of wall is a slaughtered, flayed sheep (sheep 2). a white sheet has been spread beneath the sheep.

sugar cubes are arranged about the room.

lines are drawn around the sugar cubes in chalk.

stoles and maniples are spread out. lines are drawn around the maniples in chalk.

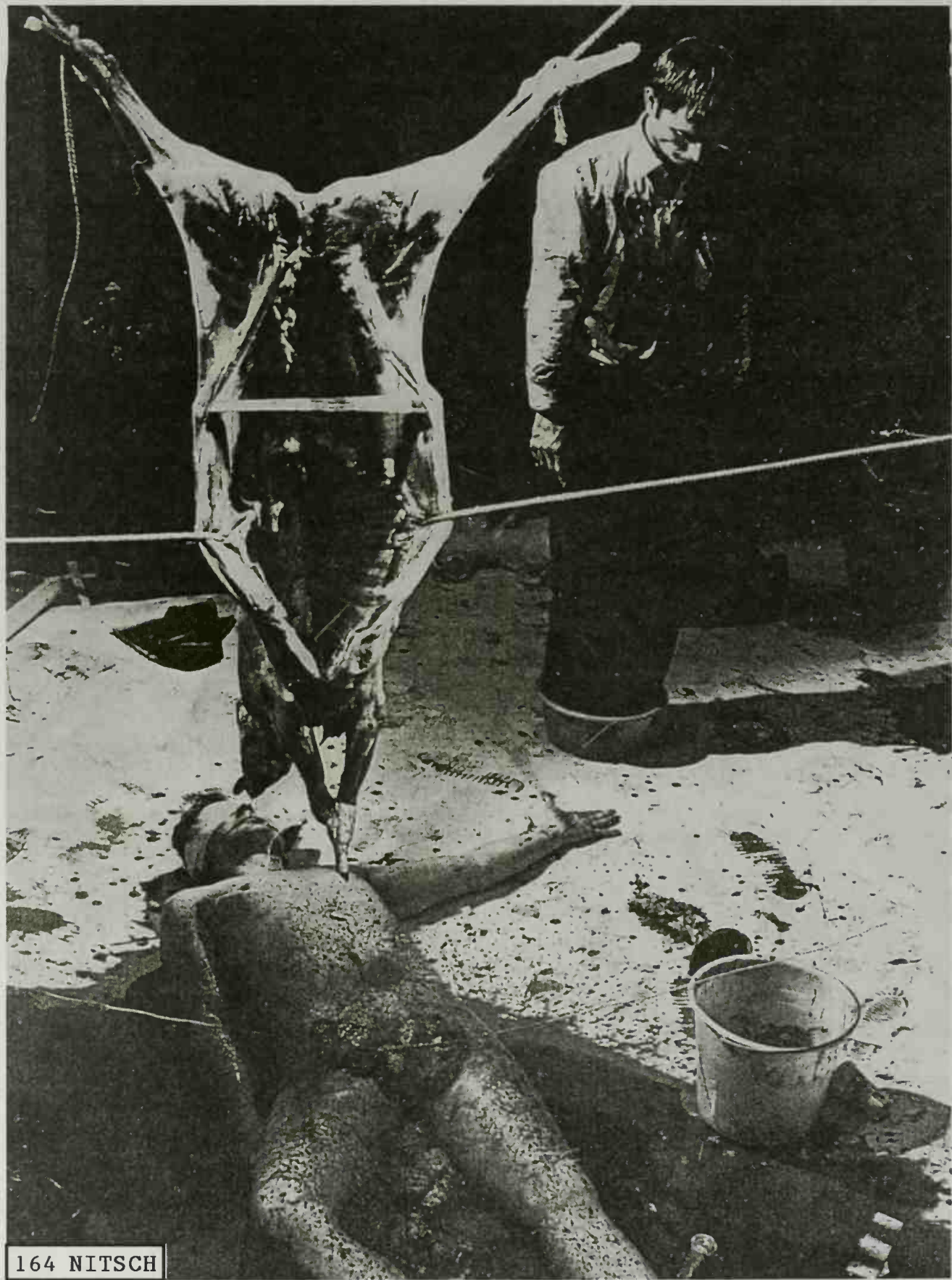
chasubles are spread out on the floor and lines are drawn around them in chalk.

a monstrance is placed at the end of the row of sugar cubes.

intestines lying on the floor are doused with blood.

the monstrance is placed before the bloody intestines. a white, freshly laundered sheet is placed





before the monstrance. a lump of sugar is placed on the white sheet.

brus is led into the room naked by 2 actors. his eyes are bound. he comes to a halt before the monstrance and the intestines.

brus's blindfold is removed.

brus sees the monstrance and intestines, ecstatic screams from brus.

a bloody lambskin is wrapped around the monstrance, the bloody inner side facing outwards.

blood is poured over the bloody skin. ecstatic screams from brus.

blast on a whistle.

the monstrance is unwrapped. ecstatic screams from brus.

sugar cubes are arranged on the floor.

gioia is lying naked on a stretcher behind the scenes. her eyes are bound. buckets of bloody damp intestines and blood are tipped over gioia's lower body. the brass players are behind the scenes, making a din during the action.

gioia is carried into the room on the stretcher, still with the intestines lying on her. the brass players follow silently.

blast on a whistle.

gioia is uncovered.

sugar cubes are arranged on the floor.

fish lying on the floor are slit open with a knife and opened up wide, during which blood and hot water is poured over the opened fish from a test-tube. the intestines are torn out of the fish.

cibulka is led by the hand into the room by 2 actors. he is fully dressed and his eyes are bound. he lies down under the sheep hanging over (the central area of) the stage.

he is undressed. a length of twine is wound around his penis. the two ends of the long piece of twine are held to the left and the right by the 2 actors.

a cock's intestines are placed on cibulka's lower body.

blood is tipped over the opened-up sheep hanging above cibulka. blood drips on to cibulka's lower body.

the participants pour liquids from test-tubes over the opened-up sheep and cibulka's genitals. at the same time brus washes his feet in a plastic bucket.

slime is poured over cibulka's genitals. the first actor inserts cibulka's member into his mouth and sucks it.

the monstrance is placed flat on cibulka's genitals.

2 actors open sheep 1's body up wide. intestines are stuffed into the sheep's body, ripped out again and then stuffed back in. blood, hot water and slime are poured into the sheep's open body and over the tumbling intestines. finally the bloody slimy intestines fall on to cibulka's lower body.

kipper kid 1 lies fully dressed on a stretcher beneath sheep 2. his eyes are bound. a wound is cut with a scalpel in the chest of the crucified sheep on the lengthwise wall. a circle is drawn round the wound using a greasy, soft, wine-red lipstick smelling of cyclamen. the wound is opened up wide. blood is poured from test-tubes into the wound and over the moist edges of the wound. test-tubes filled with blood are

handed out to the participants, who pour the blood into the wound of the slaughtered sheep.

the evisceration action can be made to last a long time, up to 30 minutes.

the crucified sheep is eviscerated. blood and hot water are poured over the tumbling intestines. the bloody damp lukewarm intestines are stuffed repeatedly into the sheep's body and each time ripped out again. kipper kid 1 lying on the stretcher sits up, undresses and masturbates.

the chest of crucified sheep 2 is opened up. the head-end of the stretcher bearing kipper kid 1 is lifted up, his head is level with the opened-up sheep. intestines are stuffed into the sheep's gaping body and ripped out again. participants thrust their hands around in the intestines. blood, hot water and slime are poured into the opened-up body and over the tumbling intestines.

blast on a whistle.

kipper kid 1 is carried off.

kipper kid 2 is brought in, fully dressed, and placed beneath sheep 2. his eyes are bound. his legs are below those of the sheep.

the sheep's wound is opened up wide. blood is poured from test-tubes into the wound and over the moist edges of the wound. test-tubes filled with blood are handed out to the participants.

the evisceration action can be made to last a long time, up to 30 minutes.

the crucified sheep is eviscerated. blood and hot water are poured over the tumbling intestines. the bloody damp lukewarm intestines are stuffed repeatedly into the sheep's body and each time ripped out again.

2 actors open up the body of sheep 2, and kipper kid 2's trousers are removed.

kipper kid 2 is lifted by the feet until they are level with the sheep's hind legs. intestines are stuffed into the sheep's gaping body and ripped out again. people thrust their hands around in the intestines.

blood, hot water and slime are poured into the opened-up body and over the tumbling intestines.

blast on a whistle.

kipper kid 2 is dragged off by the feet.

blast on a whistle.

the stretcher with gioia is removed.

cibulka is carried off.

brus draws a line around the monstrance in chalk.

brus knocks the monstrance over and screams at it.

sheep 2 is nailed to a cross lying on the floor (its hind legs are nailed to the cross-beam, its front legs to the vertical plank). the sheep's chest is opened up wide. intestines are stuffed inside. blood, hot water and slime are poured over them.

harald tramples on the intestines stuffed inside the sheep's gaping body while 2 actors support him by the arms.

blast on a whistle.

harald is led out.

cibulka is led into the room, fully dressed and with eyes bound, and tied to the cross lying on the floor. the cross with cibulka is placed under sheep 1. cibulka's lower body lies beneath the sheep's head.

sheep 1 is opened up wide. intestines are stuffed into the gaping body and ripped out again. blood, hot water and slime are poured into the sheep's body and on to the tumbling intestines. blood, hot water and slime splash and trickle over cibulka. bloody wet intestines fall on to his body.

cibulka is undressed and tied once again to the cross.

the cross with cibulka tied to it is raised up, inverted, behind the gaping sheep. the gaping sheep hangs before the chest of the inverted crucified cibulka.

the inverted cross with cibulka tied to it is moved 1 m to the left of the sheep. blood is poured over cibulka's genitals.

the cross with cibulka tied to it is placed on the ground. sheep 2 is placed on his lower body. its hind legs come to rest on his chest, and are pulled apart (the front legs have been tied together). cibulka's legs are released from their fetters. ropes are attached to cibulka's legs. his legs are drawn apart. intestines are stuffed into the sheep's gaping body and ripped out. blood, hot water and slime are poured into the sheep's gaping body and over the intestines.

blast on a whistle.

the cross with cibulka and the sheep resting on him are removed.

sheep 1 is removed from its fastenings and tied by the hind legs to a rope attached to the ceiling (its head hangs 1.5 m above the floor).

the sheep hanging from the ceiling is beaten back and forth by 2 actors using masonry hooks (a short roar from the orchestra each time the sheep is hit).

the bloody wet sheep is torn from its fastenings.

cibulka is brought in, naked and eyes bound. he is tied to the cross lying on the floor.

the cross with cibulka tied to it is raised up. blood is poured into cibulka's mouth. he disgorges it. the cross bearing cibulka is turned in several directions.

the cross with cibulka tied to it is lowered to the floor. sheep 1 is placed on his body. 2 actors hold its hind legs parallel to cibulka's upper arms, which are tied to the cross-beam. the sheep is opened up wide. intestines are stuffed into it and ripped out. blood, hot water and slime are poured into the sheep's gaping body and over the tumbling intestines.

flesh and intestines are thrown at the sheep and at cibulka.

blast on a whistle.

the cross with cibulka tied to it and the sheep are removed.

all the flesh and intestines are dragged into the centre and thrown about. the actors all tussle with one another in the pile of flesh and intestines. the orchestra, which is creating an ecstatic din, forms a circle about the tussling actors.

*In 1969, Nitsch began writing a number of scores for large-scale action plays, the first published being *Harmating*, a Festival, which was followed in 1974 by the fall of Jerusalem, and more recently by *CUMA*. These works, which are not conceived for actual performance, frequently include poetic, associative passages that do not directly "describe" the actual course of the events. The following excerpt constitutes pages 130-131 of the English edition of the fall of Jerusalem as published by Atlas Press⁹⁵; the action takes place in an underground city.*

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (Excerpt)

the participants are led into room 19 (slaughterhouse) hanging as if crucified head down on the walls of the slaughterhouse are at least 12-20 slaughtered flayed oxen lying beneath them the majority of the carcasses are broad beds covered in white linens sheets some of the beds have white duvets and white pillows in front of the rear wall is a 20 strong noise orchestra and a boys choir of 40 grouped in the centre of the slaughterhouse are a large number of broad beds covered in white sheets arranged so as to form one enormous bed the bed arrangement is also covered with white duvets and pillows great quantities of raw flesh and entrails are brought into the slaughterhouse and cast onto the concrete floor in front of the bed assembly in the centre of the room performers begin to trample the raw flesh and entrails and pour and squirt bright red whipped frothy blood hot water hot blood serum and egg yolks onto the intestines the raw flesh the concrete floor the walls and each other the performers direct water from hoses onto the blood covered intestines and the raw bloody flesh simultaneously the oxen hanging from the walls are hacked open and partly disembowelled by butchers bright red whipped frothy blood hot water and lukewarm blood serum are poured from buckets into the hacked open bodies of the oxen and onto the entrails that have tumbled to the ground the participants immerse the intestines in blood egg yolk hot blood serum and hot water hurl them at the walls and floor stamp on them push them around with their feet kick them at one another they hurl the intestines at each other the oxen and the group of beds at the centre of the slaughterhouse likewise they immerse pieces of raw flesh in blood egg yolk hot blood serum and hot water and hurl them at the walls and floor blood is poured into the bodies of the split open oxen cotton wool and tear roses that have been immersed in hot water are stuffed into the carcasses and torn out again blood and purple aniline dyes are poured over the fallen roses the participants tear pieces of raw flesh from the hacked open animals with their bare hands and grope around inside the body warm tepid entrails some of the performers climb into the hacked open bodies of the carcasses lying on the ground and trample about inside large quantities of intestines entrails and pieces of raw flesh are dragged onto the group of beds at the centre of the slaughterhouse and blood egg yolk hot blood serum and hot water is poured over them while people trample them ecstatically the membranes of the intestines burst in numerous places under the force of the stamping and the issuing excrement mingles with the blood and egg yolk blood and egg yolk spur onto the white bed linens some of the participants roll about on the blood stained beds on the bloodied duvets and pillows and on the moist bloody intestines lying on top meanwhile numerous slaughtered flayed oxen are dragged onto the group of beds whilst being constantly drenched with blood and hot water their bodies have already been split open the carcasses are disembowelled the body warm intestines and the remaining entrails are torn out with bare hands tearoses smelling of fether that have been immersed in the tearoses that have been immersed in hot water tea roses dusted with rosescented talcumpowder cotton wool dusted with rosescented talcumpowder and moist bloody intestines are stuffed into the open bodies of the oxen while the cotton wool and tearoses are torn out again both they and the split open bodies of the oxen are drenched with bright red whipped frothy blood still warm from the slaughter hot blood serum hot greasy washing up water egg yolk sugared urine and hot water the spectators and performers stamp on the carcasses one of the oxen is dragged to the end wall and attached to it as if crucified head down the previous actions are repeated with the hanging ox EVERYTHING develops into a general orgy EVERYONE pours and splashes blood over themselves ALLOF THE PARTICIPANTS hurl moist intestines and raw flesh at each other the blood and egg yolk stained performers and participants roll screaming with the carcasses and intestines on the floor and beds the animals are torn to shred the climax of the orgiastics a dead naked boy with a wreath of fresh tearoses round his brow is carried into the slaughterhouse and nailed as if crucified to a free space on the wall bloody circular wound discut just to the right of his navel with a scalpel his intestines are pulled out through the hole formed by the wound and placed on a white sheet at his feet bright aniline dye trickles out of his mouth and the wound for the entire duration of the action the boys choirs scream ecstatically and the noise orchestra produces an ecstatic cacophony the screaming from both groups increases until the climax of the action during the course of the action all of the participants begin to scream ecstatically to clap their hands and trample the ground under foot the entire duration of the action hitlers speeches church bells and brass music (*schuhplattler*) issue from the most deafening loudspeakers

from corridor 20 narrow flights of stairs lead out into the open. a corpus christi procession is moving through the fields close to a village.

the FALCON hovers directly above the procession

white LIGHT reflected by soft white

flowermounds

flowerlight

floweraltars (damp)

resplendent altars adorned with
strong-scented white flowers

blue (vanilla sweet) heady hot
incense clouds cloak the
poisonous BALDACHIN embroidered
with (lemon-yellow) flowers,
beneath which the bejewelled and
lasciviously made-up priest holds
the gold-glistening glittering
monstrance with the FLESH OF
CHRIST
on high

hunting passion claws at
the HEART OF JESUS

the priest's naked legs are immersed
(to the ankles) softly in wine-wetted
feverish sweet incense-wilted petals
of TEA-ROSES (damp)

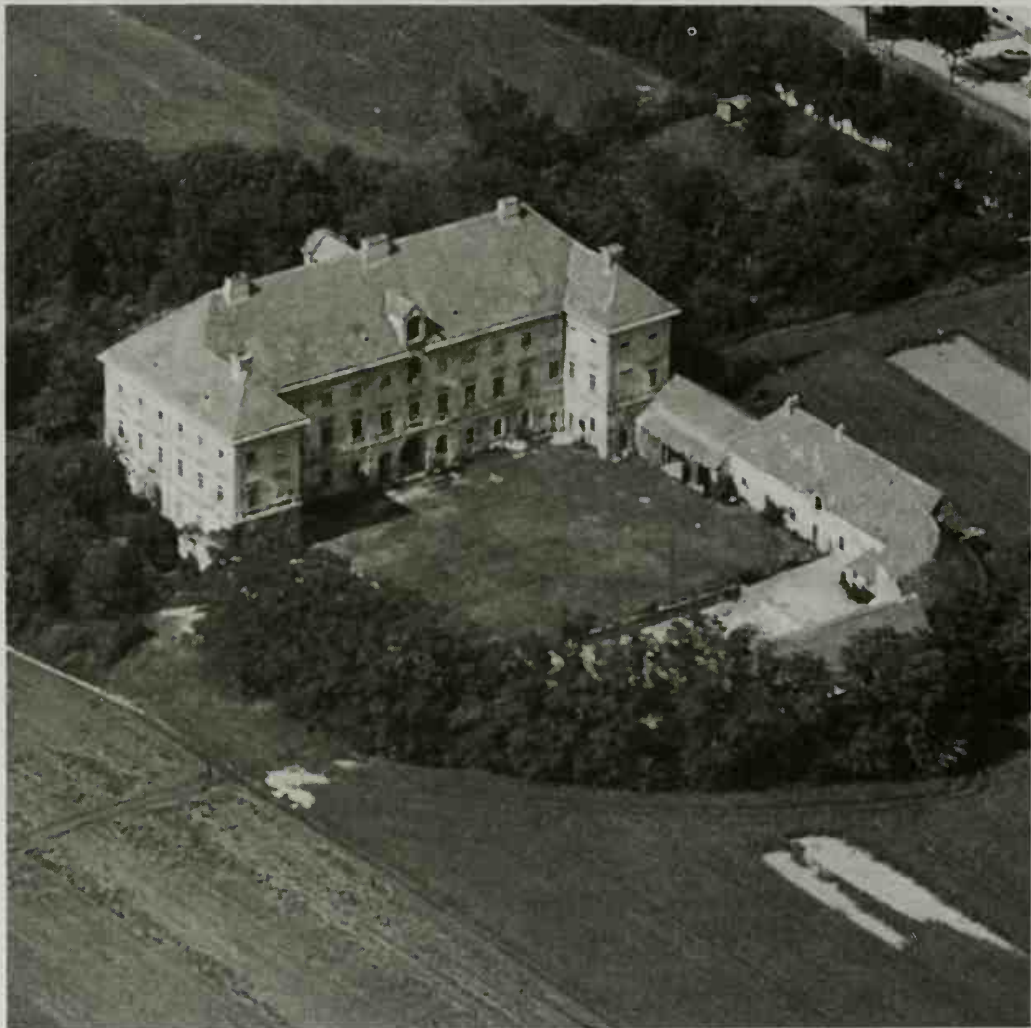
carnation light

SOUTHERN LIGHT

NORTH

smell of

vanilla sweet heady hot
incense clouds
wine
petals wilted from incense
from tea-roses



In 1971, Nitsch's wife Beate managed to acquire Prinzendorf Castle in Lower Austria. Although Nitsch still stages actions elsewhere, Prinzendorf is now the permanent home of his theatre. The first action to be staged there was at Whitsun 1973, when the Society for the Promotion of the O.M. Theatre was founded. In August 1998 it saw the first full performance of Nitsch's life-work, his 6-day play. The first "Declarations" date back to 1959; others appeared in the Blood Organ Manifesto, and with time they have become a unique genre within Nitsch's written work, often covering dozens of pages. The version here dates from 1978.

DECLARATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE O.M. THEATRE PROJECT⁹⁶

1. prinzenndorf castle is the orgies mysteries theatre.
2. the o.m. theatre is situated in the midst of the beautiful landscape of the *weinviertel*, where it is surrounded by vineyards, corn fields and forest gorges, and veined by narrow lanes bordered with vintner's cellars.
3. in the none-too-distant future, humanity's greatest and most intense festival, the 6-day play, will be held in the castle grounds, in the castle itself, and in its environs, and will be repeated each year.
4. creation (all that exists and transpires) strives to gain self-awareness through all that is alive. the course of the universe, the totality of all things, creates organs for self-awareness through all that is alive, through every living being.
5. set in the countryside of the *weinviertel*, the o.m. theatre will become a place of living knowledge of our dynamic, immortal reality. our true potential for experience and happiness will be lived out.
6. the glorious heart of the festival is the joyful awareness that creation gains of itself through the celebrating people.
7. our intensity accelerates the process of creation (universal transformation) and advances it towards its ultimate fulfilment in eternity.
8. the festival of the o.m. theatre is an invitation to enjoy intense, ecstatically exhilarating experience.
9. in the enthused intoxication of being we identify with the entire cosmos, with the entirety of all that exists. we represent causally the endless, simultaneously creative and destructive stream of universal transformation that ceaselessly produces, dissolves and reforms worlds within the lineaments of eternity.
10. the fact that we exist here and now is celebrated.
11. the fact that we exist, live and die has its ramified causes, determining factors and promises in the cosmic process, in the trajectories of the stars, in the being of the galaxies.
12. the festival participants walk through the countryside of prinzenndorf. processions and groups of enthusiastic people walk through the vineyards and fields.
13. it is beautiful to behold a gentle undulation, a hill covered in vineyards. the curve that takes the vines up to the crest of the hills makes us dizzy, makes us reel. we can scarcely bear the joy this curve produces in us.
14. processions make their way down the lanes to the wine cellars. blissfully simple celebrations are held in the pleasant coolness of the cellars. simple food is taken with wine.
15. the paths through the corn fields are beautiful.
16. the paths through the vineyards are beautiful.
17. the paths through the orchards are beautiful.
18. most beautiful of all are the paths to the valley on hot evenings or on a hot summer night.
19. the paths to the valley are also beautiful when walked along of a summer morning, before it grows hot.
20. beholding the stars and their movements is sacred to us, it fills us with rapture and intoxication.
21. i believe that the universe is my true body.
22. prinzenndorf is most beautiful in june, when everything is resplendent with luxuriant blooms and lush foliage.

23. the highest wine cellars in prinzenndorf are on mt. steinberg. the cellars there have no electric lights. a candle must be lit in order to descend the cellar stairs.
24. it is best to accompany a tart wine with fatty food and plenty of bread. the wine digests the fatty meat, the fatty meat burns up the wine.
25. the wine cellars are cool in summer, the wine has the coolness of the cellars.
26. in winter the wine cellars are warm.
27. wine barrels are made of wood that breathes.
28. wine siphons are made of glass.
29. the wine of the o.m. theatre is unadulterated, it is simply fermented grape must, with no additives.
30. fermentation is a pure, simple process, comparable with a second phase of growth, and should not be disturbed in any way.
31. apart from the orgiastic intoxication and excesses, getting drunk on wine is also a beautiful discipline that can be learned. the intoxication is tamed, mastered, its extent can be determined.
32. it is beautiful to leave an inn at closing-time and have a long way home before you through fields and vineyards. the singing of happy drunks rings through the star-flung night. the intoxication has been spent by the time you reach home. tired, the late home-comer retires to bed.
33. i have often renounced the day's rational activities and gone to the inebriate darkness of a wine cellar. then, sent away by complete intoxication, i entered the dazzling and, for me, incomprehensible sunlight. but also i have often ended up forgetting the time of day in the cellar. i would leave to urinate and stand there in amazement — cast into yet deeper drunkenness — beneath the sparkling canopy of stars.
34. tables and benches have been set up in the vineyards, where merry people sit and eat and drink new wine. the drinkers' mood is coloured by a cheerful, gentle drunkenness; light cheery music plays in the background. it is beautiful to drink at dusk. everyone joins in the drinking songs when the first stars appear. the drinking continues deep into the starlit night. their intoxication inspires numerous diligent, dedicated drinkers to stay all night until, completely drunk, they witness the sunrise in a state of total inebriation.
35. a communal meal is essential for bringing us together and as an act of total communion. we want to know one another, be in one another, be in the other, be in all things. your bodies are my body. you constitute my external world, just as i constitute your external world. we want to assimilate the external world. sitting in a group with our friends, we assimilate the flesh of our brothers who have been slaughtered for us, the flesh of the plants and animals, and drink the blood of fruits, the fermented juice of the vine, so that everything transforms within us, passes through us and over and beyond us. the blissful state of our drunkenness of being is intended to transform both us and the world. being together amounts to a joyful intoxication and a realisation of our existence.
36. the god dionysos is a living principle that is by no means extinct. it determines and enthuses the course of being alive.
37. the self-evident smells of nature, of plants, the air, food and drink are taken in with a keen sensitivity. in connection with these, we perceive artificially created odours, such as incense, perfume and aromatic essences.
38. life is experienced through all five senses at once.
39. the o.m. theatre is a festival of all the senses and simultaneously a festival of the combination of sensory impressions.
40. the o.m. theatre play is determined by synaesthetic reference systems.
41. my main work is devising the score for the 6-day play. smells, tastes, tactile sensations, sounds, colours and light are determined with the utmost precision, as is the course of the events.
42. apart from my main work, i wish to write the score of a play that will be carried out in prinzenndorf throughout all four seasons.

43. a great variety of things may be witnessed in a year at prinzenndorf.
44. in early spring we are delighted by the mildness of the air, the germinating plants and the eloquent song of the birds, and the mild march nights make us conscious of the equinox.
45. in springtime, bushes, trees and vines turn green after blossoming and spurting pollen amid clouds of bees. the hills are covered in the green, fermenting, breathing, dewy luxuriance of the foliage. only now is the new wine bottled, after having spent a long while maturing in barrels. the nightingales warble in the leafy cathedral formed by the avenue of chestnuts (there really are nightingales in the deciduous trees at prinzenndorf). christians attend the may devotions and pray to the mother of the world before the altar bedecked with fresh, fragrant white lilacs. the meadows assume a moist, succulent green.
46. in summer, the flowers are at their most luxuriant. above all the full, white, heavy-scented roses. the fresh blossoms are taken to the church altars so that these and the sanctuaries can be decorated in the most sumptuous and voluptuous manner. altars are erected outdoors. corpus christi processions move through the fields. the body of the lord is carried between the meadows in a monstrance. the first country fairs are held in the villages.
47. humanity's greatest celebration, the great universal festival, the fulfilment and overcoming of history, the 6-day play of the o.m. theatre, is held each year at this time in prinzenndorf. the annunciation and true experiencing of our universe, the incarnation of the universe, takes place. the universe is recognised as our true body. the moment, grasped through the festival, the experienced HERE AND NOW, tears us from our insipid state of vegetation and brings the dimension of eternity into our lives, making our existence manifest. the clearly grasped moment (intoxication of being) precipitates an identification with the essence of creation — a moving, transforming, ceaseless occurring throughout the infinity of eternity. as the joyful celebration of growth reaches its climax, the people, friends and brothers, stream to their festival, to the festival of living, to the festival of the fundamental affirmation of our condition, our existence. the festival leads us to an intoxicated affirmation of being.
48. in late summer, the corn has ripened and grown very tall. everywhere the harvesting is under way. a lot of fruit has already been harvested. the days and nights are very hot. the stars are clearer during the august nights. people sit outside the wine cellars during the hot evenings, or seek refreshment in the cool interiors. the dusk on august evenings is the loveliest time for walks. all around, between the vineyards and the footpaths, are people who are elated by the warm dusk. many outings end with a visit to a wine cellar; others come and join those seated outside and drink with them.
49. in autumn, the wine grapes and the rest of the fruit are harvested. the sugar in the grapes and fruit has reached the peak of its sweetness. these are the last warm, beautiful, sunny days. the 21st of september brings the second equinox. apples and grapes are eaten. it is the sacred time of the wine harvest, which inspires all with enthusiasm. the vineyards are alive and overflowing with grape-pickers. carts groaning with grapes are pulled to the wine cellars by tractors. the grapes are pressed, becoming a sweet slime interspersed with pips. the skins of the trampled grapes burst, the flesh spills out, sweet juice spurts forth. it is nice to dip a glass into the unfermented mash and savour the mixture of sickly-sweet grape juice, squashed grape flesh and pips. later, one can drink the pressed grape juice, the must ready for fermentation.
50. shortly after the wine harvest the wine cellars are full of dangerous fermentation gases.
51. the shoot has a sad beauty. the hunters and dogs have a very similar murderous intent. but only the hunters' thirst to kill is quenched in the wine cellar. for many a hunter the shoot ends with joy at the bloody trophies and a deep intoxication.
52. it is sad when hares, pheasants and partridges are mangled by shot.
53. it is sad when a bullet tears open the heart of a doe, a stag or a boar.
54. but it is lovely to eat game and drink red wine with it.
55. around all saints' day, when the rains and fog have set in, all the unsurfaced roads are

- covered in mud and puddles, while in the cellars, tangy, foaming, still-fermenting, cloudy wine can be tasted.
56. in late autumn, after the land has already suffered several frosts, the first new wine can be drunk.
 57. in winter, when the frosty air and the cold winds have turned the earth as hard as stone, it is nice to drink invigorating and intoxicating wine in warm wine cellars.
 58. animals are fed, bred, milked, sold and slaughtered.
 59. animals are slaughtered in every season (for our nutrition) on farms and in abattoirs.
 60. hares and poultry are slaughtered and gutted.
 61. sheep are slaughtered, flayed and disembowelled.
 62. goats are slaughtered, flayed and disembowelled.
 63. pigs are slaughtered and disembowelled.
 64. cows are slaughtered, flayed and disembowelled.
 65. the programme of the o.m. theatre does not preach a sentimental return to nature. nor does it eschew technology. technology is admirable when it makes sense. only the side that suits our real nature will be featured. our connections with the whole, which transcend our petty decisions, are made clear, we are coloured by a somewhat purist approach to the essential.
 66. list of simple activities: growing fruit, grafting fruit and vines, setting seeds in the fertile darkness. pruning vines, harvesting fruit, harvesting grapes, pressing grapes, supervising the fermentation of the wine, milking cows, milking goats, assisting in the birth and breeding of animals, slaughtering, flaying and disembowelling animals, watering flowers, planting, spreading manure.
 67. seen in another way, growth and decay is simply a stream of occurrences, of changes and transformations, that will never run dry. this stream transforms itself in its never-endingness in the expanse of infinity and eternity; inside and outside cease to exist. everything permeates everything. everything transforms itself of its own accord, from itself to the best of its potentialities.
 68. the action of the stars, the genesis and decay of the planets, drives our celebratory intoxication to the extreme, to the orgiastic; downfall, the extinction of billions of galaxies and their re-blossoming again, transforms the orgy of the liveliest rapture into sado-masochistic destruction. genesis and decay are one.
 69. the process of creation is comparable to an explosion or an agonising, perpetual birth.
 70. the world as we live and know it is tragic. it is a tragic over-abundance of occurrences replete with death and life.
 71. tragedy is failure, is ruination, being taken back. tragedy is the perpetual transformation into death.
 72. intense living is fulfilment of the tragic, full with the closeness of death, and simultaneously the glorious triumph over death.
 73. ecstasy, voluptuous lust, is marriage with immortality.
 74. the catastrophe of drama, the tragic event, the revelation of the tragic, leads to marriage with immortality.
 75. the expressive beginning of creation is experienced through the catastrophe of the drama. the origins of all suffering, of all birth, of the painful beginning, are evoked. the eternal beginning, the eternal streaming of the simultaneously self-destroying and respawning creation is experienced.
 76. the result is the opposite of the buddhist teaching of redemption. the painful beginning of all life and the agony of life is affirmed so that jubilation and resurrection may be experienced.
 77. the essence of the tragic is transformation, change. the unbridled thirst for being encounters obstructions and resistance and produces suffering.
 78. resurrection counters tragedy. resurrection overcomes tragedy.
 79. the 6-day play turns this drama into a festival.
 80. resurrection is tragedy under reversed conditions.

