

# *The Crime Scene of Representation*

A Case Study of the Visual Identity of  
the Exhibition Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014

Laura Kokkonen



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Master's Thesis  
Curating, Managing and Mediating Art  
Department of Art  
School of Arts, Design, and Architecture  
Aalto University  
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# Abstract

In this thesis, I have researched the visual identity of the exhibition *Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 – Crime Scene* that I co-curated with Henna Paunu and Janne Koski. The exhibition at Rauma Art Museum presented fifteen contemporary art projects that addressed issues of crime and punishment; activism; ethics; and social justice. In my research I have analyzed two images which were part of the exhibition's visual identity, designed by Kasino Creative Studio. They presented the face of a young black woman partially covered with white crime scene tape. During and after the exhibition's parallel Migrating Art Academies laboratory event curated by Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez, the images were criticized for contradicting the aims of the exhibition, and for reproducing a stereotype of the black female subject. I have looked into how the debate about the images came into being, and have also suggested parallel readings of the images with the help of postcolonial and feminist theories on representation. I claim that rather than being stereotypes, the *Crime Scene* images enable multiple interpretations. They can be thought of as representations of subalternity and as such, are simply a surface for employing similar representational strategies that are in use within contemporary art. From this starting point, I then research the problematic power relations of such representations. The research question of the thesis is twofold: in what sense are the images of this particular case study representations of subalternity, and what problems generally emerge from representing subalternity within contemporary art? The questions then extend to more universal discussions on representation within political contemporary art. The main finding of the thesis is that artistic and curatorial methods that call for greater visibility for subaltern and precarious subjects rarely take into account the power relations of agencies within such representational processes. From this standpoint, I suggest that instead of *speaking for* "the other", artists and curators should engage in investigating counter-hegemonic artistic strategies that would lead to *hearing* or *speaking to* the subaltern.



# *Tiivistelmä*

Olen tutkinut tässä opinnäytteessä Henna Paunun ja Janne Kosken kanssa kuratoimani näyttelyn *Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 – Crime Scene* visuaalista identiteettiä. Rauman taidemuseossa järjestetty näyttely esitteli viisitoista nykyaideprojektia, jotka käsittelivät rikoksen ja rangaistuksen, aktivismin, etiikan ja oikeiden mukaisuuden aiheita. Tutkimuksessani olen analysoinut kahta Kasino Creative Studion näyttelyn visuaalista identiteettiä varten suunnittelemaa kuvaa. Kuvat esittävät nuoren tummaihoisen naisen osittain valkoisen rikospaikkanauhan peittämänä. Näyttelyn rinnalla järjestettiin Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadezin kuratoima työpaja, Migrating Art Academies -laboratorio, jonka aikana ja jälkeen näitä kuvia kritisoitiin; kuvien väitettiin olevan ristiriidassa näyttelyn tavoitteiden kanssa ja toistavan stereotyyppiä mustista naisista. Opinnäytteessäni olen tutkinut miten kuvia koskeva debatti syntyi ja ehdottanut rinnakkaisia lukutapoja postkoloniaalisten ja feminististen teorioiden avulla. Sen sijaan että kuvat tulkittaisiin pelkästään stereotyyppinä, väitän että tulkintamahdollisuuksia on useampia. Kuvia voi ajatella toisen tai alistetun (”subaltern”) representaatioina, ja sellaisina ne ovat vain yksi esimerkki siitä miten samankaltaiset representaation tavat esiintyvät laajemmin poliittisessa nykyaiteessa. Tämä on lähtökohtanani, kun tutkin näiden representaatioiden taustalla toimivia ongelmallisia valtasuhteita. Opinnäytteen tutkimuskysymys on kaksiosainen: millä tavoin tämän tapaustutkimuksen representaatiot edustavat ”alistettuja”, ja toisaalta mitä ongelmia ”alistettujen” esittämisestä nykyaiteessa yleensä seuraa? Nämä kysymykset laajenevat yleisempään keskusteluun representaatiosta poliittisessa nykyaiteessa. Opinnäytteen keskeisiä päätelmiä on, että sellaiset taiteelliset menet, jotka pyrkivät ”toisten” ja ”alistettujen” suurempaan näkyvyyteen, ottavat vain harvoin huomioon tällaisten representaatioprosessien sisältämät valtasuhteet. Tästä näkökulmasta ehdotan, että ”toisten” *puolesta puhumisen* sijaan taiteilijoiden ja kuraattorien tulisi sitoutua tutkimaan keinoja vastustaa vallitsevaa hegemoniaa tavalla, joka johtaisi ”alistettujen” *äänien kuulemiseen* tai *heille puhumiseen*.



Cover Image

*Detail of the Crime Scene exhibition invitation designed by Kasino Creative Studio.*

Proofreading

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*The annexes that are necessary for comprehending the thesis are layouted between the text pages. The rest of the annexes are listed in a separate section in the end. The annexes have not been edited or proofread but are reproduced in their original textual form.*



# *Contents*

1 Introduction	7
2 Research Material	11
2.1 The Exhibition and Its Preconditions	11
2.2 The Exhibition's Visual Identity and Its Reception	19
2.3 The Laboratory and the Images	28
2.4 The Debate after the Laboratory	36
2.5 The Benevolent Humanists	43
3 Research Methodology	49
3.1 Methodologies	49
3.2 Some Words on the Context in Finland	51
3.3 Partial Perspectives	53
4 Representation and the Subaltern	57
4.1 Stereotyping Otherness	57
4.2 Subalternity	61
4.3 Precarity	65
4.4 The Double Session of Representations	67
4.5 Political Art and the Ethics of Representation	71
5 Overtures	74
5.1 On Pessimism	74
5.2 Doubts	77
5.3 The Body and the Gaze	81
5.4 The Mask of Identity	86
5.5 The Mask of the Mercenary	89
6 Conclusions	91
Annex	93
Bibliography	105



# 1 Introduction

I wrote my first research plan for this master's thesis in fall 2013. The only remnants of that piece of writing is the subject of the case study I am dealing with: the exhibition *Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 – Crime Scene*. The plan was written almost one year before the exhibition took place, and now summer 2015 is one year after the exhibition. The fact that the exhibition and its discourses altered the direction of my research—I was originally planning to research artistic labor—proves that contemporary art and the field of curating are today intrinsically social practices. Something unexpected happened on site that brought me to research the problematics of representation.

When I began the process of co-curating the *Crime Scene* exhibition, I was simultaneously thinking about post-representational exhibition strategies together with other Curating, Managing and Mediating Art (CuMMA) master's program students and teachers Henna Harri, Riikka Haapalainen and Nora Sternfeld. I considered one of the goals of the exhibition was to make a difference and do something “beyond representation”, as defined by Sternfeld as methods of post-representational strategies.<sup>1</sup> I thought this could be achieved with socially engaged, site-specific projects—some of which indeed took place and were successful. Still, it was not until the *Crime Scene* exhibition had opened that I truly found myself embedded within the questions of post-representational curating that Sternfeld and Luisa Ziaja proposed in 2012: Who is acting? What is the time for the curatorial? Where do we want to go by overcoming representation?<sup>2</sup>

The exhibition ended up including both representational and post-representational elements. That I realized the urgency of dealing with post-representational questions was propelled by the moments of coming together before the exhibition for installation, and for the collateral Migrating Art Academies laboratory event. I was not involved in the production at that point, so I had the rare opportunity to observe the situation from a distance. What we had planned for months, together with the exhibition's working team, generated reactions that were unexpected. This was one of the key post-representational moments of the exhibition. It proved for me that such curatorial strategies do not have to mean intellectual tricks, nor do they have to be seen only in the end result of an exhibition, but they are also helpful as attitudes that reshape processes and working methods each time anew. These insights are the basis of this thesis that nevertheless is not about post-representation, but once again rethinks representation.

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1 See Sternfeld 2013.

2 Sternfeld & Ziaja 2012, 24; Together with the CuMMA students, we curated the exhibition *AYE / NAY / ABSENT – a collection of realities* (13.11.2013–2.3.2014, EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art) that was completely post-representational in relation to artworks. *Crime Scene* on the other hand was about to represent artistic projects, so Sternfeld's and Ziaja's questions had a very different entry point for me within this project.



The thesis looks into the the visual identity of the exhibition from the starting point of the discussions that emerged before, during and after the opening of the exhibition *Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 – Crime Scene*. It took place at Rauma Art Museum in southwest Finland, from June 14 to September 14, 2014. I co-curated an exhibition of fifteen artistic projects together with Rauma Art Museum director Janne Koski and curator Henna Paunu. Artist Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez curated the parallel laboratory event in collaboration with Lithuanian-based organization MigAA (Migrating Art Academies). The laboratory took place around the opening of the exhibition, from June 11-18, 2014. Kasino Creative Studio's Pekka Toivonen and Antti Grundstén designed the exhibition's visual identity.

This thesis situates itself in the tradition of curatorial studies. It combines practical experiences with theoretical issues and employs artistic and scientific research methodologies. It is firstly a case study of two images but also a reflection on a curatorial project. A vast collection of writings and images related to the exhibition accompany the thesis and serve as background material. The context is outlined, as are the general framework and conditions for curating an international contemporary art exhibition, defined by scattered communication and precarious labor. By analyzing the two images that functioned as the exhibition poster and invitation, I respond to the debate they caused.

The background material of the thesis outlines and dismantles the chaotic field-work of this particular exhibition process. It serves as an insight into my process diary, correspondence and debates online and offline, from my perspective as a freelance curator. All the texts that I am aware of that have been published about the exhibition and its discourses after its opening are reproduced here—this excludes newspaper articles that were completely based on press releases, to avoid repetition. The reason for such an inclusive reproduction is to enable the reader to form a multidimensional overall picture of the events.<sup>3</sup> This thesis presents my point of view of the events, and is therefore inevitably limited by my perspective. By including all the related public texts and comments that I know of, I try to counter the one-sidedness of the thesis. By bringing the related material together, I also aim to add to the limited and narrow discussions on postcolonialism within Finnish contemporary art.

In order to understand what the two images of the exhibition's visual identity meant beyond the actual events and texts related to this particular exhibition, the thesis makes use of writings on representation and power relations that originate from feminist and postcolonial discourses of the late 20th century. The postcolonial literary theorist Gayatri

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3 If a translation was available, the reproduced texts are in English. In the case of no translation, the texts are unfortunately only in Finnish. Citations that I refer to directly in the thesis are translated by the author. The long article by Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez is not reproduced, because it can be easily accessed online and it is widely referred to in Chapter 5.1. There is also one text in Lithuanian that is not reproduced. It is an interview with the Cooltūristės group and can be read here: <http://literaturairmenas.lt/1983-daile/3128-zali-zmogeliukai-geles-ir-rusiai-coolturisciu-ispudziai-is-raumos-baltijos-bienales> (accessed on: 30 June 2015). It is also possible that I am not aware of some discussions on private Facebook accounts that took place outside of my social media circles.



Chakravorty Spivak's understanding of the term subalternity functions as the central concept of the thesis. With the help of Spivak and other writings that shape the theoretical background for the thesis, I try to find out how positions of subalternity and precarity come into being within contemporary art exhibition discourses. In light of this theoretical background, I suggest that the *Crime Scene* images are, above all, representations of subalternity, but they only scratch the surface of the ways in which similar representational strategies are used within contemporary art. The extensive discussions in cultural theory on difference and otherness form the basic framework for detailing the problems that emerge when representing otherness and subalternity within political contemporary art.

Exhibitions that deal with social and political issues often fall in the trap of either trying to speak for "the other" or being indifferent to who is setting the framework in which "the other" could speak. This is in spite of the long-standing critical research on otherness as a concept that is constructed by hegemonic discourses that build majority and minority identities. Otherness has been an important philosophical concept since Hegel, but as a key framework of this thesis, it is mainly understood from the critical perspective of cultural theory since the late 20th century. As supported by the thesis research, artistic strategies that call for greater visibility of the subaltern rarely take into account the power relations behind such representational processes.

The problems of representing the other sit in the very core of the act of exhibiting and of this thesis: who speaks, for whom, and who sets the stage for the speech? Who presents and who is represented? In general, those who have the power to speak and create representations are the most privileged, and those who are spoken for and represented by others are less privileged. The act of representation is an act of power and therefore comes with ethical responsibilities, as I will later elaborate upon with the support of various theorists. I research how contemporary art exhibition discourses bring forward the concepts of difference and otherness. From this foundation, I will also suggest alternative concepts and points of views when considering the representational in this particular case study.

Ethics is classically understood as systematizing concepts of right and wrong. The debate about the images and representation in general cannot be merely subtracted to this classic definition, in the sense of if it was right or wrong to produce and publish the images. Tolerance of the images is a question of attitudes, responsibilities and positions, not only moralities. Nevertheless, both the exhibition and the debate called ethics into question, and that is why they demarcated the curator as an ethical subject and agent; the case suggests that curators and artists alike are not able to fulfil the ethical demands that are laid for them, as the current circumstances for contemporary art production create several challenges for acting consciously. Curating is an endless set of negotiations. The position of a curator is therefore always unsettled and unruly, and no curator can dictate the ethical choices of their project alone. Each exhibition process offers a possibility for unlearning and rethinking.

The thesis begins with a chapter that presents the context of the case study, the exhibition *Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 – Crime Scene*, and goes through the related events.





*Théâtre Pouk (Riikka Kosonen & Marie Papon) performing "Crime Scenes I" in the exhibition opening. Photo by Titus Verhe.*

Then I move on to the methodology and wider context of the thesis, bringing forward the issues related to the case that sit below the surface of the public texts and general events. After that, I deal with the main theoretical frameworks of the thesis that also answers the first part of the thesis' research question: in what sense are the images of this particular case study representations of subalternity. These aspects—the case of the images and the theoretical discussions—come together in the latter half of the thesis in which I analyze and reflect the unsettled arguments around representation and the field of political art. By bringing together alternative thoughts on the issue, I suggest an answer to the second part of the research question: what problems generally emerge from representing subalternity within contemporary art. From the point of view of the theoretical frameworks at hand, the main conclusion of the thesis is that instead of *speaking for* “the other”, artists and curators should engage in investigating counter-hegemonic artistic strategies that would lead to *hearing* or *speaking to* the subaltern.



