do not ~~exist~~

europe, woman, digital medium

Symposium, workshops, exhibitions, netart, video, film...

This call addresses all artists, theorists, journalists, activists interested in participating in a (Eastern) European Project on the question of (non)existence – from a gendered, political or media based point of view. The project will be organized, by the thealit Frauen.Kultur.Labor, Bremen (Germany, http://www.thealit.de) and co-organized by the Estonian Academy of Arts, E-Media Centre, Tallinn (Estonia, http://e-media.artun.ee/), the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis (ISH) – Ljubljana Graduate School of the Humanities (Slovenia, http://www.ish.si/) and The Gender Studies Center at the Sofia University Faculty of Philosophy, (Bulgaria, http://www.uni-sofia.bg/resources/gsc/engl/home/), the Galeria Kronika, Bytom (Poland, http://www.bck.bytom.pl/inside.asp) and will take place from September 2006 to September 2007 in Bremen, Cologne, Ljubljana, Tallinn, Sofia, Bytom and probably other places (depending on funding).
We invite (women) presenters who epistemologically, politically or artistically pursue a gender-conscious approach through their works.

Send all proposals (for the symposium, workshops, exhibitions including film, video, netart) to kontakt@thealit.de

Frauen.Kultur.Labor thealit,
Im Krummen Arm 1
28203 Bremen
Germany

Proposals shall include descriptions of your artwork, film or abstracts of the paper you wish to present (maximum 2000 characters, images to 2MB).

Deadline: Start sending from now on

With any question, idea, or suggestion feel free to contact:
office@claudia-reiche.net
or:
sick@thealit.de
telephone thealit: 0049-421-701632.

The project's title indicates our concept of how to approach the subject, please read the following programmatic lines for specification.

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Question

Is it possible to speak of the non-existence of what is labelled "Europe", "Woman" or "Digital Medium" and does this open up a new perspective in thinking and behaviour? The project do not ~~exist~~ ... is designed to examine his concept and experiment with it. The idea of a lacking, incomplete or imperfect existence of the three notions, conjectures or realities has already been undertaken in different ways by media and cultural studies, historical and political sciences as well as by psychoanalysis, gender studies and media art: however, the attempt has not yet been made to bring these different concepts together and into confrontation with each other. Our challenge is to perform this in full recognition of a female perspective, allowing the querying of the non-existence of woman from a female point of view.

What indeed is the Europe we speak of?

Although we need this illusory point of identity and reference, we are not at all capable of precisely identifying its meaning. Beyond the question of the multi-layered political and legal structures of the European Union, "Europe" in a more general sense is today neither distinctly defined in reference to a political unity nor to a historico-cultural or 'ethnic' one. In what way can 'we' be defined as members of a certain union, bearers of certain rights, representatives of a certain culture? On the basis of which grounds and traditions is "fortress Europe" being erected against "invaders"?

"La femme n'existe pas"

thus spake Jacques Lacan in his much-quoted provocative formula, more accurately translated as: "The Woman (as a universal) does not exist". (Encore, Le séminaire, volume XX). Julia Kristeva reaches the same conclusion: "Strictly speaking one cannot say that 'woman' exists at all" , as does Monique Wittig, putting it differently: "Lesbians are no women", or "I am no woman" (both quoted in Judith Butler, Gender Trouble). Apart from these deliberations on the excludedness of 'woman' in universal statements and the unconscious, there is obviously the area of excludedness of individual women from their participation in social opportunities. The function of 'women' not only as symbolic objects of trade but of trafficking is drastically exemplified by the wave of female migrants from 'eastern' to 'western' Europe. And is it equally exemplified from another point of view in the potentiated exclusion of lesbian representation? Can these discriminations of the female be seen in relation to each other? And: does 'the' man (male identity) exist? Does 'being' exist as 'all' or always only in the particular? (cf Joan Copjek, Imagine There's No Woman: "There is no whole of being, no 'all there is', there are only appearences in their particularity.")

The digital medium

is strongly linked with diverse assumptions of disappearance. Since Walter Benjamin's assertion of the disappearance of the aura by reproduction technologies (especially photography and film), notions of a disappearance of so-called reality, materiality, identity of the image and the body, or even of the visible, have been formulated since the development of digital and telecommunications media.
These descriptions have influenced many concepts of "cyberspace", in net.art as well as in the popular mythologies of the world wide web. How to deal with these perceived disappearances? "What is today included in an pre-eminent sense of being, can on principle not be seen although - or because - the visible is seen first. In this sense the history of optical media is a history of disappearing," suggests Friedrich A. Kittler (Optische Medien, Berliner Vorlesung 1999, p. 35). Can universal statements like this be made, taking sexual diffference into consideration?

do not ~~exist~~ ... intends to create opportunities where these three topics and threads of discussion can be seen in relation to one another in the arts and sciences.

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