81. the festival of the o.m. theatre is a resurrection play.

82. the RAPTURES of excess, of excessive, orgiastic perception, propel us into a state in which

pain and extreme pleasure are intimately fused together. simultaneously, the states of death and of life seem to be revealed within us. no difference is seen between life and death. life and death only appear in everyday life as separate states as a result of the way man perceives. the excesses of experience based on the mysticism of being, the experience of basic excess, comes close to the truth of eternal being. birth, procreation, death, death on the cross and resurrection are experienced all at the same time. we have within us the anxiety and lust of the murderer, and the mortal fear of the victim. we are the killer and the killed. the blissful raging pain engendered by the intense experience of existence leads us to identify with the transformative powers of existence, which simultaneously effect constant growth and destruction and re-growth. we fall into an abyss of darkness and into an abyss of light. at the same time we suffer universes of death and of cruelty, and race through universes of the immeasurable bright radiant dazzling white blissful sensations of light. raw, damp, bloody flesh torn apart during the dionysian excess contrasts with the taste of fruit on the morning of the resurrection. the double abyss of light and darkness is BEING.

83. the fundamental excess = the rending of the lamb in the play. the trajectories of the stars course through the blood and sweet nerves of the lamb. the living, prophetic stream of atoms spells out the construction, the structure, the immeasurable vault of the UNIVERSE (vaulted arches, solar eclipses, lightless space, orbit, stellar wine, galactic wine, galactic cellar) burning dive-bomber pilot (in his cockpit), dying, injured gods. the experience of the fundamental excess knows the creative rage, the destruction and carnal lust of a sacred mixture of the powers of destruction and construction of a system of worlds in the lust of the basic excess annihilation explosion big bang, primordial creative urge bridehood of destruction and construction in the rent sacrificed (crucified) body of the lamb (easter feast) body philosophy physiognomy of the organs ANIMAL BODY philosophy.
84. the o.m. theatre is not a theatre of representation, it has no stage, no actors, no comedians. the participants themselves are the heroes of the drama, their ability to experience, the development of their potential to experience, is the content of the play and corresponds to the events, which is to say the storyline.
85. life itself is staged by the o.m. theatre.
86. the o.m. theatre has no sets, but instead the most vital space for experience: the countryside of prinzen Dorf.
87. the architecture of the o.m. theatre is provided by the castle grounds, its buildings and the surrounding stables. i wish nevertheless to dig theatre spaces under the earth (the subterranean realm), to create an underground, uterine architecture.
88. the new, non-additive form of the *gesamtkunstwerk*, which has real occurrences as its plot or course of events, uses the natural sounds of the events as an acoustic, musical medium. the ecstasy of the dionysian excess needs these sounds, wants noise. the sado-masochistic rending of flayed animal carcasses, raw flesh and moist entrails is spurred on by the ecstatic noise. the noise music grows into one great roar. the warmth of lukewarm intestines, the damp warmth of bloody intestines. the body warmth of blood from freshly slaughtered animals, spattered blood, a bite into raw flesh bellows into the music. the screaming rage of women giving birth, the anxiety of the newly-born, mingles with the sexual heat of slimy-soft uterus-warm electric storms and bright thunder from foreign galaxies. the roar of the stars' orbits is revealed. the boom of the birth of the universe. the rage of cataracts, the hunger for life that flows through us, has reached its peak. a thundering maelstrom pulses through the universe. the endless course of events becomes the harmony of this sexual heat transformed into noise.
89. in 1975, it was possible to stage one day of the 6-day play with the help of the society for the promotion of the o.m. theatre, which was founded in 1972. the action lasted 24 hours, from sunrise to sunrise.
90. i ask all of my friends to help me to realise the o.m. theatre project. joining the society for the promotion of the o.m. theatre will bring this enterprise closer to its realisation.
91. i owe the acquisition of prinzen Dorf castle to my late wife, beate nitsch. her unprecedented efforts oblige me, beyond any wish of my own, to complete and realise my work.

Nitsch's work was always directed towards the realisation of his 6-day play. He was finally able to stage the whole work, his 100th action, at Prinzendorf in August 1998. The invitation contained a "non-binding" résumé of the action, including this description of the final day of celebration after the five previous days of alternating frenzy and excess, quiet and meditation.

SIXTH DAY OF THE 6-DAY PLAY: Saturday, 8 August 1998⁹⁷

5.00 a.m. sunrise music

5.39 a.m. sunrise

the day of resurrection

public festival

the joys of the previous evening and the previous night continue, as does the pure festival of the joy of being. all of my friends who now see with fresh eyes hug and kiss one another in laughter. many have kept drinking the whole time, and done so with joy. the glory of the sunrise is in the offing. festive food is served up the whole day long.

brass bands walk around the castle and also into the castle. people stroll through the vineyards in the vicinity of the castle and around prinzenndorf. many of the wine cellars in prinzenndorf are open. the doors of the wine cellars are wide open.

CEREMONIAL PROCESSIONS with loud music pass from one wine cellar to the next.

the castle church bells ring out. sumptuous floral decorations can be seen throughout the castle area.

symphonic crescendo from all of the orchestras until midday.

participants emerge from dark vaulted cellars bearing blazing torches. the flames of the torches are extinguished at the sight of the radiant sunlight.

people are sitting in all of the inns, eating and drinking.

joyfully excited people walk along the paths through the fields, meadows, orchards, woodlands and vineyards.

farmers and friends are sitting at tables in front of the open wine cellars, drinking wine in the mild sun.

the play of the o.m. theatre becomes a PUBLIC FESTIVAL.

12.00 p.m. the noonday church bells

discovering the fleeting moment in the pure holiness of NOW

discovering the condition of BEING, the intoxication of being.

the participants are sitting in every corner of the fields, the orchards and vineyards, happily eating and drinking wine. a cheery restful meditative liveliness swells into the intoxication of being. a happiness fulfils hearts that have been enthralled by the stars and the universe. a deep honey-gold happiness flows rich and intoxicating through our blood.

the identity with a possible whole has been found.

ALL OF THE CHURCH BELLS CHIME.

8.20 p.m. sunset

the sun sets

a warm evening wind sets up and wafts the singing of the drunks and the tavern music over the fields.
an indescribable rejoicing distinguishes the quiet drinker. the encroaching night is calmly awaited. we study the
galaxies, drunk on the universe.

we calmly await the midnight hour.
await the sunrise

5.40 a.m. sunrise

the participants kiss and hug one another.

STATEMENT 1999⁹⁸

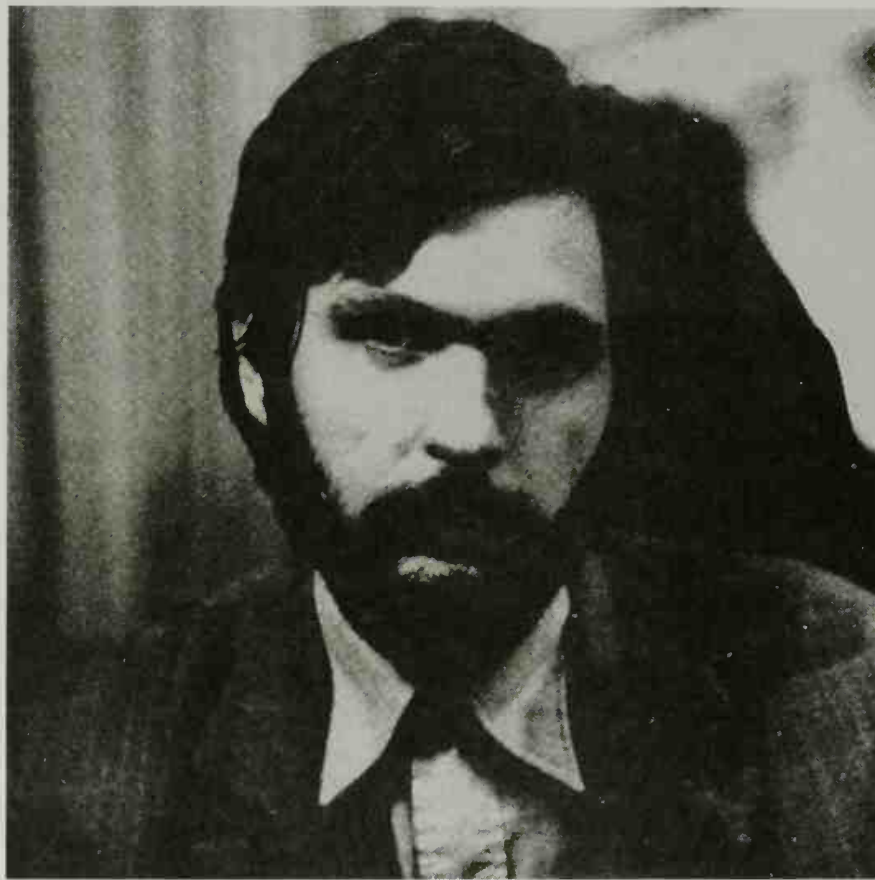
in 1971 a small inheritance enabled my departed wife beate nitsch to buy prinzenhof castle and its grounds. the aim of the acquisition was the realisation of my 6-day play. no architect could have devised, designed and constructed a better setting for the orgies mysteries theatre than the castle and its grounds. from its cellars, subterranean passageways, stables and park, to its lofts and courtyard — everything i required for my theatre was already there. since then i have had my own bayreuth.

all of the actions i have performed from 1960 to the present must be seen as preparations for the 6-day play, which was finally realised in 1998.

despite energetic protests, the first 6-day play was brought to a successful conclusion. it was a triumph for my cause. we had at least 350 participants, including 90 actors, 2 large classical orchestras, a group of percussionists, two brass bands, traditional tavern musicians, a choir and a string quartet. a large team worked in the kitchens and in the administration. the response in the media was quite unparalleled. i doubt that there has ever been an austrian artist who has received so many negative, as well as positive, reviews in the local and international press. this realisation of the 6-day play was the first draft as such. i am ceaselessly at work on an ideal score. there will be further performances in the years to come, which will bring the play ever closer to its perfect realisation.

SCHWARZKOGLER





The death of Rudolf Schwarzkogler in 1969 might lead one to expect a clearly delineated and easily surveyable body of work. However, Schwarzkogler destroyed many of his writings in his continual striving for perfection, and after the six actions he staged between 1965 and 1966, his production was largely restricted to increasingly conceptual, often haiku-like texts, which merge his concerns in a highly aestheticised manner.

This section draws extensively on the excellent book on Schwarzkogler, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Leben und Werk (Ritter Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1992). In the main, the contents here follow the structure of this standard work, but for convenience a selection of Schwarzkogler's later writings has been collected with earlier texts to form thematic groups. It should be noted that while Schwarzkogler did not publish his writings, many of them were typed up in what appears to be a finalised form (in the days before desktop publishing, the typed page had the quality of a printed page), although a number subsequently underwent further revision by hand.

Brus, Muehl and Nitsch all wrote essays on Schwarzkogler after his death. The following by Nitsch dates from 1970, scarcely a year after his death, and appeared in Weibel and Export's bildkompandium.⁹⁹

RUDOLF SCHWARZKOGLER Hermann Nitsch

schwarzkogler put an end to his life on 20 june 1969¹⁰⁰. it is important to write about him and his approach. when i got to know schwarzkogler around 1960 he had already worked his way through large areas of older and contemporary poetry, music and philosophy, and was already one of the most knowledgeable and informed people i knew. i could talk with him just as easily about the music of tristan, east-asian mysticism, or schopenhauer's philosophy as about yves klein or john cage. hans henny jahnn was a decisive influence on him at that time. jahnn's aesthetic and self-concept corresponded closely to his own and appealed strongly to his nature. schwarzkogler took in a great deal; he had a concrete relationship with the various manifestations of his environment, to the point of selecting his food and wines according to aesthetic criteria. his aesthetic outlook on his environment consisted of choosing and selecting from what was present in order to balance the elements and interrelate them. he observed the contemporary art scene in vienna with wary but attentive interest. he accepted very little of it. he held arnulf rainer in enormous esteem, right until the end. it was almost an *idée fixe* of his to hold a banquet together with us younger artists in honour of rainer. from our very first meetings it became clear that schwarzkogler approached the world with very different premises from my own.

when i think of the more expressive, dionysian manifestations of brus, muehl and myself, he adopted

a different position from the outset. i recall that on one occasion we met because schwarzkogler wanted me to explain what i had meant in a passage in the blood organ manifesto: "the concept of man is heightened towards the apollonian, the release from animal instincts is achieved." the apollonian principle was his guideline. he often said this to me during the early sixties. images of a cold bluish-emerald light combined with a cruel, dazzling metallic brightness were the expression of his apollonian goals, and characterised the symbol of the god apollo, which for him still retained its validity. for him the god of light was the principle of a strict lucid mastery of life and the cheerful subduing of all inner urges. the process of life was to become art, become form, and to take place within the orbit of form. life, nature was to be raised to the level of art as the highest expression of nature. schwarzkogler often said that he wanted to change nature and intervene in creation, he wanted to dye the vegetation blue, above all the trees. he was drawn to the colour blue, it was his favourite colour. he saw in it the refinement and transformation of basic urges, personified by the apollonian way of life. red transformed itself into blue. he lived this view of life, especially between his 19th and 22nd years. at that time it was by no means decided whether he would set out on a creative path, but he perceived himself in a world fashioned into an artwork. he lived as an aesthete. the phenomena and aspects of life that attracted him were arranged by him

aesthetically. this was revealed in his outward appearance at that time, his body and behaviour being especially beautiful during those years. it was precisely these pre-conditions that made him very hesitant to begin his production. this began with paintings which, as i now see, were clearly the preparations for his later work. in 1963 or early 1964 schwarzkogler became acquainted with muehl and brus. he was interested at that time in muehl's work, and in 1964 he participated in muehl's "balloon concert". early in 1965 schwarzkogler staged his first action, "wedding", which was followed, up until 1968, by a further six.¹⁰¹ (the actions are all documented by photographs.) he presented a feeling of tragedy, and it was in keeping with schwarzkogler's extremely self-critical and cautious nature that he only ever staged his actions before us, a small circle of "initiates", and avoided the press and any public resonance. apart from our own acclaim for his work, he never enjoyed any public success, which doubtless contributed to his despondency. 1964-66 was a fruitful period for brus, muehl and myself. important works were created, and schwarzkogler spent much time with us, often for evenings on end. the conversation always turned to theoretical issues and the practical alternatives for their realisation. looking back, there is no mistaking schwarzkogler's direct and indirect influence. many of his theoretical and practical ideas had an effect on us. the fact that his work made an important, autonomous contribution to the actions in vienna is incontrovertible. schwarzkogler was often critical of our achievements, and countered with his own works, which were always beautiful and always determined by form. every expressive manifestation of his was coloured by a beauty that extended far into sadism. the cruelty of his actions was beautiful. he was the aesthete among us. in this respect he was a true viennese. his works had that febrile erotic sweetness that stems from the viennese tradition. an extreme will to express is heightened to erotic cruelty, but constantly mastered aesthetically (mixed with the enjoyments of form). death, which is often referred to in viennese art, the fear of death and the numbing longing for death, produced, in combination with the beauty of the form, the final sweetness and bitterness of the

mannsthal, traktl, etc. the ultimate beauty of many artistic productions of that time was only manifested in cruelty (*kindertotenlieder*, *erwartung*, *wozzek*). schwarzkogler felt a strong kinship with these artists, who were typical of the situation in vienna, and they provided him with much inspiration. apart from klimt and the atonal vienna school, he felt especially drawn to the music of schubert, loving as he did the way schubert dissolved the fact of death in form, transforming it into an intoxicating, narcotic beverage.

schwarzkogler's thoughts were preoccupied by schubert's relationship to illness and beauty, which was determined by the composer's syphilis. he also enjoyed the songs of the wine taverns, which celebrate intoxication and death. the happiness of being drunk on wine is linked with the happiness of singing. we often said that the proper aesthetic appreciation of these tavern songs was yet to come. schwarzkogler's actions tended to be more static than dramatic. whilst the actions of the others in vienna all had a clear dramatic sequence that functioned over time, he created a different kind of action. he arranged montages out of reality, montages consisting of different realities. by means of the most sensitive feeling for form he brought elements of reality into new relationships with one another, for example, the naked body of a young man with the dampness of a fish, with antiseptic gauze bandages, with metal and wire and the reflections of light on a black mirror. the model's genitals were wrapped in bandages, a 20-year-old man's lips were painted. his actions often made great use of cosmetics; painting the face of a youth tended strongly towards the perversions of transvestism. additionally, the sterile atmosphere of a hospital, smelling of ether and chloroform and with its hints of sado-masochistic erotic aggression tending towards castration, played a large part in his works. the topic of castration was touched on several times.

he changed reality into a "picture", into art in a way that must be viewed as a second reality, and had the new arrangement captured photographically. in this way the old notion of easel painting was dissolved in the sphere of reality and turned into a sensitive play with the objects present, with the "aura" and the sensual and associative values conveyed by objects and occurrences. schwarzkogler never wanted to

create depictions, he wanted to communicate arranged occurrences.

the existing photographic documentation formed only a part of schwarzkogler's ambitions. many of his texts for unperformed actions indicate the extent and possibilities he envisaged for his work. the notion of synaesthesia was one of the central points of his approach. schwarzkogler could connect

the hues of a green roof-gutter with a cock-crow. the visual communication of a specific colour was to be associated with a particular sound. fine nuances in taste and smell, the experienced temperature were all creative means that he related to one another. his idea of a *gesamtkunstwerk* had a seamless quality about it, in much the same way that the actual environment was to be taken in quite self-evidently as the sum of sensory impressions. his prime concern was with the self-evident nature of a new height-

ened apollonian refined sensuality, with the grasping of nature through multiple, simultaneous feeling.

in the final analysis, schwarzkogler's work was determined by an all-embracing attempt at gaining a religious-philosophical relationship to the world and to being. his aim was to penetrate the fundamental possibilities of experience. for him the mystic's experience was an insight into the experience of being and a reality of true enjoyment. he opposed all existing political systems, which base their right to existence on threadbare, hypocritical concepts and prevent you from forging your way towards fundamental, intensive, strongly-felt experiences of

existence. he rejected the state and felt very close to anarchy. he viewed his art as a means to escape a schema that only allows the person to experience the minimal amount of life intensity. his aim was to reach the point where being is discovered, using aesthetic ritual and intense sensory registration (tasting, smelling, touching, looking, listening). "... art as a life ritual...", to which schwarzkogler added:

**PANORAMA MANIFESTO I:
THE TOTAL ACT
Rudolf Schwarzkogler**

the construction of the picture is replaced by the construction of the pre-conditions for the act of painting as the determinant of the action field (of the space around the actor — the real objects present in his surroundings). the actual act of painting is freed from the compulsion of making/having relics (as) its goal by performing it in front of the reproducing apparatus which attends to the data. the temporality of the act of painting becomes one with its performance; this moves and alters the objects — the elements of the PANORAMA — in space (confrontation, montage, automatic contacts). it is possible to expand the act of painting into a total act that can be experienced by all the senses. being an entity in space and time, it reveals its form by means of the plastic image achieved in multiple recording using various apparatuses.

"the everyday artist searches, however, for his personal style, he wants to achieve something without asking what. he serves the ruling institutions in so far as his products confirm the concepts on which such institutions are founded. for this he also receives rewards, decorations, pensions, etc. but the practice of art is primarily justified by artistic enjoyment, not slavery to style ... art as the training of experience and the destruction of all established conceptions about life.

painting as the art of healing ... art is a withdrawal treatment ... a sequence of elementary chains of experiences."

during his last one-and-a-half months, schwarzkogler's mind turned to speculative theories that fascinated me when he spoke of them. he wanted to extend his work in the direction of influencing the spectators (the participants at his actions) through physiological and medical means. he wanted to achieve this by administering to them certain foods, drugs and medicines.

fasting cures were also

envisaged. a physiological and medical healing process was to be introduced into the aesthetic possibilities of the drama. accordingly, the dramatic process would aim at restoring both physical and mental health. the sickness inside us that prevents us from experiencing intensely would be boiled away, sweated out of our juices.

he talked of sweating the organism back to health, of blood-letting. he intended a process of purification and resurrection, and not without making overt references to the mythical reality of death and resurrection. a comparison with alchemical procedures is obvious. this kind of cathartic process was something new to me, something total. in the months before his death he produced a large number of texts and sketches for actions and quasi-environments, which were also to involve the countryside (parallels can be made to such contemporary art movements as minimal art and land art). these pieces are among the most beautiful by schwarzkogler in terms of their texts and concepts.

they contain allusions to meditative fast cures, ritual ablutions and aesthetic healing procedures. their words have the quality of poetry, precisely because they are not the ciphers and symbols of a faded reality, but demand that their content be experienced in a manner extending beyond words. the word does not reflect past realities, it refers to a new reality that is to be experienced. his is a poetry of real occurrences, an impressionistic view of our actionism that loses itself in reality; everything becomes a beautiful guide to a more sensitive form of experience. the last texts he wrote are a summing-up of his world picture and final balance of what he had experienced.



Schwarzkogler left behind no scores of his performed actions (although a number of the scores given on pp. 206ff. are thematically linked with them). Fortunately, his companion Edith Adam recorded full descriptions of all six of his actions, of which the three that follow may be taken as representative (Actions 2, 3 and 4 constitute a closed group in terms of their themes and realisation).



ACTION 1: WEDDING
 > 6.2.1965¹⁰²

Location: Cibulka's Flat, Kaiserstrasse, Vienna.

Actors: Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Anni Brus, Heinz Cibulka.

Sequence of action:

A white distempered room.

On one wall are two windows set in deep bays.

The wall between them has been painted with blue distemper from the floor to the line connecting the tops of the bays.

A white cloth has been stretched across the right-hand bay. There is an empty space behind.

A crate has been placed by the wall, between the two bays.

The left-hand window has been pasted over with paper.

A narrow, blue-painted plank has been propped against the pasted-over window.

A similar plank has been propped against the wall to the right of the bay covered with white cloth.

A blue sphere has been placed in the free space of the room on a blue-painted cylinder approx. 1.20 m high.





A table covered with a white cloth has been placed before the pasted-over window.

The following items have been placed on the white-covered table:
a black mirror with fish, a knife and a pair of scissors, glasses containing red, blue, yellow and white chemicals

glasses containing blue paint

a yellow bath-sponge

eggs

a chicken

a brain

a plate with some pears

two white-painted flowering

plants with pink blossoms

a hot-plate painted pink

gauze bandages

yellow, red and blue plastic film

sticky tape

a colonic irrigator.

A tape of Gregorian chorales is

switched on.



S. stands at the table, dressed in a black suit and tie.

S. wraps a gauze bandage around a fish and places it on the black mirror.

Blue paint is poured over the table from a glass.

The fish are pricked with the knife and cut open using the scissors. Yellow crystals are poured into them. S. arranges the fish in a row on the black mirror.

Blue paint is poured over the chicken which, together with a tube, is wrapped in white paper.

A pear is sliced open and the knife plunged into its flesh.

A raw egg is pricked with the irrigator and filled with blue paint.

A flower-pot is smashed with a





hammer and the earth struck from the roots.

Two sliced-open fish are filled with blossoms, wrapped in blue and red plastic film respectively and nailed to the wall.

Lying beside the laid table on a small foot-stool is a black wooden board (approx. 90 x 90 cm in size). A fish wrapped in gauze bandages and filled with crystals is placed on the board, together with the chicken wrapped in paper.

Blue paint is poured over them from a glass.

A raw brain is placed on the board. Red and blue crystals are poured over it. An inflammable liquid is poured over the lot and ignited.

The entire board is sprayed with blue paint using a spray gun, then the chicken is lacerated with the knife.

A white cloth has been stretched across the right-hand window bay, with a longish blue-painted plank leaning beside it.

S. snips the white stretched cloth with the scissors, to reveal a woman in a white bridal gown. He squirts paint on to the cloth with the irrigator.

The cut fabric is opened up wide. The veiled head of the bride becomes visible. S. puts a yellow sponge in the bride's mouth.

S. puts a party-blower in the bride's mouth, and she blows into it.

S. pulls the bride's head out and wraps clear sticky tape around her veil at eye-level.

He kneels down before the cloth curtain and tears the opening wide



apart. He pulls and lifts the bride out.

A bucket of white paint is tipped over the bride.

S tears open the bodice of the bride's dress.

To one side of the bride is a blue sphere resting on a tall blue cylinder, on the other side a strip of transparent plastic has been attached to the wall. Small fireworks have been attached to the blue cylinder by means of sticky tape.

S. pours a bucket of blue paint over the bride.

S. lashes out at her with the blue-sprayed chicken.

S. and C. wrap one another's heads in white gauze bandages.

S. pours a bucket of blue paint over C.

The blue cylinder is placed over C.'s head.

The bride is tied firmly to C., who is standing on the crate next to the wall, holding an accordion.

S. lights the fireworks attached to the cylinder.



ACTION 3:
(UNTITLED)
> Summer 1965

Location: Cibulka's Flat, Vienna.
Actor: Heinz Cibulka.

Sequence of action:

A white sheet has been spread out on the floor. On it is a sphere wrapped in white bandages.

C. lies with his head and shoulder touching the white sphere. His forehead has been bandaged. His face and upper body have been covered in white make-up.

A rubber tube leads from C.'s mouth to the white sphere.

Wires and cables come out of his ears and mouth.

C. lies down on the white cloth. His head is covered with a white cloth. Lying on top is a cable.

White sphere on white cloth.

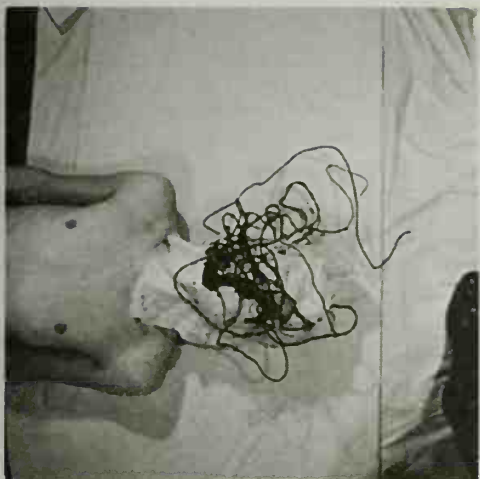
C. sits at the table and leans with his cheek on the sphere. Cables issue from his mouth.