## 2 *Research Material*

Theses classically begin with a theory that is followed by supporting material. As this thesis is an applied case study, it is relevant to begin with general events—the context of the thesis—to better understand the storyline that is the subject of the research. After the descriptive story, I move on to the main theoretical problems and questions of the thesis. This order enables me to combine material and theory from early on.

In this chapter I will retrace the developments of the exhibition's discourses. I map out the events that form the background for the research as neutrally as possible. The more partial overview follow in later chapters. Due to the aforementioned thesis approach, this descriptive chapter is also clearly from my perspective as the curator of the exhibition and the researcher of the thesis. Because I have participated in creating the material that I research, a truly objective point of view is out of the thesis' reach and aims. Consequently, the thesis' main target is to prove that there are multiple possible interpretations for the *Crime Scene* images, and that they are a conceptually interesting starting point to think about power relations in representation within contemporary art in general.

### 2.1 *The Exhibition and Its Preconditions*

*Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 – Crime Scene* was part of an international exhibition series that has taken place in the Rauma Art Museum since 1985. The series of exhibitions developed from the first *Biennale of Gulf of Bothnia (Pohjanlahden biennale)* which was held in 1977. In 1985, the biennial was expanded to cover the whole Baltic Sea region and since 1990 it has been curated according to current themes in contemporary art. The series of exhibitions and its publications provide a perspective on several decades of cultural and social change along with developments in contemporary art in the Baltic Sea region. Over the years, the themes of the exhibitions have particularly emphasized ecological and environmental concerns and the issues of human life at the levels of the individual and the community.

The participating artists of the *Crime Scene* exhibition were based in ten countries around the Baltic Sea. The artists were Aram Bartholl (Germany), Inga Erdmane (Latvia), Evgenia Golant (Russia), Stine Marie Jacobsen (Denmark/Germany), JP Kaljonen (Finland), Karel Koplímets (Estonia), Haidi Motola (Finland) and Dorota Nieznalska (Poland). The artist duos were Group Helm (Liisi Eelma and Minna Hint, Estonia), Geir Tore Holm & Søsja Jørgensen (Norway), NUG & Pike (Sweden), Théâtre Pouk (Riikka Kosonen & Marie Papon, France/Finland) and Lauri Rotko and Jukka Rapo (Finland), and the artist groups were Cooltūristēs (Lithuania) and Telekommunisten (Germany).



Their projects were connected to the phenomena of activism; civil participation; environmental crimes and issues; anarchism; and social agency in contemporary art practices; along with more traditional artistic methods that contributed to questions of morality, law, crime and punishment as a part of art and human behaviour.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of the collateral laboratory event that Gerardo Montes de Oca de Valadez curated was to explore the *Crime Scene* theme of the exhibition theoretically and expand its concerns to actual activism and participation beyond representation. The laboratory included lectures, debates, and the construction of an experimental art exhibition in the vaulted basement of the art museum. The participants of the laboratory included nine artists of the biennial—Minna Hint, Liisi Eelmaa, JP Kaljonen, Inga Erdmane, Stine Marie Jacobsen, Haidi Motola and three members of Cooltūristēs—and external curators and artists Ahmed Al-Nawas, David Muoz, Aino Korvensyrjä and Giovanna Esposito Yussif. The artist Carolina Trigo was the key lecturer and tutor of the laboratory. The laboratory is comprehensively presented in the third Migrating Art Academies volume *Displace* (2015).

The exhibition's curatorial process began in March 2013, when Henna Paunu and Janne Koski asked me to join in the curatorial team. Paunu and Koski had curated the last six *Rauma Biennale Balticum* exhibitions together.<sup>5</sup> We decided on the theme quite quickly, and as a key objective of the biennial was to reflect the contemporary issues in art around the Baltic Sea, we decided to focus on activism and political concerns that were widely dealt with by contemporary artists. The preliminary concept evolved later—partly due to the title *Crime Scene* suggested by Henna Paunu—and crime became a central topic. Traditionally, the *Rauma Biennale Balticum* exhibitions have been strongly based on individual artists and their practices, and the themes have mainly operated as titles, not as theoretically focused, artistically restricting concepts.

The three curators suggested artists based on research, interests, and a discussion on the general theme in spring 2013. The artists were then discussed and agreed upon together with the curatorial team of myself, Koski and Paunu; some of the curators' suggestions were left out. Each curator was also responsible for the production of the works of the artists they had originally suggested. The artists I invited were Inga Erdmane, Evgenia Golant, Stine Marie Jacobsen, JP Kaljonen, Geir Tore Holm and Søsja Jørgensen, and Cooltūristēs. Paunu and Koski invited the other artists of the main exhibition. All of the artists were given the possibility to take part in the laboratory, but not all had the time because they were constructing site-specific works and were therefore more involved with the installation process. Montes de Oca Valadez had studied Visual Culture at Aalto University in Pori, fifty kilometres north of Rauma, and had therefore ended up working

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4 More on the institutional setting of the exhibition in the press release, see Annex 1 on page 13.

5 The artists and curators of the earlier 1990–2000 biennales can be found here: <http://www.raumantaidemuseo.fi/suomi/rbb90-00.html> (accessed on: 13 July 2015).



## ANNEX 1: THE PRESS RELEASES

RAUMA BIENNALE BALTICUM 2014 RIKOSPAIKKA – CRIME SCENE  
RAUMA ART MUSEUM 14 JUNE–14 SEPTEMBER 2014

Opening in June at the Rauma Art Museum, Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 will once again present an overview of topical contemporary art from the Baltic Sea region. Entitled Rikospaikka – Crime Scene, the biennial exhibition presents phenomena of crime, violence and power, and activism and anarchy as means of realizing and implementing art. This exhibition explores the contradictions of society and the life of the individual and turns the gaze towards the boundaries and limitations of organized society regulating human activity. The artists take up the drawbacks of our society, traumas and marginal phenomena or the abuse of the environment. They also address creative processes and other tools with which art can promote change in society. How can the boundaries of dissent and the law be re-interpreted? What is ultimately crime?

The Rauma Biennale Balticum has a long history. The Rauma Art Museum has consistently staged held this series of exhibitions since 1977, when the first Biennale of Gulf of Bothnia was held. In 1985, the Biennial was expanded to cover the whole Baltic Sea region and since 1990 it has been curated according to current themes. By now the series of exhibitions and its publications provide a perspective of several decades on cultural and social change and developments in contemporary art in the Baltic Sea region. Over the years, the themes of the exhibitions have particularly emphasized ecological and environmental concerns and the issues of human life at the levels of the individual and the community.

A part of this year's exhibition at the Rauma Art Museum is a laboratory workshop of contemporary art belonging to a series of three workshops organized by the Migrating Art Academies (MigAA) community. Nothing similar has previously been arranged in Finland. The other laboratories of the series will be held in Reykjavik, Iceland and Kaunas, Lithuania. In these laboratories of science and art, the Crime Scene theme of the Rauma Biennale Balticum will be explored in relation to activism and the practices of participation in communal contemporary art and new models of action will be considered. Each laboratory will last a week, containing lectures for the public and a multidisciplinary and critical approach to the theme through the experimental and innovation of perspective of MigAA. The laboratory will be held during the first week of the Rauma Biennale Balticum. In connection with this event, the UG exhibition facilities for experimental art in the vaulted basement of the art museum will be taken into use.

The exhibition will feature the following artists: Aram Bartholl (DE), Coolturistes (LT), Inga Erdmane (LV), Evgenia Golant (RU), Group Helm (EE), Geir Tore Holm & Søsja Jørgensen (NO), Stine Marie Jacobsen (DK), JP Kaljonen (FI), Karel Koplimets (EE), Haidi Motola (FI), Dorota Nieznalska (PL), Nug & Pike (SE), Pouk Theater (FI/FR), Lauri Rotko & Jukka Rapo (FI), Telekommunisten (DE)

The Rauma Biennale Balticum is part of the Ars Baltica cultural network of the Baltic Sea region. The official patron of the exhibition is Mr Paa-vo Arhinmäki, Member of the Finnish Parliament. The exhibition will be compiled by a working of curator Laura Kokkonen, museum director Janne Koski and curator Henna Paunu. In addition to the curatorial team, the social-psychologist and visual artist Gerardo Montes de Oca (Mexico/Austria) will serve as the project coordinator of the Crime Scene laboratory of the international Migrating Art Academies series of events. The visual and webpage design of the exhibition is by Kasino Creative Studio.

MIGRATING ART ACADEMIES LABORATORY: CRIME SCENE  
RAUMA, FINLAND. 12TH – 18TH OF JUNE, 2014

This collaborative laboratory expands on the themes of the Rauma Biennale Balticum through different theoretical and practical processes that propose the bringing together of social activism and civil participation as contemporary art practices. Through a series of experimental lectures (anti-lectures, lecture-performances), expeditions and field work, we will research concepts and aesthetic processes that can imagine and inseminate social change through art. Participants reflect upon and propose modalities of social agency and dissent under current cultural and cognitive frames of capitalism and violence. We ask: What is a crime scene? What is it to bear witness? What is responsibility? What forms of social agency and solidarity can emerge at sites of alterity? Concepts of political subjectivation, vulnerability and place, among others, are addressed.

UG (Underground) is an open space and a counterpart of the Rauma Art Museum and Rauma Biennale Balticum aiming to host both emergent artists and curators seeking to develop situated and interdisciplinary projects of social and artistic relevance. It is also conceptualized to have experimental and interdisciplinary events such as laboratories, workshops, exhibitions, public talks, or any kind of activity that contributes to generating and disseminating free and new knowledge. This space welcomes challenging proposals of artistic and curatorial projects in any medium with special emphasis on research-oriented, site production practices and pedagogical outcomes. UG is also the host of the MigAA laboratory that will be launched for the first time this year in 2014. This collaborative laboratory plays as a counterpart to the Rauma Biennale Balticum. As an event, it expands on the themes of the Biennale through different theoretical and practical processes such as a series of experimental lectures (anti-lectures, lecture-performances), expeditions and field work. UG is open to collaborate in partnership with other organizations and institutions of any kind (museums, universities, NGOs, artistic groups or collectives, etc.) seeking to develop artistic and curatorial research, events, exhibitions or exchange.

This laboratory is organized by Rauma Art Museum (<http://www.raumantaidemuseo.fi>) and Rauma Biennale Balticum in collaboration with Institutio Media, and it is supported by the Nordic Culture Point and the City of Rauma. We appreciate and thank the support given by City of Rauma for our field trips to the Bothnian Sea National Park (<http://www.selkameri.fi/home-en>).

Crime Scene Laboratory is led by Gerardo Montes de Oca (Rauma Art Museum), a psychologist and cross-media artist currently based in Finland and Vienna, Austria.

Laboratory team:  
Carolina Trigo (Artist and PhD candidate, European Graduate School) Tutor.  
Gerardo Montes de Oca (Psychologist and artist, MA in Visual Culture) Project coordinator and lecturer.  
Niilo Rinne (Master of Arts, Aalto University) Photographer and Assistant.  
Titus Verhe (MA in Art History) Photographer.

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for Rauma Art Museum. He invited the external laboratory participants. I coordinated the collaboration with the graphic designers of Kasino Creative Studio until April 2014, when I went on maternity leave and delegated my tasks to the other curators. This was by chance the second last exhibition Henna Paunu curated at Rauma Art Museum; she changed jobs in August 2014.

The exhibition's content is not the main focus of the thesis, but because it was claimed to be in contradiction with the *Crime Scene* images, it is still important to include a general description of the exhibition.<sup>6</sup> The title of the exhibition, *Crime Scene*, was understood quite widely. Crime was dealt in the presented artworks both in an abstract, societal sense, and as concrete criminal activities.

Beginning with the artists I invited, the exhibition presented Stine Marie Jacobsen's *Direct Approach* which is a project based on conversations about violence in film and reality. Evgenia Golant exhibited portraits of illegal migrants from the Caucasus working in St Petersburg, and also worked in Rauma painting portraits of local second world war migrants from Karelia. JP Kaljonen's *Down-low at the Nuclear Plant* portrayed a project that aimed to establish a cultural center in the Olkiluoto Nuclear Power Plant Accommodation Village in order to increase interaction between the Olkiluoto construction site migrant workers and local residents. The videos of the anonymous feminist group Cooltūristès *Fire and Thunder I. The Tower of Flowers* and *Fire and Thunder II. Little Green Men Landing* dealt with Russian imperialism of both the Soviet occupation in the Baltic countries and the 2014–2015 Russian military intervention in Ukraine. They also performed the work *Autonomous Crime Scenes* at the opening. Inga Erdmane's installation focused on the indeterminate relations of law, order and disruption, and portrayed the artist's own experience in the face of being prosecuted for a drug felony. Geir Tore Holm & Søs Jørgensen's site-specific installation presented the artists' earlier video works on how industrialized society has altered opportunities for traditional ways of life.

Henna Paunu invited two artists and two artist duos. Karel Koplímets' installation dealt with domestic violence and homicides taking place behind closed doors. Haidi Motola's installation *Mycotoxycosis* presented poetic research about the victims of mold intoxication. Photographs by Jukka Rapo & Lauri Rotko presented the polluted Baltic Sea above and below the sea level. Group Helm's *Hall of Power* was a room installation consisting of objects, sound and video projections that dealt with power operating as an individual or group's ability to exercise physical strength or political or social control over other people.

Of the artists Janne Koski invited, the installation *Greater Finland* by Dorota Nieznalska studied how social, political and cultural structures influenced the visual expression of monuments of the Finnish Civil War of 1918. The installations by Aram Bartholl dealt with hacking and online crimes, the two worlds of online and offline, and how Internet

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6 For the claim, see the essay of Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä, Annex 9 on page 39.



manifests itself materially. The group Telekommunisten investigated the political and economic basis of communication technology, how social inequality is inbuilt in the infrastructure of technology, and how the ideal of freedom in the early stages of the Internet has passed. The videos by Nug & Pike dealt with the blurry relationship between art and anarchism, exploring the physical event and provocative nature of graffiti painting.

Théâtre Pouk was invited as part of Raumars Artists-in-Residence programme. They performed *Crime Scenes I & II* in the exhibition opening and on the Night of Black Lace, a citywide event that's part of Rauma's historical Lace Week celebrations. More detailed project descriptions can be found in the exhibition catalogue texts attached in the annexes.

