



# SOCIAL SCULPTURE IN PRACTICE:

JOSEPH BEUYS,  
WALDO BIEN  
AND THE  
FREE INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY WORLD ART  
COLLECTION,  
A REPORT

PATRICK HEALY





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**PATRICK HEALY**

FIU Amsterdam  
2020





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to thank Dr. Gerhard Bruyns for his enormous work on behalf of this publication. For help on the text I thank Professor Daniel Brown (Southampton), Stephan Waldow, and in the latter stages Kevin Power in Amsterdam for direct assistance with image files. Further thanks go to Waldo Bien and Hilarius Hofstede, and all those who have participated in the F.I.U. Amsterdam, and artists who have contributed to the Free International University World Art Collection. Finally my best thanks to colleagues in the Theory section of the Faculty of Architecture, Delft University, the Netherlands.



Beuys with Lehmbruck Sculpture.  
12<sup>th</sup> January 1986  
Photo: Britta Lauer.  
FIU Archive.



Lehmbruck, Kneeling woman. 1911,  
from 1920 catalogue of Dr. Hof.  
Internet Archive.



Heiner Stachelhaus, Joseph Beuys.  
Reclam. Leipzig, 1989.



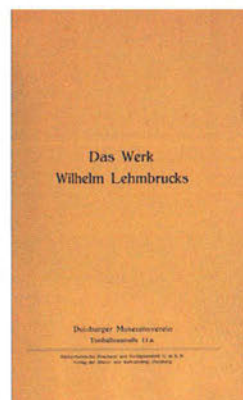
## MAKING LINKS

This report accounts for the existence of the Free International University World Art Collection (FIUWAC), the main project of the Free International University, Amsterdam (F.I.U.) as an exemplification of *social sculpture*. It will accordingly explore the meaning of the social sculpture, the relationship between creativity and design, and the precise route in which the thinking of Joseph Beuys eventuated in Holland and acts as the inspiration and original source for the actions of many artists who have contributed to the expanded notion of art for which Beuys had been such a powerful advocate, from shortly after the end the 1940's until his death in 1983 (Part 1 and 2). The specific *motor* in Holland is the life and work of Waldo Bien, and the continuation of the principles and activities of the Free International University. This is not just as some clear organizational structure, but more significantly, consequences that flow from the earliest collaborative work of Bien and Beuys as artists; as first seen in the Regal Star Project, it culminated in the Bien/Beuys collaboration in the Centre George Pompidou, to which I will return later (Part 3).

As the FIUWAC collection shows, in its almost one thousand of pieces, there is an active participation of numerous artists in the on-going process of the collection as a work of social sculpture and a vibrant generator of transformation. This material gifting, and its registration, can be found online at the F.I.U. Amsterdam website. In this report I refer readers to online sources in order to keep the text at manageable length, and in some cases I embed notes in the text, which signals their direct relevance to the arguments put forward. The use of acronyms is variable, reflecting original documents and publication variations, in use of interpunction and upper and lower letters.

How are we to understand the Free International University, and why did it choose to create an art collection to further its activities and principles? What are those principles? How did the collection come into being, and what lessons can be learned from this extensive public enterprise that involves so many artists across so many national borders? What is the relationship between the work of Beuys and the later expansion of his former master's student, (Meisterschüler) Waldo Bien? In what way did the shared anthroposophical principles of Beuys and Bien overlap and diverge? How did the relationship between F.I.U. Amsterdam and the FIUWAC develop?

What was the role of, Triodos, the anthroposophically inspired bank, in the collaboration that effectively helped the collection emerge and subsequently caused it to come to a stand-still, which then required an extraordinary intervention to save? It is now parked in Belgium. The answer lies with the F.I.U., as founded by Beuys and Bien's encounter with Beuys. We can locate the beginning of that relationship to a specific



Catalogue, Dr. Hof,  
Duisburger Museumverein, 1920.  
Internet Archive.

place and time, namely the art academy in Düsseldorf (*Kunstakademie Düsseldorf*), where Bien studied under Beuys.

We might then wonder out of what, and from where, Beuys developed his conceptions, known as the expanded concept of art, and initiated the revolution in understanding the social and pedagogical in relation to human capacity and creativity. In addition to this we need to look at the politics which ensued, and how its future was laid claim to through various instruments and activities currently in train.

In what follows, I will try and answer these questions in an orderly way. Firstly, I will look at the life and thought of Beuys. Secondly, I will focus on Bien's direct relationship with Beuys and his work. Thirdly, I will outline the Amsterdam development of the F.I.U. and the subsequent activation of social sculpture.

In his own biography, Beuys slightly muddled the waters of exactly where his own beginning took place by suggesting he was born in Kleve. However, Heiner Stachelhaus, in his biographical study, *Joseph Beuys* (1987), gives Krefeld and not Kleve as the birthplace. As a biographer Stachelhaus had to deal with the articulate distortions often deliberately provided by Beuys.



Rudolf Steiner, *Die Anthroposophie und ihre Gegner*. Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 2003. (Reprint from 1919 original).



Aristide Maillol, Bas relief, terracotta, 1913.



# PART 1





# THE THREEFOLD COMMONWEALTH

Authorized Translation by E. Bowen-Wedgwood

BY

RUDOLPH STEINER  
Author of "The Philosophy of Freedom,"  
"Die Soziale Zukunft," etc.

LONDON

The Threefold Commonwealth  
46, Gloucester Place, W. 1.

NEW YORK

The Threefold Commonwealth Publishing Association  
701, Carnegie Hall

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Translated Works of  
RUDOLPH STEINER, Ph.D.

The Philosophy of Freedom  
An Outline of Occult Science  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Gates of Knowledge  
Philosophy and Theosophy  
Three Essays on Haeckel and on Karma  
The Education of Children  
The Occult Significance of Blood  
Atlantis and Lemuria  
The Way of Initiation  
Initiation and its Results  
Theosophy  
The Mystics of the Renaissance  
Christianity as Mystical Fact  
A Road to Self-Knowledge  
The Threshold of the Spiritual World

## BEHAVIOUR WORKSHOP

22 september t/m 3 oktober 1978

Theater Afd. Rijn  
Rijksstraat  
Arnhem

Uitgangspunt van de workshop is verband te leggen tussen kunstvormen  
- waarin bepaalde facetten van menselijk gedrag worden geïsoleerd -  
en maatschappelijke fenomenen die het menselijk gedrag in sterke mate  
bepalende.  
Doel is discussie en samenwerking te bewerkstelligen tussen alle  
deelnemers aan de workshop, kunstenaars, studenten, vertegenwoordigers  
van verschillende maatschappelijke groeperingen en specialisten op het  
gebied van economie, politiek, filosofie, recht en cultuur.

## Structuur van de workshop

- De vaste medewerkers hebben de gelegenheid  
vanaf donderdag 22 september 1978 10.00 uur  
projecten te starten die in principe 6 dagen  
kunnen bestaan.  
Deze projecten vinden plaats in de buiten  
Theater Afd. Rijn.  
De vaste medewerkers zijn:  
Marina Abramovic, Joseph Beuys, Hans Eekboom,  
Henk G. Groot, Sofia Gubak, Frans J. Kalk,  
Reinoud Werk, Today's Place, Ulysses.
- In de grote benedenzaal krijgen toevancomende  
vaste medewerkers en gastmedewerkers een  
bestede tijd als podium.  
De functie van dit podium is door middel van  
performances, acties, handelingen en lezingen  
een algemene discussie over het thema  
behaviour op gang te brengen tussen medewerkers  
en publiek. (zie rooster).

Amnesty International, polit. art. stichting  
omni, Free International University, Amnesty  
vrouwenreest en stichting de regening zijn  
uitgenodigd om in deze ruime informaties  
in te te richten.

Jan Brand  
Harten Hendrik  
Van Janselijn

The first "behaviour workshop" was held as part of the series of  
Free International University workshops at Documenta 6 in 1977.  
In simple terms, the idea was to invite several artists working in  
and with human behaviour, to contribute talks, manifestations and  
discussions of their work in the public situation of the exhibition.  
We used the accepted form of F.I.U. workshop, that is for each  
contributor to be allotted a certain period of time during the day  
when they could put over their subject as they wished. Discussions  
were expected to follow. Obviously there were the makers of another  
dry, academic workshop.

However, the particular quality of an art concerned with behaviour,  
that the artist is of necessity a living example of his/her subject,  
transformed many expectations. Because, again of necessity, all  
expressions of the subject were the subject; all relationships between  
the contributors themselves and the public, whether they were in  
agreement or dispute, were the subject. Thus with focus on "behaviour",  
barriers between "presenter", "subject", and "receiver" had either  
their artificiality made obvious, or were broken down.

It is with this experience that we propose the setting-up of a  
behaviour workshop as part of the Arnhem Festival in September/  
October 1978.

We expect the Arnhem workshop to be not just an end in itself, but  
the beginning of a permanent grouping in Holland, located in the  
Arnhem area. The nature and extent of this idea will be very much  
determined by the work and achievements of the workshop.

(Tom Puckey, Dirk Larsen, Reinoud Werk, England)

2, CASTELL HOUSE, DEPTFORD CHURCH ST., LONDON S.E.

Dear Elly,

Thanks for the letter and photograph.

In answer to your questions: the workshop will  
be a place where people are charged. That's a  
simple statement. Let me add to it. Increasingly I  
believe in the workshop as a human situation with  
a greater potential for charging the person  
than past situations (e.g. exhibitions, performances,  
lectures, rallies, rituals) that held this function.  
It seems to be right for the times. I like it  
that no one can exactly define what a workshop  
is, other than a collection of people who have  
gathered for the purpose of interactive work. There  
seems to be the need for a catalyst. In our  
one, the invited artist will be catalyst. The  
artist that their decided-upon activities will  
be the beginnings of what occurs, not  
the end purpose. I like the relative  
unpredictability of it all. Personally, I don't  
know at all what may happen. I have confidence  
the workshop will be a catalyst.

Rudolf Steiner,  
The Threefold Commonwealth,  
1923.  
FIU Archive.

Joseph Beuys.

(Founding concept and manifesto of the Free University II.1.11)



## FICTIFICATIONS

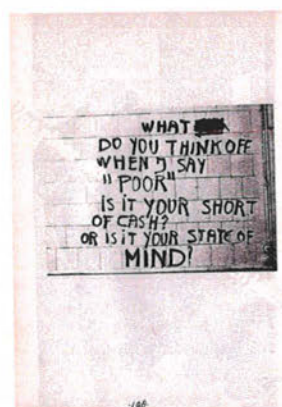
The dispute about the actual place of birth points to a feature of Beuysian reminiscence and self-imaging which needs alertness and generosity to understand. Beuys was given to confabulations, or *fictifications* within the stream of his own biographical reminiscences. One of the main sources for many of his autobiographical reminiscences comes from remarks he made in the 1964 exhibition catalogue on his curriculum vitae. An incident where he claims he was shot down over the Crimea, and was taken care of by nomads, rubbed with fat and kept in felt to preserve body warmth, has been thoroughly examined, and placed in serious doubt. One argument has gone so far as to say that there were no nomads, and thus no fat or felt, and indeed the only true fact was the crash of the Luftwaffe plane and the death of one of the crew members.

War time involvement by the 1960's had been a subject of active revisionism and Beuys may well be seen as deflecting from giving an account of his own commitments, both in the Hitler youth and the later war effort, as part of the denazification required in the German Federal Republic, a process which was less extensive and thorough than might have been expected. Artists in general were taken as being exempt in some peculiar way, which would suggest they were not taken seriously, or their political involvements were something apart. Take for example Gottfried Benn, or the treatment of the so-called earlier enthusiasm of Emil Nolde.

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, in her study of James Joyce as a source of inspiration for Beuys, approvingly quotes the observation of Ann Temkin of how Joyce would organize his art around a strongly autobiographical axis, with the artist's homeland as a central issue in the work. However the degree of nationalism imputed must be distinguished carefully, away from the ideological conflation within national-socialist rhetoric.

Joyce was deeply suspicious of nationalist positions, which can be seen in his 1907 lecture in Trieste, "Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages," where the upshot of Joyce's overview of Irish history, and his specific engagement with the development of national consciousness, inspired by German sources such as Herder and Fichte, was distant and impersonal. Joyce thought there was no *race*, no pureblood from some past. Rather, he saw a melting pot and complex tapestries, with threads of influence, migration and acculturation that create a dizzying patchwork. The famous sentence in *Ulysses* about history being the "nightmare" from which we wish to awake, may very well speak to Joyce's own experience of war in WWI.

But as to Nationalism, think of the coruscating parody of the Citizen in *Ulysses*, and the complete mocking of Irish annalist history in *Finnegans Wake*, with Roderick O'Connor as a tippling, drunken patriarch, a toppling

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

CAN WE BE IN  
CONTRADICTION  
TO OURSELVES  
WHEN IT CONCERNS  
AN EVOLUTION  
IN OUR THINKING?

DO YOU WANT  
TO BE LOGICAL?  
DO YOU HAVE TO?

CAN YOU BE LOGICAL  
WITHOUT BEING  
CONFUSED?



Behaviour Workshop.  
Typescript, Arnhem,  
1978.  
FIU Archive.



absurdity, which for Joyce meant that he could approve towards all claims of nation and language and purity, sceptical distance, and a re-affirmation of the individual, even "eccentric" life.<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing in Beuys equivalent to the description of die Heimat of Joyce's as an old sow that eats its farrow: an image that starts its long life in Virgil's *Aeneid*, BK.3 where the sight offered to Aeneas of a white sow with farrow presages the place of the West in which the migrant Trojans will finally find refuge. It occurs in Irish literature as a magical trope. Beuys is resolutely German, even given Dutch ancestors, and lives so close to the Dutch border, his commitments are often to imagined geographies, and even highly distorted remembrance of locale. Although, it should be said, Beuys' identification with Kleve is understandable since he studied there, was a student at the Hindenburg Gymnasium, and later had his first atelier there. In some sense his identification with Kleve was both physical and imaginative. Kleve provided him with romantic stories with which he could identify. This identification could lead to fantasy assimilation, as in the case of Anacharsis Cloots, who was born in 1755 in Schloss Gnadenenthal, as Baron von Cloots. Beuys, as will be seen later, really took on his persona, and lived through the act by creating a kind of conceptual figure, Beuys/Cloots, as Bien was to do much later by creating a work in Paris, which was a Beuys/Bien co-creation, and the identification was further turned into a sense of completing a mission.

## BLOOD AND OUNS

Beuys did not just identify with historical figures but also, with imaginative verve, figures from the legendary past. Further, he had an association with Richard Wagner's Lohengrin and Parsifal. The mystical and complex quest theme in *Parsifal*, and the source of healing through purity via the Knight's self-control and renunciation, has deep spiritual and folk roots. The theme of the wound that is healed by the source of the wound, Wagner's homeopathic idea of the Grail legend, itself dependent on the work of Paracelsus (a Swiss physician and alchemist), the sobriquet of the famous medical doctor, Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, was of importance to Beuys in his work, with its emphasis on art as healing. It will be clear that Beuys takes the therapeutic dimension seriously and thinks of it as directed again in the human and social to the earth itself. It can also be seen that Beuys had a direct understanding of the shamanic dimension of his own teaching, which I will discuss in section two. Equally it relates to the crossover of science and magic in the work of Paracelsus.

## EVERYTHING IS SCULPTURE

Beuys was also perfectly capable of giving accounts that were less saturated with his symbolic-mythic self-presentation. Towards the end of his life he accepted the Lehmbruck prize for his sculptural work, and

<sup>1</sup>  
Readers are referred to Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, (2001), *James Joyce als Inspirationsquelle für Joseph Beuys*. Olms: Hildesheim. For the Joyce essay above see Joyce, J., Barry, K., & Deane, C., (2008), *Occasional, critical, and political writing* (Oxford world's classics (Oxford University Press)), Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press. For history and *Finnegans Wake*, see Healy, P., (1991), *The Modern and the Wake*, (1991), Dublin: Lilliput Press.

made his debts clear to his own teachers and his fundamental discovery in the area of sculpture. The occasion was on the January 12, 1986, when he was the recipient of the Lehmbruck prize from the city of Duisburg. This was some eleven days before his death and one of the last public accounts Beuys offered of his development and influences. Not only does Beuys reckon the artist Wilhelm Lehmbruck, after whom the prize was named, to be of a higher status than Auguste Rodin - the French sculptur, he also points to the way in which his own chance meeting with the work became a kind of fatal encounter. Heiner Stachelhaus has the account. Eleven days before his death the terminally ill, and world famous artist, literally invoked Lehmbruck as his "teacher". This assertion hangs on the simple coincidence of Beuys seeing a book on Lehmbruck, in which a photograph of his work had a profound effect on him. The following quotation gives something of the sense of missionary zeal:


*Skulptur- mit der Skulptur ist etwas zu machen. Alles ist Skulptur. Rief mir quasi dieses Bild zu. Und in dem Bild sah ich eine Fackel, sah ich eine Flamme, und ich hörte; Schütze die Flamme!:*

Sculpture-There is something to be done about sculpture. The image told me in a way 'Everything is sculpture' and in the image I saw a torch, I saw a flame, and I heard, 'Protect the flame!'<sup>2</sup>

Beuys was seventeen, and it was 1938. He would take it as a pivot for his own studies, and his desire to enrol in the Düsseldorf Academy as a student. In a later reflection he suggested that it was the work of Lehmbruck, which crossed a threshold in the concept of sculpture that had provoked his choice; something he doubted would have resulted from considering Hans Arp, Pablo Picasso or Auguste Rodin. The affiliation with Lehmbruck did not amount to a complete identification as in the case of Baron Cloots, but rather a critical assessment which granted the work of Lehmbruck considerable weight in the development of what Beuys would identify as 'the expanded concept of art', and the revolution within Beuys' own thinking about the sculptural which would release it from its ancient ties to material and representation and its very conservative traditions. Lehmbruck was too similar in background and upbringing to be a source of self-aggrandizement for Beuys.

However, by the same token Beuys was anchoring his account of development very much in the local scene, as Lehmbruck came from a similar social background, and had also been a student, as Beuys would later be, in the Düsseldorf Academy. More significantly, in his acceptance speech Beuys argues against the version of modern sculptural development, which when he was giving his speech effectively had settled as a modernist story, namely the turning point was attributed to Marcel Duchamp and given a conceptual direction.

JUDENS DE WORKSHOP & PUBLICAARD STATEMENTS



Thursday 28.12.1975	Friday 29.12.1975	Saturday 30.12.1975	Sunday 31.12.1975	Monday 1.01.1976	Tuesday 2.01.1976
10.00 Katholische Messe	10.00 Jochim "Katholische Messe"	10.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	10.00 de Appel "Katholische Messe"	10.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	10.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"
12.00 Mittagessen Katholische Messe	12.00 Mittagessen Katholische Messe	12.00 Mittagessen Katholische Messe	12.00 Mittagessen Katholische Messe	12.00 Mittagessen Katholische Messe	12.00 Mittagessen Katholische Messe
15.00 Beuys	15.00 Beuys	15.00 Beuys	15.00 Beuys	15.00 Beuys	15.00 Beuys
		17.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	17.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	17.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	17.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"
		18.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	18.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	18.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"	18.00 Katholische Messe "Katholische Messe"

Workshop statements.

1975.

FIU Archive.

2

I refer the reader, for ease of reference to Stachelhaus, H. (1991). Joseph Beuys, New York: Abbeville Press, for context.



Speaking of sculpture, Beuys emphasizes the somatic intensity in Lehmbruck, the development of the experience of space from the human body. His account parallels that of the profound intuition of Lehmbruck, where Beuys' sculpture is in the whole of the social, and in Lehmbruck it has to do with 'inner experience'.

Lehmbruck brought the tradition of the experiencing of space in the human frame or body to a point, a culminating point, that even Rodin could not surpass.

*Er treibt die Tradition die in dem Erleben des Raumlichen an menschlichen Korper, am menschlichen Leibe besteht bis zu einem Punkt hin auf einen Hohepunkt, der einen Rodin nicht übertrifft.*

Beuys is not arguing for synaesthesia in speaking of Lehmbruck, when he claims that his work can only be grasped through an intuition that opens up different organs of perception, above all hearing, thinking, willing. After all, Beuys heard a command in the reproduced image, he understood that the unity of sensation lay before any theoretical formulation. Indeed he was probably most attuned to the way this innerness, to which he ascribes the power of the work of Lehmbruck, was itself touching on the will of the artist to create per se. In that sense he argues:

That is to say his sculptures are not to be grasped visually they can be grasped only in an intuition that opens up completely different door for the organs of perception; above all, hearing, thinking, willing and this means that his sculptures contain categories that were never present before.

*Das heisst seine Skulpturen sind eigentlich gar nicht visuell zu erfassen. Man kann sie nur erfassen mit einer Intuition, wobei einem ganz andere Sinnesorgane ihr intuitives Tor offen machen, und das ist vor allen Dingen das Hörende - das Hörende, das Sinnende, das Wollende, das heisst, es sind Kategorien in seiner Skulptur vorhanden, die nie damals vorher vorhanden waren.*

Beuys also ups the stakes for any easy historical construction of the development of sculpture. His pronouncement here yields the remarkable implication that in 1938 Beuys had already intuited, and by his insistence of an innerness of reading and responding to the image, had seen the potential for the development of his idea of *social sculpture*.

One can say that Beuys' response was to make of Lehmbruck a different kind of artist to what had been understood about his work, which viewed him as someone who had literally gone from an arts and crafts background to being a free artist, having studied at the School of Applied Arts in Düsseldorf, then going on to study at the Kunstakademie, Art Academy of Düsseldorf, where he worked with Karl Jannsen. It is known that Lehmbruck was inspired through the influx of exhibitions to the city by the work of Constantin Meunier, and of course Rodin.

How did you come  
to idea of  
education of  
children?

WE NEVER  
BELIEVE  
CHILDREN.

**I OPEN MY HAND  
AND MATCHES FALL**  
2 OCT. 1978  
Pre-fact by Henryk Gajewski

**I KISS HER  
AND SHE LIKES IT**  
2 OCT. 1978  
Pre-fact by Henryk Gajewski

Behaviour Workshop,  
Typescript, Arnhem,  
1978.  
FIU Archive.

The International Exhibition of 1904 was probably the most significant catalyst for his sculptural sources. By 1908 one can see his affinity align more with Aristide Malliol's sensually handled, curved forms. Thus between 1908 - 1911 he works through these influences, and then in 1911 there is a radical shift. This is best seen in the work *Woman Kneeling* (Berlin NG), which I suspect is the work seen in illustration by Beuys, a work which Theodor Daubler would call "the preface to expressionism" and the combination of clarity of shape and Gothic elaboration makes it a signature of the new expressionist currents being identified for the first time at that date in the writings of Max Raphael, who was the first to use the term "Der Expressionismus" in print in German.<sup>3</sup>

In the following few years Lehmbruck's works achieved a searing intensity, with elongation and tectonization, which can be compared with works of Egon Schiele, with whom he exhibited and with that of Hans Beckmann. His 1916 *Fallen Man for Berlin Secession* is his undisputed masterpiece. He worked as a nurse as part of war effort, and became increasingly subject to despair and unrelieved melancholy, whereby he took his life on March 25th 1919. For Beuys, none of this art historical analysis of his development is really significant - the movement from naturalism to expressionism, and the employment of Gothic elongation - since this makes of the work a kind of epiphenomenon of stylistics. The speech adds a second and most important point, that Beuys again joined to the suffering and work of Lehmbruck during WWI, namely a text of Rudolf Steiner, which Beuys had, he would claim, been led to in some inchoate and mysterious way. The text was entitled "An Appeal to the German People and the Civilized World", (1919). Steiner's work was a call for social renewal, better to say, revolution. It was a clarion cry to re-build from the insight that the cause of the war had been spiritual impotence.

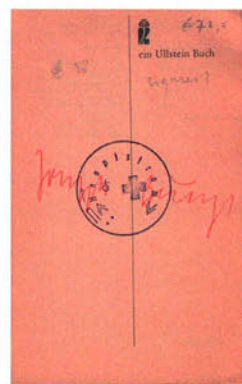
In passing on of this torch, I found a movement that is still necessary today, a movement of which many people need to be aware, and a fundamental idea for the renewal of the social whole that leads to 'Social Sculpture.' (Stachelhaus. op.cit. p.16)

## ANTHROPOS

It should be mentioned that Beuys gives little information in his "Life-course" about the years between 1933-41. However, we can date his discovery of Steiner to 1941. Again, it is related in Beuys' inimitable way, as the spirit of Lehmbruck guided him to the book in a dusty bookshop. The ghost of the future was a kind of guiding spirit for Beuys, and Steiner would become a deep and important source as an *Auseinandersetzung*, with all the various meanings that word has in German, of engagement, contesting, involvement, a putting into position

3

I have argued this in several publications. For a succinct account see Healy, P., (1993) "Matisse and the earliest theory of German Expressionism", in Mari-Aymonr Djeribi (ed.) Element, autumn/winter, issue 1, Dublin: mer-maid turbulence, pp. 29-33. A more recent account is found in Healy, P., (2017), *Max Raphael and the Invention of Expressionism*, Amsterdam: November Editions.



Beuys signature.  
FIU Archive.



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Düsseldorf  
Datum 6. Juli 1981

betraf: FIU - Bulletin, Dein Schreiben v. 15.06.1981

Bericht der FIU-Geschäftsstelle Düsseldorf  
(- Johannes Stüttgen, FIU-Geschäftsführer -)

- 1.) Zu unterscheiden sind:
- a) Die FREIE INTERNATIONALE HOCHSCHULE FÜR KREATIVITÄT UND INTERDISZIPLINÄRE FORSCHUNG e.V.
  - b) Die FREIE INTERNATIONALE UNIVERSITÄT oder FREE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY oder, abgekürzt, FIU

Die unter a) genannte FREIE INTERNATIONALE HOCHSCHULE FÜR KREATIVITÄT UND INTERDISZIPLINÄRE FORSCHUNG ist als T r e g e r v e r e i n der unter b) genannten FIU ein eingetragener Verein, Sitz: Düsseldorf, anerkannt als "gemeinnützig" (kann also Spendenbescheinigungen ausstellen) und verwaltet das Bankkonto. Die Mitglieder dieses Vereins, die einen Vorstand bestimmen und sich - satzungsgemäß - jährlich 1 mal treffen, sind nicht unbedingt auch aktive Mitarbeiter der FIU. Ebenso wenig sind die Mitarbeiter der FIU notwendig Mitglieder des Vereins. Beide Organe sind autonom. Der Verein ist der Rechts-Repräsentant der FIU nach außen und nimmt keinen Einfluß auf die Tätigkeit der FIU, die ein AUTONOMES FORSCHUNGsinstitut ist.

Der Geschäftsführer der FIU (seit dem 15.11.1980 Johannes Stüttgen) ist Angestellter des Vereins und bezieht sein Einkommen von dem Verein. Er ist nicht Mitglied des Vereins. Seine selbstbestimmte Tätigkeit ist ausschließlich Bestandteil der Arbeitszusammenhänge in der FIU. Er leitet und organisiert u.a. die FIU-Geschäftsstelle, die in wesentlichen Informations- u. Koordinationsaufgaben zu leisten hat - nach außen und innerhalb der FIU-Zweigstellen.

- 2.) Die wesentlichen Tätigkeitsfelder der FIU

Die FREIE INTERNATIONALE UNIVERSITÄT wurde als AUTONOMES FORSCHUNGsinstitut auf der Grundlage eines "erweiterten Kunstbegriffs", der sich auf alle Menschen (Joseph Beuys: "Jeder Mensch ein Künstler") und die G e s a m t u n g aller Lebens- und Arbeitsbereiche bezieht, im Herbst 1977 auf der Documenta VI in Kassel von Joseph Beuys initiiert. Dieser universale Gestaltungs- (Kunst- oder Kreativitäts-)Begriff, in dem die menschliche Fähigkeit und ihre Realisierung in der Arbeit - grundsätzlich als eine selbstbestimmte, freie - als das eigentliche

FIU Communication bulletin,

6 July 1981.

FIU Archive.

menhang der FIU eingebunden. Auch heute sehen wir in der Kunst, versteht man sie jetzt wirklich als den Erweiterten Kunstbegriff, die einzige revolutionäre Kraft.

Zu dieser Aktivität, das darf hier nicht verschwiegen werden, gehört auch unsere Arbeit bei den GRÜNEN. Diese Arbeit bei den GRÜNEN ist uns besonders wichtig und läßt sich, zumindest hier in Gelsenkirchen, nahtlos einbeziehen. Wir betrachten uns zwar als eine AUTONOME FORSCHUNGSGRUPPE innerhalb der Grünen Bewegung, machen dort aber auch nichts anderes als innerhalb der FIU selbst.

Trotzdem sind nicht alle Mitarbeiter der FIU - Gelsenkirchen auch gleichzeitig Mitglieder der GRÜNEN und umgekehrt, das spielt aber keine Rolle. Unserer Meinung nach kann in der momentanen Krisensituation nur dann etwas geändert werden, wenn man den Begriff der Kunst auch wirklich so ganzheitlich betrachtet, daß er auch, ja gerade eine Mitarbeit bei den GRÜNEN anstrebt.

Lieber Walth,

ich hoffe der Text passt in etwa in Deine Konzeption, denn heute habe ich nicht über den Ideenzusammenhang der FIU als solchen berichtet, d.h., ich habe nicht über die Idee eines entstaatlichten, freien Schulwesens, eines neuen Wirtschaftsbegriffes usw. geredet, sondern über unsere Entstehungsgeschichte und unsere momentane Arbeit. Weitere Informationen sind jederzeit bei uns erhältlich.



Tafelbild eines Ringgesprächs  
in der Kunst-AG/Fluxus Zone West

*Beuys Bloch  
Siegfried Sander*

Free International Universit

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Gelsenkircher memo.

January 1980.

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FIU Bulletin, nr.3,  
August 1981.  
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APPEAL TO ALL F.I.U. PERSONS & GROUPS

Existing Factors and Considerations concerning the Functioning and Future of the F.I.U.

A. Questions

- Does the existing FIU consider itself to be a members organization And does it have any income-framework or decision-making structure, implicit or explicit?
- Is it synonymous with the Achberg 3 rd Road Members Organization? If not, what is the relationship?
- If the FIU intends to become an independent Members Organization, also based essentially on the 3 rd Road model, is it wise to have two 3 rd Road Members Organizations?
- Achberg (and/or Achberg connected groups) seem to consider the FIU as an undertaking within Achberg, whilst the FIU seems to consider Achberg as an undertaking under the International umbrella of the FIU? Should some discussion and consensus not be arrived at concerning these rather opposing views?
- Does the FIU, as yet, have any formal arrangements, or verbal agreements with other organizations or groups? e.g. all those groups who participated at Documents/ or with the Greens/ etc? If so, what are these arrangements and/or commitments?

B. Difficulties in the existing situation

- Meetings with new groups of people, interested in the FIU (e.g. the forthcoming meeting in Amsterdam with people who have written in since the talks in Rotterdam), as well as in countries where Beuys is not known... It is difficult to know what to tell people about the FIU - ...is it a loosely connected group of people, interested either in the 3rd Road model/ Beuys/ and/or other 'alternative' activities? If so, what function will it serve for them? Unless it is an 'Interest Collective' - and potentially, at least, a Members Organization, with some common focus/ aims/ structure etc, it is hard to bring people together under the umbrella of the FIU, or to tell them what it is. It develops false expectations to tell people about the FIU as a model 'interest collective', when it has no such structure.

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via another. In a very specific genealogy of passage and heritage, Beuys found the book, and noted that one of the committee members listed for the anthroposophical group was Lehmbruck. Beuys surmised that Lehmbruck had:

In the last moments of his life, this will, this flame, that he wanted to transmit to others when he had already passed through the Gates of Death of his own sculpture. - *diesen Willen diese Flamme, die er weitererreichen wollte, im letzten Augenblick seines Lebens, als er durch das Tor des Todes seiner eigenen Skulptur hindurchgegangen war* (Stachelhaus, op.cit. p.16).

This act of transmission, via Steiner, and to Beuys himself, was the source for the development of his notion of Sozialen Plastik:

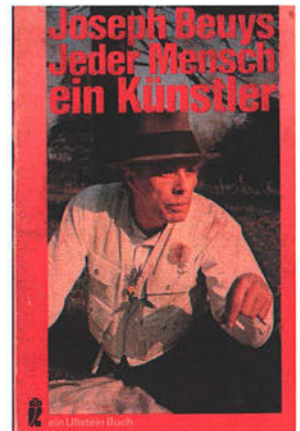
(...) which to this day is necessary and which many people ought to take as the basic idea for the renovation of the social whole, that leads to 'Social Sculpture', - *(...)die auch heute noch notwendig ist und die auch heute viele Menschen sollten als eine Grundidee zur Erneuerung des sozialen Ganzen, die zur 'Sozialen Skulptur' führt* (Stachelhaus, op.cit. p.16).

In one sense the question of the social sculpture points to Beuys accepting the arguments in Rudolf Steiner's Appeal to the German People of 1919. Steiner diagnosed the cause of the WW1 as a "spiritual impotence" and sought a new society; a new version of the social organism.

It remains to be seen how direct democracy and the expanded concept of sculpture is related in the Beuys' thinking with Steiner's teaching.

The liberation of pedagogy was one of the essential ways in which the freeing of the social, from a dominating State control, would be effected. The release of the energy of making, from people, in a co-operative way would eventually return even the most advanced individual creations "back to the social", that is the cultural community of care which fostered the development of freedom in life forms. For a German artist the appeal to the domain of the aesthetic with such direct social responsibility goes all the way back to Friedrich Schiller, and the legacy of his letters on aesthetic education.

Given the various publications that deal with Beuys, the focus here is on the development of the F.I.U. and specifically the link with Holland. In order to capture some sense of this the most interesting documentary source is the mimeographed reports on the *Behaviour Workshop Arnhem*, 1978. In the course of the workshop, which ran from the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1978 to October 3<sup>rd</sup>, there is a valuable account given and



Ullstein publication for Documenta 5, 1972. nr. 3651.

material directly provided from Beuys and Johannes Stüttgen, which indicate the initial spread of F.I.U. outside of Germany.

## THE DUTCH CONNEXION

The first of the Behaviour Workshops was held as part of the Free International University workshops at Documenta 6 in 1977. The initiators of this were the artists Tom Pucey (Puckey) and Dirk Larsen, who had the idea of inviting artists who worked with human behaviour to contribute to workshops based on the model of the form used by the F.I.U., that is each contributor was allotted a certain period of time during the day to communicate their subject as they wished, and discussions were expected to follow. They expected that the workshops would break with traditional academic modes, and proposed to set up a behaviour workshop as part of the Arnhem Festival in September-October 1978. Their further expectation was that the workshop would not be an end in itself but "the beginning of a permanent grouping in Holland, located in the Arnhem area. The nature and extent of this idea will be very much determined by the work and achievements of the workshop" (page 3). The workshop was set to start at 10:00 a.m. Theatre a/d Rhein, and to last six days. The participants were publicly announced in advance and included: Marina Abramovic, Joseph Beuys, Hans Eykelboom, Henryk Gajewski, Zofia Kulik, Premyslaw Kwiek, Reindeer Werk (Tom Pucey, (sic) Dirk Larsen) Today's Place and Ulay. Kuloik and Kwiek, the Polish "art-duo" could not get travel documents, and made a work around the refusal of the Polish authorities to allow them travel to the West. The main place for the events was the large downstairs space in the theatre, and participants were given time at the podium where they were free to present, perform, discuss. The involvement of Amnesty International, Polit Art, Foundation Nemo, Free International University, the Arnhem Vrouwenkrant, and the Rainbow Foundation, pointed to the political dimension of the groupings invited.

Beuys "founding concept" of the manifesto of the *Free University*, was cited in English translation:

Creativity is not limited to people practising one of the traditional forms of art. and even in the case (sic) artist's creativity is not confined to the exercise of their art. Each one of us had a creative potential which is hidden by competitiveness and the aggressive pursuit of success. To recognize, explore and develop this potential is the task of this school. Creation involves not merely talent, intuition, powers of imagination and application, but also the ability to shape material which could be extended to other socially relevant spheres. Conversely, when we examine the ability to organize material that is expected of a worker, a housewife, a farmer, a doctor, a philosopher, judge, or, works manager, we find that their work by no means



3rd Road, there is no alternative but to write to someone in the FIU. The question is who ?

- h Another major problem is that we are as yet unable to envisage the specific strategies in keeping with the 3rd Road model for the present situation in South Africa.  
-This needs both more time and more funds. However, as in other countries like Ireland, most other persons who are not Marxists are completely clouded by the immediate specifics of the situations, and find such long-term, comprehensive social-models laughable. This is clearly a problem in any country - but is much more difficult if everyone is focused on something like race.
7. Yes. Quarterly sounds okay. Actually how often depends on whether there is a full-time co-ordinator or not. Every 2 months would be better, but the danger is that lack of time could lead to superficiality. It is more important that it contain depth information and reports on work in the different countries and regions - this is a priority - even if it can only be brought out every 6 months.
8. Yes - there is a real need for a permanent co-ordinating facility. It makes no difference where it is. The Netherlands is fine, provided that wherever it is there are people with enough time and commitment to keep it going.  
As for the idea of a rotating facility - although I was one of the people who pushed for it at documents - I don't think it could work, as continuity is essential.  
Negative centralization need not necessarily develop due to the facility being in one place. To be democratically run and be a true reflection of all our views and needs, it needs only for all groups to take responsibility and constantly feed in all the wish to.  
Anyhow, you in the Netherlands seem open and dedicated enough to take criticism/suggestions etc. So, we are for a constant co-ordinating facility - which should work if no one gets on an ego trip - and since you kindly got it together in the Netherlands - why not continue there?
9. It should fulfil as many of the most urgent needs described in no. 5 as possible - especially to develop proper communication channels (eg the bulletin); and to organize a meeting of all representatives of the Interest Collective; and also, to organize for translations to be done into English and other languages.  
  
The main thing is to create a platform for us all to describe what we are doing - and for this to be questioned/discussed/criticized by other groups.
10. The only further comment is that, - although we are all committed to using our creativity to move toward a society based on freedom and creativity - right here things are pretty heavy. The 3rd Road model possibly holds some real solutions. For this reason more than any other, we must work as quickly as possible and be



- vi to spread awareness of
  - a the expanded concept of economics and the expanded concept of art
  - b the need for interdisciplinary activity
  - c the essential creative nature of all humans - that every man is an artist
  - d our role - that together we must become free sculptors of our future
- vii to awaken the perception and spread the vision of the existing inner warmth body of society

2. The activities actually carried out by the group are as follows:

- i A book on the 3rd Road alternative model - written by the Achberg group - has been translated and published by the group here and is now being given out. The English translation will also be printed in Germany in the near future, for overseas distribution. The translating of this book has taken 18 months of working between all the other work, unfortunately at the expense of other 3rd Road activities.
- ii An article has been published - relating to the expanded conception of art
- iii A talk given by Beuys has been translated into English and disseminated
- iv Postcards and multiples have been made
- v A talk is shortly to be given on the FIU/Beuys/3rd Road
- vi A weekly discussion group - from Oct 77 to Jan 78
- vii Circulating transcriptions of a taped discussion on the forming of an enterprise that could run as part of the FIU/3rd Road Interest Collective
- viii A transcription of the Beuys video on the FIU/3rd Road model is presently to be printed and disseminated
- ix A translation of Art and State is being done - to be handed out at an academic art conference - surprisingly of the same theme Art and State, which has excluded bringing in views of Beuys or FIU on this subject
- x Most information about the 3rd Road is probably given, by the way, in the course of discussions, seminars, conferences etc connected with my work in a development organization. My being in such an organization has meant that not only information is given but also that the opportunity exists, now and then, to base some of the activities on and develop structures according to 3rd road principles

Report from FIU South Africa,  
July 1979.  
FIU Archive.

REPORT FROM THE FIU - CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

JULY 1979

We appreciate the efforts of the group in Holland very much. As you will see from our report we are very much in favour of both a bulletin and a co-ordinating facility. Enclosed is a copy of the 3rd Road book that has been translated, and a few other things.

I am trying to find funds to come over at the end of this year. It would be good to meet you and other new FIU groups - perhaps at the Achberg Yearly Congress.

Please let us know whatever developments take place. Thanks

Answers to questions in the first FIU bulletin

1. The objectives of the FIU are:

- i to inform people about the 3rd Road, and the inadequacy of both the present world systems (through discussions, actions, work-groups, articles, dissemination of (translations of) writings and interviews of 3rd Road/FIU members)
- ii to facilitate analysis of activities and theories supposedly working toward change - in the light of the 3rd Road model (e.g. to assess to what extent an approach is reformist or not)
- iii to facilitate wherever possible the development of approaches/action etc based on 3rd Road principles
- iv to work together with others (economists, artists, members of social action groups and organizations, development workers and anyone else who is interested) to develop firstly, an understanding of the alternative model and secondly, the practical steps required to move toward implementation
- v to offer persons and groups channels for making known and articulating their stand both to themselves and to others, and to offer them the chance to commit themselves to a re-thinking of the situation and to developing their understanding (e.g. to draw up and circulate a petition whereby one pledges oneself not only to non-violence in principle



exhausts the full range of their creative abilities. Creative democracy is increasingly discouraged by the growth of bureaucracy, coupled with the aggressive proliferation of standardized mass-culture. Political creativity is reduced to mere delegation of decision-making and power. The imposition of an international cultural and economic dictatorship by the constantly expanding media combines leads to a poverty of articulation, learning and the quality of verbal expression. (p.4).

In a letter from London, which was reproduced in facsimile in the publication of the workshop, Tom Pucey made the point that it was about change, change in the human situation, and that he liked that no-one can exactly define what a workshop is other than: "a collection of people who have gathered for the purpose of interactive work" (p.5). For Dirk Larsen the workshop was to be a human crossroads, and had to stay open and equal in order to forward the change of life envisioned by Pucey. People talking, and the freedom to do so was an important emphasis in his contribution, and literally not having any further "plan", in a sense the rejection of the plan, which a living exchange would entail.

A report by Laurien Wijers, which she began in the hope of it being a detailed diary of the event, and happenings became impossible for her after she learned of the death of Ben d'Armagnac, who on the night of the 2nd of September drowned where his houseboat was moored in the Brouwersgracht in Amsterdam. She gives an account of the return to Amsterdam and the return to Arnhem, and of placing photos and flowers in memory of her friend. Beuys played a farewell piece on the piano, and Wijers interviewed him, a return to work as a journalist and writer which d'Armagnac had encouraged.<sup>4</sup>

The interview with Beuys offers a snapshot of Beuys' thinking at this time, and his main concerns as an artist. It is worth while to condense his statements he exchanged with Wijers, and in a slightly modified form, as the text as published is in upper-case throughout, and it has been rendered in an English translation that remains sometimes too close to the German syntax. The following paraphrase is meant as a summary of the full range of Beuys' views as reported:

For Wijers was back to her typewriter, and she felt that the work of talking to Beuys was part of her own creative activity, her "mental sculpture" as she called it. In some sense there is still a performative element in the interview, with Wijers using the format to have Beuys expand on his thinking. Wijers was au fait with all the main participants, and earlier that year, many of them had already participated in the European Performance Series in the Brooklyn Museum New York, in a show heavily weighted by the choice of Dutch-based artists, as Jan Brand - who was also in attendance at Arnhem - had selected the show for New York with Sharon Avery. Thus the activities of Abramovic and Ulay, Gerrit Dekker,

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Some of the details can be found in the doctoral research of Thompson, C., (2011), *Felt: Fluxus, Joseph Beuys and the Dalai Lama*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Hans Eykelboom, Reindeer Werk, and others was also a continuation of their previous presence at Documenta VI. Much of the actions in New York and then Arnhem flow from their connection with Beuys, who was seen as much as a *performance* artist as a sculptor.

Beuys clearly wants to take the interview opportunity to engage with what has taken place over the previous days, and by the same token to elaborate on his own aims for research and the future direction he envisages. Firstly he makes the direct claim that for him it is possible to compare “fringe events” such as happened in Edinburgh Festival with what is now in hand, but that the main issue was not such a comparison, rather it was to become clear about what it means when we speak of creating things.

For Beuys, creativity meant the “science of freedom”, the question of self-determination, self-administration, self-government, self-responsibility. He added that it was in the domain of culture that freedom needed to be established more and more, by which he meant, getting free from every institution, from the ruling of State power. Thus he saw the key component of this kind of creating things as a move in the direction of education, as an identification of the problems in education, and with special reference to what was happening in the Universities.

The second major emphasis that appears is Beuys’s discussion on democracy, and his understanding of the necessity to “mould out a body of society.” At first the interview stayed in the tight conceptual definition of the concept of *behaviour*, where Beuys elaborated on his own interest in zoology, and natural sciences, suggested to him, from the reading of the Dutch zoologist Nikolaas Tinbergen. Beuys is enormously optimistic:

I see a future because I feel it more and more necessary to go on with such so-called fringe-activities amidst all the so-called official festivals and activities. ...I feel that here in Arnhem there is a lot of interest in the people to have some alternative information and a kind of permanent research in the principles, surely behaviour is a nice word, but all the principles of behaviour have still to be researched.

After some hesitation Beuys produced from memory the name of Tinbergen and ascribed to him the first use of the term *behaviourism*. Beuys made the point that he was very interested in what is called natural science, and stressed that when he saw certain problems he tried to bring in discussions about this idea of behaviour, “because in everything there is behaviour.” Wijers then asks, “And then one always comes back to natural laws?”, a question which Beuys repeats, and then says, “I would say that... let’s go and let’s find the new human laws, because the old laws and the old structures for laws, for culture, for economics are from my point of view no longer effective.”



Beuys then gives a summary of how to understand the view that develops from considering one's creative ability from inside: that it allows one see that inside oneself the whole past is at work, and not just the recent events of the French revolution, or the development of ideologies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rather "we understand more and more that we experience the whole of history, from the beginning on, from the stone-age." What he thinks becomes clearer from this overview is that there is development, which he understands as permanent movement with a special metaphoric transformation, by which is evident that people see the need for transformation, for change. Beuys sees art as the best description of the "human-kind capability," and that the main question he faces is what it means when we speak of creating, of creating things. For Beuys this is the main question for the science of consciousness.

It is at this point that he raises the question of freedom, which is not about the choices available for a consumer, but the question directs itself to education and politics. Beuys argues that in democracy this is the issue of equal laws for everybody, and in the domain of culture, the question of freedom is free development for everybody. This concept of free development belongs to necessarily historical beings, and is essential for the difference in creative abilities of each individual. Thus the system of schooling, as long as it is nationalized, and dependent on State-ideology, by definition means that "creativity cannot grow, ability of people cannot grow."

For Beuys, the biological metaphor returns in a very specific way, the need to free the whole of culture of the indoctrination of State-ideology and of its administration, freedom equality and brotherhood, mean nothing each on their own.

All these things are functions in the social body as an organ, and as an organic whole, as for instance with the case of the human being who has different organs inside the body like the heart the lung, the liver, kidney's and blood-stream, brain so nevertheless they cooperate, and after this model, the model of a human being as a physical and spiritual being, we have to mould out a body of society.

Beuys insists that the model must be the body. He suggests that in order for this to happen people should be brought together, speak together, and build up alternative groupings and a kind of movement between humankind, "that for me is the most important work of art" (p.67).

Beuys believes that this bringing together releases new kinds of consciousness, a new science. For example, when thinking about democracy one would understand how profit, property and dependency are overlaid on the concrete economical value, and thus one sees there is a need for the transformation of money, a transformation towards the sphere of equal laws for everybody.

Here, Beuys touches on the nerve ends of the most complex part of his own discussion, how to give an account of a transformed economy, and the relation of money and democracy. His most specific concrete proposal is to think of a new process of consumption and production as being like a bloodstream. Beuys wants to release the economy of commodification, back to the role that money plays where there is free development in culture and consumption and production is determined in the production of the person and place in which the creative making takes place. He declares that "Money should be eliminated, and it should run back to a kind of social democratic, central bank."

Beuys draws out the fuller implications of the research in which he sees the development of freedom to be taking, namely the need to go deeper than just the external description of behaviour, which is not only a cultural question or of art-professionals. Rather we have to:

(...)understand art as the description of man, of the human kind. So everybody is an artist. It is an anthropological understanding of art and in this way it is related to labour, to all labour of people, and then having time for development with such transforming ideas, the labour will bring out the qualities, and the qualities will be the culture, and will help to renew, regenerate all illness and cancer in the world.

At the request of Wijers, Beuys repeated what he said, that after a period of development and working with such ideas and with such models, and also in doing and performing such models concretely in small communities, people will see that the quality springs from these new ideas and this heals the cancer, the illness and the deformation, and the damages of man and nature (p.69). Beuys stresses that what he is saying is reasonable, and has a strong relation to art and politics. Now there is nothing needed more than the support of alternative groups who try to go another way, who try to deal with open discussion, where no one says "I am right" and "You are wrong." When asked by Weijers about the value of looking towards Eastern philosophies, Beuys resolutely returns to identifying what in the West needs to be thought about, the kind of concentration he believes makes thinking stronger, the re-animating of thinking as an organic activity, where the human being is the organic model for the future:

But we cannot take away the problem of the western world's development in special if you do not understand the step further on... because we did the step towards death. The death of the principles. That for instance was the discussion yesterday; how this problem went a step deeper towards the problem that the west serves... they take the black cross of the abstraction, of the materialistic understanding of the world, of the crisis and the possibility to exploit even the nature,



and which has also the possibility to destroy the basis of life; the planet earth itself, so this means, for my understanding, to get free from older philosophies which are more related to other kinds of communities, where everybody has to follow the same line, like in clan-conditions.