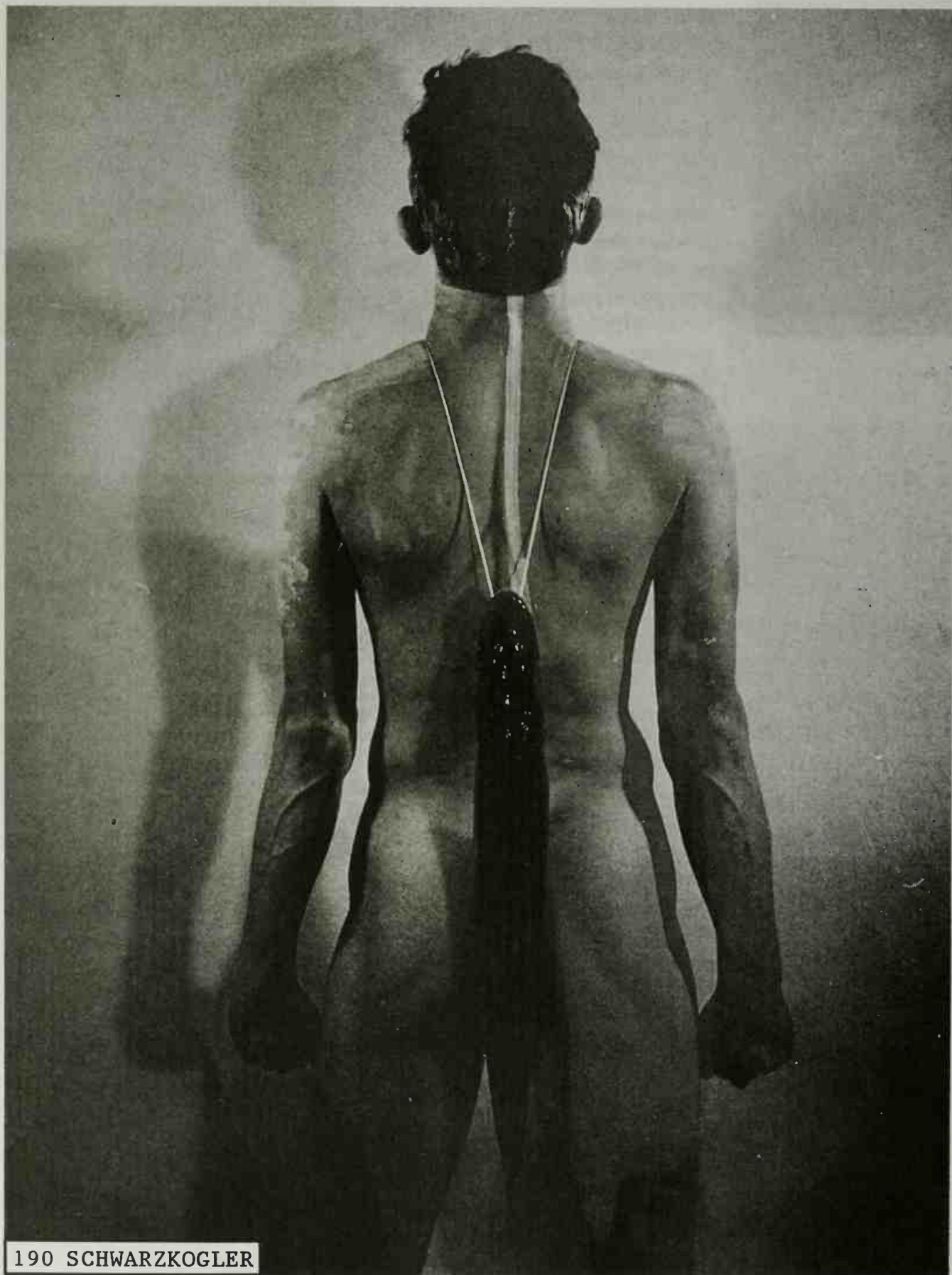
C. lies with his head and shoulder touching a white sphere. His forehead has been bandaged, his left eye covered with a gauze bandage.

A rubber tube leads from C.'s mouth to the white sphere.

C. sits upright at the table. His forehead has been bandaged, his left eye covered with a gauze bandage. His head and body are white, his nipples painted dark. A cable leads from his mouth to a tangle of cables lying on a plate in front of him on the table.

C.'s head lies with its forehead and eye bandages on the white-covered table. A rubber tube leads from his mouth to the large white sphere beside his head.







A medicine bottle with a pipette is placed in front of his head, another placed beside it.

S. removes the wadding slightly from the eye bandage.

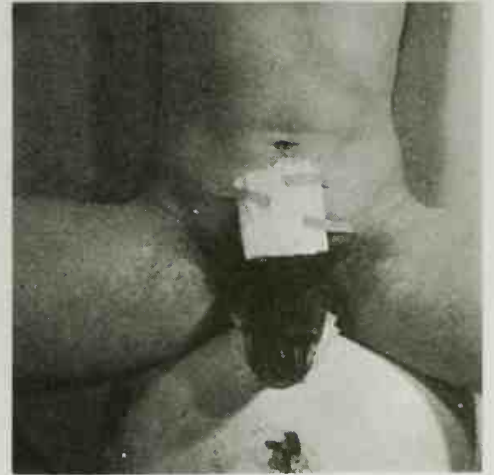
C. stands naked, his legs splayed and his fists clenched, with his face to the white wall. Hanging down his back is a large fish (tench).



C. lies with bound eyes and bandaged penis on a white sheet. His right arm extends at a right angle, his left remains close to his body. White lines have been drawn on his upper body, and on the inner side of one arm and thigh.



C. sits naked on a white sphere with his legs apart. Slipped over his penis is a fish head, its mouth held open by a razor blade. Stuck above his penis is a square sticking-plaster. Beneath the fish head a dark trickle of liquid can be seen on the white sphere.



C. raises his sideways extended arms slowly upwards to the vertical. Additional razor blades are stuck to the white sphere and to C.'s chest (solar plexus).



C. sits with his legs apart and his penis bandaged on the white sphere. A thin trickle of black liquid flows from his penis down the white sphere. A piece of gauze bandage is attached to his stomach above his penis.

C. stands beside the white-covered table. His bandaged penis rests on a sheet of black glass. A black circle has been drawn around his





navel. A wire runs along the length of his left forearm.

A number of razor blades lie on the sheet of black glass.

C. extends both arms vertically upwards.

C. stands upright in a white room, his head and body bandaged. Wires and cables hang from his mouth.

C. lies bandaged, his legs drawn up, propped up on one arm, on a white surface. Wires and cables dangle from his chest.

C. sits, bandaged, in the lotus position. In his lap is a large white sphere, a rubber tube leads from his mouth, across his arm to the white sphere.

C. lies on his side, his legs drawn up, on a white sheet. He is bandaged in white. His head rests on a sheet of black glass.

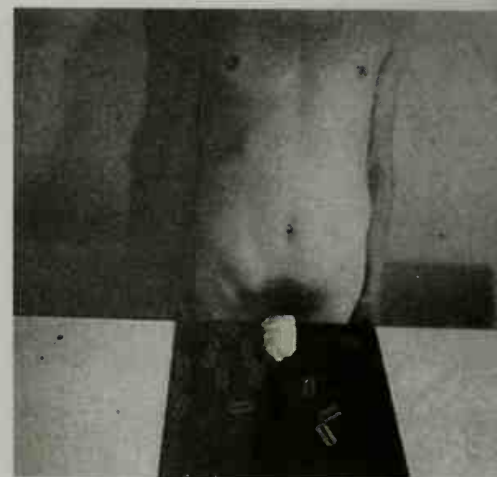
Bandages spill from his mouth. A tangle of wire and a knife lie next to his head on the sheet of black glass.

C. lies bandaged, half propped up, in a white room. Cables and wires spill from his bandaged body. A number of razor blades have been scattered over his face and body.

C. lies bandaged, his legs bent, in a box-like section of the room formed out of white sheets. Wires come out of his bandages, leading to his left hand.

Razor blades lie on and next to his face.

C. lies bandaged, on a white sheet beside a wall. He draws up his legs, lies on one side with his legs bent, his back to the wall.





C. lies bandaged, on his back, on a white surface by the wall. Black stains can be seen on his bandaged penis. A length of stiff white cloth has been draped over his upper body. A bundle of bandages, wires and cables spills from his mouth. Lying beside his head is a dark stone.

C. lies bandaged, on a white sheet by the wall. His head and upper body are wrapped up in plastic film.



ACTION 6
(UNTITLED)
> Spring 1966

*Location: Schwarzkogler's Flat,
Werdertorgasse, Vienna.*
Actor: Rudolf Schwarzkogler.

Sequence of action:

White lit room. S.'s head and body have been wrapped in white gauze bandages. Resting against the wall is a black mirror (sheet of matt black glass). Lying to the side are a large and a small white sphere (bandaged balloon painted white). S. stands beside the wall. He is holding a lighted bulb by its fitting. Resting against the wall is a black mirror.

S. holds the lighted bulb up to his open mouth.

S. binds his head with a cable.

S., squatting, touches a chicken lying on the floor with his black-varnished index finger. Electric cables emerge from its beak.

S. points to his open mouth with his black-varnished index finger.

S. holds a chicken by the wings in one hand, and with the other holds a lighted ultra-violet bulb up to it.

S. holds a chicken in one hand, and with the other rests a lighted bulb on its feathers.

Lying on the floor is a chicken with wires emerging from its beak. S. puts a cable into a bottle standing on the floor.

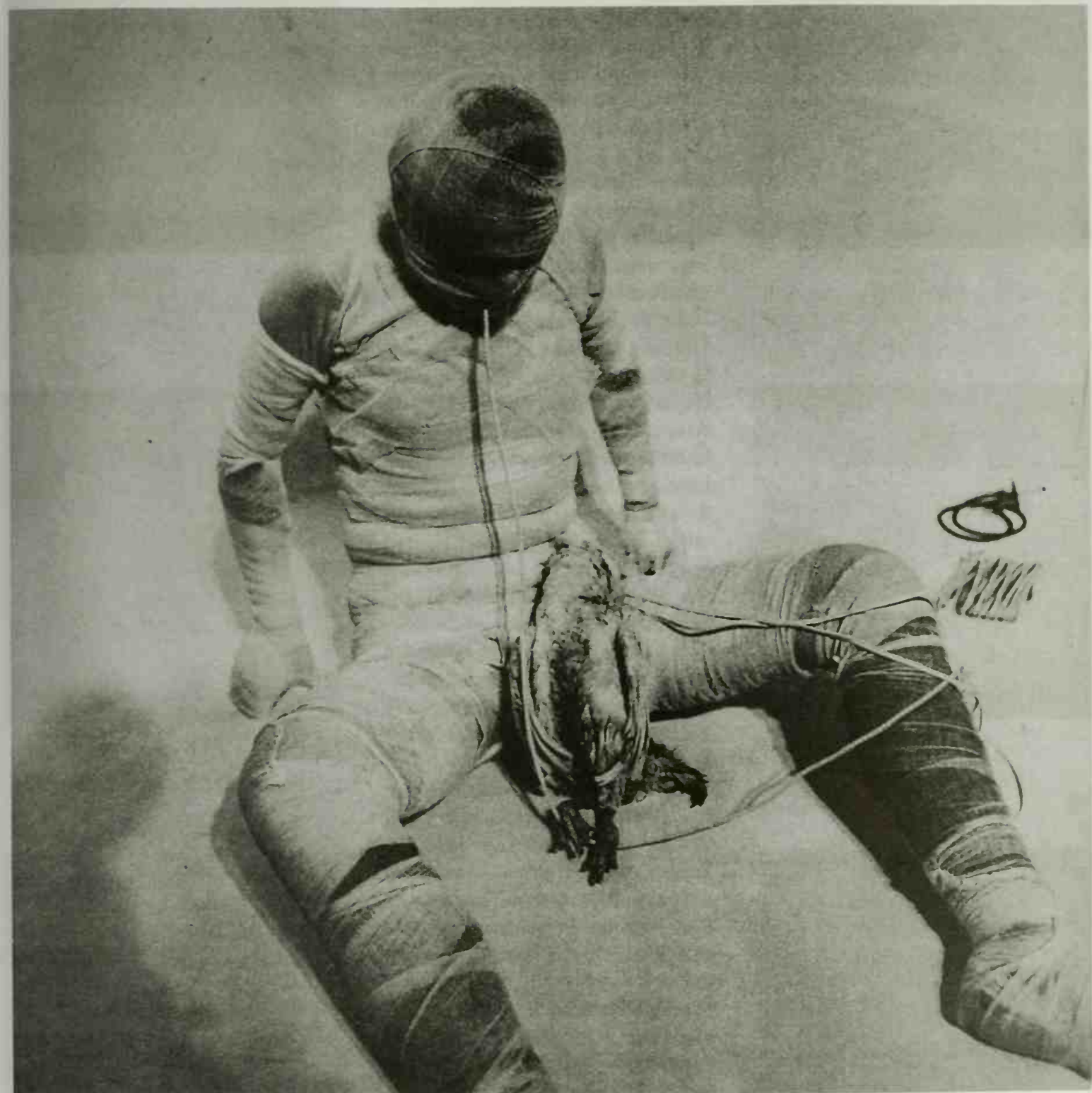
S. lies on the floor. His mouth is connected to the bottle by a tube.

S. kneels on the floor and inserts a cable into the chicken's beak.

S. lies on the floor and snatches at the chicken lying next to him.

His mouth is connected to the







chicken's beak by a cable.

S. lies on the floor next to the chicken. A cable extends from his mouth to the chicken's beak.

S. lies on the floor next to the chicken and sticks out his tongue.

S. pulls the chicken across the white room with the cable. To one side are a large and a small white sphere. Resting against the wall is a black mirror.

S. sits on the white floor with his legs open. A cable extends from his mouth to the chicken, which is lying on him. The cable has been wrapped around the chicken.

S. sits on the white floor. A cable leads from his mouth to the wrapped-up chicken. He holds a knife to the chicken with his right hand.

S. sits on the white floor and sticks the knife inside the beak of the chicken, which is lying on his lap. The cable tied around the chicken leads to his mouth.

S. winds the cable coming out of its beak round the chicken's body.

S. holds the dangling chicken by his teeth. A bundle of cables hangs from the chicken.

S. holds up in one hand the cable from which the chicken is hanging by its beak, with the other he holds a stethoscope to the chicken.

S. puts on the stethoscope.

S. lies on the floor. A stethoscope extends from his ears to a white sphere.

S. lies on his back. He holds the stethoscope he has on against his upper body. Beside him is a black mirror, a white sphere and a glass bottle.

S. lies by the wall, with the stethoscope on. The black mirror





leans against the wall behind him. S. gazes at the black mirror while lying on his stomach. A cable extends from his bandaged head. Beside him lie the stethoscope and a white sphere.

S. lies with his head on the black mirror. A cable emerges from his ears and trails over his face.

S. lies on his back, holding the black mirror directly before his face with both hands. A cable extends from his bandaged head.

S. lies on his back and presses the black mirror to his face.

S. lies on his side with his cheek on the black mirror. The stethoscope is wrapped around his head. One arm is stretched out to the side.

S. lies with the back of his head on the black mirror. His face has been bound with the stethoscope.

S. lies on the white floor. Beside him is an electric heater.

S. lies on the floor beside the electric heater. In front of him is a tangle of wires and cables and an ultra-violet light bulb, behind him is a black mirror.

S. lies in a white room with his head on a black mirror. Lying around him are a large and a small white sphere, a stethoscope, a tangle of wires and cables together with an ultra-violet light bulb, a knife and an irrigator.

Lying on a white surface is a chicken with a cable extending from its beak. Inside its stomach is an ultra-violet light bulb, beside it lies a white sphere.

Black mirror with the chicken on it. Its feet have been wrapped with an electric cable. Splinters of glass from a light bulb, a knife, beside that a chicken with an ultra-





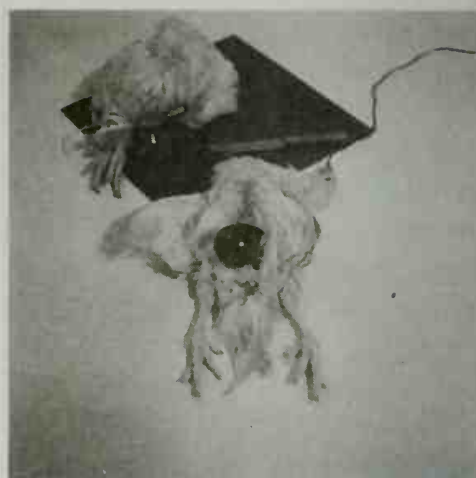
violet light bulb in its stomach. A cable extends from its beak.

Black mirror with cable. Bottle with tube. A chicken has been wrapped in an electric cable, black spots of paint can be seen on its beak. A second chicken with an ultra-violet light bulb in its stomach. A wire extends from its beak, past a white sphere lying close by.

Black mirror with a chicken lying on it, its feet bound together with an electric cable. Glass splinters. A white bandaged hand holds another chicken beside it.

Chicken with a tangle of cables emerging from its stomach. Black spots of paint. Close by an electric cable runs past a white sphere.

Lying on a black mirror is a chicken and a stethoscope. The chicken's feet have been bound with an electric cable. Lying to one side is a white bandaged hand with black-varnished finger-nails. White sphere.



Schwarzkogler's only published work during his lifetime consisted of the following two texts which appeared in the magazine Le Marais, edited by Brus in 1965. The Panorama text, presumably written at about the time he staged his first action, emphasises the role photography was to assume in his work.

PLAN FOR A PERFORMANCE

i tie ten dead white chickens into a ball using transparent nylon thread, and hang them in the middle of a freshly distempred room. i stuff ten plastic bags filled with grass into a pram and spread a white cloth over them. i drench a pair of men's white underpants with ether and lysoform, and allow a member of the audience to put them on. after blindfolding him with a gauze bandage, i empty a tin of sweet condensed milk over the white cloth and he sits on it. he empties the plastic bags, i wheel him beneath the chickens, dip my left hand in gum arabic and stroke it gently over the feathers and his head. he begins to crow like a cockerel, simultaneously a member of the audience cuts a wire stretched between two resonators (tin cans), i pour hot water, vinegar and sweet perfume over the chickens and then dust them with yellow powder paint. the spectators shove at the pram so that it moves around the room, i tip a bucket of size and a bag of yellow powder paint over it. when the pram passes under the chickens the audience shouts briefly at the man sitting in it, who then tries to catch them. when he reaches them i cut the nylon thread.

everyone leaves the room. i push the pram, still with the man holding the chickens in it, along the streets in front of the audience, who follow in a procession.

PANORAMA I: PAINTING IN MOTION (Draft)

the pictorial construction on a surface is replaced by the construction of the pre-conditions for the act of painting as the determinant of the action field, of the space around the actor = the real objects present in his surroundings. the actual act of painting can be freed from the compulsion to make relics its goal by performing it in front of a reproducing apparatus which attends to the data. the temporality of the act of painting becomes one with that of its performance. the movement and confrontation of the selected elements produces variable montages, the reshaping and sequence of which gives rise to the temporal-dynamic course of the action. it becomes possible to expand this so that it becomes a total synaesthetic act which can be perceived by all the senses and inwardly grasped by others. being a real occurrence, it reveals its form by means of the plastic image achieved in multiple recording using various apparatuses.

All of Schwarzkogler's remaining texts were unpublished at the time of his death. The translations that follow are from typescripts, notebooks and scraps of paper (the MSS. illustrated opposite give some idea of the range of their appearance).

The first selection of Schwarzkogler's texts appeared in the third issue of Brus's Die Schastrommel. In an afterword, Brus wrote "... I have often been compelled to place texts together where Schwarzkogler had given them a single page. This means that the texts lose much of their succinct, palpable clarity. The same applies where texts and photos have been put on one page, and should not imply a direct connection between them." The same caveat applies to the texts given in this anthology.

In the following texts lines deleted by Schwarzkogler have been included and crossed through when they are of interest. In other instances, words missing in the original have been added in square brackets. A dotted line indicates a page-break in a notebook. The roman numerals have been inserted here to distinguish individual texts, and are not Schwarzkogler's.

SELECTED THEORETICAL TEXTS

I

panoramas were already known in the 18th century; by the latter half of the 19th century there was scarcely a town of any size that did not have one or more of these paintings. the preferred themes were roman feasts and maritime battles; in the 1880s the panorama "the crucifixion of christ" by the artist PIGLHEIN was destroyed by fire in vienna. these paintings were usually installed in circular buildings some 15 m tall, and were 120 m long. after walking down a dark corridor and up a number of steps, the spectator arrived at a round platform. the paintings were executed in a very naturalistic manner, and the foreground features were three-dimensional so that the viewer often had doubts as to where the actual painting began.

i believe that the material employed in future artworks will not be there for some particular purpose, or in order to express something, but there in another way, that corresponds to its character. this also means that the material will be of a different kind. until now material has been violated for the sake of style.

(cf. = position of women in capitalist society, hierarchical or pseudo-hierarchical society)

what you see is the image

i want my images to be understood as extremely objective

the critique of the use of materials for artistic purposes is contained in the theory of its history

every artistic image weakens itself through its style, through the suppression of other "styles". (it is already working towards being itself destroyed by another "style")

it is important to break this cycle.

the art of the future will break this cycle.

instead of being tormented by epigones, i would prefer to make art which everyone can interpret in their own way

[1965]

II

the artist (painter) — the viewer

the musician — the listener

art takes place on the level of sensory reality. this fact has been obscured by the representational character (illustrative character) of works of art. it is, however, essential that all elements of representation are eradicated from the practice of art. (the technical equipment for representation — reproduction, documentation — has long been available)

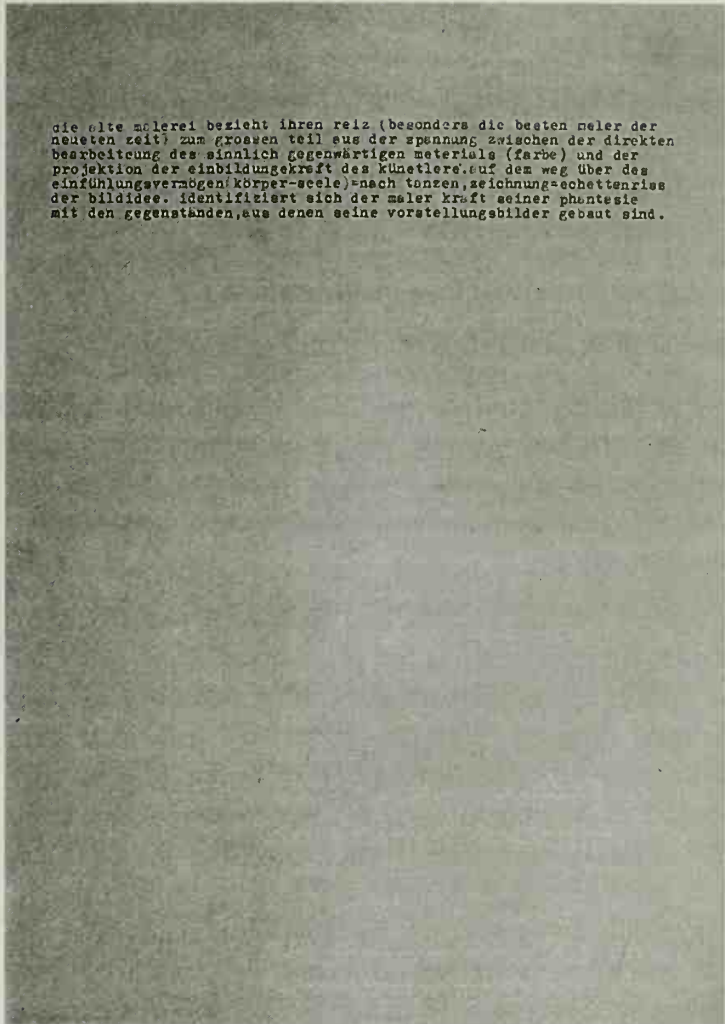
an ideal example of this kind of art is:

the cook — the eater

[1968]

III

the painting of old derives its appeal (especially with the best painters of recent times) largely from the tension between the projection of the artist's imagination and the direct manner in which the sensuously present material (paint) is worked. proceeding along the path of empathy (body-mind) = after the dance, drawing = silhouette of the pictorial idea. the artist employs his imagination to identify with the objects from which his mental images are constructed. [1965]



die alte malerei bezieht ihren reiz (besonders die besten maler der neueren zeit) zum grossen teil aus der spannung zwischen der direkten bearbeitung des sinnlich gegenwärtigen materials (farbe) und der projektion der einbildungskraft des künstleres auf dem weg über des einfühlungsvermögen (körper-seele) nach tonzen, zeichnung=schattenreize der bildidee. identifiziert sich der maler kraft seiner phantasie mit den gegenständen, aus denen seine vorstellungsbilder gebaut sind.

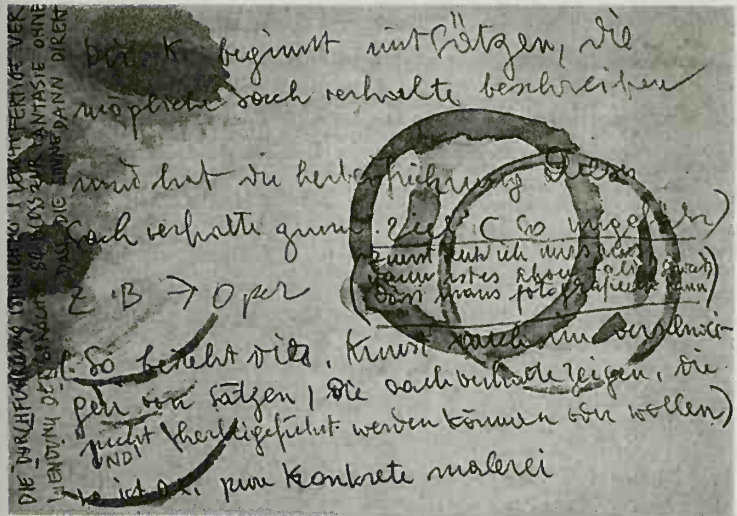
IV

Direct art begins with propositions that describe possible states of affairs, and is aimed at bringing about these states of affairs (more or less)

for example: opera (first i think it up then quickly it reaches the point where it can be photographed)

(So, even covertly direct art consists of propositions that demonstrate states of affairs which neither can nor wish to be brought about.)

AND thus direct art is pure concrete painting THE EXECUTION IS IMPORTANT; THOUGHTLESS USE OF LANGUAGE SIMPLY FOR FANTASY WITHOUT THE SENSE (BEING) DIRECTLY



Die Darstellung beginnt mit Sätzen, die mögliche Sachverhalte beschreiben
 nicht die herkömmliche Beschreibung
 Sachverhalte zum Ziel (so wie sie in) zum Punkt ich mich dann (nach) zum Punkt ich mich dann (nach) dann muss fotografiert werden
 E.B. → Opera
 So besteht die Kunst aus Sätzen, die nicht herbeigeführt werden können (zu wollen)
 es ist die pure konkrete malerei

THE AESTHETIC PANORAMA (ART DIRECTED
INWARDS = TRUE PAINTING)

IT IS NOT STYLE THAT IS IMPORTANT HERE,
BUT ARTISTIC ENJOYMENT

(art must be palatable — art of cooking)

aesthetic = relating to the faculty of perception

the everyday artist lives in his "reality" and devotes himself to "art" on the side, non-committally, as it were (he struggles doggedly to find his own style), and for this he receives his rewards, decorations, pension, etc.

although the institutions and their representatives are not really interested in the production of art (they are as indifferent as anyone else), they make up for this lack of interest by the more or less energetic promotion of art (obviously by those artists who operate according to certain rules of the game). since this is clearly not done in the belief that the products thus created might in any way lead to an increase in enjoyment or experience, the suspicion arises that the real intention is not to promote this production, but rather to prevent any other production that might appear in the absence of such a subvention.

alongside the purging of painting, for instance, of its secondary elements (projections from semantic levels of experience) comes a growing awareness of reality, whose sensual character, with reference to the physical presence of the individual, is recognised as aesthetically pre-formed (constricted, disfigured, marred)

THE AESTHETIC PANORAMA WILL BE THE
NUCLEUS OF A NEW ART

AN ART OF THE REGENERATED CAPACITY FOR
EXPERIENCE

art as a synthetic adventure

a product of elementary chains of experience (a life ritual, a sanatorium)

THE AESTHETIC PANORAMA IS THE EFFECTIVE
GESAMTKUNSTWERK (the *gesamtkunstwerk* does not arise from the parallels between thematically interrelated fields, but from the logical structure of the material and the range of perceptions)

for psychologists: the artist creates a complex that distinguishes itself from everyday reality in that it is less intricate than the latter, and that it allows the observer to carve out his own path through it. the observer is removed from the appeals of his everyday surroundings (he faces them differently) ART AS A PURGATORY OF THE SENSES the artist confronts the civilising labyrinth of concepts (dictatorship of anonymous organisation) with his idiotically simple constructions. ~~art as a mnemonic link with reality~~ symbolic relationships are employed as working hypotheses. art as the training of experience and the destruction of all established conceptions ABOUT LIFE. painting as the art of healing.

THE AESTHETIC PANORAMA HAS THE TENDENCY TO EXPAND AND TO OUST ALL OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND OCCUPY THEIR POSITION.

the artwork has always been a complex that differed from "reality" in that the material it uses interacts in a formal (clarified) = purified manner.

since the birth of the idea of the *gesamtkunstwerk*, there has been a tendency to allow the artwork to act so totally on the observer's senses that the whole person is transported

[1967-68]

the rigorous transposition [of the] artistic IDEA (of the IDEA BEHIND PAINTING) into the reality of experience will, ultimately, [lead] to the TRUE realisation of what was shown (depicted) in older art. this results (for the artist) in a radically new position: he regards himself as a manufacturer of ideas, and these ideas are not based on artistic and certainly not on "social" problems, but on his own existence.

[the artist no longer] begins to depict an ideal reality, as was the case with old art (and with the unpalatable regression of most "new" manufacturers of art, who are happy to accept the dissolution of the old artists' formal DISCIPLINE without having understood the problems faced by those whose work made this dissolution possible (practice)), especially as was the case with icon painting; increasingly he tends to view elements of his real SURROUNDINGS (real objects, real occurrences, autobiographical elements, etc.) as being equivalent to this "ideal reality," and begins to realise his picture (his mental world) from them, i.e. he uses these elements precisely the way the painter of old used paints as his material — used his paint, his ground, and not least his MODEL in order to make his PICTURE. with this he arrives at an entirely new position, totally at odds with normal art business practice, in opposition to ordinary artists who are maintained and lauded by the engineers of the cretinisation-mechanisms and those who commission them. he regards himself as a manufacturer of deliberate situations, the inventor of cases and settings (constellations of being = CASES IN THE SAME SENSE AS WHEN, FOR INSTANCE, ONE TALKS OF CRIMINAL CASES) and moreover of situations that, [without] being political in the true [meaning] of the word, could, [by] referring to the (aesthetic) relationship between his own existence and his surroundings and to the possible (aesthetic) change in his sensual (aesthetic) experience of the whole, become an eminently important social factor. this is because entering into the fundamental problems of the capacity for experience is at the same time a vehicle for criticism.

