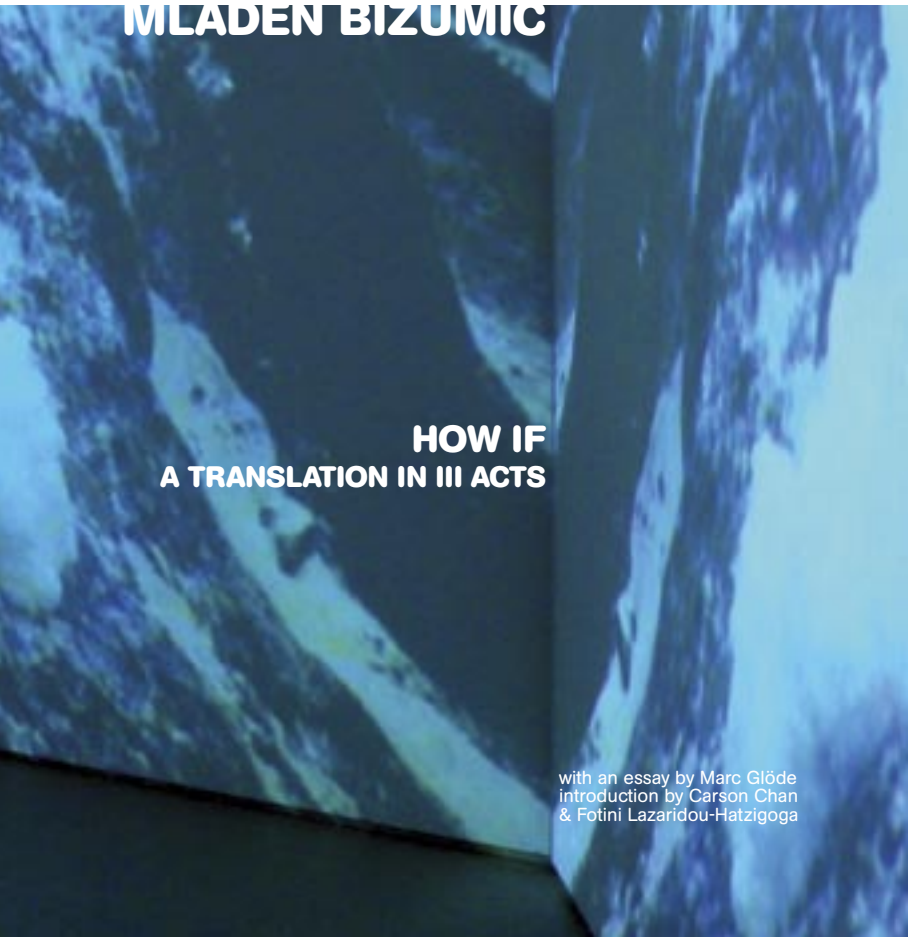


MLADEN BIZUMIC

HOW IF
A TRANSLATION IN III ACTS

with an essay by Marc Glöde
introduction by Carson Chan
& Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga

How If – A Translation in III Acts, Mladen Bizumic's first solo exhibition in Berlin, is structured as a "spatial opera." Distributed between two different locations (Act I and II at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Act III at PROGRAM), and involving several guest collaborators, one finds moments of an open-ended process in the form of a video installation, drawing, a vitrine of objects, a piano piece, and a poem.

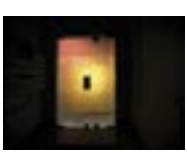
The split nature of the work functions as a representation and reconsideration of fragmented realities – blurry, layered and difficult to grasp. These realities, which elude fixed definitions and linear logics, act well as a prescient metaphor for architecture as something less exact, less concrete – a point that PROGRAM seeks to forward. *How If...* negotiates the space between the subjective experience of the individual and the abstract and impersonal forces of a global system while remaining open to multiple readings and interpretations. Essentially, it contests the dominant construction of space as a physical question by proposing expanded and shifting views.

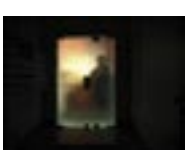
For Bizumic, space, location, culture, personal history and their translation into aesthetics is a conflation of multiple meanings. Architecture, a discipline that Bizumic uses as his starting point, is also part of this conflation. With its expanded definitions, architecture can act as a system that organizes politics, histories and the culture in which it exists. Mountain slopes, cities, buildings, gardens and windows, here, become elements of that process.