Beuys then dramatically turns the question of the West into the question of confrontation with the principle of death and regeneration, namely the question of Christ, of dying to re-create, thus awareness of the crisis of death:

(...) then comes the conscious full freedom that every individual feels as his own possession, so after this we can get on and understand the self as a free producer.... yes, that is the western world's way .. and so I think it has to do with Christianity. It has to do with the problem of Christ (p.72).

In the latter part of the interview Beuys echoes what had been the new consensus on scholars of the history of religion and found, in the Eranos Jahrbuch papers in which Mircea Eliade considers the overall symbolism of initiation and mystery religions. He concluded: "Let us remember this, for it is important: for all archaic people, access to spirituality is translated by a symbolism of death".

Clearly the interview with Weijers was seen as an opportunity for Beuys to present his thinking and engage the views of other participants, whilst effectively continuing his *performance* from the Documenta V engagements. The transcriptions of some of his 100-day work of talking at Documenta V appeared as an Ullstein Buchverlage paperback with the title *Joseph Beuys Jeder Mensch ein Künstler*. It appeared in 1975, and was advertised as indicating the new work of Beuys, and Beuys as the one who was influencing the possibilities from the present like no other. It also announced that he was working on "invisible sculpture," whose centre was the human being in "a new society."

The text dealt with schooling, art, western capitalism, education, and the threefold social organism following Steiner, among other topics. The conversations were taken down in the office over a weekend by Clara Bodenmann- Ritter, and gave a fluent conversational insight into Beuys' way of talking and the main themes that he would develop from Documenta V, until his death in 1986. Heiner Stackelhaus, who had extensively interviewed the Van De Grinten brothers and the architect Herrich, and was in contact with the Beuys family, gives the best insight into the shift that took place in Beuys' thinking in the 1970's in his 1987 biography. He had known Beuys since 1966, and thus had twenty years to reflect on his life and work, and had spoken to all of his main

contemporaries. In that sense he is also a primary witness. Thus when he suggests that Beuys declares “Geschichte ist Plastik” (‘History is plastic’), one has to take into account the direct effect of this on his own writing and understanding. It is also a central problem in dealing with Beuys’s notion of economy and society and his mission as a teacher and artist. One can read the conversations as reported by Clara Bodenmann-Ritter, and compare the sense of what is said without the hindsight interpretation of, for example, Stackelhaus. In comparison with the interview with Weijers, we see a less assertive Beuys, and the emphasis on Steiner’s thinking has been considerably reduced.

With Clara Bodenmann-Ritter, Beuys is very explicit in saying, that it was a situation of beginning again, “*Jetzt sind wir wieder am Ausgangspunkt*” (‘We are now back at the starting-point’). The task in hand for Beuys was to radically re-configure the understanding of Democracy and to clarify his ideas about the a new social order, that has never before existed: “Put simply where freedom, democracy and socialism is realised- a free democratic Socialism” (“*Das heit einfach: Freiheit, Demokratie und Sozialismus verwirklichen - den freien demokratischen Sozialismus*”).

Beuys accepted that this work could take until the end of the century. He also saw it as necessary to being now, and with the spread of information, emerging directly from Documenta V, to schools and groups who would work with thinking and action and show what could be done. He envisaged a snowball effect and declared, “we want to build a network throughout Europe, which would work on these ideas: no?” (‘Wir wollen also eine Netzarbeit durch Europa aufbauen, die an diesen Dingen arbeitet- nicht?’ (p.17)). Beuys took measured exception to Bodenmann-Ritter’s suggestion that this was about building a sub-culture, and stated that “No, subculture, that is what we don’t want. I didn’t use the term. It is not that there are not a lot of good things in sub-cultures. We don’t want just sub-culture, we want real culture” (id est- “Wir wollen nicht nur Subkultur, wir wollen richtige Kultur” (p.17)). It is at this point, when pressed on the subject of culture and education, that Beuys is challenged as to whether it is possible to have a schooling situation that would be free of State control, even if the school was based on Beuys’ own personal presence. In reply, Beuys announces that:

This is indeed my idea, to found a free school for creativity and interdisciplinary research in Düsseldorf.

“Das ist genau meine Idee. Ich will eine freie Schule für Kreativität und interdisziplinäre Forschung in Düsseldorf gründen” (p.17).

The Dutch reception to his work and ideas is of particular focus of the present account of Beuys, and no full treatment has ever been published. What is offered here are notes, in the hope a study will one day be



developed to deal with the relations developed around Beuys' call to action that spread out from the Documenta event. Part of the F.I.U.'s Amsterdam research in the last years has gathered up information relevant to the discovery of more about the initial F.I.U. developments in Holland. Here I will indicate some of the findings that resulted from this on-going enquiry.

Bien wrote to Bud Oostrom - in February 2009 who indicated that he had met with Babeth Mondini van Loo, and that it was Babeth who opened a F.I.U. studio in Amsterdam, which Beuys visited. It was at the time of the coronation of Beatrice as Queen of Holland in late April 1980, and this got in the way of the F.I.U. meeting. Beuys also had contact with Bud Oostrom at the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam. Beuys was gaining international attention, and the impact of his teaching was reaching radical political groups in Germany and Holland fairly directly. He was also making direct contact with activists and engaged theorists.

Beuys became aware of the work of Oostrom at the Workshop in 1978, and his pamphlet "Colourlike is Lifelike," which was reprinted by Wijers in her publications.<sup>5</sup> He, Oostrom, claimed the police shadowed them. There was a complex set of overlaps and State suspicion between the Greens, Baader Meinhof and the Free International University. Beuys was travelling at this time, and made the famous *Coyote* performance in New York, which was attended by Rem Koolhaas, the later world-famous Dutch architect.<sup>6</sup> During this visit Beuys also had a celebrated meeting of Beuys with Warhol, the photograph of which would hang in De Pels bar in Amsterdam, until the end of the century. Beuys returned to Holland again in 1980. At the Beuymans in 1980 "*Kein Grün ohne Rot*", there was a stand for the Free International University, and Babeth Mondini made film footage of Beuys in Rotterdam, henceforth Babeth, in Rijnmond. The following year Oostrom and some others visited Beuys in Düsseldorf.

The Workshop for Creative Co-Operation at Moerkapelle was issued from 1979 a bulletin entitled "Free International Bulletin NR.2," October 1979. The second number has an overview of the previous year's activities. In 1978, a questionnaire was sent and some answers published. This material was collated by Shelley Sacks from Capetown, who translated a leaflet written by Beuys with Franz Kruger as "Art and the State," and became a very active force in the F.I.U.. The documents were seen as a point of departure for discussion. Walther Micke took the intervention in the first issue of Bud Oostrom with his contribution "F>I>U-a Dutch approach", as reflecting very important changes that took place since the publication of the first bulletin as Bud joined Micke in the Dutch F.I.U. activities.

Oostrom, who was educated as an artist, worked as an elementary school teacher, ran a gallery, and founded the experimental branch of

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I refer readers to the recent publication, *Babeth Mondini-VanLoo, From Beuys to Buddhism*, Samsara Uitgeverij, Amsterdam, 2016. This book also contains valuable information on Beuys and many of the circles that worked under his inspiration.

6

For this see Bettina Scürkamp in Hauptmann, D., & Akkerhuis, B., (2006). *The body in architecture* (Delft school of design series on architecture and urbanism, [2]). Rotterdam: 010 Publishers.

Crea at the University of Amsterdam. He was involved with numerous groups, including Constant Nieuwenhuis, Event Structures Research Group, Mass Moving and also engaged with quite a number of artists in Amsterdam. From 1975 Oostrom was the catalyst of creative groups in the Hague, and published his idea in a condensed pamphlet version with the title "Colourlike is Lifelike". His non-conformism led to a break with the groups, and he retired. The main event in which he then participated was the *Workshop Behaviour* in Arnhem, where he met Joseph Beuys. The Bulletin carried articles from Shelley Sacks, and information on a further meeting of F.I.U. in Gelsenkirchen planned for December, as well as activities in Kassel and Belfast. Oostrom's the F.I.U. a Dutch approach was also given:

Seen from a local viewpoint in the Netherlands, the relative small Dutch contribution as yet may be accounted for by the recent historical developments. Our country has recently witnessed a lot of alternative movements. In the mid-sixties there was PROVO in Amsterdam, which later on became the "World Hippy Center". PROVO was followed then by KABOUTER (the "dwarfs").

Until 1970 we thought being very progressive and alternative, then the more "ludic" than (sic) fundamental ideas went under in the stream of "scientific" theories and doomsday-stories of a great many futurologists. The rapport (sic) of the "Club of Rome" had a "bomb-like" impact. People in the Netherlands were much impressed by all that foreign intellectual-technological power. And there was just one small initiative that would try to find an answer: 'De Kleine Aarde' (The Small Earth) in Boxtel.

However, the predominantly alternative-technological orientation of the organisations did not cope with the arrival of a lot of people who looked for "cultural" alternatives in the first place. Because of practical considerations they could not be admitted. Here lies the heart of the matter! The development of our culture remains by all means in the hands of those who want to see human behaviour as part of a material system. Many natural and emotional values like beauty and art - the presence of some quality provided - become gradually accepted in the market-mechanism. Frequently, however, they were realised in spite of much resistance from the official representatives of culture. The present incompatibility of intellectual-technological and emotional-artistic factors justifies calling our culture a schizophrenic one.

For the first time in history sensible politics can only be based on a synthesis of both factors. At the one hand this points at the necessity of the development of a theory about integral human behaviour



on the other hand at the necessity of the partial dismantlement of contemporary culture and the fostering of new organic developments. Furthermore an analysis of contemporary social reality is requested. (It is taken for granted here that the substitution of the present).

Of course a struggle between the two extremes is fought, art being strangled. Nevertheless there are developments pointing in the direction of the synthesis mentioned above. Social scientists and artists, among Beuys, were present at a meeting about the theme: "behaviour" in 1978. Also the F.I.U. was discussed there. All did agree that such workshops were fruitful occasions for the generation of new insights. J. Beuys proved to be a proponent of a foundation of theory building in the arts. He supported my proposal to take colour because there is a Dutch tradition based on it. For Germany he thought about language. I hope there is interest for these ideas in F.I.U. circles. If so, I would like to present them in an elaborated form." (Bud Oostrom, 25th August 1979, Den Haag).

The first appeal for an F.I.U. can then be dated to November 11, 1978 - Armistice Day. It was an effort tentatively called an initiation of activities in the "framework" of the F.I.U. in the Netherlands, thus the Workshop for Creative Cooperation was founded in May 1978.

Since that date there were contacts with the F.I.U. group in Gelsenkirchen, Fluxus-Zone West and especially with Johannes Stüttgen.

The questionnaire that was sent out received replies from Belfast and Capetown. The group in Lombard Street in Belfast replied to the questions that the objectives were to encourage people individually or in groups to develop their own creativity, and to work across barriers that exist between different forms of artwork, learning and research. They did not see much of what they did as F.I.U. activities, and kept in touch with Robert McDowell and Caroline Tisdall in England, and John Halpern in America. The group in Belfast complained about the cost of travel, the need for co-ordination, the tendency to theorise all the time, the unwillingness to use other forms of communication, the ignoring of the periphery of Europe, but nevertheless thought that the Netherlands would be a good place to start an international bulletin and a coordinating facility.

From Cape Town a very encouraging note evinced a much more advanced development than in the German and Dutch situation. It was in many ways much in advance of everyone. Shelly Sacks saw the most fundamental problem, the need to understand the *Third Way model*, neither communism nor capitalism, a point that became central to the work of the Baronessa Lucrezia Domizio-Durini, in the Italian

development of F.I.U.. Sacks noted the need to put the material into English, one of the priorities with which the group in Capetown was busy with over the preceding eighteen months. They had direct personal contact with Rhea Thonges, and thus the group in Kassel, and through Achim Weber with the group in Gelsenkirchen. Due to their being very busy with establishing their group, they had not kept the other sides informed, and thus the information provided to Holland by Shelley Sacks was the first full account of F.I.U. South Africa.

They translated the Achberg's group's 3<sup>rd</sup> Road alternative model, but it took eighteen months due to interruptions with other work. An article was published on the expanded concept of art, a talk by Beuys was translated and disseminated, postcards and multiples were made, a weekly discussion group from October 1977 through January 1978, a Beuys video was being prepared for distribution, and the leaflet "Art and State" was handed out at an academic conference. Sacks made the point in her reply to the questionnaire that all these activities "are explicitly carried out as F.I.U. activities." The Capetown group pointed to the need for English translations, an international co-ordinator, etc. Thus for the last months of the 1970's a small overview of F.I.U. and its activities are available. In the next section I will indicate how a further development took place in Amsterdam.

At this stage of communication orchestrated by the Dutch, the F.I.U. was active in the following locations: a) there was a group working out of Archbishop's Place London; b) Saint Mary's Lane Dublin (the home of Robin and Dorothy Walker, and the Walker family); c) in Belfast as the Art & Research Exchange (ARE) - a group that organised yoga classes, silk screen lessons, meetings, and exhibitions; d) there was a group in Achberg). there were three different groups identified as working out of Gelsenkirchen, one with Johannes Stüttgen, another under the guidance of Bloch and Sander, and a third with the Kuchentheater; f) further groups were active in Münster, Capetown, New York, and Scotland.

For the available documentation there were some notices in the Bulletin of the ARE in Belfast,<sup>7</sup> Johannes Stüttgen published his "Einige grundsätzliche Hinweise zu der Organisationsform der F.I.U. mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Gelsenkirchener Zweigstelle," in November 1978. Shelley Sacks and Franz Kruger published the English translation of the "Art and State" pamphlet. Beuys' talk "The Great suffering of nature" circulated in translation, and in Capetown the Bakery Tapes circulated from October of 1979, which was a discussion around the Third Road Model that involved Alan Dafson, Gerry Dixon, John Evans, Joe Bomman, Gareth Young, Eddie Pritons, Shelley Sacks, and Wendy Jaylor. There was a publication in the Frankfurter Rundschau on F.I.U. and Beuys dated December 23, 1978. Miecke published an account of the expanded

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Two numbers between August 1978 and November of that year.



conception of art in the anthroposophical journal, *Jonas*. Shelley Sacks and Anke Cram's translation of *The Third Road*, with the long running title "*building-up initiatives and a practical attempt to realise an alternative to the existing social system of the east and west*" was duly reported. Dorothy Walker, the Irish art critic, and Caroline Tisdall, who contributed art reviews in her capacity as a journalist to the *Guardian* newspaper in Manchester, both added their critical voices to champion Beuys. Along with Shelley Sacks they were immensely influential in disseminating awareness about, and internationalising, the thinking and writings of Beuys, while connecting the various groups of F.I.U. through personal contact. In Amsterdam, Babeth, along with Carl Giskes and others, always considered the F.I.U. to be informal and as fugitive. Sacks spotted the urgent need for material to be made available in English translation, in order to spread Beuys' ideas internationally and allow the groups to flourish in Germany. Holland's bi-lingual ease made it a perfect location to co-ordinate diverse groups, and everyone agreed that a bulletin with a co-ordination facility was needed.

Despite the pleas for Holland as a place of co-ordination, translation and dissemination, the third number of 'a bulletin', which appeared in 1981, was mostly filled with German language contributions. Again, since the material is inaccessible I will give a snapshot summary and try to show where things stood, just at the point in which the involvement of Bien radicalised the Dutch situation and moved it much more directly to artistic practise. These arguments will be found in section 2. The point Oostrom made about the "cooler" dimension of the Dutch engagement, is developed at length in section 2. It should be noted that the analysis of Shelley Sacks at this date, after a whistle-stop tour of the various groups in 1980, points to a genuine crisis for the work of F.I.U. and also to a difficulty in finding ways to work together and communicate.

## **A WORD FROM THE OFFICE**

The upshot of the suggestion by Shelley Sacks, found a response which went almost in the opposite direction to the spirit of development for which she had hoped. With an F.I.U. office in the Art Academy in Düsseldorf where he was the co-ordinator, Johannes Stüttgen set down in numbing jargon a document on the F.I.U., an account by the man who had been effectively self-appointed to be the spokesman of one of the most articulate artists in the world. Stüttgen had a kind of zeal and the ideological harshness of the apparatchik. The convulsive legalistic language that emerged from the Art Academy would have been seen as merciless parody were it not for the fact that it did not possess a trace of humor. What is clear from the communiqué is that there is a direct alliance with the politics of the Green party envisaged by Stüttgen, that the basic work of the F.I.U. is to develop the thinking of Beuys, and that it is fundamentally devoted to breaking up power structures of capitalist

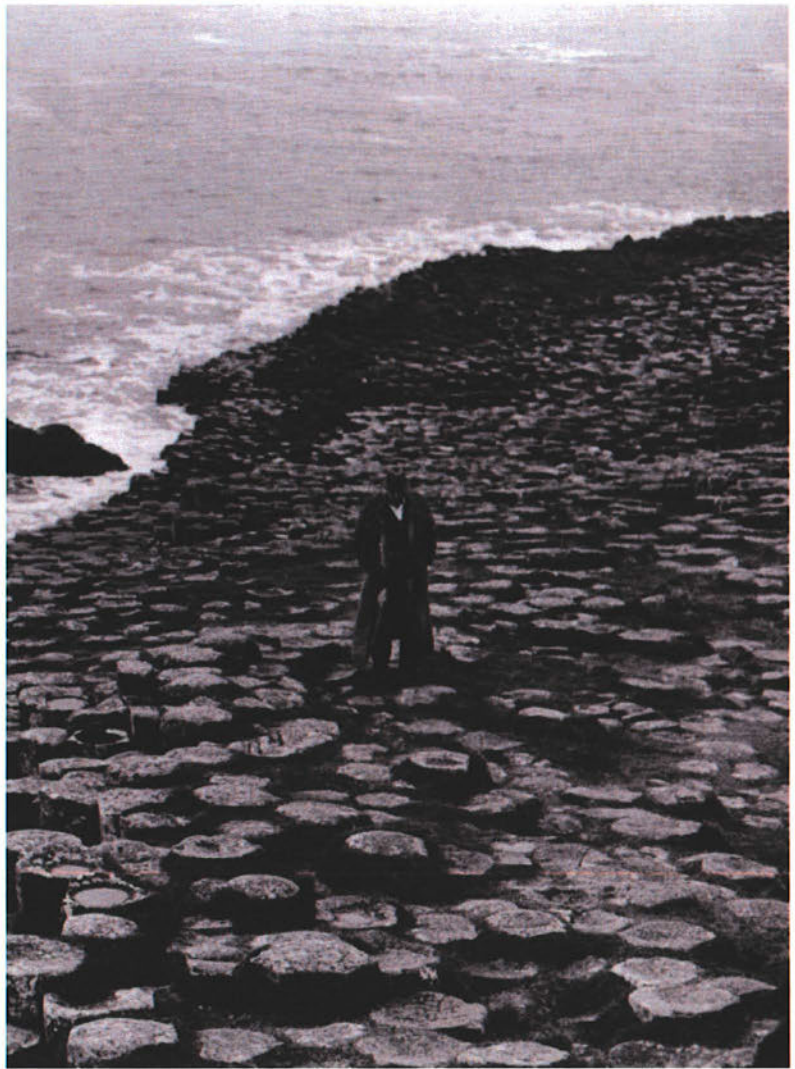
social formation. It enacts - or institutes - a legal and formal distinction between 'Die Freie Internationale Hochschule für Kreativität und Interdisziplinäre Forschung' and 'Die Freie Internationale Universität', or, Free International University, or abbreviated F.I.U. - without interpunction:

The Verein is a legal representative of the F.I.U. and external, thus it has no impact on the activities of the F.I.U.. The co-ordinator of the F.I.U. is Stüttgen, since November 15, 1980. It is a paid position, where the co-ordinator derives income from the Verein. The F.I.U. is an autonomous research institute, AUTONOMES FORSCHUNGS-INSTITUT, and Beuys initiated this at Documenta VI Kassel, 1977. It emerges out of Beuys' "expanded conception of art," and relates to all mankind and all manner of work and process in the social and economic sphere. It seeks the radical transformation of the social whole into a social organism, which is shaped in freedom, what is co-terminus with the creation of the process of social sculpture.

The main fields of activity of the F.I.U. are designated as the transmission of information, via discussion, seminars, lectures, street actions, and collaboration in citizens' initiatives. It, the F.I.U.'s activity is also committed to the creation of new enterprises and co-operative undertaking in the field of social production: in the economic sphere, on the basis of the new conception of capital and money, which would involve the creation of autonomous workers' collectives, where money would be a regulator of rights between the participants, which was the sphere of direct democracy. Money would no longer be determined by capital, but flow into a central bank, and out again through the collective democratic involvement of the participants according to need and capacity. Money would act as a perpetual mobile and work like the blood supply in the body. This was the sense of the social becoming organic as *embodiment*.

The F.I.U. was a member of the Action Third Way in Hamburg. The model of enterprises and undertakings there, where the distinction between employer and employee falls away and surplus is re-circulated, was the goal of F.I.U., which wanted a permanent expansion of this process, then provided a model for the social organism as a whole. Stüttgen makes the major point that the F.I.U. is a foundational member of the Greens, "Gründungsmitglied der Grünen," and participates in projects and initiatives of this "young alternative party." The Greens were a party with a parliamentary arm that wanted to break the system of the ruling parties in the parliamentary democracy, and worked outside of the parliament with peace groups, women's movements, and other initiatives. In a precise sense this party is an "Anti-Partei." Turning to the situation he offers a potted history of the F.I.U. and his own role, and again he





Beuys at Giant's Causeway,  
Antrim, Northern Ireland.  
Photo: Richard Demarco.  
FIU Archive.

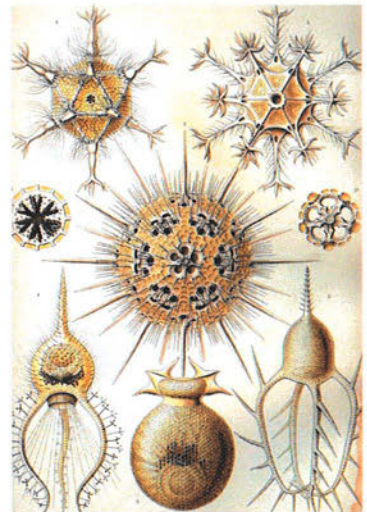


Plate from Ernst Haeckel  
Kunstformen der Natur.  
1899-1904. Internet Archive.  
Illustration of 'Phaeodaria' from  
1904 set of lithographs.  
Wikipedia Commons.

points to the “foundation” event for F.I.U. and its form and current way of existing. The existence of an F.I.U. office in the Academy, which was a research institute, came out of Beuys designating the place where he had occupied and fought against the authorities. It was his F.I.U. atelier, and this was the place of the first F.I.U. activities.

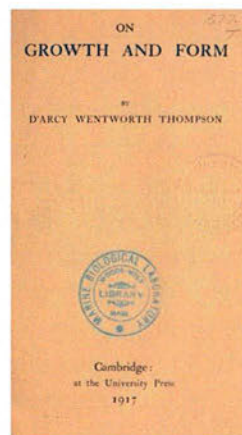
After her tour of 1980, Sacks formed the view that all was not well with F.I.U., and that none of the problems she had so astutely observed from distant South Africa had really been solved or properly addressed by the European groups. There were enlightened moves in the work of Rhea Tonges, Dorothy Walker, Caroline Tisdall, and Shelley Sacks, but the hand of Stüttgen reached to define by fiat and text the F.I.U. and re-iterate principles, whereas the general perception was always that F.I.U. was Beuys’, and that he alone was the common denominator.

This also meant that those who had his ear, could also proclaim the Beuysian view without running much risk of contradiction, as Beuys was thoroughly exhausted at this stage of his world famous life, and also by the demands of his wealth, fame, and the pressures of ill health, yet everything F.I.U. seemed to need his attention or imprimatur. It really was more of a teacher’s disciples situation: and the notion of transmission was to be, per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso, the “founder”. In some sense Sacks had chosen to be the gadfly, coming from her own work as a performance artist, and directly concerned with the ways and means that the F.I.U. could, through organisation and structure, build on its different activities and various beginnings.

## ORGANIZATION?

Sacks’ concerns were direct and she asked if the F.I.U. considered itself to be a members’ organization, whether it had any income-framework, or decision-making structure, implicit or explicit. Secondly, she asked if the F.I.U. was synonymous with the “Achberg 3<sup>rd</sup> Road Members Organization.” Thirdly, if the F.I.U. was to become an independent Members Organization, essentially based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Road model, then wasn’t there a real situation of unnecessary duplication? She then points to the confusion about whether Achberg group/s considered F.I.U. an undertaking within Achberg, and if F.I.U. considered Achberg as an undertaking under the international umbrella of the F.I.U. - was there not a need for discussion and consensus, concerning these opposing views? She further asked if F.I.U. had agreements with other groups, such as those who participated at Documenta or with the Greens, for example, and if so, what were these agreements and commitments?

These questions were included at the beginning of her appeal, and the second section moved to an analysis of what she described as difficulties in the existing situation. Her analysis came after a month’s travel and visiting of various groups. Firstly, it was difficult to know what to tell



D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson,  
On Growth and Form,  
Cambridge University Press, 1917.



people about the F.I.U., and that unless it was an "Interest Collective," or at least a Members Organisation, with common focus, aims, structures, it was hard to see how people could be brought together under the umbrella of the F.I.U., or say what it was. She made the point that it developed false expectations to tell people that F.I.U. was a model of collective interest when it had no such structure. Her deeper concern was to point to the danger that she saw in the loose confederacy, that if it remained informal it would exclude the need or indeed possibility of developing a more structured and participatory decision-making, and thus direct democracy would be undermined. "The F.I.U. needs to look at the relationship of its visions, ideals and theory to its practice, with respect to the role and need for democratic structures."

Sacks identified other problems, including the lack of communication between different groups, and the need for a decision on the question of language, which was effectively the use of English as an international language. Further, she saw that the group in Achberg did not really have knowledge of what other groups were doing, most F.I.U. groups did not know what Düsseldorf was doing, and there was almost no awareness of what the Edinburgh groups were doing. Because there was no overall structure or common communication centre all "decisions fall on Beuys." Sacks saw two routes that the F.I.U. could choose: one, remain loosely connected and thus no international action body can develop, nor can an international members' organization develop, and thus there was no basis for a third road economy to develop.

The other route would be to become a 3<sup>rd</sup> road Interest Collective, meet regularly, create an agreed upon income frame, and also have a democratic decision making framework, both of which points she sees as necessary if F.I.U. was to function as a model of the ideas it was promoting.

In the piece, Sacks claims to ask all relevant groups to reflect on their involvement with F.I.U., and asked the question if they were interested in working as a proper democratic collective, were they committed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> road model, and would they do the work to be a democratic collective "with maximum communication and oneness - which will lessen the dependency on Beuys and other 'central' figures." In the course of the following year it is clear that the political intervention of Sacks had no impact whatsoever. In Krefeld, Uwe Claus and the Fluxus/zone/ Niederrhein Westend set up the F.I.U. travelling Company, and became like a band of 18<sup>th</sup> century strolling players.

Carl Giskes is just one example of how from such work there would be an unexpected continuity and activity. It is itself a remarkable story. Giskes set out to walk around the world. After the seven years of his "walk-about" through Africa, Asia, and the Americas he returned and worked with Joseph Beuys. From 1978-1981 he was the director of Fluxus Zone West

End in Krefeld. In 1981 Beuys asked Giskes to run the Free International University for creativity and interdisciplinary research on Gut Schirmau in the Eifel, and later that year to assist Beuys in the realisation of his work, effectively becoming his assistant. It was Carl Giskes and U We Claus who drilled a hole in the work, "At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century." It is now housed in Munich, and has a detailed catalogue that indicates the range and depth of their collaboration with Beuys. In the following year, Carl Giskes was responsible for sourcing and transporting the basalt stones needed for the project *7000 Oaks*. It was when the first basalt stone arrived to Kassel that Giskes and Stüttgen planted the first oak.

Giskes studied clay architecture under the architect Eckert who taught in Kassel, and would build the first clay commission for Louwrien Wijers under the initiative "Art meet Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy." Held at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, this exhibition and conference included among others, Robert Rauschenberg, John Chamberlain, and the Dalai Lama of Tibet. David Bohm the physicist and the economist Stanislav Menshikov also participated. In the intervening years to the present, Giskes realised over 1,500 clay buildings. He worked on the public interior of OBIBIO in Amsterdam, and on a conference room designed by Jacobus Kloppenburg and Waldo Bien. Giskes is still involved in education by example, and workshops, all within the open framework of F.I.U. Amsterdam. For example, in 2000 he worked with the Algerian architect Kamel Louafi, and presented work at the Difesa Della Natura in Venice 2008 along with other members and participants of the F.I.U. Amsterdam. U we Claus left a detailed diary analysis of the days in Venice, and worked along with Babeth and Lucrezia Domizio Durini in the best traditions of Fluxus Zone West End and so forth.<sup>8</sup>

Stüttgen delivered his text from *The Office*, and meanwhile Kassel made the point that they had been on the go since 1977, had over 300 different initiatives, workshops, actions, weekend seminars, which involved up to 5,000 participants. Creating a free forum in the world of alternative work, thinking freely, creating human warmth, releasing energy potential, elaborating art in all its forms, freeing-up the notions of economy, culture and nature, exigencies that kept them at a great distance from the concerns of having a structured international organisation.

In Holland the view of those involved in the bulletin was more sanguine, since Mieke really drew a parallel with the ideas not of Beuys, but Karl Popper, deploying the notion of a kind of Socratic eristic as the instrument of openness and discussion, it would be much less doctrinaire than the views of either Sachs or Stüttgen, both of whom had in mind the role of international coordinator as part of moving the F.I.U. along, in different directions. Notions of autonomy of research, and "academic freedom," was surely the reason for using the term "University" - with its implicit internationalism, as a claim that the

8

For this see Collateral Events of the 52 International Art Exposition, Venice Biennale, (2007), published in Risk, Edizione Associazione Culturale Onlus il Claveicembal, pp. 116-117.



exchange of information was the first requirement, and that post-War Germany had the painful task of even learning what a democratic society would and could be.

## BACK TO BEUYS

With respect to Beuys himself, a much clearer picture was just then emerging in the wake of the publication of the book length study *Joseph Beuys, Life and Works*, by Götz Adriani, Winifried Konnertz and Karin Thomas, and available in English. This publication offers what by the end of the 1970's was the fullest understanding of the relation of Beuys' expanded conception of art and science, and also of the development of the F.I.U. and its place in the life work of the artist. From a retrospective viewpoint it will become much clearer how the complaints of Shelley Sacks fell far short of understanding the complexity of Beuys' work and heritage, and also that the kind of organization for which she pleaded existed, but was not the F.I.U. and that it never intended to be such a thing. There is an anarchic, Dadaistic dimension in Beuys and his fellow artists that defies description, and as will be seen, much of what ultimately emerged came out of the friendships and loves of those who knew him, each other, and continued in Rilke's words: "they though impossible, went on listening such was their hearkening."

## HOW LONG DO YOU WANT TO REMAIN AT THE FIRST STEP? (JOSEPH BEUYS)

The declared aim of the publication at the São Paulo Biennale was to set the record straight, to present the material from Beuys' own Lebenslauf, and add comments and other details gained from interview and other sources. The original text was published on the occasion of the XV International Biennale São Paulo, 3 October to 9 December, 1979. It is the single most substantial source on Beuys at this date, up to and following his death. It is also, in its illustrations and references, one of the most influential on subsequent research. There is a photo of Beuys walking with his father, whose hand he is holding. Hubert Beuys and his mother Johanna (née Hulsermann) are walking along the street in Kleve, he, the child Beuys, is carrying a shepherd's staff in his right hand, and is dressed in a sailor suit, 3/4 length coat, short pants, and woollen stockings to the knees. He is looking from under his brow directly to the camera, and already an expression is there, which one sees throughout his life. All three are wearing hats, and Beuys' is a soft-rimmed hat possibly made of felt.

I can still remember that for years I behaved like a shepherd: I went around with a staff a sort of Eurasian staff, which later appeared in my works, and I always had an imaginary herd gathered around me... I felt really comfortable in this role in which I sought to invent experiences I had had (p12).

The family background was Catholic, and at some point in 1938, at the age of 17, Beuys became a member of the Hitler Youth Movement. In Beuys' own LL the years 1933-40 are not presented. Beuys presents his reading of Kierkegaard, interest in the music of Wagner and Satie, fascination with Nordic mythology, in Scandinavian literature, and the work of Edvard Munch as "I wanted to take in everything that was forbidden during Hitler's reign". Beuys' final school choice was to prepare him to become a paediatrician, and his scientific technical interests also inclined him to the military, where he trained as a radio operator. This is the early fascination with the idea of "open transmission." Beuys was trained as a dive-bomber pilot. Again, he condensed his war time experiences as a fascination with the "nomadic" given that he held that he had been shot down over enemy lines, crash-landed and was saved by Tartars in the bottle neck of the Crimea. Beuys was injured five times during the war and received the gold ribbon for the wounded, shortly before he was taken prisoner in Cuxhaven. In 1944 there is evidence that Beuys was engaged in operations against his Dutch neighbours, one amongst the "Western theatre of operations paratroopers in Northern Holland Oldenburg to the North sea coast" (p. 19).

On return to Kleve from being a prisoner of war, Beuys intensified his study of art and especially sculpture. He became acquainted with current developments in Paris. He exhibited drawings and watercolours in 1946 and 1947, and befriended the Van der Grinten brothers who were at his old school in Kleve during this time.

It was also at this time, in discussions with his friend Rainer Lynen, that he engaged with the writings of Steiner: "We discussed, no, argued, about Rudolf Steiner... I had already been following his train of thought with great interest for many years." Another important discovery for Beuys was the work of James Joyce. The impact of the author for him was that whatever about the modern objective style of writing the true impact of the work was "mythological and spiritual." The expansion in Joyce's work interested Beuys because it was "a spiritual form of movement" (p.29).

Beuys also identified with the multi-faced genius of Leonardo Da Vinci.<sup>9</sup> Beuys identified the development of knowledge via the artist Leonardo, and again studied it as a development of positivism in Marx. In a sense he had made Marx a product of his times, and thus showed that the issue of bourgeois ideology remained a real issue for exploration, and overcoming.

One of the earliest contacts Beuys had with Amsterdam was the exhibition of one of his works in the show *Art from Krefeld, Art uit Krefeld*. The piece was the work entitled "Fountain." Beuys returned to his own bestiary after finishing his studies with Mattaré, which also concentrated on hares, sheep, and bees. The latter was of special fascination as a study of the process of the life of the bee illustrated for him the heat

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For this see Brix, M., (1993).  
*Catalogue Beuys und Leonard*,  
 Exhibition November / December,  
 Munich: Fach-hochschule.

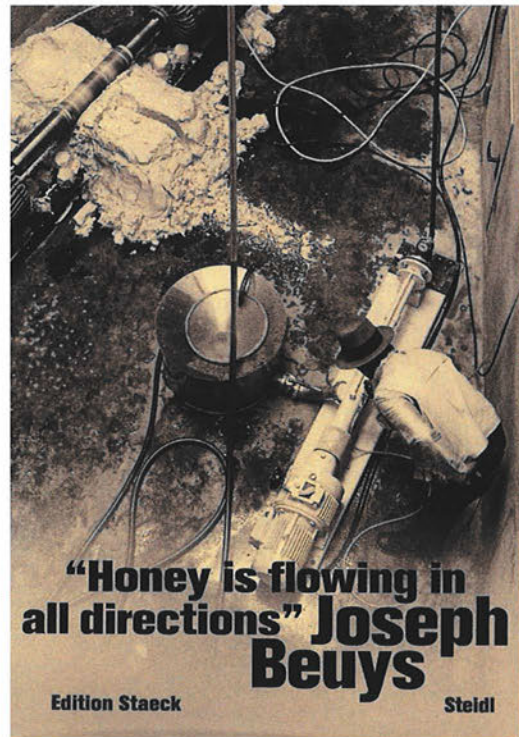


sensitive materials of wax and fat could move from the amorphous to the crystalline. This was the main fascination. He claims, "What had interested me about bees... or rather about their life system, is the total heat organization of such an organism and the sculpturally finished forces within this organization."

#### **THEORETICAL INTERLUDE; TAKING SCULPTURE FOR A WALK.**

This points to a very fundamental problem that surfaced in art historical writing of the previous century and especially in the work of the Viennese art-historian Alois Riegl. In his late writing Riegl identified the antagonism between art and nature as fundamental, and the question of whether art derived its guiding principles from the inorganic or from movement, the distinction thus being between the inorganic or the organic. It was in such an antagonism that the extremes of functionality and the conceptual requirement for art played out. The crystal had the property that it could be divided along an ever-present, if ideal, axis into two halves and in which even adjacent surfaces likewise become divisible into halves along its own central axis. This leads to delimitation by regular surfaces conjoined at angles, and an absolute stereometric and planimetric symmetry; a symmetry that can be multiplied on all sides. This leads Riegl to suggest that the earliest stage of art from which monuments survive reveal inorganic *stylisation*, to be the most basic elementary property even in organic motifs. Such a situation is contrasted with the organic, which in effect a capacity for movement, and which in the long run emphasises the contingent, the accidental and plays to what Walter Benjamin once identified as the spark of contingency in the capture of things, through the artistic medium, in which an optical unconscious turns the tension, or the agonistic element, into one of a tension between magic and technology.

Riegl wants to argue for the process of crystallisation even in the organic, and the example he adduces is that of looking at a tree, or, a quadruped from the side, where one recognises that they lack the stark symmetry of the closed demarcation of equal planes; due to the uneven distribution of the masses of these organic bodies, with the bounding surface rounded off, thus eradicating a sense of closure. Nevertheless, Riegl insists that on closer inspection of tree cells and the annual rings, the structure of the leaves, the principle of symmetry is there, if hidden. Further, it is the impulse of the visual, of what is given for sight, that pre-eminently employs the laws of crystallinity in decoration, where the other senses lead to practical needs, for example, shelter that occurs for architecture through the sense of touch, and the arousal further as mental images, or association of ideas, within these various purposes, which is where stylisation takes place. Despite this, he thinks that at certain periods the conceptual will dominate the decorative, which



'Honey is flowering in all directions',  
Joseph Beuys. Stack Editions, 1977.  
FIU Archive.

**Joseph Beuys**

**HONIGPUMPE AM ARBEITSPLATZ**

**HONEYPUMP**



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Signed Edition. 'HONEYPUMP',  
Joseph Beuys. Stack Edition, 1977.



eventuates in his own theory of *Kunstwollen*, the will to art that occurs at certain periods, in which the association of ideas and the image, especially when derived from the organic prevent the formal laws of crystallisation from enjoying pre-eminence, or absolute sway over organic nature.

Motion clearly only allows symmetrical relations during pauses. When movement is deemed acceptable, it is then that transitory and accidental qualities enter art. Then one has the situation where the asymmetrical accompanies curvature, and the body in movement, as an expressive and perceptual unity, crosses the world in which it is totally complicit and literally displaces the union of symmetry and proportion that is characteristic of harmony. There are then multiple antagonisms that procure stylisation, which derive from the primary agon of man and nature, and the further agon between the poles of functionality and the conceptual purpose that is caught up in the externalisation of the *Kunstwollen*. The other major source for theoretical reflection on sculpture in the German language was the famous work of Adolf von Hildebrand.

## **FATA MORGANA: WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU DON'T GET**

*The Problem of Form*, first published in 1893 when the sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand was 46 years old, was one of the most cited works in aesthetic discussion up to the period around the beginning of the First World War, and had been through seven editions. In some ways it had a complex, and at the same time, homely message. It suggests that our relations to things are incomplete, that we cannot see the whole object, there is always something we have to fill in, through imagination or an act of comparison. Thus we have the problem of how we grant unity to the perceptions we have, or, what grants such unity. For Hildebrand, this is the role of art. The sculptor has a specific task, and it is really the arrangement through the viewpoint of enough clues and cues for the viewer to perceive the three dimensional wholeness of an object. It is not a sleight of hand, but of sight: the dominance of the manipulation of viewpoint, and the perceptual underpinning that require illusionistic means via, depth, movement, surface sheen. At issue was the simple question of how form relates to appearance, and how does this differ in artistic practise from everyday seeing. For the artist there is a necessary reflexive awareness of how his seeing is literally constituted, not just from within the conventions of the cultural domain, but to examine closely what are the scientific and artistic ways of seeing. As scholars have noted, he was in touch with Wilhelm Wundt and Hermann Helmholtz, and closely followed debates on psychology and physiology. The major distinction he drew was that between visual and kinaesthetic perception, and therefore, notions. Kinesis still is the heart of all discussion with regard to the optical ability to understand contour, surface and effects. In

the striving for form there is always a search for unity for the artist. Ernst Gombrich's later theory this is the actual small number of conventions, often very culturally coded, on which so much that is made depends. The shift between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional illusion is the task of translation, in the spatial that brings about the experience of unity, and is the artist's main goal. For Hildebrand what counts is what they can take in at a glance, from a certain distance that launches and resolves the problem of form. The sculptor has to produce a cubic form that gives the illusion of cubic form that has to give the effect of a planimetric image, and the painter conversely has to produce an image that takes into account the idea of cubic dimension.<sup>10</sup>

## EXPANSION FAT, WAX, BASALT

It was towards the end of the 1950's that Beuys came to a crossroads with regard to the relation between art and science, what had been a kind of polarity for him, and he realised that "expanded views" must be sought (p.65). He had since the early 1950's been fascinated as to how the "warmth" principle could be expressed sculpturally. It is also a dialectical solution to the polarity and antagonisms evinced in the arguments of Riegl, and at the same time points to Beuys' position with regard to what is the development of a new and expanded conception of art. Bees can store deep warmth that they later use to shape and mould, they also produce a wax from their body that is fatty out of which they can form a honeycomb of hexagonal cells for reproduction, which is also a storage facility. According to the authors, the creation of heat, as well as the building of the honeycomb, "which looks like the negative of a rock crystal" and the regularity it possesses, are, according to Beuys' interpretation, primary sculptural processes, which in their organic and in-organic so-called opposition elucidate the sculptural base model. There is on the one hand a "chaotic flowing" process of retaining heat, which as the source of 'spiritual warmth' (Rudolf Steiner) is provided with an inexhaustible source of energy. It is found in heat-sensitive materials such as fat and wax, whose unformed state can be described as amorphous. On the other hand are the crystallised final forms that exist in a geometrical context, which are taken from many materials during the conversion of the fluid warm steam state into the cold hardened state" (pp. 40-41). Beuys himself really explains the direct fascination and the implications of his research most precisely:

The heat organism of the bee colony is without a doubt the essential element of connection between the wax and fat and the bees. What has interested me about bees, or rather about their life system, is the total heat organization of such an organism and the sculpturally finished forms within this organization. On one hand bees have this element of heat, which is a very strong fluid element. On the other hand they produce crystalline sculptures; they make regular geometric

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For more on this see Vischer, Mallgrave, Ikonou, Vischer, Robert, Mallgrave, Harry Francis, & Ikonou, Eleftherios. (1994). *Empathy, form, and space: Problems in German aesthetics, 1873-1893 (Texts & documents)*. Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, which has a full translation of *The Problem of Form*. See also Carl Einstein's critique of Hildebrand in my translation of his *Negro Sculpture* in Einstein, C., (2016), *Negro Sculpture*, translated by Patrick Healy, Amsterdam: November Editions.



forms. Here we already find something of sculptural theory, as we do in the corners of fat, which also appear in certain situations in geometric contexts. But the actual character of the existing heat is a fluid element, whereby the fat is affected by the heat and thus flows off. From this undefined element of motion, by way of diminishing element of movement surfaces a form, which appears in abstract, geometric configurations. The bees did this regularly. (pp.41-42).

The importance of the hexagonal pattern is also something not confined to the organic worlds, and thus attention can be drawn to the basalt of Staffa, or the Giant's Causeway Northern Ireland, and the frozen soil of Spitzbergen. It should also be said that the very principle that Beuys mentions in regard to the bees can also be found in the cooling into prisms with the forces in the field shrinking, and through tension forming horizontal layers. The basalt of Staffa and the Giant's Causeway shows a wonderful range of prismatic columns of irregular size and form but mostly hexagonal. D'Arcy Thompson, in his book *Growth and Form*, asks us to imagine:

a sheet or 'sill' of intrusive basalt, thrust in as a molten mass between older rocks. It is gradually chilled by the cold air above or by the rocks on either side, and its inner mass, cooling slower than the outer layer, contracts slowly. Nothing hinders its vertical contraction, rather it is helped by its own weight and by the load above, but no further lateral contraction can take place without splitting the mass, once the basalt sets hard. Contraction, however, does not take place, irresistibly, and it may be that long cracks appear; the strain being so far relieved, the next cracks will tend to take place at right angles to the first. But more commonly rupture is delayed until considerable strain-energy has been stored up; once started it proceeds explosively from a number of centers, and shatters the whole mass into prismatic fragments. However quickly and explosively the cracks succeed one another and each relieves an existing tension, and the next crack will give relief in a different direction to the first. When one crack meets another it will seldom cross it, for the strain, which led to the former fractures does not extend into the new field. In short the cracks will be found to meet one another three by three, and therefore at angles on the average of 120 and the columns will be on the average hexagonal. For the making of a prismatic structure all that is required is more or less uniform tensile strain in the two dimensions of a horizontal plane; uniform tension in three dimensions would have given rise to a cellular structure, of which the hexagonal 'causeway' is the two-dimensional analogue... In the bee cell the prisms have two layers, one facing one way and one another.<sup>11</sup>

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The detailed description of these processes can be found in Thompson, D'Arcy. (1917). *Growth and Form*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. For basaltic columns and bees cell see pp. 520 and ff 544. At page 544 Thompson provides a bibliography of key papers on bees and honeycomb formations and basalt formation - which is a key to understanding almost all the processes with which Beuys was engaged, and some of his most captivating sculptural works; and in the text surveys findings of ancient and modern authors, including Pappus, and Kepler, perhaps no other work in the biological science would help one grasp Beuys' concerns than *Growth and Form*, even though it cannot be shown that Beuys had any awareness of this swan-song of neo-Aristotelian phenomenological science. Pointing forward slightly, I would like to make reference to a work by the Soviet author Naum Ioyrich, who proposed a bee-utopia, an actual town to be built for the elderly, based on his lifelong study of bees in Ioyrich, N., (1974). *Bees and People*, Moscow: Mir Publishers. Chapter ten contains a short account of interest in bees since Aristotle, with fascinating information on the love for bees of Peter the Great, and Catherine the Great. The work of Martin Heidegger, which also discusses the problem of organism and how we understand animal life, has been well studied in Kessel, T., (2011). "Phänomenologie des Lebendigen", Feiburg: Karl Alber. Brett Buchanan's book, (2008), *Onto-ethologies: the animal environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, is also rich in material. And for the biological scientific background see Goldstein, K., (1934). *Der Aufbau des Organismus*, Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff.

## ORGANISM: BELL CHIMES, SOAP BUBBLES, PERPETUAL MELODY

As mentioned, the problem of vitalism, organism and environment, remains at the heart of Beuys' concerns. He also begins to construe his own development towards a mission, and the primary mission is one of healing and preparing the future. In a specific way Beuys wants to realise the goals of the French Revolution and he layers the thinking of Steiner on his fundamental concern with transformation and the social responsibility of art. This returns one to Schiller's *Aesthetic Education*, but has in fact its most direct issue from the encounter with nature, the question towards the animal, and the idea of a dynamic interpretation of the environmental as subjective, namely the crisis of the global and the relation to the world is "ourselves": it is subjective.

In the work of Jacob von Üexküll, the coinage of Umwelt for living beings is one of the significant shifts in the debates on vitalism in the preceding century.<sup>12</sup> Üexküll takes on the Kantian idea of subjectivity and radicalises it to state that all reality is a subjective appearance. He made the term "Umwelt" current from his publication, and it took up to 1975 before there was an environment charter declared, and the full implications of his path-breaking research was taken into the full sphere of political and social practise.

The problem of how a unity of perception and the nature of the thing is given fascinates Üexküll in this theoretical elaboration, and he signals that in order to understand the animal one must posit the "Umwelt", itself a co-nexus of meanings and perceptions that function within a kind of spherical, bubble-like containment. There can be as many environments as organisms, and one can even think of organisms in which functionality and behaviour is only a moment of luminous communication, such as marine biologists are discovering in the deepest layers of the ocean, not just new species but a new understanding of environment and behaviour that remains, for the most part, largely unknown to research. Bioluminescence suggests that all cellular activity and even multi-cellular activity in a colony organism, with specialist divisions and identifiable differential activities, remains tied to communication.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of the spherical soap bubble expresses the way in which containment and capture are understood by Üexküll, and indicates their space of meanings and concerns that occupy the biological concentration of communication. In his 1934 publication "Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Thiere und Menschen," he gives the sample of the *Ixodes rhitinis*, which will, and can wait up to 18 years for the scent of butyric acid of an animal before falling on its prey/host for its trigger to reproduce and then die. It is a remarkable story that indicates the precise limitations

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For an account see Stolberg, G., (2000), 'Vitalism and Vital Forces in Life Sciences'. The Demise and Life of Sci-entific Conception. Online available at: <https://www.unibielefeld.de/soz/pdf/Vitalism%20HPLS-1.pdf>.

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See YouTube. *National Geographic, Ocean Deep.*



why four legs on the table. Question  
to a fundamental standing is architectural.

My work on the whale oil should have been better timed. I got the Seuge label put on my head. It was all different. Seuge was never busy with photography. There was an exhibition going on from where a Seuge had collected his own interaction with each material.