[1967-68]

nowadays the main thrust of a progressive political movement should not lie PRIMARILY in the development of a programme of action, but in the presentation of a lifestyle, which means that converts and not fellow travellers are to be won over. but the lifestyle that is to distinguish the movement cannot "arise" OF ITSELF, because this arising would always result from the production mechanisms of those who profit by it; rather it must be invented (presented), and the new art (happenings, fluxus, *nouveau réalisme*) is well suited to this. artists constitute the only group which from time immemorial has pursued this tendency, albeit in a projective rather than REAL fashion.

projective = in a specific framework and material through the logical transfer of the artistic idea to the possibility of real actions, the aestheticising of everyday activities, through the destruction and critical presentation of elements existing in the reality of our surroundings, we achieve an understanding and an awareness of these very surroundings, of the concrete possibilities of both the indispensable and the superfluous elements of social products. this could mean that if it is not based on a progression in art (?), politics (political upheaval) is condemned to become an ideological concept that gathers fellow travellers, but equally it could mean that the further art advances in the direction of self-dissolution, the more suitable it becomes for providing the basis of models of reality that strive towards political upheaval, which will result in the novelty and aesthetic relevance of such models.

in brief:

the waffle about ideological reform from the student and other groups' representatives, who are nothing but tomorrow's potential business directors, is damned similar to the shit spouted by the leaders of the establishment, differing only in the dangerous conviction these fellows have of the correctness of their pocket-book theses concerning their ageing counter-models.

anarchy is simply not some party programme, existing in its own right, as a paper fetish made out of the convoluted utopias of a few aged or even deceased gentlemen; on the contrary, in order to exist

anarchy needs anarchists. however, being an anarchist means rejecting the rulership of one man or woman over others, and in real terms, not JUST by not wishing to be the other's EMPLOYEE or by moaning about it when you are, nor again by attempting to become the boss, which is simply the other and only RELATIVELY more agreeable side of the coin, but by [improving?] anarchy as far as is possible. whether cheering or awful, the outcome of this situation will be a joint programme of action.

it is not a question of achieving reforms IN AUSTRIA, but of lighting a fire under their lordships' BACKSIDES without showing any consideration or asking why or what will we do afterwards.

we want to enter the condition of nature, experimentally, without any whys or wherefores, without any picture or pattern of anything apart from ourselves, so: if a storm is brewing in the air, then quite simply there will be a storm.

(assuming the tension in austria is sufficient for a storm)

above all, this should spark the realisation that certain products of the top-earners are damaging and superfluous, which in turn messes up their production for them, as the students in germany have demonstrated in exemplary fashion with the springer concern.¹⁰³

entering a state like that of a tachist painter and performing actions that aim at an *informel* painting¹⁰⁴ and this picture is the picture of society (*informel* society)

the prerequisite for such actions is that the number of participants should be so large that they cannot be treated as common criminals.

2: the artist does not work in order to live by his work, rather for him his work is life itself

the transformation from the pleasure- to the reality-principle leaves a wound whose scar points to the reality that has been experienced.

the bipolar psyche and the monistic reason

the artist works at the presentation of a lifestyle, which diminishes his dependence on the system.

V I I I

the practice of art takes place within the conditional reality of the more or less familiar sensory impressions the total (unconditional) reality remains unrecognised during this process, all the more so since this sensually conditional reality — the basis and agent of the practice of art — is robbed of its intrinsic qualities by the representational character of most art products

thus it is essential that all representational elements be eradicated from the practice of art
clear effects

roughly as in the case of the relationship cook food eater

an art for regenerating the capacity for experience but the conventional artist searches for his personal style

he wants to achieve something without asking what he serves the ruling institutions inasmuch as his products confirm the concepts on which such institutions are founded

for this he also receives his rewards, decorations, pension, etc.

but the practice of art is primarily justified by the enjoyment of art, not slavery to style

artistic enjoyment: the environment — spoiled by its conceptual interpretation — manifests itself as an artwork through its elementary sensual appearance (the artist creates a complex that distinguishes itself from everyday surroundings in that it is less intricate than the latter, and that it allows the observer to carve out his own path through it — the observer is removed from the appeals of his everyday surroundings and faces them differently)

art is a withdrawal treatment and simultaneously a source of new (concrete) experiences [1967-68]

I X

1. the practice of art by the everyday artist takes place within everyday reality. real reality remains thereby unrecognised.
2. because of the art products' representational aspirations, the essential nature of even this everyday reality goes unrecognised and thus lapses ever further into the everyday.
3. for this reason it is essential that all representational elements be eradicated from the practice of art.
4. art conceived in this way will create products that withdraw the viewer from the appeals of his everyday surroundings.
5. art is a withdrawal treatment. *[undated]*

X

the everyday artist is an over-ambitious person who tries to add his self to what is there, but since this self is, for this very reason, no different from what is there, it is superfluous. *[undated]*

X I

unconditional reality cannot be represented
conditional reality can be represented and is simultaneously the means of representation
(so what is it that is represented? essentially nothing)
the practice of art takes place in (externally) conditional reality.
when conditional (sensually conditional) reality is employed as the means of representation (of itself?), it loses its greatest effectiveness (merit)
if it is not used as the means of representation, it represents itself.
in this way it achieves its utmost aesthetic effectiveness. *[1968]*

X I I

...art will be reduced to a purgatory of the senses. *[1968]*

The division of the following texts into separately titled groups ("Action Scores", "The Art of Healing", etc.) is based on general thematic similarities. Inevitably, attempts to classify these texts as purely action scores or film ideas, or as being concerned simply with cooking, healing, environments or speculative ideas, lead to a simplification of Schwarzkogler's writings, whose boundaries, if any, are very fluid. Moreover, it would be missing the point to divorce any of these texts from their author's overall concept, which worked progressively away from the notion of a "consumable" artwork that could be viewed and experienced from without, while performers went through certain prescribed motions. Instead Schwarzkogler envisaged a controlled environment in which the "viewer" is a participant, and is obliged to experience specific states induced by carefully selected stimuli (food, drink, UV lamps, postures to be adopted, fasts, etc.).

ACTION SCORES

I

lying on her back almost parallel (slightly diagonal) to the threshold of a doorway connecting two large rooms (roughly 20 cm away from the threshold) is a young woman wearing an ordinary dress; her legs are bound together above the knees with a thin cord, her mouth is painted white, her finger-nails are varnished white. her eyes and forehead are covered with a gauze bandage, from the top of which juts a thin, green tube 30 cm long. lying at an obtuse angle to her, his head nearly touching hers, his face turned to the wall, half on his stomach, half on his side, roughly parallel to the wall, is a man wearing a white shirt and dark trousers. in one of the two rooms a ladder has been placed by the wall opposite the door. at the top of it is a man, a spotlight and coloured filters.

1.

it is almost dark, the spotlight is directed at the two actors.

2.

sound of air escaping from a compressed-air cylinder — the spotlight turns blue — the first actor (1) holds a light bulb in his mouth and screws the socket on to it. as soon as the light comes on the sound of an electric bell is heard. the spotlight is dimmed.

3.

it is dark and quiet — flash-light

4.

spotlight — white — room lights on full. 1 turns his head until it faces the

is now lying half on his back — opens her painted mouth — gurgling can be heard coming from the direction of the ladder.

5.

spotlight off, room lights on low — the two actors tug at the cords and wires that connect their arms and heads together — 1 places the tube, which is sticking out of 2's head bandage, in his mouth, picks up a small balloon filled with black paint, and brings it slowly to 2's mouth. he inserts it into her mouth — 2 turns her head to one side and bites it open. a small puddle forms.

6.

spotlight on — room lights out. 2 draws up her knees — a crashing noise — a text montage (medical, chemical, electro-technical terms, etc.) is read out — noises in between.

7.

darkness — whistling noise

8.

the light from the spot alternates (quickly) between yellow and pink. the room lights flash on for a second — 2 tosses herself from side to side frantically, convulses — 1 makes a piercing noise with the electric bell, a smell of ammonia — 2 tries quickly to free herself from her cords. the sound of a balloon bursting. 1 pulls a cloth over his head — darkness — 2 walks through the audience and out of the room — crashing — the spotlight projects wavering blue light into the audience — dims.

V I I I

screeching screaming shattered glass
2 of the 3 actors lie head to head in front of the door
so that the visitors have to step over one of them to
enter the room
3 bright red fluorescent squares measuring 1 x 1 m
have been outlined at irregular intervals on the floor.

sound:

air escaping from a compressed-air cylinder

lighting:

blue

a man holds a light bulb in his mouth and screws the
socket on to it

as soon as the light comes on the sound of an electric
bell is heard

darkness

flash-light

a man who has been nailed to the wall by the toes of
his shoes at a height of 1 m, and whose hands are tied
together behind his back, bites through a [...]

lighting:

quickly alternating between green and pink

then dark blue (indigo)

the first actor breaks open a phial containing
ammonia

a sharp smell of ammonia permeates the room

the third actor opens one of HIS veins — spotlight —

the blood flows into a glass

the second actor presses /KNEELING/ a cloth soaked
in chloroform over his face until he falls down
unconscious

the first actor vomits into a bowl half filled with
green liquid

sound:

SCREECHING

the 1st actor throws light bulbs

2nd

[probably 1968]

In his programmatic text "The Aesthetic Panorama" Schwarzkogler states not only that "art must be palatable [an] art of cooking", but also an "art of healing." The following texts, taken largely from the last 18 months of his life, reflect both aspects to a greater or lesser degree.

Many of the texts can be seen as recipes, not simply for the food to be eaten and the synaesthetic order in which the various foodstuffs are to be consumed, but also for curative practices (the water cures developed in the nineteenth century that are still popular in the German-speaking world, as well as fasts, sweat cures, the use of UV lamps, and more recently yogic practices, breathing exercises and the like).

When in "The Aesthetic Panorama" Schwarzkogler talks of art as a "product of elementary chains of experience [considered as] a life ritual," it becomes clear that the order in which the foods are listed is also important, a ritual aspect intended to bring about a heightened state of awareness, and an intensification of experience (paralleling the synaesthetic effect produced by certain food combinations). The washing and sweating cures increasingly assumed the quality of daily rituals, with a monastic or yogic feel, and of consecrating the things in life around us, which links them to the speculative writings. Eastern practices can be detected in various areas, as when Schwarzkogler began investigating breathing exercises as a result of his reading of yogic literature, or when he sketched out his plans for a Tantric feast. These life rituals also lead to the environment pieces: various actions are to be performed, but with special emphasis placed on the specific stimuli to be taken in, a certain temperature, perhaps, or a particular sight or smell, and in some cases these stimuli are to be perceived while "kneeling in a glass cube" or crouching nailed to a plank.

THE ART OF HEALING / THE ART OF COOKING

I

mat, blanket (1 m x 2 m) table
for sitting, sleeping (lying?)

books
a set (4-5) of eating bowls with a small cupboard
gown (two-piece)

breakfast early in the morning

main meal 10 a.m.

the remains of the main meal approx. 4 p.m.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF THE MONASTIC
LIFE IS NOT TO SQUANDER ANYTHING, BUT TO
DRAW THE GREATEST USE FROM ALL THAT
THERE IS

the meal: wordless

gong (bell)

mouth rinsing (washing)

cleaning the bowls: first the smaller ones in the
larger ones, and so on

daily bath (immersion bath)

Stone : music!

drinking milk (milk and honey)

pure fresh water

pure nourishment!

.....
flowers

light

incense

food

water

the careful selection (control) of the

things to be seen

things to be heard

things to be touched

things to be smelt

things to be eaten

the learning

~~the "ritual" (daily ritual)~~

~~offering of food and drink~~

eating and drinking

guests

music

days of fasting: new moon, full moon

a separate room, inside clean air

(to be entered without a coat) —

drinking the milk (milk and honey)

— butter and honey

.....
FISH

BREAD

WINE

MEAT

~~SEXUAL INTERCOURSE~~

over-estimation of social forms

over-estimation of writings

over-estimation of the physical body¹⁰⁵

days of fasting: (every 7th day)

maintain fast (for 1 week)

easter fast (40 days)

the preparations:

nutrition

purification of the body

~~proper control of thoughts~~

.....
red wine cure (3 days?)

1st day

mustard seeds

milk

fasting cure (7 days?)

2nd day

water

milk

milk-bread roll cure (40 days?)

3rd day

red wine

milk

— honey

4th day

milk

milk

fish

honey

milk

meat

5th day

fish

milk

6th day

white wine

milk

— aspirin

7th day

bread

milk

— bread and wine

8th day

meat

milk

— immersion bath (light-shock)

night in the greenhouse

foot-bath:

2 min: 40 degrees hot

daily

1 min cold

2 min 40 degrees hot

1 min cold

eye-bath: 1 min: affusion — (gentle jet)

wrap up in damp sheets and remain close to the fire until sweat breaks out

.....
fasting

sun tan

staying awake

holding breath

[probably 1968]

I I

THE PREPARATION OF KOUMISS¹⁰⁶

take a horn spoon and mix
 0.5 fresh compressed yeast into
 60.0 water,
 pour the mixture into a strong bottle approx. 400
 cm³ in volume, add
 4.0 sugar, powder M/80
 7.0 lactose, powder M/8
 fill the bottle up to the neck with sufficient boiled
 cow's milk that has been allowed to cool down again.
 cork the bottle with a machine, bind the cork and
 shake well. then leave the bottle in a warm place
 (kitchen) for 6 hours, and a further 48 hours in the
 cellar. the koumiss is now ready for consumption, but
 must be shaken beforehand.

5 g of yeast +
 good ½ l water
 + 40 g sugar
 + 70 g milk sugar [1965]

I I I

milk
 milk water
 milk red wine
 water
 mustard seeds
 fish honey
 mustard seeds
 fish white wine
 bread
 milk honey
 bread white wine
 mustard seeds
 meat [1968]

I V

purification
 bath:
 submerge completely so that no hair is visible [1968]

V

wine white wine
 fish freshwater fish
 meat lamb, goat meat
 dried grains wheat, barley-corns
 (bread)
 cinnamon milk
 almonds
 figs [1968]

V I

bread dipped in vinegar
 meat from the right side of a male animal
 lamb, ram
 garlic oil salt
 bitter herbs [1968]

V I I

food:
 fish
 salt sage onions
 water
 37 degrees [1968]

V I I I

let hair and beard grow
 fasting and hot steam-baths
 hold breath
 avoid any salty food
 avoid looking down any wells or out of any windows
 stay awake
 sleep in a greenhouse on the bare earth
 until it rains

I X

cure

in the morning
before sunrise
wrapped in a wet sheet
sweating

suspended by the arms
~~take a deep breath~~
drink a glass of cold water

blood-letting
two hours of sleep

food:
fish
salt sage onions
hot vinegar

alternating foot-bath¹⁰⁷
two minutes hot
one minute cold
two minutes hot

[1968]

X

washing:

the inside of the right arm
the upper part
chest and trunk
the inside of the left arm
the upper part
chest and trunk
the back
the legs THE SOLES OF THE FEET
without stopping¹⁰⁸

[1968]

X I

first day
day of fasting
second day
walk in the forest
view from the observatory
third day

environment¹⁰⁹
wooden plank 2 trestles
glass (moulded tumblers)

the left side is the front side
the right side is the rear side, which became the
second front side

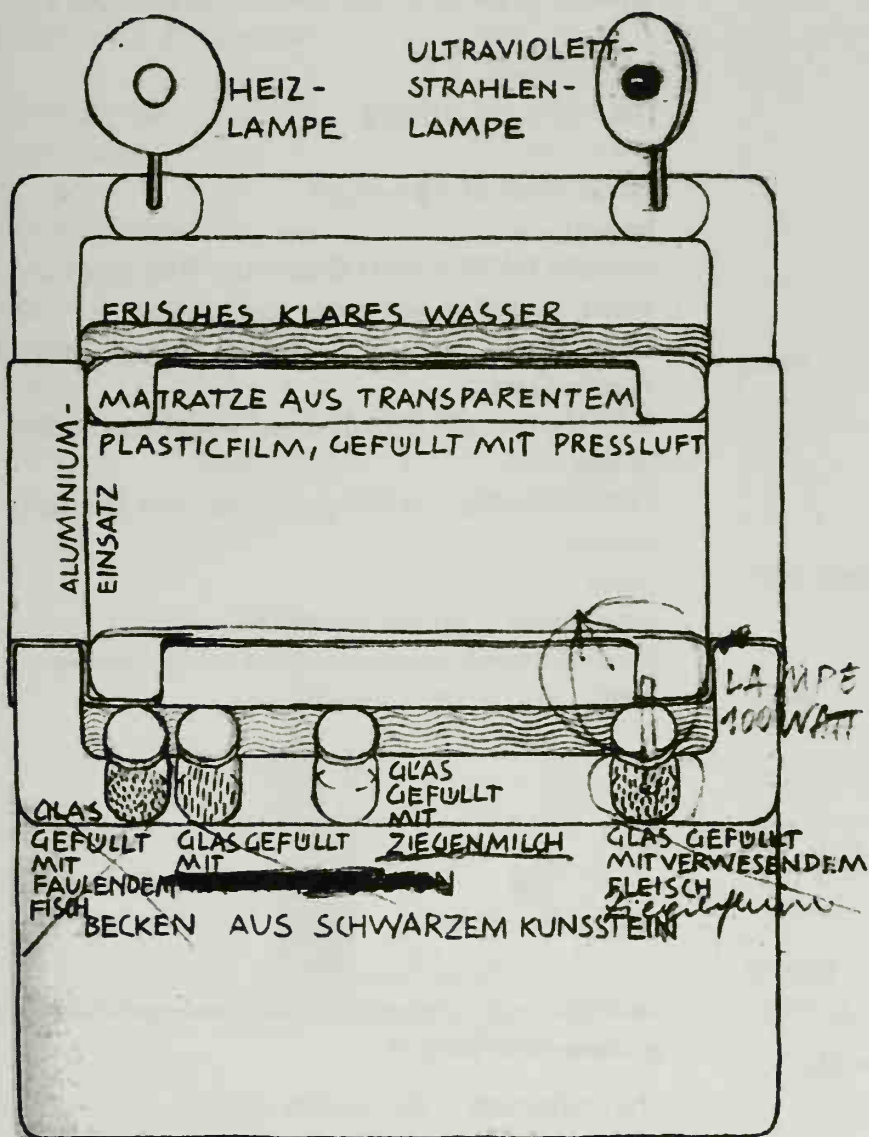
the inner side to the rear
the outer side at the rear fell down, turned round
and wanted to go through the centre in order to
become the front
but since the front side was already there, the rear
side couldn't go through the centre [ca.1968-69]

X I I

wine
fish
meat from male animals
dried grains
& the performance of sacred coition
syllables
diagrams
smells
flowers
clothes
jewels
“(food & drink)”

the universal possibility for using the thread (the lead)
[ca.1968-69]

FAUL
BETT
BETT



ROTTING
BED
BED

HEATING LAMP ULTRA-VIOLET
LAMP

FRESH CLEAR WATER

MATTRESS MADE OF TRANSPARENT
PLASTIC FILM, FILLED WITH
COMPRESSED AIR

ALUMINIUM SECTION

LAMP
100 WATTS

GLASS	GLASS	GLASS	GLASS
FILLED	FILLED	FILLED	FILLED
WITH	WITH	WITH	WITH
ROTTING		GOAT'S ROTTING	
FISH		MILK	MEAT

goat's
meat

basin MADE OF ARTIFICIAL
BLACK STONE

[ca.1966-67]

I I

summer
bright starry night
deep breaths
the breaking of waves (it is getting wavy)
[probably 1968]

I I I

sand
sand
wall
nut tree
table and bench
nut tree
wine
nuts
[1968]

I V

white asphalt
aluminium
lawn
black asphalt
aluminium
sand
lilac trees
[1968]

V

interior made of highly polished aluminium walls
5 light sources
white sheepskin
infra-red
film projections
yellow copy
blue copy
[1968]

V I

the consecrated austrian pavilion¹¹⁰

the square floor surface is made of pear-wood
the walls of glass
the ceiling of metal alloy
violet fluorescent tubes

a pile of grass covering one fifth of the floor's surface

white sheets
red white red bunting

tables made of pear-wood
bowls

CONSECRATED FISH freshwater fish, trout and
tench, cooked in salt water and vinegar

CONSECRATED MEAT pieces of goat's meat boiled
in salt water

CONSECRATED GRAIN dried wheat and barley
grains

CONSECRATED WINE green veltliner in small
glasses

pears

a bed made of plastic, grass and goatskin

~~for performing consecrated sexual intercourse~~

A BED MADE OF [CLOTH] *[1968]*

V I I

~~children's playground for the municipality of vienna,
architectural project~~

the realisation of the garden of eden

white like linen

reflecting light
(film)

luminous being

} the 3 stages

VIII

(setting for a festival)

night
waxing moon

a garden, encircled by a wall
greenhouse
raked sand

air-conditioning 27 degrees

pile of fresh grass
pool with water

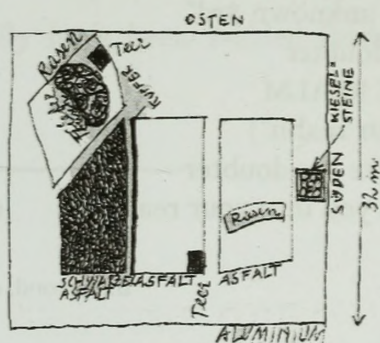
low wooden tables

red wine
hard, peeled eggs
white bread
salt

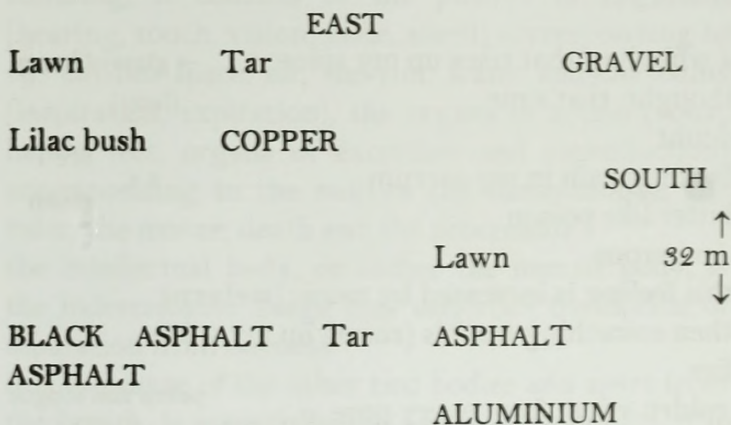
[1968]

IX

KINDERSPIELPLATZ



CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND



[undated]

SPECULATIVE TEXTS

I

i have experienced various things but it is a lot of effort for me to arrange them in chronological order
 my memory is imperfect, fragmentary
 my vanity (the feeling of having experienced something exceptional) no longer inhibits me (this is the second draft)
 remembering backwards
 e.g. i plunge into a cavern (i want to understand or "reach" something, attempt to penetrate, and END UP BESIDE MYSELF)
 moment of hesitation
 i plunge into a cavern or: something dark is thrown over me and immediately i find the smell pleasant, i enjoy falling (head over heels)
 i am completely enraptured GIGANTIC and SWEET and completely dark
 i have never felt so good before
 later i remember: it happened twice, quite similarly.
 i wish in passing that i was back in my usual surroundings (that seems to have been during the second time — my big toe had frozen)
 it is important to distinguish: the 1st time
 the 2nd time

a whistling that rises up my spine	→ glass of honey
thought: that's me	(later)
doubt	
burning pain in my sacrum	2 x fire ↑
bitter like poison	steam
dangerous	
this feeling is increased by music (webern)	
then something travels (roars) up my spine	
fire	
golden sweat from every pore	palms and tongue

i have no nose
 unimaginably sad
 the feeling of being alone among the stars
 black and gold
 (that is all much later)

my tongue, soft /? even softer/ (happiness while eating) becomes like metal, (liquid gold)
 hot energy rises out of the ground
 ("2 fiery snakes") up to my testicles
 — i urinate into a porcelain vessel and drink my urine [1969]

II

i enter a cave (?)
 enormously large and dark
 pleasant and WARM/warm
 how quiet!
 i cannot see myself because there is no light at all
 enormously large
 (so large that if i were to light a torch i would not cast a shadow)
 back to the world of the others

.....
 (my big toe had frozen)

inside me: 2 + ↓? = 3
 "the unknown 3rd"
 the doubter
 THE REALM
 ("your realm")
 →take the doubter————→ there are 2
 with you into your realm the first flinches (hissing)
 "that's me"
 the second, composed, calm, advances
 "no, me"

.....
 my icy kidneys leap out of my body and remain suspended on threads:
 ("Floating")
 everything becomes reversed
 starfish PINS AND NEEDLES

i have felt different kinds of breath

(2 pounds ?)

poison-breath

&

(sweet flesh: love's raptures)



asthma



like this

a "secret portal"
on the palate

PALATE-SAIL

"little tongue on the scales"



urine

+ sperm

the 2 channels were the wrong way round (belly?)

feeling of rapture



the anus contracts (periodically?)

no diaphragm?

complete reversal (of the body)?

(blindness)?

people must originally have been 2-sided (bishop's
mitre) ~~front-back~~

from behind

(anus)

from the front

(mouth?)

more dangerous!

during sexual intercourse the previously "absent"
diaphragm suddenly becomes a

COLLECTING DEVICE

indescribable feeling of happiness

(dark: snakes)

I I I

first transcription sankaracharya¹¹¹

the necessary aptitudes:

discrimination between the permanent and the
impermanent

the strength to be able to renounce all enjoyment of
the fruits of one's works

the capacity to act calmly (reserved, self-controlled,
(forbearing), composed, sanguine and (concentrated)
in both thoughts and wishes)

the will to be free —

recognition of the principles, that "the self" is
breath¹¹² and all other things are unreal

being self-existent, uncreated, knowledge-bliss,
spectator of all that was, is and will be, it is elevated
above the gross, the astral and the mental bodies and
above the five forms of manifestation (the material,
the vital, the mental image, the form of realisation
and the form of blissful existence)

the gross body, composed of the five elements (with
each containing the other four in latent form), is the
effect of a (self-)created cause and a means for having
or gaining experiences

the astral body, drawn from the five elements but not
composed of them, is the source of desire and
suffering; it consists of the powers of cognition
(hearing, touch, vision, taste, smell) corresponding to
the entities space, air, the sun, water and the twins
(inspiration, expiration), the organs of action (voice,
hands, feet, organs of excretion and reproduction)
corresponding to the entities the flame-tongue, the
ruler, the mover, death and the procreator

the intellectual body, or rather the mental body, is
the indescribable image that underlies the notion of
separation from oneness

it is the cause of the other two bodies and apart from
the breath, is essentially the result of ignorance. it is
the seat of intuition and surrounds the others like an
aura. it is the seer, toucher, hearer, smeller, taster,
knower, perceiver — without shadow or colour, clear
and untransmutable, he who knows it becomes all-
knowing and ceases to exist in his selfhood.

breath, the spirit that indwells the gross body (carnal
body), recognises the

SCHWARZKOGLER 217

[1969]

objects of its cognition by virtue of its faculty of perception, and in this way you know that you are awake (what wakefulness is)
 the dream state, in which the self (breath) that indwells the luminous body sees the repetition of all that was registered during wakefulness
 the self-conscious (dreamless) state, in which breath (the self) residing in the mental body realises that it is elevated above all illusions
 all these bodies are mere appearances, images of the imagination, states the mind has created of its own volition
 the material manifestation is formed of earth and will return to earth
 it is the material part of the astral body
 the vital form (star-soul) of man

[1969]

IV

hearing	space	ether
touching	air	fire-air
seeing	sun	light-ether
tasting	water	water
aswini ¹¹³ smelling	twin out-in	earth

voice	flame-tongue
hands	the lord
feet	the mover
excretion	death
reproduction	procreator

red side: dragon's-blood
 13 phases of growth

title: i ask to take the word¹¹⁴ [1969]

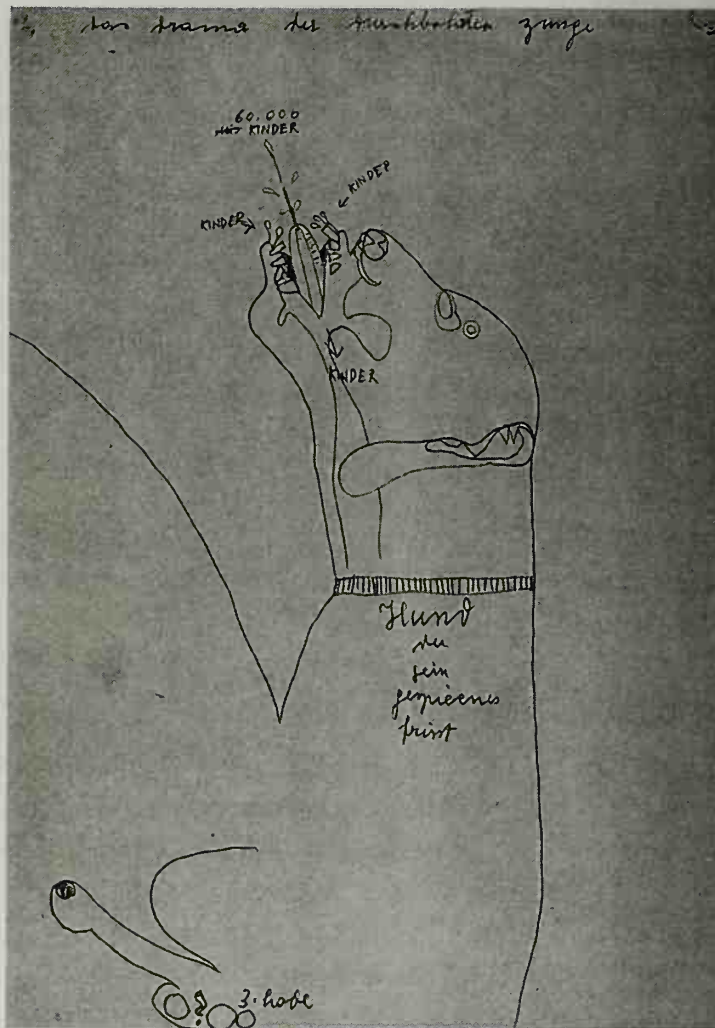
V

who knows how long i will need to cut up the shit
 you have saddled me with into its component parts
 if i wanted, i could grow as old as the wandering jew

[ca. 1968]

218 SCHWARZKOGLER

VI



the drama of the drilled tongue

60,000 CHILDREN
 CHILDREN CHILDREN

CHILDREN

Dog who eats his own vomit

3rd testicle

[1969]

As Eva Badura-Triska writes,¹¹⁵ a number of drawings and written sketches allow cautious guesses to be made about the kinds of films Schwarzkogler intended making in his later years: "it is evident that, far removed from a coherent plot or narrative content, they would confront the viewer with sequences of static images, or ones that simply changed within themselves, and very short scenes. These were to be accompanied by noises and musical sounds." Clearly this corresponds closely to Schwarzkogler's use of individual tableaux to create his actions. The specific images envisaged for the films would appear to include shots of a variety of natural substances, as well as natural elements and forces — starry skies, sunrises, the planets, earthquakes and lightning. In addition they would feature simple activities like eating, drinking, sitting, touching, dancing, crying, tossing a coin, ringing a bell or breaking a window, along with basic geometrical shapes (circles found abstractly in the wheels of an upturned bicycle, or in the outline of a record, for instance) and the sequences of colours that are to be found in his drawings and paintings. A final element consisted of various fantastic and visionary images, such as masked or otherwise altered faces, which formed a major part of the vocabulary of Schwarzkogler's actions.

