

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: It began when the artist was only a child...

Exhibit: <I PLAY I>

Venue: ConcentArt e.V.

Artists: CYLAND, Alexandra Dementieva, Jorgen Erkius, Anna Frants, Florian Japp, Marte Kiessling, Raphaele Shirley, Peter Vogel

Curated by: Leah Stuhltrager

Dates: Feb 26 - Mar 27, 2010

Reception: Feb 26 (7pm - 10pm)

Contact: ConcentArt e. V.
Kreuzbergstrasse 28
D - 10965 Berlin
+ 49 (0) 7007 16 45
www.concentart.org
concentart@gmx.net

Director: Georgi Begun

Directions: U7 / S1 / S2 to Yorckstrasse

"In a sense, every form of expression is imposed upon one by social factors, one's own language above all." - Edward Sapir

Whether learned or inherent, the language one uses to communicate throughout their lifetime is developed in the earliest stages of cognitive thought.

About: <I PLAY I>

The ways artists express themselves creatively is traced back to their childhood. From constructing cities with blocks to banging on pots to making tree forts to devising strategies to win games - an artist begins a life of creating with curiosity, wonder and unencumbered imagination which is developed through "PLAY". One can only hope curiosity, wonder and unencumbered imagination is not abandoned with youth and instead matures into a distinct artistic voice.

In <I PLAY I> at ConcentArt, seven installations embody how sophisticated curiosity, wonder and unencumbered imagination can in essence, become ageless.

In the exhibit, a futuristic miniature city is daintily ordered and delicately planned to cast a societal shadow. Sculptures whimsically move and generate their own sounds in reaction to someone walking nearby to grab attention. Peeking one's head inside a suspended boat divulges the view from the hideaway's perspective. Moving cans of "fodder" create a panorama of an environment nearing extinction. <I PLAY I> reminds us we are never too old to remember what we've learned and to dream bigger than that.

CYLAND (St Petersburg, Russia) In the most elemental stage, infants recognize their ability to convey what they have not yet learned through loud noise and physical outbursts. Much like a baby acknowledging distress represents the beginning formation of cognitive thought, CYLAND's "Protozoa" is in the first stages of exhibiting programmed reason. Having sensed an alien presence, "Protozoa" - small robot bodies characterizing early life forms - defend themselves in the only manner they are capable of: whipping their flagellum (tale, proboscis, sting). The excitement of one is transmitted to all the rest. In a few seconds, the mass hysteria is communicated to the entire micro-community. CYLAND makes a social commentary by linking the universal rationality connecting life forms from birth: the acknowledgement of elementary fear. (Concept: Marina Koldobskaya, Development: Oleg Rodionov, Design: Anton Chumak)

Alexandra Dementieva (Brussels, Belgium) From doll houses to stuffed animals, transference

of a child's home life and familiar relationships onto imaginary lives and family units is linked to a child's first explorations of identity. In Dementieva's "Drama-House", a collection of fantasized lives of fictional characters are placed in one interactive multimedia apartment building. Buzzing one of eight bells summons dwellers of an apartment building to their open window. Projected video of the tenants - servants, intellectuals, wealth, middle-class, professionals, immigrants and criminals - gives the voyeur access to society's home life. Through participation, the viewer creates the setting, tone, and pace of a wonderful story of the everyday. Dementieva's installation recognizes that encountering characters of a society is where one learns how to comprise and convey meaning through the experience of interacting.

Jorgen Erkius (Berlin, Germany) Finding one's own voice is a lifelong process that starts being defined when a child recognizes himself as an individual. The mental leap from being comforted to finding one's own sense of security is often outwardly identifiable by a child defining his or her own private space. Some tuck into a cupboard. Others build a tent with sheets. Some grow to build tree houses. In "Kanu", Erkius adeptly transports viewers into an environment he has constructed out of plane sight and yet right at eye level. Ducking slightly under a suspended canoe to view a video, one is deftly transported into the exclusive, safe spot Erkius has claimed for himself. Inviting to only one viewer at a time, Erkius intimately shares a physical and visceral level. "Kanu's" strength is in capturing the moment in time when it is discovered that words, pictures and places all carry projected or instilled emotions .

