

Gaylen Gerber

*Fundamentalism of the New Order*

Charlottenborg Exhibition Hall, Copenhagen, Denmark

October 31 – December 8, 2002



Gaylen Gerber with M& Co., *Backdrop/Everybody*, 2002, acrylic and sign enamel on canvas, N55, LAND resources: chairs, 2002. dimensions vary with installation - approximately 5 x 6.3 x 1m (16 ft. 4 ¾ x 20 feet 8 inches x 39 ¾ inches) overall, Photo: Gaylen Gerber.

For a number of years, Gerber has collaborated on works with other artists as one aspect of his artistic practice. Frequently these collaborations involve a large scale canvas, which is meant to duplicate the existing wall in a museum. In this particular case, Gerber's painting is the same size and shape as the west wall in room 310 in Charlottenborg Exhibition Hall. Gerber then relocates his large canvas, painting in his signature gray, outdoors, where it becomes the backdrop for a work by another artist. For this exhibition, Gerber chose to collaborate with the estate of Tibor Kalman, an artist best known as the editor of the *United Colors of Benetton* magazine in the 1990s and for his design work with M & Co. Kalman was an unabashed socialist who embraced market strategies in order to get his message across to the public. M & Co.'s *Everybody* billboard was originally installed in Time Square in New York in the early 1990's as the area began to be re-developed. "It was about the attitude of we wanted the street to have," Kalman said, "You had to actually trust the chairs, and sit on it with your feet dangling, on display. The idea is that the street is you, and you are the street." (*Tibor Kalman Perverse Optimist*; Princeton Architectural Press, NY, 1988). Gerber's choice to re-present *Everybody* in this exhibition reflects his interest in paradoxical expressions. As Gerber sees it, *Everybody* was meant to represent everyone, but at the same time, very few individuals would actually participate in the work by sitting in the chairs. Even though Gerber makes this piece accessible to every passerby on the street when he displaces the museum wall outdoors, most people will still only look from a distance. *Everybody* reflects not only the presence of those who sit in the chairs, but also those who choose not to sit in the chairs. The relationship between those that take an active

role in representing themselves and those whose involvement is more passive corresponds to the relations in many other forms of representation in the world today. Gerber is asking that we consider the ramifications of these alternating positions in relation to art.