FILMS

I

lise, a television play

she is a really beautiful girl

lise is sitting among the palms of a conservatory

she is wearing white stockings and shoes, a white dress and a white hat

she is surrounded by four members of the philharmonia, a string quartet

the string quartet plays the quartet in g minor by arnold schönberg

lise puts an ivory ball in her mouth, takes a sip of kirsch and spits the ivory ball into a silver bowl

first movement

lise takes off her dress

second movement

~~lise inserts the ivory ball into her lovely painted cunt and wets her nipples with saliva~~

third movement vomits

lise kneels down and vomits into the bowl with the aid of a feather

fourth movement

lise has a basket of eggs in front of her and begins to inject inks into the eggs using a syringe NEEDLE

bright red bright blue dark blue bright green dark green violet and then breaks the eggs over her knees

(simultaneously)

3rd movement

lise drinks black coffee

[1966-68]

II

musical comedy for television (colour television)

4 members of the philharmonia (string quartet) sit in a conservatory and play the string quartet in g minor by arnold schönberg or some other suitable string quartet

a young girl with bleached white hair and wearing a white dress, white stockings and shoes drinks down a glass of white liquid during the first movement

during the second movement she drinks down a glass of bright red liquid

during the third movement she drinks down a glass of dark violet liquid

during the fourth movement she kneels down on the floor and vomits into a bowl with the aid of a chicken feather

[1966-68]

I I I

trampling on (vomiting out) the one

the woman who is swallowed
the burning house (+ eagle)
the river that is swallowed
the plunge into the water

tar: — lilacs

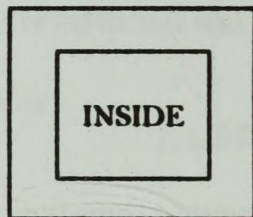
glass

asphalt, bright dark

aluminium

lawn

tree (chestnut)



[undated]

I V

this is you
the deep sleep as a foretaste of liberation
wrath-chamber
vampire
great angel

} [film (or title)?]

water
milk
honey
wine
fish
meat
black swan and white swan

} [film (or title)?]

[probably 1969]



Brus, Muehl, Nitsch, ca.1970.

*One of the first actions to be performed publicly in Vienna was planned as a joint event by Muehl and Nitsch, the Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism staged in 1963, and over the years the actionists frequently worked together, either singly in simultaneous actions or jointly. They also wrote together, formed "institutions" and staged larger-scale events. This section, arranged alphabetically, documents a number of these collaborations. Particular thanks must go to Peter Weibel and Valie Export, whose excellent book *wien. bildkompendium wiener aktionismus und film* (Kohlkunst Verlag, Frankfurt, 1970) provides a wealth of valuable information. The artists' individual contributions to collaborations can be found in the*

The Art and Revolution event at the University of Vienna in the summer of 1968 not only resulted in the greatest scandal surrounding the actionists, but was also one of the very last public manifestations of actionism in Austria. The performers were Brus, Franz Kaltenbäck, Muehl, Peter Weibel, Oswald Wiener, and members of Muehl's Direct Art Group: Anastas, Otmar Bauer, Dieter Haupt, Laurids, Herbert Stumpfl.

Despite the public furor provoked by this event, it is one of the least documented. See Brus section for invitation, photographs, poster, press reports and court proceedings, and Muehl section for additional text. Herbert Stumpfl described the events in a pamphlet:

THE EVENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA ON 7.6.68

i. The SÖS (Austrian Socialist Student Association) invited the artists Günter Brus, Otto Muehl, Oswald Wiener, Peter Weibel and Franz Kaltenbäck to its event "Art and Revolution" in lecture hall 1 of the new institute building of the Vienna University.

ii. Course of the event:

1) Introductory talk by one of the SÖS members on the position, possibilities and function of art in late capitalist society

2) Simultaneous actions by the artists

a) Muehl reads out a pamphlet on the Kennedy family

b) Weibel reads a tract on the minister of finance, Professor Koren

c) Wiener analyses the input-output relationships between thought and language

d) Kaltenbäck gives a talk on information and language

e) Brus undresses. He makes incisions in his chest and thighs with a razor blade. He urinates, drinks his urine and vomits. He strikes up the austrian national anthem and simultaneously exhibits the process of anal excretion. He smears his body with his excrement. Then he lies down and begins to masturbate

f) Muehl beats a masochist, whose upper body is exposed, with a military belt. The masochist's head is bandaged so that he is unrecognisable. During the whipping he reads aloud from "pornographic" literature

g) Three naked men organise a how-far-can-you-urate competition. The results are measured and written on the blackboard

h) Muehl and the three naked men pick up open beer bottles. They imitate the motions of masturbation by moaning and moving the bottles rhythmically at a level with their groins, until beer froth spurts over the audience.

Weibel read his text wearing a burning asbestos glove, so that the manuscript went up in flames: the action was particularly "inflammatory" because the Minister of Finance, Prof. Koren, had lost an arm as a fighter pilot during the Second World War. Muehl's text on the death of Robert Kennedy, who had died a few days beforehand, created an additional stir. The ensuing actions, however, proved to be the main bone of contention in the subsequent outcry and court case, above all Brus's virtuoso simultaneous taboo-breaking, and the whipping scene.

Dr. Malte Olschewski (aka Laurids), the masochist who was beaten by Muehl, had already acted earlier that year in Muehl's sado-masochistic film Amore. He was also a doctor of philosophy at the university, and as such the only academic in the team. At the end of the event he went up on to the stage without his bandages and, beaming, openly admitted to his preferences and the pleasure he had experienced, and tried to hand out his telephone number to interested parties. In his own words: "Generally speaking the atmosphere was not negative, people were rolling in the aisles. Really enthusiastic."¹¹⁶

Other accounts of the event variously describe it as hilarious or depressing, but no actual protests were made. It was, however, attended by two journalists who succeeded in whipping up a real lynch-mob atmosphere: the artists were accosted on the streets, and a Viennese newspaper, the Kronen-Zeitung, even went as far as to publish the addresses of Brus, Wiener and Muehl. These three were quickly arrested and kept in custody for two months; Brus received death threats while on remand, and a petition was organised to remove his daughter from his care.¹⁷ After 28 days' arrest for causing a public nuisance, etc., followed by two months on remand, Wiener was let off; Muehl was sentenced to a further 1 month prison sentence, while Brus received 6 months (reduced a year later after he appealed to 5 months, but including 2 days' fasting a week and 2 days on a hard bed every month). Other performers (Bauer, Weibel, Stumpfl) received sentences ranging from 8 to 20 days. Although Brus was not permitted to leave the country, he still had his passport and in early 1969 was able to flee to Berlin, where Wiener and Gerhard Rühm organised free lodgings for him and his family. In 1976 Brus's sentence was commuted to a fine, on Wiener's intercession, upon which he returned to Austria.

Afterwards, the student association largely distanced itself from the action and asked for the forgiveness of the university's rector. At the same time, however, a few showed their solidarity with the actionists, but this split eventually led to the association being disbanded. This may be the reason why Brus was later to compare the situation in West Germany, with the Red Army Faction, with that in Austria, claiming: "The Uni-Action scotched any possibilities for Austrian terrorism to establish itself. Although it wasn't our intention, our actions divided the leftist groups to such an extent that their ideas did not catch on or fell into the wrong hands."¹⁸

THE BLOOD ORGAN

> Vienna, 1-4 June 1962

Muehl and Nitsch first met in late 1961 on the occasion of Nitsch's exhibition at the Galerie Fuchs. After a rapid exchange of ideas, they and Muehl's close friend and fellow artist, Adolf Frohner, planned The Blood Organ, which was conceived as a counter-event to the Vienna Festival Week. The publication of the same name appeared at the end of May, prior to the event on 4.6.1962, and contained manifestos from Muehl, Nitsch and Frohner and contributions by Josef Dvorak and Fritz Graf. Frohner did the layout and design, which was then "enriched" by Nitsch splashing paint over it and Muehl adding his handprint. (See Muehl and Nitsch sections.)

(OPENING STATEMENT)

We* have resolved for the appeasement of mankind to descend into the vault for four days. (Where we shall allow ourselves to be immured.)

Three days of unbridled disinhibition, liberation from all sexual lust, transposition of the same into sheet metal, scrap, rotting garbage, meat, blood, junk, etc. — we wish to transform the entire material of the cosmos.

After these three days of spiritual exercises, during which we shall neither eat nor sleep nor care for our bodies — obviously without women — WE shall await the ceremonial disimmurement in a purified state.

*After the disimmurement, Messrs. Adolf FROHNER, Otto MUEHL and Hermann NITSCH are to be addressed as Herr Dr. Adolf Frohner, Herr Dr. Otto Muehl and Herr Dr. Hermann Nitsch.

Before the event, a newspaper article announced that an animal was to be slaughtered, which led to alarm among the animal protection league and to Nitsch receiving a visit from the police while at work in the Technical Museum, which nearly cost him his job.

The immurement in the cellar lasted three days; the entrance was bricked up by Muehl and Frohner and a microphone concealed by the door to record the comments



poured over the whole lot. Nitsch completed the work by striking the composition on the chair with the blunt edge of an axe, sending blood spurting up the walls.

On the evening of the last day the wall was kicked in by a woman dressed in an evening gown and high heels, whom Muehl had hired for the occasion, freeing the way for the large crowd of spectators to inspect the results. Dvorak gave the opening speech, proclaiming a return of art and humanity to the depths beneath the surface of the earth whence it

The publication The Blood Organ continued for a further five issues under different titles and the sole editorship of Dvorak.

of passers-by. The artists were able, however, to come and go through a back entrance.

The police were once more alerted on the second day by local inhabitants, who clustered outside the cellar assuming that, among other things, sexual orgies were being indulged in and sexual murders committed inside. On their arrival, the two officers were unable to discover any evidence of criminal activity.

During the three days, Muehl and Frohner created junk sculptures as planned, all three painted on jute sacks covering the walls, and on the last day Nitsch performed his 7th painting action. He painted a 9 x 2 metre canvas using red paint and finally blood, and after first flaying, disembowelling and maltreating a dead lamb with the help of Muehl and Frohner, the cadaver was nailed to the wall in an inverted crucified position. The lamb's skin was then nailed to the wall in a niche, a chair was placed beneath the lamb and covered with a white cloth, intestines were placed on the chair, and blood

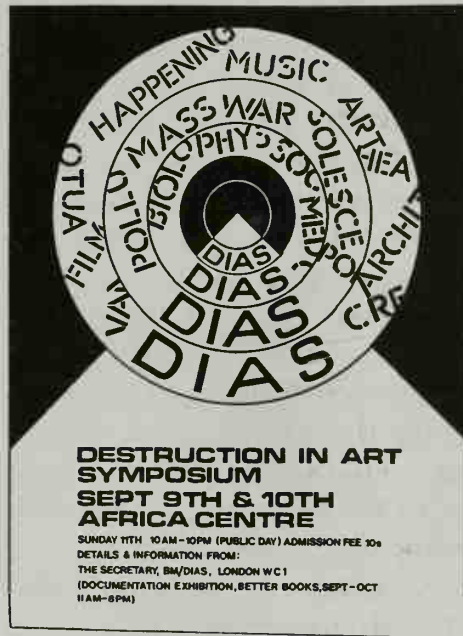


came, and a musique concrète composition by Anestis Logothetis was played: Phantasmata, a collage based on snatches of voices of Congolese dancers in ecstasy, followed by an arrangement of estranged drumbeats. The whole event was rounded off with a bowl of roses placed by Nitsch in front of the lamb, and heavy incense.

Nitsch, Frohner, Muehl.

The symposium, organised by Gustav Metzger together with a team of eleven who included John Sharkey, Enrico Baj, Wolf Vostell, Bob Cobbing, Jim Haynes and Barry Miles, brought together an international selection of artists who used destruction as an artistic means. The participants included, among others, Al Hansen, Yoko Ono, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Henri Chopin, George Maciunas, the ZAJ Group, Werner Schreib, Ralph Ortiz, Mark Boyle, Robin Page, John Latham, and the AMM Group.

The three-day symposium was followed by events in various halls and other locations, and accompanied by an exhibition in Better Books, Charing Cross Road, which included documentation on the actionists. Brus, Muehl and Nitsch were invited through the mediation of the poet Ernst Jandl, and were accompanied by fellow Austrians Kurt Kren and Peter Weibel. Schwarzkogler was unable to attend for financial and other reasons. Shortly before leaving Vienna, the three artists held a press conference in Muehl's studio in Perinetgasse on 2 September. All three performed short actions, Hoffenreich photographed. Brus performed Action in a Circle (see Brus section), his "most personally satisfactory work to date," Nitsch Action 20a, and Muehl Still Life with Finger.



The second evening of the symposium in London was dedicated to the Viennese, who broke with the rule that there were to be no performances by presenting "actionist" lectures. After a conventional talk by Weibel on film, the division of labour and direct art, Muehl performed his translation action for two voices with Juan Hidalgo. According to Weibel (bildkompendium), the action was the reverse of Muehl's score (see Muehl section). Hidalgo read short sentences, the names of towns and sights, etc. from a travel guide, while Muehl interrupted and "interpreted" him by means of facial grimaces and noises — as if he were "translating" Hidalgo — finally seizing Hidalgo's face and mouth and preventing him from reading. Then Brus performed a piece entitled Head Destruction. "Brus hit his head against a paper bag filled with paper and placed

on the table with increasing force, speed and trajectory, until he fell backwards and crashed stiffly to the ground, emitting a cry."¹¹⁹ Nitsch concluded the evening with a lecture on "abreaction and crime".

After the symposium proper, 12 September saw the beginning of various performances at the different venues. On that day the actionists appeared at Conway Hall, along with Yoko Ono, Al Hansen and others. Muehl and Brus followed Henri Chopin's Tape Presentation with their Breath Exercises. The action consisted of breathing exercises, croaks, groans, screams and roars amplified over a microphone, and interspersed with gymnastic exercises.

The DIAS events were extensively photographed but most of this documentation has been lost.

BREATH EXERCISES Brus & Muehl¹²⁰

1. standing, breathe through nose
2. breathe through mouth
3. abdominal breathing
4. run around, gymnastic exercises, heavy breathing
5. expel breath sharply
6. gasp
7. scream
8. roar, roll about on the floor



A second action by Brus and Muehl was staged at the St. Bride Institute the following day, Ten Rounds for Cassius Clay, which Gustav Metzger described as "perfect, beautiful and exceptional." Life¹²¹ reviewed it:

Mühl is ready in raincoat and socks when the crowd arrives at St. Bride Foundation Institute (...) he listens carefully as the London law for public spectacles is explained to him — only to discover a moment later that the question of insisting upon nudity has become academic: the girl he has found to assist him is a music teacher at a Catholic grammar school and she has asked to remain in her underwear throughout.

Mühl is a good sport about it, and when the girl comes into the arena of folding chairs, she is veiled in a gauze, and she also wears a graceful smile. She lies

down on a bed of moss placed in the centre of the room. Mühl shadow-boxes privately under the bright spotlights. Günter Brus, Mühl's partner from Vienna and the ideological *Sprecher* of the evening, circles the room screaming German curses at the crowd. "Wow! The real concentration camp thing!" says a spectator.

Then Mühl comforts the girl in vegetables. Her body is smeared with flour, tomatoes, beer, raw eggs. Melons are smashed inside a gunny sack and Mühl pours the runny results artfully down on the twisting figure. Then comes dry cereal, wheat paste, milk, half-chewed carrots. Volunteers rise from their seats to come forward and chew carrots. Mühl chants and pours in bright coloured powdered paints as he stamps and dances in the spreading salad. Finally he flings himself into the

animal-vegetable marriage, embracing the girl, lapping up the milk and beer. An appealing mood of harvest-time merry-making descends upon the room — the audience is spellbound, the girl is radiant at the bottom of the stew. It is her first Happening — an experience! "At first you're scared and embarrassed," she says, "but afterward it's just so *great*."

Clearly, Mühl is a man working the mother lode. In spilled groceries he has lucidly revealed a number of the Underground's most difficult and ambiguous directions. There is the element of psychodrama, the jocular sado-masochism, the destruction, the libidinous innocence, the significantly popular choice of primitive ritual as a means of mapping modern thought. It is powerful stuff, and the critics who happened to see it are uniformly impressed. (...)

On 15 September, all 13 of Kurt Kren's films were shown at the Africa Centre, including those of Muehl's and Brus's actions, and this was accompanied by a simultaneous happening staged by Brus, Nitsch, Weibel, Muehl and Al Hansen. According to Weibel, Nitsch showed films of his actions, Brus disconcerted the audience by simulating pre-natal and natal experiences, freezing in one position for a lengthy period, crawling on his belly, etc., and Weibel and Muehl gave a simultaneous Action Lecture to the sound of alternating gramophone records. Weibel began by tearing up a



photograph and then read a text entitled "Proposals on Non-Affirmative Art" while Muehl disrupted him in various ways; he glued the sheets of paper together, tore the pages from Weibel's hands, and gradually undressed him. From time to time, Weibel screwed up the pages and threw them into the audience, while Muehl succeeded in dragging him further and further to the ground, finally gagging him with a bandage as he uttered the last word of the text.

On the 16th, Nitsch performed his 21st action, the 5th abreaction play, at the St. Bride Institute (see Nitsch section for score). The performers consisted of Brus, Muehl, Weibel, Al Hansen, Kurt Kren and Robin Page. Shortly before the conclusion of the action, 10 policemen entered and forced the performers to stop. The film was confiscated (in actual fact Ralph Ortiz gave them a reel of unexposed film in its stead) and Nitsch was

searched in the toilet. As a consequence of the Nitsch action, two members of the honorary committee of DIAS, John Sharkey and Gustav Metzger, were charged with "unlawfully causing to be shown and presented an indecent exhibition contrary to Common Law." They were subsequently found guilty and Metzger fined £100, Sharkey being given a conditional discharge.

The Symposium and actions brought the actionists many admirers and new friends, above all from the Fluxus contingent (Yoko Ono and Al Hansen spread the word on the radical new art movement when they returned to the United States), and Muehl responded by staging an action concert for Al Hansen upon returning to Vienna (see Muehl section). However, success in England was not

matched by their reception back home: at the press conference in Oswald Wiener's flat in Vienna, only a single journalist put in an appearance.

A second DIAS event was organised in New York in 1968, this time attended only by Nitsch (thanks to an invitation mediated by the Austrian film-maker Peter Kubelka).

The DIAS participants appear below. Front row, left to right: ?, Jean-Jacques Lebel (with pipe), Robin Page, Kurt Kren, Brus, John Latham, ?. Second row: Ferdy Bonnomi (in spectacles), Nitsch, Metzger, Ivor Davies, Henri Chopin (with arm raised), Pro-Diaz. Third row: Scottie (in striped shirt), Muehl, Werner Schreib (wearing a cap), Hidalgo. At the back: Al Hansen wearing a policeman's helmet.



This was the last and most extensive event to be staged by Brus and Muehl under the banner of the Institute for Direct Art. It encompassed direct audience confrontation, featuring strong body actions from Brus and a more literary, theatrical side from Muehl. The event was staged at the Porrhaus with these participants: Brus, Muehl, Otmar Bauer, August Fröhlich, Dieter Haupt, Hermann Simböck, Hans Jörg Staudinger, Herbert Stumpfl, Kurt Zein and Irene. For additional documentation see Brus and Muehl sections.

Brus and Muehl announced the event in a mimeographed flyer.

PUBLICITY FLYER¹²²

GUENTER BRUS & OTTO MUEHL will present at the DIRECT ART FESTIVAL 1967 the various direct art forms that have been developed to date.

direct art differs conspicuously from the happenings of the american-german kind. we believe that the vienna INSTITUTE FOR DIRECT ART has produced forms of action that exist nowhere else on the planet. these are:

1. the PSYCHO-MOTORIC NOISE ACTION, mutually developed by BRUS and MUEHL. it uses the human body as its preferred means of expression and activates the latter's means of locomotion, muscles and vocal cords. the P-M.N.A. could be viewed as the most advanced musical statement currently in existence;
2. the MATERIAL ACTION, developed by OTTO MUEHL. "it is painting that has grown beyond the picture surface." the human body becomes the picture surface;
3. the ORGIES MYSTERIES THEATRE of HERMANN NITSCH. the tracing back of theatre to its primal elements;
4. the SELF-MUTILATIONS of GUENTER BRUS. the artist's own body as an action-object (self-destruction);
5. CINEMA DIRECT ART. the film as a means of preserving DIRECT ART.

direct art and happenings developed solely from painting.

musical influences came at a later date. the influence of literature is slight. to this day the literati are unable to free themselves from words and texts. DIRECT ART rejects every attempt to brighten up plays, poetry readings, private views and music performances with happening-like interludes.

DIRECT ART distances itself from the wit of the

drunken party.

DIRECT ART distances itself from all art practice concerned with creating IN ALL SERIOUSNESS pictures, paintings, texts, novels, films, plays, architecture, regardless of how progressive the materials and scores may be.

Their press release added:¹²³

the happening-popes of vienna, BRUS & MUEHL, will create the new autumn look with this DIRECT ART HAPPENING.

after its unveiling in vienna, BRUS & MUEHL will present the DIRECT ART PROTOTYPE on the catwalks of munich, berlin, wuppertal, london and leeds.

BRUS & MUEHL'S sensational forthcoming SPRING LOOK will be launched in march 1968 by dada-hülsenbeck at the DESTRUCTION IN ART FESTIVAL in new york, and in may will be marketed in boston, chicago, san francisco and los angeles.

DIRECT ART WINTER LOOK '67

your two favourites B & M will be hosting a rather unusual show, featuring:

1. knee-length winter ties
2. of course, they have also come up with something new: this is no longer the matronly happening from last april, with its mothball odour — this is a totally new fur stole, youthful and made up of many different parts.

In the publication BRUS of the same year, the author gave more details of his planned actions for the festival:

DIRECT ART FESTIVAL VIENNA 67

1. FROM THE DOSSIER ON HUMANITY

A person lies motionless on his back. A woman and a man appear to attend to him.

2. THE E-SHOCK PLEASE, I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE

When someone shakes you by the hand, you may immediately lose your self-control.

3. PERVERSE EXPERIMENT WITH A HANDKERCHIEF

A handkerchief is taken from your trouser pocket. After blowing your nose on it, the handkerchief is spread out on the floor and the back of your head placed on it. This position may be maintained for a long time.

4. ECCENTRIC DOINGS OF AN INVALID WITH A DOG

A person lies on a walking apparatus and takes an electric dog with luminous eyes for a walk.

5. I'LL CHOP OFF YOUR HEAD IN THE HALLWAY, GABRIELA

A person scuttles backwards over the apron of the stage, dragging a pillow behind him in his mouth. Later, he can tremble or beat his head on the pillow at regular intervals.

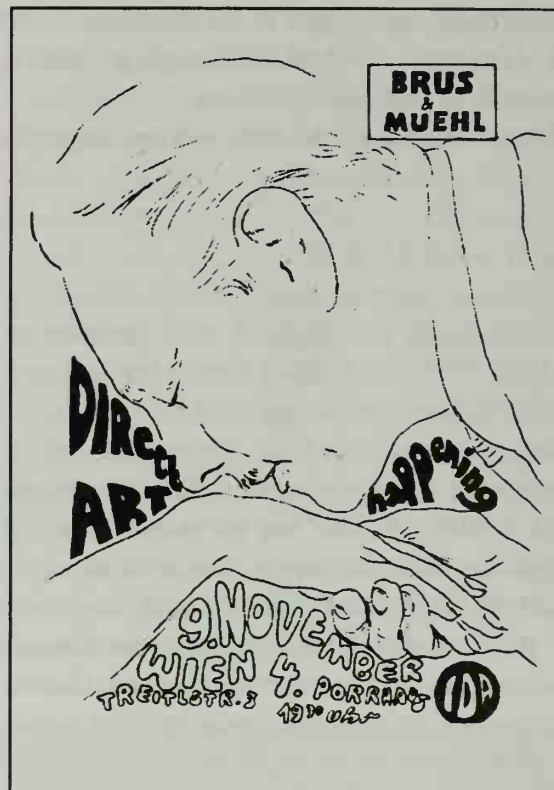
6. ABRAHAM'S SAUSAGE BOILER (*illustrated right*)
Reminiscences of his birth, mixed with medicinal knowledge. Birth of lights (a lung) from trouser waistband. Subsequently the lung is wrapped in a fresh white nappy and strangled. The possibility of a murder is not excluded.

7. I LOVE YOU YES I DO

Love between young people under a large blanket, which after a while is pulled off. Accompanied by mood music.

8. IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT, MUMMY

An arbitrary movement is constantly repeated until the festival is over.



One of several publicity flyers by Brus.



Like The Blood Organ the year before, the Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism was held in Muehl's basement studio, and conceived of as a protest against the Vienna Festival Week. The Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism can be seen as the first public manifestation of Vienna actionism, and the newspapers provided full coverage of the event. Actions were planned by Muehl and Nitsch; Brus was invited by Muehl to paint the cellar walls in front of the public, but declined the offer. The music consisted of Part 2 of Logothetis's Phantasmata. The objective on this occasion was to show actual processes rather than to present finished works.

As in The Blood Organ, the artists barred the entrance, this time with a mirror, before the action began. Several hundred people had gathered outside by the time Muehl signalled the action's beginning by smashing the mirror with two bricks.

For manifestos and other documentation see Muehl and Nitsch sections.

POLICE REPORT

On the side walls of the cellar were pieces of rusty iron, wire and broken pieces of mirror; the facing wall, situated on the west side of the cellar, was lined with white canvas. A low bed covered with a white cloth was also located there, and in front of it, hanging on a rope and a butcher's hook from the ceiling, was a slaughtered lamb. Standing next to the low bed were several buckets containing the entrails of an animal, probably a slaughtered lamb. Nitsch, who at the beginning of the performance was lying on the bed and was covered in a white sheet, stood up, took the entrails from a bucket and threw them on to a sheet that was spread out beneath the suspended lamb. Tearing with his hands and also using a pair of shears, he reduced the intestines to little pieces. He then chewed up a white flower, probably a tea-rose, and spat the chewed-up pieces on to the entrails. Nitsch then seized a clamp-iron and lashed out at the skinned lamb with it, so that pieces of meat and blood came away from the animal's body and sprayed against the canvas lining. The blows with the clamp-iron caused the lamb to swing backwards and forwards and finally to detach itself. The lamb fell into the crowd of onlookers, who reacted with laughter. Nitsch then lay down on the bed and covered himself with chopped-up intestines. Nitsch's clothes, which consisted of a white shirt, dark trousers and black shoes, and

the bed and canvas on the facing wall of the room became heavily soiled by the slimy intestines during the aforementioned activity. Moreover, a red, blood-like liquid was poured over Nitsch from a bucket. In the end, Nitsch and the low bed and the canvas on the facing wall presented such a revolting sight that the onlookers felt compelled to leave the premises.

It had been agreed beforehand that Nitsch should begin the festival, and he had performed for some 45 minutes and attracted a crowd of several hundred when a large contingent of police and squad cars arrived and ended the action. (Their reason was that the artists had not sought the necessary permission to use the street for the performance.) Muehl was thus unable to perform his defiling a surface or his action with the kitchen dresser, described in the leaflet overleaf. Nitsch, however, was extremely satisfied with his performance, which was of a new intensity and was seen by a number of important artists.

That evening the animal remains were put in a sack and taken down to the Danube Canal, where Brus cast it in a frenzy into the water. The occurrence was observed by passers-by, cries of "murderers" were heard, and the police soon arrived and asked for an explanation after several people had contacted them. Brus, Nitsch and a friend, Kari Bauer, were arrested and forced to spend three days in prison; later, Nitsch and Muehl received 14 days for causing a public nuisance and disturbing the peace.

III Smashing the mirror (which closes off the cellar door) with bricks

In the cellar: the defilement and soiling of a venus

The artistic uniformity of morass, human being, rags, bread & cement

Hermann Nitsch

I shall put myself into a state of physical and psychic excitation through my actions in order to reach the primal excess experience.

I shall pour, spray and soil the surface with blood and roll about in a pool of paint.

I shall lie down dressed in a bed, intestines lacerated cow udders hair hot water and blood serum will be pushed and poured under the sheets.

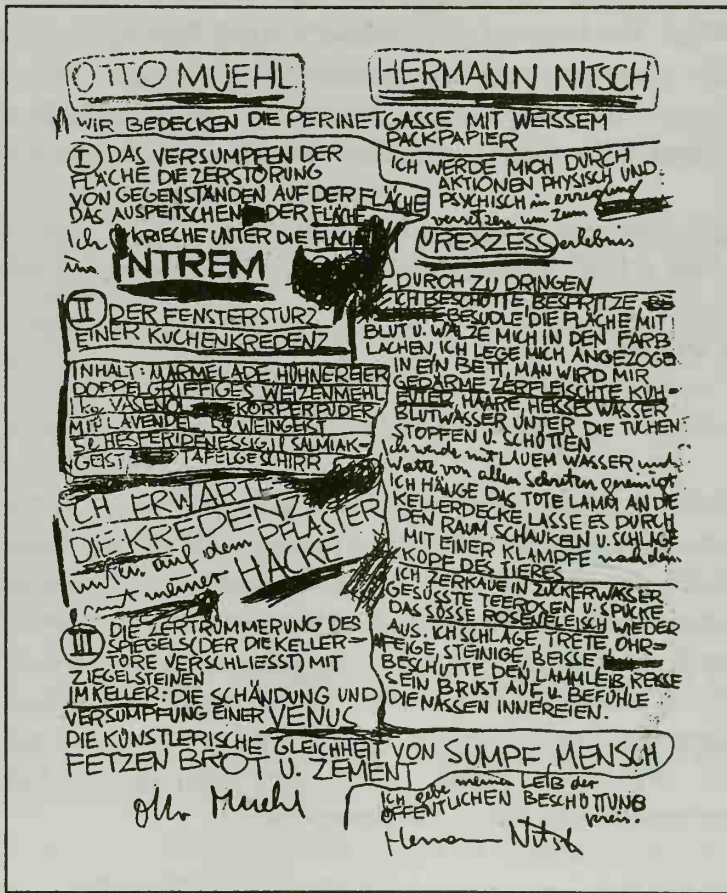
All the secretions will be cleansed from me using lukewarm water and cotton wool.