The production of the exhibition happened in various locations. Koski and Paunu were based in Rauma, while I was based 250 kilometres east in Helsinki and visited Rauma approximately once a month. Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez was based in Vienna. The artists were based in ten different countries, and travelled a lot due to residencies and other exhibitions. To my understanding, the scattered geographical location of all the artists and curators is an accepted challenge when producing international art exhibitions. That might also be one reason for why the laboratory was so important for the participating artists: there was a latent sense of urgency around personal communication and dialogue, and when there was finally a chance to meet in person the discussions were very intense. The fact that the curators could not participate in the laboratory due to the full-time work required during the exhibition's production was disappointing for all parties; the mounting period was as intense as usual in big international exhibition projects, and the dates for the laboratory were fixed according to the artist's presence in the country.

In addition to the scattered field of actors, the economic conditions of the exhibition were challenging. The project received only approximately 60% of the funding that was originally budgeted, and this reduction was made known to the curators less than six months before the opening, after the production of the artworks were already well underway. This resulted in unpleasant budget reductions that made working with the artists more complicated. Due to the increased privatization of cultural funds, institutions operate under quite precarious conditions. Along with other regional art museums, Rauma Art Museum is still in the process of responding to the increased focus on project funding and lacks a solid economic base for production. At the same time, the city that should be responsible for half of the museum's funding is constantly cutting its share.

All these elements of the exhibition's preconditions—the economic framework and the geographically and positionally scattered actors—were a factor that created the power relations between the institution, its employees, the artists, the freelancers and other partners. As the theoretical frameworks of the thesis indicate, material power relations are closely related to the processes of representational power. This transpired to influence the relations between the artists, the institution and the laboratory participants. To my understanding, the tight economic circumstances on the one hand and the lack of horizontal dialogue with the actors on the other caused the tricky dynamics within the human





relationships of the project. This then resulted in a veil of oblivion between the laboratory participants, designers, and curators, which then caused growing intensities amongst all parties. This is a context that produced extreme reactions, including a particularly biased published interpretation of the *Crime Scene* images by laboratory participants Ahmed Al-Nawas and Aino Korvensyrjä.





*Cooltūristēs performing “Autonomous Crime Scenes” in the exhibition’s opening. Evgenia Golant’s paintings in the background. Photo by Titus Verhe.*





*The visit by the local fire service and details of the installation “Play of Death” by Kasino Creative Studio. Photos by Titus Verhe.*



## 2.2 The Exhibition's Visual Identity and Its Reception

"I hope this [car crash installation] doesn't represent the values of the museum."

Anonymous comment during the opening

Kasino Creative Studio is a Helsinki-based design office founded in 2005, with Pekka Toivonen as its "art dictator".<sup>7</sup> Toivonen realized a conceptual visual identity for the exhibition together with the graphic designer Antti Grundstén. Their designs constituted of a video teaser, posters, a digital invitation, a small publication, a website, a car crash installation, and *Crime Scene* titled tape and cigarette lighters. Only the exhibition graphics and a single sales item were actually commissioned; the comprehensiveness of Kasino Creative's production was mostly a result of their interests and working methods. Their working conditions, which were also mentioned in the contract, included complete artistic freedom which meant they would not change or develop their designs according to the client's wishes. Kasino Creative Studio's work can be described as uncompromising, with a take it or leave it attitude.

The designers were to use *Crime Scene* tape as a starting point. It was the first criteria Henna Paunu and I discussed with them: an exhibition titled *Crime Scene* should definitely be visually represented by *Crime Scene* tape. The tape was not only an image but it was also used to intervene in museum spaces and elsewhere. In addition to the material tape, four marketing images that represented the tape were published before the exhibition poster and invitation were released. The first two pictured only the tape and the following two suggested vice: they presented a liquor bottle and a knife taped on a surface. As mentioned, Kasino Creative Studio were also commissioned to design a sales article for the museum shop. They ended up designing a lighter decorated with the text *Crime Scene*.<sup>8</sup> A video teaser, including ten cuts presented on page 22 as still photos, followed the images. The soundtrack was an eerie tune.

The posters, the invitation and the installation cultivated debates that began just before the opening. The installation titled *Play of Death* consisted of a crashed car, a fog machine, *Crime Scene* tape and a dummy on the driver's seat that looked like an injured person. Some people considered the installation insulting because it caused worry and

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7 The studio defines itself by the following quote: "For Kasino it is imperative to come up with cutting-edge solutions that combine the best design with the best content to the best possible effect. Why settle for anything less? Recent commissions include brand identities and campaigns as well as editorial concepts, design & content." [www.wearekasino.com](http://www.wearekasino.com) (accessed on: 23 June 2015)

8 Giovanna Esposito Yussif and David Muoz later used this lighter as material in their artwork that was produced during the collateral laboratory event, see the Annex 32 on page 104.



anxiety among the opening guests and created an actual emergency alarm. The local fire service was called on site and the fog machine had to be turned off for the rest of the exhibition. The debate that followed the installation had a shorter lifespan than the debate about the images. It was mainly the opening guests and the local press that noticed the installation. The critic Harri Mäcklin also mentioned the installation in his review of the exhibition in *Helsingin Sanomat*, but wrote nothing of the invitation and poster images.

The debates on the installation and the images were two separate discussions: to my knowledge, the laboratory participants did not react much to the car crash installation, but focused on the *Crime Scene* images. It also seemed that the people who commented on the installation did not react to the images.<sup>9</sup> The poster and the invitation were shared with the curators during the late stages of the exhibition production and they were directly approved without discussions like all the other designs by the studio. I was not present during that time because of my maternity leave.

The bottom of the invitation included the exhibition and opening information with white font on black background. Above that was a photograph of a dark-skinned woman who was holding the white *Crime Scene* tape in front of her face. She was looking directly at the camera. One of the three exhibition posters also included a part of a black person's face: an eye that looked directly at the camera from underneath the tape that covered rest of her face, like a mummy. It cannot be confirmed, but it can be assumed that the eye belongs to the same person in the invitation, however the iris' appear to be different colors. The invitation image looked like it had not been retouched much. The poster, on the other hand, was highly retouched. Part of this poster was also used in the cover of the exhibition leaflet.<sup>10</sup>

The debate about these images started when I shared the invitation image on my wall in Facebook on June 8, 2014, with a conversation attached. The criticism within that short discussion was that a black face represented an exhibition in which no black artists participated. The images were later to become one of the central topics of the laboratory. The participating artists also made an intervention during the laboratory that dealt with the images.

It seemed that two binary oppositions existed within the exhibition discourse: the institution versus the artists and colleagues on the one hand, and the artistic discourse and the marketing discourse on the other. In a published essay that criticized the exhibition's visual identity, the writers claimed that the marketing was outsourced to an advertising agency. I would not call Kasino Creative Studio an advertizing agency, even though their designs were the only visual material that was used to advertise the exhibition. The *Crime Scene* images are peculiar in that they defy classification. All the materials Kasino Creative Studio produced for the exhibition could be classified as artistic, and they all walk the line between art and advertising.

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9 See the attached *Taide* (Annex 31, page 102–103), *Satakunnan Kansa* and *Helsingin Sanomat* (Annexes 2 & 3, page 23) articles, for example.

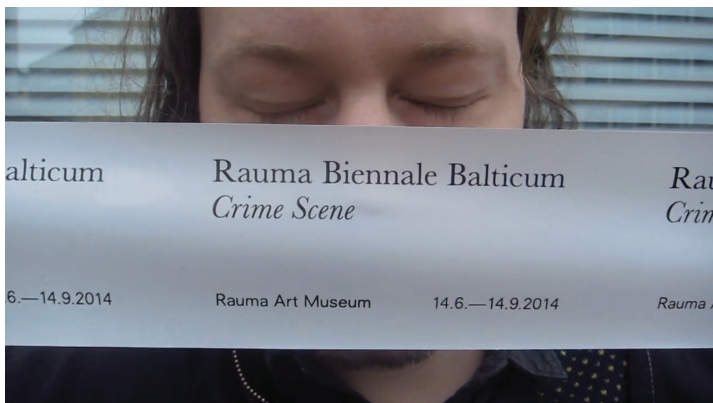
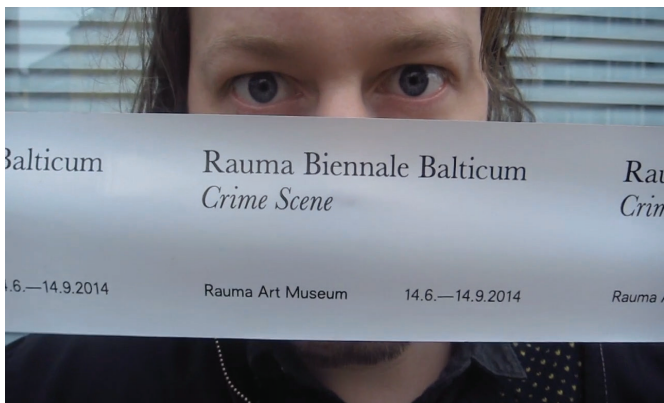
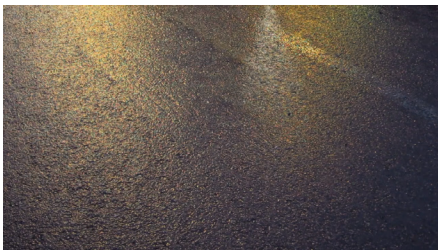
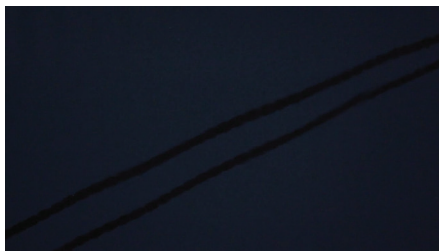
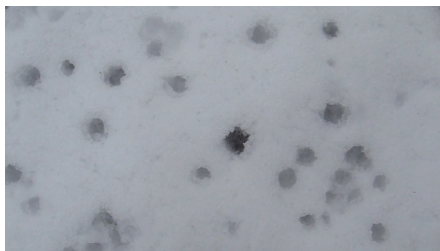
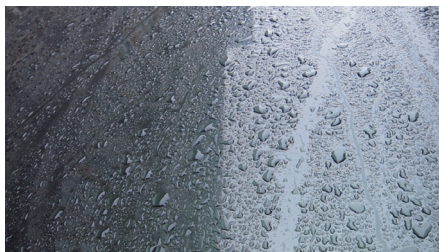
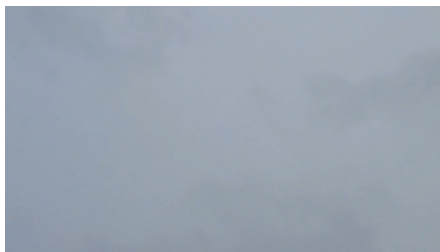
10 See also Stine Marie Jacobsen's description of the images, Annex 7, page 34–35.





*Four of the exhibition's teaser images by Kasino Creative Studio.*





*Stills of the exhibition's video teaser by Kasino Creative Studio.*



## ANNEX 2: ARTICLE IN SATAKUNNAN KANSA AND THE COMMENTS FOLLOWED BY IT

SATAKUNNAN KANSA 3.6.2014

### **RAUMAN BIENNALE KÄYNTIIN PALOHÄLYTYKSELLÄ – SAVUAVA AUTO OLIKIN TAIDETEOS** PIRKKO AALTO

Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 Crime Scene näyttelyn aloitus sai alkuillasta yllättävää ja odottamatonta huomiota, kun palokunta kurvasi paikalle.

Pelastuslaitos sai kello 17.37 hälytyksen, jonka mukaan Vanhan Rauman alueella paloi auto. Kaiken lisäksi autossa istui ihminen.

Kun sammuttajat saapuivat paikalle, kävi ilmi, että kyse oli taideteoksesta. Rauman taidemuseon edustajalla todellakin oli savuava auto, mutta sisällä ei ollut ihminen, vaan nukke.

Savukin tuli savukoneesta. Sen verran todelliselta tilanne kuitenkin näytti, että useat pysähtyivät paikalle. Moni säikähtikin, sillä jos tiiviisti rakennetusta ja suojellusta kaupunginosasta nousee savua, se ei yleensä tiedä mitään hyvää.

Päivystävä palomestari määräsi savukoneen suljettavaksi.

Intendentti Janne Koski Rauman taidemuseosta kertoi, että auton ympärille on nyt vedetty näyttelyteippiä.

Aika hankalaksi asian teki se, ettei auton ympärillä ollut mitään merkkiä siitä, mihin se kuului.

Installaatio on Casino Kreatiivisen Studion toteuttama.

Tuntematon

14.6.2014 10:07 Raum o ain Raum...

Kirjoitit pelkkää asiaa, ja joka sana oli totta, eikä ennen kuultua.

Tuntematon

14.6.2014 03:51

Järki käteen järjestäjät. Sama kuin heittelisi nukkeja kokemäenjokeen ja nauraisi kun ihmiset yrittäisivät pelastaa hukkuvia nukkeja. Äly hoi älä jätä.

Tuntematon

13.6.2014 23:55

Järkke tarvittas kerjätieski :D

Tuntematon

13.6.2014 22:59

Järjen köyhyyttä! Taiteilijoilta tämmästä voisi odottaa, mutta luulis nyt että siellä joku täysipäinenkin olisi eksynyt joukkoon...

Tuntematon 13.6.2014 22:57

Kyseinen laite ei tuota ollenkaan savua. Savukone onkin täysin virheellinen ilmaisu usvaa, eli pääosin vesihöyryä tuottavalle laitteelle. Pitäisi palomestarin asia tietää.

Yhdessäkään teatterissa tai diskossa ei voitaisi kyseisiä laitteita käyttää päivittäin, jos savua tulisi.

Tuntematon

13.6.2014 20:34 Raum o ain Raum...

