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EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Tales of Places

A Master of Arts Thesis Exhibition curated by Zeljka Himbele

March 12-26, 2006

Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

Gallery Hours: Wednesday- Sunday 1:00-5:00 pm

Tales of Places is concerned with intimate relationships to particular surroundings. Connecting with places today appears to be more dynamic and fluid. Increased mobility and essential, variously generated changes in our surroundings complicate feeling of belonging and ways of defining one's identity. The artists-Chantal Akerman, Janine Antoni, Dunja Sablic, Anri Sala, Berni Searle, Karina Aguilera Skvirsky and Sandra Sterle-address these phenomena in their works by showing their own relationships to particular places. A "place" is seen here as a complex notion delivered through artists' individual experiences. Personal memories, histories, interaction with family and wider surrounding communities and descriptions of localities are closely entangled with the artists' emotions and sensations. Consequently, the works represent both the artists' past and their own present.



Sandra Sterle, *Round Around*, 1996/7 (video still)
Courtesy of the artist

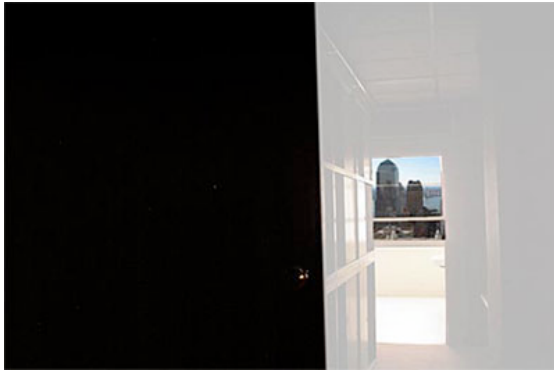
My deepest appreciation goes to the artists Chantal Akerman, Janine Antoni, Dunja Sablic, Anri Sala, Berni Searle, Karina Aguilera Skvirsky and Sandra Sterle for making the inspiring works and participating in the exhibition.

Thanks for the tremendous support to Marcia Acita, Rhea Anastas, Julie Ault, Norton Batkin, Lynne Cooke, Tom Eccles, Colleen Egan, Nico Israel, Kay Larson, Susan Leonard, Ivo Mesquita, Linda Norden, Michael Pilon and the installation team at CCS, Tatjana von Prittwitz und Gaffron, Letitia Smith and my dearest friends - the class of

2006.

Special thanks to Dan Oki, Dia Art Foundation, New York, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, Jessica Murray Projects, New York, Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York and Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the support of my loving family, friends and Kristian.



Karina Aguilera Skvirsky, *The Observation Gallery*, 2004 (video stills)
Courtesy of the artist

EXHIBITION ESSAY: TALES OF PLACES

A long time ago a term *place* left its exclusively geographical denotation. Gradually, its meaning has become multi-layered and fluid. Places more rapidly change their appearances and meaning considering the global accelerations of communication, commuting and consumerism. It seems that the urge to somehow react against rapidly changing concepts of surroundings and to rethink personal relationship with place gain importance in a time when notions of places are lost or complicated.

The exhibition *Tales of Places* links together several works that unravel artists' concern with defining their identity and the possibility of belonging. Personal histories and collective memories are set in motion through works that investigate artists' intimate relationships to particular surroundings. By merging their memories and imagination, the artists rediscover a potential of a *tale*- an intimate, highly personalized idiom-as a particular artistic strategy in contemporary art practice.

In Sandra Sterle's video *Round Around* the artist, dressed in traditional clothing borrowed from a peasant woman from the Croatian island of Mljet, runs until exhaustion, around an olive tree, in a personal ritual set in the original location of the island. The duration of Sterle's continuous action is underlined by the technical device of a video medium-the act of running is put in slow motion. The action expresses the desire to connect with local and cultural legacies.

Touch by Janine Antoni shows the artist walking on a tightrope on the beach against the background of a horizon. Occasionally, the line of the rope and the horizon-metaphorically, known surroundings and the walk towards an undefined destination-coincide and touch to be again separated in the next moment. The motif of horizon for Antoni indicates leaving one place and widening one's horizons but always simultaneously remembering previous places and related memories (i.e., the beach in Freeport, Bahamas on which Antoni grew up)-the movement between places here is presented as a recurrent dynamic action.

Berni Searle's still images capture silhouette cut-outs made of red crêpe paper—of photographs of the artist's friends and family—that were then submerged in water. The moments of their gradual disintegration were recorded by a camera. A few of these moments were transformed into the printed stills; therefore, they have become suspended in time. They symbolically represent different intensities of memories; those that are clear and recognizable and those that have almost completely disappeared.

In *The Observation Gallery* by Karina Aguilera Skvirsky the camera moves slowly through a building space. Occasionally it records outdoor views as seen from the windows. The images are accompanied by an audio component, a text taken from Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, sporadically interrupted by sounds taken from crowded New York surroundings. The text narrated tells about the possibility of locating oneself and recovering personal memories.

Dunja Sablic in her CD-ROM project *Vila Velebita* investigates personal and family history as well as the history of a Croatian town of Bakar. Through the structure and technology of a CD-ROM, the original photographic material is manipulated. The work avoids linear narration. Users navigate through numerous data, without a fixed agenda and without the necessity of going through all of it. This work literally points to the variety of personal and collective memories, as well as a complex notion of place that is formed through them. Recalling the memories and stories from one's surroundings and the attempt to define relationships that inform a place, is seen here as a never ending, transitory state.

Chantal Akerman's *A Family in Brussels* is an audio record of a performance of the artist reading. The "stream of consciousness" text contains autobiographical references to family, belonging and distance. The text encompasses multiple subjectivities, shifting between first and third person as Akerman tells the story of her mother's life, and consequently, of herself as well.