I shall hang the dead lamb from the cellar ceiling, allow it to swing about, and lash out at the animal's head with a cramp-iron. I shall chew up bite through tea-roses dipped in sugar water and spit out the sweet rose flesh. I shall punch, kick, cuff, stone, bite and drench the body of the lamb, tear open its chest and fondle its damp innards.

I shall give up my body to the audience to be drenched.

During the ensuing legal proceedings, Muehl made the following comment in his written statement:

Only the third section of our "Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism", the triggering of the "primal excess experience", could be performed in our private cellar. With this primal excess experience, the spectators and the supporters of our approach to art were to be completely sobered and brought to the realization that all material amounts to nothing, regardless of whether it is a smashed-up dresser or a slaughtered lamb. Only once the spectators are confronted by this total destruction can a hopeful intimation of a new, better world be revealed, in which a more beautiful world of art may be built up from the ruins of the old, material world. In keeping with our thinking, the destructive rending of an already slaughtered lamb was demonstrated in the cellar.



we will cover the perinetgasse with white wrapping paper

Otto Muehl

I Defiling a surface destroying objects on the surface whipping the surface i crawl beneath the surface into the intreme

II Sending a kitchen dresser plummeting from the window

Contents: jam, hen's eggs, coarsely milled flour, 1 kg vasenol talcum powder with lavender, 5 l spirits of wine, 5 l citrus vinegar, 1 l liquid ammonia, crockery

I wait for the dresser on the pavement below with an axe

FILMS BY BRUS AND MUEHL

Brus and Muehl made several films together, most notably perhaps With Verve into the New Year (in collaboration with Schwarzkogler), Fountain and Satisfaction, all dating from 1968.

The following descriptions come from the second edition of Muehl's Zock.

FOUNTAIN

16 mm, 12 min, b/w.

Actors: Brus, Buonanno, Steiner, Kren, Muehl.

Camera: Spermint.

a, female, kneels on a table, backside to camera.

b lies under a's backside, mouth open.

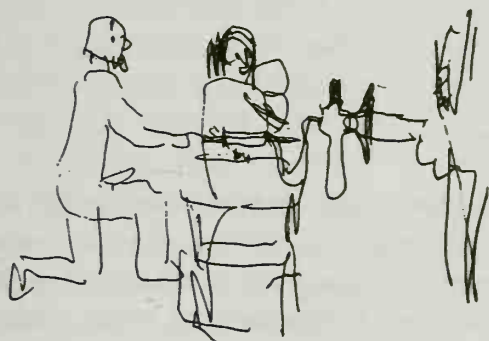
c hangs upside down, his feet upwards, beside a and b.

d sits on a's backside.

the camera keeps running, after 2 minutes everyone begins to urinate simultaneously.

a b c d lie in layers on top of one another, perform rocking motions and urinate. everyone does something, a and c dance a waltz during which c urinates and shits.

c and d enact a urination duel.



Satisfaction consisted of three sections, the sketch for part one (below left) is by Muehl.

1. *Simultaneous action: Brus, Muehl, Schwarzkogler*

2. *Brus: "G. Brus asks you to be quiet" (shitting action)*

3. *Muehl: "All the best for mother's day" (penis action)*

SATISFACTION (I)

16 mm, 12 min, b/w.

Actors: Anni Brus, Brus, Muehl, Schwarzkogler, Steiner, Diana, Stalin.

Camera: Spermint and Helmut Kronberger.

all the actors are naked.

a kneels and presses a 3-metre-long wooden rod into a corner of the room with his forehead.

b squats on a chair and pumps air into his intestines with a pump.

c, female, stands leaning against a sofa resting at an angle against the wall and performs orgasmic motions.

d stands upright, attaches a lady's handbag to his member, jiggles it about, empties it, scatters the contents, urinates in the bag.

b, tied into the framework of a pram, backside to the camera, pushes himself away from the camera, shits and urinates.

a milk pump for suckling mothers is tied to a chair arm-rest. sitting on the chair is c with child.

d stands to the right of the chair, his member inserted in the pump.

a kneels to the left of the chair and pumps.

the same in close-up: pump and member.

stalin, a cat, joins in with all of the actions.

HAPPENING AND FLUXUS > Cologne,
6 November 1970 - 6 January 1971

In late 1970, Harald Szeemann staged the Happening & Fluxus Exhibition on behalf of the Cologne Arts Society. A large contingent of artists from America (Red Grooms, George Brecht, Al Hansen, Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams, Claes Oldenburg, among others) and Europe (Ben Vautier, Tomas Schmit, Robert Filliou, Arthur Koepcke, Wolf Vostell and others) were invited, as were Brus, Muehl and Nitsch. Each artist was allocated a booth for documentation, space was provided for environments and talks, and actions and happenings were staged.

The exhibition quickly became the focus of controversy, with Muehl and Nitsch very much in the forefront: threats and complaints were made to the Arts Society, followed by law suits, pressure from the Lord Mayor of Cologne, and of course scandalised comments in the press.

Nitsch performed a large action in an underground car-park (assisted by Jon Hendricks, Muehl and members of Muehl's Direct Art Group) which precipitated a stream of complaints accusing Nitsch of infringing hygiene regulations, offences against religion, pornography and even actual bodily harm (someone slipped over in a pool of blood in the car-park). Muehl's The Wanton Wotan, a Manopsychotic Ballet, a wild, turbulent action performed twice on one day in front of large audiences, also became the target of legal action. A description of it appeared in the civil prosecutor's report:

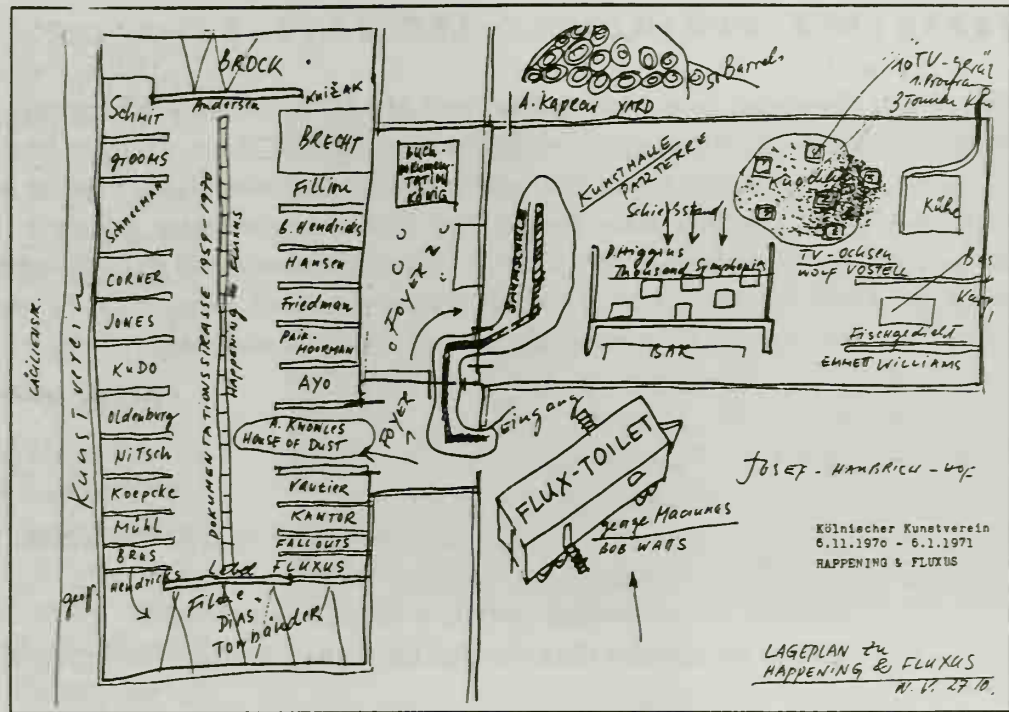
happening & fluxus

CIVIL PROSECUTOR'S REPORT

During the first of Muehl's actions he appeared with another male performer and two female performers. Muehl and the male performer were dressed in brassières and suspender belts, the female performers were naked. The actors performed a kind of round dance, during which, among other things, a rolling-pin was manipulated and at times inserted into the vaginas of the female performers. The round was continued and after a while Muehl evacuated his bowels over one of the female performers. He smeared the excrement, mixed with flour and water, over the female performers and then whipped them theatrically with a thong. Towards the end of the piece a chicken was carried into the space. Muehl's companions severed its head with a quick flick of a long and evidently sharp knife, and the performers leapt at and fought over the chicken's body, tearing it apart and mutually smearing each other with its blood. This concluded the action. The second event was apparently very similar. There were, however, minor deviations. Muehl and his male performer were undressed from the start, and whereas the first action was backed by mechanical music, a lady cellist¹²⁴ accompanied the events of the second action with sequences of notes.

The contents of both Nitsch's and Muehl's booths were removed a few days after the opening of the exhibition, partly for "reasons of hygiene", and partly in Nitsch's case because of his use of religious symbols: a priest removed the wooden cross. Nitsch gave this description of his stand, which he set up during a short action:¹²⁵

space for the action: an exhibition stand 4 x 4 m (3 walls). the end wall is covered in white cloth. a slaughtered, skinned sheep is nailed as if crucified (head down) to this wall. the sheep's chest is kept wide open by 2 strong, thin nylon cords attached to the side walls. hanging to the left of the crucified sheep is a yellow-gold chasuble, above it a stole. a line has been drawn round the chasuble in violet chalk. to the right, beside the adorned end wall, are plans of the o.m. theatre. fixed to the two side walls are photos of actions. the floor of the stand is covered in white cloth. set beneath the crucified sheep is a table (table 1). the table is covered with a freshly laundered white cloth. lying on the table are a sheep's intestines, a sheep's stomach, the brain of a slaughtered cow and folded white paper handkerchiefs. set in front of table 1 is a second table. table 2 is covered with a freshly laundered white cloth. lying to the left of the table is a chasuble. lying on the chasuble are sugar cubes and folded white paper handkerchiefs. to the right of the table are fresh white cloths, antiseptic bandages, sugar cubes,



reagent glasses filled with blood, a wooden stand containing blood-filled test-tubes. on the floor to the left of the stand is a green chasuble.

blood and serum are poured from the test-tubes and reagent glasses into the sheep's open body. the blood and serum splashes and flows on to the white table-cloth. test-tubes and reagent glasses are handed to the visitors to the exhibition, who pour the blood into the crucified sheep's open body.

the audience reacted very timidly and shyly.

happening & fluxus, cover of exhibition catalogue (plan of exhibition), Cologne, 1970.

INSTITUTE FOR DIRECT ART (I.D.A.)

Founded in Vienna in June 1966 by Brus and Muehl, the Institute subsequently came to include Nitsch, Kurt Kren, Peter Weibel and Josef Dvorak, and later Schwarzkogler, Otmar Bauer, Herbert Stumpfl and Valie Export. The Institute came about during the period in which Brus and Muehl worked most closely together and produced several joint publications. Its initial purpose was to give the actionists and their colleagues more gravity at the Destruction in Art Symposium in London in September. Among other projects, the Institute was intent on contributing the Austrian exhibit to the 1968 Venice Biennale, as outlined by Dvorak at the press conference which followed DIAS and by Brus and Muehl in their publication, Direct Art, B & M.¹²⁶ This is one of the four short pieces it contained:

DIRECT ART, B & M

GÜNTER BRUS — OTTO MUEHL

concept for the austrian pavilion at the biennale 1968

motto: we suspect that the alps have an extremely damaging effect on the austrian mentality.

MAN

human specimens from old people's homes in the city of vienna are placed on pedestals:

name, age, illnesses, vicissitudes of fate, distinguishing features and abilities are listed on a plaque.

austrian mental patients are strapped behind frames as waist-length portraits or presented in cages.

direct portraits of a psychiatrist, psychiatric-hospital orderly, policeman, butcher, nurse, surgeon, gym teacher, nun, welfare worker and a streetwalker.

direct sculptures: the exhibition supervisor is sitting in an apple tree in the sculpture park, beneath him are all the austrian art critics together with the senate and all civil servants responsible for the arts.

all the exhibited specimens are forbidden to speak. visitors who tease or feed the exhibits, or act in an undignified manner towards them, will be ordered to leave the biennale.

photography is prohibited.

3 times a day the specimens will be publicly fed and watered.

sick specimens will be artificially fed by means of tubes.

disabled specimens will be taken in wheelchairs to transparent cabinets to evacuate their bowels.

in this way the evacuation of their bowels can be viewed by spectators.

the sounds of bowel movements will be broadcast on the plaza san marco by a tannoy system. presumably they will even be audible in mestre¹²⁷ as a low rumbling noise.

LE MARAIS

Mautner — I believe he was a student at the university — wanted to produce a new periodical with the title *Le Marais* (The Marsh). The first issue, which was already a special one, acted as the catalogue to my exhibition *Painting — Self-Painting — Self-Mutilation*. I used the opportunity not only to include my own activities, but also those of my friends (Muehl, Nitsch, Schwarzkogler, Priessnitz, Schürer).¹²⁸

The exhibition opened at the Galerie Junge Generation on 6 July 1965 (see Brus section). Le Marais was important for several reasons: it contained the first published writings of both Brus and Schwarzkogler, as well as the first writings of the other two actionists to appear outside their own publishing ventures. Furthermore, the four artists referred to themselves as the "Vienna Action Group", the only occasion on which they identified themselves collectively in this way.

Muehl's text, material action, is similar to the version in the Muehl section here; see also the Schwarzkogler section for his texts, draft PANORAMA I: painting in motion and plan for a performance.



FROM LE MARAIS

SELF-MUTILATION

Brus (Excerpt)

I lie white in white in a white bedroom.

I lie white in white in a white lavatory.

I sit white in white in a white police station among white policemen.

I deliver a white speech white in white in the white assembly room in parliament among white delegates.

I preach white in white in a white church.

I sever my left hand. Lying somewhere or other is a foot. A suture on my wrist bone. I press a drawing-pin into my spinal cord. I nail my big toe to my index finger. Lying on a white plate is hair from my head, armpits and pubic area. I slit open my aorta lengthways with a razor blade (Gillette). I drive a tin-tack into my ear. I split my head open lengthways in two halves. I insert barbed wire into my urethra and gently attempt to twist it and slice the nerve (autocystoscopy). I bite open my pimples and suck them dry. I have everything photographed and observed.

Muehl and Schwarzkogler worked on several action scripts together, although none were ever to be realised. The first given here, sanitary art, dates from 1965 and was presumably intended for the aborted publication das fieber. The second is from the same year, and at least two versions of it exist: an early, unpublished draft, which is given here, and a version that was reworked by Schwarzkogler and published in Weibel and Export's bildkompendium.

I. SANITARY ART ¹²⁹

white doctors' coats
 a round hand-mirror in a bread roll on their foreheads
 gogglebox, in front, a plank with two petri dishes (clean, dirty) and swab-sticks — head bandage
 spray-painted hose
 sticking-plasters over eyes, sticking-plasters over mouth
 insert light bulb
 backside with panties rubber hose drips paint into a bed-pan
 breast with rubber teats — cut off with scissors
 belly from the front scraps of meat hanging on a string
 powder in the hose — paper bag is inflated and burst — dust flies out of backside
 brain operation
 gargling spittoon
 from tape recorder: death-rattles, groans, shouts, grating noises
 sawing: plaster of paris in a glove, inside that a piece of sheet metal
 (rabbit-plank-blowtorch)
 stomach operation: plastic bag filled with offal — a plaster lid on top
 exhibition:
 rubber glove on a plate, sawn-off finger — karbanossi
 deer's head in bell jar (specimen)
 artificial limbs on the wall
 photos of operations temperature curves
 picture with red cross (text s.a.)
 plate with offal — rubber tube
 kidneys in alcohol — connected by white plastic tubes — stone

II. (SECOND TEXT, FIRST DRAFT) ¹³⁰

white room two people in white pyjamas
 a man in blue overalls saws up two planks to the beat of a metronome for three minutes
 a and b sit at a table
 b saws up sheet metal
 a stretches and punches balloons with hands until they burst, hammers sheet metal, rubs with paper action with water: gargling, spitting, splashing, squirting with irrigator, tipping, sucking up water
 large tub, takes a bath and splashes about
 hole is bored through plank with nude against it
 paint squirted through it from behind
 table is pulled along by a rope, various objects on it
 some fall off
 water drips on to a drum

 a and b sit at a table, eat and drink
 eat an egg together
 slurp an egg together
 scatter petals
 look at each other, pour wine into one another's mouths, take irrigators, squirt milk into one another's mouths. both inflate balloons filled with bed-feathers. throw two kilos of beans into the air. then on to the sheet metal. urinate by means of bottles filled with beans into various containers. spit beans into containers. throw flour into the air. squirt flour from plastic bottles. squash balloons with backsides turned to the audience. sit down on whoopee cushions. let air out. play on balloons. hit filled white balloons against the wall. play with small white balloons, then with eggs. small balloon filled with beetroot juice. before that tie serviettes round necks. balloons filled with food dyes, simultaneously gurgle. tear open plaster of paris balloon.

interval
 semi-dark room bangers
 balloon filled with fluorescent paint
 a and b are wearing goggles and gloves
 1. match
 2. box of matches is set on fire
 3. candle is lit
 4. colouring the flame
 5. candle is melted with a blow-torch
 6. magnesium flare is lit
 7. bengal match
 8. flash-wadding sparklers (calf's head studded with sparklers)
 9. toy-torpedoes cap-gun
 10. burst balloons using blow-torch and fire
 11. large bomb is lit, does not explode, is pierced, black paint flows out.

interval
 action with compressed air
 a plastic tube is inflated
 balloons are inflated
 flute is played with a tube
 air is blown into bottles
 air is blown into water omo
 balloons with soap flakes
 speaking down stove-pipes

addendum: calf's head with flickering effect

*In point of fact, Schwarzkogler's first participation in an action was in Muehl's Balloon Concert (see Muehl section). According to Muehl, Schwarzkogler immediately attempted to realise his more aesthetic ideas, demanding for instance that the balloons should be white, and later commenting that the action was "very dirty."*¹⁵¹

DIE SCHASTROMMEL

Founded in Berlin in 1969 as the organ of the "Austrian Government in Exile" by Brus, Gerhard Rühm and Oswald Wiener (who had also settled in Berlin and set up a bar called Exile). The title came from Rühm, and is an Austrian colloquialism which, although literally meaning "fart-drum", is actually a humorous idiom for an "old biddy" or woman in general. Brus was responsible for the editorial content, the silk-screened covers and the layout. The publication ran for a total of 17 issues, issues 13 to 17 appearing under the new title Die Drossel (The Thrush), and featured not only the work of the actionists and their colleagues (such as Peter Weibel, Valie Export and Otmar Bauer), but also such major artists as Dieter Roth, Arnulf Rainer, Georg Baselitz and the film-maker Peter Kubelka.

The first issue began with this Proclamation:

DIE SCHASTROMMEL
 Organ der österr. Exilregierung

A U P R U F

klause und kreisky haben mit hilfe ihrer organisierten
 eschlägerbanden die macht in österreich an sich gerie-
 een. ihre feile gerichtbarkeit, diese fene des öster-
 reichischen fröhrentners, hat es zuwege gebracht, alle
 aufrechten österreichischer über die grenzen ihrer heimat
 zu jagen. in bolzano fand sich ein häuflein der ver-
 sprengten und beschloß, unter hintansetzung persönlicher
 interessen gut und leben für die befreiung der
 gesamten öosterreichischen bevölkerung vom terror der
 austro-terroristen zu befreien. diese männer beschlos-
 een, die österreichische exilregierung zu errichten.

die portefeuillee wurden provisorisch verteilt wie
 folgt:

keiser für polizei & volkesundheit:	otmar bauer
keiser für inneres & äußeres:	günter brus
keiser für religion & andere fragen:	hermann nitsch
keiser für verkehr & volkbildung:	gerhard rühm
keiser für justiz & wiedergutmachung:	oswald wiener
militärkeiser:	

die erste sitzung der exilregierung am 27.5.1969 er-
 brachte die folgenden richtlinien:

1. einrichtung eines zentralen organs der österreichi-
 schen exilregierung. dieses organ soll "DIE SCHAS-
 TROMMEL" heißen. "DIE SCHASTROMMEL" etellt sich zur
 aufgabe, das organ der österreichischen exilregie-
 rung zu sein.
2. die nächste sitzung findet im laufe des monats ju-
 li statt.

Gerhard Rühm *H. Nitsch* *günter Brus*
 keiser f. verkehr keiser f. religion keiser f. inneres u.
 und volkbildung und andere fragen äußeres

WIENER
 keiser f. justiz u.
 wiedergutmachung;
 militärkeiser

oswald wiener
 keiser f. polizei u.
 volkesundheit

PROCLAMATION!

klaus and kreisky¹³² have usurped power in austria with the help of their organised gangs of thugs. their venal jurisdiction, this kangaroo court of the young austrian pensioner, has succeeded in chasing every upright austrian across the borders of their homeland. a small heap of scattered souls met in bolzano and resolved to put their personal interests, lives and possessions behind them in the cause of liberating the whole austrian population from the terror of these austro-terrorists. they resolved to set up the austrian government in exile.

provisional portfolios were allotted as follows:

emperor for the police & public health: otmar bauer

emperor for the interior & exterior: günter brus

emperor for religion & other questions: hermann nitsch

emperor for transport & national education: gerhard rühm

emperor for justice & reparations, military emperor: oswald wiener

the first sitting of the government in exile, on 27.5.1969, passed the following resolutions:

1. the establishment of a central organ of the austrian government in exile. this organ is to be called "DIE SCHASTROMMEL". "DIE SCHASTROMMEL" will undertake the task of acting as the organ of the austrian government in exile.

2. the next sitting will be held during the month of july.



TOTAL ACTIONS

"Total Action" was an idea of Brus and Muehl's dating from early 1966: it combined Brus's self-mutilation themes and Muehl's material actions into a "direct encounter between the unconscious and the reality of the material."¹³³ For Brus this meant a further step beyond extended painting, applying actionist means to actions proper, and a move away from the camera to real time. The model in their First Total Action was the painter Annette Meyer. The press report opposite (from Wiener Woche) is headed with before-and-after photographs of the participants.

A second action followed three weeks later, whose full title was Second Total Action (which should not be without significance for sensible mental cases). This action differed in a few details (meat instead of wood, a bit more cocoa, a bikini for the model, the use of a flat-iron to cook meat, a radio, etc.). In an interview with the Wiener Woche, Muehl stated, "I do it on account of my world view. For political reasons. I'm aggressive."

FIRST TOTAL ACTION

SIMULTANEOUS ACTION — ORNAMENT IS A CRIME

2 june 1966, adolf loos villa, esslergasse 9, vienna¹³⁴

noises, talking, screaming, paint, food, movements.

1. brus and muehl stand facing each other from the opposite walls of the room.

lying between them on freshly mown grass is a naked model covered in plastic film.

both actors wear bikinis, brus is painted white.

overlapping actions.

M: chops wood, stacks it, cracks an egg over it, pours raspberry juice, custard and yoghurt on top, licks the kindling with his tongue, draws arrows on the floor pointing to brus and the model.

B: creeps forward and draws a line on the floor in chalk, encircles the model with dashes, crawls to muehl's stack of wood while muehl drips raspberry juice on him. takes a piece of wood and places it on the model's stomach.

M and B stand facing each other over the model, stare at each other for a long while, begin to gasp for air, stammer and gurgle. return to their places.

B and M stand facing each other and do physical jerks.

B and M approach each other, crane their necks forward, and stammer while raspberry juice trickles from their mouths on to the model.

B eats a cracked egg from M's hand, complete with shell, spits it into M's mouth who then spits it on to the model's stomach.

B and M slap each other round the face with jam.

M crushes an egg inside B's pants.

M lies down on B, they tear a tomato apart with their teeth.

they rip a cow's lung apart with their teeth.

M pulls a pig's liver out of B's pants.

B tips blueberry yoghurt over M.

they slap each other round the face with cream pastries.

they squirt milk over the model.

M squirts raspberry juice into the model's mouth through an artificial penis.

M lies down on the floor and eats flowers and lettuce and spits it all on to the model.

B lies on his back on the floor and moves himself backwards over the model, eats dough, M washes out his mouth with a soda siphon. M squirts B, who is kissing the model, with the siphon and tips 5 litres of milk over both of them.

he throws 3 kg of flour over them.

B and M look each other deep in the eye.

they move their mouths mechanically and fall into a screaming fit.

M places a doll's mask over the model's head.

B lies with his back on the model and disperses 1 kg of yellow powder paint over himself.

M, B and the model read various texts simultaneously.

M and B standing, the model lying.

read louder and louder, scream, screech, roar, tear up the texts, continue roaring, throw themselves to the floor, roll with the model around the room and consider that thereby they have rendered all forms of poetry reading impossible.

The last of the three (and the most acclaimed) "Total actions" by Brus and Muehl was their Vietnam Party (see Brus section for the text of the invitation). In an interview,¹³⁵ Brus recalled:

Muehl and I conceived of the *Vietnam Party* together, fifty-fifty. I had observed the phrase-mongering that had been going on. The way the press had reacted towards Vietnam over the years — journalists either said nothing or were pro-American. Then all at once, when it had reached a certain point, everyone did an about-turn, suddenly adopting the words of the leftists, as if they had always spoken that way. I noticed that something fishy was going on, that this wasn't the way to deal with the problem. So we focused on this and underlined the element of shock by making fun of a serious or indeed earnest problem. But anyone who attended the action saw that it was anything but amusing! It was only amusing the way the newspapers wrote about it. They saw the people we had asked to turn up in costume. But the action itself was out-and-out warfare in our cellar, if you want to put it that way (laughs). It mirrored the atrocities. One day we barged into a debate on Vietnam with the prelate Ungar. We handed out our leaflets and suddenly there was an enormous protest: "What's the meaning of this, get these people out of here? How can one... How can one write freedom schmeedom curds and whey, how can one associate that with the tragic occurrences in Vietnam? We must first discuss it all!"

The leaflet he mentions is given below. The action resulted in sizable fines for Brus and Muehl.

VIETNAM PARTY: Mimeographed leaflet¹³⁶

GÜNTER BRUS AND OTTO MUEHL

PROGRAMME: a call for peace will be read by the chairman of the institute for direct art, josef dvorak.

a treatise will be read by peter partlevskij on art that, by presenting direct reality, hinders the curdling of the gastric juices among large sections of the population and maintains a healthy appetite for the world around us.

burning of a buddhist on a soup plate.

balloon-, bed-feather-, flour-throwing match US vs. vietcong.

a hen that has fallen for the sake of the fatherland is given a hero's burial, so that everything seems right and proper again.

after being worked over with flour, tomatoes and raspberry juice, a US soldier and a vietcong decide to make a confession. a US soldier and a vietcong scrap over a hen, which lays an apple because it has no other alternative.

shouting orgy US vs. vietcong.

mottoes:

vietcong and usa,

all the birds are home to stay.

buddhists, johnson, gasoline,

freedom, fortune and sing sing

if you trail the flag in dust

you're not worth a single crust

freedom schmeedom curds and whey

we plant our rice ourselves, okay?

hot potato and hotline

highest treason, pork in brine

meat intestines jungle troop

epitome of chicken soup

our vietnam party differs fundamentally from the normal, useless demonstrations against the war in vietnam. by means of a diversity of materials, the vietnam party, put on by the institute for direct art, will show directly that the wholesale slaughter of people for political, ideological, economic, moral and religious ends is part of our reality. which should not

be without significance for thinking people. although killing people is one of the most exciting and amusing things in the world, otto muehl and günter brus demand an immediate ban, for their own selfish reasons. unless, however, all means of communication have been completely exhausted, as is the case in the vietnam war. anyone who chooses not to think should die.



VIETNAM PARTY: Score¹³⁷

1. dvorak's speech. his desk is a female model who is lying flat on a swing in front of him. colour slides are projected on to dvorak and model.
2. brus and muehl sit at a laid table and eat. set on the table are: cornflakes, eggs, flour, bread-crumbs, milk, honey, jam, a meat dish with gravy on a plate, 2 bottles of beer. hanging above the table are a number of balloons.
3. balloons are destroyed by squeezing, burning cigarettes. (the balloons are filled with materials.)
4. the foodstuffs are spilled, teeth brushed with gravy, M slaps the plate with the palm of his hand. works over the model on the swing with food.
5. B and M sit opposite each other, shake their beer bottles rhythmically to the accompaniment of mouth noises. climaxes in a roar as the co₂ pressure makes the beer spray out.
6. B and M burn a doll hanging from the ceiling. B and M and model dance and sing around the burning doll: ring a ring o' roses, mounting to screams, audience throws paint and flour.
7. model sits with legs apart on the stove, audience

throws material at model. gauze bandages are tied around model and fastened with elastoplast. stove is lit, balloons filled with feathers explode inside oven and fly out of the open door, which is directly between the model's splayed legs. B vomits through the stove door.

8. two trenches have been dug in the room, 9 metres apart.

B and M lie down in them, facing each other.

B and M throw eggs, tomatoes, bags of flour at each other, crawl towards each other, continue their bombardment, B pushes a cardboard box in front of him (soap powder), M leaps up and pours milk, dough and black paint over B, M bores his head through the box, they push each other about the room, heads locked together, B buries M in his trench under earth and sand, M pops a balloon by means of a fuse. B jumps against a wooden partition and falls into his trench.

B and M run back and forth around the room until they collapse. whenever they meet they cry out.

Although Zock (see Muehl section) was seen by the yellow press as simply an association of friends and representatives of the Vienna avant-garde, the founders saw it more as a political formation. The name was coined by Muehl, Oswald Wiener and Kurt Kalb, after such attempts as "p.p.r.t.t." — what they wanted was a name that really hit the mark, like "zap", namely Zock.¹³⁸

The first Zock Manifesto was drawn up by Wiener and Muehl at the end of 1966, and was delivered by Wiener at midnight, 31 December, before friends in his flat. This original manifesto, which was the model for Muehl's later manifesto (in Muehl section), has been lost or destroyed. The plans for Zock extended beyond festival stagings: a branch was to be set up in America by Dieter Roth (although he was probably never informed of this), candidates were to be nominated for the National Assembly elections in Austria and suitable hustings were to be organised. There were plans for a number of publications (a book on childhood sexual experiences, for instance), and even to mint Zock money, or at least to mark every note that came the group's way with a Zock stamp. In the end, two events were realised, and Muehl continued publishing his own texts in his Zock Press.