[illegible][illegible]

important  
in interviews with  
R. Steady, 1993

Sam's for Text  
Reading frame.  
2000

[illegible]

100

"every minute, engaged in the loving  
stare [sic] [sic]"

"If there is an indication that I realized  
anything would be an [sic] as a woman  
and I, 'twelve the 1982.

"We couldn't I know late of my day  
and I have never seen a gap to they  
and we cannot later would.

"Children don't make me very beautiful,"  
she says.

"I realized that the general was in me, but  
I never let myself be so much as a  
addition, my share in such work was  
nothing and was blown.

"I was sure a fairly well and such a  
confrontation with the unknown, and  
to have so nothing with it, because it  
is there [possibly], I realized that I had  
to start working on myself, I had to doubt  
each word of my memory, of complete  
blatancy, as well as everything, or I knew  
The next day I continued on standing as reward  
for thirty confidence and I was able to  
study the results. This was to make  
study the picture of presence, "on the  
[sic] of I, 'twelve I felt it was  
to go to the shop and get some mail, and  
I got into a very interesting, I was not over  
on the street, I was late and had some  
on. Suddenly, I was unable, I was there  
on. Suddenly, then I realized something  
I knew I was to bring me up to my equipment.  
I also asked for a lawyer, as I could observe  
my without seeing anyone else. I  
se. I observed myself with the camera.

How much the repetition there was a  
possibility in this program within the  
program. I continued to think about the  
very delicate psychological and  
anthropological dimension of this ordinary  
thing. It became necessary to study  
the line of the flow of moving objects,  
of place and how, which could be analytically  
abstracted. The process of analysis seemed  
intricate.

The actual movie work became an essential  
reference within this program. I was able  
to have the effect of creating the line  
to some of the artist as a photographic frame.  
Meanwhile, other objects, manipulation  
of the revealing of empty traces, were  
in the standing table, a twelve and  
magnifying glasses. The manipulation  
was an enabling, for better or may, some  
reconstruction and the uncertainty of its own  
analysis. In the table I placed a small  
figure placed with water as a kind of  
marker of landscape.

Within the context of the project,  
I observed the integration into the balance  
of the object.

Through the manipulation with myself  
through the manipulation with the  
object would stand, logically, anything  
that would open up the question itself.  
Because most of time and so on realization  
as I hope, we are still in our position  
we knowing that "man is not going  
to stand". The work of the previous  
7 years was a kind of prelude.

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of sensors, signals and the semiotics; literally of matter that encapsulates the environmental affordance for the life cycle of the tick, which is not always successful. The actual vivid way in which organisms behave within the bubble is the melodic, and harmonic music of their survival. Nature has scores, only some of which we grasp, and the meaning of nature is given to us only as the subjective depth of our own affects.

## ENVIRONMENT. MEANING. CAPTURE

Meaning is generation activity in the relational. The search for meanings are what gives the “Umwelt” its life, and also requires the fullness of human subjectivity, and not functional and mechanical explanation based on vicious efficient causality, and merely quantifiable data. In a holistic view of the “Umwelt” Üexkull posits a symbiotic relationship in a becoming of, for example eye-sun, flower-bee. The older homeopathic vitalism links with the idea of an animated world, which Stahl introduced at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century for the life sciences, then the science of natural history. The symbiotic and relational makes affinity of the source of life, the movement of attraction and the need for communication, of which light is the prime vehicle, which is most clearly demonstrated in the three-dimensional world of the deep sea creatures, whose gelatinous, and luminous transparency is their protection and their messaging system within the oscillating and dynamic environment in which they too are contained and have their limit and meaning.

Bodies can understand bodies without necessarily having language. This marker of having language, so essential for Aristotle’s definition of the human being, is by-passed in swarms, and flocks by the very complex signalling and intentionality of their bodily movements. Part of the way the organism in becoming achieves its own melodic capacity is through the very being other that allows such a completion to occur. There is strictly no absolute other, only co-relations within living and dynamic emergence. One can easily see, and this is a scope of particular relevance to architecture and music, that the life-less, in the sense of the in-organic-sound, spaces, objects, are capable and belong to the unfolding capacities of living things and subjectivities, so that only border, thresholds and boundaries make any sharp distinction possible. Üexkull created a new biological science, namely ethology.

Brett Buchanan makes the point, which is of so much importance in today’s discussion of the body, and is also a key to following the debates in “new materialism” that “in the case of Deleuze and Guattari, the main issue falls similarly on the nature of relations... but that they question the very concept of ‘body’ and organism, life is a play of differential relations that form brief assemblages, and this abandons the metaphor of the sphere, and introduces lines of flight, nomadism.” Beuys goes behind the problem of the Kantian subjective to the double point of



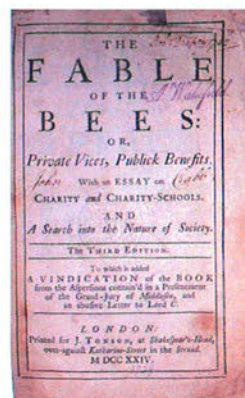
Waldo Bien,  
Alle Farbe ist im Kopf, 1976.  
FIU Archive.



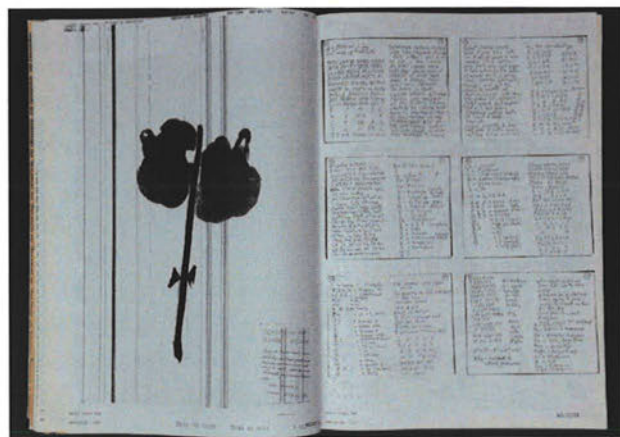
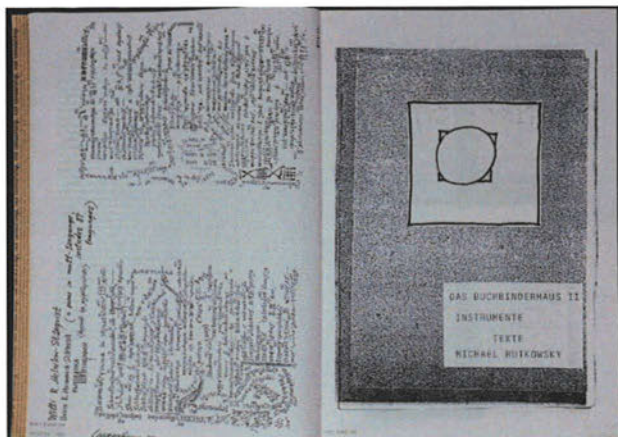
apperceptions and pulsions without shape, and the imaginary as what guides and creates the harmony of the faculties, that is itself the harmony in the perception of unity that struggles with the second and third dimension in the traditional sculptural, giving way, as performance and body as affect movement to his processual and dynamic understanding of nature, without a goal that is other than its own genesis, beginning as movement. Thus he does not see that material image as an arrest of the process, but rather a new body, a new time. Eventually Beuys, as with Fluxus, abandoned any traditional view of the object, and found all the concretion of spirit and matter, in the older metaphysics, as action.

Art will be the source of this genesis, not only its goal. Beuys rejects art for art's sake, and instead re-found the ontological priority of art as the setting into truth of becoming, which grants the radiance of being, the manifestness of appearance in action, relation and per-forming as in-forming. This is also a pedagogical elaboration of a new concept of ergon, as work tool and organism as relationship and vital achievement. The processes of fluid and warm, of sedimentation and cooling, physical and other forces are environmental and productive because of human imagination. This is what keeps the whole of the organism in view, not a de-construction whose part can then be re-assembled. Eyes let us see because we are seeing beings. Mechanically one can compare the camera eye of the squid - and if you think of the human expression of the vampire squid this seems most believable - with the human eye, but not what is the seeing, and access to the difference in the seeing and hearing remains a mystery of access to the animal, and of the animal as well for the human, which can reflect on this capacity. This grasping is the deep but not totally excluding differential, as the relational still carries with it possibilities and communicative events that are knowable and can be sensed.

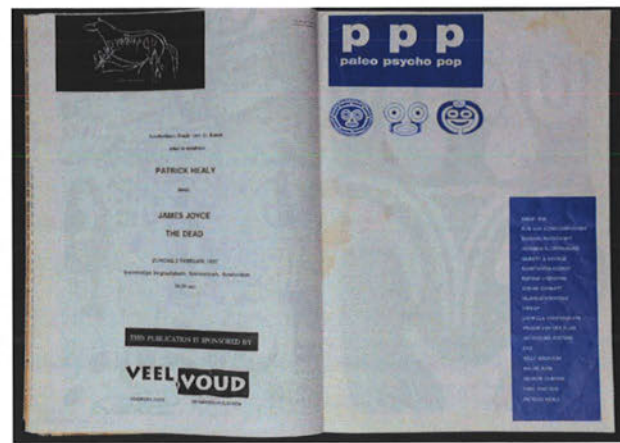
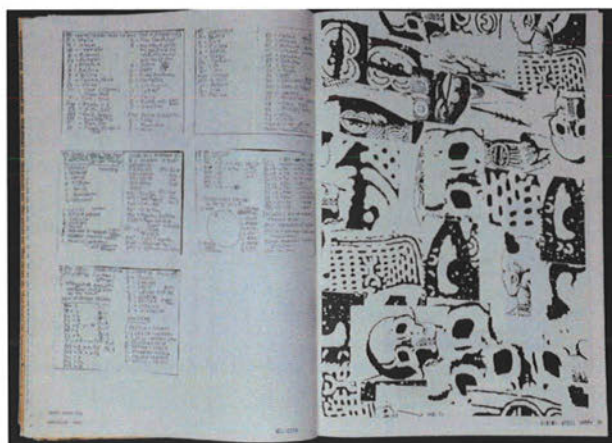
World is known in the everyday character of a horizon in which a finite search is conducted. Plants, animals, humans share this in different relational ways, and the ability to grasp the world as something, as being, is what marks out the human belonging and capacity for holding this 'something' as a direction of meaning, whereas, the animal poor in world is held captive. The example is the bee. Aristotle noted in his *Historia Animalium* the complexity of bee communication, and Karl von Frisch studied their dances and further documented this complexity. Again, the communication is enigmatic for us, although it occurs all the time, as we make pathic projections and become embroiled in easy metaphor; saying that claws and paws function as hands and feet, etc. How does the bee relate to what is present/absent, in the choice - is it choice - of flowers, and in the becoming bee of the flower what is the actual vector of inclination, the plane of imminent affinity where the duet of the different beings which are alive, are organisms, can be taken in this difference as behaviour, but not something intentional, since something other can be thought, through environmental plasticity, to occur?



Bernard Mandeville,  
Fable of the Bees,  
London, Jacob Tonson, 1724.



Paleo Psycho Pop, nr.2.  
 Edited by Hilarius Hostede and  
 Patrick Healy. 1997.



Paleo Psycho Pop, nr.3.  
 Edited by Hilarius Hostede and  
 Patrick Healy. 1997.



Relationality flourishes even if we cannot ascribe processes of recognition. In the human recognition is the essence of the relation to what is absent and present, and even auto-constitutive as in recognition by others, and self re-cognition, that sounds even in the darkness of deep sleep: I know I dream even whilst dreaming. The captivation and the ring of captivation which holds the animal is a structural "totality," in the human the wholeness is always released to the world as an openness to being, whereas the animal's life is its environmental captivation. This is the difference that indicates how the relational cannot be viewed as mechanistic assemblage, but belongs in the sphere of action and organism, and most explicitly in the human that takes being as being, as such. The world, then, is not a plenum, *partes extra partes*, but the place of appearance, where the behaviours in diversities open up and show themselves.

Beuys moves to his most significant insight when he realises that in human development everything is shaped from elementary artistic images: "which means that everything both human and scientific stems from art. In this totally primary concept of art everything is brought together, one comes to the conclusion that the scientific was originally contained in the artistic." (p.66).

In asking for an "expanded" conception Beuys makes it clear that:

I do not advance this demand so much out of originality - he did after all attribute the same concern to Goethe - for me it is more important that these things become reality in a political sense, that is in the area of cultural freedom, in the democratic legal structure, and in economic areas, thus these concepts can be stated like those of the French revolution, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. It is in this way I go a different route from Goethe, for him it was a question of science and art, it was not so much a question of the connection to society (p.68).

It was also his contact with international artists, which were principally Nam June Paik and the Fluxus group, that contact with musicians and a different idea of involvement and material realisation. George Maciunas managed to set out a kind of manifesto for Fluxus, which had also emphasised that the goals of Fluxus were social and not aesthetic, citing a relation to the LEF group in the Soviet Union. A letter sent to Thomas Schmit makes *inter alia* the following points:

Fluxus is strongly opposed to the art object, FLUXUS was thus anti-professional, against artists and against art, which was about making money, or, those who devote their life to making money with art. It was also against art as a vehicle for the artist's ego. It even scorned art and the avant-garde and even oneself. It was collectivist, and against individuality, against Europeanism, the source of *l'art pour*

l'art and artist's ego. Against theatre and opera, preferring circus and vaudeville. It was not without structure as it worked as a collective, and each year the chairperson could change. At the time the main people involved were, George Brecht, Ayo (Takaio Ijima), Willem de Ridder, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Joe Jones, and Shigehu Kubota. There was a period to await for the complete elimination of the institutional forms of fine arts.

Beuys would see it ultimately as a form of neo-Dadaism, a kind of unbridled nihilism and anarchy, a Scandinavian surrealism and some homage to Kurt Schwitters and the Zurich cabaret. Still he thought of the group as representing an important push for development. This is the period of Beuys' *Siberian Symphony, First Movement* and his *Composition for two musicians*. He engages action and sound in a new constellation, which also still advances his own realisation of an expanded concept for art. On the evening of the Festum-Fluxorum event Daniel Spoerri and Robert Filliou were also to be invited to participate, as well as Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles.<sup>14</sup>

## POLITICS FROM THE THROAT

In all the various "Actions" of the 1960's one sees the way in which Beuys' thinking also expands and that the sculptural process is now given in ways not previously conceived. Beuys challenged, via Fluxus, what he took as the anti-art gesturalism of their work and ultimately Marcel Duchamp, who commented on what was happening in a sarcastic way, suggested that it was for him at least *deja vu*. Again, we can quickly indicate Beuys' thinking here, and how it develops the expanded conception and also responds to actual practice in the arts and the whole world of performance, events, and happenings of which Beuys was himself one of the most adept practitioners. The expansion is not a Darwinian unfolding in the sense of an evolutionary movement that goes to simpler claims, or to, as happens in Darwinism, more and more with no plan rather exhibiting random complexity. One can indicate the unfold in the passage itself. Thus for Beuys, intuition is the "higher" form of reason and knowledge, as thinking exhibits its plasticity in the way the thought and voice move through the body as the physiological trace and by the pressure again in the air form an affect, further affect as sound, which is both inner and outer, a contrast and harmony, simultaneously, and thus a fold in the world, which suffers as it must delimit in effecting itself, in being only what a body can do: "For me the rose is a very simple and clear example and image of the evolutionary process towards a revolutionary goal, for the rose is a revolution in reference to its genesis. Its blossoms do not form in a jerky manner but only in an organic process of growth in which the blossom petals are placed in a kerna-like manner within the green leaves and develop out of this, the calyx and the blossom petals are transformed green leaves. Thus a blossom is a

14

For the philosophical problem of "Die Bewegung des Nihilismus" as ultimately the "will to power" see Heidegger in his work on Nietzsche in Hemming, L., Costea, B., & Amiridis, K., (2011). *The movement of nihilism: Heidegger's thinking after Nietzsche*. London: Continuum.



revolution in relation to the leaves and the stem, although it grows in the organic transformation, the rose as a blossom is only possible through this organic evolution" (p.213). Beuys had a gift to clarify also with image and here he lives both the animal and human in the way that Van der Grinten once said:

"No less important in Beuys work than human existence is animal existence... In his different forms of expression this is a constantly present element" (p.211).

## **WE ARE THE REVOLUTION**

Beuys, too, is moving into the revolution in his own self-growth. After the bruising and violent arguments with the Academy, at which he was Professor and where he was subjected to collegiate scrutiny that exploded into direct confrontation and hostility, Beuys publicly thought out his conception of the relation of pupil and teacher, and established clearly how his political thinking, with regard to direct democracy and the notion of interdisciplinary came together. It is this phase of his own revolution that sets in train the actions and connection whose nexus is the F.I.U..

In this decade of the 1970s Beuys' teaching and activity reaches out and is granted broader support outside the confines of the teaching institution with which he had become directly associated. The "founding" of the Free International University by Joseph Beuys and Heinrich Böll in 1974, took place on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding by Steiner of The Free University for Mental Science. Stachelhaus is more than likely to be right in seeing a direct relation to the earlier creation of Steiner, who had brought, as would Beuys, his notion of the relation of the State. Beuys had become a member of the Anthroposophical Society in the previous year, 1973, and thus the intensification of his concerns with the upshot of Steinerian teaching in relation to the pedagogical must have become re-focused. Again Beuys had joined the Society on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding.

In conversation with George Jappé and Erwin Heerich, in 2000, I had the impression that this element of Beuys still remained under appreciated, as also the relation with Heinrich Böll. Johannes Stüttgen had made it clear that it was the political confrontations in the Academy, marked by his placing the office in the building, that was the source for F.I.U.: what seems, however, more to the point is that Beuys had known and engaged with Steiner's thinking since the early 1940's, and as noted in his Lehmbruck prize acceptance speech, indicated his sense of the spiritual relay in which he took himself to be a part. In the early 70's Beuys already had in mind to create The Free Academy, and an international communications Centre, and had looked for a suitable building. Again, it can be mentioned that during his visit to Ireland he was also looking for a large building to have as a kind of international headquarters for his



[ 1972-008 ]  
*Billiard Table With Sluice*  
 Exhibit Kunstmuseum am Ehrenhof, Düsseldorf, 1972

Waldo Bien, *Billiard Table with Sluice*.  
 Waldo Bien Archive, 1972-08.

The *billiard table* work [ 1972-008 ] which precedes the dynamic and static socle works was made in the polders. Beuys who had proposed the walk to Bien was also to criticise the work on its showing at the Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf. By a process of linking Bien had made the suggestion that the experience of walking the polders reminded him of the billiard table from his childhood. The flatness of the landscape as a memory object fascinated him. He painted, in response, coloured stripes moving in and out of the surface to suggest movement, or precarious possession; the colours as much concerned with the psychological jostling between memory and forgetfulness, as with any literal reportage of the monochromes of the polders. The problem of the ground seemed to him more than a problem of complex perceiving, as he interpreted his own stance as the unseen within the seeing.

Initially with the billiard table he covered it with zinc, sides and legs, the playing surface he covered with tar. Responding to this work Beuys looked underneath and remarked that it had been dealt with by way of surface and not as sculpture. Beuys made specific suggestions as to changes which could be made, and said that he thought it should have been covered underneath, as sculpture did not have a 'backside'. For Beuys the work was not grounded and was too optically contrived. On the *Isjsselmeer* [ 1972-007 ] he offered the opposite criticism, and thought that it should be stripped down, a reduction was needed, a gesture which would tear it away from the painterly.

The figure in the box construction with balancing wire [ 1972-010 ] Beuys found lacking in improvisation, although the element of the dynamic strings was to be re-deployed in the *Static Pedestal* work, as Bien wanted to establish suspension and a dynamic in tandem, and

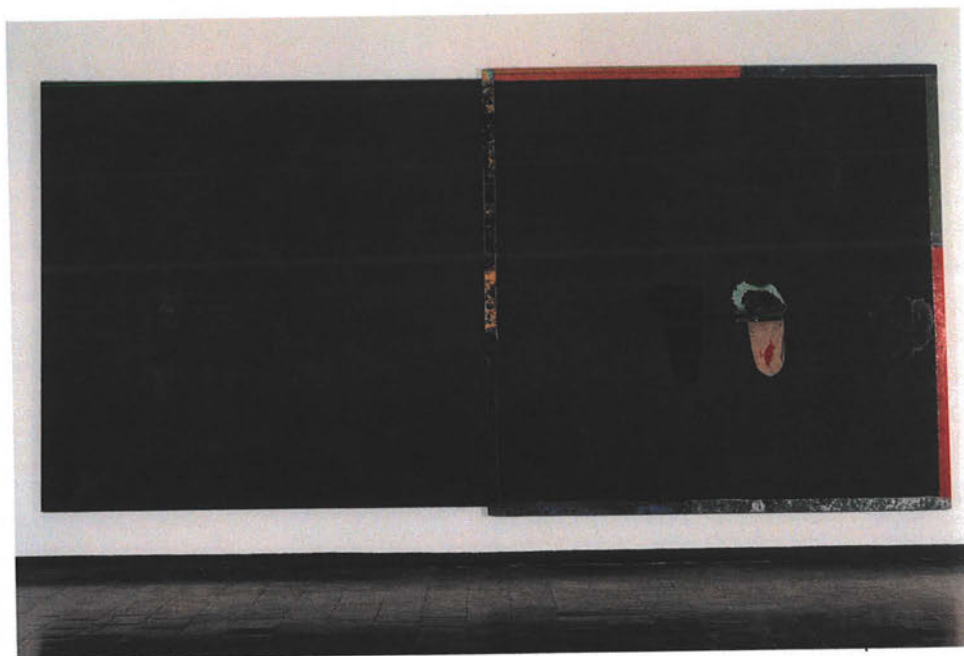
CHAPTER - KAPITEL I

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Die *Billardtisch-Arbeit* [ 1972-008 ], der die dynamischen und statischen Sockel-Werke vorausgingen, wurde in den Poldern erstellt. Joseph Beuys, der Bien einen dortigen Aufenthalt vorschlug, besprach die Arbeit anlässlich einer Ausstellung im Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf. Bien erinnerte sich an seine Kindheit, als er über die Polder wanderte. Die flache Landschaft blieb für ihn eine faszinierende Erinnerung. Als unmittelbare Reaktion malte er farbige Streifen, die wechselweise über die Bildfläche hinauswiesen, um Bewegung oder ein prekäres Gleichgewicht anzudeuten. Die Farben hatten eine psychologische Funktion zwischen Erinnern und Vergessen und spiegelten die Monochromie der Polder wider. Das Problem des Bodens schien ihm dabei wichtiger als jenes der komplexen Wahrnehmung, wobei er seine eigene Position als das 'Ungesehene im Sehen' interpretierte.

Zu Beginn seiner Arbeit am *Billardtisch* verkleidete Bien die Seiten und Beine des Objekts mit Zink und überzog die Spielfläche mit Teer. Beuys betrachtete die Unterseite des Tisches und bemerkte, daß sein Schüler diese als bloße Oberfläche aufgefaßt hatte und nicht skulptural. Er empfahl, die Unterseite zu bearbeiten, da Skulpturen für gewöhnlich keine „Rückseite“ hätten. Für Beuys besaß die Arbeit keine Präsenz und war zu sehr auf ihre äußere Wirkung hin konzipiert. Gegenüber der Arbeit *Isjsselmeer* [ 1972-007 ] äußerte er sich allerdings gegenteilig: Hier war er der Meinung, daß das Werk eine Reduktion erfahren müsse, weg vom Malerischen.

Die figurliche Form, die sich in einer selbst gebauten Schachtel mit Draht befand [ 1972-010 ], beurteilte Beuys als zu wenig improvisiert. Immerhin lassen sich dynamische Saiten auch in Biens späterer Arbeit *Static Pedestal* wiederfinden, wo er versuchte, Aufhängung und Bewegung zu thematisieren. Die Bemerkungen von Beuys blieben also unberücksichtigt. Biens Untersuchung der platonischen Körper setzte sich auch mit Mondrians theosophischen Vorstellungen auseinander und er interpretierte dessen 'asketische Reduktion' als eine Form



Waldo Bien, *Waldläufer*, 1991.  
 Waldo Bien Archive, 1991-019.



ideas of the F.I.U., assisted by Dorothy Walker and Oliver Dowling, the artist Cecil King and Ms. Waldron of the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery in Dublin.<sup>15</sup> He had had some idea that the Free Academy should be seen as some kind of “memory bank”, and saw a suitable building for the activity of a Free Academy in a two-story hall in the old Düsseldorf fairgrounds. What Beuys wanted was a place in which the expanded conception of art and the realisation of social sculpture would be itself a transformation of student/teacher relations. It would be an education establishment with anthropological dimensions, and “The Free Academy should be a memory bank of time in which things happen; it should be perhaps an arsenal where several typical steps can be shown” (p.208). It was Beuys’ 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. One senses the need for a legacy in his awareness of the time that had passed, his connection to the earlier generations and his responsibility to the future. In some sense the move towards the social also recapitulated a similar move of the previous century, from philosophy to sociology, and it was indeed sociology that was the “interdisciplinary” par excellence for Beuys. The intensification of Beuys’ program can be seen in the almost simultaneous founding of the Free Academy, and a few weeks after his birthday, May 12, of the Organization for Direct Democracy through Referendum on June 12<sup>th</sup> in 1971. Beuys wanted to leave the restriction of the Academy and the relative lack of broad appeal of the Student party and move into the wide social and public domain. Within a year he was dismissed from his post as an Academy Professor, and also, because of the trauma, his wife, Eva Beuys, suggested that he had a heart attack. He was dismissed on October 11<sup>th</sup> 1972.

15  
See Tisdall, C., (2001), *Let's Go this Way*, London: Violette Editions.

The Free Academy was an out-reach exercise, and one that again opened up possibilities for the expanded art conception to, reach and permeate the whole of society. It also harked back to the 1919 Alliance for the three structures of a socialistic organism of Rudolf Steiner, where Steiner challenged the all-encompassing power of the State, and argued for the independence of State, economy and “intellectual or cultural and spiritual life”. Steiner demanded equality for all in a public constitutional State. The State should not be the economic regulator, but rather its primary role was defence and protection, protecting the citizens from internal and external dangers. Steiner’s thinking developed for the post-war society of Germany, and his central insight - one that ultimately derives directly from Spinoza’s *Tractatus Politico-Theologicus* - is that the State had overstepped its boundaries, and the freedom to *philosophise* meant that the citizenry should oppose injustice and create fraternity by full involvement in the economic process of production, distribution and consumption of products, in what were to be chains and groups of co-operative projects and alliances, which were regulated by their own creative needs. Steiner saw a way of making the ideals of the French Revolution into a program.

## CULTURE AS REVOLUTION

Stachelhaus made the point that what was most fascinating for Beuys in the teachings of Steiner was the concept of redemption, in which the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms are seen as three stages in nature that lead upward, first to man, then to the “fourfold structure” of physical body, etheric body, astral body and “I”, and finally to the absolute human cognitive faculty. We can point again to the way in which Beuys worked out of his commitments and his artistic practice and teaching overlap. In a crucial interview given to the German bee-keeping journal published in 1975, *Rheinische Bienenzeitung*, we have not only a reprise of the teaching of Steiner, but also his expansive developments of it. In 1923 Steiner gave lectures where he stressed the need to understand how a study of the bee revealed the manifest work going on in the human, and that if you took a little bit of beeswax, what you really had was an intermediate product between blood, muscle and bone, which goes through a wax stage, inside the human body, where it never sets but stays fluid until it can be transformed into blood and muscles or bone. Thus in wax one has the same forces as within the human being. But we see how Beuys has expanded the conceptions of Steiner, and opened up the realm of the principle of warmth into a kind of social imperative:

The bee likes to live in an environment that has a certain organic warmth. The most straightforward was the old beehive made of straw. Wood is a relatively hardened material more or less. The later box beehive no longer has this quality of warmth. So here you have what has interested me in all my sculpture: the general quality of warmth. I later worked out a kind of theory of sculpture in which the quality of warmth -warmth sculpture- played an important part, and this ultimately extends to the whole of society.

Perhaps what Beuys did not mention, but was once pointedly noted by Theodor Adorno: Fascism is always cold. Beuys goes on:

The quality of warmth is there in honey, but also in wax, and also in pollen and nectar, because the bee consumes from the plant the thing that has the greatest possible quality of warmth. An alchemical process is going on somewhere in the flower, where the actual warmth process primarily develops, where fragrances are created, which disperses, where nectar forms, which is really the plant's own honey. This one could call a honey stage produced by the plant itself. The bee takes this away, let it go through its body, and turns it into something higher, a higher activity in the general honey operation. Because you have to proceed on the assumption that there is a general honey operation in nature. The bee simply collects what is there and takes it to a higher level.



It is important to recognise that in a certain way all of this is a cultural asset. The beehive as we know it, is a disciplined creation of man. In the wild bees work as wasps do, fairly anarchic. Their only honeycombs are small and irregular. The beehive as we know it today, is a very ancient cultural form: it is derived from a wild form belonging to wasps, which live in plants or mostly in trees. It has been cultivated to its present form. This in itself is a deeply sculptural understanding, and a therapeutic understanding, of course.

In the last comment Beuys stresses, and this is the really shamanistic importance of his own sense of mission in the world, the responsibility to healing.

### **HONEY CULT : THE WARM SWARM**

Honey as such also used to be seen in a mythological context as a spiritual substance, so of course the bee was divine. There is the Apis cult. The Apis cult is a very widespread culture, basically a cult of Venus that concerned itself especially with bees. What mattered was not having honey to eat; it was the whole process that was regarded as important, a link between cosmic and earthly forces that absorbed it all.

Basically my sculptures too are a kind of Apis cult. They are not to be understood as a statement to be understood as a statement about the biological processes in a beehive but are meant to extend to the Apis cult, for example, which signifies socialism. One of the first socialist movements was in Switzerland at La Chaux de Fonds, where they make watches. That's why you see so many carvings of bees over all the walls there. They used bees to symbolise the idea of socialism." Human beings too were a swarm. (Stachelhaus, English edition, pp. 57-58).

For Beuys, the F.I.U. was the social sculpture. It was the model and moulding which would rectify defective education. It would release creativity from being excluded in all areas of work for everyone. It was the revolution and the call to freedom. It was his central teaching. The direct democracy was not intended to shape itself as a kind of NGO of the future.

Beuys gifted his work to those who would go with it, as he understood with regard to portfolio requirements that if people were not up to the task after a few terms, they would drop out. Inclusion was also a kind of self-correcting hypothesis, and a movement to action away from the hypothetical, whose consequences could not, inevitably, be foreseen. Nevertheless, the ideal was always utopian.

As the exhibition in Frankfurt in 1976 was to make clear, the freedom initiated by Beuys could lead in many directions, which was ultimately the risk for him.

## THE ACADEMY IS ACTION. OSCILLATION

What the new principles in the teaching situation of the Free Academy evinced was Beuys' notion of "oscillation". To conclude this section I will outline what is going on with Beuys and his ideas for F.I.U. between 1975 and 1980, and also mention that this account is paralleled and overlapped in the next section when I look more closely at how during the same dates, and a little after, the Dutch masters student of Beuys, Bien, is developing in tandem with his teacher. Additionally I will discuss how outside the Academy parallels and other developments of the social sculpture, which will eventuate in the creation of the FIUWAC.

By "oscillation" Beuys meant the re-thinking of the relations between teacher and student, and he eventually saw that the commonality was learning. Through the process of social warmth the inter-disciplinary would release the best creative potential in the situation. Beuys once again, kept founding and re-founding versions of the developments of the Free Academy, even in the middle of the tumultuous confrontation with government and academic authorities, which has all been well studied. Thus, on November 1, 1971, he founded the Committee for a Free College. In April 1973, after the project at Documenta V, and the bruising court battle with the Ministry of Education, Beuys initiated the Union for the Advancement of A Free International College for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research. This Union was to take charge of the Free Academy of which Beuys declared himself to be the Rector. The Heidelberg lawyer, Klaus Shaeck, was to be the chairman of the union, or, in his place, as substitute, the Karlsruhe professor Georg Meistemann. Other participants included Willi Bongard, Erwin Heerich, Gerhard Richter, Walter Warnach, and Melitta Mitschelich among others. This was intended to be a school and it was for this part of Beuys' project that Heinrich Boll wrote a manifesto that was actively considered by the education ministry of Rheinland Pfalz.

The founding union set itself the task to develop a teaching plan for the school level of the Free International College for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research. At the school level, art should be pursued in connection with interdisciplinary research, i.e. psychology, communications, information theory, and perception teaching. The "school level" presents an institutionalised education system with a school character, while "international research" should be a mobile learning system where various teachers from different areas teach in the capacity as guest teachers, each with a new cycle of lectures, whereby a cooperation between the different faculties of the university would be striven for. There was provision for an ecological institute within the school and also discussion on Satellite TV as a global information exchange. It was envisaged to have a kindergarten, which whilst not practicable in terms of the building in the city's old fair hall, could be



developed near the school. State exams were rejected, civil service status for teachers rejected, and the principles of interdisciplinary was the creation of an open platform of inter-communication in which creative freedom would shape the future. In the cultural economic sphere new forms of production would emerge.

In 1974 Beuys and Böll founded a Free College in Düsseldorf. In November of the same year, Beuys expressed his hope of founding a Free College in Ireland. In a sense another beginning, he founded The Free International College for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research Inc. in Documenta 6 in Kassel. The installation of the Honeypump at the Work Place melded seamlessly together in the “lingo of flows.”



Raum 20.  
Bien in foreground, left of photo.  
FIU Archive.



# PART 2





## AMSTERDAM

Having set out some of the main features of Beuys' work and teaching, the question now arises as to the contact Waldo Bien had with the charismatic and powerful figure, what he discovered during his studies with Beuys, and what continued and remained for him, in what now is a period of almost forty years. No one thinks how quickly a past can form even from within the experience of a life, and suddenly realise that decades have gone since his or her early influences and commitments were shaped. Very often the mid to late 20's leaves almost ineradicable concerns and directions. In Bien's case, this is seen in his loyalty to the artistic relations and principles he formed at this time, and to the single-minded, often ferocious energy, he put into realising the goals of his teacher.

There are several documentary sources that can be drawn upon in order to give a picture of Bien's engagement with Beuys, but the richest is the frank series of interviews he granted in 1997, in which he effectively told most of the details of this story, and which he continued to plot in subsequent years, yielding a rich documentary version where he mirrors his own development vis-a-vis the Free International University (Amsterdam). The interviews were conducted with Bien as preparation for a subsequently published monograph-length publication on his work, and in its raw state gives insight into a way of being and a manner of expression that remains characteristically his own.

Before detailing this it might be helpful to set out a brief account of what is more fully explored in the monograph study Bien, and also the pendant volume *Virgil Grotfeld* which covers the collaboration and fruitful exchange between these two artists more fully than in the first volume. Again, material has also been included in the volume on Jacobus Kloppenburg, where Bien's long friendship and the development of their often shared aims and ideals is chartered in the catastrophic story of the destruction of the "Artchive of the Future", and subsequent efforts to save what was left of the work of Kloppenburg. It is also necessary to point out that this has been a central Free International University interest over the last fifteen years, and in a real sense is still on-going. The opening at the Verbeke Foundation of a permanent display place for the work of Kloppenburg, and the continued housing of the FIUWAC is indeed the occasion for the following notes and observations.<sup>16</sup>

Bien was born in 1949 in the South of Holland. He had no particular artistic influences within the direct family milieu. His academic and other interests were of a piece with a middle class education and showed no precocious signs of interest in art or science or literature. Indeed his first real gesture of revolt was the desire to travel, especially to America. He is said to have literally landed in Düsseldorf to study art on the basis of an accident and whim.

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For these three book-length publications see [www.patrick-healy.com](http://www.patrick-healy.com).

His earliest work, which was exhibited at the Kunstmuseum am Eherenhof Düsseldorf in 1972, tells its own tale. Bien was effectively an autodidact, and with the characteristic intensity and ruthlessness of the self-shaped, he bridled at the imposition of discipline and social obligations in a form of expressive romantic rebellion, which took the form of actually taking himself to Germany and studying in an art college.

He did not inherit the interests in his father's concerns in Heerlen, nor did he seek any definite career or job in his local community. The work is taken as a culmination of a research that he described as making a pedestal for himself and questioning where he came from, and the frame of visibility that the ideology of art and the social and the economic imposed. There is no doubt that Bien was in open revolt, and placed the weight on his own expressive and spontaneous actions. There are three inter-related works of the 1970's that allow one to understand his formal interests. These are *The continuing story of the Dutch IJsselmeer and her Embryo*, *The Billard Table*, and the *Static Pedestal*. All three works are inter-related, as for Bien's process. The temporal and social manifestation of his work, both in the material and immaterial, are taken through his forming and shaping as instances that allow further work to go on, that is to say, the world is not just about stuff and things that are re-combined, but rather the intersection of his own spontaneous and expressive needs, with what is to hand, the realisation then of the play of the possible and the virtual as a limit-production of feeling and concept. Working in Raum 20 opened Bien up to a kind of free-fall experimental laboratory. He also dealt with the specific national issue of his own homeland, as he treated his being in Germany as a kind of self-imposed exile. His point of interest however, was himself and physically so.

If he used what seemed a national theme, on the IJsselmeer, he was pointing to his own sense not of belonging but of disenchantment. There was a sharp critique in his framing of this shaped land, which had in it the theme of the Polder Model that on two counts was abhorrent to the emerging artist. One, it was a model in which the triumph of the social over the individual was advocated in terms of a consensual and levelling common life, of shared values, or work, of a creation that exhibited the early modernist obsession with mastery over nature. Two, it was the insistence of a constructivist paradigm, which for Bien eliminated all real spontaneity, and also insinuated a kind of ideology of land and place that became over-determining for the individual, who was told, in the memorable Dutch idiom, "doe maar normaal dan doe je al gek genoeg," which translates as, 'being normal is crazy enough.'

Bien responded with an almighty thud. He did not argue the fine points of the model, but delivered an irreversible blow; literally a violence of the affects in which his gesture of spontaneity was defiant and passionate in



its instinct of not subscribing to the idealised authority of construction. Secondly, in activating his critique Bien chose to work with non-valourised materials. He did not want a sculpture that took a craftsman's view towards the value of the working materials. The materials he chose are everyday, and required little change in their transformation. By insisting on his own body, free actions and everyday materials, Bien underlined that the process was also saturated with time, and this finite fact meant he was engaged in a kind of self destruction through protest, a real act of self-sabotage and abjection in which the artist is capable of a monstrous excess in his own body in order to register the depth of his contestation and the limits of his own appraisal.

## REVOLTING

The rebellion is truly romantic, and "satanic", in the sense Mario Praz once developed in his work *The Romantic Agony*, and the *Gewalt der Affekten* remains its most sublime indicator. There was no possibility for a conceptual distance, or the kind of refinement that Carl Andre exhibited at about the same time. Bien was brutal, honest, forthright and a gambler, because he pitched his defiant gestures against the possibility of a hidden sublimity within the object itself, prised open in his wrecking, torn apart by the ferocious sundering of the tradition of pedestal and materials with which he directly engaged. It is necessary to be clear in saying that to remain human Bien's aggressive counter-thrust to the overwhelming experience of control and the social technology of Holland was to be monstrous. This excess reminds one of the shift in terms of forming against the formless as the search for the sublime. Bien was a high-octane risk taker, and ultimately insisted that he who walks, must walk alone along these lonely strips of flattened, man-made earth.

## A WALK IN THE POLDERS

The earliest direct encounter with Beuys and Bien as teacher and pupil, of which we have a report, relates to Bien's creation of the work *The Billiard Table*. The work emerges from a walk that Bien and Beuys made in the Polders of which details are lacking. However, from Bien we have the account that Beuys was critical of his responses, and the works that eventuated, finding the billiard work too optical, and the painterly work too sculptural. Bien ignored his teacher's comments. Again, he was not going to protest so vehemently against his own background simply to exchange it for a venerable relationship with an authority figure in Düsseldorf. It was even the case that Bien allied himself in Raum 20 with two classmates who were very much in opposite direction of what Beuys was developing in his work at this date, speaking of the beginning of the 1970's, which was very much on display in the 1971 Dutch exhibition *Beyond Limits* at the Zeeuws-Museum in Middelburg, Zeeland.

## BEUYS WILL BE BEUYS

Beuys' fascination with animals, stags, hare, and insects - especially bees - derived from Rudolf Steiner's lectures of 1923. Martin Schönebron and Michael Rutkowski did not share the counterweight influences for Bien in Class 20. One can also argue that Bien found himself in a bind, after all this was the very period when Beuys was developing his social theory of art, and what would amount for him to the end of art, or in Beuys' own words:

To me, the work of art becomes a riddle to which the solution had to be man himself- the work of art is the supreme riddle, but man is the solution, This is the threshold that I want to identify as the end of modernism, the end of all traditions.

Directed one might think as much at conservative versions of what is art as the "anti-art" of Duchamp, Beuys was anxious to create a clearing. Via what can only be termed as an anthroposophical turn, Bien was more engaged with the anti-art of Duchamp, and less with the highly pedagogic and thematic, even linguistically funded way of working of Beuys, for whom the concept and form could be equivalent, and who insisted on the need for a universalising of the notion of art, and a re-direction of artistic capabilities towards on one side, animals, plants and nature and also co-terminously, angels and spirits.

Beuys had many variations on the theme of "Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler", including the notion of the projected future of "social warmth sculpture" within the expanded concept of art. Bien did not share Beuys' fascination with angels or spirits, or with animals or plants. He was, however, strong in his attack, very much still enclosed in the Dutch world of construction and art as immensely artificial, and ultimately abstract. Further, he came from a world that had almost no significant sculptural production in terms of modernist work. No one had really clarified how Beuys then understood the work of students in an Academy and the direct role of teaching. In the case of Bien, who came from a society in which the analogy of the social and a bee-hive was an old literary topos - think of Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* - Beuys' emphasis on the social was not easily assimilated to Bien's highly individualistic strategy or his own inner search. But no one was more political and disruptive than the charismatic Beuys who could joke that he was the Academy. There was no performative contradiction, as the relation with the students itself literally demonstrated his understanding of the social warmth as sculptural process, in effect Plastik, and in contradistinction to Bildhauerei as shaping, and following crystalline principles of forming.





Waldo Bien, Shaving table  
installation from  
Regal Star project.  
Waldo Bien Archive.



Waldo Bien, Planting Flag,  
Iceland, 1984. FIU Archive.

For Beuys, the social sculpture was also a utopian proposal, a time to prepare the future. Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) of the 1960's left in place a kind of capitalist hierarchy, and conservative social thinking, which many of the post-war generation, especially students, were prepared to revolt against, a process which also took place in Paris. Germany would settle for a *juste milieu*, and stability through consensus. Beuys who was working in the Academy for a little over a decade was at this very date involved in a famous confrontation with Johannes Rau. The teaching authorities, having challenged and succeeded in the question of accepting students without a portfolio, remained very enigmatic in relation to his aims and future ambitions.

Bien was part of the expanded *numerus clausus* intake, and the work he did in Raum 20 put him directly in touch with his teacher, who would keep an eye on him and take an interest in his development. Less schooled than Beuys, Bien nevertheless had a quick and ready ability to learn, and relished the atmosphere of the Academy, especially the sit-ins, the creation of student pockets of resistance, the formation of political parties, and inevitably the post 1960's relaxation of social and moralizing restraints.

However, as a Dutch student in Germany Bien also had the pragmatic reserve, even diplomatic intelligence of his fellow countrymen to be wary of "big" talk, and of over-charismatic individuals. In Holland the closest such kind of adulation was usually reserved for religious thinkers, such as the Bhagwan, or Krishnamurti, who enjoyed exceptional support from Dutch people eager to escape their traditional upbringing. As mentioned, the whole issue of modernization in Holland after the war had direct repercussions on the life of someone like Bien, who had intuited well and early the direction of the new society that was being shaped. It was well studied by Carelton Kennedy, who maintains that the traditional integration powers of old religious groups in terms of social cohesion was inevitably weakened. The elites had already committed themselves to a management style of planning within the paradigms of the rationalist-functional model. Art and other areas of aesthetic affect, essentially ideological, were to serve this consensus from the top. Dutch modernism was an espousal of formal-functional rationality.

## MOTORIC SCRIPT, GLOBAL ROTATION

It was from his study of Michael Rutkowski that Bien had some chance of insulating himself against what were fairly savage critiques by Beuys. When he looked under the *Billiard Table* he suggested to Bien that a sculpture does not have an "arse." In effect, what Beuys said was that the table that was covered with zinc on the side and legs, and with tar on the playing surface, was treated too optically and not in a sculptural way, since he, Beuys, thought it should have been covered underneath. With



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regard to the *Ijsselmeer*, he thought the work should be stripped down, and some gesture made that would take it away from the painterly - in other words, not sculptural enough, and too painterly. It was Rutkowski who thought that Beuys was still preserving the identity of the object, even in the anti-art gesture of Duchamp. He also viewed Beuys' relationship as talking in a suspicious light, as he felt that without this use of conceptual language Beuys' work could not maintain the idea of the unity of the object.

Beuys had already anticipated such criticisms, and his performance and arguments with regard to talking as a social sculptural process robbed the Rutkowski critique of much of its sting. Nevertheless, Bien was really committed to the full implications of "process" even if it meant dissolution that no object endured. Bien wanted to see that the concretion of gesture, performance and making, was itself a constant potential, which could dynamically enter other fields and relations, take off on new directions, and literally be generated within another condition. The endless discussion, especially the famous Friday discussions in the class, left Bien exasperated. Bien's notion of innerness, a return to his own feeling and body as a site of resistance and obstacle chimes with Rutkowski's research into the haptic quality of the innerness of the body. This being "in" was not set against some objective outside, rather it was the lived condition of the experience of the self, as movement, as impulse, as desire; which then, as it shaped in its own reflexion, moved onto another place of immediacy that had no lateral or vertical extension. Bien resolved the being/becoming problem by suspending wires in a static/dynamic construction, and found an adequate way to indicate a sense of carceral experience in his Static pedestal work, which is a kind of arrested image of the dialectic at play in the *Billiard Table*. For Beuys this work lacked improvisation. Bien's sights were soon to be re-directed to the Dutch artist Jan Dibbets, whose role as a legatee of the work of Piet Mondrian he fiercely opposed.

Bien was fascinated by the elimination of space, and the grid of flatness as a pseudo topology of land or place in Mondrian's work. In a sense Mondrian, an immensely gifted painter, had surrendered his best gifts in face of his encounter with cubism, which he reversed as a segmented seeing of the surface. He also reverses the power of Vincent Van Gogh's creation within the work of its own autonomous "visuality" away from all "natural" referent, indeed making of the artist's own work a second nature that emerges from its agency in the very welter of objects and things and non-human elements without which the vision could not be realised.

Bien, however, had to deal with Beuys, even as he prepared his return to Holland as an artist with radical, and de facto, specific spiritual and political allegiances that would set him against the mainstream.

What Rutkowski and Bien did not want was a world made of “art objects.” Rather, their view coincided in the relational, exploratory, and much more hesitant proposition, in which actions vibrated into the energy of the world and were submitted to the temporal flow as with all things finite. Bien wanted to break through the boundaries, the tight “no opening” that Dibbets invoked, the tight flat grid of order and control in Mondrian, and at the same time he did not think lyrical wiliness and subjective fiat, could be achieved outside the confrontation with the innerness of the self. Bien wanted a threshold that was in a constant state of raw modification. “The Regal Star Project” of some ten years later would be the conclusion of this period of research and work, which began with the *Billiard Table*, and in the former it was to be that Bien solved the problem of the pedestal for sculpture by becoming one himself.

## BODYTALK

Something of the body is drained in the excess of its living, and Bien sought energy, a kind of strange searching for life force via force. Nevertheless, he was committed to analysis and observation, and needed standpoints so that the pedestal problem allowed him the most fruitful way to engage process as question and answer. Unlike Beuys, Bien did not see himself as a kind of pedagogue, nor did he have the ecstatic and exalted sense of shamanism. Later, it is clear that Bien had a relationship to mammals, but only ones in water, such as the whale, and this does not connect with the terrestrial flora and fauna of Beuys. This is an important difference, and relates as much to the psycho-geography, as Guy Debord would have it, as to individual preferences. For Beuys, land is through the living plants and animals a rooting in the world of the seen and also the access to the unseen, and thus he can take this specialist knowledge, of plants and drugs and animals as his means of “identification” and the shamanic mission of healing, which he openly proclaims for art. For Bien, the problems are more about the fact of the human skeleton, the inscriptive practises of how the body is distributed in space and movement, the suspension and re-animation of process alternately.

Some of the research is seen in the work of Bien a little later in the 1970's, that is 1976, “Alle Farbe ist im Kopf.” The weight of the research is dedicated to innerness that is not idealist. Bien's problem was the inability to work with secondary colours, and his pursuit of colour theory, which he discovered from his reading of Rudolf Steiner. One can see the real overlap of the student and teacher in Bien's personal discovery of the work and writing of Steiner. For Bien, in some sense the spectral colours remain dispositional and move towards abstraction. He is caught in a kind of searing double bind. Initially he worked with primary colours. One could take it that the painting he produced invited complete immersion in the often unbroken colour field. As Philip Ball once noted in his book *Bright Earth*, there is only the raw visual impression itself,



the hue and luminosity in a way the vision that Wassily Kandinsky had espoused taking to its logical conclusion. In what had been a free domain of mixed metaphors musicians could talk about chromaticism, and painters about pitch, and key of sound and colour respectively.