One part of Anri Sala's work *Byrek* is a continuous slide projection—a text written by the artist that recalls his emotional ties to his family and personal history, symbolically materialized in a traditional dish. On the adjacent wall a video is screened, which contains images of an elderly woman's hands making the dish in a kitchen, a familiar, protected and timeless place. These images are regularly interrupted by outdoor views on planes moving across the sky. The video is projected onto a paper screen with the

copy of the grandmother's letter. The intimate content of the letter is mixed with the detailed sketches-instructions for Sala to make the dish. In *Byrek*, Sala underlines his personal memories as important and constitutive part of his present.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST AND LAYOUT:

1. Sandra Sterle (b. 1965. Lives and works in Split and Amsterdam.)

Round Around, 1996/7

DVD, color and sound, 9' 7"

Courtesy of the artist

Berni Searle (b. 1964. Lives and works in Cape Town.)

2. *By the River*, 2005, 1/3

3. *By the River (Traces)*, 2005, 1/3

4. *Along the Way*, 2005, AP

5. *Along the Way (Traces)*, 2005, 1/3

archival pigment ink on cotton rag paper

Courtesy of Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town

6. Anri Sala (b. 1974. Lives and works in Berlin.)

Byrek, 2000

DVD, color and sound, 21'43"

Print on paper

Slide, 35 mm

Courtesy of Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

7. Dunja Sablic (b. 1978. Lives and works in Rijeka.)

Vila Velebita, 2003

CD-ROM, mixed media installation

Courtesy of the artist

8. Karina Aguilera Skvirsky (b. 1967. Lives and works in New York.)

The Observation Gallery, 2004

DVD, color and sound, 3' 30"

Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Murray Projects, New York

9. Janine Antoni (b. 1964. Lives and works in New York.)

Touch, 2002

DVD, color and sound, 9' loop

Marieluise Hessel Collection on permanent loan to the Center for Curatorial Studies,
Bard College

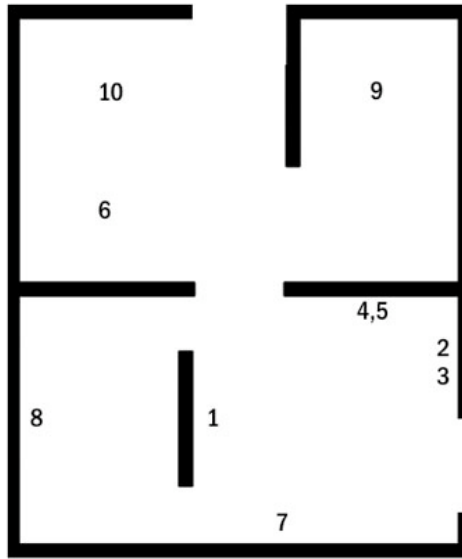
Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York

10. Chantal Akerman (b. 1950. Lives and works in Paris.)

A Family in Brussels, 2003

Book and 2 CDs, 110'

Courtesy of the artist and Dia Art Foundation, New York



EXHIBITION INSTALLATION VIEWS



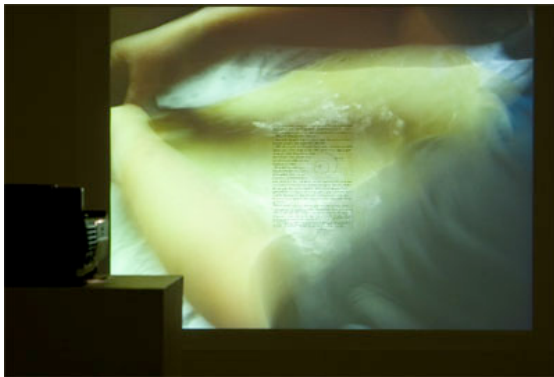
Sandra Sterle, *Round Around*, 1996/7 (installation view)



Installation view: Berni Searle, from left to right: *Along the Way*; *Along the Way (Traces)*; *By the River*; *By the River (Traces)*, 2005
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Anri Sala, *Byrek*, 2000 (installation view)
© Chris Kendall 2006

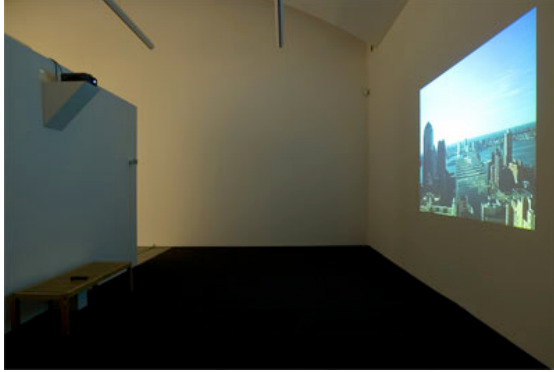


Anri Sala, *Byrek*, 2000 (installation view)
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Dunja Sablic, *Vila Velebita*, 2003 (installation view)

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Karina Aguilera Skvirsky, *The Observation Gallery*, 2004 (installation view)
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Installation view- left: Sandra Sterle, *Round Around*, 1996/7;
right: Berni Searle, *Along the Way; Along the Way (Traces)*
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Installation view- left: Dunja Sablic, *Vila Velebita*, 2003;
right: Sandra Sterle *Round Around*, 1996/7
© Chris Kendall 2006



Installation view- left: Chantal Akerman, *A Family in Brussels*, 2003;
right: Janine Antoni, *Touch*, 2002
© Chris Kendall 2006



Installation view- left: Anri Sala, *Byrek*, 2000;
A Family in Brussels, 2003
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