The first public manifestation was Zock Exercises, at the Galerie Nächst St. Stephan, Vienna, on 17.4.1967 at 8 p.m., which was seen as a "chamber music prelude" to the Zock Festival four days later. Weibel read his text "Zock certainly answers" in the dark, using a torch, in such a rapid and almost incomprehensible manner that the audience was soon in a tumult. This was followed by Wiener's lost "Zock Manifesto", declaimed through a megaphone; the author gave short shrift to the voices of protest in the audience, naming the hecklers and categorising them (fool, idiot, etc.), and thereby imposing a respectful silence.

The performance concluded with a series of actions by Muehl, wearing a dressing-gown, tennis shoes and swimming trunks: a silent "Grimuïdes Concert" (roughly, Gurning Concert) in which he grimaced, twisted his mouth, etc., a breathing recital, a glottal-stop recital, "Body Poems" (spastic muscle exercises performed in only his trunks, concluded by raspberry juice suddenly spilling from his mouth and trickling down his chest): "cosmetic, but from inside"; and finally a screaming recital.

DAS IST DIE NEUE BANANE:
 SPESENBEITRAG
 S 20.-

GARTH ^{x)}
 MODERNE
 ESSAYS

ZOCK [®]
 EXERCISES

17. APRIL
 20^h

^{x)} MIT EXTRA FLEISCHKRAFT

OMO SUPER ^{*}
 MATERIALACTION
 BODYLYRIK

^{*} KOSMETIK VON INNEN

GALERIE ST. STEPHAN
 WIEN 1, GRÜNANGERG. 1
 MONTAG, 17. APRIL 67 20 UHR



The Zock Festival was organised by the Catholic Student Society, which wanted to put on a "happening" for its members. It was staged before some 500 spectators. The festival included contributions from a wide range of artists and writers of the avant-garde, with notable exceptions being Brus, who distanced himself from Muehl's plans, and Schwarzkogler, who took umbrage when his name was not printed on the poster. The mixture of artistic temperaments and viewpoints, jealousies and mutual aggressions led to animosity and even blows being exchanged on stage, particularly when the compère (Michel Würthle) began insulting those performers he disliked and lauding his favourites. "The main front," according to Weibel and Export, "was between Muehl and Wiener, between the actionists and the literati, and although Muehl was given credit for arranging the event, the majority of those involved expressed a distaste for his kind of actions."

Above all, Wiener and Gerhard Rühm had developed their own arsenal of (literary-based) techniques during the Literary Cabarets that they, together with other members of the so-called "Vienna Group" (H.C. Artmann, Konrad Bayer, Friedrich Achleitner), staged in the late Fifties. And they were determined to pull rank. "It was Wiener's action, he destroyed ours and celebrated his own," as Muehl put it in retrospect.¹³⁹ A third factor in the uproar was Kurt Kalb, freelance enfant terrible, who began the evening by handing round drinks into which he had previously urinated, then proceeded to urinate into the glasses of the audience in the front seats, later urinated over Muehl's group during the epileptic scene (see below), and grew increasingly drunk and belligerent over the course of the evening.

The description of the actual events comes from Weibel and Export's bildkompendium.¹⁴⁰ See also Muehl section.

PROGRAMME

1. GUSTAV WERWOLF: Gusch
2. KOBALÉK: Reading of a verdict
3. OMO SUPER & HIS BIG BAND presents the Zock fanfare
4. GARTH: Zock for all
5. ATTERSEE: Something beautiful
6. OMO SUPER: Dear God, we're all epileptics
7. MR. MESSAGE: Hymn to Zock
8. WOLFGANG BAUER AND SERVANT GÜNTER: Istanbul
9. FORD MUSTANG 70: Zock outset
10. OMO SUPER: Zock's hens lay more
11. FNUFI: Disgrace
12. OMO SUPER: Omo Super hits out wherever dirt shows its face
- 12a. JOHANNES 007: Superzock

EVENTS AT THE ZOCK FESTIVAL

1. Rühm stood alone in front of the curtain, doing nothing, simply standing there. After about 15 minutes the audience grew restless and the first cat-calls came. Rühm responded with the word "this". He waited quite a few minutes more until the next voice made itself heard, to which he said "sentence". After the next cat-call, which was also several minutes in coming, he said "will". He continued in this way at ever shorter intervals (because several members of the audience had worked out what was going on) until he had spoken the last word of his sentence: "this sentence will finish after the eighth cat-call."

(...)

2. Otto Kobalek read out the court ruling from the hearing, 9.11.1966, in which Hermann Nitsch and Josef Dvorak were found guilty of ridiculing the Roman Catholic church on the occasion of Nitsch's exhibition at Galerie Dvorak (June 1966). This reading also lasted at least 20 minutes.

3-6. These events managed to take place despite the increasing excitement of the audience. Ossi's¹⁴¹ dumpling throwing and Muehl's epileptics

brought the audience to the boil.

7. Mr Message's *Hymn to Zock* (Reinhard Priessnitz's enervating speech, which was designed to get on the audience's nerves by whining, self-deprecation, etc.): by now there was no more need to fear the worst, it was already happening.

Meanwhile, on Muehl's instructions, Dieter Haupt did a Günter Brus, slithering through the middle of the hall on to the stage, like a reptile with no limbs. The audience wanted to see more, crowded to the middle of the hall, stood up, and in the middle of the crush Nitsch set his lamb swinging: worried that his action might get omitted, Johannes 007: Superzock jumped ahead of the plan — he simply began, headlong and

with vehemence.

As he reached for his bucket of paint, he found that it had already been taken. People threw it at him, splashed paint in all directions.

(...)

In the mean time Priessnitz continued stamping on the floor, and demonstrating his inadequacy and weakness with a whingeing voice, simulating an impression of impotency and inferiority which was bound to prompt feelings of superiority and power, strength and glory in the minds of the audience, and the audience now joined in with force. By now Kurt Kalb, who was totally drunk, had started a glorious fight on stage and was in a steely clinch with the students responsible for the event (who were worried



Vor Schmutz wird gewarnt

So hartnäckig beginnt die ZOCK-Vorstellung: Vor Mutter's oder Köchel's, ein Gerüchserkenntnis, das vor einiger Zeit zur Schließung einer Wiener Galerie geführt hat, in deren Räumlichkeiten angeblich die Religion verpöppelt wurde. Die ZOCK-Gruppe will die Bühne zum Forum des Lächerlichen machen. Die Warnung, daß für beschmutzte Kleider nicht gehaftet wird, weist auf große künftige Ereignisse: Knüttelschächten, Beförderungszyklone und Farbputzerorgien stehen bevor.



Generalreinigung — Und das ist der Höhepunkt: Eine Parodie auf die aufdringliche OMO-Werbung. Die Reinigungskraft der Männer in Götterhosen ist ungeheuer — in wenigen Minuten ist alles weggefegt, was auf der Bühne stand: Mamas Küchenherdanzug im Trimmerhaufen, die Stühle Kleinhals, Bettfedern Regen durch die Luft. Und zum Schluß beginnen sie sogar (Bilder darunter), die Bühne von sich selber zu reinigen. Sie wälzen sich die Stufen herunter auf das Publikum zu und quälen wie ein Irt über den Rand der Bühne. Vor den Füßen des Publikums bleiben sie liegen, die Riesensackkraft ist erschöpft.



FÜR BESCHMUTZTE KLEIDUNG WIRD KEINE HAFTUNG GERNOMMEN

ZOCK schlägt zu

• Ein Wiener Happening mit Polizeieinsatz

Ungeduld oder Spieß mit starker Bedrückung! Da jenseits harrige Jähren die Wälder befehlige Politanen hervor, Semmelknecht und OMO-Baum-Gas fliegen durch die Luft, Bestfessern stehen — 's ist Frühling in Wien, und im Frühling entstehen etc. „Happening“ wie diese künftigen künftigen künftigen künftigen Wälder heißen.

Eine kleine Wiener Happening-Gruppe, die sich „ZOCK“ nennt, hat diese Tage Arbeiten verrichtet. In einem ZOCK-Happening in einem Saal im „Garten“, im ehemaligen Straß 14, drängten 20 Publikum 200 Teilnehmer auf die Straße und sprangen die Veranstaltung.

„ZOCK“

Genau das Frühling wollen die sonderbaren ZOCK-Jährlinge:

... von der Polizei beschützt werden. ZOCK ist die Abkürzung für Zentralorganisation christlicher „Katholischer“, während sie tatsächlich ihren Namen, denn in Wahrheit haben sie natürlich weder einen noch von einer anderen Organisation des Kapitalismus, und wahrscheinlich auch nicht viel von Christentum.

Was sie wollen?

WieWe-Reporter kamen so jenseits ungenutzten Arbeit, kaum nach, als die ZOCK-Führerinnen es registrierte. Da wurden Gerüchserkenntnis und Werbemaschinen, sogar pseudopolitische Reden gehalten, als Eisenbahn wurde aufgelegt und mit Papierbäumen und Christbaumstücken dekoriert. geschickelt, so gab es das Bühnen als Großformstücke mit Häusern und Haden — die Betitledern

... tote Lämmer wurden hergeschoben, und über allem stand die hat herangebrachte Dervies des ZOCK:

„Findet ihr es schlecht? Greift es euch selbst! Mach und noch und noch ein Zock!“

... Sie nahmen es in Kauf, daß der wilde Bürger nicht von ihnen hätte — die selber hatten ja auch nichts von der Solidarität.

... Sie fragten sich über die Sinnlosigkeit des modernen Lebens und ließen sie auf die Spitze.

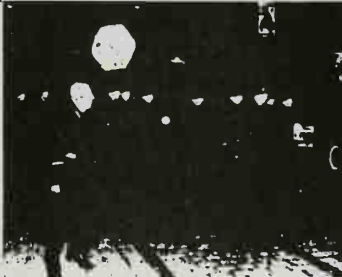
... Chefs? Lärmmacher! im Grunde Philosophen?

... „Von Zeit zu Zeit“, riefen sie am Ende der Happening Darbietungen, während sie schon samt dem Zuschauern von der Polizei durchgenommen — „schlagen wir zu, damit noch in Wien nicht ganz vernarrt!“



Was schön ist

... zeigte der Maler Attorse, der sich als Erfinder des Würfelstößers ausgibt; Die Hölle eines riesigen blauen Ballons liegt schief auf dem Boden, Attorse schließt das verkehrte Ende eines Strohsträngers an und bläst das Ding auf. Als es dann darauf was ein blauer Wesenbild, platzt er Papierbäumen und Sternenspeicher von Westderradem Währdendessen fragt ein Conferencier (vom Mädchen aus dem Publikum, ob ihnen die Darbietung gefallen hat. Jetzt wissen wir, was schön ist, seufzen sie.



Was häßlich ist

... zeigte sich noch mehr-fach (Bilder links und oben) auf der Straße; Polizisten, die man aus Angst vor Zugern gerufen hatte, drängten das Publikum aus dem Saal. Und mancher, dem die jähre Luftveränderung nicht bekam, spielte dann ein Straßen-„Happening“ auf seine Wewe.



about the equipment).

After he had wrecked the chairs and flung the microphone to the other end of the hall, after the stage had been stormed and become the scene of dancing, drumming and screaming, after the scuffle had spread to the entire hall, the owner called the police.

Consequently, events 8 (the writer Wolfgang Bauer with Günter Falk), 9 (Peter Weibel), 10 (Muehl), 11 (Dominik Steiger) and 12 (Muehl) could not be performed.

In fact 200 police arrived, wearing riot helmets and leading dogs. The Zock performers casually wandered into the crowd, sat with the guests at the bar and quietly drank a beer, or departed in cars, as if nothing had happened. The exception to this was Kalb, who by now had collapsed in a drunken stupor behind the stage. Nitsch later commented,¹⁴² that the evening had been a success and achieved its goals — even if his own action did not really get off the ground. One consequence was, however, that various of the performers avoided one another for some months to come.

Newspaper headline (Wiener Wochenblatt, 6.5.1967): Zock hits out. A Viennese happening with police intervention.

Picture captions: Zock's dirt warning (refers to the sign on the podium "We accept no responsibility for soiled clothing.")

Zock's secret weapon: dumplings.

A general clean-up, until everything's wrecked.

What's beautiful.

What's ugly.

These biographies are intended as loose outlines to help orient the texts and actions given in the main body of the book. Information is largely restricted to the artists' formative years and the periods in which they were directly involved in actionism.

GÜNTER BRUS

1938 Born in Ardning, Styria.

1953 Admitted to the School of Applied Arts in Graz to study graphic design. Intense preoccupation with the music of "classical modernism": Bartok, Stravinsky, Berg and the Vienna School, as well as early Viennese Expressionist painting.

1956 Completion of course and move to Vienna, where he is accepted for the commercial graphics class at the Academy of Applied Arts. After a few weeks he transfers to fine art. Familiarisation with turn-of-the-century art, especially van Gogh, Kubin and Munch, and contemporary Austrian abstract art, above all Arnulf Rainer.

1960 Difficulties at the Academy lead him to accept an invitation from his friend Alfons Schilling to come to Majorca, where he is exposed to the large abstract paintings of an American artist working there. First, unsatisfactory attempts to free himself from the academic canon. Visits the Biennale in Venice; sees paintings of Kline and Vedova for the first time, and is struck by their progressiveness. Begins painting on brown wrapping paper (mainly with black and white paint), gradually reducing it to a record of physical gestures. Meets Muehl in December, both are attending the Christmas show at the Vienna Secession; Muehl is attracted to Brus, who is loudly criticising the exhibits. Muehl wants to see his works, and is fascinated on visiting his studio. Together with Schilling, Brus makes several important breaks with easel painting, and above all realises that it is the act itself that should be shown, not the product, especially since the process often ends with the destruction of the picture.

1961 Shows paintings in a collective exhibition in Vienna, which includes Nitsch, whom he rejects (not knowing his theoretical work) as overly conservative. Joint exhibition with Schilling of large-sized works at the Galerie Junge Generation. Call-up to military service.

End of 1961 Completion of military service accompanied by major personal crisis in which he turns away from art. Returns to his parental home, and there meets his

future wife Anni.

1962 With Anni returns to Vienna, and after several months, to art: radicalises tachist means of expression to liberate himself from technique (such as painting with hands and legs bound, etc.). Meets Nitsch through Muehl.

1963 Painting in a Labyrinthine Space, a work painted more or less simultaneously on a number of canvases on the walls of two rooms in Dvorak's gallery. The work is largely destroyed by builders during the renovation of the basement in which it is stored. Works for six months with his wife, Anni, as a dish-washer and shoe-cleaner in a hotel in St. Moritz, where he writes a novel that is later lost, and records improvised music on the piano.

1964 First action, Ana, after receiving encouragement from Muehl, followed at the end of the year by the three-part action Hand painting, Head painting, Total head painting, which for the first time introduces elements such as razor blades, etc.

1965 Actions Self-Painting II, Silver, Self-Mutilation are performed in quick succession in Muehl's studio. These actions develop the arsenal of razor blades, tin-tacks, scissors, etc. that are used to awaken a powerful field of associations, and also come to be used in subsequent actions. Kren's films of Ana and Silver are shown at the Museum of the 20th Century, Vienna. In July Brus has an exhibition of action photographs at the Galerie Junge Generation, entitled Painting, Self-Painting, Self-Mutilation, with an action at the opening. The catalogue is a special edition of the magazine Le Marais (The Marsh) which Brus edits; the action is Brus's first before an audience. The director is nervous. He forces Brus to exhibit paintings as well, and to conclude the action with a public discussion led by a psychiatrist, the arts adviser for Vienna, and a Catholic socialist; in addition, the invitation is effectively worded as an apology in advance. Brus responds by staging an extra action the day before the opening, Vienna Walk. The action is stopped by the police

and he is fined.

Autumn 1965 *Further film actions: Tetanus and Transfusion. During this period Brus produces a large number of action sketches which develop the theme of self-mutilation and the analytically dissected body.*

1966 *Work on a large series of drawings for a proposed action at the Galerie Nächst St. Stephan, which is turned down. Conceives with Muehl the idea of "Total Action". Performance of First Total Action: Ornament is a Crime; Second Total Action; Vietnam Party together with Muehl. Brus and Muehl begin publishing their written collaborations and a number of broadsheets. Extensive work on action sketches. Close contact with Schwarzkogler. Participates in the Destruction in Art Symposium in London. Birth of daughter, Diana.*

1967 *Film triptych Osmosis, Pullover, Inhaling — Exhaling. Action in September with his daughter (Action with a Baby), designed for documentation as still photographs. From now on his actions (Body Analyses) concentrate on a radical examination of the body, body language and taboo bodily functions, and no longer bother with theatrical forms or painting. Performs 20 September; Transvestite Action; With Verve into the New Year (the last with Muehl and Schwarzkogler). Stages the Direct Art Festival with Muehl and his group. Publishes BRUS, a book of his action sketches.*

1968 *Film/photo actions Fountain (with Muehl and Kren) and Satisfaction (with Muehl, Schwarzkogler, Anni Brus, among others). First actions in Germany: Sheer Madness at the Reiff Museum in Aachen (first public defecation and self-injury actions before an audience); Direct Art at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. Performs Citizen Günter Brus Studies his Body in Vienna.*

7 June 1968 *Participation in the Art and Revolution event. Brus is arrested and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment for degrading symbols of the state. Two actions (Strangulation and Tricks) performed in private while waiting for his appeal to be considered. Brus produces a critical documentation of the events, with additional texts by himself, in the publications Patent Urinoir, Patent Merde and Unter dem Ladentisch (Under the Counter).*

1969 *Flees with his family to Berlin after his appeal is rejected. Action Flower Piece based on a poem by Gerhard*

Rühm; film action Impudence in Grünewald (with Otmar Bauer and a female actress); Body Analysis I and II; Intelligence Test. Co-founds the Austrian Government in Exile, and its organ, Die Schastrommel.

1970 *On the invitation of the Frankfurt publisher Kohlkunst Verlag he writes Irrwisch (Jack-o'-Lantern), a key work marking his breakthrough and transition from actionism to his later picturepoems. Performance of the brief action Psychodramalet in Munich, joint event entitled O God, Here They Are with Oswald Wiener and Rühm, and in June Breaking Test, his last and most extreme action, once again in Munich.*

The years of Brus's exile (his sentence was finally commuted to a fine, and he returned to Austria in 1976) were marked by his development of a unique, graphic style of painting and drawing, collaborations with a number of other artists (Rainer, Attersee, Dominik Steiger), and the marriage of his drawings and writings to produce his own genre, the "picturepoem". Over the decades he has produced a vast number of these, and many have been published. Brus was included in the Documenta 5 in 1972, the Bachelor Machines exhibition in 1975, the Venice Biennale in 1980, and has had major retrospectives in Vienna, and in Paris at the Centre Georges Pompidou (1993). It is interesting to note that despite the artist's acknowledged international status, his "reputation" meant that none of the major German newspapers reviewed the latter exhibition.

OTTO MUEHL

1925 *Born in Grodnau, Burgenland.*

1943 *Conscripted for military service; painting in free time.*

1944 *Transferred to the western front.*

1945 *Transferred to the Prague area. Flight from the Russians; imprisonment by the Czechs, escape and return to Upper Austria. Work as farm-hand and stable-boy.*

1948 *Completes studies in German and history at the University of Vienna.*

1952 *Receives teaching diploma. Painting influenced by van Gogh. Attends Academy of Fine Arts.*

1958-63 *Art therapist for handicapped children.*

1960 *One-man show at the Galerie Junge Generation. Meets Brus, who is openly critical of his work. The influence of Brus and his friend Alfons Schilling*

brings about major changes in Muehl's work.

1961 Begins the year by abandoning the easel: swift move from figurative to abstract art, involving new materials, ecstatic destruction and the negation of the picture, which is now placed on the floor. Begins making junk sculptures in the summer, later exhibited at the Vienna Secession.

1962 Meets Nitsch, becomes interested in his O.M. Theatre theories. Interest in Schwitters. Joint event with Nitsch and Adolf Frohner and publication of Die Blutorgel (The Blood Organ). Creates junk sculptures with Frohner during the three-day immurement. Work on large abstract material pictures, then later in the year, on primitivist scrawls. Collaborates on Nitsch's first action, staged in Muehl's flat.

1963 Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism with Nitsch. Muehl's 1st action in his studio flat, Degradation of a Female Body, Degradation of a Venus, using a naked model, rubbish, paint and sheets. This is photographed by Ludwig Hoffenreich, and followed the same year by his 2nd action, a variation entitled Degradation. At the end of the year he gives up his job as a therapist. Becomes acquainted with Oswald Wiener.

1964 3rd material action in four parts: Transparent Packaging, Degradation in a Trunk, Bread-crumbling a Backside, Rolling in Mud, involving naked models and a variety of foodstuffs — ingredients he continued to use for many actions. 4th material action with Nitsch, involving a crucifixion and pelting with mud, which leads to a temporary estrangement between the two. First public material action, for the opening of a jazz bar (Chattanooga). 11 further material actions this year, including Still Life, Action with One Female, One Male and One Ox's Head in Düsseldorf, Balloon Concert, with the assistance of Schwarzkogler, and several specially conceived for filming by Kurt Kren (Mama and Papa, Leda and the Swan, Cosine Alpha and O Christmas Tree). The year marks a notable development of a more theatrical object language. Muehl exhibits action photos for the first time in a gallery.

1965 Further material actions Silver-arse and Bimmel Bammel in February. Two weeks in prison for the Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism after his appeal fails. First screening of Kren's films in Vienna at the Museum of the 20th Century. Material actions Rumpsti Pumpsti and Body-building, filmed by Ernst

Schmidt. His actions are still largely conceived for the camera, but now under his direction as records of the work. Five further actions, including Gym Lesson in Foodstuffs and several Penis Actions.

1966 Last five "material actions", in which people and materials mingle equally. With the "Total Actions" staged with Brus (First Total Action, Second Total Action and Vietnam Party) the emphasis moves strongly to a direct, performance-based action. Co-founds the Institute for Direct Art and participates in the Destruction in Art Symposium. After the unsuccessful joint press conference on the actionists' return to Vienna, Muehl stages his action concert for al hansen in the prestigious avant-garde Galerie Nächst St. Stephan.

1967 Founding of Zock with Wiener. Muehl writes numerous manifestos, stages Zock Exercises in the Galerie Nächst St. Stephan with Wiener and Weibel, and four days later the Zock Festival which ends in a débâcle. Muehl forms the "Direct Art Group", young performers who collaborate in a number of actions including his Psycho-Motoric Noise Concert, various actions at the Direct Art Festival, and the Art and Revolution event. Stages the Direct Art Festival, in collaboration with Brus. Produces a series of paintings, Personalities 67, ironic poster-like portraits of celebrities which correspond thematically to his Zock writings.

1968 Further collaborations with Brus (including With Verve into the New Year, Amore, Satisfaction). Staged for filming, these demonstrate a radical move towards themes of sexuality, perversion and mental illness. In June the Art and Revolution event, for which Muehl spends one month in custody. In September, the first Piss Action in front of an audience during a public presentation of his films in Munich. This action, together with one four days later near Stuttgart, triggers a scandal and Muehl is sought by the West German police.

1969 Concentration on film actions since public performance has become impossible in Austria. Further invitations to Germany; his films are received with enthusiasm at underground festivals. Several "psycho-dramatic" actions in the summer, filmed once again by Kren and assembled to create the film The Saddle Riders' Club. Further actions in Milan and Cologne; Shithead, a private faecal action for film; major scandal after his action O Christmas Tree in Brunswick, which leads to

questions in the Bundestag. Publication of *Mama and Papa* by *Kohlkunst-Verlag, Frankfurt*, his first work not to be self-published.

1970— Several new actions in spring and summer 1970, which are assembled to form the film *The Wanton Wotan*. Beginnings of loose commune life in his flat in Vienna, which gradually coalesces into the idea of a new social form. This informs his concluding actionist work, which becomes increasingly critical of society and the artist's role. *Happening & Fluxus* event in Cologne, November 1970. Muehl performs two actions, but distances himself from the festival in a proclamation. By 1972 the realisation of the *Actions-Analytical Commune*, strongly inspired by *Wilhelm Reich*, takes full precedence over art. A number of photographic folders are produced to raise funds. Due to the increasing hostility towards his work, Muehl turns his back on actionism and produces a series of paintings entitled *12 actions*, based on actionist themes. The commune, which moved in the Seventies to *Burgenland*, lasted until 1990, by which time it had branches in major European cities and many hundreds of members. The practice of free love, actionist therapy, communal property ownership, educational innovation, placing emphasis on artistic development, etc. attracted as many people as it shocked. An unbiased review (or indeed any lengthy survey) of the commune's results remains to be written. Muehl's role as *spiritus rector* subsequently received a serious blow when in June 1991 he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for "engaging in sexual intercourse with minors, illicit sexual acts, rape" and drug offences. He was released in 1998, and now lives in Portugal.

HERMANN NITSCH

1938 Born in Vienna.

1953 Decides to become a church painter in the style of Baroque and Renaissance artists. Admitted to the School of Graphic Art in Vienna. Learns drawing from nature, printing and graphic art.

1954 Commences painting, principally religious themes and above all crucifixions.

1957 First conceives the *Orgies Mysteries Theatre*. Commences study of mythology, past cults, psychoanalysis, anthropology.

1958 Awarded his diploma. Decides to abandon

painting and dedicate himself to poetry and poetic drama.

1959 Writes the drama *ein brunstspiel* (a rutting play), using traditional literary forms, and later conceives his 6-day play, which becomes his life's work. Finds an order to realise the maxims of the *O.M. Theatre*, and envisages *Prinzendorf Castle* as its home (which it was to become over 10 years later).

1960 Returns to painting after being inspired by his encounter with abstract expressionism and tachism, but sees it as a further element to be incorporated into his theatre. First show in Vienna (with *Fritz Kindl*) of action paintings and wax pictures, for which he issues a manifesto on "existential-sacred painting". Gets to know *Schwarzkogler* late in the year at a group exhibition. 1st painting action performed in private in November at the *Technical Museum* where he works, followed by seven more over the next three years.

1961 Finishes writing the first of three abreaction plays. Three further painting actions, the 4th performed for the first time wearing a chasuble-like garment. Gets to know Muehl and the psychoanalyst *Josef Dvorak*. Work on *könig ödipus* (*King Oedipus*).

1962 Further group shows, including one in Korea. Immurement action with Muehl and *Adolf Frohner* and publication of *The Blood Organ*. 1st action, with assistance of Muehl.

1963 Privately publishes abreaction plays 1, 2 and 3. 2nd action is performed in *Dvorak's* gallery, in front of an audience, using a lamb cadaver. Festival of *Psycho-Physical Naturalism* (3rd action). *Nitsch* and Muehl are both sentenced to 14 days in prison. 4th action (a private photo-action with the assistance of his wife *Eva*, Muehl and friend *Wolfgang Tunner*), in which the treatment of the lamb is systematised (inflicting a side-wound, crucifixion, disembowelment, tipping blood over it, rinsing, trampling on the cadaver). Also produces first paintings and collages using blood, sanitary towels, etc.

1964 5th action, in which fetishistic elements are introduced (girl's hair, talc, etc.). Action in the *Galerie Junge Generation* accompanying an exhibition of montages, for which he issues the manifesto *the lamb*. The exhibits were removed after two days on the orders of the mayor. Similarly, a lecture advertised for the following week is banned. Completion of *könig ödipus* and two further action dramas. Beginning of friendship with *Brus*.

1965 7th action dedicated to *Dr. Wolfgang Tunner*,

which developed the use of tables for object actions. Commencement of a series of 7 actions ("penis rinsings") working directly on the male body, initially with Schwarzkogler as his model. Tour of Germany in the spring, where he gets to know Beuys, H.C. Artmann and Vostell. On returning, two weeks in prison for the Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism after his appeal fails. The art magazine *Kunst* publishes an article about Nitsch which unleashes a storm of indignation among its readers. 9th action, lasting 10 hours and using several passive actors and assistants, including Brus, Muehl, Schwarzkogler; the action is performed outdoors, as is the 13th action. 16th action performed for and filmed by Stan Brakhage when he was visiting Vienna (footage later included in his film *The Songs*).

1966 Exhibition of sanitary-towel montages in the Galerie Dvorak, during which he performs his 19th action (with passive actor, lamb and objects) in an elaborately fashioned environment. Five days' arrest for staging a theatrical production in a gallery, plus a suspended sentence of 6 months for offending religious feelings on account of the montage first holy communion, which included a sanitary towel. Journey to London in September for the Destruction in Art Symposium with Brus and Muehl. His action for this is interrupted by the police, but this does nothing to diminish the critical acclaim he receives, above all from the American Fluxus artists there. Beginning of friendship with Oswald Wiener.

1967 Participation in the Zock Festival, where he attempts to stage 23rd action. Plans for a film for Austrian television are thwarted by the director of the station; Nitsch leaves Vienna for Munich, where he joins his future wife, Beate.

1968 Brief return to Vienna for action 24a with Brus's baby daughter. US tour, where he becomes friends with many members of the Fluxus movement and stages 4 large actions to great acclaim (actors include Al Hansen and Jon Hendricks). Now able to realise much larger actions than had previously been possible. Commencement of friendship with Dieter Roth.

1969 Publication of *Orgien Mysterien Theater* in Darmstadt in German and English, his first work that is not self-published; the book contains a broad overview of his theoretical writings, manifestos and playscripts. 30th action, the last with Schwarzkogler before his death; ten-hour 31st action in Munich, with extreme sexual imagery

and blasphemous content. Commences work on the fall of Jerusalem.

1970 32nd action in Munich, now with a conductor for his noise music and a very precise score. 33rd and 34th actions in New York state; the second, at the New York State University, triggers a massive scandal and provokes the intervention of Governor Rockefeller. Participates in *Happening & Fluxus* in Cologne, where part of his installation is removed by a protesting clergyman.

1971 Production of an acoustic abreaction play for West German Radio, but the broadcast is banned at the instigation of the Bishop of Cologne. Guest lecturer at Frankfurt Art College. Purchase of Prinzendorf Castle in Lower Austria by Beate Nitsch as the home of the O.M. Theatre, and thus the realisation of a dream of his youth.

1972 Participates in *Documenta 5*, in Kassel (photographic documentation of a slaughterhouse and of earlier actions). On 2.12.1972 realises the first 12 hours of his 6-day play at the Mercer Arts Kitchen, New York, with the encouragement of the film-maker Jonas Mekas. Actors include Charlotte Moorman, Geoffrey Hendricks (both passive) and Jon Hendricks.