### **"ORANGE IS A MAN CONVINCED OF HIS OWN POWERS"**

Kandinsky saw a sun set over Moscow and heard Wagner's *Lohengrin* and wanted to achieve a similar *Verschmelzung* as he experienced optically and sonorously. Such effects could not be so easily achieved in painting. The material realisation, the medium, the pigments, chemical or synthetic colours, reactions of priming agents all added to the difficulty of creating an art of transition in the composition of shape and colour, and Kandinsky had an intense sense that he derived from the Russian peasant art of Wologoda of the physical and brute fact of colour. There was something irreconcilable between the man-made and the natural order, and Kandinsky squarely faced the problem by trying to effect works where they could vibrate together, even in their apparent irreconcilability. In some way, as Kandinsky wrote in the "Spiritual in Art" abstraction could evoke the inner 'sound' of the picture. His synaesthesia was an effort to map how the different planes of intensity met in material realisation, and to find a form that was analogous to the reality of the singular elements of feeling. As is known, Kandinsky would develop a chromatic theory. In this he saw yellow as the earth colour and that an intermingling with blue rendered it sickly, whereas vermilion was a red with a feeling of sharpness. On the colour orange, which would be of especial interest to a Dutch artist, Kandinsky had the note that "orange is like a man convinced of his own powers." Violet is sad and ailing. In short we can say that Kandinsky's chromatic theory has little to do with Isaac Newton or Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and even less Rudolf Steiner. In Kandinsky's opinion it is really the individual artistic quest that gives colour its meaning. Therefore, there was no strong conceptual basis on which to advance a colour theory, it remained dispositional through and through, and for some this meant that it was equivalent to the freedom for each individual temperament and artistic sensibility to discover a unique means of expression.<sup>17</sup>

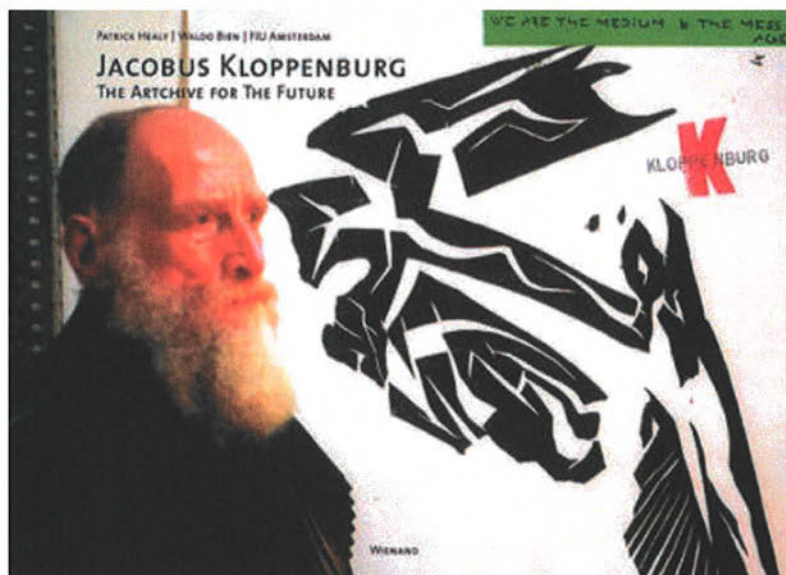
### **LIGHT IS ALIVE AND THE GREY ZONE**

For Bien it is clear that the colour research is of considerable importance. It is from Steiner that he grasped an argument that goes to the rhythm, and often abrupt, mood swings of his concerns as an artist. Kandinsky thought that one could orchestrate the colour and shape in a composition to create response and emotion such as one had in music. For Goethe, there is a colour "circle," and it depends on the fundamental proposition that colour is born out of the play of light and darkness. It is the example of yellow and blue that point to this fact, which Goethe took as the elementary colours and essentially opposite. The pure experience of one

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See Ball, P., (2002), *Bright earth: Art and the invention of color* (1st American ed.), New York: Farrar, Straus, p.23, discussing Bridget Riley's understanding of this material from Kandinsky. For the esoteric sources of Kandinsky's thinking see Ringbom, S., (1966), *Art in 'the epoch of the great spiritual': Occult elements in the early theory of abstract painting*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29: pp. 386-418

P Healy and W Bien.  
 'Jacobus Kloppenburg.  
 The Archive for the Future'.  
 Wienand, Cologne, 2006.  
 FIU Archive.



Waldo Bien,  
 Numeri 3 (numeri series)  
 1990. Waldo Bien Archive.



excluded the experience of the other, and he sees the colours as having a “tension” or “tendency” towards each other: they are separate, they are pure, they are opposite each other, and yet given that, they are inclined to mingle. It is not simply that light and dark are opposed; and Goethe thus thinks of the grey as the simplest colour that can arouse a vital impression against the ghostly zone of basic opposition: “Schwarz und Weiss, eine Totenschau Vermischt ein niederträchtig Grau” (“Black and white, a death parade mix to form a common grey”).

Even in the Grey Zone the production of colour is the result of the mingling process. From that Goethe understands that colour in this zone exhibits rigid polarity, immutability and deathliness. The opposition of yellow and blue is another polar tension. Being opposites is not contradictory. They are in fact an inclination towards each other, and this says that they are living. The stimulating energy with which colour surfaces affect the eye, Goethe argues, is not to be confused with the brightness with which the eye is affected by white. He gives an example of an orange colour surface set against a white one, and says that it will produce more effect on the eye, not because it is brighter, but because it has more stimulating energy. In such a theory colour comes alive, it is enmeshed in the polarities and bridges them, the polarities of light and dark, of black and white, grey and chiaroscuro. The light is alive for Goethe. In material resonance the light creates amplitudes and singular intensities, which is not the sum of the constituent parts of matter. The work in hand is a bridging phenomenon, as indeed the work was in the first instance with regard to the disjoint between art and nature. Heinrich Proskauer, in his *The Rediscovery of Colour*, makes the point that for Goethe the colour circle was a harmonious whole that is only achieved when the colour that was one-sided finds its enhancement in the “other” colour and creates an harmonious whole, which is not simply a making-up of white.<sup>18</sup>

Black and white are rigidly opposed by virtue of the matter in which we become aware of chiaroscuro and single colours emerge in the dynamic interweaving of the polarities of light and darkness, or in Goethe’s pregnant formulation, they are the deeds of light, the deeds of suffering. The enhancement of the stimulating energy, in the release of colour, comes through the creation of a reconciliation of opposites at a higher level. They come from the fully developed dynamic of the completed state. On this account it is light which grants visibility. For some artists the upshot of such theorising was that the painter and the process that is chosen mentally, is the meaning of colour; in the singularity of the material used.

Bien, as with Beuys, made the discovery, which was derived from Steiner, that it is the individual moment in the zone of energy signatures that must be grasped by the artists. Much that is called creative is, as the artist Hilarius Hofstede remarked, “moving energy around.” In Steiner

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For this see Proskauer, H., (1986),  
*The Rediscovery of Colour*, New  
York: Anthroposophic Press.

there is the further consideration that artistic activity is the primary agent of social transformation, and for raising spiritual consciousness, which is de facto the anthropological event in the world. Such a transformation takes place in pictures and images.

## CHANGING FORMS

It was Steiner's reading of Goethe's scientific writings that allowed him to advance the claim that spiritual science was on a par with natural history. Goethe insisted on the search for living concepts. The division between the idea of philosophy or science as being concerned with concepts, and art and cultural expression as ideological avatars was repugnant to Goethe, as a great creative artist. His emphasis was on listening to what is within oneself, the injunction is ultimately Socratic, the search for self-knowledge, which is achieved in the realisation of the good, and returned to the social as a necessary amelioration of the political. One can give the example of the tremendous speech of Socrates, towards the end of the *Gorgias*, where he literally conducts an interview and provides his own answers, to Callicles whose hubris was deeply deflated by the method of continually questioning Socrates earlier in the dialogue.

For Goethe this inner search was also a kind of attuning, and largely non-intellectual. This also required a new orientation of perception. Steiner took up the Goethean demand of living concepts and re-attunement of perception and emphasised the act of clairvoyance, as gaining access to the cosmos, of which the world is a veiled image, again a highly Platonic point, which can be found in the *Timaeus*. Steiner adds a formal, extra element, as he sees the practise of clairvoyance as initiating the neophyte into higher worlds. In such a notion of "higher" there is the shift in understanding the perceptual, and also how we can speak of living concepts, namely, feelings and thoughts as deep realities, and not simply as virtual accretions, or, parallel realities, and further, how they are capable of acting and of acting upon one another. In human awareness there is also a stream of dying and becoming, and in watching nature there is the awareness of this active co-participation of man in evolution. Thus the world of sensation is replete with the idea. This can be grasped through self-perception, which is the perception of our own perception. Philosophically the line Steiner pursued is not dissimilar to the investigation that marked the response in French 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophy to the researches of Maine de Biran, via Felix Ravaisson, and culminates in Henri Bergson. Steiner's positing of the centrality of image and picture also related to the Platonic and Neo-Platonic theory of self-formation, ultimately of *Bildung*, which is the self-shaping and access through attunement to the spiritual whose reality, a point shared with Ravaisson, is constitutive and real in a way that brute facts, or positivist functionalism cannot be.

The notion of *Bildung* also comes to the fore in that Steiner sees the practise of this kind of voyance as eliminating subject/object dualism of



and restoring the urgent need to think again in images. In his *Riddles of Philosophy*, Steiner stressed the point of that thinking in images can be compared with Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, in many ways. It can be briefly stated as such;

In a series of lectures he gave during the building of the Goetheaneum in Dornach he pointed to the specific and concrete conquest such thinking gives for the development of the lost fatal power of cosmic thinking, and our loss of the sense of world, and the principles that allow for a sense of the unity of the entire world and cosmos. The fundamental and key anthroposophical claim is that we can gain access to and awareness of such principles because the inner man is a microcosm, an imprint of the macrocosm. The word "clairvoyance" translates directly from the Greek term "psychdelos," from which we have "psychedelic." It is a key to understanding the primacy that Steiner accords to the image.

## HEARING THE WORLD-RETURNING TO THE IMAGE

Steiner asks for a new sense of veneration of the world. The need for a humble approach to the mystery of the cosmos marked the search of the spiritually awakened. It is also an ancient philosophical topos that wonder and awe, which come from a sense of devotion to the search for the truth, mark the journey of the philosophical soul. This awe and wonder is the beginning of attunement, and can even begin as a shock, a seizure of one's being in the power of the question toward existence, towards being. Such developed knowledge could be shared with others, as it was not a simply exclusive acquisition that bordered on the *unsayable*. Here Steiner is far from Plato, whose late teachings in the Academy stressed that an ultimate awareness would be "arheton," literally unsayable. Philosophy constantly tasks itself towards the unsayable in what it is says and shows. Steiner always created the social bond, stressed the communication of insights gained, and remained wedded to the pedagogical imperative. It is clear in the document of 1923 in the *Statues of the Anthroposophical Society*:

The society shall be a union of people who on the basis of a true knowledge of the spiritual world want to take care of the spiritual life in the single man as well as in human society. They are thoroughly of the opinion that today a real science of the spiritual world exists, established over long years, and already published in part.<sup>19</sup>

The return to the image is paramount for Steiner because in the spiritual world everything is in permanent flux, always in that sense creative, and it is the very nature of their creative novum that they point to the cosmic love that is the ultimate force of nature and cosmos. This shift in argument moves Steiner much closer, as happens with Bergson, to the thinking of Plotinus. The relation with Neo-Platonism, or, Plotinism, is taken up in the contemporary scientific theorising of Rupert Sheldrake,

<sup>19</sup> One of the best orientations in the dispersed work of Steiner can be found in the notes released as Steiner, R., (2012), *The Threefold Order of the Body Social*, translated into English by E.Bowen-Wedgwood, and distributed in manuscript to the members of the Anthroposophical Society by permission Marie Steiner in three volumes. Steiner suggests that what is being expressed is not just his private opinion, but also the voicing of the actual unconscious of the European people. Further publications to be consulted of Steiner in regard to the question of the return to the image are Steiner, R., (1969), "Die okkulte Bewegung im 19-Jahrhundert und ihre Beziehung zur Weltkultur," Dornach.

and his theory of *cosmic resonance* as the explanation of how forms are consistently produced. Indeed Sheldrake specifically draws the analogy of his arguments with Plotinian philosophy.

Spiritual growth is also a constant state of metamorphosis, and one day this revolution evolution will become arrested in the perfect change of mankind into a completely spiritual existence. From a 1915 talk by Steiner on the real sources of art, we have the direct assertion that art is what we create as part of the searching in this transformation and that is transformative, and true art has as its aim as the opening up of the spiritual:

Whenever the artist transforms reality, pursuing the track of reason, his art gives us a deep satisfaction, because things that come from the hands are set before us as if they flow immediately from the primal principle itself.<sup>20</sup>

Art infuses the spiritual into the physical. For Steiner art is congenial to clairvoyant perception, and in its work can express the general laws of sympathy, antipathy and metamorphosis. Here one sees how the colour theory is exemplary for the transformations and dynamic event in the material, which the artist can facilitate.

All of nature's sounds whisper her secret to man. What for the soul were merely incomprehensible sounds now become the meaningful language of the gods, from all sides of the universe speaking to us. The organs of the spirit are all around me; I must only acquire the capacity to understand the language as it is spoken by these forms, once understood in my heart, however, I must not interpret them.<sup>21</sup>

## WHAT A CLAIRVOYANT TELLS A PAINTER

The work *Alle Farbe im Kopf* is Bien's most detailed exploration of much of Steiner's direct theory as it relates to artistic making. He clearly had Steiner's text in his mind from his story of what a clairvoyant tells a painter, and very much took it to heart.

A clairvoyant tells a painter: 'What lives in the depths of your soul is what lives in things. Because you have through the things, you live with your soul in the spirit of these things. But in order to preserve your virtue of painting, in order to live consciously what you lived while you were going through the things of the external world, you must keep alive the impulses that produce your painter's art in your subconscious. It is all about the unconscious impulses ascending into consciousness.'

Further, Steiner points to the exaltation of the state in which the artist achieves this spiritual action:

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For this see Steiner, "The Spiritual Sources of Art," and his "Echte Kunst geht zurück auf die Geheimnisse der initiation." This was a talk first delivered in Dornach on January 30, 1915.

21

I am grateful to Dr. R. Sierksma who made his unpublished typescript, "Authoritarian Architecture," available to me, and who treats this material in some detail in part 2, "The Myth of Architecture." The full text is drawn from "The Spiritual Sources of Art," for which see note above.



The impulse your Ego receives penetrates into the ethereal body. This also needs to be understood in the other direction.... all colours, at least all colour proportions desire to be a total human being or part of him. You may have the feeling the red or yellow wants something: these colours desire to be transformed into something that belongs to you, what you encounter in red and yellow expresses itself by itself, of its own accord, it brings about the ideal of art, the elimination of all thought.

## DORNACH'S RAINBOW

In his text on the Dornach building, Steiner really lets all of his own feeling and thinking emerge with regard to what he takes as that which is essentially alive, and the response to which eliminates the need for a higher spiritual being to read or write

While giving oneself up to the essence of colours as they reveal figures, the soulful creation of the figural gets stronger. In those moments of creative painting you feel as if only moving living colours exist in this world: colours that are creative themselves and that produce something essential. When as a painter you truly paint from inside the colour, you will experience what that colour demands. You say to yourself: 'Now I have dipped my brush in green paint, now I must become a little bit bourgeois and paint the green, with sharp, rough little hairs': or; 'Now I paint with yellow, I must make it radiate, mentally I need to transport myself in the spirit, in the shining spirit'. When he paints with blue the artist thinks: 'I withdraw in myself, in my own inner self, in a way I produce a crust around myself, and that is the way I paint, because I bestow the exterior of the blue with a kind of crust.'

Later Steiner writes:

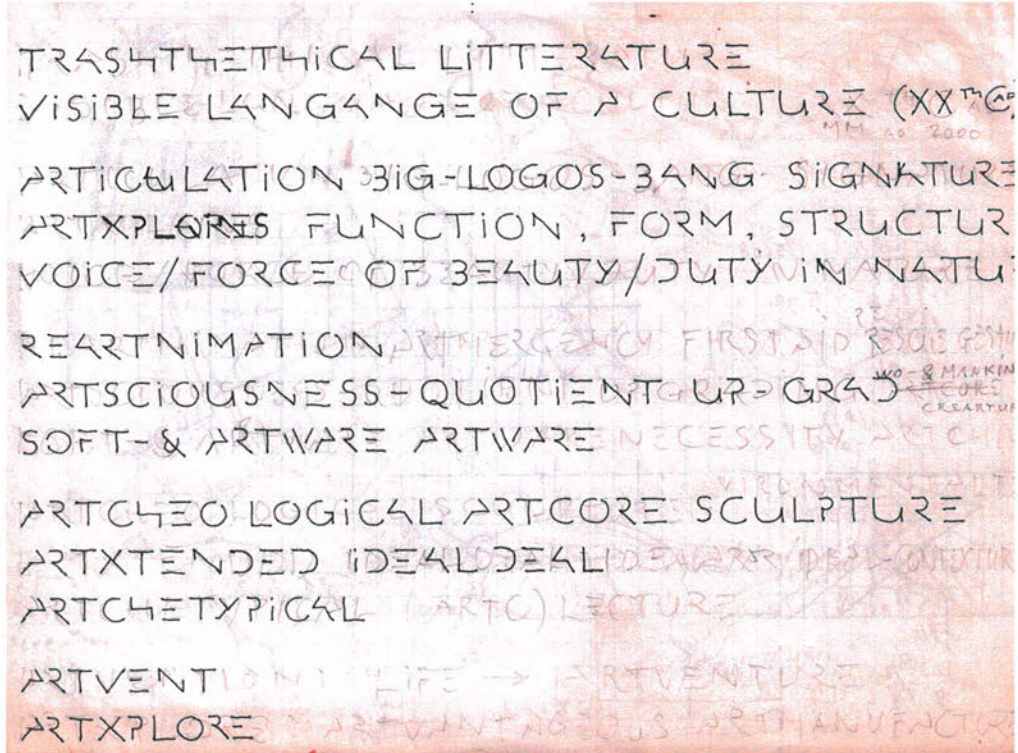
Solid matter begets colour or can become colourful as a result of the fact that the earth has been liberated from the forces that were still inside her when she was bound up with the other planets. Subsequently these forces become effective from outside, i.e. the cosmos, in this way they summon the inner colour-force of coloured minerals. In fact what once left the earth, now affects it from the cosmos. Thus in minerals, we observe that the secret lies hidden much deeper than is the case of the origin of the green colour of plants. Because all this is so much hidden, it touches the essence more deeply, it does not merely penetrate the living world of plants, but even the mineral realm.<sup>22</sup>

## SPECTRAL INTERVALS

Bien described the work of the late seventies as research in colour, and this had much wider implications than such a laconic description might

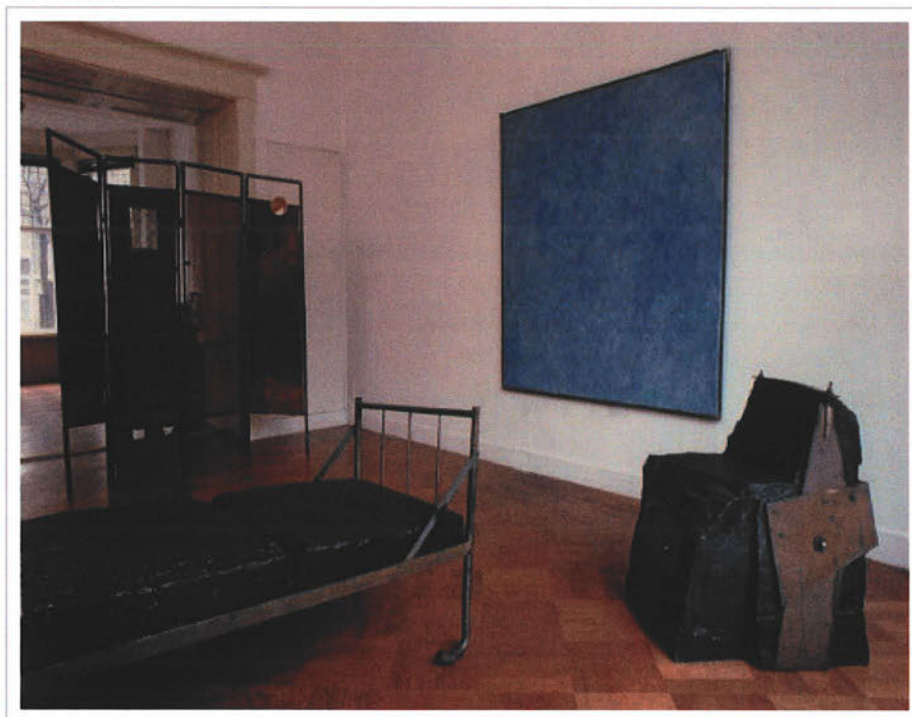
22

For further discussion see van Bemmelen, R., (1973), "Rudolf Steiner's Farbige Gestaltung des Goetheaneum", Stuttgart: J.Ch. Mellinger Verlag. For all of this in relation to the work of Jacobus Kloppenburg, see Healy, P., Bien, W., (2007), *Jacobus Kloppenburg. The Archive for the Future*, in collaboration with Waldo Bien, Cologne: Wienand Verlag.



Jacobus Kloppenburg.  
Reduced Alphabet.  
FIU Artchive.

Waldo Bien.  
The Death Room Interior  
(for Joseph Beuys),  
1986.  
Waldo Bien Archive.





at first suggest. It seems that the idea of research was also as much the activity of discussion among the students, as going directly to check individual artist's work, such as Emil Nolde or Paul Klee, and analysing their chromatics. Further, the main emphasis was on the need to develop a direct personal experience of colour. From Klee, for example, a different conception to that of Kandinsky could be inferred.

Klee can be characterised as thinking of colour as work tools, and Kandinsky sees them more as vibrations of the soul. Bien mentioned that for him the discussion on the relation to primary and secondary colours brought him to an impasse, in the sense that he could only work with what had been called "secondary" colours only in a dry and academic way. Within colour theory it was taken that the colours of the rainbow showed colours in their purest spectral clarity. An important discovery was that of Goethe on the idea of simultaneous contrast. Whilst Bien understood such claims, he became arrested in his own work, and what often happened in the course of the next thirty years, Bien created in him a kind of breakthrough, not unlike the opening in the *Billiard Table*. It is as if the flow of his creativity silted up and he needed a very intense, often explosive, gesture to get going again. He arrived at a point, stopped, and then broke through the aporia in which he finds himself, usually by travel or returning to physical making.

Bien, like Beuys, shared the same capacity for *handiness*. The Van der Grintens noted of Beuys when he stayed with them and worked on the farm that he had very capable hands, and could, as the phrase has it, turn his hand to anything - agricultural work, repairing instruments, building. Bien also had an enormous capacity for work, and took to making frames, setting up a bookshop, beginning a family, and making long trips and producing from the mid-70's through to the early 2000s an enormous number of individual works. When engaged in research in the book on Bien, I made a rough calculation, counting drawings, watercolours, paintings, and sculptures of up to almost 30,000 items. As will be seen, this covers the period from, approximately 1972 - 2000, as at that date he turned more and more to the development of the social sculpture as the work of the FIUWAC, and reached out to other artists and supported their work and development, in a kind of indirect pedagogy.

The point at which Bien arrived at the conclusion, or rather suspension, of his colour research was the return to his own self, and he describes this as a linear development. But in reality, all of the various influences and impulses worked simultaneously - the deeper engagement with the thinking of Steiner from 1975, the real research that was his wish to dematerialise colours. In other words, he acknowledged that colours had a different physicality, and that they took on their own being, as it were, from the distance towards the object.

The virtual dimension in Goethe's theory of the actual polarity of colours could be seen as a dynamic expression, but the gap between the reality of the colour and its virtual existence indicated that the tension in colour, was in Bien's view a move to transparency and disappearance. The experience of intensity vibrated simultaneously as a becoming and movement towards a void. The shimmer of time could only be gained in the fleeting sensation, like hearing a sound, whose disappearance gave one the movement of connection in the musical phrase, for example.

I realised that the pedestal was in me, but I needed to escape the phenomenological addiction, my share in such work was cold-blooded and minimal. When I looked into my own eyes and saw such a deep gap, and so unknown, I realised that I had to work on myself. I had to double crosscheck all my memories, my complete biography, my past, everything, my ideas. (Patrick Healy, Waldo Bien, p.31).

The work *Static Pedestal*, of 1978 is the result of this self-engagement. The work, which also signals the colour research directly, is *Werwandelzeichen*, of 1980 - and it marks the area of movement and transformation, but result in a form of self-exclusion, whereas the sluice on the Billiard Table was the break-through the rupture with the constraints of the tradition, in other words the whole decade is a way of dealing with the Van Gogh-Mondrian dimension of Dutch art, which was suggested by Donald Kuspit as the tension between order and the mysterious elective affinities that haunt Dutch artists, namely the choice that can be seen between Van Gogh and Mondrian, which is the choice between the ordered, rational planning, and of lyrical subjective wildness. The latter was often viewed as the grotesque, and the former as the pendant in art to the ordered world of the Polders. One is utopia, the other nightmare. The dichotomy is stark, the double bind still tight. Bien would take a hammer to the distinction. A complete experience and life of an artist required a much more dialectical sense, and sometimes wild, sometimes delicate, sometimes simply absurd.

The way out and forward was for Bien to engage in a massive Aktion, and in this he learned his most significant lesson from Beuys, which included the move into the public domain, engaging in a meticulous research project, a gathering up of the material and learning of the previous decade. For Bien it was also the connection that had him return to work with Beuys later in the Pompidou Centre and bring him to a much wider public and international audience. In a direct sense, the shaving action with Beuys and Bien in Pompidou began much earlier in the harbour of Amsterdam, where Bien began the *Regal Star Project*, which started from the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1982, in what was also a kind of parallel citation to the scale and kinds of actions in which Beuys had established his reputation during the 1960's and 1970's. As argued in the first section, it was this



dimension of Beuys as a performance artist that was taken up in the "behaviour" workshop and seen as his main concern as an artist.

## GOING PUBLIC

Bien's commitment to his research took him back to Amsterdam. The *Regal Star Project* would have immense implications for his life. He had obviously thoroughly enjoyed the adventure of living in Germany, and with a mimetic fluency spoke Dutch on his return with a German accent. In some ways the relation with Germany was increasingly weakened in Dutch public life during the course of the 1970's with the full development of the former Common Market and the dominating influence of the Anglo-American cultural and economic world. The loss of the connection with German is also very obvious in the academic life of Holland during these decades. As is well-known, many Dutch speak English as their preferred choice of second language.

Bien had to deal with the issue of domain. His return was, as he saw it, a matter of private research. He was cross, or double cross-checking himself, as he put it. The ambiguity in the expression is interesting, as the issue of loyalty to his teacher and the Academy remained moot, for him, and if he had already moved away from it, he would have to go forward to move away from that movement, a manner in which a perceived betrayal could only be corrected by another betrayal. The sense of loyalty and firm resolve to accept even the developing hostility toward Beuys among Dutch intellectuals and the art establishment, meant that Bien would inevitably be caught in the slack of such hostility and bear the brunt of deeper misunderstanding directed towards the new development in the artistic sphere.

The question of the public/private domain was also inscribed in Bien's shift in relation, not only to where he had returned, but to the very question of research he had developed in respect of territory and domain. This had led him to travel to Iceland and create works that directly referred to the North, as a metaphor of the polar movements which had already shown themselves in the optical/sculptural dichotomy from the works of the early and late 70's, a tension noted by Beuys in his critique. It is also one that was expressive of the Dutch Dilemma, as noted earlier in Mondrian/Van Gogh, and by extension Rembrandt/Vermeer and so on. A kind of schizoid situation emerged, and Bien saw early on that the only way through was to break through. Sometimes this was nothing other than the return to an earlier place, or in another case the polarity became the movement between the private and public domains. Bien was at home and so on the move. His continuing action/performance was to engage in a shaving project which would continue for a year, and have two major sites, one the Regal Star Ship, which was moored in the harbour of Amsterdam, and secondly, a small portable shaving table

that he constructed and took with him on a journey to Iceland that he had in mind during the course of the project. Beuys discussed with Bien the issue of remaining within “research,” and his not appearing as a public artist. Bien’s suggestion was then to invite Beuys to Amsterdam to participate in the shaving project, and this would be the moment he would make a decision as to whether he would be a public artist. The idea was to invite Beuys to come on the last day of the year. In November, Beuys phoned Bien to invite him to come to the Paris where he was involved in an Action with John Cage in the Centre Pompidou. This is listed in Beuys’ Actions as one of his last. The standard account has shown to be deficient in the publication on Bien in 2000.

The question that remains is how to designate this involvement of Bien and Beuys, as it resulted in a vitrine in which elements of the performance and action were gathered, and which led to the question of authorship. It is not quite the judgement of Solomon, as the work clearly had the participation of both artists, one at the height of his fame, the other formally beginning his public life as an artist. If one used an older kind of description one could say that the “fecit” was Beuys/Bien, but the “invenit” was Bien: a kind of division of labour and shared authorship that was common for images that were engraved and gave the indication of the production relationship. Thus, it can be described as a Bien/Beuys’ work in the Bien inventory, and as a Beuys/Bien work in the Beuys inventory.

Briefly: Bien invited Beuys to come to Amsterdam. Beuys, rather than make that journey asked Bien to complete his action and performance in the *Good Morning Mr. Orwell* action in Paris, and thus Bien brought his work to Paris and Beuys participated by shaving Bien in a gesture of very personal sensitivity, and thus completed also the discussion of whether he would become a public artist.

Beuys had just launched him into the new globalisation of art, which television and other media made possible. This was one of the first such events aired on live television. Bien had indeed gone public. From the time he returned to Amsterdam in 1980, his closest artistic friendship was with Jacobus Kloppenburg, which was inevitably rooted in both of their understanding of the work of Rudolf Steiner. The life and work of Kloppenburg and Bien become inextricably intertwined from that date, and continues to this day, 35 years later. At the very end of 2014 Bien was busy archiving Kloppenburg’s works and in lively discussion with a team of university scholars on the issue of “restoration” and curating of the entire remains of the Kloppenburg oeuvre.



## CLOSE SHAVE

Bien started shaving at Lauriergracht, and the initial problem he faced was that of the finding of form. After his colour research he made works that explored his signature, overtly influenced by Rutkowski, and which also drew on his experience of making toys for children, very few of which survive. In my previous publication on Bien I took the sculpture the *Death Room Interior* as Bien's major work and tried to examine the background of experience and relations that led to its creation. In this extended essay I take the *Regal Star Project* as the key work for understanding Bien's development in regard to the public domain and social sculpture, which links most directly to the creation of FIUWAC and explains the development of Bien's actions from 2000 to the present day. I include considerable direct quotations from interview I conducted with Bien, which are in typescript and have annotations made in the margins by Bien in a later response and emendation to what were transcribed. There is also correction *ex silentio* in my use of current quotation, based on further manuscript notes of my own, and the quotations are then slightly altered in some cases to facilitate reading, although this has been done very lightly. As the interview sometimes moved into German or used Dutch, they are for the most part faithful reports of the spoken words of Bien. Errors in the original typescript and variation of names are corrected and regularised in this re-working of the notes.

## THE SIGNATURE OF THINGS

The colour research was a search for dematerialisation, and in his thoughts on the signature Bien was busy with Platonic figures, and thought about space from a spiritual, mathematical point of view. The research had to do with the Platonic emphasis in *Timaeus* on the mathematical and the order of nature, Bien made the discovery that his own signature could be read as a three dimensional sculpture in space.

I used my signature, its spiritual and dynamical process of writing as an expression of an individual. I did research on this and it became a frieze, a self-realisation in fundamental space... the work could not be intelligible without my relationship to Rutkowski. The entire mobile and dynamic element emerges from a deep element in my biography, a kind of endless activity. Movement fascinated me. The dynamic is fully self-contained. I think of the perpetuum mobile. Again I use the image of standing and watching the train go by. I had been making furniture, influenced by Egyptian work I had seen.

Works that are the direct result of this study are *Sunlight Soap*, *Isis*, and the work *New Moon* of 1982. In Bien's view, this move in his work emerged from the concept in grasping. For Bien this is the "thinking hand", which is the notion of a phenomenological research and of research by making and creating. If the colours were seen as being away

from the object, this is something you express in the form. He was ready to cite Mondrian, and saw the overlap with his own doing, namely the study of nature being determined by colour and forms, and that the real forms determined the colouristic response.

The new direction moved towards the gamut of neurophysiological interaction, an obsession with right/left brain, the interrelation between the static and dynamic, and that was also the motivation to find something that would be as clear as a sign in the colour research. It was the search for the constitutive dynamic of genesis, to understand that there was something and it had formal unity, and allowed for transparency, the search for the signature of things.

## THE RITES OF SPACE

I shaved every day, and I wanted to take the automatism of a daily ritual and try to understand the kind of inner mythology it once served, or indeed discover what other kinds of actions were implicated or could be generated from this. In these years of the early 80's I had undertaken extensive travel to Iceland, the Orkneys, the island of Iona, Ireland and France.

Bien was with Eliane Gompertz, with who he started a second family in Amsterdam, and so the journey was also linked with the fascination of islands as offering a circular analogue to the sense of the eternity that romantic love places as its inner goal, love in such freshness is always forever. In this resourceful partner Bien had another link with the study of Steiner, as she taught at a Waldorf school, and was deeply committed to the pedagogical transformation of society that resulted in her founding a school in the 2000's that remains one of the enduring acts of social sculpture in their long collaboration and fruitful union.

I was walking and collecting material. Iceland was important because the principle of metamorphosis in the landscape seemed most visible. In previous travels I had been in many landscapes, which had been formed by vulcanism or erosion. In Iceland you could see the process as you stood there, and previously it had only been like a photographic still. It was in Iceland the meaning of all that I had known only in Christian theology became meaningful at another level. I started collecting cod liver oil, whale oil and whalebone.

The memory traces go back into an early experience of sacred vessels and oils from a liturgical context:

Another world was made visible for me where the slow ooze of the oil seemed to gain a kind of purchase on the static problem of the object. I connected this in my mind with the process of baptism,



confirmation, and this was like a sense of initiation on to another level of consciousness.

All of Bien's references here are to the use of oil in Roman Catholic ritual, and especially the use of oil placed on the hands of the priest when being ordained, and again used during the administering of the last rites, where it is called the oil of extreme unction. It is also used in the administration of the rite of confirmation, and in baptism.<sup>23</sup>

## MOVEMENT'S ANTHROPATHIC UNDERSTANDING

The creation of the shaving table became the first issue for the performance. There is a Steinerian backdrop. There is an expression for children of will in the stomping of the legs, and Bien remarks that for adults this is expressed in the hand:

The problem of the table comes into view. Direct up from the will of the legs to the hands, I stood with the hands to create a movement as a province of understanding which held the object as a moment of localised will in which the being of my standing united with the stand holding the mirror. There was the discovery of height, the function of confrontation with the optical mirror, and the question of how that is to be understood, and how you can express the development of the will as something essential within the process of human consciousness and also how this was to be understood in terms of human evolution.

I was not trying to make an ethnographic intervention rather I was exploring through very vulnerable means, the sculptural decision of expression and the creation of a common line that was intelligible for the anthropological question itself in the activity of artistic naming and making.

The use of oil in Bien's work stems from 1983. It is not used in conjunction with photographs as a form of conservation, but as a means to raise meaning: "In Beuys feet was a means of raising the energy fields or an induction to the problem of energy and the transformation of energy. I was using it in a magico-ritualistic way to enter another field of epistemic and consciousness level."

Bien added to the typescript that the first work with oil was the cod liver oil work, a framed basis with the photograph of me as a child with my mother and a silver spoon she used to give me my daily portion of cod liver oil 1984-014. For Bien that work is the entrance to all the works with oil.

## ATELIER TO REGAL STAR; ENTRANCEMENT'S OIL

Went by small boat to Regal Star, in the summer I made a mobile set for travelling, a portable shaving unit, with mirror, and in the summer

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For details see Església Catòlica, (1940), *Rituale Romanum*, editio septima, Turonibus: Sumptibus et Typis Mame, for example at pp.127 ff Ordo Ministrandi Sacramentum Extremae Unctionis and De Confirmatione, pp.441 ff Chapter one deals with infant and adult baptism.

I went to Iceland, from Reykjavik to the Northern coast and using the camera as a tool. Oil and photography had not yet come together.

With the camera I made photographs of the landscape and holding the mirror in my hand it was possible to see two things, the landscape in front of the camera but on the mirror you saw the photographer and the camera, the object and the spiritual objective and the space behind the objective as objective.

Here, the consequence for Bien is that what you see optically is incomplete, for example, in his work the *Visual Supplement* from 1981. He remarked that the "mythology of the photographic objectivity was dismantled." Bien used the photographs in a very limited edition publication, five copies, of his diary of Iceland, and again in his work *Nordland Route* from 1983, which was exhibited only once, during his first solo exhibition in the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam. Bien summarises this time of 1982-1983, as the period when he gained insight into the static pedestal as a point of observation and then saw it as a prism through which light passed and radiated out into the exploration of many different tools.

## ALONG THE LINE

At the same time Bien also developed his concept of Feldpost.

I am now the pedestal. I'm taking photographs of myself. This is the moment when the Feldpost becomes my personal cipher. Of course I ran the risk of the military connotation, but, the idea of an observation being communicated along a line, which didn't require pseudo-objectivity, seemed very appropriate to what I was engaged in. I thought of Feldpost as reports from my field of research, visual results.

They still (speaking in 1997) have the quality for me of a continuing hypothesis, which can be checked and modified by anyone who is interested in the material I present...

I thought that I had here confirmed the epistemic view of Goethe, not in a didactic way, but through the experience of myself as a pedestal, and I added to the cycle of the glass plates with shaving soap (The work *zwarte November*, 1982) the same amount of photographic images, slides, from the beginning of the century, as a proof that the external world is present and exists and is something with which one must reckon.

This recognition was a way of knowing again and differently, the act was a means of insisting on the real existence of the world. The determination of the Feldpost: "now acted in the umbrella under which I placed my work."



Bien then adds the really crucial observation that for him the field of interdisciplinary research, “was now on an empirical level. After all the insight into the 30 day shaving cycle, the fertility of such a method became confirmed.”

## **STARTING: THE ANCHOR OF DECISION**

How could any differential be generated in the repetition? How, Bien wondered:

Was there a possibility to gain progress within the process. I continued to think about the very intimate psychological and anthropological dimension of this ordinary action. It became necessary to explore the idea of the form of the shaving equipment, of place and use, which could be sculpturally addressed. The problem of entities seemed intractable.

The static sockle work became an essential reference within this process. This was to have the effect of recalling the work in Raum 20, of the work on foundational forms. In the epistemic sedimentation memory traces were in the table, ‘Umstülpung’. It could be seen as a positive and negative pyramid. Each determination was an exclusion, or better to say, each determination had the necessity of its own negation.

He then added a description of some of his gestures:

In the table I place a small golden piece, which acted as a kind of anchor of decision. There was then the problem of disposal. The concept of disposal was integrated into the balance of the object. Whether the confrontation with myself through the confrontation with the mirror could yield logically anything that would open up the question itself.

However complex the proposition here, and especially the very precise Spinozistic point that every determination is a negation, the difference in repetition could not be accounted for in this meontic aim, and Bien saw that it was the possibility of the reflexive question that emerged that was the novum in the action itself. Behind this lay a much more personal encounter, and presence: “Behind much of this lay my own relation to Beuys, who was still in an ironic way wondering about ‘When are you going to start?’” The work of the previous seven years was a kind of prelude.

Bien became the immobile moment in his own reckoning, and he expressed this in the work *Silenzio* of 1983. He had been involved in a car accident when leaving his studio, on 12<sup>th</sup> of November, his legs were broken, and he lost consciousness. Upon regaining consciousness, he asked Eliane Gompertz to bring him shaving equipment, so he could observe himself without anyone observing him.

## LANDFALL

It is clear from the extraordinary outburst of works from Bien in the 1980's that he was in a creative furor, and the results are still deeply impressive not just in their range, but in the full absorption and transformation of all he had previously learned. Among the works that can be mentioned, is *Advice for Architects*, *Psoriasis Trap*, *Nordlandroute*, *Preparing the Land for (re-Settlement)*, *Eyrabakkis Best Choice*, *Visual Supplement of a Third to a Whole Circle*, *North Atlantic Samurai*.<sup>24</sup> What this last work indicates is that Bien's journey to Iceland in 1983 had a long resonance in his oeuvre, and the collecting whale bones and going to volcanoes, he would also literally plant the flag F.I.U. International University. It was a complex strategy, Bien addressed the issue of geography, and not in any other way than the surrealist *dérive*. It was a journey North that would then be abruptly counterpointed with a journey to Chile. The journey was taken in direct response to the journey to Iceland.

## FISH MUSIC

Bien made a recording of thousands of codfish hanging out to dry when in Iceland and in 1984 made a work provisionally entitled *North Atlantic Tales*. This is the work that he said gave him access to the understanding of territory. He was engaged in what he called an anthropology of landscape mediated by his concept of an elaborate polarity which constituted global rotation.

## FEELING THE EARTH MOVE

Bien wanted to register the sensation of earth, and to think of earth as that which gathers into itself the sound of the world, as it releases the pressure in the geomorphological field. Steiner's idea of the earth as compressed and releasing the energy and vibrations of colour and the spiritual ascendancy into the cosmos, and of the insight given in clairvoyance, for Bien became the pressure of the earth as what can be, in what is a more rational construction heard.

Hearing in some way closes the public/private divide and contains a different innerness and distance than what is given to sight, where externality seems, initially the means by which sensation is available. Bien took in idea of earth as that which encloses and releases, and it is other than world.

Everything Bien did in the 70's he thought he had to re-do in the 1980's. It was a matter of getting into the process and out of it. He needed to become the process, start thinking that way, and he discovered what he called the method of anthropological research, which meant not looking at Beuys, not studying Beuys, but rather thinking Beuys, or becoming Bien/Beuys as Beuys had become Beuys/Steiner, as Steiner had become Steiner/Goethe: what the philosopher Gilles Deleuze would call a conceptual figure.

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A work that he would respond to with other works in 1995 called *Footnotes to North Atlantic-Samurai*, and thus the whole work subsequently dated as 1982-1995.



Creativity is not limited to people practicing one of the traditional forms of art, and even in the case of artists creativity is not confined to the exercise of their art. Each one of us has a creative potential which is hidden by competitiveness and success-aggression. To recognize, explore and develop this potential is the task of the school.

Creation—whether it be a painting, sculpture, symphony or novel, involves not merely talent, intuition, powers of imagination and application, but also the ability to shape material that could be expanded to other socially relevant spheres.

Conversely, when we consider the ability to organize material that is expected of a worker, a housewife, a farmer, doctor, philosopher, judge or works manager, we find that their work by no means exhausts the full range of their creative abilities.

Whereas the specialist's insulated point of view places the arts and other kinds of work in sharp opposition, it is in fact crucial that the structural, formal and thematic problems of the various work processes should be constantly compared with one another.

The school does not discount the specialist, nor does it adopt an anti-technological stance. It does, however reject the idea of experts and technicians being the sole arbiters in their respective fields. In a spirit of democratic creativity, without regressing to merely mechanical defensive or aggressive clichés, we shall discover the inherent reason in things.

In a new definition of creativity the terms professional and dilettante are surpassed, and the fallacy of the unworldly artist and the alienated non-artist is abandoned.

The founders of the school look for creative stimulation from foreigners working here. This is not to say that it is a prerequisite that we learn from them or that they learn from us. Their cultural traditions and way of life call forth an exchange of creativity that must go beyond preoccupation with varying art forms to a comparison of the structures, formulations and verbal expressions of the material pillars of social life: law, economics, science, religion, and then move on to the investigation or exploration of the "creativity of the democratic."

The creativity of the democratic is increasingly discouraged by the progress of bureaucracy, coupled with the aggressive proliferation of an international mass culture. Political creativity is being reduced to the mere delegation of decision and power. The imposition of an international cultural and economic dictatorship by the constantly expanding combines leads to a loss of articulation, learning and the quality of verbal expression.

In the consumer society, creativity, imagination and intelligence, not articulated, their expression prevented, become defective, harmful and damaging—in contrast to a democratic society—and find outlets in corrupted criminal creativity. Criminality can arise from boredom, from inarticulated creativity. To be reduced to consumer values, to see democratic potential reduced to the occasional election, this can also be regarded as a rejection or a dismissal of democratic creativity.

Environmental pollution advances parallel with a pollution of the world within us. Hope is denounced as utopian or as illusory, and discarded hope breeds violence. In the school we shall research into the numerous forms of violence, which are by no means confined to those of weapons or physical force.

As a forum for the confrontation of political or social opponents, the school can set up a permanent seminar on social behavior and its articulate expression.

The founders of the school proceed from the knowledge that since 1945, along with the brutality of the reconstruction period, the gross privileges afforded by monetary reforms, the crude accumulation of possessions and an upbringing resulting in an expense account mentality, many insights and initiatives have been prematurely shattered. The realistic attitude of those who do survive, the idea that living might be the purpose of existence, has been denounced as a romantic fallacy. The Nazis' blood and soil doctrine, which ravaged the land and spilled the blood, has disturbed our relation to tradition and environment. Now, however, it is no longer regarded as romantic but exceedingly realistic to fight for every tree, every plot of undeveloped land, every stream as yet unpoisoned, every old town center, and against every thoughtless reconstruction scheme. And it is no longer considered romantic to speak of nature. In the permanent trade competition and performance of the two German political systems which have successfully exerted themselves for world recognition, the values of life have been lost. Since the school's concern is with the values of life we shall stress the consciousness of solidarity. The school is based on the principle of interaction, whereby no institutional distinction is drawn between the teachers and the taught. The school's activity will be accessible to the public, and it will conduct its work in the public eye. Its open and international character will be constantly reinforced by exhibitions and events in keeping with the concept of creativity.

"Non-artists" could initially be encouraged to discover or explore their creativity by artists attempting to communicate and to explain—in an undidactic manner—the elements and the coordination of their creativity. At the same time we would seek to find out why laws and disciplines in the arts invariably stant in creative opposition to established law and order.

It is not the aim of the school to develop political and cultural directions, or to form styles, or to provide industrial and commercial prototypes. Its chief goal is the encouragement, discovery and furtherance of democratic potential, and the expression of this. In a world increasingly manipulated by publicity, political propaganda, the culture business and the press, it is not to the named—but the nameless—that it will offer a forum.



All the terms contained in the syllabus are to be understood only in the context of the creativity-terminology as explained in the manifesto.

Reprinted in *Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America, Writings by and Interviews with the Artist*, compiled by Carin Kuoni. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990.

#### Comments from one of Beuys' Biographers:

In this Beuysian school—which, as the master and his fellow campaigners constantly reiterated, was not intended as a private teaching venue for Beuys himself—the primary objective was to reactivate the “life values” that had been buried by indifference, habit, disenchantment, aggression, war, violence, and environmental decay; and to do so through a creative interchange, on a basis of equality, between teachers and learners. The syllabus was to offer, along with the traditional art specialties, “intermediate disciplines.”...

In a number of notes on this syllabus, [professor of painting Georg] Meistemann, who had years of experience as a teacher in the Düsseldorf and Karlsruhe academies, pointed to the dangers of technological progress: it often leads, in Meistemann's view, to physical and psychic depression, “because the individual can no longer remain open to what is within himself.” This is where the Free University comes in, “to liberate individuals from their isolation.”

The most sensitive of human beings, they prefer inner withdrawal over contact based on misunderstandings....The state of the art schools is not one that promotes an integration of artists with society. Therefore the Free University proposes to explore comprehensively the interaction between the life of the individual and that of society, and to this end it intends to concentrate on the issue of social behavior.”

...Beuys saw the FIU as an experiment in education across the board. He stressed once more that there were to be no tests, no examinations, no limitation on number of students, no age limits. The school was to be public and under control of the public. The teachers would receive limited contracts instead of official tenure. Heinrich Böll, a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, was prepared to make himself available—initially as a consultant, and later as an “instructor in literacy theory,” which meant that he would help with difficulties in articulation and, conceivably, with bringing the vocabularies of the various disciplines closer together. As for the interdisciplinary syllabus, no limits on subjects were set. Böll even suggested setting up a professorship of politeness.

It is typical of Beuys that he was not discouraged even by such setbacks as the failure to find financing. Undaunted, he went right on campaigning for his Free University “sculpture.”

Initial public statement for internet on FIUWAC. 1999.

# U 192

#### Arte Ütili nr:

192

#### Initiator:

Joseph Beuys

#### Location:

Germany

#### Category:

pedagogical, politics, economy

#### Users:

Beuys, Klaus Maack (1st chairman), Georg Meistemann (2nd chairman) and Willi Borgard (secretary), students.

#### Maintained by:

Its users

#### Certification:

Implemented

#### Duration:

1972-1988

## Joseph Beuys

### Free International University (FIU) for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research

#### Description:

A school outside the academic system that admitted all students. It was founded as an “organizational place of research, work, and communication” to ponder the future of society.

#### Goals:

As a Free University it was intended to supplement the state educational system while at the same time campaigning for legal equality with that system. One of the most pressing issues for the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research was how to help realize the capacity of all individuals to be creative beings by advocating cross-pollination of ideas across disciplines as well as how to formulate the concept of individual freedom as the ability to shape social forms, through the transformation of resources.

#### Beneficial Outcomes:

The idea of the Free International University was revisited and taken further by various people and groups, including the author Hainer Reymann under the FIU-Verlag and the FIU in Amsterdam, Gelsenkirchen, Hamburg, and Munich, which were begun by students of Beuys. They also include the organization Mehr Demokratie e.V. (A) and the Omnibus for direct democracy.

#### Images:



Addendum to reprint of Manifesto from 1973. FIU Archive.

Free International University World Art Collection

Statement for and on behalf of FIUWAC, from Waldo Bieri, Founding-Director.

