

Acknowledgements

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PROJECT SPACE

BUILDING 94: 23-27 CARDIGAN STREET, CARLTON

Managed by the RMIT School of Art
CURATOR/COORDINATOR Stephen Gallagher
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TELEPHONE +61 3 9925 4971 **GALLERY OPENING HOURS** Monday – Friday 10.00am to 5.00pm



Desire and what you end up doing

Barbara Kapusta [Austria]

FRIDAY 27 AUGUST TO THURSDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2010
OPENING THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 5-7PM
FLOOR TALK THURSDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 1-1.30PM



Bringing fiction into reality: Who are you talking to, me?

As I sit to write about Barbara Kapusta's project she is involved in the making of her work. I have just telephoned to enquire how her day of filming had progressed and while I write I am conscious that what I write is a fiction; that I am writing about something that is not formed or defined and is yet to be brought into existence. And as an artist I am mindful of how artists generally approach their work, as a type of collaboration or attempt at establishing a synergy with the mediums through which they work. In part Kapusta works with video, a medium that implies a form of disembodied experience in the same way that sculpture conversely involves a physical encounter. And I know that artists work with and through the character or qualities of their chosen mediums in order to shepherd something that is essentially an anticipatory, prefiguring projection, or more simply a hopeful gut feeling. Through my own experiences I also know that there is a constant and inevitable assignation between failure and hopeful possibility, even when the work is based reassuringly in careful preparation and thoughts of probability. Still, a work is never really known until it is tangible and concrete, until it comes into being.

Therefore, while the filming is occurring and the actors are interpreting their scripts, I write with a sense of apprehension, feeling a little like one of the characters in Kapusta's work. Her script is a text that changes and is improvised in the very moment of filming. Her characters are fictional and are denoted as A, B and C, with each character corresponding to one color – white, red and black. Kapusta also includes a narrator. The characters and narrator mark separate positions or states of mind, reflecting through their individual vantage points. However, at times these

individual entities collapse and breakdown as their voices shift out of synchronization.

Kapusta works through fictionalised or virtualised scenarios in order to examine our contextual and psychological relationship to society and reality based on the differing perspectives and viewpoints of her characters. Conceptually (and visually) she utilises a methodology of formalist and abstract construction presenting us with an intensified and enhanced construct of reality. Kapusta's current video and installation may be as much about an assessment of societal constraints and constructs as it may be an analytical assessment of individual neurosis.

In filming and working Kapusta attempts to shift perspectives from the visual (our awareness of form and structure) and of the actors acting, to an awareness of actuality as she affords her actors the opportunity to interweave personal reflections or genuine stories within the video footage. In this Kapusta crosses through fiction and reality implicitly critiquing pictorial representation in moving image by interspersing the script with the actors personal reflections. However, her intention is not to tell us which is which, reinforcing the notion that it doesn't matter what is real and what is fiction, because what is real will have resonance to one viewer as fiction, while what is fiction will have resonance to another as a reality.

Perhaps in turn actuality reflects a construction where the 'real' inevitably represents fiction. In filming this work and by allowing each of the actors to intersperse reflections of their individual and actual experiences, Kapusta in turn reverses of the way we fictionalise reality, merging fiction into fact. Working in this

manner, Kapusta seems to be attempting to 'de-realise' what we know in order to form a parallel abstract representation that is based on captured and compressed perceptions of reality. Kapusta defines awareness, realisation and perception through a range of vantages in a structure that commingles the informal within the formal, and analyses perception through arranged presentations.

*'... as a metaphor for the mind ... it may be that film is the artistic medium that [best represents] psychological processes ...'*¹

Kapusta seems to wish to invoke an unsettled or restless space through her use of disorientation and the presentation of different points of view. Her characters form component parts each with a desire, perhaps an inherent lament for subjectivity within a condition of post-subjectivity. However, more particularly Kapusta seems to be exploring the parameters of spaces – personal, psychological, perceptual, societal, visual and virtual – where her implicit questioning of fiction and actuality may be meant as a critique of the present moment.

Peter Westwood

Peter Westwood is Coordinator of the Artist in Residence Program in the School of Art at RMIT University. He is an artist, writer and curator based in Melbourne.

Notes

1. Turvey.M., Baker.G., Round Table: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art, October Magazine, (Discussion involving: Malcolm Turvey, Hal Foster, George Baker, Matthew Buckingham, Chrissie Iles and Anthony McCall), New York City, December 8, 2002; pp 14

Inside Pages
Barbara Kapusta
Desire and what you end up doing (stills), 2010
HD 16:9, Colour, Sound
Cast: James Deeth, Begajeta Voloder, Miyuki Watanabe and Lucinda Wilmot
Sound: Martin Kay
Assistant: Mark Reid

Outside Pages
Barbara Kapusta
Desire and what you end up doing (set photos), 2010