Like the exhibition, this publication itself represents a spirit of collaboration, translating the exhibition's various locations and media into text, images and sound.

Carson Chan and Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga
directors of PROGRAM

PROGRAM – initiative for art and architecture, is an interdisciplinary platform for projects examining architecture, the arts, and their disciplinary boundaries. PROGRAM was founded in Berlin in 2006.





Loci of Agglomeration and Spatial Dynamics

on Mladen Bizumic's installations How If – A Translation in III Acts

by Marc Glöde

We often only become aware of the fact that the museum is an apparatus that adjusts our perception of art when the ongoing process of our reception is interrupted – like when the flow of the walk through the museum or gallery is broken by an encounter with an installation, for example.

How if – A Translation in III Acts, the installation group by Mladen Bizumic offers such a possibility for interruption, a stalwart position against exhibition practices that concretize and delimit (spatial) thinking. Already, the splitting of the work in two different locations goes against the conventional spatial practices of art presentation: as the tripartite work is not limited to one space of installation, but is in fact dislodged from the architectonic and institutional parameters of a single space, it escapes from the constrictions of the interior space, out from a position of self propelled monopoly. Meanwhile, the simple splitting of the exhibition in two locations creates an in-between space that gives access to the urban context and city structure surrounding the pieces – the installation requires a movement

through the city to be fully experienced. Art, for Bizumic, becomes a space that is not only no longer fully separated from the everyday sphere, but in fact, acts as a counterpart that can and should always be related to the everyday.[1] The relationship between the pieces acts as a parallel to the correspondence between the two locations of the exhibition, opening a debate between their different spatial dynamics.