A central level of the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research, founded in 1972 by Joseph Beuys, as part of his enlarged conception of artistic action, and Heinrich Böll, the Nobel Prize laureate, is perfectly captured in Beuys's remarks: "Economics is not only a money-making principle. It can be a way of production to fulfill the demands of people all over the world. Capital is human kind's ability to work, not just money. Thus economics includes the creativity of people. Creativity equals Capital." One of the most pressing issues for the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research was how to help realize the capacity of each person to be a creative being; how to formulate the concept of individual freedom as the ability to shape social forms, through the transformation of resources.

Joseph Beuys developed the concept "social sculpture" to describe the interplay between spiritual, material and social spheres, where, thanks to the principles of freedom and equality, economics would create bonds of community, cooperation, creative flows of energy. For Beuys constant change and permanent dialogue was the source and process for social sculpture. His belief was that such a work of transformation had the power to release the binding patterns of history and the potential to bring forward in society the energies that emerge in creativity, in any realm in which it manifests itself.

Such a social sculpture requires a free flow of information, democratic initiatives, production-sites that could overcome barriers between structures, between knowledge and instinct, to become a genuine practice of interdisciplinary research where the organic and the technological, intuition and intellect would melt and reconfigure into new social wholes in which creativity can flourish.

Art is everyone's capacity, thus, Beuys's dictum: "Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler." The activity of FIU has helped to create fusions and crossing points, survival bridges between people and economy. It is a permanent platform and conference with individual freedom as the primary creative datum.

The FIU Amsterdam has proposed with the co-operation of the environmental and socially concerned TRODOS BANK, "where more than money counts", to create a "modern collection", which reflects new needs in the imagination for the future, and thinking for all resources, natural, human, ecological and social.

The Free International University World Art Collection (FIUWAC) on my initiative and with the TRODOS BANK has as its aim an open and transparent collection, which belongs to everyone and will be available, world-wide, to any group willing and capable to host and support it.

By accepting this proposal as value, TRODOS has enabled FIUWAC to form and acquire, by gift, loan, donation, acquisition and purchase, the kernel of a pluralistic and multicultural collection, which uses the archive of its own formation, the so called FIU times, as a guarantee that in 25 years its sale will redeem the money in the first instance as a loan against its formation. Creativity has its own economic mutuality in the trust of this cooperation between FIUWAC and TRODOS. As part of the permanent conference lectures, publications, the building of active websites will continue to promote the presence of these creative agencies within the collection.

Active members of the FIU Amsterdam, Jacobus Koppenburg, Babette Mondini van Loos, Hilaria Hofstede, Alfons Alt, Patrick Healy, Brendan O'Riordan and friends and supporters as Walter Hopps, Virgil and Deborah Griefel, later all, have made donations and contributions. In conjunction with the magnificent and generous loan to the FIUWAC from the Rudolf Steiner archive in Dornach, Dr. Walter Kugler, has drawn our attention to comments, which Steiner made when speaking out on August 11, 1919, that we need new heads on our shoulders when we wish to ensure a wise future for mankind. The abstraction of value in money must be returned to the flows and needs of a properly human and spiritually alive existence, where human, animal and plant potencies are reanimated as care and responsibility.

The formation of FIUWAC manifests concretely the search for the realization of spiritual and creative goals for society, which can create a vital enrichment for the world.

Waldo Bieri Founding Director, FIUWAC sept 1 1999

Joseph Beuys and Waldo Bieri 1976

FIU- Broadsheet publication.  
FIU Archive.



The problem of the inter-disciplinary was not just about the borders and frames, but also the interval, the voids and the silence. It was essential to keep research on the move, to prevent it from coming out of the tools that one created, just something from hand rather than the present living, often pre-theoretical grasping and making that was the imagination's own activity.

The *Regal Star Project* introduced Bien to the issue of the circle, whereas he had been thinking in terms of line, having placed the table in the middle of the inner space of the hull of the ship, he created an eye shape. He was not exploring the installation as a rudimentary territory, but rather he insisted that it was a living on-going performance.

A film made by Martijn van Haalan, shot over three days, was shown to Beuys in October of that year, and Bien invited Beuys to come to Amsterdam to shave him on the last day of the performance, and invitation that Beuys accepted. Bien did not, he claims, think of this as an "art=work" (sic), rather he was thinking in terms of a process in which he was re-organizing the reading of the past, of his own biography.

It turned out to be a complex process of simultaneously shifting the energy and the ballast, and everything was an obstacle and a freedom. What was not necessary could not be brought forward, like a sailor packing a suitcase, the need to discard as important as what one brings. The trans-mobilisation of the autobiographical required utter decision and efficiency. Bien included elements that were surely very private, self-referential, but conceptually explicit in terms of the search, by including in the assemblage in the space, and a little toy snake with a rope, which was to act as an aide-memoire that was the "sneaky" process of bringing support into the horizontal activity, as the bottom of the boat could also be read as the surface landscape, as territory.

## MOORINGS

The arrival at the rusty ship by canoe in bad weather felt like an immense journey. Entry to the ship was difficult, it was necessary to open the hatches with a winch, which already started Bien in terms of the relation of hand and thinking. By the imaginative juxtaposition the obstacle yielded the image of a sardine can, and so Bien covered a mirror with lead, which made access to the reflection mirror the self-reflection, and further commented on the process of opening and closing the hatches. It was the interval between arrival and welcome that every stranger experiences. The question of settling in the boat, without any electricity, its hull below the water line, rusty and sonorous as if in the belly of a whale, provided a whole set of further associations. How the lingering between the entry and leave taking was ultimately a question of hospitality, of making the place hospitable, not through images of comfort, but by engaging with all elements of the experience in the setting and arranging of the objects to hand, and the ritual to be enacted.

Bien left notes on the daily developments and checks to any progress, and made the decision to inscribe his observations on the work itself. He used pieces of rolled lead on which he scratched with a nail. It is a strange choice of material and writing, as one associates it with the defixiones of the ancient Romans: which was the use of lead as a soft and malleable material to write what were magical wishes and spells, usually against hostile forces and persons, on such material.

Bien also used a stick to dislodge the rusting surface above him, and he collected the rust at the end of the year and put it in a box, which he described as the physical witness of the ship in the sculpture, and called this Regal Star Dust. Bien then incorporated the glass plates that he made in Iceland and brought the photographic work, the physical objects and his actions, into a form of circular concert. The notion of the year was also a circling within time, the return of the seasons, of the same even in the constant shifting of the weather. The line that he left was also the line of how the self constructed itself as going from one point to an end point in a progress, which retains its identity through all changes. Bien in some way tried to join both of these geometrical figures in the work, and marked the sensitive event of time as submerged in ritual and repetition, and the movement in and out of the ship as a form of leave-taking, which was the constant therapy of the preparation of finite beings for the last possibility of the non-possible.

Beuys changed the plans he had in mind, and to which they had agreed. As outlined earlier, he rang to say he could not come to Amsterdam, and asked if Bien instead would come to Paris where Beuys was involved in a performance with John Cage. They discussed the shift of terrain and the implications for the performance. There was also the practical consideration of what Bien would bring to Paris. He had to work out if he would bring the table, or make special portable equipment. He also allowed himself the luxury of adding new found objects. In this instance he found three small white crosses at the Waterlooplein flea-market in Amsterdam, which were signature marks worn by Christian medical missionaries.

Bien brought his own equipment, and had with him Martijn van Haalen, who came and documented the performance with Beuys on video. Beuys, who can be seen in the video - now online - shaves Bien twice - and in interview for a film made by Illya Kloppenburg - online - Bien gives an account of the shaving and the sensation of Beuys' hands and his own response to being in such a public and passive situation, as part of what was a global transmission, in one of Beuys' the last great public appearances.

Beuys placed the shaving knives he used between glass plates, and gave Bien objects and material during and at the end of the performance. As was argued in the independent study on Bien, "Schneede's Die Aktionen," it left out references to the last thirty minutes of the Action,



and thus the Bien / Beuys', Beuys / Bien's work, was the performance and the material gathered from the physical remnants of the action and placed in a vitrine by the two artists. A notice appeared in *Jonas* 21, by the anthroposophical writer and academic Michiel Damen, who was a generous supporter of Bien over years, and a critic of Bien saw the Plastik as the various inter-relational activities of the cold and warm, transmitted through the land, and his own bodily activities, the formal developments were the radiations out of his colour theory.

## CO-OPERATION

In studies on Kloppenburg and Grotfeldt I have explored how Beuys retreats from the foreground in Bien's mind, and the work with Rutkowski, Joseph Semah and many others released different capacities and responses in Bien, who in the use of the camera moved away from the question of form, and instead explored the stillness and the moment of the instant, the suddenness of appearance, which suited his strongly impulsive and immediate personality. Bien eschewed theoretical reflections and always thought of his communication as concrete and specifically involved in the work. He had less commitment to talking in the Beuysian sense, in some sense less public, more intimate, and when for example he speaks of his choice of whale oil, he speaks of the way in which the arrest of the image is being brought back to movement. In some sense he was answering one of the most perplexing questions of the revolution, namely why does it stop, and how can it find the force to go on, in a permanent revolution.

## THE MACHINE IN THE CAVE

Bien was committed to chance and accident. In that sense he became a kind of dialectical reprise of Duchamp/Beuys, and retained a fascination for pre-technical manipulation, and to accept that the relational was itself literally before and behind things in a manifest way.

He thought whale oil much more sublime than machine oil because it was so close to nerves and blood, and closer to the intimacy of the body. He was also fascinated with the camera, and his own use of it to eliminate its pseudo-objectivity, and his exploration of how to create an endless collapse of the symmetry within the mirror, especially by having the image produced engaged with the viscous and slowness of the oil, which in his mind was as sensitive in its coming into being as another image / material as the growth of a coral reef. He sought the invisible in vision. Beuys had not been busy with such material, nor, as Bien points out, been busy with photography. Bien did not just extend the material reference, but used the optical facts of machine and instruments of seeing, and engaged in a real conflictual and dynamic dialogue of his own looking, the invisible in vision, the problem of how tools shape the perceptual. The ancient Dutch fascination with optical phenomenon,



Overview page of collection items  
from FIUWAC website.  
<https://www.fiuwac.com>.





was grist to Bien's mill, and Bien would even include photography in land site works, such as burying photograph plates in a basal corridor in a cave covered by perfectly translucent water, which looked like glass. The layering fascinated Bien and he left the work to "grow". He returned again three years later, and it was not until 1997 that he took the material he had removed at that time and framed it as works.

The double problem of framing works and breaking boundaries remain a constant exploration in his work and also what would eventually be the solution of the pedestal problem for him, which he finds and with that closes his work, to which a long note in his workbooks of 1999 bears testimony, to which I will return in the third and final section. Bien always had a strong sense of the work as a kind of suicide, a self-elimination. This partly went back to discussions with Rutkowski and the development of the motoric dynamic of the signature, but it was more available to Bien in his friend and neighbour Jacobus Kloppenburg's elimination alphabet, or at least in the reductions and voids that are Kloppenburg's traces, which require the viewer to constitute through seeing the forms of the letters. The process of elimination could also invite the imaginative trigger which moved, as in Bien's case, to the works with snake skins and his *Engine Room*, where the blue with its red, was a source of activity, and he noted that by printing the colours differently there was another dynamic. In this, his colour theory and dynamic self-elimination meet as the motor of revolution and he aligns his discovery, although from a different route, to his response and work with Kloppenburg and Rutkowski, who will work with him, on the greatest and most complete development in Bien's own life, and which in traditional language be described as his masterpiece among his many works of the next twenty years. It is the fifteen years from the *Death Room* Interior in which Bien creates literally hundreds and thousands of works, drawings, watercolours, objects, but almost never in the Beuysian way, actions or performances, nor does he seek out schools or pupils.

## **THE MARKET IS THE ABBATOIR OF CREATIVE LIFE**

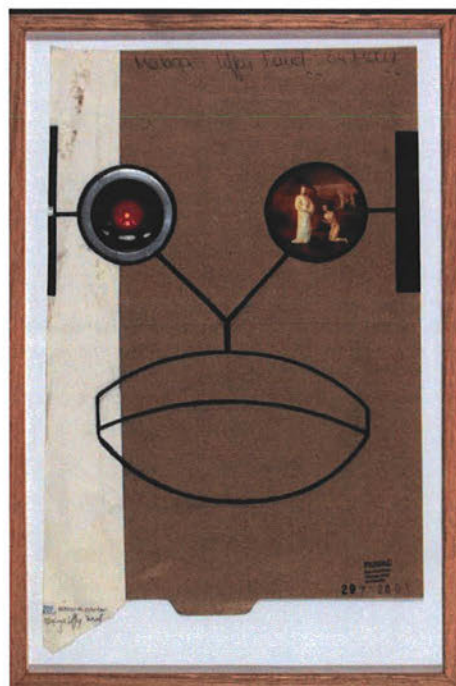
Bien's public engagement with the cultural domain itself, set himself as a provocateur, gad-fly, and critic of prevalent tendencies in Dutch Art, and yet it should be noted he constantly exhibited work, put up over 150 shows in a thirty year period, and traveled the world, sold on the market at high prices for a Dutch artist, and attended to family life, and so forth. Bien located the difficulty of the market for the artist who engages in interdisciplinary research. He stated that his real interest in photography was not moved towards the market. He noted this as a very sensitive point between interdisciplinary research and the market. The market also dictated rhythm, and one rule he suggested is that it does not matter if the market pops up behind you, but if it pops up in front of you it is impossible to do this research. You need the silence of the laboratory, you need the time to develop what is to hand, and the kind of process of discovery.



David Lebe, photograph, 1987.  
FIU Archive.



Virgil Grotfeldt,  
Work on paper, 1987.  
FIU Archive.



Hilarius Hofstede,  
Collage, 1997.  
FIU Archive.



Bien also has a wry sense of his own place in the world as an artist, and remarked that he sensed the immensity and awe of the world, and the universe. He also noted that the simplest flower in his hand was more than anything he could ever make. He was also grateful that he had had the blessing of being able to work easily, and that he could risk saying his work had real matters of concern developing within it, and he liked the flow of such making. However, his view on the market remained steadfast; "The market is the abattoir of creative life." Bien was conflicted, as he did not inherit wealth, and work and sales were necessary for survival.

## **A BACKWARDS STEP**

In fact this tension between the laboratory work of art and the pressures of markets really went back to his time in the Academy. After Beuys was sacked, it was not possible for a student like Bien to be signed in. There was panic as an effort was made to force students into other classes, including those of Anti-Beuys Professors, those who signed the document against Beuys. Bien signed up with Erwin Heerich - a consistent supporter of Beuys - which meant at the time that he had another route to encounter teachers and became aware of Beuys' teacher Mattaré, of whom Herrich had also been a student. Bien made contact with Günther Mancke who was living in an anthroposophical village, and with the encouragement of Hans Veneman, Bien claimed he learned to live away from the idea of career and ambition:

He showed me you can live with guts. He was la bohème, and not a coward. He was far from intellectual, so the discourse was bottom line. ...Günther Mancke was a master of anthroposophy and with Uwe Peel he went up and down listening to lectures, at the house of Günther Mancke... Heerich did not want to know about Anthroposophy, Beuys never mentions it. With Mancke and Heerich there was a strong line into Mattaré. We didn't identify with Steiner. We also discovered that anthroposophy as a club was not to our taste Beuys became perhaps a member, after he had changed things. As an artist you have to be an outsider, because they straightaway terrorise you with things that eliminate your freedom of speech and behaviour if you are in a club as an artist. We have to stay the independent voice. My affinity was with the newspaper *het Parool*, because it started off as an illegal paper in the War. It was an opposition paper, illegal. If you read Hesse *Zwischen den Rädern*, you see how society demands and expectations can grind up talent completely, and leave a young person in the valley of frustration.



Hilarius Hofstede.  
Work on paper, 1999.  
FIU Archive.

Patrick Healy.  
Painting on board,  
"Oblomov in Manhattan".  
FIU Archive.



Jacobus Kloppenburg.  
Pastel drawing, 1984.  
FIU Archive.



## DEEP SKIN GIVE ME FIVE OR NOTHING

In Bien's words:

First physical influence on my work in terms of materials I use was Kloppenburg and not Beuys. I had not studied the material of Beuys. I was busy with Rutkowski and Schönenborn, and when I came to Amsterdam he was the only man I knew in town, and we were good friends, and I went with him to the Flea Market everyday. I felt that I gained with every conversation especially his emotional sense for light and colours was tremendous. I had always the idea that they were flat, Goethe and Steiner. Dostoevsky is so dynamic when talking about colour. Jacobus would describe colour he had seen in 1943, he would draw my attention to the Dutch light, and I had never really observed that.

Bien continued:

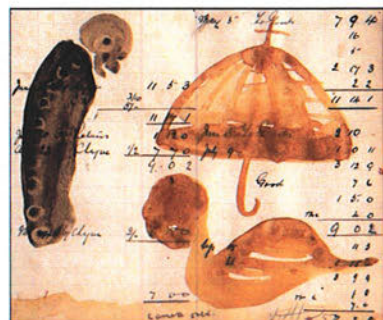
At that time the roof of my studio was made for the largest part out of glass, the difference between light as direct illumination and when it comes in waves, was pointed out to me by J, and in the studio when the light came through the tiles then it was coming through and it was a vivid thing. All that I learned and observed and analysed from him.

In a generous acknowledgement Bien noted:

I learnt from him to look at what was fading as a metamorphosis, and to accept every stage of that movement to see its values. I learned more from him than from anyone else, and he drew my attention to the plant and architecture. Wherever we would go in the world we would always look at plants and architecture.

The first Amsterdam works in the 80's, almost up to the 'Tableaux Africaines', were all related to the junk and rubbish and patina, emerged from dialogue with Jacobus. Endless serendipity and finding something on the street and discussing how the bath of Marat was painted, and he drew my attention to food, to nutrition, and to the Philosophy of Freedom of Rudolf Steiner, that you could adore it but you were free to handle to the contrary.

Bien added a pencil note in the margin after the typescript of the interviews were made available for his reading: "the rubbish dump as a source was very economical too and on every level giving a lot of information, social, economical, spiritual and historical form and colour theoretical etc."



Hilarius Hofstede,  
Work on paper,  
1997.  
FIU Archive.



Jacobus Kloppenburg.  
Pastel drawing, 1984.  
FIU Archive.

## BEING FROM EVERYWHERE ELSE

Bien had to face the difficulties of his own position in Holland when he returned from Germany as a student, and how to communicate, and, having planted the F.I.U. flag in Iceland, his F.I.U. involvement.

## ANTI-PAINTING AND THE BATHROOM TILES

It was a good sign that everyone thought of me as being from somewhere else. Swiss director said I was too Dutch, Germans thought I was Dutch, the Dutch treated me as a German, and so on. There was for me a kind of multicultural freedom in this, I was very easy with the Africans. They called me a 'primitive' when I was in the Academy, and in Africa they said I was a representative of a white one. .... There was a constant problem here with making a label for me. I only know that I am standing in my shoes and trying to figure out who I am, that is what my work is about. A teacher told me once that I was a monkey that was going straight up, and I didn't believe him. I was too German to represent Holland in foreign exhibitions. I was strictly treated in a kind of remote foreign way. If truth in Holland is not good for business, we are not interested in the truth.

The whole definition of land and country is only related to the surface. They had a problem with me. If you just looked at painting you see for example in Feininger, he was an awful bureaucrat. (Waldo Bien)

Once again Bien engaged in work that Beuys determined to eschew, namely painting on canvas. The way in which Beuys, for example, could take over the materials used by Steiner, namely the blackboards, and turn them into independent works also fascinated Bien. In his conversation with Kloppenburg he came to colour and light again, and even the phenomenon of just one site in Amsterdam, along the Lauriergracht, and engaged with painting as a result. However, one can see that he literally attempted to get out of a corner, and to dramatically confront what he took as something crucial in the Dutch tradition:

I wanted a method of painting which was according to my understanding of the light, and then into a kind of crystal mineral understanding, of fractured zones, and the anti-motoric, more in the way of atom pattern, short, straight brush strokes in logical directions to each their own unlogic, you see how a dynamic monochrome surface, that the dynamic is created by anti-dynamics, (he added a gloss here, 'in the sense of form'), the painting consists of anti-painting. That is like what you see in Mondrian, who starts off with the motoric in nature, and especially the brush strokes of van Gogh, and ends up with bathroom tiles.



## SURFACE AND IMAGE - EVENT OR MILK IN A FISH BOWL

Bien made the corrective view almost immediately:

It was beautiful to see this monochrome which was not painted out of the concept, and then they became a beautiful painting. It enabled me to recognise the de Stijl work of Mondrian as painting, which I had never done before.

He then added:

The nice thing was that the whole liquid element, I had that in the pot of my paint, and I brought the liquid to a state of mineralising, not only physical but as an image, and that was a great event.

The light on them was the same frequency where we have seen the light on rocks, in Carrara, where sculpture and rocks get together with light. It takes a lot of seeing to see the light going through the rocks. You look at fish in a basin and you see 3D, you see the depth, put milk in and you compress, and you will discover that at a certain moment you cannot see through the surface, but you know the depth on the other hand, the surface, we know it, our own skin, and we know, pretty well, what is behind it, in terms of our body we have no problem to do so, to look at our skin and think of our liver.

Then he remarked of his contemporaries:

Dibbets was dealing with the surface in a Dutch way, the soil as surface, as Mondrian does. I want things to come from the ground. This changes what I have to say about colour and light. But I understand him quite well. The solution of the tripod, which Dibbets used in his spiralling photographic sequence, when I started to analyse the probe I realised that within the research of the pedestal that I had to analyse the tripod, human static, two legs, botanical static, the column, and animalistic static, table and the tripod is a position of dialogue within this. I made a whole series of works on the tripod, because I was standing in between, it created something not human, or architectural or animalistic, and not botanical, if Dibbets had been born 50 km to the south his whole work would have been different. Dibbets is the sublime after Mondrian for the Dutch. It is possible that after 50 years he will be quickly on the decline. I think the motivation of Frieling is very promising. As a real artist you should not be interested in power. Sometimes to be a loser is an enormous resource of knowledge.



Walter Hopps letter.  
25 June 1999.  
FIU Archive.

## ARCHITIPLOFTICAL

To conclude this section I will examine in some detail a project in which Bien, Giskes, and Kloppenburg were involved in Amsterdam, and which was developed as an F.I.U. interdisciplinary activity in very real and realised terms. As I did not study this in detail in my work on Bien, which concentrated on his sculpture and painting, the architectural begins to emerge. Also, I should underline that all of this is contained in the expanded notion of art, and so the divisions are themselves sublated in a higher unity and should not be treated as other than how different expressive possibilities are deployed in the artistic imaging. Bien had a natural gift for building. In the pre-history of his work, which remains largely a matter of his own reminiscence, he mentions that when he was fourteen or fifteen, as an *enfant terrible*, he was subjected to being examined by a psychologist who was blind. Nevertheless, from listening to Bien, the psychologist suggested that Bien become an architect:

Now suddenly after years with Jacobus, Rutkowski, Herrich we always had discussion about architecture. Later on Semah added a lot to this, because his work was very much about architecture. One day Karl phoned, doing clay architecture in Holland, he phoned and said he had caught a big fish, a wealthy young man, a member of a supermarket chain, very well known, who wanted to build a spiritual New Age centre, the name of the centre was to be Obibio, it still exists, there is still a court-case going (speaking in May 1997). New Age for us meant unidentified resource and freedom, so nice to do research on value, to develop perspectives, and Karl invited me to come and look at what he was doing there. It was unique. I went there to have a look at what he was plastering, the congress room, the name sounds bigger than the space is. He had an architect, and everything was designed, drawn, planned for the whole building. I looked at the plans I saw it was a mess. They had a real problem over there. This was the time that Jacobus and Waldo came close together in the bonding of work and when the architectural programme was underway.

We had to eliminate the sword of Damocles that was hanging in the middle of the room, a 60 cm high iron beam was supporting the ceiling, and it came down to two meters from the floor. It was an impossible project, they wanted to make a congress room there, it meant that the beam would come down to 1.3 above table. The architect they had engaged to do the whole building, he had the contract, had thought to resolve the problem by putting mirrors on the beam. Everyone who knows they are not beauties know that they shouldn't look in the mirror. The problem doubled with the beam.



## BUILDING ANTHROPOSOPHY

Bien laid claim, in no uncertain terms, to his role in the project:

I said to Karl who was working there that this was impossible. Karl asked if I knew another solution. I drew on the back of the cigar box, a kind of symmetrical gesture, as I had worked on with Rutkowsky in the art academy. I made the beam the backbone of a corpus, and drew two ribs to the side. Now the ceiling had become a kind of Arabian ceiling, or a metro station, where the trains would pass by on the platform, and you would stand on the platform. Karl in the evening showed my drawing to the owner of the building and he liked it much more than what the architect had supplied. He came here and asked me if I wanted to design the congress room. That was my second involvement in architecture since Africa. I told him that K was my partner and would work with me. I gave him a dossier and explained to him interdisciplinary research. I explained we would tackle the problem from a sculptural and choreographical and spiritual point of view, the contents and the iconography of form. He said okay, and we made a contract.

There were an enormous lot of problems in this room but we dissolved them very well. I don't think anyone could make more out of it than we did. Because the problem of the beam had been resolved by the round ceiling, the problem was now an emotional one, which reminded me as a Western European of a railway road station. So the first thing we thought was we wanted this backbone to be supported by two columns. Jacobus designed two columns. The Easter Island pillars prompted out of a desire to go to the Easter Islands.

Bien realised that when one is engaged in interdisciplinary research, no one really grasps what was taking place, as it could sometimes be just looking at a pineapple on a shelf. The constant open attunement, so radically apparent in the vivid, sensitive alertness of Kloppenburg was a daily adventure, and pursued through long journeys to South America, Africa, Easter Islands, Australia. It was guided increasingly by Bien's own response to the 'artchive of the future', the mega-sculpture being accumulated, assembled, by K in an atelier on the Lauriergracht, his work with Joseph Semah, and later in the 80's the shift again to watercolours, paintings and actions. He took nearly one year to go to the public domain, which was the one continuing and major performance / action that he participated in. By the beginning of the 1990's, he solved the pedestal again in a whole new series of works, and moved to fluidity and the exploration of new materials, which had had a certain logic in development as whale-oil, flint- carbon- bone marrow- basalt- snake skin. Again, it is fascinating to see the way in which Bien moved between, and created a dialectical movement from, the work of Beuys and Duchamp,

retaining strong elements of his Dutch tradition which was not only the fascination with the optical, but also the strength of design. This is especially evident in the work around the Olivetti furniture from the end of the 1980's.

## FRAMEWORKS LIQUID FLOWS

"How open it is," was a phrase that applied to the complex overlapping relationships between, for example, Bien, Kloppenburg, Giskes, Babeth, and innumerable others who engaged with Bien as a friend, and as an artist. His later direct collaboration with Joseph Semah, and especially Virgil Grotfeld, whose work with Bien, as my study on Grotfeld attempted to indicate, produced a remarkable series of series of paintings in which Bien engaged in response to the work of another artist. Meanwhile, he re-explored his ideas of boundary, territory, and the visual world that could express his life-long concerns. He also wrote some accounts and stories from his travels, some of which are published on the F.I.U. hosted websites. Bien retained strong links through his children in Germany, and with colleagues from Raum 20 days, such as Rutkowski.

Some of these connections were personal, and some explicitly "in the framework of the F.I.U.." If one were to construct diagrams of the overlap between various people and circles, especially in Amsterdam, they would show the fluidity of the associations and activities, sometimes gathered in a tight bond, and often floating social connections that reanimated when the need arose at an exhibition, a gathering, or supporting activities. The essential journey for Bien was to retain the hospitality to creativity in whatever form it showed. The direction of F.I.U. was to de-institutionalise and really much more virtual, or actualised itself in the virtual combines and interests as they emerged via social connection. As we can see from the Obibio example, the activities of the artists remains highly attuned to context and the local scene.

Bien wrote to me at the Architectural Faculty where I worked with Arie Graafland and the Delft School of Design as a researcher, in September 2002 in Dutch, in order to point out that the Obibio was the first "leembouw" project in Holland.<sup>25</sup> Since 1947 he pointed out that the use of straw and clay was not a part of Dutch building. Further, that it was the first example of an anthroposophically oriented architecture in conjunction with interdisciplinary research, and he stressed the "plasticity" and thus sculptural nature, in the expanded sense, of the building. The contrast between the virtual space of sculpture and the including/excluding physical domain of architecture meet in the

25

Logbook 14, manuscript log books  
of Waldo Bien, F.I.U. Archives,  
Amsterdam.



development. Bien wrote at a moment when he was advancing the arguments in the public domain on the artistic activities of Jacobus Kloppenburg, and also planning a publication that might attract funding on the Oibio project.

Bien also retained a lively critical engagement with the cultural domain. Once again, the role of the artist was in question. The end of the 1980's effectively saw the triumph of a rampant capitalist hijacking of the aims of art, which brought the full forces of the market values and enormous fame machinery to bear on individual careers. The role of the critic was replaced by the gallerist, and later this was replaced by the "curator." The last years of Beuys' life were also absorbed in this ineluctable globalising mechanism, and the need for the development of the "third way," became a need to return to different scales of involvement, a more personal, face-to-face world, and a more fugitive, liquid commitment to the complex ideological forces driving the art market as speculative investment, and literally absurdist values.

## **SNAKES AND LADDERS**

The Dutch situation allowed some kind of defence against the onslaught of money, as a subsidy system was in place that allowed a kind of frugal survival, and some distance from the power of the "aesthetic shop," and at the end of the 80's the mantra that Andy Warhol and Keith Haring so loved: "art=money."

Bien also saw the way in which Beuys had distinguished his founding of political parties from the work he set in train with the F.I.U.. Bien was prepared, and at great cost to himself, to challenge the system root and branch. He was guided by the sense that what was at issue was really resentment about the independence of the artist's life, and without a full scale conspiracy theory in place, constructed a view that he was disliked for his own independence, for being offensive, and "stomping over etiquette": "We have an historical responsibility, and if we have to suffer for that then we must suffer, it is not about liking or disliking, someone has to do it".

The strange thing about inter-disciplinary research is that no one understands what you are doing, because no one knows what it is. It is the absolute anti-academic, in terms of what academy is today. That is what Beuys recognised very well. All those works that are made for a purpose are the kind of drawings I very seldom make and I do not enjoy them as much as the ones I do as an 'idiot', as a monkey (29 April 1997).

One can see in Bien's work a literal way in which he sees how the F.I.U. needs to go on. The example can be followed via the way in which Bien

tried to find a “clearing” and introduced a lightness to the work that accumulated. Sailing along the coast of Tasmania he read the stretched out fractal geometry as a snake skin, which was also his way of reading the text as a motorical event - here the connection to Rutkowski is very explicit. His interest in text is not as something constructed of signs and combinations rather, it is from a nomadic point of view, as a track, as a continuous line.

## STRETCHING THE SNAKE SKIN

The snake was also a stretched element. Every kind of response was now interwoven; cartographical, typographical, topological. For Bien it would be a very important element, in that you could build with it, construct with it, engage in engineering, or you could, he argued: “build all the platonic materials with the snake element as it has within it the secret of the dynamic pedestal, which you could also recognise as being implicated in the pillar of Brancusi. Brancusi’s snake is alive, the column is a highly dynamic form. It is a very important work, the Brancusi work.”

*Dynamic Square*, the work from 1996, was his way of bringing the muscular dynamics of the snake into the highly immobile square, and yet Bien says he recognised within the very enclosure a rotations, and a circular field with a centre, and thus he recognised he could construct a motor. However, he also investigated bone marrow and saw so much landscape in it that he placed it on basalt. It looked like it belonged there, but he quickly realised that the form, through its dynamic was off, “with my mountain.” He identified a problem, and it goes also to the heart of how to understand the actual movement of interdisciplinary research the way F.I.U. was considered by Bien at this time:

I had created a form that was going away with my mountain. I had a problem here. I have to make this dynamical form steerable. The same problem that appeared with the static pedestal that the dynamic of the forms were creating unrest, and we needed rest. I thought I had to build a fuse into it to limit it, to be able to control its mobility, like the electrical system. Then I go into the sculptural problem of where to put the fuse, and symmetry. I chose to place three fuses in there. What I had done I have also done with the snake. I eliminated the dynamic in order to study it. I had to make it controllable. I think good things should steer themselves. Good things are their own pilot. You have to create a dynamic pedestal, on which all the good valuable ideas which are ever developed by mankind, cannot be victims of the practise of manipulation.



## MERGEL AND THE GREY ZONE

There was also tension in Bien's mind about the way the research was driving everything. In the work *Techno Genesis* he translated the erotic back into the geophysical, when he presented a column, an oval column, which was out of the limestone caves near Maastricht:

On them I put several porcelain women's legs with shoes, good-looking women's legs. I had found a whole box of them in the Archive for the future. A lot of stuff I worked with came out of the archive, and I straight away turned things into work. Once in Tasmania he had poured melted tin over a rock, and this was the experience of seeing what looked like the rock erupt, with a frothy, frivolous character.

Bien saw the archive in colour theory terms. He had entered the grey zone.

## A GENEROUS MAN

During the late 1980's the financial situation was parlous. Bien acknowledged that: "Michiel Damen, was the only one who acted with a true sympathy in ethics, never offering what he wants, but asking what it is you need. He supported me all those years, and the first person I knew in Amsterdam apart from Kloppenburg, without him I would have been gone, a normal man with a normal income, a most generous person."



Hilarius Hofstede,  
PPP statement.  
FIU Archive.

**PALEO:** REACHING BACK  
TO PALEOLITHIC TIMES,  
THAT OF THE VERY FIRST  
HUMAN IMAGE MAKING.

**PSYCHO:** THROUGH THE  
STAGES OF THE MIND.

**POP:** TO A NEW FORM OF  
POPULAR ART.



# PART 3









Jacobus KLOPPENBURG

Patrick HEALY

Waldo BIEN

Hilarius HOFSTEDE

18-07-6661 / 5-09-6661

Hierbij nodigen wij u uit voor de opening van THE LIGHTFACTORY op **zondag 18 juli om 16.00 uur** in de **WATERTOREN AK** Vlissingen/Oost-Souburg. Ter gelegenheid van de opening leest **Patrick HEALY** om **16.30 uur** in het Waterreservoir een gedeelte uit **DE MARKIES VAN WATER** van Hilarius HOFSTEDE, (DUBLIN 1998). Het betreft een primeur, omdat dit tevens de publicatie is van het boek in Nederland.

De transformatie van de WATERTOREN AK tot THE LIGHTFACTORY nodigt u als bezoeker uit om een reis te maken in de gedachtenwereld van **PPP Paleo Psycho Pop** (H. Hofstede). Een fysieke en energieke reis door een sculptuur van beeld, taal en klank. In de reinwaterkelder een samengaan van het handschrift, de wandtekeningen van KLOPPENBURG en kaaimannen uit Reptielenzoo 'Iguana' Vlissingen, die de ruimte paleontiseren. Hier ligt het begin van de reis, de constructie van het licht, die ons naar boven voert. In de ruimte daarboven vindt de vertaling plaats van schrift naar water, van BABEL naar PPP, met teksten van HEALY en HOFSTEDE. 560 tekstpanelen die afzonderlijk en in relatie met elkaar ontelbare associaties teweegbrengen.

"PPP takes the Millennium energy seriously and considers it dangerous to some extent. It shows or unmasks the pornographic dynamics of commerce and the consequences these dynamics have for what we call 'LIFE'."

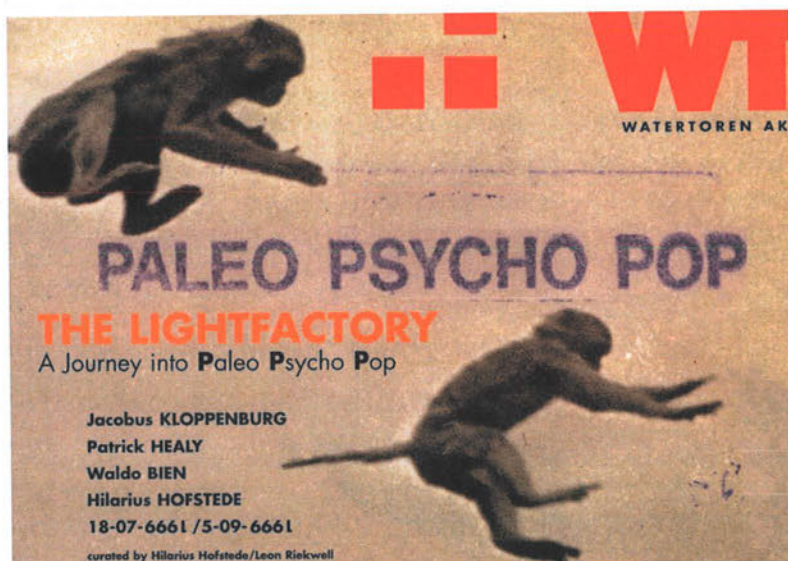
In de twee gestapelde ruimten maakt het woord de reis naar het licht, van in den beginne naar.... 'The Lightfactory' in het Waterreservoir. Deze ruimte van 450 m3 wordt getransformeerd door Waldo BIEN en Hilarius HOFSTEDE. Het eind van uw reis is niet in zicht. Hier begint het pas!

Agendatitelt: Op **zondag 5 september** zal in een non-stop voordracht van 10.00 uur tot 18.00 uur Patrick HEALY lezen uit **DE MARKIES VAN WATER**. Deze performance in het Waterreservoir wordt op tape geregistreerd.

**WATERTOREN AK** Vlissingen/Oost-Souburg. **Ruimte voor experiment-n in actuele kunst.** Open: donderdag t/m zondag 12.00-17.00 uur en op afspraak. Organisatie Buro Beeldende Kunst Vlissingen 0118 416672. Bezoekadres: Vlissingestraat 239/Rijksweg A58 Oost-Souburg. Postadres: Postbus 5105, 4380 KC Vlissingen.

Exhibition invitation,

Verso, 18.7.1999 - 5.9.1999.



Exhibition Invitation, 1999.

FIU Archive.



## FIUWAC

This section sets out, in relatively brief detail, the development of the Free International University World Art Collection – or FIUWAC – and contextualises the project as the social sculpture in which F.I.U. Amsterdam was engaged most directly and obviously since the beginning of the collection. This starts, at least by anecdote, when on a certain day the artist Hilarius Hofstede visited the atelier in Lauriergracht, the offices also at that time of the FIU Amsterdam, where Waldo and the children were present and received a work from Hilarius that he had just made of a globe and a shoe. This was a gift for the then proposed F.I.U. study collection, which also had on-loan paintings that I made in Ireland in the summer of 1997. Waldo and I were considering in what way a study collection would work, when one of Waldo Bien's sons, Matthijs, and the other, Niels, took a piece of wood that they then worked on, by putting in nails, and presented it to their father Waldo. Reverting to his own earliest concerns in Düsseldorf, he immediately declared it as the pedestal for a "World Art Collection," and thus the designation and beginning of the Free international University World Art Collection.

I will give an overall account and then present key facts from documents, interviews, and conversations in a chronological order. Thus the material will bear some repetition. It is also necessary to say that given the number of people involved, that the reader is asked to use the internet to find out further details, or social media for the various details of named artists. To keep the narrative manageable I concentrate on the group who were working on a daily basis on the specifics of the project, and for some years, this also involves workers of the Triodos Bank with its headquarter in Zeist, Holland. Basic information on the bank and its proclaimed ideals is readily available from their websites on the internet, and so the information presented here is for the most part not in the public domain.

Further, the three published books on Kloppenburg, Bien and Grotfeldt - or KG - will be referenced by capital letter and page number internally in the text, and they are all available online and can be consulted via the FIU Amsterdam sites, which provides updates on many of the persons mentioned in this account.

A major documentary source is the workbooks kept at the main office of the F.I.U. Amsterdam, and the log of acquisition and correspondence formed as a paper archive diary by Waldo Bien. I will designate this as Bien.Log. – B.L. - and indicate it as a source by volume, and then via internal dating of documents, thus BL.14, and date, as the folders are not paginated, and contain photographs, cards and various miscellanea. Entries are written in English, Dutch and German, almost all in Bien's own handwriting, and the work log reads from right to left in terms of dating. It is the single largest and indispensable source for my reconstruction of the founding and early development of the FIUWAC.

The first published account of the formation of the FIUWAC is the pamphlet-sized booklet that accompanied the opening of the headquarters in Zeist. Waldo Bien and I prepared the document, and Thomas Steiner gave a final check and edit. The document was made available on the day of the opening, to which contributing artists were invited, and some of which can now be seen thanks to a fly-on-the-wall video documentary made by Babebth Mondini van Loo. As can be seen from the video, and the quick guided tour that Waldo Bien provided, a substantial part of the collection was already in place at this date. A substantial part of the parallel collection known as the F.I.U.tures is also on view. It was being assembled to guarantee the ability of the Triodos Bank to honour its commitments after twenty-five years, in what is a kind of reverse credit/loan relationship between the F.I.U. and the bank, with a different conception of social and financial responsibility, around which, as will be shown a significant misunderstanding arose, that created a deep diplomatic impasse for the continuation of what had been a happy and fruitful collaboration.

When comparing the original typescript and the published version we find no major revisions or changes, and the involvement of Thomas Steiner, who acted as the liaison between Triodos Bank and the F.I.U., was as much to ensure that the bank was clear about the outcome of the negotiations that preceded, as to interject any major emendations. The correspondence between Bien and the Bank clearly shows that the FIUWAC's initial ideas were expansions of work that he had in mind for some years. The first broad public presentation took place with the appendix to the book on Virgil Grotfeld published by Wienand in Cologne, in 2003.

The presented material includes the letter signed off by Walter Hopps - and probably composed by Waldo Bien and Deborah Grotfeld - and the text of the actual publication that was produced by the Triodos Bank for the opening on October 2, 1999. If one examines the interviews Waldo Bien granted in the first part of 1997, there is no direct proposal at that time to create such a collection. The broader concerns of the F.I.U. were with the Archive of the Future, and Bien was in fact preparing for a full-scale overview of his work. In 1999 he made the switch from his own oeuvre to declaring the exemplification of F.I.U. though the FIUWAC as the task to which he would now dedicate his remaining years. That document links directly with the concluding section of part two and allows one to see that Bien had turned his thinking towards social sculpture, as well as finding a means to make the "invisible visible." I use variants on the conventions for the acronyms, as they are used diversely through documents, but feel it is self-evident and can be followed easily, sometimes with inter-punctuations and sometimes not. However, the reader's indulgence is requested.



Alfons Alt,  
Paper on canvas.  
FIU Archive.



I will follow this “backwards,” as it were. In other words, I will examine the public, and published state, and then point to some earlier documentary sources that help grasp its genesis. Secondly, I will look at the emergence of a clear misunderstanding, which was to have long-term consequences for the collaboration of the Triodos Bank and the F.I.U. Amsterdam. Thirdly, I will try to indicate the future direction of the FIUWAC. The criss-cross and interlace of the Archive of the Future and the work of K, under threat of destruction, also became a major focus at the same time, and the period of Zeist’s opening, showing the collection, the archive’s threat of destruction, and preparation of the publication in 2000 of a major study on Bien were all deftly interconnected. In 1999 F.I.U. also joined up with PPP for a show in Vlissingen, which indicated the vitality of a small and dedicated group of artists to go on.

## 1999

At the beginning of 1999, Bien had the sense of need to close his oeuvre, and the intense re-capitulation of his thinking and projects over the years in preparation for a publication on his work, also put him in a square of self-reflection, and even a certain nostalgia. There is a group portrait photograph from March 9, 1999, where for the only time in his personal archive all of his children are present. He calls it “tribal meeting Holland end of 20<sup>th</sup> century”. The group is standing in front of his most abstract painting, *Virgin State*, and includes his six sons, Sebastiaan, Hendrik, Lucas - whose mother was Hanemann - and Mathijs, Niels, and Thijmen - with their mother Gompertz present. The group also includes Jacobus, Babeth, Joris Brouwers, and Michiel Damen.

## A HUNGER TO BE LESS SERIOUS

The occasion was an exhibition of Bien’s work in de Paviljoen Almere, called *A Hunger to be Less Serious*. The text that accompanied the exhibition was brief. Installed in the fifth pavilion the exhibition was there to showcase the relation in the artistic work of art and nature. Bien showed the work from 1972 of the *Ijsselmeer and her embryo’s*. Bien gave the North-East Polder as the germinal site for his inspiration, and his thinking on the surface as depth, the landscape as skin. In the press-release from the show it is stated that “De tentoonstelling van Bien is mede te beschouwen als het denkresultaat van de Free International University, die hij met anderen in Amsterdam vertegenwoordigt” (“The exhibition of Bien can be seen as the result of the thinking around the Free International University which he along with others represents”)<sup>26</sup> (cited in the review of show in *Dagblad van Almere*, 18.3.1999). Bien also provocatively put baking paper around his neck, like a lace collar, and had himself photographed as a Dutch Master at the end of the 20th century, which was of course cocking a hoop at the pious self-effacing myth of discretion and humbleness in art, even if humble was to be written with a capital “H.”

26

Cited in the review of show in  
*Dagblad van Almere*, 18.3.1999.

In the same month in Amsterdam, there was a launch of Paleo Psycho Pop, and shortly before Easter Waldo Bien wrote to Peter Blom of the Triodos Bank requesting a meeting at his atelier, to talk with him and Thomas Steiner. Bien suggested that the word "bank" has a lot more meaning than you would guess on the first hand, and also asked to introduce his ideas and results, "as a business," reminding them that they, Triodos, an "anthroposophical-inspired bank" - has the right to be in charge. The meeting took place on April 1st in Almere at the exhibition.

## ACTION

It was a difficult time, with financial pressure, and the need to get funding for the book about Bien for show in Recklinghausen the following year. There was also litigation over a collectors' terms of agreement and dispute about the ownership of works of his that were in his eyes properly acquired.

The Beuys' Stiftung in Basel wrote to Ferdinand Ullrich in Recklinghausen to say that due to financial restriction they could not contribute to publication costs for the show.<sup>27</sup> Bien knew he was at a crucial juncture. He went on a whistle-stop tour of the old comrades, and visited Michael Rutkowski, whom he persuaded to move his manuscripts to Amsterdam, with a view to F.I.U. working on them. He visited his son Sebastiaan, and also Jacobus who had a family and home in Düsseldorf, and found him busy with the light. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April the court hearing took place and in the afternoon the momentous meeting with the representatives of the bank, which emerged because of dispute with the collector Becht and his works with Semah,. In his workbook under the date April 1, Bien notes:<sup>28</sup>

After the court case K and I went to Almere (my running exhibit) to meet Peter Blom (dir. Triodos Bank) and Mr. Steiner there. They wanted to see the show and discuss possible forms of working together. I suggested an F.I.U. Art collection which I would put together for them in the coming 7 years. Also expressed the urgent need for a F.I.U. Publication fund to be able to make some necessary books. K-Rutkowski-Grotfeld-Hofstede, etc. They wanted us to come and see the building, walk through (sic) and think about it. Artworks, Architecture, Plans for Social Sculpture etc.

Bien also reported that he felt exhausted and tired. He was pushing on all fronts, and not only was the multi-tasking hard to fathom, he even added to projects as he went along. It is impossible to describe the level of concentration and energy that Bien released in the coming two years. He set to thinking immediately about what could go to the Bank as an expression of F.I.U. and came up with the idea of a Rudolf Steiner blackboard.

27

Letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 1999.

28

See B.L. 4.



He got in touch with Uwe Piel, a Waldorf schoolteacher who had taught his sons Sebastiaan and Lucas. They discussed a possible Raum 20 review. Bien was Janus-like in this year, and as he looked forward he was also looking back. The time had come to settle the direction and invoke the good steering, which had been so much part of his own sculptural working within the process of the social sculpture and expanded conception of art. His direct move was to make F.I.U. completely aligned with all of his personal and social life.

## UNDER THE WINGS

A little over a week after the meeting in Almere he wrote to Blom with regard to the Free International University *kunstcollectie/art* collection, of what he had in mind for the bank. How to place the collection under the wings of the Triodos Bank, “ik stel me het volgende voor onder de vleugels van de Triodos Bank” (‘I imagine the following under the aegis of the Triodos Bank’) occupied his mind. The metaphor was crucial, as it already indicated that the F.I.U.’s view is that the bank has a relationship of protection and care towards the collection, and there is absolutely no question of the Bank “acquiring” an art collection from the F.I.U.. The documents also show that the gathering of an art collection, with a didactic function, has to be without, what he termed, “continental or other sorts of limitations.” By this he indicated the idea of a World Art Collection. The collection would not be a “trend-follower,” but rather set a trend. He stressed that it was a work of the “future” and that it needed to be accompanied by publication.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of April Virgil Grotfeldt wrote a letter that gives insight into what these collaborative duos were facing, and something of the deep emotional situation among the participating artists in the whole FIUWAC “adventure,” as Bien liked to call all works of the F.I.U.:

WALDO

I wanted to drop a note, and let you know that indeed I am alive. Deb said she had heard from you, and that you were working hard still trying to raise money for the book. I am sure you will. I am not sure how, but certain you will.

I am basically as settled as I probably ever will be. The only thing I can say is that it in NY nothing more makes sense. I have begun to work, and have completed two canvases, and some drawings. The problem is I do not know what I want any longer. I look around at the thousands of aspiring artists fighting for bones in the street, hoping one day to find a bit of meat still on the bone. It seems for many of them the real subject is some artificial form of fame backed by little substance. I need to take advice from the title of your last exhibit, and learn to be less serious.

