

Space for Actualisation Concept

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Space for Actualisation Hamburg

- *»The true method of bringing past things to one's mind, is, to imagine them in our space (not us in theirs). (...) The things, imagined that way, do not allow any mediating construction from »greater views.«* Walter Benjamin, »Das Passagen-Werk« (GS Vol. V-1, p.273)

The Space for Actualisation is a non-commercial art- and exhibition project in Hamburg, initiated by Nina Köller (Berlin) and Kerstin Stakemeier (Hamburg). It deals with the present of that past, which remained unfulfilled, and looks back onto it with one specific interest: to not allow the loss of the past to the present. Instead fragments of the past will be actualised in the space itself.

Over a time-span of twelve months, twelve artists, artist-groups, musicians and producers without profession are invited to, each for one month, realise an actualisation. A fragment is dissected from its role in historicity – an artwork, an invention, an event – to pull it into the present, to find out what the consequences of its actualisation are.

»The past carries with it a hidden index, through which it is hinted towards redemption.« Walter Benjamin, »Über den Begriff der Geschichte«, (GS Vol. I.2, p.693)

The Space for Actualisation aims at reviving possibilities still unexhausted, and to equip their potential for liberation with renewed vigour. The fragment, which is to be saved here for a moment is freed from the ties of its original function for the prevailing narrative in which it is incorporated, to allow for other narratives and other presents. The actualisation opens up forgotten perspectives onto an emancipated human kind, on alternative ends to the past. To not give up history is the aim of the actualisation.

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»Admittedly, only redeemed mankind will be able to fully grasp their past (...): only for the redeemed mankind their past will become quotable in each moment.« Walter Benjamin, »Über den Begriff der Geschichte«, (GS Vol. I.2, p. 694)

To grasp in the direction of an unfulfilled past at present seems to be the only alternative to resignation. Where in a revolutionized history each moment of the past would refigure actualised, in the unrevolutionised present only fragments are reconfigurable. The Space for Actualisation isolates such fragments. The projects realized in it deal with elements of a revolution postponed at present.

Walter Benjamin formulates in his text »Über den Begriff der Geschichte« a critique of a linear concept of progress, which orients itself towards the possible rescue of the past. The redemption, of which he speaks, the revolutionization of the world itself, would be that of its history, an ongoing actualization of its past in its present. According to Benjamin only that history is rescued which is actualized, which is addressed by the present and not just passivised in its justificatory function for past and present rule. The Space for Actualisation deals with those anchor-points in the past.

»Because it is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to get lost which each present which does not recognize itself as being addressed by it.« Walter Benjamin, ›Über den Begriff der Geschichte‹, (GS Vol. I.2, p.695)

In the Space for Actualisation we want to collectively produce against this loss. If in text- in objects- in actions- or in varying forms, the actualized historical fragments are in each of those actions set free from their role in the dominant historiography, if only for that moment. They change their status and become starting point of new productions, new histories. They are no longer limited to being references to past ideas, but become eigenständige continuations. No matter if those refer to an artwork, a scientific finding or a song, the result in the Space for Actualization is a production, which starts spinning a new thread through history. The aims of the Space for Actualisation are the rescue of lost beginnings and the unlocking of new endings.

»The idea of a progress of mankind on history is inseparable from the idea of a homogeneous and empty progression through time. The critique of the idea of this progression has to be the foundation of a critique of the idea of progress as such.« Walter Benjamin, ›Über den Begriff der Geschichte‹, (GS Vol. I.2, p.701)

The Space for Actualization wants to produce possibilities to see more about where history was interrupted, where it stopped making sense, where it ran on empty and where it was prevented from its realization. With each project an

archive will be produced, materials on the actualized and the actualisation will be collected and with this with every fragment a new grid of concrete counterings of historiography is established. Each project, each actualisation, denies, that the past is terminated and produces the past anew, as the present.

»The conscience to force open the continuum of history, is characteristic to the revolutionary classes in the moment they take action. The Great Revolution introduced a new calendar. The day with which this calendar starts, operates as a historical historic time-lapse.« Walter Benjamin, ›Über den Begriff der Geschichte‹, (GS Vol. I.2, p.701)

As a revolutionary social movement seems to be absent at present, and the classes, for which Benjamin still hoped, situated themselves to become parts of the ruling system instead of their enemy, the actualisations at present are limited to those fragments. Those grasping for the historical fragments are not the classes but the individual commitments to a perspective of general emancipation. The importance of the actualized fragments therefore is given in the act of actualization itself, in the potentials it holds for the present, not in their role in world history as such. The Space for Actualization begins with an idea, a quote and produces from there new commitments. From the space we want to start past and present connections, objects, texts, workshops, lectures, discussions. From here on.