

DAS SEHADE HAAR

Matthias Holzapfel

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D A S S T A D T – H A A R

This is a shortened transcript of a speech given on the 1st of November 2024 at the HBK Braunschweig.

[...] I like to think of this exhibition as a module. A module which has been planned starting slowly since 2022 and that accelerated during a time period of intense planning in the last few months. It was important to us to create an exhibition that was as horizontal as possible. Even as flat as possible: condensed.

While trying to achieve this metaphorical and actual horizontality we tried to look at the university gallery like a moving box and unfold it, creating an unfolded plane area. An area in which there is room for encounters. A pause for breath that is not to be anticipated.
Trying to achieve this with a minor involvement, that still puts down roots before disappearing again, we came upon the thought of a single hair that had detached from the scalp and is now wandering through gardens, streets, and squares.

Now autonomous, the hair becomes an undecided fragment of the city: The City-Hair (Das Stadt-Haar). Now sharing the collective space and consciousness, the hair as well as the unfolded gallery space allow us to open up a temporary space of the future.

The transition from a head of hair to a bald one is a threshold, like so many transitions and intermediate states. Every boundary has a depth and an imprecision. As we increasingly empty spaces, there comes a point where a filled space – an occupied space – becomes an empty, occupiable space. Though the deconstructed wasteland, the unoccupied throne, and the empty stage that we are confronted with are never empty. We are exposed to a void that doesn't really correspond to a real void. John Cage must have felt similarly when he first sat in the soundless chamber, only to realise that there was a sound there after all: the sound of his own continuously acting body. He heard the blood in his veins, his heartbeat, and the swelling and expansion of his lungs.

The university gallery is a place of great contingency. The cybernetic office machine HBK plants its seedlings here. "Here, seeds can begin to flourish." From the moment of feigned emptiness and self realisation, things begin to bubble up: The body I have recognised as mine must be used. What is this body I have (re)discovered capable of? What is the potential of this enlightened contingency? What do we want to do with these granted spaces? Where do we find our lost hair? How do these hairs come together again as a ball? And where can they even come together?

We would like to invite you to participate in the supporting program taking place over the next two weeks. We would also like to invite you to take a walk to Jahnstrasse and enter the other two modules of the exhibition. The exhibition on Jahnstrasse is open today and tomorrow until 7:00 PM and can then be viewed during regular opening hours.

Autonomy is nonsense. Interdependence is reality. Therefore, I would like to thank the following people:
All past friends,
all present friends,
and all future friends.

Text by Benno Hauswaldt

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I was taken by surprise by my initial reaction to the show.

Immediately as you enter the exhibition space, which is just an apartment-turned-gallery, you start walking on wooden boards painted in a light greenish blue colour. One may not immediately think of them as paintings, but by crouching down and taking a closer look, you notice the lacquer that was used to paint them or the various flecks and stains on their surface. You might even leave your own traces just by stepping on them.

The boards spread through the gallery's rooms like neatly snapped branches, which give you the impression that they were created specifically for this appartment. Though the idea of shifting one's perception through subtle interventions of the exhibition space, specifically using its seeming emptiness to your advantage, has been around for a while, it still makes an impact on me. Situational aesthetics at their best. But with a bit more emotion. A walk down the plank and that's it. I bet the opening was funny. The only further artwork was a hair taped to the wall, right next to the stairs at the back entrance of the building. But there's gotta be more to it, right?

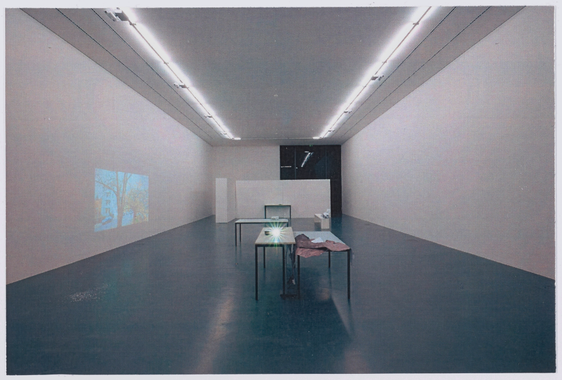
Apparently, the space between the first exhibition location, the one featuring the turquoise catwalk paintings on the floor and the hair taped to the wall, and the second one, which is just a few minutes' walk from the first and inhabits











benches with paper sculptures on them, a projection of manipulated video footage, emulating a view through the wall and a few seating arrangements, is called the invisible sculpture (unsichtbare Skulptur). To be honest, I don't remember much of my walk between the two. The lineup of the show featured a variety of activations from students of the HBK Braunschweig and the choir of the TU Braunschweig. Platforms as utopian spaces of community and visibility instead of monopolistic business giants seeking to annihilate their competitors.