Virgil reported that Walter Hopps was in discussion with people in New York involving their work and that he felt he and Waldo would “land softly after all.” He then concluded the letter by asking:

what do we think we really want from all of this, except for the obvious \$, and mental security after all that should be a beginning, not and end. The question is the beginning of what?

## **GIMME SKIN OR RAWHIDE**

Bien had no time to reply. The show in Almere was being taken down. Requests for funding from the Beuys Foundation, Artimo Foundation, Art Funds were denied; there was no reply of acceptance from the N.O.G., and it would be necessary to write to Mondrian Fonds, and others. There was also the work with Oeke Hogendijk and Babeth on Kloppenburg, a film being made, archive cards for the *Archive Of The Future*, research, family matters, and even making new works, in between the hustle and bustle of a daily grind to keep going. It was as if spinning plates at a circus. Bien was dangerously extended and at the edge of his strength. Going through the archives at Lauriergracht allowed a response to earlier work, and the focus of preparing the mock-up book for Recklinghausen meant that Bien was re-considering all his own development. He took to painting and created with powder pigments, a response on the African Tableaux, called *Painting under the skin*:

The skin of the body, the dwelling between mass and space, and he notes in his journal, look at him, he's only skin, a hole is an eye looking in and out, an eye is a hole looking out, but you can look in. Think of the light as the source of darkness, the darkness as the mother of the light. When painting don't think about what you do, think about where you are in the painting, there you find where to go.

In May 8, Rutkowski celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **MOMENTUM AND PLACE**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of May Bien wrote what is one of the key documents for understanding his activity over the last fourteen years, which I give here without “sicut”:

I have much the feeling that the 1999-044 work could very well be the last work in my oeuvre. After the pedestal adventure was brought to a satisfactory end and with the geopedestal and pedestal related open ‘space’ (fontanella) I have the feeling that in the framing device and painting device there is not much to gain any more. Of course I could (can) fall back into the adventure of the image. But I am not really interested in that at the moment. For my feeling too the problem of the book is dissolved. In principle it exists. The same with



the Archival Registration of the works. In principle it already exists. What rest to do is working things out; take quick decisions about stuff that's waiting for years (art or not?) to be quantified. Still there is a lot hidden in the photo archive. The work with Grotfeldt has also made an enormous move in the last series. One could go on forever. For me the development does not lie in the pictorial domain. My interest is in the level of understanding (Begriffsfeld) In fact there is no more need for physical artworks in my life anymore. I would like to become the director of the F.I.U. Collection under the umbrella of the Triodos Bank, and for the rest bring order in the Kloppenburg Artchive + over and the Rutkowski work and find a proper place in the world for them. Some things have to happen between Eliane and me too. We are in opposite positions. She wants to start her new life (School-Education) and I am in a retrospective situation of rounding things up and off. I cannot do without her.

## FLASH OF THE UNIVERSE FLESH OF THE WORLD

In a reflective postscript, as it were, Bien indicates his sense of time gone, and going by. He muses: "we are in the world a short time, just a lifetime, which he describes as a flash of the universe, and it is a sense of this finite existence which grants a moral sense of responsibility in dealing with time, and action."

Bien learned from Deborah Grotfeldt that she and Virgil gave a child up for adoption, who was very much in their minds since. When the Grotfeld book was published Bien put a dedication to Toby, and I discovered whom this was only by working through the Log Books in May 2013. Bien's thought also turned to people he had known in his Academy days, especially Ott Landau - born in 1899 Hamburg, who was a direct link to Steiner for both Beuys and Bien. In the logbooks it is as if he summons up the living and the dead for the task in hand. We also see: one, the closing down of his "making objects and physical things" oeuvre; and secondly, reflections on how to advance from the future vision of F.I.U..

Landau also gave lectures on Steiner at the Volkshochschule, which Beuys attended.<sup>29</sup>

He reached to his family and back to childhood for solace. On the ground he placed a double photograph of his father, W.T. Bien, and his mother, A.M. Hollanders. His mother, in her advanced years, still wrote to him every week, and there was always a small enclosure or consideration for her adored son.

## GRONDSTEEN

As painting was now the flesh of the world, Bien became very singular in his feelings about the reality of the body. Noted for tough and energetic

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Drawing by Beuys of Ott Landau and his wife Hella, shown in *Beuys Kleine Zeichnungen*, (2016), Kranenburg: Museum Schloss Moyland.

life, Bien could also exhibit a melancholic, even Herculean resignation. But the task in hand did not leave much time for deeper feeling.

By May 21 he confided to his journal the sense that he now felt the foundation stone had been laid for a new and modern future with different aims and ideals than what had been in place for museums, collectors and cultural agencies since the beginning of the museum boom in the 1820's to 1830's, with their removal literally of art from its historical nexus, out of churches, alms houses, salons, and homes, and its re-arranging along historical and precise lines according to a division of practise and result.

In Logbook 4, May 21, 1999 the following entry in Dutch gives the first written account of the foundation of FIUWAC. In the margin he placed the word "grondsteen," (foundation stone), and the entry reads:

One day, to be precise on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1997 I was in discussion with Patrick Healy and Hilarius Hofstede about the setting up of an F.I.U. Collection. We came to the conclusion that due to lack of means, for the collection to come into being it would require donations from artists, to get started. My sons, Mathijs (10) and Niels(6) were sitting a few meters away from us, playing on the ground. They had heard our discussion and suddenly asked if they could give an 'art work'?" They were referring to what they had been making together, it was accepted, Bien says I made an archive card for the work, and with that the foundation stone of the F.I.U was laid, by the children, the coming generation.

*Op een dag, om precies te zijn 7 Jan 1997, was ik met Patrick Healy en Hilarius Hofstede hier in mijn atelier in gesprek over de opzet van een F.I.U. Collectie. Wij kwamen tot de conclusie dat, door afwezigheid van middelen, de collectie tot stand zou moeten komen door donaties van kunstenaars, om te beginnen. Mijn zonen Matthijs (10) en Niels (6) zaten enkele meters van ons vandaan op de grond te spelen. Blijkbaar hadden zij meegeluisterd want plots kwamen zij bij ons staan en vroegen... kunnen wij dan ook een kunstwerk geven?*

In discussion, Bien rapidly developed ideas about the collection, and Jacobus also drew and designed logos. The excitement of the transparent development was itself turned into auxiliary works that were to hang parallel with the FIUWAC, known as F.I.U.tures, and through drawings, notes and annotation they gave their own "history" of how the thinking was developed, towards the collection being for the "world": only "owned" for the world. Secondly, it was a challenge to museum and cultural practises. Thirdly, it steered to the future, and it was.

The very same day Bien wrote to Blom and explained what happened with Oibibio, and the way in which things could not simply be surrendered to the principle of design, as it was necessary to have form and content.



He took up the notion of the *Begriffserweiterung*, the expansion, or development of the concept, and indicated to Blom how the anthropological and anthroposophical development needed such an expansion also, as the case of Oibibio showed it was easy to hijack the notion of “spirituality” and still remain tied to very non-spiritual aims. His note to Blom was also an appeal for the new time, the new millennium and the need for artists in the public domain, publicly active and accountable, publicly responsible, in offices, in factories, in banks. The cautionary tale and the moral appeal were calculated to put it directly to Blom. If F.I.U had the green light to go on and approach artists, this obviously indicated that Triodos was a serious partner in the initiative.

## THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

The bank responded by making an appointment, and Peter Blom informed Bien by phone, to contact Thomas Steiner, and was duly invited to visit Zeist. The bank also proposed that Marietta de Bruin would liaise for them on official and financial things, although her background was as an art-historian, and she knew Eliane Gompertz from the Waldorf school: thus had a direct anthroposophical education. For Bien this was a good augur, and he felt that if this really could get going, then this would be: “the first multinational with a real human profile on the globe, and an absolute evergreen, a chance that comes by only once in a lifetime and in a millennium.”

Bien set to work on his own network of artist contacts. Charles Stagg from the U.S.A., Charlie as he was called, lived in Vidor Texas, and had just turned 60 that year. Bien thought of him as remarkable for his capacity to create sculpture in a real “found-object-way,” and admired his economical means, as he was capable of taking branches, Bien remarked, and turning them through built forms and modules into something with the strength and logic of the Brancusi columns, adding this was something that would be good for the collection. He had come to know Charles Stagg via Virgil Grotfeldt.

## ZELO ZELATUS SUM

Bien went to meet Caroline Tisdall. This was as much diplomacy as enquiry, and he found her brilliant and engaging. She was working on a garden project in Holland, and was married with the son of an old Dutch merchant-patriciate family, Paul Fentener van Vlissingen. She was exploring gardening and landscape, away from her work as a critic of the Guardian, and journalist. She was also one of the main “translators” of Beuys’ work to the English speaking world. Her most recent book had a lot of fascinating information on Beuys in Ireland, and Bien, who had visited Ireland and given a lecture about the blackboards in the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, and made works around his time in Ireland, was delighted to receive the gift of this book.

Many years previously, Bien sent her a copy of one of the books from the *Regal Star Project*, and took the opportunity to show her the mock-up of the book planned for Recklinghausen, the following year. The visit to Lunenburg exhausted Bien, and the next day he lost his voice.

It was now he felt that the turn was needed, the hour and the man had arrived. Just in the last days of May 1999 there came two other developments that belong to the wide story of the development of the collection. Bien has a card between May 21, and June 1, which may have been inserted *ex post factum*.

The card included a brief summary of events to this date in late May. He told that the children founded the collection by spontaneous donation, it consisted of three elements, and he says we added several works to create a substantial base. Hilarius Hofstede donated a sculpture, which was a shoe and globe, Bien donated a shaving sculpture, I donated a painting, and K donated the *Artchive for the Future* text concept.

Bien had in mind that if money was available he would purchase a substantial block of Kloppenburg pastel drawings, of Grotfeld works, some sculptures of Charles Stagg, and a substantial block of work from Michael Rutkowski, especially his work *Tragbarer wagen*, or, also all of his workbooks since 1970, and publish them on the internet.

Bien was in such an expansive mood that he also argued for the sense in having this in Holland, as this was a country with experience in pragmatism, and in the field of assimilation. After some days working out the concept sketches it would be a short time before the basic earliest written document that set out aims and goals would be sent to the bank's attention. The basic text was ready to be sent, and was presented as a memo from Bien dated June 2. The document was typed and written in English:

In Re: F.I.U. ART WORLD COLLECTION

Founded on the principles of free creativity, direct democracy, interdisciplinary research.

Following on previous written communication the memo will set forth, in more systematic detail, the proposals and context of the thinking which we have engaged with in the formation of the F.I.U. World Art Collection.

At the end of the century, and the beginning of a millennium, we are in a position to look backwards and forwards: like the Janus god of the new year. One of the principle aims of our collection is to create a balance in the creative exchange of the world itself; to ask again about the multiplicity of belonging to the world, in whatever social or cultural configuration, and to create new forces and directions for the appraisal of our worldly belonging and responsibility. That is the future economy.



The collection acts as a pedestal for meetings between cultures on an equal basis. It has the possibility of spontaneous accretions: as in its early formation on the 9th of January 1997. It is directed by the guiding ideas which engaged Joseph Beuys, and its first generation members. We see around us a highly fractured global population, divided into cultural, and economic and social blocks. The organisation of art historical research has contributed to another form of apartheid making inter-cultural understanding increasingly difficult. On an analogy with the United Nations we want to create a United Cultures. The F.I.U. World Art Collection requires sites in various parts of the world, with a commitment to engaged dialogues emerging from the various activities of the members.

The collection is free to travel and we positively encourage it as a site for study and a form of mobile communication. We really want the collection to 'belong' to the world. The emergence of a common sense, a respect for the common which unites, can be promoted by this collection, and the disastrous consequences of museums splitting collections between ancient and modern, European and ethnographic etc. must be exposed as something that urgently needs to be overcome. The F.I.U. World Art Collection has this as a primary goal.

Commodity fetishism has over-determined the way the value of creativity is archived and exhibited, either leading to a form of indecent stockbroking or creating large divides between nations and what have always been, even if unequal, interacting histories. From the oldest Palaeolithic art to the present post-modern, and into the future, the task is to connect and create understanding and co-operation towards the creative which we see as the guarantee of our humanity, and the possibility to reconnect with nature, threatened by ersatz communication and spurious ideologies, be they ideologies of economic growth, or imperial globalisation trends in the political realm.

Our collection was formed by children, children at play.

We appeal to all institutions and groups for support and interest. We ask you to join us in this future.

Free creativity can have the character of play and the true seriousness too. The initial collection was formed by the active engagement of myself (Waldo Bien), Hilarius Hofstede, Jacobus Kloppenburg, Virgil Grotfeldt, and has flourished by donation and gift, including drawings, sculptures, and active interdisciplinary research which is resulting in publications on various involved members of F.I.U. (Amsterdam), F.I.U. Patrick Healy, The Gomperts family, Babeth, Carl Giskes, etc.

The element of direct democracy also means that we do not create spurious hierarchy of value, so that sketches for a finished drawing are as much a part of the creative process as any finished work. The collection details and organizes itself as a processual and interactive archive.

Waldo Bien

Bien seized the moment. He requested a *carte de visite* printed by the bank with the details Waldo Bien, Founding Director, F.I.U (Amsterdam), World Art Collection. The impending trip to America made this urgent. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of June Bien wrote to Peter Blom that he might attend the meeting planned for Amsterdam the following Monday: "it means we would have to talk less and get to the essence of things in one evening".

The old malaise of meetings about meetings had to be avoided. Bien knew that such a negotiation tactic was often a means of wearing down initiative, and he also understood that speed and action was essential to create momentum and bring people along. It was also necessary to have the public domain open for the planned collection, another front of communication was required.

It was then that Bien started to outline the practical needs that would arise, and new alliances that would be necessary: air tickets (thus an alliance with K.L.M.), office space, a legal adviser, an advisory board of distinguished and recognized individuals, the need for publication funding, and that the acquisitions would be framed and on the wall for the opening in October. It would be the issue of framing that absorbed the first major money investments. So far the question of money to pay for this had not been broached, and it should be mentioned that no payment was made to anyone for work at F.I.U..

## FROM STEINER TO STEINER

Per Thomas Steiner, in advance of the meeting set for the evening of Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, the bank wrote to say that it had no financial means to pay for the purchase of works, a point repeated in his note. The opening of the new building would be the occasion for launching the idea, and that Triodos would open up its networks and have presentations from time to time to keep workers and others of the bank informed. However, as the building was not a "public" building, it would not be possible to have exhibitions or third party visits. Thomas Steiner also indicated that it was essential that the project did not absorb too much time for Triodos.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of June Bien considered what was effectively a heavy break on what had been discussed, the ideas floated, and the suggestions of what was needed to have things, as he would have it, in the air, and done in a way that needed little shifting around in the future.



Photo of Triodos Opening.  
FIU Archive.



Bien/Kloppenborg. Installation  
Triodos Board room, Zeist.  
FIU Archive.



The notes and drafts around this meeting are essential for understanding the creative solution that emerged. It would also be the source of a misunderstanding the full implications of which would not be clear until some years later.

Again I will cite in summary the document, number 901637, dated 9 June in which the “big idea” is given in its simplest form, and is the keystone for understanding the relation between F.I.U. and the bank as it actually was construed on the side of F.I.U., and which would be later incorporated in the published document that accompanied the opening of the building in October of 1999.

### **ALEA JACTA EST**

The crucial meeting with Thomas Steiner took place at the atelier of Waldo Bien, 123 Lauriergracht, Amsterdam, and in attendance was Waldo Bien, Jacobus Kloppenburg, Marietta de Bruine, Thomas Steiner, and myself. Bien gives the following summary of what took place:

After his suggestion to Peter Blom and Thomas Steiner (Triodos) to set up the World Art Collection that they realised the unique chance hidden in the idea, but after receipt of the concept and financial needs, they ‘made a move backwards’. They were ready to go forward with the idea by providing a building, their name and other support, but, ‘no money’. The first acquisition money requested by Bien, \$100,000 to buy works of Kloppenburg-Grotfeldt-Stagg, was not available: and indeed: “there was no money at all.”



Patrick Healy, Painting, 1996.

Bien requested a loan on the idea, in other words asked for a loan of \$100,000:

but they were not advanced enough in creative economy to do that. It was not a matter of guts. They have guts, they built this bank from scrap. But they could not see the form so clear in front of us because they are trained to be realistic. No they could not give us credit.

They came to tell me this (Steiner) on the eve of Monday, June 7 L gr 123, they had worked it out on paper. In the meantime, I worked out another, better idea: the F.I.U. giving Triodos a \$100,000 loan over 25 years and 10% interest (per year) to pay into the F.I.U account for the collection to start with. It was clear that we would find other sources

of money later on. They were knocked out, had expected everything but not that. When I explained that I set up a savings account for the Triodos F.I.U.tures to insure that they were capable after 25 years to pay our loan back, there was a tremendous opening. Entering a new and unthought-of idea, a new world. So I asked for \$10,000. Today they offered me the sum of \$10,000, so I will start with that. Just to do it and get the bird in the sky. So there will be a few Grotfeldts, but I can and will buy a large block as soon as there is money, off to NY

June 12.

The interest on the loan, and the creation of the F.I.U.tures to enable re-payment was a kind of perpetuum mobile that would, via the interest, support the office of the F.I.U., de facto Bien's atelier in Amsterdam, and give a safe haven to the art works and archives, to the whole social sculpture in train.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, Thomas Steiner confirmed by telephone call at 15:45 p.m. that \$10,000 had been transferred to Bien's account. Triodos engaged with the terms on offer. And in the world of banking, ethical or not, what is more realistic than a payment?

## **WALTER HOPPS**

In America, Bien stayed with Virgil, set to work immediately, and made contact with Walter Hopps. Hopps, who was a living legend in the art world, followed his own advice and as a curator "kicked" around with the artists. Since his earliest meetings with Duchamp, and involvement in the Ferus Gallery, which gave Berman, Warhol and hosts of other artists their "first" shows, he had, through his position at the Menil, and later as a senior curator of 20th century art in the Guggenheim, become a guru and source of enormous influence in terms of his curating and personal links. He followed the work of Virgil Grotfeld for years, and indeed it was to his last "discovery", saying that he had not encountered such an artist for a very long time, not since the work of early Jackson Pollock or Arshile Gorky.

Hopps was urbane in a way of an American, an urbanity that deserves to be better known, open to new ideas, supportive, and highly engaged with what must have been for him, given the parlous state of his health, the last throw of the dice. In some ways FIUWAC. would also, unexpectedly, become a memorial collection, because within a few short years, Hopps and Virgil would be deceased, and their contribution and imprint on the early formation of the collection, outside that of Kloppenburg and Bien, remained the most marked. Hopps was, if the structures allowed it, ready to give a substantial donation of works he had accumulated over the years, from artists as diverse as Duchamp, Warhol, Frank Stella, Robert



Rauschenberg, etc. Virgil enthusiastically took on the mantle of F.I.U. Houston, and despite the eccentricities of green politics in America, was utterly convinced there was no other way forward if America was to enjoy the Great Renewal and give an example to the world.

Like Hopps, Bien shared a fascination with the frontier, the idea that reduced to almost nothing one started again, and went on. Hopps charmingly reminded Bien in a phone call that the early flag of America had a tree, and he loved the idea of the root and tree as interconnecting, growing, and a wonderful environment. One can hear the echo of Üxekull, discussed earlier, that the collection would be a shelter, a sanctuary, a source of connection rich in communication, and benign to the world.

### **LET RHIZOMES BE BEUYSZONES**

Hopps accepted to be involved, and within days had a letter drafted which he signed, after discussion with Waldo Bien, Virgil and Deborah Grotfeldt. The first two paragraphs summarized what was worked out in the memo to the bank, see above, but the final three paragraphs of the letter added new views and conclude with a powerful plea from Hopps to the whole art world:

The collection is analogous with the planting of a tree in which shade mankind can meet and pay respect to a common past and a common future interest. In this regard it is especially propitious that the Dutch Triodos Bank, known for its ethical approach towards banking and investments, is lending their auspices and assistance that together, we might set a new trend for the future.

Hopps is not speaking in *propria persona*, but as a member of the F.I.U. America. It is a resounding moment when the artists and one of the most distinguished curators of the 20<sup>th</sup> century agree that change and transformation are the only way forward.

The fact that this collection will be the declared property of the world's population as the only benefactor makes it the first real 'modern' art collection in the world. The moment of introduction is unique: On the eve of a new millennium, an open future space.

Hopps concluded:

It is my privilege to serve as a member of the Advisory Board of the Free International University World Art Collection. As such I urgently request that all artists, individuals, multi-nationals, institutions and governments support this initiative and contribute to its realisation.

The global content of this united population collection should ultimately be placed under the protection of the United Nations. Future generations will be thankful to us for giving such a tool into their hands.

## **BIRTHDAY GREETINGS**

If the FIUWAC had its foundation in January 1997, its birthday was the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1999. On that day Bien wrote to the Triodos Bank NL to confirm that he had received the sum of \$10,000 “as their share in the starting costs for the Free International World Art Collection which will be publicly presented at the day of the official opening of the new Triodos Building in Zeist, NL, 9 October 1999”, and indicated at the bottom of the note that “your investment is counterbalanced with 8 Triodos F.I.U.tures (date June 9 1999).”

A close examination of those eight F.I.U.tures showed that they contained the entire thinking behind the collection and the clear commitments that was given on every side: bank, artists, and F.I.U..

## **INTERLUDE: BACK TO THE WORD, BACK TO WATER**

The year 1999 was not only the creation of the collection, but a show that was curated by Leon Riekwell for the Watertoren Hedendaagse Kunst, Vlissingen Oost Soubourg, was to run for the summer as well. Hilarius Hofstede conceived it, and he sent the full concept text to Bien in May, written in his inimitable style, and in Dutch, which outlined the show, and sealed direct collaboration with Paleo Psycho Pop and the older generation of artists, who in this case were Waldo Bien and Jacobus Kloppenburg. From the FIUWAC point of view, the papers around this show were very revealing, which speaks to the awareness of the actual financial costs borne by Bien and Kloppenburg, in their enormously generous early gift to the collection. Bien contributed a series of drawings, and the insurable value of the works included, and very specific data on their value. Bien was an expensive artist in the Dutch context, and Kloppenburg, when he chose to sell his work, such as after the Fodor exhibition of his pastels was viewed as an artist of rare worth, but for almost all of his life he eschewed the market. He learned to survive with éclat and frugality from growing up in the war years, and he maintained this way of living into his mid 80's, where for the first time some of the marks of time have slowed him down.

## **THE FAX OF LIFE**

Hofstede was stationed in Denmark, and from there faxed the concept on May 21 1999. It was at precisely the time, as we have seen, when the details of the connection with Triodos emerged. Hofstede has shown his ability to engage quickly and with enormous energy in fact, as not only was he preparing this exhibition that was to run from July until



September, but also the massive collaborative work with Berend Hoekstra that would take place in the Stedelijk later in the year.

He based the show on the fact that his own revolutionary and experimental prose work, "De Markies van Water," which was published in its entirety in Dublin, by Pallas Press, in the previous year (1998), had the flooding of this part of Holland as one of its chief tropes for the emblematic persona of De Markies. Vast personification of the forces of nature, as much destructive as creative, are mobilised through constant punning language that was the becoming of the word in his text. personally identified with his own creation, Hilarius is referred to in correspondence as de Markies, being.<sup>30</sup>

Hofstede had a view on the installation of the various spaces of the tower, and asked Waldo to take on the upper storey. The whole event was the process of making light and was called the *Lightfactory*, echoing Warhol's Factory and Edison's Invention factory, and the clash in the concept of immaterial and material making via the social organization, which is registered also in the vivid slogan that Hofstede produced, "PPP Sponsored By Nature."<sup>31</sup> There was a very encouraging review in the piece, and the entire collaboration of F.I.U. and PPP was positive and highly successful undertaking. Hofstede also produced a multiple for the event, and Bien showed that there was no better tonic than good work for someone who was exhausted. Modern tiredness is indeed the failure of work for people, because of the lack of spiritual energy from jobs that are not directly related to the creative capacity of the person. That was the real "economic" problem, which F.I.U. identified and engaged with in all of its actions and all of its quasi missionary outreach.

## CELLAR

In the cellar with some baby alligators, the walls and tank area were the site of an extraordinary living performed drawing event by Kloppenburg. It was a magical moment and beautiful, which showed the life and vitality of Kloppenburg, and renewed the sense that the long past since the caves had been a blink of an eye for everyone, and the magic of light and the hand was the most profound experience of which human beings are capable, and to which they are entrusted in Being itself. It was also a subtle and mysterious riposte to the much more elaborate and rhetorically grand events that Beuys staged. Kloppenburg was living the drawing and in communication with the alligators, bringing the light and water through his thinking hand for an amazing series of hours. Even the seasoned curator Leon Riekwell expressed deep emotion having witnessed what was the most living of live events, and which showed the fascinating exchange with K and Bien and their utter independence. Hofstede gave the last word in an extensive paper coverage of the event: "Tony Blair can not make the world better, we can."

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See my recent: *Oracles of Water*, Synonym Books, Amsterdam, 2011; for Paleo Psycho Pop, see Chantal van Ervens Dorens, Hilarius Hofstede Paleo Psycho Pop, Amsterdam 2011, and for his work with Hoekstra, the recent box set publication of the 3 catalogues of their 3 P.I.G. Shows, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, 2012.

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Further details of the show and its statement can be found in PPP nr.9, which was distributed in newspaper format, in 10,000 copies. Taf Hassam recently wrote perceptively on the Edison-Warhol relation, and I thank him for discussion on this point.

## **VAN SPIJKER TOT SPIJKER (FROM NAIL TO NAIL)**

Bien priced the works between 12,00 and 600,00 guilders, the declared insurance value of the work was 105 guilders, 230 guilders for the Kloppenburg works, and Bien's at 289,000 guilders. In Holland this was a way of assessing art works, when museums and cultural institutions accepted the insurance value, this was seen to reflect market sale prices. One whale work from 1986 was valued at 40,000 guilders, a much smaller earlier whalebone piece at 12,000 guilders, and so on. Some prices were as low as 600 guilders.

The aim of the exhibition to transform the Water tower into the Lightfactory remained completely in view, and in interviews all of the participants stressed the need for freedom from consumption society, and the need for freedom and the imagination *tout court*.

## **RENEWAL**

Bien wrote to Steiner to list the framing costs of works for the FIUWAC, and also invited him to Vlissingen; as works from the show would go to the FIUWAC and be there for the opening of the building. Bien could have made the point, but did not, that the artists were already contributing more than the entire "loan" that was given to the bank, not just in terms of creative futures, but which in reality cost the bank the administration and framing, and little else, which could go on for twenty-five years. They already had a parallel collection that could be released to the market or bought for the FIUWAC that guaranteed they had the wherewithal to pay the loan in its entirety.

The costs indicated for framing, pastels, photographs, and vitrine works was 15,700 guilders.

For the sake of the record, and at the risk of providing a clutter of detail, it would be useful to state that as of July 1999 the FIUWAC collection existed. One can see that Bien did not just shoot the breeze during his visit with Grotfeldt, with whom he had a relaxed almost "cowboy" relationship, eating beans by a campfire and swapping stories. Bien had had connections with America since he first worked as a steward on the Holland America Line, and his dream to expand F.I.U. to Texas and further afield was being realised thanks to his close connection with the Grotfeldt family. Deborah was also involved in the Project Row Houses, and various fascinating developments that touched on the deepest taboo of American society: poverty.

## **ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY EIGHT MORE BONES TO HIT PARADE**

The first registered work was indeed from the Gompertz children and the second a work by Hilarius Hofstede, *Feminist Magic*, which included a shoe and a globe. Charles Staggs donated six works, and one work was acquired by purchase from Virgil Grotfeldt, who also donated other



works - two canvases, one of coal dust and the other of coal dust and river clay. Virgil made a work with a magic mushroom floating in space, framed by dollar bills. Bien spent 8,750 dollars on acquisition and the remaining sum of the \$10,000 on his trip and expenses. So not only was the interest returned to the returner, but it added to the collection and sustained the travel and needs of the founding director who still bore the cost of the atelier and all other expenses from his own income, which was generated by sales of his work.

It was also at this point that the famous block of work of Grotfeld was given by Grotfeld, under the condition that all the works would be published by FIUWAC, in a special publication within one and a half years of the acquisition. No provision was indicated as to what would happen if they bypassed that date. The block was estimated at 35.000 dollars and the artist was to receive 300 copies of the publication. Bien negotiated this deal directly with Grotfeldt, and listed the relevant items.<sup>32</sup>

Weihong wrote to send works from Houston. These were delicate and ghostly works that responded beautifully to the notion of the "grey zone," ephemeral and sensitive. The gift was generously offered, and received with keen interest by Bien, whose studies are so rooted in colour theory.

Alfons Alt, who developed new photographic techniques, was to send works. The following year he was to be given the Leica Photographer of the Year Award, and he helped put the FIUWAC in connection with South Germany and Marseille, where he then resided. Thus, the work of his colleague Laurent Dejente, which had a little music box attached that could be played, a work of delight for anyone, and with the charm of French childhood by the sea, was acquired.

The refined and conceptual artist Lothar Baumgarten also contributed works, including his work on the *Name of Trees*, which was post-Beuysian conceptual and highly refined aesthetic,<sup>33</sup> and his *Tierra de los perros mudos*, Stedelijk Amsterdam, and the *Carbon book* from Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Douwe Fomer, who later did Trojan work for the F.I.U. as a photographer and helped with websites, contributed early works. There were, crucially for Bien, works from Michael Rutkowski, which included a block of twenty-four drawings, oil paint on paper. Some of Rutkowski's work was also published in PPP, and he was an artist who was held in the highest regards, and the least known possible given the range and extent of his work and influence.

That there was a full block of works that came out of Raum 20 in 1971, the significance of which can be appreciated from discussions in earlier chapters. Bien was thoroughly delighted. He had always believed that Rutkowski was the hidden alchemical Magus of the Academy who had

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For further discussion see  
Healy, P., (2003), *Virgil Grotfeld*,  
Köln: Wienand GmbH, Druck &  
Verlagshaus.

33

Also published as an edition  
in the Van Abbe Museum,  
Eindhoven, (1982).

managed the greatest rational achievement, and was accordingly worthy of a full study. The works donated by Harry Hoogstraten were effectively the present hope of FIUWAC, that they would draw attention to such artists and provoke study and response. It was work of local intensity, a locative *par excellence* of the sex and drugs and rock-and-roll underground of Amsterdam from the 1960's with the famous magazine *SUCK* and its almost religious zeal towards the experience of the self via drugs. Much of this aligned with what was taking place in America and England and was revolutionary, at least in the sense of a generational revulsion towards the progenitors of war and beneficiaries of war, who were their parents.

There was a curious mixture of the sub-literary, the Beat generation, heroin references<sup>34</sup> and feathers in the work of Hoogstraten. He was the great survivor of years being wasted, and chilling, and the cult of "relax" for which Amsterdam gained a world-wide reputation, although the UNESCO declaration of it as a world heritage site in the very year 1999 made little reference to such a distinct feature of its identity.

The photograph contributed by Ira Cohen is a gloriously funny image, of the Baba Ganoush giving an intergalactic wave from Coney Island, and it gains a purchase on the whole world of Eastern guru adoration and devotees, Herman Hesse novels, New Age movements: a funfair with a diminutive figure waving to inevitably unknown viewers. Ira Cohen held one of his very last poetry readings in Amsterdam, for the Shamanic warriors at the atelier in Lauriergracht: a night in which many of the real survivors of the Amsterdam underground from the 1960's came together. A bootleg recording of the event by Gijs van Koningsveld exists. Ira Cohen was a connection to Peter Lamborn Wilson, t.a.z. Beat generation people. The most affable and charming raconteur in the world, his photographic study of Jimmy Hendrix is legendary. The CD of his 70th birthday reading gives a fine glimpse into the mind and heart of the man.

Other works were donated from Terrell James, in Houston. Later the Houston contributions would increase, with works from Richard Stout, the now doyenne of the Houston art world, and his friends, which included the Texas scene for the preceding fifty years. Walter Hopps indicated that he would contribute more, as he gave a work he made, and some text, Virgil Grotfeld, Weihong, Jeff Nixon, amongst others.<sup>35</sup>

The young Dutch artist, Caleb de Groot, made an assembly that had the atmosphere of Jeff Koons, with party glitter on a seascape. For the mass of the collection the main contributions at this date were, overwhelmingly, the works donated by Bien and Kloppenburg. Gijs Frieling contributed paintings. He was a frequent visitor to Bien and Kloppenburg, and learned to use painting techniques from the Italian fresco tradition.

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See Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (1993).

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For the Houston and Texas scene, see my forthcoming book on the work of Richard Stout, *The Cave of Making*, written in 2011 at <http://www.patrick-healy.com/html/stout/>.



## YOU ARE THE PEDESTAL

Yemeni artist Jahia Nasr Mohamad donated two sculptures to the collection, and some paintings and works I contributed were included in the collection. I later contributed a drawing caricature made by Federico Fellini of the time I conducted an interview with him in Rome in collaboration with the Canadian filmmaker Damien Pettigrew.

Many of the works of Hilarius Hofstede were contributed directly from my own collection of his work. The earliest published illustration of these works with their number and accession date appears in the book on Virgil Grotfeldt, published in 2003, pp. 202-205, which illustrates over 300 works in the FIUWAC, and provides one shot into the wall on which the F.I.U.-tures were hanging. At that time these numbered up to 500, and the indication given was that the register was in progress, and again a comment on the F.I.U.ture that it agree to build a parallel "Savings Account" in the form of "F.I.U.tures," which could be realised on the market in twenty-five years. With the sale of the F.I.U.tures, the FIUWAC could continue to generate further works, and exist in a continuing open sphere of creative enhancement.

The problem of the pedestal was being solved. Bien moved the various sculptural concerns in his work and the solutions he had sought for almost 30 years towards this "creative commons": the open collaboration, the warmth of the social, which in no way diminished the capacity of the individual to gain the greatest freedom of expression. The forms then chosen, through the collaboration with the bank, and via works of artists themselves, opened the view on the process that was the real didactic aim of the collection.

## TALKING ABOUT THINGS

One of the implicit tasks of the collection was also a critique of how collecting and museum worlds had come together and orchestrated the sort of "apartheid of things" that was mentioned in the letter from Hopps. It was, of course, startling that at the end of a long and distinguished career the legendary curator Walter Hopps, who had been the subject of a long *New Yorker* profile piece, should have turned towards this new and very different "adventure."

Bien established with Grotfeldt that they were working in the open framework of the F.I.U., and indeed some of the physical exploration of their duo paintings was precisely a reflection on the question of the frame. How to deal with the way in which artwork was supposed to be displayed, the straight-jacket that visual culture, whether in the white walls of the antiseptic gallery space, or the increasing dominance of critical and curatorial practice, lead artists to behave in a certain way.

Discussions at that time, in the atelier and with members of the F.I.U.,

focused, in the early summer and later in the year, on the recent publication of *Didier Maleuvre: Museum Memories*, which was published by the Stanford University Press in California. It seemed to point to the instincts that were generated in our earlier discussions as having a wider and more complex background, even in terms of the so-called "official" culture. Research in the works of Riegl and Walter Benjamin were also a rich forum of insights. The question was so wonderfully addressed in a very witty and provocative way, in Hofstede's "Natural Born History" exhibition some years later, in 2005.

In an essay for the "Natural Born History" exhibition, I pointed out that Hofstede's concern seems rooted in the tradition of art in Holland, and one could also say that of many of the Dutch artists who contributed to the FIUWAC. This may well be the contrivance of a distinctly artificial realm of arrangement in which, for example through the development of a still life, the principle of animation is actually one of mental activity. That is to say the symbolic attachment of things in the singular observation of the artists, passed out as a language of personal, intimate meanings, which itself belonged to the meaning of the world. It is the discussion of life and death, where life is consumption, and death the destruction of all possibility, namely nihilism.

## BANALITIES CHILDREN

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who wrote richly on Dutch art, saw its achievement as the mastering of the banal and the everyday. Indeed Hegel is the very first to introduce the problem of the "everyday" into the discussion of artistic practise, and anticipate the whole realm of social and photographic realist concerns of a century later. This control of the everyday and selection of banal items for attention and re-presentation, Hegel saw as the distinctive feature of the Dutch bourgeoisie tradition. What it implied was that it was essentially a control of the world and the dominant merchant ideology required a necessary transversal of the world of things and humans.<sup>36</sup> It would be a chilling equation, human=things, and in principle the frame in which this equivalence took place was the money economy. Eventually the managerial organisation of such "transversal" meant that everything was a resource, a "bestand," and everything was replaceable by everything else. Money as an exchange principle required a tertium quid, and thus functioned as an aesthetic principle, which resulted in the long terms in values being assigned that made artists' lives unworkable, and impossible. In principle, the whole alienation of bourgeois life and "reification" is at work in these exchanges of the gathering and collecting of things, arranged in a certain way, to gain not just access towards meaning, but to dominate the possibility of nature as having any meaning other than that of what could be of use, what could be exploited, and what could make money. Simon Schama, in a book full of beautifully crafted anecdotes, sees it as an "embarrassment of riches." It was less sensitive, however, in its disclosure and non-

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Kaplan, A. Y., & Ross, K. (1987). *Everyday life*. *Yale French Studies*, Nr. 73, New Haven: Yale University Press.



disclosure, because wedded to such an intense principle of materialism, something in the public statement of religious belief had to give.

It was dark and obscure, and Hegel saw it as one of the genuine "schizo" - not his word, of course - fault lines in the emergent early capitalist social formations, of which in this period, Holland was the supreme exemplar, a kind of global hub. It was a growing, largely trader, empire, that amassed vast fortunes and released a manic building boom in the city of Amsterdam, which carries the complex of so many "things" to this day.

## THE DAM EXPLODES

Amsterdam is still stuffed, and the complex overlap of communicative and mobile exchange gives it a very transient character. It gathers up, it disperses, it moves on to another set of relations. The tradition of taxonomy, collecting and classification, the need for statistical control of the proliferation of things, of inventory and archive, of a rational and pervasive bureaucratic managing that also became a form of "diplomacy" as feeling and rigorous accounting for the kind of flows and excesses that are themselves results of pressure in the engineered and hydraulic system of affect, directly mirrored in the canals and the structure of the complex networks where every kind of communicative means is deployed, results in the ideology of the banal as a sort of quasi-religious quietism.

If one wanted one concrete image of this it is there on the decorated pediments of the Royal Palace, with what is arguably one of the finest sculptures of the city: the figure of Atlas with the world on his shoulders - *tjscha* - and in the pedimental decoration the goods and peoples of the world congregating in a mass profusion, worthy of a Hindu Temple, with bales of imported goods, and emblematic figures of the population of the world, in a farrago of excess and superfluity, where excess is not a kind of imaginative and desiring transcendent but a precise calculation, which ends up in double entry book-keeping.

In the decorative program of the Dutch Royal Palace we have in an image the focus and concretion of the energy of a whole society, on assembling and collecting, of the dominion of things, and the city becoming the site of this ordering with its visible, if contrived, displays of wealth and power, which as has been argued, is related to the theme of good government, and the structuring of civil society of which the Lorenzetti fresco in Siena is a fine and dramatic example.

## THE NORMAL AS MONSTER

As Mario Perniola has argued, in his book *The sex-life of the inorganic*, there is in the Western tradition a double edged inheritance, one which is geared towards the celebration of the world of appearance, a kind of aesthetic rapture and pleasure in the things that are given to the senses,

as such. Secondly, there is the effort to found a depth and reality in experience - the problem of surface and depth so astutely explored in Bien's example about the milk in the fish bowl.

In the first trend, there is of necessity distance and separation, of suspension, and effectively de-realisation. In the second trend there is the issue of attempting to create a more intense perception of reality. This has culminated in the version of the psychotic as the ultimately real, a massive significance given to the body, and also an attention to the threatening, the banal, what disgust and even disturbs as the forces which give the excess to experience, with the monstrous becoming a normative. As Hegel remarked, it is a topsy-turvy world, exactly the point made by Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*, when he reminds Callicles that he, Socrates, is the only real "politician" in Athens because he "minds his own business."

However, the principle that the world is inverted, so that perverted behaviour is the justified response in order to set things to rights, is spotted by Socrates as a sophism. It is the case that it is better to have an injustice done to one, than to visit an injustice on another, and the life directed to the good is the essential human life and only route to *eudaimonia* - a life with good spirit, or happiness, as we would say.

## A NECESSARY FICTION

The distinction raised by Perniola, which is very much a response to the problem in Benjamin of the "poverty" of experience, can be seen as the real schizo that entered aesthetics, even founded the aesthetic in the 18th century, either as a "science of the sensible" or the tracking out -as in Burke- of the origin of the idea of poles of the beautiful and the sublime. The papering over of the cracks was the creation by the bourgeois of a fiction of a notion of "community" that could be created out of "having" and not being, and the ideological carrier par excellence of this imaginary community was the aesthetic, a point raised by Kant in his short early text of his "Observations on the sublime and beautiful." It was a kind of pretend humanity where the common was the agreement to such a fiction. The sublime rooted in terror could also be given credence into a relation to nature that was subject and equalised in the human recovery of awareness after being overpowered. Business as usual, and all is well with the world.

At the join of this aesthetic duality is the playing out of: (a) "others," human / machine -robotics in Japan in the 17th century fascinated Dutch merchants; (b) the production of "others," organic / inorganic, impulse / computing (Leibniz's "apperception to the lowest degrees," and the invention of calculus and computers); (c) the reification of "others," human / commodities, and most of all for the self as subject / object. This shattered the very domain of the historical. In this latter trauma are the



seeds of all reparation. Here I follow Theodor Adorno, and run with an extended argument that I take to be crucial to all previous considerations, including the work of Beuys and the whole construction of "modernism."

### **APORIA IN THE ATELIER**

Adorno's lectures to students at Frankfurt were to address the question of modernism in a philosophical way. It remains a crucial series of lectures for much subsequent social theory, and impacts directly on the discussion which emerged from Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk*, to which Adorno had had privileged access in the preceding twenty-five years.

Without the commitment to "critique," Adorno contends there was no "modernity," and without the critique no rational discourse is possible. How to construct a critical and theoretical position that was invulnerable to sceptical and anti-metaphysical, or the over-metaphysical claims of science, namely that science is the truth, was a prime concern of Adorno. He saw an unmitigated anarchism, which abrogated the political tout court, emerging from the failure to grasp what had been at stake in Hegel. Adorno devoted a series of lectures on the question of Freedom and History to the students at Frankfurt University in the 1960's, a student population increasingly marked by the traits of a globalised "youth culture," which took being "young" seriously, and as a whole way of life. Being young could be a beau ideal for the whole of a life, even to the time a zimmer-frame was needed and pacemakers installed.

Adorno faced the task with great acumen and drew from his most considered work on Hegel, asking the question of the relation of freedom and history, of meaning and the historical. He made the point that it was only understandable if one asked "for whom" is it rational; what one could call the *cui bono* explanation. Herbert Marcuse would draw on his doctoral work on Hegel, published as *Reason and Revolution*, which was such an inspiration to the student movement in the late 1960's, for example in California, and he became an icon of that generation, not a fate in store for Adorno. Within the context of the domination of technical rationality, which Adorno sees in the shapes of airports, as models for future cities, the expansion of technological instruments world-wide, the increasing "Americanisation" of renewed German cities, he identifies the "globalization" that represents the power of the new, the compulsion of innovation, as the technological imperative and the reign of means-ends rationality. He further observes that the problem of the individual is geared to species survival, and the historical "sciences" enact violence in respect to nature by their self-appointed role of explanatory totality.

### **THE BONDS THAT YIELD**

Part of the underlined Hegelian inheritance was the understanding that the struggle to the death of the human subject was a necessary part of

freedom, the struggle through work and community. The question of bio-power emerged from the issue of sovereignty over life and death, which was included in the Hegelian scenario. In other words, keeping everything in train requires that the particular is always subject to the universal, and it is only in the ideology of the false immediacy of the subjective that this is kept from view, in which subjective there is only the constant assertion of incorrigibility. By the loss of the relation to the individual, the role of reason degenerates into unreason, and the contemporary form of reason is that it is both reason and unreason in one.

At stake for Adorno is clearly the relation of conformism and non-conformism in the real of social action and artistic practise and how one has to learn from "dialectics," that there is no category, no concept, no theory. However true, that is immune to the danger of becoming false and even ideological: "in the constellation that it enters into in practise"<sup>37</sup>

The idea of interests and self-preservation would always bow to the demands of species survival, and the means of species survival was necessarily imbued with conflict and irreconcilable demands. Social existence could not simply achieve a reconciliation of such conflicts. The world historical consequences of means-ends rationality is the instrument by which the piling up of the disaster of history is repressed, or eradicated, to an unimaginable degree by the victorious power of history. Only an actually achieved identity would lead to the reconciliation of opposing interests. A truly achieved identity would have to be consciousness of non-identity, or more accurately perhaps, it would have to be the creation of a reconciled non-identity, such as one finds, Adorno suggests, in the utopia conceived by Hölderlin.

### **'DO YOU KNOW THE LAND WHERE THE LEMONS BLOOM'**

The last observation is a tilt against Heidegger, and for Adorno the source of this in the bourgeois class-interpretation of history, which he sees as deriving directly from Kant's interpretation in his "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose." Adorno argues that the individual is ultimately sacrificed to the Universal, the cement that holds the binding of the rational and irrational is psychology. Not only does it depend on the valorising of the notion of "immediacy," but also it is used to support the general model of the social for the bourgeois, which is that of postponement, deferral, keeping death at bay. This is something that Benjamin saw in the plush interior of his grandmother's home in Berlin, where all the objects and heavy brocades, etui, and velvet-lined boxes, heavy furniture, gilt leather, mirrors, bijoux objects, bibelots, cushions, lace coverlets, were a means of eternalising the present, and thus bidding death not to enter.<sup>38</sup>

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Theodor. W. Adorno, (2006). *Freedom and History*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, translated Rodney Livingstone, London: Polity, p.57. First published in German by Suhrkamp in 1964/5 as 'Lehre von der Geschichte und der Freiheit'.

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For further details see Palmier, J. M., & Perrier, F. (2006). *Walter Benjamin: Le chiffonnier, l'ange et le petit bossu: esthétique et politique chez Walter Benjamin*. Paris: Klincksieck, pp. 71-97.



For Adorno the most successful form of ideology in the post-war period is the “culture industry.” The individual is the “prey” (*beute*) of this ideology, is turned into ideology, and this is a point raised forcibly at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> lecture:

We may conclude then, and this brings me back to my starting point, that at the very moment when people believe that they are most themselves and belong to themselves they are not only the prey of ideology but we might even go so far as to say that they themselves have turned into ideology.<sup>39</sup>

## FREEDOM AND HISTORY

Adorno reads the situation in Western Europe as keyed to the issue of individuality, as defined in Hegel’s version of *Universal History*, and concludes that the history of the “modern” is that of the category of the individual being socialised with its shadow side as the crisis of individuality.

The communicative demands for aesthetic feeling as an intersubjective domain both saves and destroys the object. The negation of the object also negates the aesthetic experience, which makes the very consideration of the object as process and creation less possible. How the showing of things within museum culture belongs to this de-valorisation whilst masquerading through ontological forgery, a realm of richness, and this is really where the “embarrassment” enters, in Schama’s sense. The radical dilemma of the inheritance of Enlightenment was how to explain society at a time of crisis. This, in turn, meant that the social sciences became regulators of the social, having began as aids to understanding, because the social took over philosophy by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed the perfectibility of society relates directly to the debates that raged among Calvinist theologians in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that find an echo in much later discussions of the Polder Model, and the social democratic interpretation of Holland as a modern society.<sup>40</sup>

The problem of the museum sphere and the everyday engaged further discussion during the summer. Maleuvre’s arguments were also moot. He specifically reviewed the problem of the historical production of objects. He did so, however without the issue in mind raised by Adorno, in his understanding via Benjamin of a materialist history, where thinking not only involves the movement of thought, but also we might say, the movement of the time continuum, and their arrest as well. Here thinking suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tension, it gives that constellation a shock, by which thinking is crystallised into a monad. Thus, the historical materialist approaches an historical object only where it confronts it as a monad, then material facts crystallise time in their very nucleus and the act of interpretation explodes from their

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For the development of the concept of ideology in the Napoleonic period, when the term was coined, see both Picavet, F. J. (1891). *Les idéologues; essai sur l’histoire des idées et des théories scientifiques, philosophiques, religieuses, etc. en France depuis 1789*. Paris: F. Alcan as well as F. Copleston, F., (1977). *History of Philosophy*, vol 9, Part I, Chapter two. New York: Image Books.

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For this especially, Van Eijnatten, J., (1993). *God, Nederland En Oranje : Dutch Calvinism and the Search for the Social Centre*, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Kampen: Kok, not to be confused with F.I.U.. For further expansion of arguments here, see my *A Dutch Graafland in Liber Gratulatoria*, Arie Graafland, (2012), editors Annemieke Bal Sanders, Gerhard Bruyns and Jasper Schapp, Rotterdam: oio Publishers, pp. 18-37.

core to be decoded in a manner which acknowledges the essential discontinuity of such facts, away from the surface unity of universal history.

This materialist interpretation, and decoding, is that of the prevailing non-identity, where the non-identical is the opposition between what is held down, and the universal domination that is condemned to identity, and that if history is not looked at as the history of victories, that is if it is looked at materialistically, then as that of defeats. We will become more conscious of this non-identity than idealist historians could ever be. Further, this non-identity is not the non-identity of which Hegel speaks, when he argues that identity is not simply identity but is made up of identity and non-identity. Adorno contends - and he claims to share this with Benjamin - that it is not the case that an identity rules that also contains non-identity, but non-identity is the non-identical of the identical. This is to say that the notion of Hegel, which is identity as identity and non-identity as relation of concept and thing, is inverted, in that the non-identity is what gives history its unity, what enables it to accommodate itself to the concept as well as what does not. Such a negative identity requires a free relation towards history. This is the task for the negative history of the future to appraise the possible in the non-given. Freedom opens up then in all directions, and the individual sustains history as becoming aware of the shaping of the future.