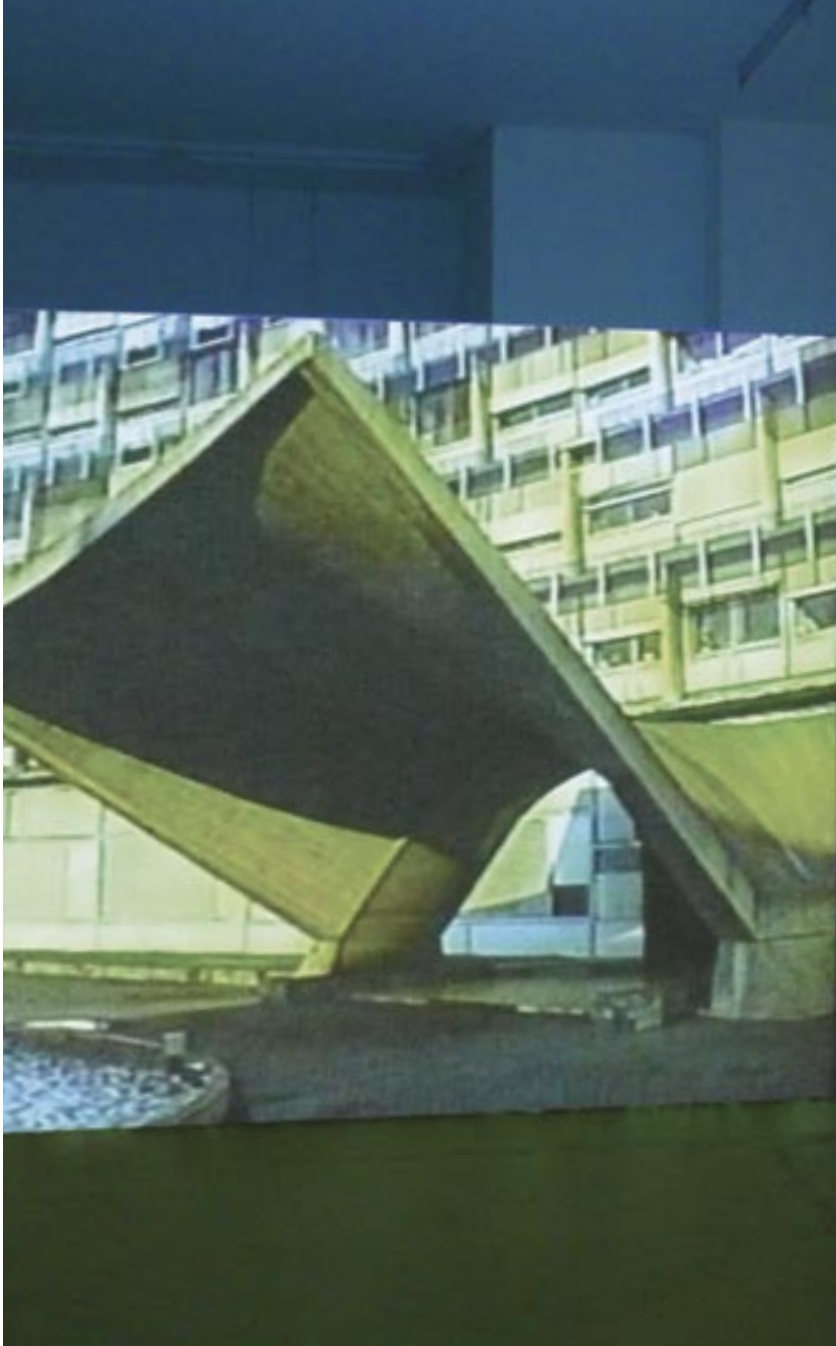
Act I + II

The work of the first and second acts appear as little islands – seemingly arranged in clusters within the room. The pieces are various cooperations between Bizumic and people in his personal circles: for example, the video installation called *Sister Cities of Berlin (Paris)*. In this installation of an abstract light-play seen through a glass door and enriched with ambient sounds composed by MINIT, the viewer/listener is abducted to an in-between space. Also, the work *Freud Museum (For Her)* – a display that oscillates between sculpture and vitrine in which black colored stone fragments from buildings in Vienna are exhibited. This arrangement is accompanied by two commissioned works: a piano piece composed by the artist's Viennese girlfriend (a musician) and a 'psychoanalytical poem' written by his mother (a psychoanalyst). These are pieces that, taken individually, possess the potential to summon us away to other places, and are directly demanding that we "Leave the presence for a moment...." But it is precisely this *Für-sich-Nehmen*, this problem of the isolated, contemplative perception of the single element that Bizumic seeks to problematize. As the questions and stories opened by each piece constantly interfere with the other positions present in the space, Bizumic shows how quickly new interpretations and approaches are created from the disparate self-contained positions. Like in a laboratory (which the space with its white fluorescent lights reminds one of) the viewers can thoroughly observe themselves

in a process that could be described as a production of meaning and mood. These installations, these discrete agglomerations expose themselves increasingly as space consuming axes from which "mystery/story and hystery and his(s)tory"[2] are amplified. They're in constant modification, determining the experience of the viewer in the space. At the same time, these fragments in the installation never gain enough power that they link together into a continuous narrative or homogeneous whole. One would never be able to form a black square from the installation's black fragments. By remaining fragment-like, these single pieces, bring up analytical questions: how does the sound piece change when layered over the text on the wall? How does this change my disposition/mood? How does my surrounding architecture affect this? What relationships and dynamics are created by the use of black in the various pieces in the same space?

Act III

The third act of the installation, housed in a separate space from the first two, eventually brings our attention to one of the spatial discourses that in the last years have strongly influenced the art context: namely the discourse around the filmic Dispositiv and its implementation in the art space. Where, in the end of the 1960s, the filmic apparatus, because of its spatial determination, has been subject to strong criticism by Baudry[3], the apparatus in Bizumic's work is clearly not a machine that defines the viewer's apperception. An L-shaped wall is installed in the gallery and serves as a projection surface for two mirrored projections. This mirroring along the fold of the wall transforms each double projection not only into a big ornament, but also into something of a constantly changing Rorschach inkblot. In this way, the filmic projection stops being a mode of representation and enters a play with one's own projections of the unconscious. By pointing out the interweaving of image-space, architectonic-

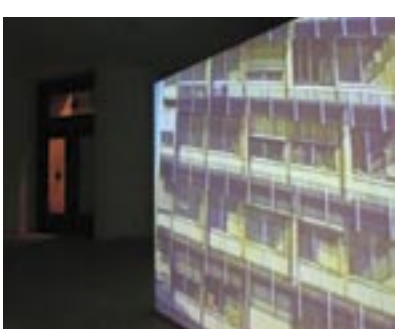


space and mental-space, Bizumic opens up the possibility of a critique of the apparatus and the institution. These are positions that "open themselves towards their visible and invisible contexts in a literal way, and in doing so they explicitly address them."[4] Mladen Bizumic's installation thus positions itself clearly against a practice of directing movement, mental and physical, and produces a stutter, a discontinuity in the art-space. This disconnect doe to rely on Adorno's observations, that the reception of a work of art is always bound inseparably with the experience of space and "with its ambient, its value, its place both literally and metaphorically."[5] In *How If...*, Bizumic shows that approaching the potentials of the space means to not take for granted the relationships between space, the art work, and the viewer, or to deal with it as a cliché, but rather to calibrate this constellation again and again towards its internal dynamics and purpose.