1973 41st action on Whitsunday to open Prinzendorf Castle.

1974 43rd action in Munich interrupted by the police. 45th action (with Brus, Anni Brus and Heinz Cibulka) in Naples leads to his being expelled from Italy.

1975 First 24 hours of his 6-day play performed at Prinzendorf Castle (50th action).

1977 Death of Beate Nitsch in a car accident.

1984 First three days of his 6-day play performed at Prinzendorf Castle (80th action).

1985 Meets his present wife, Rita.

1998 The 6-day play is performed in its entirety in August. Despite attempts by conservative politicians to disrupt the performance, Nitsch and his co-workers are able to complete the work, which meets with almost universal acclaim in the German-speaking news and art press.

Over the years, Nitsch has established himself as an internationally acclaimed artist who exhibits at major galleries and institutions. He is professor of art in Vienna and visiting professor in Frankfurt. His books are published by leading Austrian publishing houses.

RUDOLF SCHWARZKOGLER

1940 Born in Vienna.

1957-61 Attends the School of Graphic Art in Vienna, but leaves without a diploma. Close friendship with Heinz Cibulka, who later worked with both Schwarzkogler and Nitsch.

1960-61 Meets Nitsch. Interest in early Austrian Expressionism; action painting holds less interest for him. Admires Duchamp and Schwitters, French Romantics and Symbolists, Artaud and above all the German writer Hans Henny Jahnn. First graphic works.

1962-63 Attracted to the Viennese tradition (Gerstl, Kokoschka, Schiele), also Arnulf Rainer and Yves Klein; strongly drawn to the colour blue, which for him represents the Apollonian principle, and plans painting the vegetation of entire gardens blue. Ideas for first actions, but is called up for nine months' military service.

1963 Production of first paintings and drawings, including a number in a darker shade of blue than Klein's IKB. Attends the Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism. In October meets Edith Adam, who remains his companion until his death. Becomes acquainted with Brus and Muehl through Nitsch, and is in frequent contact with them.

1964 Balloon Concert with Muehl. They also write several joint action scripts. Commences work as a graphic artist for a firm producing typewriter ribbons and correction fluid, both of which he subsequently works into his actions.

1965 Integrates an action of his own into Nitsch's 7th action; Nitsch's action was the first in which he highlighted the synaesthetic use of objects, liquids and foodstuffs, which was also to feature strongly in Schwarzkogler's work. A few days later he is Nitsch's model for his 8th action, the first "penis rinsing". Again, the careful staging of Nitsch's action, and its production specifically for the photographic record, also become key aspects in Schwarzkogler's works. Publication of texts in Le Marais. 1st autonomous action, Wedding, on 6 February in Heinz Cibulka's flat in front of an invited audience. The action is spoilt somewhat when Anni Brus's dress catches fire, and the distraction caused by the audience prompts Schwarzkogler to conduct his subsequent actions solely in front of the camera. 2nd action (Cibulka as model), performed soon after, already bears the hallmarks of Schwarzkogler's own concise and fastidiously

aesthetic style. Actions 3, 4 and 5 performed during the summer. Schwarzkogler restricts documentation to black and white photographs, although he could have had his work filmed had he chosen to. Actions 2 and 3 evoke strong images of injury and castration. Action 4 is performed solely with Cibulka's head and upper body. He participates with Nitsch in action 5a; actions 5b and c feature Nitsch alone. The first of these disappointed Schwarzkogler inasmuch as he had planned to use a girl as his model, but was forced to use Nitsch in a wig! Also models for Nitsch in his 10th and 11th actions.

1966 After moving to a new flat with Edith Adam, Schwarzkogler at last realises a perfect aesthetic environment for his final action, no.6. To maintain absolute control, Schwarzkogler is the only actor, and as in all previous actions, it is recorded with photographs taken at pauses in the action. Following this action, he only drafts action scores, and concentrates on a Gesamtkunstwerk encompassing architecture, environments, and in which the entirety of life is to be ritualised and aestheticised. He does, however, participate in the action concert for al hansen staged by Muehl.

1967 Further work on environmental concepts and theoretical texts, alternating with depressive phases. Frequent visits to race tracks searching for a safe betting system. Beginnings of his notion of art as a "healing art"; increasingly influenced by mysticism and Eastern philosophy.

1968 Participates in two films with Muehl and Brus (With Verve into the New Year, Satisfaction). Periods of fasting; draws up ritualised regulations for living involving specified food combinations. Loses a considerable amount of weight. Visits the Venice Biennale in the summer. End of 1968 collaborates with Nitsch on the latter's 30th action in Munich. His mental health is growing unstable; Nitsch and his wife try to arrange treatment with a psychotherapist. Writes texts based on his reading of Indian mystics, in particular Sankaracharya.

1969 Extreme sense of isolation in Vienna; he is estranged from Muehl, Nitsch is living in Germany and Brus has fled to Berlin. Further texts and drawings, inner retreat. Dies after plunging from the window of his flat in Vienna (20 June). The funeral service is arranged by Monsignore Otto Mauer, founder of the Galerie Nächst St. Stephan, and is attended by numerous friends and artists.

Attersee, Christian Ludwig Born 1940, Pressburg; champion sailor and artist whose work in the Sixties circled largely round a tongue-in-cheek cult of personal self-aggrandisement. Performed at the Zock Festival. A permanent member of the Austrian "scene" for several decades, he has now established himself as one of Austria's most celebrated painters.

Bauer, Otmar Born 1945, Schärding; architectural student, worked with Brus and Muehl on numerous actions, film-maker, member of the "Austrian Government in Exile", contributor to Die Schastrommel and involved in Muehl's early commune.

Cibulka, Heinz Born 1943, Vienna; met Nitsch in 1965 and immediately became one of his foremost passive actors or models. Was also the chief model in Schwarzkogler's photo-actions (the person generally assumed to be Schwarzkogler!). A close friendship developed between Cibulka and Nitsch, and more recently he has become renowned for his photographic documentation of Nitsch's actions.

Dvorak, Josef Born 1934; psychoanalyst, Catholic theologian, head of the Austrian Trotskyists. Championed the actionists during the early years, giving psychoanalytic insights and much literary stimulus. Dvorak was important for providing an understanding of the pre-verbal aspect of their work, for his ideas on the beneficial effects of overcoming the "revulsion barrier", but ultimately he turned against the actionists and especially Muehl, whom he accused of transforming people (above all women) into food and consumable raw material, and consequently of fascism.

Export, Valie Born 1940, Linz; attended textile college in Vienna, performance artist; worked in film 1965-68, above all in "expanded cinema", numerous actions (often with Peter Weibel); later produced tapestries, including work for Hundertwasser and Dieter Roth. Co-represented Austria at the Venice Biennale in 1980. Export's work is characterised by a strong feminist commitment. Current vice-president of the Art School in Berlin.

Frohner, Adolf Born 1934, Gross-Inzerdorf; while training as a graphic artist, also attended fine art classes where he met Muehl. Exhibited with Muehl in the Galerie Junge Generation, and with Muehl and Nitsch in Seoul, before collaborating with them on The Blood Organ event. As a professional artist he worked in a variety of fields; his work since the early Eighties has included assemblages incorporating landscape motifs.

Hansen, Al 1927-1997, born in Queens; American Fluxus artist and theorist of Happenings met the actionists at the Destruction in Art Symposium; partly instrumental in introducing Nitsch's actions to the USA.

Hoffenreich, Ludwig 1902-1975, born in Vienna; professional photographer for various newspapers, later editor of a newspaper in Berlin and chief editor of one in Munich; returned to Vienna in the late Fifties. His objective, journalistic style made him the photographer of the actionists' work. He worked closely with all four.

Kalb, Kurt Born 1935; agent provocateur and enfant terrible of the Vienna scene, not formally allied with the actionists but a fellow traveller. Prominent art collector and dealer, now owns a renowned Viennese restaurant and gallery.

Kaltenbäck, Franz Born 1944; artist, film-maker, writer; participated in a number of Muehl's actions, as well as in the Art and Revolution event, at which he gave a talk on information and language.

Kipper Kids, The London-based performance artists Martin von Haselberg (b. Buenos Aires, 1949) and Brian Routh (b. Gateshead, 1948); formed when they met at an experimental drama school in London in 1970, from which they were expelled (for being too experimental). For the next five years took their violent, comic and curiously moving act around Europe, performing in museums, galleries, festivals, beer-tents, etc., before inadvertently moving to California; still occasionally perform together and both performed with Nitsch in Europe and the USA.



Kren, Kurt Born 1920, Vienna; bank clerk and experimental film-maker from 1956, including films made with Konrad Bayer. Met Muehl by chance in a coffee-house, and became "the midwife of the actionist film," working with both Muehl and Brus. Initially arranged the material to be shot according to complicated frame plans using graph paper, then "edited" the material, according to the scheme, inside the camera. The final result in the first films of Muehl's and Brus's actions is very fragmentary and hallucinatory, a work of art rather than a documentary film. Later works, such as 20 September with Brus ("the eating, drinking, pissing and shitting film", as it was, and still is known at the London Filmmakers' Co-operative), used much longer shots and unconventional angles, involving much physical exertion by Kren as cameraman. His filmwork with the actionists extended from 1964 (Mama & Papa, Muehl) to 1970 (SS and Star of David, Muehl), and encompasses some 17 works. Kren took part in Muehl's notorious action *Shithead* and others by Nitsch and Muehl.

"Kren deserves to be mentioned in the same breath as the protagonists of early Viennese Actionism."¹⁴³

Other films with Muehl: *Leda and the Swan* (1964), *O Christmas Tree* (1964), *Cosine Alpha* (1964), *Bim-*

mel Bammel (1965), *Happy End* (1969).

Other films with Brus: *Ana* (1964), *Self-Mutilation* (1965), *Silver* (1965), *Brus's Christmas Wishes* (1965).

Also: *Sine Beta* with footage from the *Destruction in Art Symposium* (1967).

Priessnitz, Reinhard 1945-1985, born in Vienna; a poet who was included in the magazine *Le Marais* edited by Brus in 1965; participated in the *Zock Festival*, *Nitsch's 7th action*, and in numerous actions by him and others; in close contact with *Wiener*, *Steiger* and *Kalb*.

Rühm, Gerhard Born 1930, Vienna; poet, musician, performer and chronicler of the "Vienna Group" (Rühm, H.C. Artmann, Konrad Bayer, Friedrich Achleitner and Oswald Wiener) which he co-founded. Participated in several simultaneous actions with the actionists, later a member of the "Austrian Government in Exile". To this day one of the mainstays of the avant-garde in the German-speaking world.

Schilling, Alfons Born 1934, Basel; attended the *Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna*, where he met Brus and *Attersee*; early painting experiments with Brus on *Majorca* and in *Vienna*; created a series of paintings made on fast spinning discs. After moving away from *Vienna* and a lengthy period of travel and increasing isolation, in the late *Sixties* began teaching in art schools and universities in the *USA*. Returned to *Vienna* in 1986.

Schürer, Hermann Born 1928, *Wolfsegg*, died 1986 *Vienna*. Sent down from the *University of Vienna* in 1951, established himself as a poet and urban vagabond. His only permanent residences before the *City of Vienna* offered him a home late in life were gaol and the mental hospital. Received several major prizes for his writing, and co-founded *Freibord*, an *Austrian press* dedicated to the experimental and transient.

Steiger, Dominik Born 1940, *Vienna*; *Foreign Legionnaire*, *Parisian barkeeper*, gardener, tea and *copra* smuggler, *Zock Festival* participant, writer and artist.

Stumpfl, Herbert Born 1944, *Upper Austria*; student who joined *Muehl's Direct Art Group*, and subsequently became a key member of his *Vienna* and *AA* communes.

Weibel, Peter Born 1944, Odessa; read, among other subjects, philosophy in Vienna; numerous films, film actions, partly with Export; actions with Muehl, Brus, Nitsch, Wiener; subsequently art-school lecturer, theorist on new media, author of numerous publications on this and related subjects; curator for Ars Electronica, Linz, museum director in Graz. Presently director of ZKM multi-media centre in Stuttgart.

Wiener, Oswald Born 1935, Vienna; member of the "Vienna Group" with Rühm et al. which organised several proto-actionist events: the "Literary Cabarets" of the late Fifties. Active in numerous actionist events; described as having "the bravura of Hitler, the gestures of Superman, on the border between a political and a comic figure where the communion begins" (Weibel & Export bildkompendium) during his lecture at the Zock Festival. Author of *The Improvement of Central Europe* (1969); member of the "Austrian Government in Exile". Subsequently restaurateur in Berlin, brewer, and theorist on epistemology and artificial intelligence.

Also Alexandra, Alfi, Anastas, Annette, Anni, August, Babsi, Britta, Christian, Christine, Christof, Cora, Diana, Dieter, Dieter, Dominik, Doris, Elke, Erich, Erni, Evelin, Franz, Friedhelm, Friedl, Gerd, Gerd, Günter, Hannerl, Hans Jörg, Hannes, Hanni, Harry, Heinrich, Herbert, Hermann, Ingrid, Irene, Julius, Kurt, Kurt, Laurids, Libi, Lisl, Luigi, Mica, Michael, Ossi, Otmar, Otto, Paul, Peter, Robert, Robert, Robert, Romilla, Rudolf, Schlemmer, Spermint, Susan, Timo, Traudl, Ulla, Uve, Vera, Waldtraud, Walter, Walter, Werner, Zieml, and perhaps a few others; performers in Muehl's actions.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

(unless otherwise indicated)

¹ From "Bemerkungen zu ANA" in *ANA, 1. Aktion 1964*, Galerie Heike Curtze & Galerie Ursula Krinzinger, Vienna & Innsbruck, 1985; unpaginated. The action was prompted by Muehl; Ana is the Croatian name of Brus's wife, Anni; the action was filmed by Kurt Kren using his single-frame technique for the first time.

² To my knowledge two paintings survived. (Brus's note)

³ Text from the *P.A.P.* Catalogue, [Munich, 1969]: *Kurt Kren: 8/64 ANA AKTION BRUS 1964, 16 mm b/w silent 2'40". Nude models are besmeared, bicycles demolished, etc. The montage was created in the camera during the shooting by means of very short shots or single exposures.* (Brus's note)

⁴ From "Bemerkungen zur Selbstbemalung" in *Selbstbemalung 1, 1964*, Galerie Heike Curtze & Galerie Ursula Krinzinger, Vienna & Innsbruck, 1986; unpaginated.

⁵ Otto Muehl's basement studio in Perinetgasse, Vienna, during the early Sixties.

⁶ From "Bemerkungen zum Wiener Spaziergang" in *Wiener Spaziergang, 1965*, Galerie Heike Curtze & Galerie Ursula Krinzinger, Vienna & Innsbruck, 1990; unpaginated.

⁷ Local newspaper report. The five happening specialists referred to were Muehl, Nitsch, Schwarzkogler, as well as Reinhard Priessnitz and Hermann Schürer.

⁸ See Collaborations section for score and photograph.

⁹ Josef Hauer (1883-1959); Austrian composer who anticipated Schönberg's twelve-tone music.

¹⁰ From "Bemerkungen zur Aktion im Kreis" in *Aktion im Kreis, 1966*, Galerie Heike Curtze & Galerie Ursula Krinzinger, Vienna & Innsbruck, 1990; unpaginated.

¹¹ Muehl was in fact 42.

¹² I.D.A. = Institute for Direct Art.

¹³ Although this exact English equivalent of *Das Unikum* does exist, "rarity" or "unique thing" are more common alternatives.

¹⁴ Notes to the photo-edition *Körperanalyse 1*, Hundertmark, Berlin, 1970. The action took place in Brus's house, 27 September 1967.

¹⁵ "Mother cake" is the literal translation of the German word for placenta, *Mutterkuchen*.

¹⁶ Notes to the photo-edition *Körperanalyse 1*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See Collaborations section for further documentation. SÖS stands for Austrian Socialist Student Association.

¹⁹ Letter addressed to Anni Brus.

²⁰ Staberl was and is a renowned reactionary columnist in Austria's daily newspaper, *Die Kronen-Zeitung*.

²¹ Literally: "Art Pieces".

²² Notes to the photo-edition *Körperanalyse 1*.

²³ Text written for this book.

²⁴ Literally: "Jack-o'-Lantern" or "Will-o'-the-wisp".

²⁵ *The Balcony of Europe* (published by Hundertmark, Berlin, 1972).

²⁶ *Irr* in German = mad, and *Wisch* a chit or bit of bumf.

²⁷ From *P.A.P.*, no pagination.

²⁸ Other suspects included Nitsch and the writers Artmann and Rühm.

²⁹ Spanish Riding School: a major tourist attraction in Vienna, highlighting the accomplishments of thoroughbred horses and their quaintly dressed riders.

³⁰ The "M" in question is, according to the author, Muehl himself. The manifesto is illustrated in the Collaborations section.

³¹ Otto Hapsburg: the still-living heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, who was often invoked in such phrases in post-war Austria as a criticism of the government of the small Austrian state.

³² From the booklet produced to accompany the *Festival of Psycho-Physical Naturalism*.

³³ From *Materialaktionen 1963, 1964*, self-published, Vienna, 1964.

³⁴ From an article entitled "Aus der Tiefe der Zeit" (From the Depths of Time), by Hilde Spiel, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30 April 1964.

³⁵ From *Materialaktionen 2 '64*, self-published, Vienna, 1964. This still life action (there were four) took place in the Atelier Lauhus, Düsseldorf, 11 June 1964.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.* Performed with Rudolf Schwarzkogler at the Perinet Cellar, 9 October 1964.

³⁸ Typescript, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

³⁹ Mimeographed leaflet, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

⁴⁰ Mimeographed leaflet, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

⁴¹ From *OMO SUPER Materialaktion*, bound typescript, Archiv Sohm.

⁴² Vincent Hidalgo, born 1927, Las Palmas, Canary Islands; began creating experimental music in 1956 in Milan, a year later participated at the Darmstadt Summer Academy; 1964 founded the ZAJ group with Walter Marchetti and Ramon Barcé based in Madrid. Their work was described by Cage as "the most controversial being done now in theatre and music ... not easy to take but elegant and unforgettable."

⁴³ Typescript, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

⁴⁴ Throughout their Zock period, Muehl and Wiener use the German word *Wichtel*, literally "garden gnome", to capture the charm of the petit bourgeois citizen.

⁴⁵ From the first version of *Zock*, privately published, Vienna, 1967 (illustrated centre page).

⁴⁶ See note 44.

⁴⁷ Walsertal: a valley on the Tyrolean border. Although a part of Austria, the Austrian mountains prevent access except from Germany.

⁴⁸ Garth and Omo Super were Wiener and Muehl respectively. The reference to "meat power" may well relate to problems Muehl had with the Knorr company after publishing a photomontage in which the product name was visible. In *Zock 2* Muehl reproduced his response to the company:

*dear dr. walter langer,
i wish to inform you that i first received your letter of 7.6.66 on saturday
12.6.*

*it was therefore impossible for me to send you any explanation by 10.6.
in the meantime the exhibition has already ended. moreover i should like
to add that the brand name KNORR is not clearly legible on the picture,
as you write. all that is visible is half an O and a double RR (ORR).*

*i was most astonished that the KNORR food concern is so antagonistic to
art, particularly since i am in the process of producing a KNORR soup-
cube cycle.*

*it would be better if the company bought my pictures instead of pressing
charges against an artist.*

*at any rate it was anything but my intention to denigrate KNORR with
my picture. after all, i have for many years been a great fan of KNORR
SOUP-CUBE SOUP.*

*yours faithfully
OMO S.*

*p.s. the picture shows a montage of reproductions of skin and venereal
diseases together with food adverts. also glued to the picture is the text:
omo super THE EPITOME OF A GOOD MEAT SOUP.*

⁴⁹ GARTH: biodapter, the improvement of central europe. (Muehl's note) *The Improvement of Central Europe* is the title of a book by Wiener.

⁵⁰ From *Zock 2*, Zock Press, Vienna, 1968.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Typescript, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv. The concert was first staged at the house of the composer Anestis Logothetis.

⁵⁵ From *mama & papa*, Kohlkunstverlag, Frankfurt, n.d. [1969], pp.31-32. Handwritten additions are in brackets. The action took place in Perinetgasse, early in 1967.

⁵⁶ Mimeographed leaflet, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

⁵⁷ *Kardinal* and *Michelangelo* are the titles of sections of a four-part, 12 minute film entitled *Zock Exercises*: in *Kardinal*, a face is repeatedly hit with foodstuffs and the like; in *Michelangelo*, 3 naked bodies roll about together while paint is tipped over them.

⁵⁸ Mimeographed leaflet (20.10.1967), Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

⁵⁹ *Grimuid*, an extravaganza of face-pulling performed by various members of the actionist scene.

⁶⁰ From *Burgtheater Ausgestopft*, Zock Press, Vienna, 1968.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² From *Patent Urinoir*, self-published by Brus, Vienna, 1968.

⁶³ Kohlkunstverlag, Frankfurt-am-Main.

⁶⁴ From Muehl's notes, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

⁶⁵ At the Ostheimer Gallery, Frankfurt, 20.8.1970.

⁶⁶ Low-brow state radio station.

⁶⁷ There are two versions of this text in the Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv, a typescript and a mimeographed leaflet; both have been consulted here.

⁶⁸ Written for this book.

⁶⁹ The chief ape: Andy Warhol; the coyote: Joseph Beuys, born in Kleve, North Rhine Westfalia.

⁷⁰ A Portuguese laxative.

⁷¹ Otto Mauer, who ran the Galerie Nächst St. Stephan, i.e. the gallery beside the famous cathedral of the same name in which he ministered. The quotation is more or less verbatim Mauer's words to Muehl on one of their first meetings in the early Sixties.

⁷² Dr. Walter Spiel, child psychiatrist, on the *Art and Revolution* event.

⁷³ Psychiatric hospital near Vienna.

⁷⁴ English translation published by Atlas Press in 1997. Afterword published as an off-print to coincide with Nitsch's first one-man exhibition in England in the same year.

⁷⁵ Abreaction is one of Nitsch's central concepts, adopted from Freud and Breuer. In Nitsch's interpretation:

the concept of abreaction, as i understand it: i denote every exceptional form of gratification that allows blocked, pent-up energies to escape abreaction. despite any confusions this might cause, the concept still seems the best for releasing inner urges, for the gratification and discharge of blocked vital needs. i have gone so far as not only to describe affective discharges as abreaction, but also to employ the term for the removal of blockages by means of sublimation. in addition, i have linked the fact of abreaction with the collective needs to release inner urges that can be seen in myths, rites and in religion in general.

The phenomenon leads to what Nitsch refers to as primal or (in his later writing) basic excess:

in abreaction (...) not only are the individual's blockages released, but the floodgates are opened to the immeasurable. from bottomless abysses there streams a vitality that amounts to the metaphysical, procreative rage of creation. the gaze into glorious, terrifying dionysian power allows the creative to manifest itself before us in all its rending cruelty and superabundance of love.

(*das orgien mysterien theater II*, Chiessi & Morra, Naples, Reggio Emilio, Munich, 1976, p.37 and pp.135-142.)

⁷⁶ Excerpt from the foreword to *die wortdichtung des orgien mysterien theaters*, verlag das o.m. theater, no date [1982] or place of publication; unpaginated.

⁷⁷ *das orgien mysterien theater, die partituren aller aufgeführten aktionen 1960-1979*, vol. 1, Editione Morra, Naples, 1979, p.39.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.38.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.39.

⁸¹ *die blutorgel*, self-published, Vienna, 1962; unpaginated.

⁸² *die partituren*, vol. 1, p.47.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.60.

⁸⁴ Nitsch mentions elsewhere that he found this text in C.G. Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis*.

⁸⁵ *die partituren*, vol.1, p.74.

⁸⁶ This is an edited version of the score.

⁸⁷ *die partituren*, vol. 1, pp.94-97.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.147-8.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.163-166.

⁹⁰ From Nitsch's introduction to the third edition of *könig ödipus*, Verlag Jachen Knoblauch/Edition Kaster Schweiss, Berlin, 1986, p.3.

⁹¹ *Die Schastrommel 6*, Bolzano, 1972; unpaginated.

⁹² *das orgien mysterien theater II*, pp.148-9.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.171-176.

⁹⁴ South German or Austrian dance in 3/4 time.

⁹⁵ In a limited edition, some copies of which are still available.

⁹⁶ *Das Orgien Mysterien Theater, Manifeste, Aufsätze, Vorträge*, Residenz Verlag, Salzburg & Vienna, 1990, pp.115-124.

⁹⁷ From the English language edition of the prospectus, translation by Malcolm Green.

⁹⁸ Written for this book.

⁹⁹ *wien. bildkompendium wiener aktionismus und film*, Kohl-kunstverlag, Frankfurt, 1970, pp.281-2.

¹⁰⁰ The exact circumstances of Schwarzkogler's death remain unclear. He fell from the window of his flat in Vienna, but it is uncertain whether it was suicide. As Brus notes in his essay, published in *Die Schastrommel 3* "In the Pfaffstättner wine tavern he said: 'I can't stand the death sentence or suicide.' Perhaps he remained true to this statement right until the end." The mythologised version of his death, that he previously amputated his own penis, is erroneous. The story was initially prompted by a mistaken interpretation of Schwarzkogler's action photos when they were shown in 1972 at the *Documenta 5* in Kassel. It first appeared in an article by Robert Hughes in *Time*, and over the following decades has cropped up with tenacious regularity, doubtless contributing to Schwarzkogler's cult status in recent years.

¹⁰¹ Strictly speaking Schwarzkogler staged only six actions of his own, between February 1965 and spring 1966. Here Nitsch is presumably counting one of Schwarzkogler's collaborations.

¹⁰² Schwarzkogler's actions were all conceived and performed as a series of tableaux, with the camera very much in mind. For the first action, *Wedding*, three photographers were present, which caused an unwelcome distraction. Subsequently, Schwarzkogler allowed only one photographer to record each action and worked far more directly with the lens, instructing the photographer exactly what should be recorded and from what angle.

¹⁰³ The group of newspapers owned by Axel Springer, the subject of repeated attacks during the student demonstrations of the late Sixties.

¹⁰⁴ The French term "*informel painting*" was used widely by the German-speaking artists to denote what is nowadays commonly termed "abstract painting".

¹⁰⁵ Schwarzkogler had read Swami Nikhilananda's book, *Der Hinduismus. Seine Bedeutung für die Befreiung des Geistes* (Hinduism. Its Significance for the Liberation of the Spirit), (Berlin, 1960), which advises a dietary regime for the

development of *bhakti* (love of God), and remarks that the three most binding chains are observing social formalities, overestimating the scriptures, and paying exaggerated attention to the body.

¹⁰⁶ Fermented mare's milk, as drunk by the Tartars.

¹⁰⁷ Schwarzkogler is paraphrasing here some of the hydrotherapeutic methods of the Kneipp cure system developed in the nineteenth century.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. previous note.

¹⁰⁹ In English in the original.

¹¹⁰ This pavilion is presumably intended as the Austrian contribution to the Venice Biennale in 1968, which Schwarzkogler visited. Brus and Muehl also drew up their own plans for the Biennale of that year (see Collaborations section: *Institute for Direct Art*).

¹¹¹ This text draws substantially on the Theosophical Society's German translation of *Tattva Bodha* by Sankaracharya, the renowned 8th-century Indian philosopher of the Advaita form of Vedanta. The English version here is informed by the translation and commentary by Svarupa Chaitanya, Bombay, 1990.

¹¹² Interestingly, Schwarzkogler uses the German word "*Atem*" (= breath) instead of the Sanskrit "*atman*" (= ultimate soul) throughout this text.

¹¹³ *Aswini*: the "divine twins" of inspiration and expiration.

¹¹⁴ This text includes a list of "tattvas" or elements of nature, as described in Sankaracharya's *Tattva Bodha* (see note 111 above).

¹¹⁵ *Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Leben und Werk*, Ritter Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1992, p.264.

¹¹⁶ *Der Wiener Aktionismus und die Österreicher*, ed. Danièle Roussel, Ritter Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1995, p.169.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.23.

¹¹⁸ *Limite du Visible* Catalogue, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1993, p.247.

¹¹⁹ Weibel & Export, *bildkompendium*, p.251.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.281-2.

¹²¹ *The Other Culture* by Barry Farrell, 17 February 1967.

¹²² Mimeographed leaflet, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

¹²³ Mimeographed leaflet, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

¹²⁴ The Fluxus artist Charlotte Moorman.

¹²⁵ *die partituren*, vol. 1, p.26.

¹²⁶ Privately published by the artists in 1967.

¹²⁷ Inland suburb of Venice.

¹²⁸ From Brus, *Wiener Spaziergang* (unpaginated).

¹²⁹ Typescript, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Der Wiener Aktionismus und die Österreicher*, p.41.

¹³² Josef Klaus, chancellor at the time; Bruno Kreisky, then chairman of the Socialist party and chancellor from 1970-1983.

¹³³ Brus and Muehl, flyer for *First Total Action*.

¹³⁴ From *Direkte Kunst B + M*, self-published, Vienna, 1967; unpaginated.

¹³⁵ *Wiener Aktionismus*, a special issue of *Wiener, Die Stadtilustrierte*, Vienna, 1981, p.49.

¹³⁶ Mimeographed leaflet, Sammlung Friedrichshof Archiv.

¹³⁷ From *Direkte Kunst B + M* (unpaginated).

¹³⁸ *bildkompendium*, p.286.

¹³⁹ *Wiener Aktionismus*, special issue of *Wiener*, p.37.

¹⁴⁰ pp.253-4.

¹⁴¹ Oswald Wiener = Garth, dressed as a Martian according to one newspaper.

¹⁴² *die partituren*, vol.1, p.177.

¹⁴³ "*Günter Brus*", interview in *ND 4*, Austin, Texas, 1985, p.7.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

Böck: 149; Epp: 194-198; Eschen: 68, 69, 73; Hoffenreich: cover photographs of Brus & Nitsch, 22, 28-32 (top left), 33, 34, 36-39, 44, 65, 66, 80, 82 (left), 83, 85-88, 95, 97, 98, 100, 103, 105, 117, 119 (right), 121, 136-139, 148, 185-193, 256; Kindler: cover photograph of Schwarzkogler; Klein: cover photograph of Muehl, 24, 25, 27, 32 (bottom left & right), 60; Kren: 51, 52; Kunze: 41; Lenz: 144 (right), 146; Muehl: 26; Niedersacher: 130, 225; Wolters: 53, 54.

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