Maleuvre begins to see the role museums have had in the complex ideological apparatus of cultural transmission and bourgeois education, their essential first purpose. With the establishment of the Louvre in 1793, the Wunderkammer was forever relegated to the curios and eccentricity of the individual collector scholar, a kind of panoply of fetishized discretions that lost all their inter-connections outside the individual life. The Louvre in 1793, Prado in 1820, National Gallery London 1824, Altes Museum Berlin 1830, British Museum 1852 etc. can all be seen to have an aim? of social renewal. The Louvre was the depository of the spolia wrested from the aristocracy, the plunder of revolution that became official State Property. History of objects from the past were conjured like a ghost to deliver identity in an image. Here, in the very non-dialectics we see identity as a kind of frozen trope, ultimately about immobilization. Maleuvre makes the crucial point that the primary language of art is translated into the secondary one of culture. The very becoming of the past, the fact I suppose when we think of the past we literally "place it in front of us" gets lost and becomes a transcendental history of invariability. The forming of such can be traced via Pliny, Vasari, and in the modern period, Winckelmann.<sup>41</sup>

### **"THIS WAY TO THE MUSEYROOM"**

Museums are kind of fabricants of pastness. They churn out solid image and concept, and line it up for consumption according to static

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For excellent discussion, see Tanner, J., (2006), *The invention of art history in ancient Greece: Religion, society and artistic rationalisation*. Cambridge: University Press. Also see Healy, P., (2012), 'The Garden of Earthly Delights', in *Earth perfect?: Nature, utopia and the garden*, edited by Giesecke, A., & Jacobs, N, London: Black dog, pp. 66-84, where I discuss and give further references on the art historical construction of the modern. See Winckelmann's opening to his "Kunst der Altherthums" (1763), for the incipient *Bildung* forming chrono-topography and stylistic epiphenomenalisation of aesthetic response to the past. It follows Vasari's historical schema quite closely, with some crucial difference on the relation of the Greek to the Roman.



principles of presentation and showing. The Louvre began to function as an authorisation zone for cultural authenticity. Objects taken from Egypt and other places came to Paris and were simultaneously stripped of any memory function they had. Zapped, they would be reconfigured as new inclusions in the cultural capital and promotion of the city, also becoming a blanked-out gimcrack. In the museum sphere, the cultural artefacts chosen would be inverted as the nostalgia or kitsch of no culture at all, but just a knowledge item, the label about the work being of considerably more significance for the consumer than the experience of the work.

### **LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH, OR "NO KISSIN"**

It was indeed a kind of housing of things that created homelessness. In some senses art is no longer seen as that which emerges from the struggle of human making, and the insertion of community with interests in such a process. It is instead a semblance, something with an image character, a mediated rapport to existence. The museum guarantees this abstract relation as it divests the object of context, and so all the works in the museum become a vast image bank of illusion that communicates as a gesture of propaganda, "this is art". Armies of curators and others gather to remind living artists that in light of all of this they should either be ventriloquists or just declare themselves "losers". Aesthetic detachment is achieved, and silence gathers in the halls and corridors of museums as if a police officer had suddenly entered the room of a convivial crowd of cardsharps. We do not see works, or walls, or placement, but rather the message, Art, and the fashioning of a stable image of history, which is allied to the prohibition of direct contact.

### **NO NOISE PLEASE, WE ARE DOING BUSINESS**

To construct such a Bildung-active past for mass tourism requires even further oblivion as masquerade for the historical. Because there is no real sense of responsibility for the memory of the past, places devoid of any real milieu, become a substitution for the real of memory, and memory as the very mother of the Muses, that which must be invoked to create and so on. Hence, the most pernicious draining of experience and loss of modest claiming to the Muses and their mother, which for the ancients was alone the garland of homage that made poetry possible. In Plato's *Ion*, the source of the relation between artistic creativity and bees is captured in a wonderful metaphor.

In Warsaw a structure is built that tries to encase a pre-meditated "memorable" space in a box, like a shaped chocolate in a cage of utter boredom. All of this to open up a museum not of the destruction of the Jewish population of Poland, but of a long dureé view of Jewish history, that traces back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and is now being partly revived by museum culture. Klezmer bands, and "teach yourself Yiddish" courses,



Richard Stout, Engraving,  
"Above from Below", 1957.  
FIU Archive.



Exhibition invitation, 11 June  
2016. FIU Archive.



FIU Italy - Publication on 3rd  
Way. FIU Archive.



all supported by Government funding bring tourists to Polin Museum in Warsaw. The past, then, is only a useable present. It trades on the inauthentic image to bolster up a strategy to overcome the real saturation of feeling and memory that do not need such contrivances.

Exhibition value is distance as the lack of pathos the viewer, the self-discipline of the body, required for such cultural excursions. Images do not grow like trees, and they do not belong to the world in such a way. So Maleuvre makes the point that museums are the theoretical spaces of art. Art on display in museums is hoisted by its own petard, to function only as a resemblance, thus draining all works of their vital, hallucinative and creative force.<sup>42</sup>

## MEMORY IS NEVER A PRODUCT

The *Kunstammer*, or *Wunderkammer*, is repressed in the history of the very museums that are arresting history and creating oblivion. Through the system of hanging labels, the whole warehousing, clutter, intricate interactions of different objects and scales and relations, it became a documentary of a coloratura singing a broken down old tune - "We own it." This is the ruin that was so neatly imagined for posterity, and that images were conjured up of fully realised temples and costumes of the past, so that the imagination and memory never needed to be active again.

## BECOME NEUTER

There is nothing for it but self-abnegation and ultimately self-abjection. The machinery of identity production grinds very fine. But another lesson was imparted, essential to the smooth working of the "culture industry," especially for consumers. It is mentioned in the work of Gilles Deleuze in his *Repetition and Difference*, and is a spectacular blast against the pompous pretensions of the art industrialist and their script for a better world.

## A SUMMER OF FUTURES

The final formulation of the statement for the FIUWAC was prepared during the summer months. Bien celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, and his son Sebastiaan inscribed the F.I.U. on the wall of a house that was restored in Normandy. The house and grounds were made available by the Heliczzer family, and allowed a foreseeable summer school project for twenty-five years. The work in Normandy was dedicated to the children of family friends and guests of F.I.U.. Bien benefited enormously by getting away from reading and archives, and enjoyed the physical labour of stones and furrowing, clearing and taking out roots and planting. Contact with the land and nature set his mind to thinking again about how the work of the FIUWAC could really break the chains that had so desperately tied so much creative activity and artistic life down, namely the question of property and ownership, and the equation art=money. The whole issue was there since the Dadaist attacks on art and the market, in

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Carl Einstein's formulation, see my introduction to Einstein, C., (2017), *Bebuquin: Or The Dilettantes Of The Miracle*, translated by Patrick Healy. Amsterdam: November Editions for further references.

ONE NIGHT ONLY 11. JUNI 2016

# JOSEPH BEUYS: BONZENBUNKER

EXPOSITION OPEN 20.00 h

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1013 BE AMSTERDAM/FIU@TIERRAFINO.COM

Photography JOSEPH BEUYS: Bonzenbunker FIU 1981 © courtesy Fuxuszone Westend Krefeld, FIU Amsterdam



**Joseph Beuys**

Life and Works




**Barron's**

ISBN 0-8120-2175-4

**Joseph Beuys**

Life and Works



**Barron's**

\$4.95

Adrianni, Konnertz, Thomas  
Joseph Beuys publication. FIU  
Archive.



Kurt Schwitters' work on the Commerzbank, in the arguments made by Warhol and Haring - "business is art," - etc. and ultimately flowed back to the writings of the theorist Karel Teige. He also could have considered that the thinking of F.I.U. would have receptive responses in France if only because of the writings of Andre Malraux. Sitting in the house where Piero Heliczer once lived, and where copies of *Interview* and other memorabilia of his time in New York and time at the Factory were lying in bundles, thoughts could easily have drifted in the warm evenings towards such times and places.

Bien involved himself in discussion with the local council and mayor, alerting them to what was on hand at the house and how to work out summer school on free creative principles for children. Eliane Gompertz was a great driving inspiration in this thinking, which also led her to break from the Waldorf situation in Amsterdam and create a new school model, which did have ministerial recognition, as viable and workable. Bien was thinking through his whole body of work since the 1970's works in Holland. Now, almost thirty years later, he faced the most important decision he would make - if he should close down his own oeuvre, or in other words, stop "producing" works of art, in the traditional sense. The beginning of the process and the consummation of the years of work in the social sculpture with a definite and real chance of going forward and expanding, encouraged by any decent interpretation of what the bank had indicated, must have made him feel that this could be done, without costs to his partner and children. It is curious that in the masses of documentation, only occasional glimpses of doubt and real frustration emerge.

A singular example of this is him preparing to gift the work of Kloppenburg to the FIUWAC, when with exasperation he says he feels ashamed that he has to give away the work of such a great man, and that the whole situation in Holland is intolerable. It is a *cri de Coeur*, and it is also a profound mark of affection and respect that he bears for Kloppenburg. Of course in the very period these documents are being prepared for the bank, the whole case of the fate of the *Artchive for the Future* is hanging over the F.I.U., and especially Bien's head, in a very precise way.

It is not possible to exaggerate the Lilliputian nightmare of merciless and unrelenting attrition against Kloppenburg and Bien by the landlord Ruska and his use of every possible resource of legality to have the entire work removed. He declared Kloppenburg's residence as uninhabitable, or a fire hazard, or whatever was necessary.

Ruska was using political influence in the City Council to gain a favourable outcome to his machinations, and Bien used his wily

resources and the lawyer Dolf Rueb to counter, delay, and create wider awareness of what was afoot. Articles appeared in the London *Independent*, including a remarkable one by the gifted English journalist Dannatt, and there was television and media coverage. The remarkable lack of response from the official establishment, via the Stedelijk Museum and Rudy Fuchs was noticeable. The Museum even sent a letter, having received a request, indicating that it could not help in the matter of this “hippy art”, referring to Kloppenburg.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile Fuchs was doing art m-art-yr pantomime wrapped up in a bloodied bandage on the front of a national publication as part of the Art Fair annual event, and as it turns out, had some of the most expensive taxi rides known since the first moon landing. His critical writing on contemporary artists continued with polished condescension, and his unfulfilled promise to Grotfeldt for a show was just another step to the almost complete destruction of the reputation of the Stedelijk Museum, which endures until this day. His work on the history of Dutch art that was written in silken prose shows his forte, and a latter essay on the Damien Hirst skull was the last major contemporary art moment in which his hand, that had once worked on Documenta with Beuys present, could be seen. However, even in 1999 he was conflicted, giving rooms to the Polynesian Instant Geography show. Although he could not bring himself to attend the opening, it was as if the young Turks had masterminded a coup.

In the meantime, Bien had to find the inner strength to re-deploy his skills as a strategist and “Realpolitiker” to throw the dice and make this great gamble, which would realise a long cherished dream. The exhibition with PPP convinced him of the enormous flexibility and fine working relations that could be established with diverse groups. His note is charming and at times naif, but beneath it is anguish, the angst of a whole generation, and the deep unresolved loves of the *Ijsselmeer and her embryos*, a work he wrote on again at this time, and its meaning for him.

In such an embattled situation it would be easy to crack, throw in the towel, or worse still, to believe that there was an unrelenting wall of hostility and opposition, which finally would wear one down, and leave the artists to wrack and ruin. By August the highly energetic Alfons Alt came directly to Amsterdam to donate works. He would become the French connection, and Bien was fascinated with the possible development of F.I.U. in France, which he thought of as the great opening to the ancient caves, the longest continuing tradition of art in the world. The Statement for the bank was finalised. It will be fascinating to see what was edited out of this statement for the final draft, overseen by Thomas Steiner, for the launch in October, and highlight the sentence that led to the longer terms problem that emerged.

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Hmmm, they had a big touristic exhibition in 2018 of 1960s Amsterdam hippy stuff.



This examination will require some precise citation and comparison, and is a crucial moment in the documents to grasp the F.I.U. position re. the FIUWAC and the role of the F.I.U.tures. I indicate with marginal Arabic numerals the pagination of the original typescript, and indicate original paragraph indentations.

1. "A central tenet of the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research, founded in 1972 by Joseph Beuys, as part of his enlarged conception of artistic action, and Heinrich Böll, the Nobel Prize laureate, is perfectly captured in Beuys's remarks: "Economics is not only a money making principle. It can be a way of production to fulfil the demands of people all over the world. Capital is humankind's ability in work, not just money. True economics includes the creativity of people. Creativity equals capital."

One of the pressing issues for the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research was how to help realise the capacity of each person to be a creative being; how to formulate the concept of individual freedom as the ability to shape social forms, through the transformation of resources.

Joseph Beuys developed the concept of "social sculpture" to describe the interplay between spiritual, material and social spheres, where thanks to the principles of freedom and equality, economics would create bonds of community, co-operation, creative flows of energy.

2. For Beuys constant exchange, and permanent dialogue, was the process for social sculpture. His belief was that such a work of transformation had the power to release the binding patterns of history and the potential to bring forward in society the energies that emerge in creativity, in any realm in which it manifests itself.

Such a social sculpture requires a free flow of information, democratic initiatives, production sites that would overcome barriers between structure, between knowledge and instinct, to become a genuine practice of inter-disciplinary research where the organic and the technological, intuition and intellect would meld and re-configure in new social wholes in which creativity can flourish. Art is everyone's capacity, thus, Beuys's famous dictum, "Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler."

The activity of F.I.U. has helped to create fusions and crossing points, survival bridges between people and economy. It is a permanent conference with individual freedom as the primary creative datum. F.I.U. (A'dam) has (?)prosed with the co-operation of Triodos to create a modern collection, which (?word missing here?) new needs in the imagination for the future, and thinking for all resources, natural, human, sociological and social. The Free international University

3. World Art Collection (FIUWAC) on my initiative and with Triodos has as its aim an open and transparent collection, which belongs to everyone and will be available, world-wide, to any group willing to host and support it.

By accepting this proposal as value Triodos has enabled FIUWAC to form and acquire, by gift, loan, donation, acquisition and purchase, the kernel of a pluralistic and multi-cultural collection, which uses the archive of its own formation, F.I.U.tures, as a guarantee that in twenty-five years its sale will redeem the money needed in the first instance as a loan against its formation as FIUWAC.

Creativity has its own economic mutuality in the trust of this co-operation between FIUWAC and Triodos. As part of the permanent conference, lectures, publications, the building of websites will continue to promote the presence of these creative agencies within the collection.

Active members of F.I.U. Michael Rutkowski, Jacobus Kloppenburg, Babeth Mondini van Loo, Hilarius Hofstede, Alfons Alt, Patrick Healy, Brendan O'Byrne, and friends and supporters such as Virgil Grotfeldt, Walter Hopps, among others had made donations and contributions. In conjunction with the magnificent and generous loan to FIUWAC from the Steiner archive in Dornach, Dr. Walter Kugler has drawn my attention to comments, which Steiner made when speaking on August 11 1919, that we need new heads on our shoulders when we wish to ensure a wise future for mankind.

"The abstraction of value in money must be returned to the flows and needs of a properly human and spiritually alive existence, where human, animal and plant potencies are re-animated as care and responsibility. The formation of FIUWAC manifests concretely the search for the realisation of spiritual and creative goals for society, which can create a vital enchantment for the world

The current exhibition in the Triodos building represents the first three months of our active working together.

Waldo Bien

Founding-Director FIUWAC

1 September 1999.

FIUWAC(stamp)

Waldo Bien (signature)

## COULD YOU DONATE AN ARTWORK TO THE WORLD?

Bien continued petitioning, and wrote to Hans van der Grinten to inform him precisely of the development that the FIUWAC mentioning the loan from Dornach - which really was a coup - and asked if a Beuys' work from Moyland could be placed on loan or donated. Bien was on a roll and reckoned that a domino effect could happen as one prestigious loan



attracted another. He was scrupulous in his correspondence to indicate what was vouchsafed and pledged, and kept all parties informed as best as he humanly could.

The Lightfactory exhibition ended on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September. On the last day of the exhibition, Dr. Ron Manheim attended, for which Bien sent a note of thanks and asked for further contact with Franz-Joseph van der Grinten. Ron Manheim was working on the archives of Beuys in Schloss Moyland. With only three weeks to go to the opening day at the bank, there was still much to do, and the final version of an agreed text was still in the making. Bien records that he worked day and night, but that the money level was so sunken he had a cheque sent from Virgil for a \$1,000, and responded "that's brotherhood as the economic school should understand it." Bien wrote to Jimmy Durham, whom he had contact with via Joris Brouwers, to request a work: "Could you donate an art work to the world?"

The strain was beginning to tell. In September, after months of unrelenting concentration and work, a note of despair sounded, which came out of his feeling for Kloppenburg, rather than any self-pity for Bien himself. It is a moment of existential doubt and has a dark nobility even in its plaintive tone. It then wavers between pride and shame, which is a most human moment, and Bien shows himself vulnerable, insecure, and loving to his friends. A great artist who gave up his own ego to promote a beautiful ideal for the world, he stated:

After we started the FIUWAC thing J and I (K and I) considered what works had to be thrown in by us. I did not want him to give pastel drawings as he planned to do. I felt a little ashamed that a great artist on his age should give his best works away without first becoming the recognition he deserves. But there had to be at least 4 pastel drawings. So I gave 4 drawings (1st choice) I had bought off him in 1986, the others was from my private collection, 9 the other, 3 I bought for my children) to the FIUWAC. ...In the next ten days we will start to hang the works in the building.

As can be seen from the syntax, Bien is physically and mentally under pressure. The strain of making last minute preparations, requests, petitions, arranging transport, collecting, framing, choosing framing, sorting out what was for donation, keeping in touch with artists, and a lot of this on a shoe string budget, with the in and outs of any family life, meant that the atmosphere, whilst enormously upbeat with regard to the ideal being launched, also became emotionally fraught. And as if in preparation for a set theatre piece with the rehearsals coming to an end, the principals were beginning to throw wobblers, and act-up, as much out of anxiety and insecurity, as for any other noticeable reason. Virgil

Grotfeldt and Deborah, including Charlie Stagg, were flying in from Houston. They probably expected a gala reception, as it was announced that Prince Claus, the consort of the Queen, would open the building and thus the bank had received royal approval. Then it was as if the floodgates opened. Bien delivered a diary-like entry entitled "lamentation of an artist living in Holland." The guests were subjected to a "Dutch treat."

## A JEREMIAH COME TO JUDGMENT

"It is in a way", he wrote, "a ridiculous situation, many like us, the team, F.I.U. and PPP and Bien-Kloppenburger compagnie, with all the qualities we have together and each of us has (Grotfeldt-Rutkowski) that we are so desperately low on our economical section. We are living under a permanent threat and have the honour to (like most colleagues before us) enjoy the drivel and disrespect. They are throwing out over us by buckets all the time. We request nothing more than a proper scholarly look at our works. We deserve a review, and we will get it."

He notes that he is working hard to get the FIUWAC going and that "the bankers more and more believe in it". He sees their commitments growing from day to day. He further adds that he wrote this prospect with Healy and organised framing, etc.

Bien suggested to the bank to include two chairs that he made at the opening. They represented flora and fauna, and that flora and fauna would be permanent representatives at the board for which he was working on a tool kit, that he believed could be installed everywhere in the world, and needed to act as a reminder to all workers everywhere of the inter-relational dimension of economy, culture and the social. The bank agreed. He used colour in a direct, symbolic way and added Braille on the arms of the chairs, which could be felt with the "thinking hand." The Braille read on one chair "Flora," and on the other "Fauna."

For the opening, scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, FIUWAC was represented by Jacobus Kloppenburg, Patrick Healy, Babeth Mondini van Loo, Hilarius Hofstede, Marietta de Bruin, Virgil Grotfeldt, Deborah Grotfeldt, Charlie Stagg, Oeke Hogendijk, Waldo Bien, Eliane Gompertz.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September Bien urgently faxed Steiner in Zeist that the works coming were of an insurable value of 500,000 to 700,000 (guilders), and asked if this could be taken care of. At this point the day had arrived, and some of it can be directly viewed thanks to the fly-on-the-wall documentary style video film made by Babeth, now available on the FIUWAC website.

Bien noted that the atmosphere was strange in the days of the opening. The sense of arrival and welcome was brought crashing to the earth, when it was clear that no supper was to be provided for the attendant artists



and guests after the official opening. The installation of the works took three full days, and the question of the supply of the two chairs and the bill for them, which was apart from the FIUWAC collection, had not been really clarified in correspondence. The bank treated it as a kind of request-privilege for the opening. This day also saw the release of the FIUWAC publication, paid for by the bank, which Thomas Steiner oversaw in its final form. It is time to read it directly and compare it with the memo as first sent, and also the draft of just the 1st of September. Unlike the 1st of September draft, it is in the first person, a kind of homely fireside chat and reminiscence, in which Bien wrote under the heading:

## SEEING THE IDEA

About thirty years ago there was a strong desire in my generation to turn the idealism of the late 60's and 70's into practice. We didn't just want to talk about things but really change our society for the better.

In Amsterdam Berlin, London, indeed all over Europe, I knew there were students of economics, of sociology, and artists who had started seriously to explore what we called an 'alternative' life style. There were even those who started to tackle the vision of having a different conception of the money economy by creating transparency, democratic openness and ethical standards in their day-to-day dealings.

The shifting of the text towards a more direct speech and the emphasis on addressing the issues of economy can be seen as a sop to Triodos, but is more the sense that Bien developed that he was really in the same line of development as the very people with whom he was discussing the collection, as some of them had been selling vegetables and advancing vegetarian ideals in Amsterdam as street-vendors. What I suppose is also being suggested is that there is an opposite generation fruition, and that the shared ideals and commitments sufficiently overlap to go on with the ideals of the FIUWAC. It is a careful and calculated appeal to the patrons of the idea, the guardians and protectors. We see in paragraph three how the complete identification is made with the plural pronoun:

We believed that in the different conception of banking the idea that creativity equals capital would become a real driving force and principle. Many people at the time, I remember, were politely sceptical. But as a practising artist I was fascinated by the vision, and wondered how it would be possible to find the best means to achieve it. I exhibited a sculpture in the early 80's called Universal Bank in the I.M.F building in Washington trying to tease out my appreciation of what I felt was happening.

Bien wrote back into the text the relation of his own thinking to economy and his specific reflection on monetarism that the work referenced. He discussed it in detail in 1997, and it was treated in the study on Bien that appeared the following year, 2000.

The following two section, under the headings "What is the New Idea?" and "Interdisciplinary Research," are an almost verbatim reprise of the text of the September 1 memo. The fourth section "Something unexpected happened," again tells about the founding event by the children in the atelier. It is in the section on Triodos Bank that we find the actual published details of the agreement that they reached, as Bien carried the history from the 1970's, to the meeting in 1998, through 1999. In the final two paragraphs we have the actual details: It was agreed that there would be no depots or stock. By this is meant that all works would be hanging and showing. It was further agreed that all the artworks be placed under the wings of caretakers or hosts who take care to support it. The home of the collection was declared as the world itself and those who take care to support it. There was ambivalent meaning in its double referent, the collection, the world, or, not one without the other. Keepers and curators would and could be, for a short or long time, banks, companies, governments, or individuals. Public access would be mediated through electronic networks, and each development in the collection would be transparent and available for consideration. It is then the final paragraph that has to be looked at, because from this stemmed a series of inappropriate construction that holed to the collections leaving Triodos and took up residence near Antwerp, its current home: "It was agreed to build a 'parallel 'savings account' in the form of 'F.I.U.tures' the FIUWAC and so the collection could continue to generate further works, and exist in a continuing open and public sphere of creative enhancement."

The idea of the construction was that a parallel savings account of works was made so that in twenty-five years the collection would have the means to ensure the original loan to the bank in the form that the collection could be repaid to the F.I.U., and allow the FIUWAC to continue growing and having means at its disposal to advance. F.I.U. gave a loan to the bank, the FIUWAC was housed there, and meanwhile the "savings account" was made to allow the bank, worst-case scenario, to cover itself if it could not, after twenty five years of 10 interest on the loan, make the re-payment of the original borrowing. This is not different in effect to mortgage arrangements as made by the bank, but that the F.I.U. took the ethical responsibility to ensure that the debtor was in a position to meet its obligation, through the creative play of the collection and its parallel "F.I.U.-ture."

The profound misunderstanding that arose was that Triodos thought it would own the whole FIUWAC collection as well as the F.I.U.tures in 25



years, that is, they did not grasp the truth that they owned neither. It is fairly clear that by the end of October the bank realised they had a situation on their hands that they had not properly grasped. They were busy, as the phrase has it, closing the stable door when the horse had already bolted.

## **SLAPSTICK, THE END OF SORROW**

In mid October Bien travelled again to Normandy to work with Virgil on the series entitled *The End of Sorrows*. He noted "time is on our side, the future is ours, life is a real slapstick we had real fun." There were golden days in autumn, and yet Bien knew that the previous months had created a lot of pressure and strains. He returned to his own theme that freedom was essential, and the refusal to become "a dog on a golden chain" for the Regenten who were controlling the cultural and social agenda. Bien, of course, was supple and flexible enough to realise that he was not facing a complete shut down in terms of the Dutch art scene, but rather that his cards had been marked, and that the wilfulness and lack of conformity to expected behaviour would create further obstacles on the path. Neither of the artists knew that this was the last idyll they would spend together, and Bien remarked how close their work was, the easy compact of their friendship, and saw their mutual work as a model for how relations with artists working in freedom could go on.

His regret was that the management of family and household had laid an undue burden on Eliane, and for him, perhaps out of pride, out of a sense of a failure as "breadwinner," he felt the stress and yet also accepted that this was the price to be paid for working in "freedom." Nothing, perhaps, would horrify him more than to be disloyal to the ideals of his youth, to set aside because of present restraints in income and day-to-day life, and the goal of inter-disciplinary research. Despite the fatigue and wear and tear he did not spend the days with Virgil shooting the breeze, or passing the week to zero.

"The End of Sorrow" was a very presumptive title, as it turned out. In a sense, the next years would bring difficulty after difficulty. The on-going dispute over the *Artchive of the Future* would eventuate in the City Council destroying the work contained in thirteen sea containers. His closest artist collaborator and friend, Virgil Grotfeld, died. The relationship with the Triodos Bank would come to a virtual standstill, and a review of the documents of the exchanges with the bank show not just unprofessional communication on the side of the bank, but denials and dismissals of the previous agreement that made their use of the term "ethical" questionable. They were busy using legal means either to completely change the very nature of the FIUWAC-Triodos connection, or tactics from the Harvard school of negotiation for businessmen to wrong-foot Bien, and thus the members of the F.I.U. and the entire project. The

story is long and complicated, but it has two simple points of entry: one, is the misunderstood sentence at the end of the published document, in its final paragraph; the second is the bill sent for the two chairs sculpture, *Flora and Fauna*, supplied by Bien as a direct commission from the bank, and not part of the gifting to FIUWAC, and his own work as an artist.

F.I.U. never used the idea of teamwork, or group solidarity to eliminate the individual. Again, this is the whole issue of the non-identity and identity in the passages of Adorno, discussed above. When you have a situation where there are only social demands, you are in a collectivist's nightmare, exactly like the constructivist Polder model.

"Verein," in the English sense is more of a "club" than anything else, a club that could work together, meet, attend meetings or not, keep minutes, diaries, contribute each according to his or her creative capacity, and that which was not some stamp of identity under a fixed authority. It was a modern club, liquid, and flowing, affectionate in its ties, and open and trusting to the creative ingenuity of those who were agreed to participate. The word association also captured the meaning.

The deepest struggle over the next decade was to keep the open and possible for the future. Pressure began to immediately mount. There is one document in the work log that remains indicative at this time, October 1999, namely a sealed envelope with the instructions written on the outside, not to be opened for thirty-five years, and one indication only of its contents, it is marked "stress in relationships."

## REDE QUOD DEBET OR PAY WHAT THOU OWEST

This tag in Latin, from the parable of the "unjust steward," was once wittily included in the design of the Irish five pound note. The "fiver" had a manuscript text from an medieval manuscript of the Gospels, in semi uncial handwriting, and a modern portrait of Erugenia, the Irish neo-Platonic philosopher. The tag was "pay what thou owest." It was a standing joke in the city, and the circulating fiver was a kind of open debt anyone could incur. "Do you have a fiver?" was an honourable beg that was rarely refused. Because as a small loan, it was inevitably re-paid. The time of money was more important than the quantity.

In mid October Bien sent a bill for the two chairs, which had figured prominently at the opening in Zeist. The bill was for 50,000 guilders including v.a.t. At the time this was roughly 15,000 pounds, or almost the same in dollars, maybe \$12,500. Looking at the insurable valuations on Bien's work and the prices paid for his previous items, this was completely reasonable, even below the market price. The issue that it created was the following: his bill was sent on for Thomas Steiner to deal with, who wrote and telephoned almost immediately.



The letter from the Triodos Bank, dated 20 October, also refers to the discussion by telephone that led the marketing and communication section, per Thomas Steiner, to request a meeting with Bien, as well as a discussion on the issue of the purchase of the Virgil Grotfeld block, that had the publication commitment attached. The meeting was requested at the earliest convenience, and Steiner brought up a second point in the letter that was the issue of the bill sent for the chairs, which he says they had not discussed. The bank had the impression that the stools were part of the total project on which we "were working together." Steiner sent a newspaper cutting from the *Volkskrant* and concluded with "friendly" greetings.

On that letter in the archive, Bien added in pencil an annotation for my attention: "Patrick, I had a phone call with Thomas explaining that this ship was sinking without the payment of this bill and requested a meeting Blom/Steiner/Healy/Bien on short term." By the 5th of November the implications are plain to see. In a letter of that date, Thomas Steiner wrote in reference to a meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> October that was attended by him, Koert Jansen, and Bien at the Lauriergracht. The meeting was to lay out the steps to be taken with regard to FIUWAC and the bank's intentions in regard to their involvement. Steiner indicated that in a short time a juridical concept for the structure of that involvement would be sent to Bien.

He then mentions the "misverstand rond de twee stoelen", or "the misunderstanding around the two chairs," emphasizing that they saw the two chairs as part of the FIUWAC. They pointed to variant discussions, and then made an offer, which was to reply to the bill, namely they would not pay the price asked by the artists, rather they offered \$10,000 exclusive of v.a.t. as a "compromise," with the reproduction rights also included. Crucially, in the very strained context of work and day-to-day money supply, this was a slightly menacing and calculated threat: "we hope you can agree with this and that this misunderstanding will be out of the way and will not impede further co-operation." Bien swallowed his pride and sent a renewed bill with the proviso that the original value was not diminished by the purchase.

It was a first passage of arms. Because of the sheer intensity of the months and the continuing work with Virgil, the solicitation of further contributions, enjoying the marvellous Polynesian Instant Geography exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum with Hilarius Hofstede and Berend Hoekstra, both of who he noted in his diary as strong and impressive, especially Hilarius, of whom he enthusiastically remarks (Logbook, 9<sup>th</sup> November 1999): "showed his capability to work on a very large scale without losing substance. A brilliant artist, fantastic energy, heart on the right place and a beautiful human intelligence. We were very impressed and proud."

## **BUDGET FOR THE FUTURE**

When in the words of the positivist-minded economists the “reality check” came, it was really to the surprise of everyone that the budget projections, prepared by Deborah Grotfeldt, who was experienced with projects in the public domain involving artists and future requirements, that a real “start-up” cost was somewhere in the realm of half a million dollars. The bank never alluded to the costs to the F.I.U., and what was put in place, despite having world-renowned expertise in the very area of start-up projects, ethical investment in wind energy, etc. The latter invites a Swiftean joke, which I will forbear from making.

The need to control and create structure increasingly arose, in which the first misunderstanding, and not the issue of the chairs, would create the longest and most difficult chain of responses and reactions. This added to the issue of the acquisition of the Grotfeldt block with the entailment of a publication, and would by 2003 show how deep and even, may I say, devious, the banks’ own self-serving misunderstanding had been, since their mistakes, it would seem, were never in anyone else’s favour.

## **IN TRUST WE DO NOT TRUST**

Oscar Wilde, in his letter to Alfred Douglas written from prison, reminded him that the basis of all relationships is conversation. Good conversation is the readiness to listen; give and take, and even change register from serious to humorous. In Socrates we have the most wonderful examples of conversation, which by its sincerity as a search for what is not known, requires a fairness and equality among the interlocutors. Trust is the second most important element of a relationship, as the respect of equals does not lead to deception or dishonesty: surely the whole Platonic attack on the sophists, whose cleverness and deceptiveness masked cynical power hungry exploiters. Further, where there is equality and conversation there is respect and trust. This, surely, is the core of all good relationships.

During the months of discussion and conversation that led up to the FIUWAC assembly in Zeist, the atmosphere was good-willed and benign on all sides. With the coming of the winter, it seems, in retrospect, that the Bank bargained for much more than it thought. From their viewpoint, never disclosed in writing, they would own the FIUWAC after twenty-five years. Meanwhile, it was a collection that was on deposit until they would be the legal owners via a trust down the line.

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIRE**

The introduction of lawyers and the bank’s juridical demands of a new formulation that occurred so soon after the opening, really suggests that they had miscalculated. They were not only busy resigning from any stated or implied obligations, but were also manoeuvring to gain



the maximum “benefit” to optimise the loss situation as they saw it. This included the hidden costs of their commitment coming to the fore, namely costs of framing, time spent, etc. They also seem have seriously underestimated Bien and the tenacity of his negotiation skills, the sheer chutzpah of which the man was capable, and the complex and ingenious intelligence which his own development as an artist bears testimony. Further, Bien was a street-fighter and relished the prospect of winning the argument, not for him to crow, but simply to say this can be done - money and art can change the basis of relationships in directions that are thoroughly humane, peaceful, and benevolent. After all, Bien was brought up in the tough no-nonsense world of the mining communities in the South of Holland shortly after the end of the World War II. He was not a wimp when it came to a challenge. That, I suspect, is what he had adored in Beuys - the courage to take on the establishment, the refusal to be bullied by circumstance, the tenacity to keep to sincerely held ideals, and the refusal of the “discreet charm of the bourgeois.”

Betrayal is a strange human event that can only be undone by further betrayal. That means that it is never reversible, which make it such a profound mark of character. For Bien loyalty was everything, and it had an almost mythological connotation. One can see how real that was for him, especially in his relations to Rutkowski and even those with whom he quarrelled.

The bank let the world know, with a kind of complicit wink, that they were good for the future. However, deals and principles were always a revisable item, new interpretations possible. They could point to their rapid expansion, and their pride in involvement in the cultural domain, which was a feature of their advertised public commitment.

## UNTO THE BREACH

If Bien had closed his oeuvre in 1999 it was the beginning of frenetic activity and actions. Throughout the end of 1999 he worked with Virgil, and much of the early months of 2000 were taken up with the preparation for the exhibition of his work in Recklinghausen. The study of his work was published on this occasion. The exhibition was really a retrospective of his life's work to that date, and showcased *The Death Room Interior*, his great masterpiece that he dedicated to Joseph Beuys on hearing of his death. It is the work of which the fullest documentation has been published, and there is no need for me to repeat that research here.<sup>44</sup>

Bien was fairly convinced that the glitches with the bank were no more than the famous millennium emergency where people were being paid enormous sums of money to stay up on the night of the New Year to watch the clocks, and where in fact the transition to the new millennium did not lead to computer meltdown, as some had feared. In retrospect, it now seems like “auld langsyne” (“a long time since”).

44

See chapter 5 (pp. 63-85) of Healy, P., Bien, W., Kloppenburg, J., & Free International University. (2006). *Jacobus Kloppenburg: The Archive for the Future*. Cologne: Wienand.

For Bien the move across the threshold of the century into a new millennium seemed to offer an amazing outlet for hope and forward development. A mood of buoyant optimism could prevail, and there was a sense that a better world was really in the making.

The show in Recklinghausen was to run from the 6<sup>th</sup> of May to the end of July. Kaleb de Groot assisted Bien in the show's preparation. In the early months Bien hurt his back and began showing considerable signs of exhaustion, but that too was a sign to go on, to go to the limit. It is a kind of exaltation to be so tired that you almost cannot sleep, a kind of reeling around and sudden renewals of energy, all of which showed that any mechanical model of human work and expression was nonsense. Sometimes one conversation could overcome the most wasted physiological feeling.

## **LOVE WAS IN THE AIR**

"Liefje wil je met me trouwen"? W, JA @

On the night of the opening in Recklinghausen Waldo Bien passed a note on the back of his founding director FIUWAC business card, with the question, "Darling, will you marry me?," to which Eliane Gomperts, his partner of long years, wrote simply "Yes," and underneath drew a leafy heart.

## **EXPO**

F.I.U. Carl Giskes was at the Expo doing a large clay architectural work, and Sebastiaan Bien was also making a mosaic wall. The clay walls and stairs, done by Giskes, had the drama of an Aztec temple. Bien was happy to be working with his hands again. In June he worked with Virgil, and both men finally admitted exhaustion.

## **MAN DREHT SICH IMMER WIEDER IN KREISE**

Bien never went forward without going backwards. It was as if the line of life and the repetition of the return of seasons and weather could be incarnated in the artist's own method. It was a kind of temporalized or historicised naturalism, and meant that as in the 1980's there was an intellectual reprise of the 1970's, so at the beginning of 2000 he would think again of what Rutkowski said in Raum 20, "One always goes around in a circle".

Rutkowski was invited to Insel Hombroich, but did not take him up on the offer. Anatol, the policeman who became an artist under Beuys, was working there. He was hammering a new work based on Wagner, and muttering that what was needed was "a civil war." The anvil blows shuddered the quiet of an autumn evening in the terrain - where leaves had blown with such simplicity into the exquisite single building



designed by Herrich to house a work and be a domain of rest and welcome. To Bien, the whole environment seemed perfect for Rutkowski, but he refused it.

Bien also saw that the problem of hermeticism was there, and contemplated how to get out of the circle, how to move on. There was the fact of his own multiple involvements running down his "motorics." The book was done and posted, his own book, he had set himself immediately to thinking about a work on 'K' (Kloppenburg), research for which had started at the beginning of 1997, when I first made study notes of the *Artchive of the Future*.

He started to look at the photo archives that he had amassed since his student days. There were things to be done in the house where he lived with Eliane and the children. Bien wrote to the bank on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May as if to remind them what the principles of the collection really were. Additionally, having reported the positive responses to his book, of which the bank ordered 300 copies. He thanked them. The train was, with their help, now on track and going in a good direction. He also noted that from his work he could show that an anthroposophically inspired life did not in the least risk individual freedom. This was a pointed reminder to Blom, especially of shared spiritual roots, and further added that the critique of museums, the cultural domain and political structures was not only justified, but also necessary. He also noted that this could be done in freedom. The question he thought really was: In what way and in what dimension should the FIUWAC be "grown"? He proposed to make twelve large photo works and acquire a Rutkowski sculpture, and recommended it to their attention.

By June the bank was advanced with the idea of the trust. Koert Jansen, who had dealt with the juridical consideration from within their grasp of what had taken place, sent a fax with an outline of the shape and structure of the FIUWAC. The whole manner of this was *ultra vires*, as the FIUWAC was always primarily viewed as a project of the F.I.U. and could not accept that juridical consideration not aligned to this commitment could have any real authority with respect to how the free giving and expanded domain of art was developing. The relation was thus asymmetrical in respect of the fact that the provision being advanced for FIUWAC ignored the precise "historical" background and the mutual responsibilities already, a point raised in Bien's reply of June 25<sup>th</sup>. Behind this lay the very simple point that no one in Triodos had bothered to come to the F.I.U. archives and study what was plainly written and included over long years, and available to scholars on request.

The bank deemed it necessary to create a management fund, a trust or foundation that would steer the financial responsibility away from the bank, and retain the right to sublet the collection, and decide when F.I.U.tures could be disposed of, without recourse to F.I.U.. With such an arrangement, ultimately F.I.U. might only have a single representative, and further the Trust could be dissolved by the bank at any time. One person's response was: "You must be joking".

Bien went on the high alert, like a startled hare in a field, and began seriously lobbying throughout his networks for advice and reflection. He mistrusted the move without seeing necessarily the minutiae of the legal structure, but the language alone and some gross and presumptive errors told enough. The bank may very well have assumed that talk of archives and documents was just "artist's talk" and that in typical chaos and need there was a poker bluff going on that would be resolved in favour of their suggested structure. They had fatally underestimated the situation at base.

By going over the photographic archive, Bien was back in the problem of the polarity of light and dark. Before he found a way to make the polarisation less conflicted by creating dynamic colour solutions to the problem, and thus not leaving it as a rigid undialectical opposition. He now felt that the rhythm of awareness was already a kind of implicated harmonic and needed no external resolution. It could become a flow in the optical field where the photograph, drawings and sculpture moved in and out of each other, in a kind of chromatic *Verschmelzung*, as in the music of Wagner, and that this was what the *Gesamtkunstwerk* meant, and not some idea of totalising structure. It was the same experience that he was exploring in the *Artchive of the Future*.

In the following five years Bien would daily deal with the question of the threat to the housing of the Artchive of the Future and ultimately the city of Amsterdam's threat of its physical destruction. In a publication of Kloppenburg up to 2006, a story is told that the fatal sequel of the works were publicly burnt by the city even after the most intense negotiation and appeals on the side of several concerned individuals. The city council during the mayoralty of Cohen permitted this barbaric act. The Kloppenburg Pavilion will no doubt in the future study this in great detail, as it is *prima facie* the reason why the remarkable structure of the pavilion and the housing of Kloppenburg works, has taken place. Bien sees the bitter element in the constant litigation, and the way the energy slowed and diverted. He has startling metaphors to hand, and notes he refuses to be bitten by the "dogs in the balls" and says "no, no, no."



## **AS TIME GOES BY**

The discussion on the Trust could go on interminably, and Bien engaged his own adviser and confidante to have a look at the details on offer. However, he kept his own counsel on how far the principle would be defended, and resisted the expectation that oft bedevils such discussions that everyone would see “sense” and opt for the least troublesome arrangement just to get home by dark.

The tactic of negotiation was wearing out the interlocutors and met the most stubborn resistance from the F.I.U., which was not prepared to suborn the FIUWAC to the arrangement. This meant that it would be tied to a fund management structure, which also abrogated the very principle of social giving according to needs and means, and further left the bank in an intermediate position in which its own commitments could be passed on and effectively dissembled as fiduciary obligations only. Visitors, such as Weihong and Weng Ling, came from China, and a visit to the collection was arranged. This brought up another detail that was mentioned in Steiner’s earliest communication, that even members of the F.I.U. had to arrange to visit the collection, which was totally at the behest and say so of the bank, and de facto this meant Thomas Steiner. A struggle was emerging, and Steiner in every way attempted to put a break on what he saw as a runaway horse - an unbridled creature bucking against, and chafing, to resist the unwelcome harness.

Artists, such as Ian Mc Keever, with whom Bien worked in the past came back into contact, and the book on the Kunsthalle Recklinghausen show was slowly wending its way around and beginning to attract new offers and donations for FIUWAC. Bien’s frustration was that the bank could not really see the way this could become such a magnificent and expansive event, and that it was, in the words of the day, a “win-win” situation. Furthermore, if the bank really wanted to talk reality, then the costs involved, by art world and cultural sector standards, was peanuts.

Speaking with the Chinese visitors made Bien realise that the world was reachable and open to such an ideal. At a few thousand dollars a year the bank was hardly stretching its resources in support of this. From Zeist there was the further problem that it controlled communications with the English and Belgian branches to which Bien also wanted to extend the collection, and ultimately Steiner remained the key player from the Triodos side.

## **A BORDER CROSSING**

In July I visited Rutkowski in Köln and returned with him to Amsterdam, where he brought along a block of his workbooks and made generous donations. Later he travelled to Normandy. With the *K/(Kloppenburg)* book in preparation I could not contemplate tackling such a complex work as Rutkowski, although I completely shared the view of Harald Szeeman that he was an artist of the first importance, and I was

astonished that no study was forthcoming from Germany. As much as I would have loved to, I could not accept to write on the work at the time. Unfortunately, as the years have gone by, there is still no foreseeable time available that would allow me to make this commitment.

### THE FINEST ARTIST WORKING IN HOLLAND TODAY

Rutkowski and Bien worked in Normandy, and it was like the old days. I think for Bien his admiration for Rutkowski is one of intellectual respect, and whilst less demonstrative than his contact with Jacobus and Virgil, it has a depth of shared youth and reverence that remains to this day. Rutkowski was busy on a daily basis with reading and literally creating sculptural responses to the writing of P. Sloterdijk, from his massive investigation "Sphaeren."

The house in Normandy is a most complex work as it has been a "sculpture/architectonic/land sited/work/in/progress/as/open/domain/within/the global/rotation." It has been a major site for development of F.I.U. in France, and its program for the summer with children's involvement a source of inspiration and pleasure.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Walter Hopps sent a letter to Charles Bergman, the chair of The Pollock-Krasner Foundation in New York, which is a remarkable assessment by Hopps of Bien and Grotfeld, which needs to be cited in full. It reminds one that the paltry treatment in Holland was not the only or last word on Bien, and the endorsement was one that gave him the belief that the world did not end at the borders of the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Dear Mr Bergman,

I met Waldo Bien thanks to Virgil Grotfeldt in Houston in 1992. Bien shipped in a very impressive selection of art in a variety of media and that was my first encounter. I have been reviewing professionally the art of the artists of our time since the late 1940's and it is my professional opinion that Bien is the finest artist working in Holland today. The only other artist comparable is Jan Dibbets whose art is primarily photographic montage. Bien's egalitarian ideals have kept him from normal commercial gallery affiliations. This of course has led to diminished financial support as well as the lesser international reputation than he would normally deserve.

In 1992, I included Bien in an important international exhibition at the Fernbank Museum in Atlanta, Georgia. I included in this exhibition *The Rainforest at Risk*, several challenging works done by Bien in Africa. Bien has travelled the world more than any artist I have ever known bringing back artefacts and materials to make his art. In 1995 Bien had a solo exhibition at the artists space *Diverse Works* in Houston for which I consulted along with a cast of scores.



I had the good fortune to twice spend time?? with the late great German artist Joseph Beuys on two occasions. It was in the Academy at Düsseldorf that Bien studied with Beuys, and many of his ideals and aesthetic tenets were carried forward by Bien. Beuys suffered in his lifetime that his art seemed totally undecorated and beyond the tenets of commercial galleries or most museums. That has changed drastically since his untimely death. For obvious reasons, I wish that Beuys were alive today, and I feel that his positive recommendation of Bien (with whom he collaborated) would be the most significant positive recommendation that you could receive. The nature of Bien's polymorphous art - challenging materials, unusual forms etc. - make it difficult to sell in today's art market. I know that financial aid at this point in his career would indeed be significant. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Walter Hopps, Curator Twentieth Century Art, The Menil Collection  
Houston TX.

## **POTLATCH AND THE LEAST IMPORTANT ARTIST IN HOLLAND**

As nothing was more urgent than the F.I.U.tures. Bien and the F.I.U. were utterly determined that the guarantee parallel savings account being gifted to the bank would be in place as soon as possible. Hilarius Hofestede visited from Denmark and brought water from a recent trip to Düsseldorf Art Academy and other F.I.U.tures. Alfons Alt, Hubert Martin and others sent material. Hilarius visited the Harry Hoogstraten installation, and works were also donated from this source to FIUWAC. Ten works were selected, and it should be mentioned that Harry Hoogstraten had been a close friend in the past to Piero Heliczer.

The requests to the Stichting Fonds voor de Beeldende Kunsten, Vormgeving en Bouwkunst, was turned down. He was told that the work didn't have enough of his own personality and interpretation for the contemporary context, as it was too much in terms of previously important sources and antecedents. The irony that one of the commission judges was Frank Mandersloot, who could be found in 2012 protesting violently against cutting subsidies, dressed in a jacket a la Beuys, on whom he continues to lecture on to a few students in the Rietveld, even as his eyebrows grow disturbingly grey, which seems not dissimilar to those anarchists and anarchist flags waving on the Acropolis, by groups whose main protest was the cutting of the pension funding. Mandersloot would also make a public sculpture called *Bees* (Biejen) in 2004, and another work of his from the mid 1990's looks to all the world like a work of Waldo Bien's from twenty years earlier.

## GOING ON

By the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, another 120 F.I.U.tures were installed in Zeist. This was again proof positive of the commitments of the F.I.U.. The sheer weight of things became an obvious riposte to the bank along many fronts. The works were a willy-nilly map of F.I.U. and FIUWAC and its development, and had their role as parallel commentary, experimental sketches, that gave real insight into the details of the creation of FIUWAC. This included typographical design for logos and the rhizomatic graphs that indicated the way in which the interconnections would develop potentially in the future.

The work with other artists continued, and in this case, the year ended with the first London solo show of Hilarius Hofstede, *The State of Denmark Street*. If Bien had worked the concept figure Duchamp/Beuys through his own constellation, then Hofstede was making a kind of voodoo montage of the Beuys / Warhol meeting from America, or blending Shakespeare and the Sex Pistols. Johnny Rotten became the Prince of Denmark. Kloppenburg and Bien visited London and participated at the event. It was a riot.