1 Foucault, Michel. *Andere Räume*. in Barck, Gente, Paris, Richter (ed.), 'Aisthesis. Wahrnehmung heute oder Perspektiven einer anderen Ästhetik.' Leipzig 1990. p34-46.
2 Blumfeld. *Verstärker*, from 'L'etat et moi,' Big Cat Recording, London 1994.
3 see Baudry, Jean-Louis. *Ideologische Effekte erzeugt vom Basisapparat*. in 'Eikon. Internationale Zeitschrift für Photographie und Medienkunst', Nr. 5, 1993, S. 34-43.
4 Rebentisch, Juliane. *Ästhetik der Installation*, Frankfurt a.M. 2003, p232.
5 Adorno, Theodor W. *Ästhetische Theorie*, in 'Gesammelte Schriften', vol.7, edited by R. Tiedemann, Frankfurt a.M. 1970, p520.

Marc Glöde is an Assistant Professor & Research Fellow in the Department of Film Studies at the Free University, Berlin. He has curated numerous exhibitions and film-series on film/art and film/architecture and has published widely within the fields. Just recently he was curator at the Experimenta Filmfestival in Mumbai/Bangalore, at the exhibition "What a great space you have" at Luxe Gallery, NYC and co-curator of the film series "Beyond the Cinema" together with Stan Douglas, Chris Eamon and Stefanie Schulte-Strathaus at the Hamburger Bahnhof/Cinema Arsenal. He is the Co-Director of the Wild Walls Film Festival (Berlin, Los Angeles, London and New York). His latest publication is "Igor Mischiyev: MultistoryCarPark". He is currently based in Berlin and New York City.

Translated by Carson Chan, Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga and Alexander Menke.



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TRACK 1. CG by MINIT, composed/produced by Jasmine Guffond, originally released by Staubgold on the album *Now Right Here*, ACT II Sister Cities of Berlin (Paris) 2007 (7:30). **TRACK 2. Translation (Vienna)** by Angelika Reichert 2006, ACT I Freud Museum (For Her) 2006-2007 (5:15). **TRACK 3. black.hole** by Mladen Bizumic 2004, ACT III event.horizon. black.hole 2004-ongoing (6:45).

HOW IF - A TRANSLATION IN III ACTS
List of works and credits

Mladen Bizumic
Sister Cities of Berlin (Paris) 2007
Video installation, sculpture, soundtrack CG by MINIT (composed/produced by Jasmine Guffond), scenario-text based on an interview with Saâdane Afif and Valérie Chartrain.
(7 min 30 sec, loop)

Mladen Bizumic
Freud Museum (For Her) 2007
Wooden structure and architectural fragments from buildings in Vienna painted in the color of shadow; psychoanalytic poem written by the artist's mother Nada Bizumic (psychoanalyst); piano piece composed and performed by the artist's girlfriend Angelika Reichert (musician).
(5 min 15 sec + 5 min 15 sec of silence, loop)

Mladen Bizumic
event.horizon.black.hole 2004-ongoing
Four channel video/two channel audio installation; wall designed by architects Carson Chan and Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga.
(6 min 45 sec, loop)

Mladen Bizumic (b.1976) lives and works in Berlin. Selected exhibitions include Moscow Biennale (2007), Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2007), Busan Biennale (2006), Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (2006), Zacheta National Museum of Art, Warsaw (2006); Künstlerhaus Wien, Vienna (2005); Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth (2005); City Gallery, Wellington (2004). Govett-Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth, NZ (2004), Auckland Art Gallery (2003); ARTSPACE, Auckland (2002).

program
INITIATIVE FOR ART + ARCHITECTURAL COLLLABORATIONS

www.mladenbizumic.com www.programonline.de
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