Anna Frants (St Petersburg, Russia / New York, USA) Building blocks are an ageless and universal tool used to ignite the leap from seeing individual components to understanding how components work together. The mental progression of seeing graphic symbols - to recognizing letters represent sounds - to grasping how components form a greater vocabulary - to contextualizing something as abstract as an idea - is as much cognitive as it is an auditory, visual and tactile grasping of deductive reasoning. In "Polar Bear Fodder", Frants sets the scene to enable this same formula for deductive reasoning. Frants places five tin cans in the middle of a room. As viewers handle, explore and observe the cans, they discover for themselves that their movements of these small, physical, tin components are generating the big picture projected on walls surrounding them. "Polar Bear Fodder" references how in a dramatically changing world with ever more access to information, the root formation of language remains unchanged while distance to all things indigenous becomes farther and farther removed with technological advancements.

Florian Japp (Berlin, Germany) The steadfast principles in life are learned experientially. A ball thrown up in the air comes back down... Taking jars from the bottom of the high stack of jars causes a collapse... The physicality of these laws demonstrates unequivocally that certain rules exist. Navigating within the perimeters of rules and testing limitations for exceptions ultimately leads to realizing one's own power to influence by recalculating variables. This moment of realization that one may use the rules to further make a statement is when a child begins to understand the poetic nature of language. A hybrid of cut out wood shapes, basketballs, netting, aluminum, cords and a muffler, Japp's "Objekt_45" reconfigures weight, balance, force and material properties. The mechanics of formal, physical and visual language are juxtaposed to question what is normally communicated and to propose a purpose for saying something differently. Japp's materials are all inherently strong while delicately positioned. "Objekt_45" personifies the human duality and metaphoric connotations that open even the most steadfast elements to interpretation.

Marte Kiessling (Berlin, Germany) The nuances that can be drawn from tone communicate all on their own. Whether it be a laugh, lullaby or footsteps in a game of hide and seek, one's senses are trained to pick up audible cues from the earliest social interactions. It is these cues that give context which allow one to derive meaning. In Kiessling's interactive sound installation, a playground is brought into the lavatory stall. A twist of two familiar places creates social awkwardness that investigates how cultural indexes are deeply entrenched into the psyche. Kiessling inquires into what we have learned to hypothesize from what we see, hear, smell, taste

and touch.

Raphaela Shirley (New York, USA) Raising castles from sand, building model towns around trains and erecting cities from piles of stone, the logical step after learning how to express what your mind conjures is finding a world that listens. In her "Sunken City" series. Shirley practices into a multi-media abstract landscape of uncertain scale and timeframe. Shirley explores new perspectives for our collective future, loosely implying utopian environments of awe-inspiring proportions. Masterfully placed lighting, fog, lasers and reflections create an echo where one is directed to look inward to find order created among rows of abstract architectural castings. Shirley's quiet "Dawn at Sunken City" created for ConcentArt suggests listening is the sign of an enlightened civilization.

Peter Vogel (Berlin, Germany) ... And when one learns how to talk and how to hear, one can appreciate the beauty of music. Vogel's interactive music sculptures respond to the presence of viewers by projecting their own voices.

"A language presupposes that all the individual users possess the organs." - Ferdinand de Saussure

"Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society." -Edward Sapir

About: ConcentArt e.V.

ConcentArt e.V.(a non-profit art association) was founded with the aim of promoting and realizing specific projects.

The association's primary objective is to enable the cost-effective and concrete realization of projects. In addition, the thematic content implicit in these projects will be thematized, encouraging debate and discussion of the social and moral values and issues addressed by individual works.

About: Leah Stuhltrager

Leah Stuhltrager founded Dam, Stuhltrager Gallery in 1998 in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The gallery is known as an incubator of emerging talent and for groundbreaking exhibitions that incorporate technology or utilize mediums in a new, fresh way. She has provided large public art installations to some of the most visible venues and events throughout the world including Lincoln Center (New York), Coachella (Indio), E-Halle (Basel), Convention Center (Istanbul), Circulo de Bellas Artes (Madrid) and The Hermitage Museum (St Petersburg) to name a few... In Fall 2009, Dam, Stuhltrager shipped off on an artist off on an expedition with the Farm Foundation (Arctic Circle), commenced a 150 ft public install at the Oriental Pearl Tower (Shanghai), launched the nonprofit artist residency The East/West Project (Berlin) and sent art off to a handful of museum exhibits

This exhibit is sponsored by:  &  NEUE MEDIEN PROJEKTE

Special thanks to:

galerieOPEN who represents Florian Japp and Peter Vogel,
MARCdePUECHREDON Gallery who represents Raphaela Shirley,
XL Gallery who represents Alexandra Dementieva
and the entire team at Dam, Stuhltrager Brooklyn and Dam, Stuhltrager Berlin.

Contact: Georgi Begun, Director / ConcentArt e. V.
+ 49 (0) 7007 16 45 - concentart@gmx.net - www.concentart.org