## ANNEX 3: ARTICLE IN HELSINGIN SANOMAT

HELSINGIN SANOMAT 16.7.2014

### **BIENNALE BALTICUM PROVOSOI JA JÄRKYTTÄÄ ROHKEA NÄYTTELY KYSYY TAITEEN VASTUUTA VÄÄRYYSIEN TÄYTTÄMÄSSÄ MAAILMASSA** HARRI MÄCKLIN

*Stine Maria Jacobsonin videoteoksessa Direct Approach (2012–2014) toteutetaan kauhuelokuvien traumatisoivimpia kohtauksia. Kuvassa mies etsii avainta huumeneuloja täynnä olevasta tynnyristä.*

Rauman Biennale Balticum -näyttelyn avajaisista ei puuttunut dramatiikkaa. Museon nurkalla kiviseinään törmännyt Ford Mondeo alkoi savuttaa uhkaavasti, kun auton sisällä oli vielä ihminen.

Palokunta kiirehti paikalle vain huomatakseen, että autossa istui oikeasti nukke. Savukin tuli savukoneesta. Kyseessä oli Kasino Creative Studion installaatio, joka aiheutti vielä toisenkin väärän hälytyksen, kunnes teos lopulta poistettiin näyttelystä.

Tapaus kuvaa hyvin biennaalin henkeä. Otsikolla Rikospaikka kulkeva näyttely provosoi, järkyttää ja etsii taiteen rajoja.

Vuodesta 1985 järjestetty Itämeren ympärysmaiden nykytaidetta esittelevä biennaali ei ole ennenkään kaihtanut rohkeita avauksia. Tänä vuonna se ei todellakaan jätä kylmäksi. Näyttely peräänkuuluttaa taiteen velvollisuutta toimia yhteiskunnallisten epäkohtien paljastajana – silläkin uhallä, että taide itse lipeää välillä rikoksen puolelle.

Näyttelyssä väistellään ruumissäkkejä, seurataan kafkamaista oikeudenkäyntiä ja ryhdytään vakoojiksi. Puolalaisen Dorota Nieznalskan (s. 1986) provokatiivinen installaatio SuurSuomi (2011–2012) piirtää toisenlaisen kuvan Suomen sisällissodasta kuin koulujen oppikirjat. Aram Bartholin (s. 1972) ja Telekommunisten-taiteilijaryhmä tutkivat teknologian mahdollistamia uusia rikollisuuden muotoja.

Kiinnostavimmillaan näyttely on tilanteissa, joissa taiteen ja rikoksen välinen raja hämärtyy.

Ruotsalaisen vandaalitaiteilija Nugin (s. 1972) videoperformanssi Territorial Pissing (2008), jossa taiteilija tarvitsee metrovaunun spraymaalilla, pakottaa kysymään taiteen rajoja. Mitä kaikkea taiteen nimissä voi tehdä?

Samaa kysyy Stine Maria Jacobsenin (s. 1977) videoteos Direct Approach (2012–2014), jossa kauhuelokuvien traumatisoimat henkilöt näyttävät pelkoa aiheuttaneiden elokuvien uudelleendramatisoinneissa. Teoksen eräs kohtaus lähenee kidutusta. Huumeneuloilla täytetyssä tynnyrissä rimpuilevaa miestä katsoessa on pakko pohtia, missä menee taiteen eettinen raja.

Toissa vuonna hieman veretönnäksi jäänyt biennaali on tänä vuonna ravisteleva, jopa väkivaltainen kokemus. Ansiokas näyttely alleviivaa taiteen autonomiaa mutta pakottaa samalla kyseenalaistamaan sen. Katsojalle tarjoutuu mahdollisuus kokeilla, kuinka paljon hän on valmis taiteen nimissä sietämään.



It is important to note that *Rauma Biennale Balticum* exhibitions have traditionally emphasized the role of graphic design and the visual identity has been designed by a different designer each time. In these exhibitions, graphic design has been considered a form of art and an important way to present the exhibition concept. In this sense, the images were not “only” advertisements but integral to the exhibition’s public identity. This is a relevant distinction to make, because in later critiques the images were categorized strictly as advertising. While partly true, this categorisation of advertising as a purely capitalist mechanism was one of the foundations of the criticism levelled at the museum by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä for functioning “according to capitalist logic, driven by the pursuit of profit”.

#### **ANNEX 4: THE DEBATE ON THE INVITATION IMAGE (SEE PAGE 25) ON MY WALL IN FACEBOOK ON THE 8TH AND 9TH OF JUNE 2014**

Ahmed Al-Nawas: Laura, why there is a black female with the title “crime scene”?

Laura Kokkonen: I hoped you’d ask, what do you say Antti Grundstén & Pekka Toivonen?

Pekka Toivonen: Because there is a white male with the same title & composition in the video teaser → [www.raumabiennale.com](http://www.raumabiennale.com)

Christopher Wessels: Am I the only one seeing serious issues around representation of blacks. It’s not as if when ever I encounter this rather distasteful poster I’ll have the video playing in my head. It would be interesting to know how many black artists are part of the festival/biennale? Very problematic image. Not moving any discussion in any positive way it reinforces stereotypes. I dislike this!

Laura Kokkonen: Some black artists have participated over the years but due to the (problematic) national framing of the concept (biennial of Nordic + Baltic countries) they’re are in minority

Christopher Wessels: Then why have a black woman with crime scene written across her face? I also know many black Nordic artists. Second generation...

Laura Kokkonen: I have bit of an ineligibility problem here but I can say the poster is also an artwork and the authors had all inclusive autonomy in their designs. Then again, the institution has the responsibility in the end. I agree with these concerns and am glad the topic came up and can be discussed.

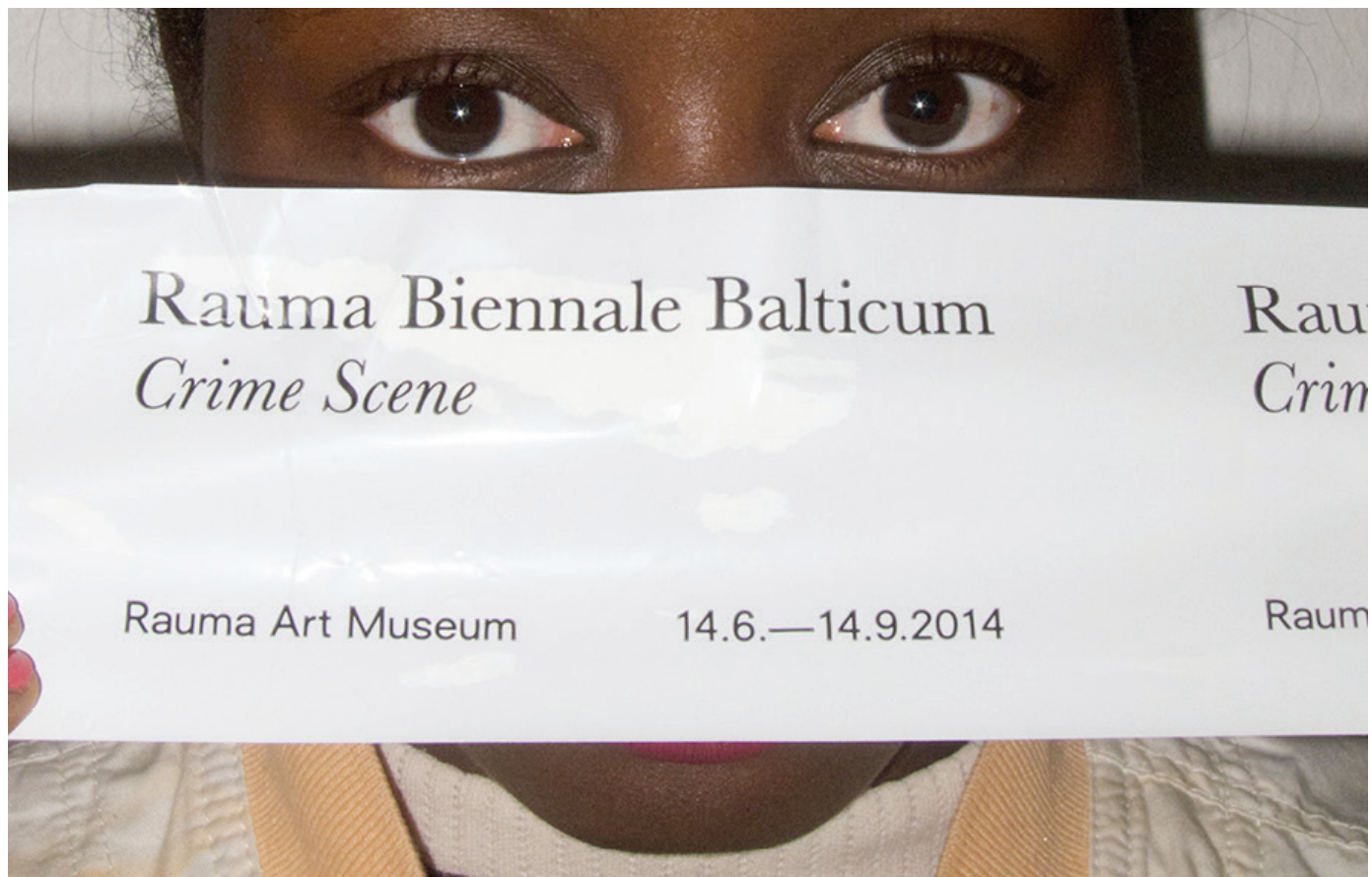
Christopher Wessels: Who are the artists?

Giovanna Esposito Yussif: I agree with Chris, and in this case is not only a problem regarding the representation of blacks, but also the representation of women. Why is the dude not used as the object for the poster if he is the one appearing on the video?

Laura Kokkonen: Kasino Creative Studio, Pekka & Antti [were the artists]. Btw this should be a topic of discussion at the laboratory Gerardo Montes de Oca is organising and Ahmed Al-Nawas and Giovanna are participating

Gerardo Montes de Oca: Oh believe me I started the topic yesterday with the other Laboratory lecturer... a topic indeed. Im sure we will discuss it along the programme of the laboratory.





# Rauma Biennale Balticum *Crime Scene*

Raum  
Crim

Rauma Art Museum

14.6.—14.9.2014

Raum

Tervetuloa avajaisiin  
perjantaina 13.6. klo 18–20  
Rauman taidemuseo, Kuninkaankatu 37  
Welcome to the opening  
on Friday 13 June at 6 – 8 pm  
Rauma Art Museum, Kuninkaankatu 37

Näyttelyn avaa Taiteen edistämiskeskuksen  
johtaja Minna Simö  
The exhibition will be opened by  
Minna Simö, director of the Arts  
Promotion Centre Finland

Performanssit  
Cooltūristēs: Autonomiset rikospaikat  
Pouk Teatteri: Pohjoinen taajuus, Rikospaikka  
Performances  
Cooltūristēs: Autonomous Crime Scenes  
Pouk Theater: Northern Frequency,  
Crime Scene

Jatkot  
Teatteriravintola Ankkuri, Alfredinkatu 2  
Musiikki Vinyyliliitto  
Afterparty (with buffet)  
Theater restaurant Ankkuri, Alfredinkatu 2  
Music by Vinyyliliitto

Aram Bartholl  
Cooltūristēs  
Group Helm  
Inga Erdmane  
Evgenia Golant  
Geir Tore Holm & Søsja Jørgensen  
Stine Marie Jacobsen  
JP Kaljonen  
Karel Koplimets  
Haidi Motola  
Dorota Nieznalska  
Nug & Pike  
Pouk Theater  
Lauri Rotko & Jukka Rapo  
Telekommunisten







*The debated exhibition poster by Kasino Creative Studio.*





*The other two exhibition posters by Kasino Creative Studio.*

## ANNEX 5: THE TEXT BY THE EXHIBITION'S PATRON PAAVO ARHINMÄKI (PUBLISHED IN THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE AND ONLINE)

Taiteen yksi tärkeimmistä tehtävistä on kysyä ja kyseenalaistaa. Taiteilija voi olla toisinnäkijä. Taiteilijan laboratorio on ympäröivä todellisuus, yhteiskunta ja ympäristö. "Rikospaikka – Crime Scene" nostaa esiin asioita, joita pitäisikin kohdella rikoksina ihmisten itsemääräämisoikeutta, tasa-arvoa, sananvapautta ja ympäristön tuhoamista vastaan.

Rauma Biennale Balticum -näyttely esittää nykyaiteen keinoin vetoomuksia informaation avoimuuden, vapaiden tietoverkkojen ja vapaan kulttuurin puolesta. Rakenteellinen erityisesti lapsiin kohdistuva väkivalta, pakolaisten ja siirtotyöläisten asema ja sanomisen ja ilmaisun vapaus ovat näyttelyn suuria teemoja. Näistä syntyy taiteilijoiden yhteinen näkemys siitä, mikä on rikos. Näyttely tuo esille ajatuksen siitä, mitä on yksilön vastuu ja aktivismi. Kuinka paljon yksi ihminen voi dehtä ja miten asioihin voi ottaa kantaa. Tarvitsemme taidetta ja taiteilijoita myös tähän: näyttämiseen, ajatusten ja toiminnan herättämiseen.

Toivon näyttelylle kauaskantoisia vaikutuksia.

Näyttelyn suojelija Paavo Arhinmäki



## 2.3 *The Laboratory and the Images*

“I considered not participating at all when I saw the image.”

A comment by a laboratory participant, June 2014

Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez wrote an essay on the laboratory process that was published in the the previously mentioned MigAA book *Displaced*. The text is in line with how I observed the situation, and what I understood from private conversations with the participants. Montes de Oca’s text is a good way to understand the events of the laboratory as a whole and also offers his own analysis of the images.<sup>11</sup> Here, I focus on the parts that deal with the debates regarding the exhibition’s visual identity, after shortly explaining the other artistic projects produced during the laboratory.

The laboratory’s setting was very open and allowed the group to define its own interests. Montes de Oca intentionally planned the laboratory as horizontal and self-organized: the group collectively decided on everything from cooking to how the budget was allocated, however a basic schedule and framework for activities existed. Montes de Oca has mentioned that as a curator, he trusted the participants to act as a group, with respect and in solidarity. It is important to highlight that the images were not part of the laboratory’s official program and not all participants insisted on them taking so much space of the discussions.<sup>12</sup>

The laboratory participants decided to form three groups that all created different projects. Giovanna Esposito Yussif and David Muoz produced two installations that were exhibited together in the museum’s spaces. *Subjects of Unwilling Representation – circa 1885* presented appropriated images found in a book that portrayed female subjects bound to a minority identity, without questioning the violence within the act of reproduction. *Fire at Will* was an artwork inherently threatening with violence—it included a canister of gasoline and the *Crime Scene* lighter side by side. Cooltūristēs Inga Erdmane and Carolina Trigo produced a performance *I’I’* that locked up its participants in a cold dark cellar for one hour, and when released asked them to reflect upon their impressions in front of a camera.