We stroll past the avenue. Right hand clenched into a fist rest in my pocket, mohair tickling. Slight hints of anxiety signal themselves through increased awareness of my surrounding. Hunts of anxiety.
I haven't been able to relax around Emma for a while now and it's stressing me out. She is one of those people who make you feel invisible when you're around them. Or maybe that's just me pitying myself.

Haven't been here in ages, Emma says. Oh-y-yeah, same, I say.

H a u n t s o f a n x i e t y.

Steamy hot raindrops corrode my skin; that's why I always bring a hoodie made of silica fabric with me, I thought to myself. Not quite as good as Kevlar or Nomex, but a lot cheaper for sure.

Hurriedly, I try to throw it over but get my head stuck the first time. Silica is a natural compound derived from white sand or residual quartz. Mine is mint green with some stains on it. Emma's is more of a poncho, wide mix-matched black and grey stripes with a kangaroo pouch on the belly. On top of it she wears a paper-thin, its weight probably being about 90g, larger than life silken embroidered floral scarf, covering most of the right half of her body. When dry it resembles a proud flag swaying in the wind but now embalms her body like wet strips of linen, making her look like a walking origami sculpture.

Oh, how I love this city. Yes, I love this city with a passion. Like a lover running their hands through your towel-dry hair. Toothpaste kisses. It's always adapting, and so am I. It's hard to do for sure. Had to learn it the hard way. Now that I think of it, Emma is kind of like the city. Or the city is kind of like Emma.

The breeze is icy cold — red-hot rain raising my body temp. Scents preserved through the gift of nostalgia. Soggy cardboard boxes on the sidewalk emanate metallic, light silverfish grey clouds of steam. As we wander around a back alley, a sudden voice rises through an open window overhead. A deep resonant bass.
I start imagining a second voice.

A soprano struggling to hit the high G notes. Polyphonic voices start harmonizing like a flock of birds, perpetual melodies gently repeat like hiccups.

A l i t u r g y f o r t h e d i s c r e e t.

Spanish man reportedly skips work for 6 years, maybe even as many as 14, without anyone noticing.

"So, you did absolutely no work", the man says.

"I am in no position to explain myself. My absence went unnoticed, furthermore it emphasizes the idleness of my superiors. They should be the ones explaining themselves. I earn a modest salary, just enough to feed my family. A pitiful income. If I were to leave this company, I would not be able to find another job until my imminent retirement." Joaquin replied.

He adds, "My colleagues were a bunch of bullies. They do their jobs with dignity. It's what fills them with joy and purpose each day of their miserable lives. It's their substance. Their deity. They despised me because of my family's socialist views. When I told them during a lunch break some years ago, I immediately noticed them starting to treat me differently. That's when I started coming to work irregularly and, yes, you are correct, did no work. I came into the office, sat down at my desk, and instead of doing any labour, read the works of Spinoza. In the end, I was paid for doing absolutely no work."

"Ha! Which fine libertarian erotic fiction!", the man laughs out loud.

"All those managers and bureaucrats are being paid to fuck around all day and do nothing. How are they any different? You're the scrivener! The living refusal of ideology! Pure patient passivity! May it trickle right down to the roots of language itself."

After all, Spinoza was a lens maker. Rendering the once invisible, visible through the technological advancement of optics used in tele- and microscopes. One may wonder how this practice influenced his thought and vice versa. He died of a weakness related to tuberculosis, which was most likely caused by the inhalation of silica dust whilst grinding glass. Silicosis, they call it.

The spectator crouches down, eye close to the lens. A liturgy for the discreet.

Text by Lennart Koch

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D A S S T A D T - H A A R

This edition documents the divided-into-three exhibition Das Stadt-Haar.

The three parts are:
Das bröckelnde Image, unsichtbare Skulptur, and Platforming. The exhibition took place in the WNG Sensor and the gallery of the HBK Braunschweig.

Artworks: Matthias Holznagel / Design: Max Schropp / Cover Artwork: Neele Seidel / Text: Lennart Koch, Benno Hauswaldt / Photography: Valentin Wedde / Participants: Paul-Can Atlama, Yannick Averdiek, Elli Becker Kozelka, Franca Behrmann, Janis Binder, Tom Brück, Lennart Deneke, Anna Erler, Leevi Ervast, Juno Falke, Pascal Kanitz, Lennart Koch, Sarah Kouidri, Clara Mannott, Dennis Mirtschoff, Patrick Neugebauer, Carlotta Oppermann, Marven Louis Rabe, Sophie Reetz, Daphne Schüttkemper, Transgangster, Chor der TU Braunschweig. / Special Thanks to: Gaston Gnefkow, Christin Hansen-Hagge, Thomas Rentmeister, Neele Seidel, and Annette Tietenberg. / The exhibitions were made possible by: Stadt Braunschweig Fachbereich Kultur und Wissenschaft, Verfügungsfonds Westliches Ringgebiet, Stiftung Braunschweigischer Kulturbesitz, Hochschule für bildende Künste Braunschweig.

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