## WHAT'S ANOTHER YEAR?

It is really in the following year that the misunderstandings started to create genuine tensions and conflicts. Bien's démarche had worked, which was to continue building and forming and shaping the FIUWAC and let the "law's delay" keep the juridical matters at bay, whilst the overwhelming effect of the full collection would be the most persuasive document of all. It was also necessary for Professor Rauschenberg to have a clear brief, when treating with the bank's proposal, and thus correspondence exchanged further amplifies the gap between what the bank was trying to structure and the inner principles of FIUWAC, as explained in the internal correspondence.

The real need was to create flows and to have public communication. Initially the prospect of reaching out to concerned and principled individuals via the bank, who understood much of the background by way of Steiner and even Beuys, seemed attractive. In practise the bank became a closed terrain. It did not, apart from the launch publication, inform any of its contact groups via its bulletins and published newsletter about the collection and collaboration in hand, nor did it facilitate with expertise in the electronic domain, etc. work of F.I.U. No computers were ever delivered.

## A STOPPED WATCH

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May the official decision in regard to the *Artchive of the Future* was handed down. From the F.I.U. point of view, it was a decision in favour of the administration, and Bien recorded it as a "black day



in art history and very dangerous from now on for artists and their studios." Bien was darkly apprehensive that this ended one of the richest developments in post war Dutch art.

Bien drew the attention of Thomas Steiner to the situation, which was reported in the local Amsterdam paper *het Parool*, on the May 31, 2001. The article reported the decision of the Raad van State, and the reported "Vernietiging" as a prospect for the archive now in containers in Weesp - that is destruction. Bien is reported as saying that the life work of an artist is the destruction of his life. The paper even cited Hopps' opinion that the work was a mega-sculpture of significant value, and compared with the Schwitters Merz archive and that of Yves Klein. The detail that the Van der Grinten's were actively considering taking over the archive was also reported, and brought it to Moyland. Bien remarked that the cultural pretensions of Amsterdam were clearly exposed in this event. Hopps had been instrumental in saving the Joseph Cornell archive, and was directly familiar with a parallel case from America.

Accumulation of further needs added to the stretched situation for F.I.U.. A major offensive had to be launched, military language almost inevitable here, and the threat of destruction stayed, in whatever way was possible.

Bien, quoting Hofstede, wrote:

#### TITANIC NO PANIC

In fact the events were physically hard to bear, and Bien reported stomach pains in the following weeks. It was a very heavy blow. Everyone had to be mobilised, and a host of other details arranged. It was necessary to write to major collections in Holland to get an inventory of the works of Kloppenburg which they had in their keeping, to have assessors for valuation sent to Zeist to establish current values for individual works, and to have letters and protest sent to the cabinet of the City hall.

On June 3rd a note was sent from the ARCHIVE OF THE FUTURE, Defence Committee: 'We are currently organising to protect the Archive(sic.?) of the Future, the work of the artist Jacobus Kloppenburg, against a written threat of destruction from the city of Amsterdam. We would be most grateful for your communication to the city in this matter, and would appreciate a copy of any communication you may send, to the above fax number. Please accept our deepest thanks for your concern in this matter.

The note was signed in my name, and sent to as many groups and individuals as possible.

Bien wrote to all the principal cultural and art bodies in the country. The visit to Rutkowski at Verr to study his Bookbinder House project, notes of which had been published in PPP nr. 2, was a rare moment of relaxation. Kloppenburg stayed in Düsseldorf and Bien went there to try and assess what he still kept in Germany, and prepared for the worst. In other words, he not only created defence, but he saw what could be saved in the worst-case-scenario, and would survive elsewhere from the life work of the artists. Bien also knew that every threat to Kloppenburg set up a precedent that could be deployed against many artists working in the city, and this included the atelier and its holding at 123.

Bien designed a new FIUWAC stamp as a ship, with indications of what was carried by the ship, and in effect the responsibility of the F.I.U. to more than just the works of art in the collection. There was the F.I.U. Archive, Waldo Bien Archive- Raum 20-Photo Archive- Archive For The Future- Michael Rutkowski Archive- Virgil Grotfeld Archive- Piero Heliczer Archive-Healy Papers- Martin Schönenborn Archive- Kloppenburg Archive- Paleo Psycho Pop Archive- Carl Giskes F.I.U. Papers- Free International University World Art Collection- Triodos F.I.U.Tures Archive-Babeth Film Archive- F.I.U. Normandy Summer School- Archive- Hans Hoffmann Papers- Bien/Kloppenburg Photo Archive.

In reality, all of this material was treated as a means of study and active elements in on-going inter-disciplinary research, and as a further development within the social sculpture. This was also why in all communications with the bank emphasis was placed on the importance of continuous publication, in book-form as websites to maintain the momentum of the archives as active agents in the social sculpture, and also to make the invisible secrets visible. There was a need for transparency beyond just making something less obscure.

### **THREE-WAYS AND A CROSSROADS: THE TRIVIA OF HECATE'S MOON.**

Bien wrote to Steiner, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001, and the letter makes it clear that the legal construction that was envisaged by Zeist was trivial, a kind of decorative embellishment that excluded all principles and previous discussion. Bien asked for a timeline for the discussion and suggested that by the second anniversary of the opening in Zeist, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 that the matter would be settled one way or the other.

From the installations being prepared for the Triodos in Brussels, Bien saw that it was now necessary to approach the task more slowly, stating: "it is obvious that we have to slow down. Hang a single work now and then spread over the years." Meetings were held to discuss websites and



databases, which involved Waldo's son, Lukas, and Thomas Steiner's son, Arthur, among others. Bien wrote to Terrell James in Houston to say that the final trust papers could be done on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. Right after that the F.I.U. would start working on the websites. He also reported that I was working on the Grotfeldt book, and he referred James to the Tierrafino.nl website to give some indication of what was going on.

In July, Pierre Aeby, who was acting as director in Zeist, wrote to finalise the arrangement with Brussels. What is of deep interest in this letter is that he indicates that he wants what is going on with Belgium to be the same as with the agreement in Zeist. He summarized this in one paragraph, showing that this was how the matter had been understood on the side of the bank (document.02 / 548 28 21). "Ons voorstel is een contract te sluiten voor een lening van FIUWAC aan Triodos Bank Brussel ten bedrag van USD 25.000 over 25 jaar met de zgn. F.I.U.Tures. De jaarlijkse rente bedraagt dus USD 2.500."

The tone was friendly and there did not seem to be any difficulty in stating how costs for production were borne by the bank and other fine details. Bien wrote directly to Peter Blom and informed him of current activity, including the writing of the book on Virgil Grotfeldt. He also added that Jacob of Espace Nord in Liege was available to be a board member, and indicated his good contacts in Italy and France. Triodos had difficulties creating outlets in France as it was viewed in the manner of the Scientology Church, a "cult" that had, in the eyes of the French, a failure of social entitlement in the Republic. Bien pointed out that payments due from Triodos were still awaited, and it put the F.I.U. in considerable debt to the sum of what was expected from the annual payment on the original loan from the F.I.U.. The other point he made was to remind the bank of a failed obligation, which was to catalogue the F.I.U.tures, which was in hand, but we were using typewriters!

## **SPONSORED BY NATURE**

The extent of what had been prepared was almost unimaginable. Since February of that year, Bien took in works from Alfons Alt and worked again with Kloppenburg both on new collaborative works, and using framing as a sculptural annotation. This commentary thus created Bien/K works K/Bien works, and a play of authorship and belonging that also pointed away from the possessive individualism that bedevilled the co-operative and non-competitive spirit of showing the close woven understanding they had reached over twenty-five years of friendship and daily communication. Their respective partners would joke that Bien and Kloppenburg was the real marriage!

A film was made of the collection to be sent to Walter Hopps, and Bien still had great hopes from that side, as Hopps was prepared, to

donate works from his own private collection to FIUWAC. The city gave Kloppenburg two weeks to pick out things from the “rubbish containers,” in addition to a bill of nearly a quarter of a million florins to payment for the storage. Bien wrote in April to inform Blom about the book on Grotfeldt, and that there was work going on of direct value to the bank itself, in that the “sponsored by nature” Bien notes was “een schepping van Hilarius Hofstede,” in other words “created by Hilarius Hofstede.” Bien shows fine scholastic manners in precise attribution and acknowledging of sources throughout his career. It was presented in the reduced alphabet of Kloppenburg and offered to the bank as a slogan.<sup>45</sup> Blom did not react really on any of the details. Yet one can find in 2006 in a campaign launched by the bank for the cultural domain, the phrase under their logo, “van nature betrokken” (“Betrokken” can mean being emotionally touched by). The bank attempted to cap the phrase as much as supported by something). Bien tried to underline the significance of the Walter Hopps connection, sending Steiner and Blom a newspaper clipping from the *Houston Chronicle*, which reported that Hopps was taking a curatorial post at the Guggenheim in tandem with his Menil position. Thomas Krens, of the Guggenheim, was quoted saying: “Walter is among the pre-eminent curators of his generation. Over the years he has organised a wide range of ground-breaking exhibitions that have redefined how we look at art of the modern era.” Hopps last major show was the great retrospective of Robert Rauschenberg in 1997, co-sponsored by the Menil and Guggenheim.

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See letter 8<sup>th</sup> April to Blom.

Bien was, of course, upping the ante. By sending the bank these details and reviews of Grotfeldt’s work, then showing in the Peters gallery in Dallas, he was also suggesting the need to compact and firm up what was happening before all of this became unavailable and placed in a market where the values would be out of reach, even for rich collections to acquire. Bien attended the show in Dallas, and concluded: “stay away from the art market as long as possible.” Bien went on studio visits to see Terrell James, and went to see Walter Hopps. He prepared to work on the series *Charlotte Corday*, a kind of re-encounter with the French revolution with the theme of heroic self-sacrifice. It was the first working re-connection with Virgil since the intense days of the *End of Sorrows* in Normandy. Virgil’s show was a sell -out, and a curious footnote is that Peter Blom’s wife had bought a work on paper from Virgil, before the show opened.

Richard Stout also became involved at this time, and even for Bien, given the stark contrast with the curmudgeonly responses of Zeist, the generosity was overwhelming. In Zeist it would be viewed as a kind of folly.



## BIEN AND WHO = WHO

During the summer months, the realisation of what the direction of the bank was, and that there was a complex manoeuvre in play that might de-rail the collection as social sculpture and return one to the situation of property and ownership in the most traditional fashion, led to serious soul-searching. In a long, handwritten document from May 5, 2001, we have effectively a position paper, from the side of the F.I.U., on where and what was the real context of people and work.

The entry for May 5, 2001 makes it all very clear. It seemed that the FIUWAC would have to become a Stichting (Foundation). Professor Rueb advised this was the best solution in the circumstances. He designed the Foundation in such a way that F.I.U. could operate with the most freedom in relation to its own original ideals of the early 1970's. By turning the F.I.U. into a "Verein," Bien thought a problem had arisen. Again, Bien thought of how to be "legal" without being official. His view was that establishing the FIUWAC did this, and he gave as proof the support of the VSB bank for the book in Recklinghausen, the loan accepted from F.I.U. to Zeist and Brussels. This was how the "invisible" of the F.I.U. Amsterdam was made visible.

But if he was to look at this as an outsider, then F.I.U. was constituted by himself as a mandate holder, Kloppenburg, the two children as founders of the collection, as well as Healy and Hofstede. There was then the wider spiritual network, Rutkowski for example, Grotfeldt who was not really occupied with these ideas but worked since 1987 within their framework, and there was Alfons Alt who in the pun of the day was "alt-true-istic." He then listed all of his children, and Kloppenburg's wife and family.

Bien also reflected on what would happen if he died, that Eliane and those who survived him would see the need to guide the various works and events to the future, and he freely acknowledged that at the end everything was about good will and shared goals and one could not legislate for that. Bien also considered my own survival, that as a writer, archivist, and secretary who was making the material visible, would need support and "his economical position should be secured at once so he can live and work in comfort".

Bien rambled slightly and was clearly at the end of his tether. The wear and tear, the stress and the on-going complex details to be kept in mind, the tricky negotiation of the bank, which used volatile on-off communications to position their potential off-load of responsibility via a tightly controlled financial instrument, the travel and disputes with the city, the landlords, the problem with his son's insurance claims, indeed the whole nightmare of bureaucracy and the ties and binds of bourgeois property rights and control, made a potential life in prison look like a stroll. Artists he met would express concern about Kloppenburg, and then

retire home, if not with a sense of Schadenfreude, the inkling of some sublime survival, and a "too bad for him" shrug, "Tjscha." What to do? In the midst of so much, the question of legitimation and the nostalgia for the old ideals seemed equally redundant. The overpowering pressure of the real made for no other choice but to go on.

One of the most galling events of 2001 was the process by which Bien questioned the decision of the Fonds and availed of his right to make another presentation, which included sending his book from the Kunsthalle Recklinghausen show. The commission replied, that having made a visit to the atelier, considered the contents of the book carefully, and spoken with Bien, they had no reason to reverse their earlier decision. No subsidy would be granted, and there was no question of the original judgment being vacated.

At the beginning of 2002, Bien sent a short report to the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, as required at the end of the year. It is a short summary of how he presented his work and worth. He cited:

As outlined in the final chapter of the study on my work, Waldo Bien, Recklinghausen, I have continued with the work of making the 'social sculpture' visible, specifically with the on-going work on the Free International University World Art Collection. Over a thousand works have been added to the host building in Zeist (Holland) and Brussels (Belgium), I am currently preparing to go to Nairobi (Kenya) to continue with the work. Thanks to the grant I was able through the last year to maintain this work and engage a wide network of artists including inter-alia Virgil Grotfeldt, Alfons Alt, Jacobus Kloppenburg, Hilarius Hofstede, in the realisation of this project. On the very mundane side this has involved measuring and cataloguing hundreds of works, and presenting the ideas to artists, in Houston, Texas, Brussels, Marseilles (France) and to the director of the K-Rep bank in Nairobi.

## IDEALIST

Bien indicated that he did not have any sales or awards during the year in question:

The grant from your Foundation proved to be a 'god-send'. The sum in question had been \$25,000. Laurent Dejente wrote to say that Eric Amoroux, who had once written on Bien's work, was offering a restoration of an old house in Portugal and was interested to have Waldo involved, 'this house could become a real centre or workplace for artists for example'. Amoroux was in Butata in Brazil working at the Alliance Francaise. In an amusing exchange with Dejente Bien suggested it would be of more value to Eric Amoroux to work there on the house himself, and explained anyway he had enough to do, with the emphatic phrase 'I am an idealiste but not a fanatic.'



Bien also encouraged artists by making it clear that by the end of the year (2002) the work would be visible on the World Wide Web (WWW). This, too, was part of the publishing work, and the creation of an “on-going platform” that used the WWW as a real tool for education and intellectual exchange seemed like a perfect vehicle, despite the fact that it was still dominated by pornographic traffic.<sup>47</sup> In tandem with YouTube and with further refinement through interactive filters with multi-lingual cues, it would be possible to create curricula tailored to the needs of artists from scratch that really create a Virtual University for Artists (VUA).

## THE FLOWS IN A FRAGILE WORLD

Hofstede wrote to opt out from the Board, as he felt the board of FIUWAC needed “go-getters and home runners”. His own work was also going forward, and part of the way in which the “socius” of the F.I.U. worked meant that projects developed by individual artists were not claimed in any way by F.I.U., but were seen as in the spirit of the social sculpture. The F.I.U. was happy to assist with its resources and networks, and draw attention to what was going on. At that point we were much influenced by the reading of Arie Graafland’s “The Socius of Architecture,” and fascinated by the arguments in his work, finding rich parallels for our own commitments.

In fact, Hofstede sent an invitation to Bien to join in the Bison Caravan, which already had contributors from Herbie Hancock, John Hiatt, Christian Denzler, Canvas International, Gillion Grantsaan, and others, including almost everyone from F.I.U. and FIUWAC circles. Venn diagrams showed amazing overlaps, but eventually became topologically too dense.

## THE NEW LIQUID MODERNISM OF THE SOCIUS ALLOWED FOR MUCH FREER INVOLVEMENTS

The text for the caravan was prepared in Amsterdam, and eventually produced as a publication in a small edition by Aksel Coruh, who made a very fine layout and choice of typography. He was still a student at the TU Delft of the Architectural Faculty. The Bison Caravan still wanders on and was destined for Poland after travels in Denmark, South of France, Mali and Brazil amongst others.<sup>48</sup>

As a kind of relief from the strain, black humour was occasionally necessary. Bien photographed the studio, strewn with material in preparation for the Grotfeldt book, and noted “time for the fire brigade to come.”

## DANGER.

In Indonesia, the Belgian ambassador Luc Darras, who had written to van de Ploeg and effectively launched a complaint to the Dutch Government

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This is a situation that has only recently changed because of the increase in information sites, and the use of the web for larger archival and education projects, the original intention of the web, the pages of which are now a CERN project to recover.

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Current information as of May 2018.

on official lines, became a member of the advisory board and Bien's trusted confidante. The continuing work on the Kloppenburg case was taking up more and more time in correspondence and necessary actions. Bien was indefatigable in writing to all parties concerned. The battle was joined, and the ministry in the Hague passed the book and put the responsibility squarely on the advice of the City of Amsterdam's "in-house" expertise, where it would remain for the next six years. Bien also kept the bank informed by sending on letters with regard to Kloppenburg, and bills to Brussels were now marked as invoices for work on the "social sculpture."

In her retirement, Anna Neervoort, the mother of Hilarius Hofstede, offered to work on the text, as she was previously a teacher of journalism and had exceptional command of English. Her work was an indispensable adjunct to the increase in production of books and writing from within the F.I.U.. Sebastiaan and Maren walked the beach in Holland holding their newborn infant. Bien had become a grandfather.

In April, Bien sent a long position document to the lawyer Dolf Rueb. Rueb also joined the advisory board of the F.I.U. at this time. The concept of the Artchive was worked out, and the initial part of my study on Kloppenburg looks at the formulation in detail.<sup>49</sup> However, the full notes to Rueb include Bien's most detailed spelling-out of the FIUWAC relations, Kloppenburg's "artchive," the process of social sculpture and the making of the visible. Bien argued, at page 11 of the manuscript, for a commitment of all artists to the public domain, and to a new ideal of sustainability. In the writing, he also rehearsed arguments that were needed to defend the claims of the "artchive" against destruction, and its intimate role in the renewal of the social and artistic. These ideas come out of Beuys' thinking, and Lehmbruck is also cited.

## SMOKING GUN OR ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM BUT IT IS STILL CAT AND MOUSE

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2002, Bien sent a sketch in writing of the FIUWAC Grotfeldt book. This reminded the bank of agreements and the process of writing. It stressed the relation to the acquisition of the Grotfeldt block for Triodos from 1999, with the specific entailments that were attached to the transaction. The time had arrived, and matters were well advanced. As he was leaving for America to continue work for some weeks with the FIUWAC, Bien wanted a letter from the bank to give to Walter Hopps, as much courtesy as record of what was going on. Bien had cannily intuited that a major donation from Hopps would be an extraordinary addition to the collection, and would link it to the whole pre-history of artistic modernism in Europe and America. He was not exactly dangling for a fish, but surely he kept his fingers crossed, and Hopps had made off-the-cuff suggestions to the effect that the FIUWAC would be a good place for things he had to "land." Mixed metaphors were, and remain, without apology, the order of the day.

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See chapters one and two in Healy, P., Bien, W., Kloppenburg, J., & Free International University. (2006). *Jacobus Kloppenburg: The Artchive for the Future*. Cologne: Wienand, pp. 29-67.



Triodos sent the following letter, signed by Steiner and Blom:

Dear Walter,

On behalf of the Triodos Bank I am writing to keep you up to date with the development of the FIUWAC, and the current discussion nearing completion, of the FIUWAC Trust, also, to send you our deepest thanks for your personal participation as the member of the advisory board. Thanks to the activity of the F.I.U. members in Amsterdam, many works of art are now in the collection, which we are hosting in our building in Zeist and also in Brussels.

To secure the ideals of the "social sculpture" as outlined in the document we published at the opening of our headquarters in Zeist we are forming a trust, which has the intention the development of publications and growth of the collection. As you know we already have a large number of works from Virgil Grotfeldt, and are pleased to hear that you have written the introduction to the study prepared by Patrick Healy.

It became increasingly clear that the outline for the trust was not something that the F.I.U. could support, and that the bank was using the trust's signing, and financial arrangements, as a parley point against further commitments, which would also include the publication of the work on Grotfeldt. Only Bien's action to present the bank with a *fait accompli* could de-rail the very "sneaky" game that was underway, which was really an old fashioned "take-over" bid disguised as moral economy. The trust would effectively sideline the F.I.U. and take its cue from Triodos. This seemed like the real direction they envisaged, which would by hook or by crook salve their ethical concerns. They sent the final proposal for the Trust in August 2002.

### **"FUTURE TO FUTURE" SINGING CAVES**

Hofstede set out another view in his document on the Bison Caravan. In a way it was as if the experience of what was taking place showed him that artists also needed to strike out in another direction. He wanted to start up the ancient migrations of the bison in the modern world, as an artist's herd, to combat the way everything was being fixed and controlled; and to bring back the magic of the cave in looking and seeing. The aim was to start and propel an art event like a herd on the move, and not to have the artifice of curatorship, but rather, and only, the inner human connections, or the constellation of the willing. The plea was to ignore culture as the flag of globalism. The need was to overcome extreme individualism, and to allow the primitive to well up in us, in art and music. But above all, the need was to go out into the open. It was an appeal, perhaps true to the need for actions that were not contemporary, that were really "out-of-joint."

## **"A COLLECTIVE RETURN TO THE BACKLANDS OF HUMAN CREATION."**

From Tel Aviv, Ernesto Levy sent works to FIUWAC. Given the intense barrage of matters to deal with, and the relations with the city, the bank and the ministry to juggle, including preparations for publications and correspondence, this was a welcome relief. as cataloguing the already accumulated material was not yet fully accomplished. Most of this work had, at the time, only the ready availability of Bien, and the hours I spent at the typewriter and in the archives.

From the Boijmans, Chris Dercon wrote van Beuningen to say that he would like his name to be added to the Committee for the protection of the Artchive for the Future. Edy de Wilde also wrote to say he wanted to pledge his support. This was all time-absorbing, and gathering names and informing people of the situation kept everyone busy for the rest of the year. The F.I.U. and FIUWAC now saw that the issue around the Artchive for the Future was the main struggle with which it must engage, "come hell or high water." All of the energy was taken up with the details of the collection now needed to flow towards the defence and protection of the Kloppenburg's work. The stand-off with the city would, of course, end some day. The idea to send everything to Moyland seemed to let them off of the line and responsibility. However, the recent death of Hans van der Grinten and need to work out details for storage and transport would take time, and it was still not clear how financial possibilities might change for the F.I.U. and give the whole situation another direction and possibility.

## **2003 BREAKING NEWS: KNOCK 'EM OUT WITH ARTWORKS**

In correspondence Bien remained optimistic. Given the degrees of social detail that he needed to cover, he was surprisingly on top of his brief. He saw the collection's expansion to Brussels and Bristol as a valuable development. Works were in preparation for Brussels, which included a drawing by Fellini - from my collection - and also works of Ernesto Levy, Piero Heliczer, Richard Stout, Nan June Paik, Hilarius Hofstede, Michael Rutkowski, Jean Planes, and Harry Hoogstraten. In January Bien travelled to Houston, made studio visits and renewed contact, which included a full meeting, on video, with Walter Hopps. This and the beginning of his study on Richard Stout's work augured well for the very strong support from Texas. In February / March, Bien noted that the way forward was to knock them out with art works. He enjoyed Texas and was hitching his boots on again. Having played snooker with Virgil and enjoying the different food and drink, he returned with wind in his sail. The chairs for Brussels were ready, he was developing the whole gamut of the boardroom instrumentation, and wanted them to eventually be in every boardroom in the world, to remind all concerned of flora and fauna and the responsibility of banking and business to the earth.



## **DIE LIEBE ERDE**

Bien wrote to Dornach and to Dr. Kugler, whom he thanked profusely for the Steiner loan to the FIUWAC, which he noted had developed well since 1999:

The idea of making the social sculpture visible is supported by many artists around the world and we have more than 1000 (thousand) art works on the walls now. After the building in Zeist we also loaded the Brussels building with spiritual and creative energy. Triodos is also doing well as you might know. In a process of extension towards a full European "green Bank" they will open a branch in Spain in 2004 as well. And more is of course on the way.

He requested more Steiner works, and his request was granted. He wrote in an exultant mood to Thomas Steiner, and also reminded the bank that no payments had been made for that year so far.

## **DANCE WITH THE LIGHT**

Bien took time to write to David Lebe, whose health was under duress from a challenged immune system. In the letter, Bien offered consolation to Lebe and his partner in life, Jack. It was also a letter in which he drew on the experience he had with the whale oil and the idea of freeing the photographic from the static, that he later worked through in various meetings and exchanges, with ideas and artists, that for him inevitably led towards a social sculpture. Bien saw a dance into the light in Lebe's work, and encouraged him to make his ideas more visible, to create a book. He sent him and Jack best wishes, whose work in the garden was also a dance. For Bien, all of this was a sculpture in process. He reminded Lebe that when they met in Philadelphia, as Bien worked on his Universal Bank project, that Lebe mentioned the sick and dying and the onslaught of AIDS, and said "how much love was created just because of this, and so much care." For Bien it was a sentence that he kept in his heart, and sometimes he observed that a positive result might only be in the future. As he wrote he surely had in mind the whole world in which his work was now deeply entangled. Work on the Grotfeldt book continued. Grotfeldt was awarded Artist of the Year in 2003 in Texas, and Bien let Steiner know that things were going on, and the bank had not paid any bills. This was late April 2003. Meanwhile the Bison Caravan set out from Denmark.

## **WHITE SHEET**

Bien's patience was exhausted. He wanted to go to Zeist and put a white sheet over one of the works to protest what he now saw as siege tactics to ensure that the trust would be signed (pardonable paranoia, given

the volatile exchanges with Blom and the irregularity of payment). It turned out to be a false alarm. There was a new building being erected in Zeist, payments had gone astray, and things were rectified again by mid May. Bien was still the acrobat on the wire. The high-risk game was not yet over and the various plates that he was spinning and juggling could all come crashing down around his feet. He knew this and went on. Everything was still at stake. In his deepest thinking he would even argue that a disaster was not the end, and even failure would one day be the ultimate vindication.

## AND THE WORLD CAN CHANGE IT CAN CHANGE LIKE THAT

He also knew that the atmosphere of the world had changed and the easy optimism of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had given way to a tense geo-political divide, to stagnation in the cultural world. Damien Hirst et al had assured the triumph of neo-pop art as business to business, they had taken up where Haring and Warhol left off. Hirst wanted to, perhaps, shoot Warhol through Francis Bacon, and himself as the product of that metamorphosis. What was at play in Hirst was something much more fascinating than a clever out-manoeuvring of the art world's forces and cynical usurpation for personal enrichment.

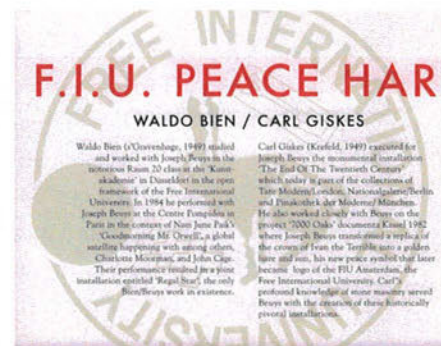
## CONSUMPTION SERIES / DESTRUCTION SERIES

As Gilles Deleuze noted in the conclusion of *Difference and Repetition*, the position of art had no other aesthetic problem than the insertion of art into everyday life. The reason for that was that even though everyday life appeared to become more standardised and accelerated the process of consumption, art needed to be injected into it in order to extract the little difference that plays between other levels of repetition, in order to make the extremes meet; namely the habitual series of consumption, and the instinctual series of destruction and death.

What Deleuze saw was that the role of art was to connect the tableau of cruelty with that of stupidity and to discover the schizophrenic clattering of jaws underneath consumption, and underneath the most ignoble destructions of war, still more processes of consumption.

Techniques of repetition that occur in contemporary art that could lead from the sad repetitions of habit, to that of a more profound memory, ultimately to a repetition of death in which freedom is played out, he thought was very visible in Warhol's Pop-Art that pushed the copy of the copy to the extreme point of reversal, thereby becoming a simulacrum. In Warhol's series all the repetitions of habit, memory and death are conjugated.

It was this territory of the insertion into everyday life and the relation of the double series of consumption and destruction and death that was the territory of Pop-Art. In Keith Haring's work, series became a differential of each other, involved and complicated by each other, explicated in their



Waldo Bien/Carl Giskes, F.I.U.  
Peace Hare, Exhibition Invitation.  
FIU Archive.



folding together. Money and death would meet perfectly, if Deleuze had lived long enough to see it, in the skull by Hirst shown in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

Warhol created the icons of consumption for consumption, the art audience was extended, and so was reputation, fame and money. Here is the source for the cult of banality and repetition. Schwitters first intuited what was going on, and named it Merz. The equivalence of money and art was the crucial equation, and Warhol's most monstrous progeny, Hirst et al, didn't need to think too much to spread the game.

## **EAU DE COLOGNE**

The production of the Grotfeldt book, with cost up to 69,000 euros, was underway. The correspondence with Wienand also contains full details of the layout, paper stock, and quality required. Wienand was committed to a work on the same level as the Bien book, and overall to create a series of handsomely produced catalogues and studies for the whole range of FIUWAC and F.I.U. activities. Bien saw all of this as the beginning. He wrote to Blom in June, to outline what was taking place, and to remind him of the agreement over the acquisition of the Grotfeldt block. Blom replied that he knew nothing about this, and neither did Thomas Steiner. Bien had also slightly muddled the communication by asking for a "lending" at the end of the letter, in the form of either a guaranteed purchase of the book, or credit for the production. It might have been more consequent to have stated that following our collective undertaking the book was now in production, costs are as follows, and request that they follow through with their side of the bargain.

Steiner and Blom took the politically well-known path of claiming they "know nothing about such an agreement etc.," because, in fact they were fully informed and had been reminded over the course of two years.

The following activities were all going on simultaneously: the Summer School in Normandy, the Bison Caravan arrived in Marseilles, Alfons Alt was doing a show on Nature, Bien had various court cases and litigations underway about previous works and ownership disputes, installations were being prepared for Bristol, the Kloppenburg was been signed for, the FIUWAC website was underway. The last three activities all depended on an answer from Zeist.

Franz Joseph van der Grinten celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Menil established a bi-annual Walter Hopps Curatorial Prize, which in this year was awarded to Roger Buergel. His interest was in the relation of aesthetics and people that attempted to organise themselves. His show on painting between vulgarity and the sublime made him the curator of choice for the award.

## IL GRAN RIFUTO

Bills sent from Wienand to Triodos in early July, were not acknowledged. A note dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, that was curt in tone and without details, was sent to Bien. Steiner sent Bien a copy of a letter from the publisher Wienand, with a bill that was incorrectly addressed to the bank, and further indicated that the letters should be re-directed to Bien, and he should take up the matter with Wienand.

The bank reneged on all agreements and voided all previous discussions. It was a massive and crushing refusal. The full text of the letter in Dutch to Bien, stated that there was nothing signed by the bank in response to the Grotfeldt book, and that they had in mind from the previous year to bring the FIUWAC collection to a standstill, until the trust was in place, and nothing further was to go on, without all of the necessary procedures of the trust being fulfilled. Steiner directly blamed Bien for the situation, and stated that the bank had invested more in FIUWAC than was originally their intention (no details given of this) etc. Bien wrote on the letter, "Oh dear."

Bien replied on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, and pointed out and refuted, paragraph by paragraph, each and every claim Steiner made, adding that what was at best a gross indication of deception that Steiner had written to Wienand, "‘Das buch ist uns (Triodos) völlig unbekannt.’ We Triodos, know nothing about the book."

## THANK YOU DARLING

What Steiner's letter to Bien clearly shows is that decisions were made in response to FIUWAC on the side of the bank that was never discussed directly with the board of FIUWAC, or with anyone in F.I.U.. Further, and this makes the letter more insidious and unpleasant, both Peter Blom and Thomas Steiner were fully aware of what a payment of 70,000 meant for Bien, as both of them had visited the atelier, and were aware of his day-to-day situation.

The tone of the letter, which had an implied command in it, showed previous non-disclosure and thus made a mockery of the commitment to open and honest, transparent and proper communication. The effort to wrong-foot Bien by the disclaimer sent to Wienand, made it look as if he had simply acted as some kind of maverick and had intentionally abused the bank's good offices. Further implications could no doubt be derived, even by a less than agile intelligence. Bien was put in a situation of potential "fraudulent" claim on Wienand, and the bank was happy to let him hang out to dry.

Almost at his wit's end, Bien thought that it would require direct sales of work, even works from the FIUWAC, to deal with such a sudden demand. He contacted a representative of Sotheby's to get some idea



of whether a public auction would be a good way to create funding. For a moment he started to wonder if the situation required a complete re-thinking of the nature of FIUWAC, and to turn it towards a kind of “venture” activity. The overwhelming sense from the documents is that he saw the arrogant manner of disclaiming responsibility and the binding nature of promise and commitment, as of a piece with the way problem, which could be solved, due to lack of rational discussion, grew and grew. He confided to the journal that with regard to the bank “I was truly shocked,” and then adds:

In the case of the Grotfeldt book I was not suffering as a victim of a broken deal, no, here I was suffering damage on both sides of the line; in fact there wasn't any choice for me. Without the much more than generous offer from Eliane to cover the bill with a serious loan (hypotheek) on her own house I would have been lost.  
(Thank you darling).

## **FORCE MAJEURE**

Steiner pressed for a reply of his long, earlier letter. Again, he set out the order of the day, a trust to be created and third money found, and then everything step-by-step. The problems around the book had to be solved by Bien and otherwise they could go no further, there is no reference to the bank having any responsibility and the letter inevitably applies more and more pressure to secure the agenda of the bank, which is finally more and more transparent, and distasteful both in tone and content.

By September the 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003, Bien arranged to travel to Wienand and make a one third of costs down-payment, through short term advances on the loan from Eliane, even from his own credit card and his mother, which was the green light to let the book go forward into production.

On the same day Steiner wrote again, pressing for an undertaking that FIUWAC activities would stop. The real implication was not only the need to cut Bien off at the pass, but to have in writing something that would prevent any liability arising, or, stemming possible litigation. Steiner and Blom realised that the situation could easily blow up in their faces, and resorted to asking a third party, agreeable to everyone, to sit down and discuss what was taking place. They approached Michiel Damen, who wrote to me out of the blue on Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup> of September.

I was informed that he would read the material between F.I.U. and bank; he wondered what organic future plan F.I.U. had. Further, he wondered why there were no websites, and one could not focus on other sources for support, although he noted there was suddenly 74,000 euros available. Damen undertook the task to act as the “honest broker,” initiated meetings, and so forth.

On September 23, Sotheby's wrote to say that they did not feel that they could realise good prices on the works offered in principle, as the market for conceptual art was low at the time. However, they urged the group to stay in contact. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, Bien buoyed by recent new donations and an encouraging letter from Virgil, but also by the intensity of working again on preparing material and writing notes on art works, taking up the so-called designation "conceptual" art for consideration, wrote a summary of the situation. We have a precious insight into the direct personal meaning of what was happening for a key "social actor," as sociology has it.

Bien understood from Damen that Steiner was very angry with him, and accepted that the situation with the bank was still tense. He thought it strange that they had not looked at the contract on the Grotfeldt block, where they would and could discover "I am not talking out of the blue." Bien for the first time lays the blame squarely on the shoulders of Thomas Steiner, whom he sees as blocking the signing of the Trust papers, "which is I think unfair." Bien felt the weight of the broken promise, not just as something for his own personal feeling, but thought of all the artists who had given so generously, and of the commitment that the FIUWAC was led to expect.

Of course there was no point in thinking about the person-on-person detail. Much had emerged in open social conversation. Dreams, hopes and expectations ran high, and in the manner of things a new future was also full of much that was imaginative, funny, ambitious, even out of the world. Many, many lives were involved, but most of all, and what was most discouraging and disheartening, was the fact that everything was moving along in such a special momentum that Bien knew that if it was lost, then it would take years and years to restore, if that was even possible. The good will and free creative enjoyment that had been so darkly distorted, would become mired down in pointless and pedantic questions and besieged by knowing advice, the usual sideline activity, when what were needed were expansiveness, hope, and above all, generosity and trust.

Damen's report on the communication and the relation with the bank absolutely failed to understand how the social process was engaged, and never took into account the actual facts of payments made and the implied relations, as well as the explicit values that were already published in the public domain. He did not find "contract" documents, and criticized Bien's manner of working with the bank. Yet, he never asked to go through the documents on the side of F.I.U., and made no research except to take the letters, some of which have been dealt with



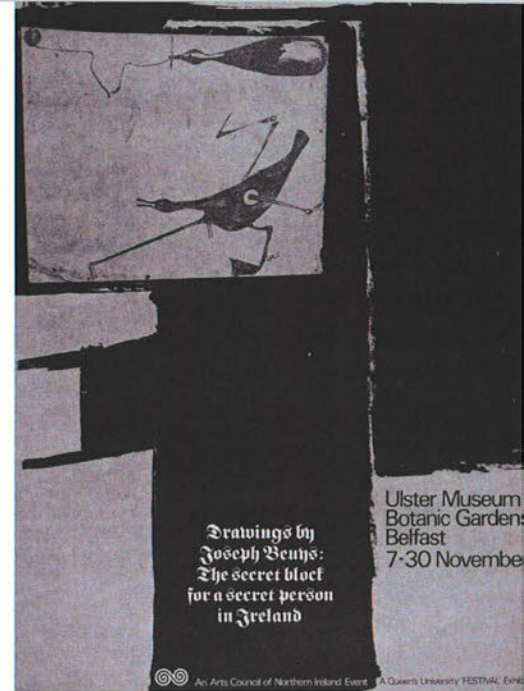
here, and effectively give what was, at best, a quick gloss on the bank's good intentions. He did this, however, without seeking a fuller grasp of the actual *Sitz im Leben*, and ultimately not addressing any of the issues germane not just to anthroposophical thinking but to the whole "social sculpture" and the living reality of people working together in good faith, and without either accountants or lawyers on their back like shadows from the other side.

The report sent from Enschede on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, denied what it in fact achieved, "Beste Waldo, misschien word je van het bovenstaande boos en verdrietig, en denk je dat ik door mijn observaties so kritisch of schrift te stellen, je van de wal in sloot help." (Dear Waldo, maybe you'll become very angry and sad from the above, and that putting my my critical observations in writing, I may be putting you in a tight corner) If Bien had not thought of that, then surely he might well conclude from the lack of real research on the side of Damen that the role of "honest broker" was fatally flawed. However, much he has appreciated this "generous man" and the years of support he gave.

In October Bien went to New York, and the book on Virgil was launched at the Jason McCoy Gallery, where Hopps was in attendance. The Hopps' curated Rosenquist exhibition opened at the Guggenheim the previous evening, and Hopps was elated and moved. Finally, an artist whose career he had followed for over fifteen years, the following night, Virgil Grotfeldt, whose work fascinated him, was receiving a study and exhibition that Hopps felt was only his due.

Bien could take stock. It was a long time since he set out for Düsseldorf in October 1970, where he left behind the commune atmosphere of Hans Veneman's artistic gathering. Veneman kept goats and other animals in the house, and pleaded for a free expression. There is a photograph of Bien, Veneman and the "charming Cecile" with goats in a room, and on the wall a poster that proclaimed, "I want peace." It was not the summer of love, but certainly, for anyone from Maastricht, an autumn of fellow feeling. In Bien's memory, Veneman was like the experience of a pre-F.I.U.. Looking back it really must have seemed like the freedom of being young, and so starkly contrasted with the morass of red tape in which he was now entangled, that it was remarkable how he could still go on. He did.

After a pause and a detailed reply, the meeting for the Trust was agreed, and Bien accepted a new meeting with Steiner that Damen brokered, that followed a meeting on the 27 the October, in which the issue of the book was not raised, and the matter seemed to settle toward discussing problems of language and how to go on.



Catalogue.  
Drawings by Joseph Beuys.  
"The secret block for a secret person in Ireland".  
Belfast 1974. FIU Archive.

In November *de Volkskrant* carried an article explaining how Triodos was now investing in oil and cars, which it had not done previously, as it was using a new step-by-step approach to sustainability. If the mountain will not visit Mohamed, then Mohamed will visit the mountain.

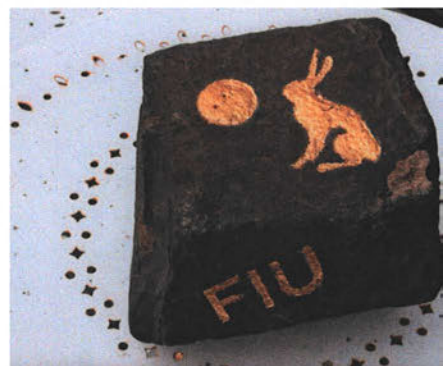
In November of that same year, 2003, a long article appeared which questioned if the Triodos Bank was anthroposophical or not. The article appeared in the journal *Motief*.

The article has a valuable interview with Lex Bos, who situated the bank's development in the very background that was also that of Bien, and was Beuys world, the results of the Prague Spring, the student revolt in Paris in 1968, and the effort to found a new anthroposophical bank in Bochum. Bos thought a similar initiative could take place in Holland. With Rudolf Mees, Adriaan Dura and Dieter Brüll they got going. By pooling money from existing anthroposophical groupings they formed a kind of "credit-union" system, and went on from there.

It was only in 1978 when they took the step to legally become a bank. For two years there was discussion with the De Nederlandse Bank on how to set up a bank based on anthroposophical principle. It was like a "reform" movement within the church of money and Rosicrucian ideals, or as with Steiner and Blavatsky, a reform within Freemasonry. This was a curious, controlled experiment that used the GLS bank in Bochum as a model, and wanted the idea of an open bank for everyone etc. The details of many of the forms they tried to discuss could not be judicially sorted.

In their statutes they included the need for an anthroposophical-oriented governor of the bank to have a place. They also made explicit the reference to Rudolf Steiner in "art. 6.2," and stated that this was the source for workers of the bank in fulfilling their task. That article was scrapped in April 1999, and a more generalised statement was made, which included that the bank had the Christian and Steinerian reform as an inspiration for their work, but that the bank was in all freedom related to Steiner's anthroposophical work. In all "freedom" was a way of also indicating a cherry picking approach, or more correctly, a pure "pragmatism" that would have revolted Steiner to the core. There was no need for obscure semiotics, as the bank was intent on shaking its own hand.

The bank's own date of foundation then became 1980. In the larger banking world it was seen as a small niche market development, with curious ideals. There was considerable scepticism about its survival. The role of volunteers gave way to the professionalising of the bank. Peter Blom, who was a volunteer worker, rose to become the General Director by the age of 44. Blom directed the bank toward co-operation with Delta



Sculpture, Carl Kieskes and Waldo Bien, Peace Hare, Gilt and Basalt.



Lloyd, and towards wind energy investment. There was also a deeper identification with ecological and green politics. The bank became known as “green,” and attracted now over 60% of its investments from clients with no anthroposophical orientation or signature. Blom was heard to express the fear that the growth of the bank would end up seeing it, just like any other major concern, and lose its character.

In the same article, Blom spelled out that the role of the bank was to help those who freely wanted to work with others, and needed the means to do so. The bank was not a closed club. It grew out of initiatives of those who wanted to better society. It was really important, Blom stressed, that the bank work with people in full spiritual view of what is better for mankind, and with those who wanted to bring about spiritual development in the human situation. The approach was not ideological, and the bank could work with people of no anthroposophical interest and yet retain a holistic approach that was directed to the essential anthroposophical background.

Blom added that the bank was not, however, Anthroposophia, and its own essence came from itself, no matter how strong the previous ties were with Steiner and so on. Blom noted the brief history of the Triodos that started with concern for people, planet and profit. There was the threefold concern that mirrored the Steinerian threefold. PPP. People Planet Profit. Leaving all abstractions aside, the bank was there, according to Blom, to help those with initiatives for societal renewal. In this regard, he claimed, lay the unique hallmark of the bank, and on which it stood or fell.

## COMETH THE DAY COMETH THE HOUR

The F.I.U. Amsterdam rejected the bank’s proposed arrangement. After five years we had reached an impasse. F.I.U. Amsterdam did not believe in their good intentions and objected to the force majeure of the negotiations. We retained our right to go on according to the details of our understanding, and in loyalty to the principles of the F.I.U. from over forty years earlier.

## CONCLUSION

Like scenes at the end of Poe’s, *Arthur Gordon Pym*, there was a floating malaise in the city of Amsterdam that an official commission identified, which saw the loss of reputation, the failure to capitalise on its architectural heritage, and of actual investment in the art, noting that 26 million euro was needed as a minimum. The main task, however, was to re-image the city for a tourist bonanza. Meanwhile, the Triodos Bank reported healthy profits and growth, and opened a branch in Spain, with an ambition to become a Europe-wide bank. Bien and F.I.U. worked on the case of the *Artchive of the Future*, and the story is reported in the Kloppenburg publication up to 2006. It was not possible to enter into the Trust arrangements proposed by Triodos, the relationship with

the bank crucially went on ice, and Blom and Steiner showed their frustration in long, often delayed and intermittent, correspondence that resided from earlier agreements and subjected Bien, in person, to derisory and unpleasant comment. Despite all the very best efforts, the containers of the *Artchive of the Future* were destroyed by the City of Amsterdam, and the last appeal launched at the Biennale collateral event, organised by the Baroness Lucrezia Domizio Durini fell on deaf ears, that was documented and published in the *RISK* magazine produced for the event, in May 2008.

There are of course stories within stories, but sometimes a close and simple account tells what needs to be known. The trust between the bank and F.I.U. was broken. Kloppenburg's archive was burnt and destroyed. By the start of 2009 the question of removing the whole collection from Zeist arose. Thanks to the Verbeke Foundation in Antwerp it was possible to do so. From there the destruction, waste, devastation was more clearly seen, and yet also the will to go on, the new generation coming into place.

Walter Hopps, Virgil Grotfeldt, Charlie Stagg, Ira Cohen, were all deceased. Bien lost his mother, his son Hendrik, and Virgil all in the same year. He spent more and more time with his grandchildren. In a story that will be told again and from other viewpoints, a pavilion of sea-containers was being built to house a permanent Kloppenburg exhibition in Antwerp, FIUWAC as in the old days of the F.I.U. in Düsseldorf will have its "office" there and collection houses. Bien goes on. Kloppenburg is still active. Bien has new energy and engagements in Normandy; the collection remains parked, awaiting the next part of its journey onwards. That it may prosper and give further inspiration is my sincerest hope.

Amsterdam August 2018



**Fiutures**, in Triodos Bank Headquarters, Zeist.

30<sup>th</sup> August 2001

Triodos Fiutures 124; 300 x 230; "In Triodos Fiutures we trust," & "Ethical investments can make profits," signed "Waldo Bien 2000." [Bien].

Triodos Fiutures 125; 300 x 230; Avocado cut-out, skin, laid on telephone page from Houston Texas directory, stamped red "K" numbered, with black skeleton stamp, all enclosed within polythene envelope. Part of series produced in Houston Texas, November 1997. Studio Grotfeldt. Pencil inscription: "19 11 97 H -1420." [Kloppenburg]

Triodos Fiutures 126, 300 x 230; Pressed & dried Texas Clover laid on telephone page from Houston Texas directory, stamped red "K" numbered, with black skeleton stamp, all enclosed within polythene envelope. [Kloppenburg]

Triodos Fiutures 127: 300 x 230; Avocado cut-out, laid on telephone page from Houston Texas directory, stamped red "K" numbered, all enclosed within polythene envelope. Pencil inscription: "19 11 97 H -1430." [Kloppenburg]

Triodos Fiutures 128; 300 x 230; A dried & pressed tree-leaf, skin, laid on telephone page from Houston Texas directory, stamped red "K" numbered, with black skeleton stamp, all enclosed within polythene envelope. Part of series produced in Houston Texas, November 1997 Studio Grotfeldt. Sketch/ Inscription in biro by Kloppenburg. [Kloppenburg]

Triodos Fiutures 129; 300 x 230; Photograph of artist by Waldo Bien laid on telephone page from Houston Texas directory, stamped red "K" numbered, all enclosed within polythene envelope. Ink marker inscription by Bien: "Houston Texas Nov 1997 Studio Grotfeldt Height Blvd 1226." [Kloppenburg]

Triodos Fiutures 130; 480 x 1400; "Bateau Ivre," foam-board with miscellaneous inscriptions formerly on Bien working desk at Lauriergracht, 123., on ship-shape parchment inset, containing Beuys Hauptstrom stamp, onlaid cut-out of former DDR flag, top-left corner. [Bien].

Triodos Fiutures 131; 420 x 310; "Picti," with flying hair, blue pigment and black ink on recycled & purple-brown dyed paper, stamped "PH." [Healy].

Triodos Fiutures 132; 310 x 420; "Fir Bolg," on recycled paper, stamped "PH." Polythene envelope. [Healy].

Triodos Fiutures 133; 300 x 220; Pencil drawing on paper: heads in profile & figuration, possible self-portraits, double horned figure, reduction alphabet & marginalia. In polythene envelope. [Kloppenburg].

Typescript of listing of  
FIUTURES, 30th August 2001.  
William Laffin, Waldo Bien,  
Patrick Healy. FIU Archive.

**SOCIAL SCULPTURE IN PRACTICE:  
JOSEPH BEUYS, WALDO BIEN AND THE  
FREE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY WORLD  
ART COLLECTION, A REPORT**

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Dutch Chamber of Commerce 34206245

**DOI**

<https://doi.org/10.31182/001>