The participants of the third and the biggest group—Minna Hint, Liisi Eelmaa, JP Kaljonen, Inga Erdmane, Stine Marie Jacobsen, Haidi Motola, Ahmed Al-Nawas and Aino Korvensyrjä—focused on the exhibition posters and made interventions related to them. The members of this group then divided into several subgroups that implement-

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11 The text can be read online here: [https://www.academia.edu/14690798/Crime\\_Scene\\_Laboratory\\_Rauma\\_Biennale\\_Balticum\\_and\\_Migrating\\_Art\\_Academies](https://www.academia.edu/14690798/Crime_Scene_Laboratory_Rauma_Biennale_Balticum_and_Migrating_Art_Academies) (accessed on: 6 August 2015).

12 As I was not part of the laboratory process, Montes de Oca has clarified the nature of the laboratory in personal discussions.



## ANNEX 6: THE INITIAL PROGRAM OF THE LABORATORY

### DAY 1 (Wednesday 11th June)

Arrival and welcome artists.

18h – Collective meeting: Collective self-organization (an exercise on coordination in real situation). Place: Museum's backyard (or baker's room in case of rain).

Collective shopping and cooking/dinner.

### DAY 2 (Thursday 12th June)

8h – Breakfast

9h – Official welcome and opening. Introduction the RBB, MigAA network and Laboratory, and UG Experimental Space.

9:30h – 11:15h – Lecture, Carolina Trigo. Fragments of a geopolitical intimacy.

11:30h – Lunch.

13h – 15h – Lecture, Gerardo Montes de Oca.

Sentiments of Fidelity: Trust and Betrayal. Notions of trans-subjectivity, sentimental cartographies, solidarity and agency.

15h – 17:30h – Workshop / Expedition Otanlahti beach and swimming pool.

17:30 – 19h – Collective cooking time.

19h – Dinner

### DAY 3 (Friday 13th June)

8h – Breakfast.

9h – 11h Lecture, Gerardo Montes de Oca.

Aesthetics of Evidence and Performativity of Dissidence. Artistic practices and activism.

11h – Lunch

13h – Press conference RBB

14:30h – 16:30h – Expedition: Location and existential territory. Infrastructure and will in social relations. Water Tower / Taidekahvila Torni, Vesitornintie 2.

18h – Rauma Biennale Balticum opening (Seen as an event: the actualization of the virtual).

### DAY 4 (Saturday 14th June)

Breakfast – Production time.

12h – Discussion on the opening in relation to UG and MigAA Lab. What is "peripheral"? (peripheral events, subaltern individualities/collectivities, sovereignty, autonomy). Modes of production and display.

13h – Lunch.

14h – Food shopping.

15:30h – Experience, visualization, discussion.

Tutoring and production time.

18h – Sauna by the sea. Collective cooking and dinner.

### DAY 5 (Sunday 15th June)

9h – Breakfast and snack preparation for field trip.

10h (10:45h at the docks) Expedition to Kylmäpihlaja Island: Migrating ships: fictional real scenario.

Departure at 11:00 from Syvärauma harbour (Suvitie 14, Rauma) on Pohjantähti-ship. The return trip starts from Kylmäpihlaja harbour at 17:00. Trip takes about 45 minutes one way.

Lunch

Experience, exercises, discussion.

17h – Return.

19h – Collective cooking and dinner.

Exhibition building initial preparations.

### DAY 6 (Monday 16th June)

8h – Breakfast. Production time. Tutoring.

12h – Lunch.

13:30h – Exhibition building.

17h – Cooking time / shopping.

18:30h – Dinner.

### DAY 7 (Tuesday 17th)

8h – Breakfast.

9h – Final exhibition arrangements.

11h – Press conference MigAA LAB.

12h/12:30h – Lunch.

18h – Exhibition opening.

### DAY 8 (Wednesday 18th)

9h – Breakfast.

10:30h – Public talk: Testimony and evidence of a Crime Scene.

Insights, reflexions.

12:30h – Lunch.

Relaxation, recreation.

Collective Dinner.

### Day 9 (Thursday 19th June)

Breakfast.

Departure.



ed separate interventions, but nevertheless decided to present these as a group. The first part of their three-part intervention was an installation assembled next to the museum's counter. As Montes de Oca describes, the installation consisted of a table with newspapers and magazines they had gathered at a grocery store, all with the same date. Next to the magazines the artists had placed some of the exhibition posters they had altered by printing on their reverse side a technical description of the content of the images. "This text emphasized the difference between what someone might see in the images with an objective eye, and what the image might represent or imply, along with multiple possible interpretations," Montes de Oca explains (Montes de Oca Valadez 2015: 443).

The second part of their intervention was to tape and print parts of Grada Kilomba's text *The Mask* (2010) on the exhibition poster. In her work as a writer, theorist and artist, Kilomba deals with gender, race, trauma and memory, issues that are also present in the *Crime Scene* images.<sup>13</sup> The quote on the poster is in Finnish, and not a direct translation of Kilomba's text but excerpts combined together. The last sentences are conclusions added by the artists. The translation of the quote would be as follows (the beginning is a direct quote from Kilomba, and the last three questions are my translations):

"In this sense, the mask represents colonialism as whole: why must the mouth of the Black subject be fastened? Why must she or he become silent? What could the Black subject say, if her or his mouth were not sealed? And what would the white subject have to listen to? In other words, who is allowed to speak? What happens when those who were forced to keep quiet speak? And above all, what can we speak of?"<sup>14</sup>

This text was taped on the illuminated advertisement in urban space on one of Rauma's main streets Nortamonkatu, and printed on all of the exhibition posters that were sold in the museum shop. Kilomba has noted that she has been "particularly engaged on staging and performing theoretical and political texts, contradicting the idea of disembodied theories, by exploring the emotionality and viscosity these texts might embody."<sup>15</sup> This is the same method the laboratory participants used in their poster intervention, as the artists staged Kilomba's text in a way that, in my opinion, explored the emotionality and viscosity of the words.

In addition to the poster intervention, the artists painted and taped a red letter "T" around the city space, always before the word "Rauma" appeared, in order to create the word "trauma".<sup>16</sup> "Trauma" is an old joke in Rauma, but the artists referred to the "unseen traumas of the city and in people's lives," as Montes de Oca explains (Montes de

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13 See Kilomba's biography for more information: <http://gradakilomba.com/bio/> (accessed on: 13 July 2015)

14 The original text is an excerpt of Kilomba's book *Plantation Memories* (2008).

15 See again Kilomba's biography.

16 Later, in spring 2015, the property owner prosecuted the museum because of one of the Ts that had been painted on a memorial plate of the civil guard's house in Rauma, could not be removed easily.



Oca 443), and also likely referenced Kilomba's use of the word. The group did not mention the T interventions or the poster intervention in public properties to Montes de Oca or to the representatives of the museum. The actions were done during the night before the opening.

In addition to these interventions, the group thoroughly discussed the *Crime Scene* images. A part of the laboratory, the group dedicated significant discussion time to the images from a postcolonial and critical standpoint, as Montes de Oca writes: “This process connected these concerns about the politics of representation with an institutional critique, having the focus on production, use, and interpretation of images” (Montes de Oca 438). The biggest group decided to compose a text that addressed their reflections as their final intervention. In the end, the text was signed only by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä. Jacobsen openly refused to be named as an author, because “she did not agree on the incorrect use of witness reporting and the personal confrontative approach to the curator and the museum without having had a proper dialogue beforehand” (Montes de Oca 444). Also other laboratory participants felt uncomfortable and did not agree with Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä’s approach. When the text was finally published, some public discussions followed, as I will now explain.



*An intervention in the museum's shop by the laboratory participants. Photo by Jari Sorjonen.*





Documentation of the laboratory's "T interventions", continues on the next page. Photos by Jari Sorjonen.







## ANNEX 7: THE TEXT ON THE LABORATORY PROCESS AND THE EXHIBITION IMAGES BY STINE MARIE JACOBSEN

This is what happened during the Crime Scene Workshop:

In the last few days of the Migrating Art Academy Laboratory Workshop the discussion phase went into production phase. I worked within a group dynamics of 7 artists and curators who were focused on keeping the discussion and exchange of artistic and political strategies alive and maybe never materialising the exchanged words.

Alas, we did end up producing material as we had not in that moment yet found a solution to represent an immaterial work. A more detailed description hereof is in a text written by the group.

I suggested to the group that we could lead conversations within our group as well as with citizens on the meaning and use of the words "worry" and "bystander" and at some point our working title became "Don't worry, I'm sorry".

The title ambiguously signals a disconnectedness between language and action in what could be an absurd utterance made during a crime scene. To "worry" ("wyrgan") originally meant when a hunting dog bites its prey and strangles it close to death so its master can do the final act of killing.

Within this working title I chose to understand and use the act of spoken or written description as a "worry" and depiction itself as death. By looking at certain kinds of images we can almost become their object and even victims by being constrained or should I say conjugated into a discursive frame we may not wish to be a part of.

It's like with language where we are strangled in a different way. A subject does an act, a verb, with an object towards someone or something turning them into an indirect object. Maybe that object is owned by someone, making the conjugations of the sentence even more difficult. Depending on which language you speak, the worry can be less than in other languages. In Finnish language for example there is gender neutrality whereas in German it's all about gender and the nouns and pronouns are in a constant fight.

However back to the point - the most discussed topic in our group became the images which a design company had made for the Rauma Balticum Biennale 2014 and my eyes stayed here. I noticed that the strategy of the images were to suggest possible crime scenes, but deliberately leaving it up to a reader to decipher them.

By doing so, the images became more violent. Especially because they were loaded with political content but then unconnected to any political statement or position whatsoever. The images were introducing a victim and a perpetrator and I needed to look closer at the images themselves to try to investigate the intentions of the image maker.

I will now describe to you four of the images as factual and objective as I possibly can.

I encourage you to only experience the images through these descriptions.

A white dirty mattress covers a vertical image.

The dirt on the mattress are marks with the shape of four lines.  
The lines are blurry and located in the middle of the image.

There are a few black spots different places on the mattress.  
The spots could be left over material of an object which was used to make the line marks, but I cannot be sure.

There are two very small objects in the top left of the mattress.  
They look like splinters from wood and could have been used to make the four lines, but I cannot be sure.

The mattress has a checkered seaming pattern.  
A few places there are scratches in the mattress.

A white tape diagonally runs through the image.  
The tape tightens the mattress a bit on the left side and creates three folds.

The white tape has a typed text on it:

Rauma Biennale Balticum  
Crime Scene  
Rauma Art Museum 14.6-14.9.2014

In the bottom of the image is another text typed directly on the image:

Aram Bartholl, Coolturistes, Group Helm, Inga Erdmane, Evgenia Golant,  
Geir Tore Holm & Søsja Jørgensen, Stine Marie Jacobsen, JP Kaljonen,  
Karel Koplimets, Haidi Motola, Dorota Nieznalska, Nug & Pike, Pouk  
Theater, Lauri Rotko & Juka Rapo, Telekomunisten

A white young man with long middle hair is holding a white tape in front of his mouth.

On the tape a text is typed:

Rauma Biennale Balticum  
Crime Scene  
Rauma Art Museum 14.6-14.9.2014

The text repeats itself on both sides and is cut like this:

Balticum  
.6.-19.9.2014  
(left side)

Rau  
Crim  
Rauma A  
(right side)

The man's eyes are visible and he looks straight onto the viewer.

The tape covers the area right under his eyes to the lower chin.  
The chin has a beard.

The man is wearing a dark blue shirt and jacket and a dark blue sweater with yellow dots.

The background is a window with white venetian blinds.  
The window is reflecting a building.



A young black girl is holding a white tape in front of her mouth.

On the tape a black text is typed:

Rauma Biennale Balticum  
Crime Scene  
Rauma Art Museum 14.6-14.9.2014

The text repeats itself on the tape and is cut like this:

Rau  
Crim  
Raum  
(on the right side)

The girl's eyes are visible and she looks straight onto the viewer.

The tape covers the area right under her eyes to the lower lip.  
The lips have pink lipstick on them but it is hardly visible because the tape covers the mouth.

On the left side of the photography the tip of her two fingers are visible.  
The nails have pink nail polish on them.

The girl is wearing a white jacket with a yellow lining.

The wall behind her is white.  
A spot light is casting her and the tapes shadow.

White stripes of tape is covering a woman's body in an image.

An eye of a black female is visible on the right side in the middle of the image.

The tape bends a bit in all corners, suggesting that she is covered with the tape, but we cannot be sure.

On the stripes of tape a text is typed and cut like this:

Rauma Biennial  
Crim  
rime  
Rauma Art Museum 14.6.-  
Rauma  
Crime  
Iticum RaumB  
Crime Sce

Aram Bartholl, Coolturistes, Group Helm, Inga Erdmane, Evgenia Golant, Geir Tore Holm & Søsja Jørgensen, Stine Marie Jacobsen, JP Kaljonen, Karel Koplimets, Haidi Motola, Dorota Nieznalska, Nug & Pike, Pouk Theater, Lauri Rotko & Juka Rappo, Telekommunisten

[www.raumabiennale.com](http://www.raumabiennale.com)

Upon a closer look at the images I decide to reach to a conclusion:

The first image with the mattress has actually not been in a crime scene. It has just been touched with a piece of wood and the maker actually did a poor job reenacting a crime scene.

The other two images with the man and the woman seem to be narratively and visually connected. Of course I cannot be sure and also I still have no answer to why he is outside and she is inside? But this is where the crime begins. I can only guess that he was just inside of the house and the venetian blinds are covering the inside space where the girl could be. But I cannot be sure and I wonder if there are other possible readings that would suggest otherwise.

The last image. A black woman covered in the designed crime tape. I wonder how she feels about being put into this context of crime scene and for what reasons she was chosen as a model. Because her body seems to be covered with the tape, a viewer will most likely read her as a victim and I find that problematic without an explanation of why she needs to be shown as a victim.

I tried to ask the maker of the images about his reasons for making the images in this way, but he would not answer me and in the group we also tried reaching the model to ask her whether she had any statements but had no luck reaching her.

But why so vaguely or visual-ambiguously hint at something so tragic like trafficking or prostitution or rape? What's the point? I do not understand and think that this choice of visual strategy offers anything else but a regressive and limited identification pattern.

Maybe I should just have ignored these images and they would have been forgotten faster.

But with the constant choice we have to make on deciding what to watch and not. Knowing of an image existence is different. I have a last confession before I end my text. I watched the video of the woman recently being brutally sexually harassed on the Tahrir Square at Sisi's inauguration in deeply regret watching this as I know she would like to have it removed from the internet and I would like to apologise for watching it. Youtube and all other online video sharing platforms should act ethical and empathetically and remove videos like this instantly. They are evidence for courtrooms but not for personal rooms.

I will not even describe it, but just tell you that this is another horrible series of picture that will stay with me forever.



## 2.4 *The Debate after the Laboratory*

The summer passed, and in September the Finnish magazine *Voima* published an article on the topic.<sup>17</sup> It was a text based on interviews, written by the journalist Veera Nuutinen. The laboratory's poster interventions were described and it also included citations of the text by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä that was soon to be published. Janne Koski and Kasino Creative Studio's Pekka Toivonen commented on the topic in the article. It was the first and only time they were directly asked for a public statement. Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä never approached the curators or the designers, insisting instead on public commentary. In the article Koski commented: "Why would it be racism if the person in the image did not look Finnish [sic]? I thought the work was good, because it brings forward the theme of the exhibition without over-explaining it," and "my association was, that the dark face is related to global injustice and other global problems." Toivonen then explains: "We wanted there to be an eye [in the poster]. Our goal was to make a good illuminated advertisement. The image signals the themes that the exhibition dealt with and is in my opinion quite successful. It does not discriminate against anyone" (Nuutinen 2014: 42).

Then the essay was published, a few days later. The writers begin their text with the Brazilian Anastácia legend that was originally referred to by Kilomba in a text that was part of the laboratory interventions.<sup>18</sup> Al-Nawas' and Korvensyrjä's point of departure is that the *Crime Scene* images originate from the same ideology of brutality and sexual violence as the Anastácia figure. Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä analyze the *Crime Scene* images: "The likeness of Anastácia and the figure of the poster is astonishing. Even the eyes of the figure in the poster look bluish, probably thanks to color correction."

In addition to the visual analysis, the writers proceeded with critical claims against the institution. The writers analyze Rauma Art Museum as a neoliberal agent and as capitalist machinery with deliberate profit-making intentions. The writers were interested in the process of how certain images became part of the marketing material. Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä described the process ambiguously and partially, and as I will later explain, in

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17 *Voima* is a free publication published since December 1999. "Voima" is the Finnish word for force. The paper is delivered e.g. in libraries, universities, public transportation facilities, theaters, and museums. Publication titles include issues of human rights, environment, economics, and society. The editors of *Voima* resigned in October 2014 shortly after the texts were published, due their mistrust for the board. <http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/a1413515632965> (accessed on: Dec 9, 2014)

18 Kilomba describes the legend of Escrava (Slave) Anastácia: "[The Anastácia legend has] no official history, some claim she was captured by European slavers and brought to Brazil, while others point to Brazil as her place of birth. Her African name is unknown. She was forced to wear an iron collar and a face mask that prevented her from speaking. Escrava Anastácia became an important political and religious figure, directly related to the Orixá Oxalá – the God of peace, serenity and wisdom." See also Sheriff 2006.



**Muumio rikospaikalla**

Veera Nuutinen

Onko ihan sama, miten mustaihoiset naishahmot esitetään kuvissa?

Näyttelyjulistesta tuijottaa yksi silmä, jonka ympärillä näkyy tummaa ihoa. Loput kasvoista peittyvät valkoisiin siteisiin kuin muumion käärinliinoin. Rauma Biennale Balticum, Crime Scene, kääreissä lukee.

Julisteen päälle on kirjoitettu ote esseisti, sukupuolentutkimuksen professori Grada Kilomban kolonialismia ja orjuutta ruotivasta esseestä The Mask.

”Miksi mustan subjektin suu täytyy sitoa? Miksi hänet täytyy vaieta? Mitä hän voisi sanoa, jolle hänen suutaan olisi suljettu?” Kilomba kysyy.

Rauma Biennale Balticumin avajaisiltana ryhmä biennaalin taiteilijoita puuttui näyttelykuvastoon. Jokaisen julisteen päälle ilmestyi kappale Kilomban tekstiä. Museon sisäänkäynnin viereen asetettiin pino sanomalehtiä ja valkoiset hansikkaat.

Ryhmä ihmettelee muun muassa, miksi kaikki näyttelyyn kutsutut taiteilijat ovat valkoihoisia, ja näyttelyjulistessa esitetään musta nainen hiljennettynä objektina.

”Monia biennaalin osallistujia häiritsee syvästi, että nimeimme liitetään tämänkaltaisiin esityksiin mustista naisista”, taiteilijat kritisoiivat.

”Juliste toistaa stereotyyppisiä, joita mediassa esitetään”, sanoo Aino Korvensyrjä, yksi väliintulon tehneistä taiteilijoista.

”Musta nainen esitetään uhrina tai epäilyttävänä henkilönä ja hänet on vaiennettu. Se on ristiriidassa näyttelyn teemojen kanssa, jotka liittyivät muun muassa sananvapauteen ja siirtolaisuuteen.”

Korvensyrjän mukaan kuvilla on suuri merkitys, sillä ne vahvistavat yhteiskunnallisia valtasuhteita.

”Omassa työssäni pyrin tuomaan esiin ja purkamaan niitä.”

Korvensyrjä ei kuitenkaan halua lähteä ohjeistamaan, miten mustia naishahmoja tulisi kuvata. Hänen mielestään kyseenalaista vallankäyttöä olisi myös identiteettien tai niiden oikeanlaisten esitystapojen määrittelevä ulkoapäin.

Rauman taidemuseon intendentti Janne Kosken mukaan julisteen hahmo perustuu suunnittelijoiden ideaan.

”Kuulin, että oli ihmetelty, miksi näin on. Itse ajattelen, että miksei, meitä on monennäköisiä ihmisiä. Miksi olisi kyse rasismista, jos kuvassa ei ole suomalaisen näköinen ihminen? Mielestäni teos oli hyvä, koska se tuo taiteen keinoin esiin näyttelyn teemaa selittämättä sitä puhki”, Koski arvioi.

Rauma Biennale Balticumin teema on tänä vuonna crime scene (rikospaikka). Näyttelyn tarkoituksena on tuoda esiin rikoksen, väkivallan ja vallankäytön ilmiöitä sekä tutkia yhteiskunnan rajoituksia ja epäkohtia.

Koski näkee julisteiden sopivan näyttelyn teemaan.

”Minun mielenpääni oli, että tumma kasvo liittyy globaaliin epäoikeudenmukaisuuteen ja muihin globaaleihin ongelmiin.”

Julisteita muokannut taiteilijaryhmä kritisoi sitä, että Rauma Biennale Balticumin osallistujat olivat vain valkoihoisia taiteilijoita. Miten näyttelyyn osallistuneet taiteilijat valittiin?

”Biennale Balticumin taiteilijat ovat kaikista Itämeren ympärillä olevista maista. Näillä alueilla on valtaosa valkoisia ihmisiä. Näyttelyn teema on kuitenkin yleismaailmallinen, ja taiteilijat on valittu sen mukaan, miten he ovat käsitelleet teemaan liittyviä aiheita töissään”, Koski sanoo.

Näyttelyjulisteen ovat suunnitelleet Kasino Creative Studion Pekka Toivonen ja Antti Grundstén.

Pekka Toivosen mukaan suunnittelijoilla oli julisteen toteutuksessa vapaat kädet.

”Ihmiset saavat nähdä kuvassa, mitä haluavat”, hän toteaa.

”Toinen töistämme oli sähköpostilla lähetetty näyttelykutsu. Kuvassa esiintyi crime-sana, ja siitä ruvettiin lukemaan merkityksiä, joita siinä ei ollut.”

Mitä halusitte viestiä sillä, että kuvien henkilöiden kasvot on osittain peitetty?

”Halusimme, että siinä on silmä.

Tavoitteenamme oli tehdä hyvä valomainos.

Kuva viestii niistä teemoista, joista näyttelyssä on kysymys ja on mielestäni varsin onnistunut. Ei siinä diskriminoida ketään.”

Sivun artikkeli on julkaistu myös Voiman numerossa 7/2014 s. 42.



*The portray of Escrava Anastácia, the image referred to by Grada Kilomba.  
Image courtesy: Lapham's Quarterly.*



many ways a falsely. Their choice of attitude shifted the focus of the discussion from the actual images to “backstage” events.

It took some time to be able to write an institutional response for the essay. The main motive that all the signers agreed on was to correct the false assumptions in Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä’s text, and indicate the gaps between the postcolonial image analysis and the institution critical statements of the text. “The witness report” constructed to function as a background for the image analysis was based on fragmentary arguments that were not completely correct (Kokkonen, Koski, Montes de Oca & Paunu 2014). The critics also write in their text that Paunu and Koski did not react to the critique. This is partly true, but a defense for this statement was the hectic working situation just before the opening that the writers were well aware of. The writers also accuse the curators of unprofessionalism, claiming we are incapable of reading images properly. The writers refer to an anonymous comment, “art is allowed to provoke”. I have yet to find out if anyone ever said that, and claim that no member of the curatorial team ever stated this.



## ANNEX 9: THE ESSAY BY AL-NAWAS AND KORVENSYRJÄ

### Black Skin, White Mask

We participated in a workshop organized 11.-18.6. in the Rauma Biennale Balticum. The Migrating Art Academies Laboratory gathered fifteen international artists and curators in Rauma during the opening week of the biennial. The laboratory sought to develop tools and strategies for art and activism to participate in societal change. The posters advertising the biennial had immediately caught the attention of our group. In one of them a black female subject's face was covered with white stripes of tape inscribed with the text Crime Scene. Only her left eye was uncovered, gazing directly at the viewer.

In another poster white tape was crossing a black girl's or woman's face, again with Crime Scene written on it. Both eyes were visible and looking straight at the viewer.

The pictures were strongly suggestive. They referred to a certain imagery of suspicion and victimization. Why did the authors of the image want to hint ambiguously at a crime, human trafficking, rape, or prostitution? What kind of identification was the viewer being offered? We were disturbed because this imagery was conjured without presenting any break or a new perspective to it.

On top of this, these stereotypical female figures were advertizing an exhibition which otherwise addressed the issues of "structural violence, particularly against children, the rights of refugees and migrant workers, and the freedom of speech and expression", and which brought up "things which ought to be treated as crimes against people's self-determination, equality, freedom of speech and environmental destruction (sic)", as the protector of the exhibition, Paavo Arhinmäki, stated in the publicity brochure of the biennial.

We continued discussing the poster issue in the laboratory in spite of risking being labelled as killjoys. The museum or the designers did not see any problem. We were however unable to see the posters as mere innocent publicity.

### An anachronism?

The mask raises many questions: why must the mouth of the Black subject be fastened? Why must she or he become silent? What could the Black subject say, if her or his mouth were not sealed? And what would the white subject have to listen to? There is an apprehensive fear that if the colonial subject speaks, the colonizer will have to listen. It would be forced into an uncomfortable confrontation with 'Other' truths, writes the gender theorist Grada Kilomba in her essay *The Mask*.

White plantation owners in Brazil habitually punished African slaves with an iron mask in front of the mouth. Officially the mask was used to prevent the slaves from eating sugar cane or cocoa beans while working. Yet according to Kilomba, implementing speechlessness and fear were its principal functions.

Kilomba tells the legend of Anastácia, a Bantu woman enslaved and brought to Brazil. Anastácia refused to provide sexual services, expected from slave women as a normal practice, and she was forced to use the iron mask. Today Anastácia, who according to the legend had blue eyes, is widely worshipped as an AfroBrazilian saint. For Kilomba the figure of Anastácia crystallizes the project of colonialism which always also includes a projection. As Anastácia refuses to be dominated and exploited, she is herself made into a "criminal" to be punished.

The colonizer denies the brutality of colonialism and projects the evil onto the colonized subject. Anastácia, whose mouth is fastened with the mask, is the image of the white man's violent desire.

The likeness of Anastácia and the figure of the poster is astonishing. Even the eyes of the figure in the poster look blueish, probably thanks to colour correction.

The similarity is not a coincidence. The international or at least transatlantic stream of images endlessly reproduces lookalikes of Anastácia. In the media black women are connected to certain stereotypes, black men to others. These are not mere ads, not even mere pictures.

It is not a coincidence that women typically don't talk in these media pictures and stories about politics, economy, or society, particularly not black women. They are instead portrayed as silenced objects. Images mediate and reproduce power relations. They have a function.

Black skin, white masks by Franz Fanon was published in 1952. Fanon's analysis of black figures as projections of white man's desires and fears is today unfortunately as fresh as ever. The doubles of Anastácia are not some insignificant remnant of the past, because the relations which they express and sustain, have not disappeared.

As Kilomba states, the mask of Anastácia is a tool for silencing and violence in everyday life. This goes also for Finland, where Fortress Europe and racism camouflaging itself as "migration critique" are a quotidian reality, silently accepted.

Ethnic profiling practiced by the police is an actual example of the function of images. When guards or the police shoot an unarmed black young man in the US or perform ID controls in European cities, "suspicious looks" have a certain figure. Images define groups of people and frame persons in different ways.

### "It is only an ad"

No black artists were invited to the Rauma Biennale Balticum but a black woman was silenced in the advertisement. The themes of the biennial were freedom of speech and migrant rights, yet the posters insinuated an imagination of suspicious persons and victims. Through the posters the exhibition had a framing which stood in a clear contradiction with the thematic aims.

A cynic would argue that the stated aims functioned as mere lip service where as the poster campaign revealed the truth. She would compare the case with the new ethnographic museum in which the exhibition texts proclaim the gospel of tolerance whereas the exhibits brought from the colonies are displayed in the old way.

We however wanted to figure out, how this situation had occurred.

One of the three curators of the biennial, Laura Kokkonen, answered our question and critique on her Facebook wall. She wrote that the posters were art works in themselves and that the designers had been given full freedom to realize the advertising campaign. Kokkonen admitted that even when the pictures were art works, in the end it was the museum which had responsibility over them.

A freelancer working for the Rauma Art Museum told us that the designers had been granted their autonomy as the museum was not able to pay what the designers were asking for. The designer answered our question concerning the idea of the poster, "it is only an ad", and wondered, why artists always made things so complicated.

Be it cost-benefit calculus or artistic autonomy, responsibility seemed to slip away and the problem to be disappearing. The last public reaction by the museum has so far been the thanks given by Kokkonen to the designers for the controversy concerning the poster.

The other members of the curatorial team, the director of the Rauma art museum, Janne Koski, and the museum curator Henna Paunu, did not react to our critique. They didn't discuss the issue with us during the laboratory or show up at our opening organized in the museum in which our group addressed the poster issue through interventions and discussion.

Perhaps it is a question of lacking professional skill to read imag-



es. Updating skills is a quotidian practice in the art field, and we offered the curatorial team an opportunity for this during the laboratory. They didn't accept it and instead denied the problem.

Denial is a crucial means to normalize racism and sexism and to silence critique. The issue is not discussed. Or it is belittled by stating for instance, "it is only an ad", or "art is allowed to provoke". Popular is also to claim that racism and sexism belong to the past which we now have overcome. We thus cannot have a problem. When the problem is not seen in the first place, the person uttering the critique must herself be a problem. The feminist writer Sarah Ahmed has called this the killjoy position.

### **Capitalist Realism**

We take images seriously because they participate in maintaining societal power relations. On the other hand, racism and sexism become possible as social relations only through singular, particular practices.

Thus we continue the "killjoy" analysis of this particular case a bit further. However the case is hardly unique.

It is remarkable, that there were as if two apparatuses operating in the Rauma Art Museum. One was taking care of enlightening the public and was concerned with social justice. The other one aimed to get the largest possible audience for the event with a flashy publicity campaign. The latter apparatus was separated from the first one by the outsourcing to the advertising agency. It functioned according to capitalist logic, driven by the pursuit of profit.

There seemed to be no mediation between the two apparatuses. When their aims and values clashed, the profit motive got the upper hand.

The representatives of the museum could then argue that they did not have bad intentions. The poster campaign had been given to the advertising agency, which nowadays is business as usual.

Besides the poster design many other tasks of the production apparatus of the biennial had been outsourced. The only member of the curatorial team who reacted to our questions was a freelancer. So was the curator of the laboratory in which we participated. As happens so often in the contemporary workshop economy, the task of criticality was given to artists working with a nominal fee as well as unpaid workshop participants.

The job of the enlightenment with good intentions was defined as "asking and questioning". "The artist can be someone who sees otherwise", as Paavo Arhinmäki states in the biennial brochure. According to the laboratory curator, we were working towards inventing "modalities of social agency and dissent under current cultural and cognitive frames of capitalism".

The expression of the curator is more than fitting. The situation in which the profit motive defeated the well-meaning enlightenment could be called Capitalist Realism.

Contradictory statements about the poster belonging to "advertising" and at the same time to "artistic autonomy" belong to this Realism. The impotence of the so-called political or activist art can also be included in this "genre" or "style". It is unfortunate, and not at all a coincidence, that this particular episode of Capitalist Realism was paid by the "black woman", "victim" and "suspicious person". The end product of the creative process was the reproduction of a stereotype.

### **Break the Frame!**

We have discussed racist and sexist pictures as framings of certain groups of people, framings in which we refuse to participate. We have referred to them as perpetuating certain power relations from which we distance ourselves. We have also asked, where is the responsibility of institutional individuals in this particular case. A thanks given to the designers of the posters for the "provocation" is not enough.

With this intervention we ultimately want to take the question beyond the museum walls, because that is where it came from. How is it possible to get rid of a typification of "victims" and "suspicious persons", of a logic of identification that classifies people according to their colour and sex?

Instead of a comprehensive answer, we return once again to the question posed by Grada Kilomba: Why must the mouth of the black subject be fastened? Is it still so traumatic in today's Finland that certain individuals open their mouths? What kind of truths might come out? Why can't we listen without adding a stereotypical framing? What so dangerous might a "migrant woman" or an "Islamist" say, if those labels and frames were to be removed?

Ahmed Al-Nawas and Aino Korvensyrjä

### **Literature**

Ahmed Sara, "Feminist Killjoys (And Other Willful Subjects)," *The Scholar and Feminist Online*, Issue 8.3: Summer 2010, [http://sfonline.barnard.edu/polyphonic/ahmed\\_01.htm](http://sfonline.barnard.edu/polyphonic/ahmed_01.htm)  
Fanon Frantz, *Black Skins, White Masks*, Pluto Press: London, 1986/2008 (orig. in 1952). Kilomba Grada, "The Mask", <http://gradakilomba.com/essays/the-mask/>.



## ANNEX 10: RAUMA ART MUSEUM'S REPLY TO THE ESSAY BY AL-NAWAS AND KORVENSYRJÄ

In their text "Black skin, white mask" (8.9.2014), curator Ahmed Al-Nawas and artist Aino Korvensyrjä address the poster and invitation images of the Rauma Biennale Balticum exhibition organized by the Rauma Art Museum. Discussion regarding the images began in the Migrating Art Academies laboratory of Rauma Biennale Balticum with artists and invited curators participating in it.

The visual identity of the exhibition was designed by Kasino Creative Studio and it includes three posters, all of which present the exhibition theme "Crime Scene". Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä focus on one of the posters and the exhibition invitation. The images that the article addresses represent the face of a black woman.

Along with the visual analysis, the text includes false assumptions that we consider to require correction. The article by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä is both a post-colonial image analysis and an institutional-critical statement. The institutional-critical witness report, constructed to function as a background for the image analysis, is based on fragmentary arguments that are not correct in all ways.\*

The writers claim that the designers had complete freedom, because the museum could not afford to pay the full fee for their services. Usually the designer has artistic freedom, but unlike the artists and the critical laboratory workshop, the results are often worked on for even long periods to meet the wishes of the client. The art museum and the curatorial team consider the designs by Kasino Creative Studio to be good quality work. Furthermore, we do not agree with the claim that our goal was a sensational campaign, and we note that the writers' interpretations of the "capitalist realism" of the exhibition and the laboratory are exaggerated.

The second part of the article forms a narrative. The writers also refer to discussions on the Facebook wall of a member of the curator team. The quotes, however, are falsely interpreted. The original sources compared to the citations have been presented to the editors of Voima. Partly because of this, the general view of Al-Nawas's and Korvensyrjä's text is fictional, dealing only with arbitrary details of the events. They have not used discussions that do not suit their narrative, and the ones that they do use have been interpreted tendentiously.

We welcome constructive criticism of all kinds and believe in more horizontal forms of working together, forms of solidarity and collaboration. The laboratory participants were asked to produce a final exhibition including one short text of their contribution. Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä published their text without first sharing it with the laboratory coordinator and other participants. The writers did not communicate with the people mentioned by name or the coordinator, which would have permitted corrections of false assumptions before publishing. They also published the text in a language which they know the other party – the coordinator of the laboratory – does not speak.

Kasino Creative Studio was given freedom for creative design along with the artists in the exhibition and the participants of the laboratory. Visual identity is no less a valuable or restricted means of expression than the artworks. The meanings of visual identity can also be, and especially in this case are, interpretable in many ways. The art museum does not provide unequivocal horizons for interpretation of art – everyone is free to interpret from their own point of view. Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä have applied this freedom. Someone else might have experienced the visual identity as a contention to the kidnapping of the two hundred Nigerian schoolgirls. Thirdly, the images deal with the unequal position of women and girls in the world. Maybe Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä mean that graphic design is not the right medium to deal with such serious topics.

In addition to the previous correction, we want to point out that the images designed by Kasino Creative Studio can also be interpreted in a different way than suggested by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä, which, in fact, was the reason why they were accepted as part of the exhibition's visual identity. These possible interpretations were discussed thoroughly during the laboratory. We are aware of the importance of criticality and the politics of representation, especially in relation to minorities experiencing any form of exclusion, domination or exploitation. That is why we take this criticism seriously.

The writers state that the poster campaign is contradictory to the thematic aims of the exhibition. On the exhibition website, the theme of the exhibition is described as follows: "The exhibition Crime Scene brings forward the issues of crime, violence and dominance" and "The artists take up the drawbacks of our society, traumas and marginal phenomena or the abuse of the environment." This is exactly what these images represent. Whether they are seen as racist stereotypes or as a critical comment are interpretations to which the viewer is entitled.

Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä mention that there were no black artists in the exhibition. The Rauma Art Museum does not select artists based on the colour of their skin. The exhibited artworks and the laboratory presented themes mentioned in the exhibition text: freedom of speech and immigrant rights, and in addition touch upon local structural racism and Nordic colonialism. We understand that exclusion, exploitation and domination have many forms and involve complex layers of social processes. Racism, for example, is one of them and it is not reduced to only one particular group or race – many radical and violent forms of racism are based precisely on a strict profiling of people and groups. Furthermore, we are aware that not all minorities experience the same forms of violence, which means that minorities should not be reduced to homogeneous categories. As the writers, we reject racist and sexist images as frames for groups of people and power dynamics in society.

We do not want to neutralize the criticism of the posters and the invitation, and we apologize that not all the participants of the working group, apart from the laboratory coordinator, took part in the discussions in Rauma in the way the writers had wished. But the curators were not clearly asked to participate in the discussions, as the writers state. The criticism of the visual identity came up just before the opening, when there was no longer any possibility to react. The resources in the final stages of building an exhibition were very limited. The museum was aware of this situation and the hectic schedule. However, the museum wanted in every way to create an opportunity for novel working methods that were based on the interaction of the participants within the concept of the exhibition's thematic. The laboratory participants were given an exceptionally confidential and autonomous position to create their own contribution and the opportunity to work independently in the museum during the most hectic phase of finalizing the exhibition.

The criticism taught Rauma Art Museum the meaning of open dialogue. We feel that lack of dialogue is the reason for many problems stated by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä. The writers themselves have declined from open dialogue by publishing the text without reciprocity with the laboratory participants and exhibition curators. We see here the necessity to prevent further misunderstandings and the requirement of improved communication within our team members and future projects.

Rauma Biennale Balticum Curatorial Team:  
Janne Koski, chief curator, Rauma Art Museum  
Henna Paunu, chief curator, EMMA Espoo Museum of  
Modern Art (until 18 August 2014: curator, Rauma Art Museum)  
Laura Kokkonen, curator and art historian  
Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez, artist, laboratory's coordinator



## ANNEX 11: COMMENTS ABOUT THE REPLY ON VOIMA MAGAZINE'S FACEBOOK WALL

Aija Salo

Ottamatta kantaa kiistan sisältöön: minusta tekstin kirjoittaminen ja julkaiseminen käy kyllä vuoropuhelusta. Eihän kritiikkiä yleensä tarvitse etukäteishyväksyttää sen kohteella.

Marian Abdulkarim

takavasemmalta huomenta, mä en ymmärrä tätä teksii. Kritiikki on huono, koska siitä ei keskusteltu etukäteen? Taiteilijat sattuivat olemaan valkoisia koska värillä ei väliä? Valitsimme mustat kasvot, koska kurjuudella on väri? Arvostelussa oli fiktiota, mutta lukija saa arvata mihin viittaamme? Tämä keskustelu on nyt julkista, skarpatkaa. Ja jossain tuolla oli anteeksipyyntö, niin meni multa ohi.

## ANNEX 12: COMMENTS ABOUT THE DEBATE ON HOMMAFORUM (ALL BY PSEUDONYMS)

“Saattaa olla, että kysymys oli vain puutteellisesta ammattitaidosta eli kuvien lukemisen taidosta. ...” Mitä todennäköisimmin. Kuvia voi lukea monella tavalla, ja keskustelu voi avata uusia kuvanlukutapoja. Kiukuttelu ja sormi pystyssä saarnaaminen eivät edistä dialogia.

“Kynnikko väittäisi, että julkilausutut tavoitteet olivat vain korulauseita ja tyhjää puhetta, kun julistekampanja kertoi totuuden.” Kynnikko voisi väittää myös, että näissä asioissa ei voi onnistua koskaan. Jos esität mustaihaisen uhrina, teet väärin. Mutta jos jätät huomiotta hänen uhriasemaansa, silloin vasta väärin teetkin. “Al-Nawas ja Korvensyrjä tuovat esille, ettei näyttelyssä ollut yhtään mustaa taiteilijaa. Rauman taidemuseo ei valitse näyttelyihinsä taiteilijoita ihonvärin perusteella.” Hehe. Touché. Tämä juttu vaikuttaa esimerkiltä siitä, miten valkoisten suhtautuminen mustiin voidaan aina nähdä ongelmana mielihaluista riippuen, oli asetelma mikä tahansa.

Nimistä ja kuvasta päätellen kaikki ovat valkoisia, joten Ahmed Al-Nawas ja Aino Korvensyrjä: älkää vielä antako periksi.

Al-Nawasi ja Korvensyrjä lähtivät kilvoittelemaan Biennale Balticumin kanssa siitä, kuka vastustaa rasismia kaikkein oikeaoppisimmin. Kaunista katseltavaa.

Mites se kun minä en enää jaksaa näihin neekeriongelmiiin suhtautua mitenkään? Onko rasismia ja ihmisvihaa? Yritin kaksi kertaa jaksaa lukea nuo aloituksen jutut, mutta en pääse edes puoliväliin ja ajatus karkaa muualle jo ensimmäisillä riveillä. Ei vaan jaksaa tätä mokuneekeerip\*skaa lukea maailmassa, jossa on IHAN OIKEITAKIN ONGELMIA. Että tattista! Ketjun aloittajaa liketän, on hyvä että joku meistä jaksaa näitä prosessoida silloinkin, kun itse on liian kyllästynyt. Jatkaa, olkaa hyvät, arvostan keskusteluanne ja kommenttejanne jaksan silmäillä vaikka lainaukset ovat liian kankeaa tavaraa nieltäväksi. Taivas varjele, että on ollut ihan VALKOINEN NAUHA ja vissiin RUSKEALLA NAAMALLA!!! Mä kuolen!!!



## 2.5 *The Benevolent Humanists*

The debate continued when the discussion was noticed by the art critic Otso Kantokorpi and described in a short article titled “Who Is Allowed to Talk about Racism and How?” in the Finnish art magazine *Taide* (5/2014). Kantokorpi wrote about two international examples. He explained how the Barbican Centre in London cancelled Brett Bailey’s *Exhibit B* that was supposed to critique the “human zoos” and ethnographic displays that showed “Africans” as objects of scientific curiosity throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the end, the project was accused of reproducing racist imagery. Kantokorpi’s other reference was the graffiti artist Banksy’s work in Clacton-on-Sea in the United Kingdom that was removed by the council after accused of being racist.<sup>19</sup>

Kantokorpi linked these cases to the *Crime Scene* debate and commented shortly on the text by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä. “This continues also in Finland. [...] When you cannot catch the actual enemy, you target the benevolent/unbiased humanists.” The short article was also published in Kantokorpi’s blog *Alaston kritikko*, followed by a single anonymous comment: “To be honest, the critique by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä seemed pretty hypocritical.”<sup>20</sup>

There was also a longer debate in Facebook on the wall of Ahmed Al-Nawas. The other debaters were Jussi Koitela, Perttu Saksa, Aino-Marjatta Mäki, Jaakko Juhani Karhunen and Aino Korvensyrjä. Saksa was the only one who was critical towards the original text by Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä: he wrote that their analysis of the images was lazy and underestimated the viewer. All the debaters agreed that no humanist can be unbiased today. This concept of the unbiased or benevolent humanist is an interesting one and I will further scrutinize it later in the thesis. Korvensyrjä also linked an image of a June 1966 *Life* magazine to the Facebook discussion. That image was originally published as an illustration to an article that claimed police brutality was a problem for extremists, resonating inherently unequal and racist values.

This discussion and another one on the wall of Jussi Koitela on the same day brought about some other references, that according to Koitela were “the actual enemies”: the exotic paintings of Cris af Enehielm and Anna Retulainen whose works were presented in the same issue of the magazine *Taide* without any criticism. The critic Heikki Kastemaa also referred to Juha Metso’s exhibition *Voodoo*. All these three artistic

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19 See *The Independent* article on the Barbican case: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/exhibit-b-human-zoo-show-cancelled-by-the-barbican-following-protest-9753519.html> (accessed on: 30 July 2015) and the *The Guardian* article on the Banksy case: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/01/banksy-mural-clacton-racist> (accessed on: 30 July 2015)

20 *Alaston kritikko* article: <http://alastonkritikko.blogspot.fi/2014/10/ju-lkaistua-579-kuka-saa-puhua.html> (accessed on: 30 July 2015)





*Exhibit B press photo, Barbican Arts Centre. Photographer unknown.*

examples have been produced in the Finnish cultural centre Villa Karo in Benin. Many artists have spent residencies there and produced art that has been inspired by the Beninese surroundings. What is contentious in Enehielm, Retulainen and Metso's work is well summarized by a sentence in the journalist Hannele Huhtala's essay in *Voima* that commented on Metso's images when they were published in *Helsingin Sanomat*: "What is significant [in these images], is the fact that they continue to represent Africa as the other and the strange. And as the simple, on the other hand" (Huhtala 2014).

These British cases of Bailey and Banksy, and the Finnish cases of Enehielm, Retulainen and Metso only scratch the surface of a deep art historical strata of representations of "the other." The cases were referenced in discussions about the *Crime Scene* case and that is why I will discuss them further in the thesis—in addition, they are all recent 2014 examples. Besides these four cases, I will later introduce some other international and Finnish examples that touch upon the topic.

I have now mapped out the main events of the *Crime Scene* debate from my point of view, and will move on to a chapter that brings forward what remained under the surface of the public events and texts. This is in order to illuminate further how the images and the debate came into being. I aim in the thesis to bring forward multiple standpoints around antiracist and postcolonial discussions in Finland. The next chapter goes deeper in analyzing my problematic position as a curator and a researcher, and from that point of departure, I hope to lay the ground for more universal discussions on curator's ethics, responsibilities, and demands. I will finally link these discussions to questions of representation in the later chapters of the thesis.





*The Banksy graffiti in Clacton-on-Sea, press photo. Photographer unknown.*

### **ANNEX 13: THE ARTICLE IN TAIDE MAGAZINE BY OTSO KANTOKORPI AND THE FOLLOWING COMMENT**

#### **Kuka saa puhua rasismista ja miten?**

Lontoolainen taidekeskus Barbican joutui syyskuussa peruuttamaan eteläafrikkalaisen Brett Baileyn Exhibit B -teoksen esitykset. Rasismia vastustavassa teoksessa esittäjät olivat osa kuvaelmia. Niissä imitoitiin tapoja, joilla afrikkalaisia aikoinaan esiteltiin erilaisissa freak show -ympäristöissä. Syynä peruutukseen oli teoksen vastansa saama yleisön raivo: lyhyessä ajassa kerättiin 23 000 nimen adressi vastustamaan teosta, jonka itsessään todettiin olevan rasistinen ja vastenmielinen ja vain uusintavan kritisoimaansa kuvastoa.

Saman tilanteen eteen joutui myös katutaiteilija Banksy. Hänen siirtolaisvastaisuutta vastustava seinämaalauksensa Clacton-on-Seassa maalattiin syyskuun lopulla yli, koska protestoijat pitivät itse teosta rasistisena. Paikallinen valtuusto antoi poistokäskyn. Kuvassa pulu piti kylttiä värikästä lintua vastaan: "Mene takaisin Afrikkaan." Toisen viesti: "Pidä näppisi irti meidän madoista."

Ja näin tapahtuu Suomessakin. Voiman verkkolehdestä Fifissä Ahmed al-Nawas ja Aino Korvensyrjä syyttivät Rauma Biennale Balticumia vastenmielisen kuvaston ja stereotyyppien uusintamisesta näyttelyn julisteessa, jossa mustan naisen silmät tuijottavat rikospaikkanauhan takaa: "Meitä kiusasi, että eltaantuneet mielikuvat herätettiin vailla minkäänlaista murtumaa tai uutta näkökulmaa." Biennaalin teemoja olivat muun muassa "rakenteellinen ja erityisesti lapsiin kohdistuva väkivalta, pakolaisten ja siirtotyöläisten asema ja sanomisen ja ilmaisun vapaus".

Kun ei siihen oikeaan viholliseen päästä tarttumaan, otetaan kohteeksi hyväntahtoiset liberaalit. Jotenkin tulee mieleeni Aulikki Oksasen sanat biisissä Kenen joukoissa seisot? (1970): "Pitäkööt puolueettomat humanistit korulauseensa."

Anonyymi 24. lokakuuta 2014

Aika tekopyhältä tuo Korvensyrjän ja Al-Nawasin teksti vaikutti jos suoraan sanotaan.





*Cris af Enehielm's "Lemon Boy", 2014, oil on canvas, 162 x 100 cm.  
Photo by Jussi Tiainen.*



*Anna Retulainen's "Lasti (Nigeriaista salakuljetettua bensaa, ruokaa ja valkoinen auto)", 2014, oil on canvas, 200 x 190 cm. Finnish National Gallery.  
Photo by Jussi Tiainen.*



## ANNEX 14: THE DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED WHEN AL-NAWAS SHARED KANTOKORPI'S ARTICLE ON HIS FACEBOOK WALL

Ahmed Al-Nawas  
????

"Kun ei siihen oikeaan viholliseen päästä tarttumaan, otetaan kohteeksi hyväntahtoiset liberaalit. Jotenkin tulee mieleeni Aulikki Oksasen sanat biisissä Kenen joukoissa seisot? (1970): "Pitäkööt puolueettomat humanistit korulauseensa."" <http://alastonkriitikko.blogspot.fi/2014/10/julkaistua-579-kuka-saa-puhua.html>

Jussi Koitela  
Mikä on oikea vihollinen?

Perttu Saksa  
Samaa mieltä Otson kanssa.

Ahmed Al-Nawas  
Perttu, en ole yllättynyt.

Ahmed Al-Nawas  
Jussi, ja kuka on saanut puhua viimeist 100v ?

Perttu Saksa  
Joo, mielestäni laiskaa ja ennakoasenteisiin nojaavaa kuvalluuntaa, nähdä toi Rauman juliste rasistisena. Vertautuu hauskaasti tuohon Kantiksen esille nostamaan Banksyn seinäduuniin. Hienoa ja tärkeää silti, että aiheesta keskustellaan. Raumalaisten vastine oli myös ok.<http://fifi.voima.fi/.../nakokulma-vastine-kirjoitukseen...>

Perttu Saksa  
Mustan ihonvärin tulkitseminen julisteessa automaattisesti kuin stigmana tarttua siihen negaationa on siis mielestäni laiskaa. Kun näyttelyn konteksti, kuvan katse yms. rakentavat sen selkeästi ihan toiseen suuntaan. Poliittisen kuvan tekeminen olisi hyvin köyhää ja paikoillaan junnaavaa, ellei esityskonteksti ja nyanssit visuaalisuudessa määrittäisi kuvia lähtökohtaisesti monimuotoisemmin (2000-luvulla) ja vaikuttaisi keskeisesti kuvantekemisen semiotiikkaan. Sensijaan pitäisi keskustella siitä, miksi kuvaa näin luetaan. Pitäisikö kuvanlukutaitoihin panostaa nykyistä enemmän. Mielestäni pitäisi. Se auttaisi katsojaa myös tunnistamaan syrjintää muussa arkipäiväisessä kuvastossa ja ajattelemaan omilla aivoillaan.

Aino-Marjatta Mäki  
Aika oireellista, että kun nimenomaan Rauman kuvat on otettu tosissaan, ja niitä on luettu melko tarkasti, mutta toisenlaisesta näkökulmasta kuin se iänikuinen tyyppisuomalainen tapa kelata, että kaikki menee, kunhan vaan tarkoitus 'meillä' on hyvä, niin tätä pidetään sitten laiskana

ja kuvanluentaa suorastaan vääränä ja epävisivestyneenä. Heh!

Perttu Saksa  
Joo, näen nimenomaan toisinpäin, että niitä on luettu laiskasti, tarttuen johonkin lukutapaan, mitä kuvantekijä taas ehkä ajattelisi katsojaa ali-arvioivana. Ehkä ne lukemattomat mainos- ja viestintätoimistot, mistä usein ajattelee niiden olevan liian yksinkertaisia ja arvostavan katsojan lukutaitoa liian vähän, ovat sittenkin oikeassa. Hmm.

Aino-Marjatta Mäki  
Mutta ehkä kuitenkin kuvanluenta tai kuvanluennan 'nyanssit' eivät tässä keskustelussa ole se keskeisin kysymys, vaan kysymys siitä kuka saa ylipäätään puhua. Ja sitä mun mielestä Aino ja Ahmed penäävät tosi hienosti ja tärkeällä tavalla. Ja tuntuu, että juuri se kysymys on jostain syystä niin traumaattinen, että se ohitetaan toistuvasti näissä omasta näkökulmasta melko kummallisissa vasta-argumenteissa.

Perttu Saksa  
Hyvä, että keskustelu on suoraa, eikä siinä kierrellä suotta. Perustelut vain mielestäni sutii ylämäessä. Tämä on oma mielipiteeni. Olennaista on, että julisteen ja sen kuvaston pitäisi osallistua keskusteluun, jota Ahmed ja Aino tekstillään herättelev...[rest of the quote is lost]

Aino Korvensyrjä  
Perttu, julisteen suunnittelija vastasi kysymykseemme julisteen ideasta lyhykäisesti: "se on vain mainos, miksi te taiteilijat teette asiasta aina niin hankalia?" Seisomme Ahmedin kanssa edelleen kritiikkimme ja luentamme takana. Joka muuten puitiin huolella läpi Raumalla kuvataiteilijoista ja kuraattoreista koostuneen 7 hengen työryhmän kanssa plus sen jälkeen käsiteltiin pitkällisesti yhteisellä meililistalla, kun valmistelimme kirjoitustamme. Otson loppukaneetista: Kun nykytilanteessa (eli suomalaisen rasismien ja seksismien noustua pinnalle huomiota herättävään tyyliin) kysytään, kenen joukoissa seisot, A) onko silloin "puolueettomia humanisteja" ylipäätään olemassa B) ovatko nämä "puolueettomat humanistit" ja "hyväntahtoiset liberaalit" kenties nimenomaan osa ongelmaa?

Perttu Saksa  
Aino- tuossa olen samaa mieltä. Mielestäni humanisti ei voi olla puolueeton vuonna 2014. Ja julkisessa tilassa ei ole asiaa nimeltä

"vain mainos".

Jaakko Juhani Karhunen  
kuvaa ei voi vain lukea suhteessa tekijän intentioon tai selittää kaikkia konnotaatiota pois viitaten kontekstiin jota katsoja ei voi tietää. tässä jutussa on kyllä kyse kuvanlukutaidosta, mutta mielestäni alkuperäinen kritiikki osui ihan oikeaan – mainoksen merkityksien lukeminen oli huolimaton. ja se juuri kertoo että jokin tietty lukutapa on 'yhä käytössä'. ei ole niin ettei absoluuttisesti saa esittää jotakin kuvaa, mutta se pitää pystyä perustelemaan eikä selittämään pois viittaamalla jengiin joka 'ottaa liian tosissaan'.

Perttu Saksa  
Olisikin kiinnostavaa kuulla, että Pekka Toivonen perustelisi asiaa vähän rakentavammin. Mistään neitsythuorakirkosta kun tässä ei kuitenkaan nyt ole kyse.

Jussi Koitela  
Ainakin Otso itse on saanut puhua viimeiset 100 vuotta. Pääasia lienee se, että maan pää kuvataidemedia (valitettavasti) kirjoittaisi asiasta oikeasti ja syventyen, eikä tyytyisi hettelemään, että nyt on väärät viholliset kritiikin kohteena. Samassa numerossa oli kritiikki Anna Retulaisen ja Cris af Enehielmin näyttelyistä kritiikit. Näyttelyissä olis kyllä ollut ihan selkeät "oikeat" viholliset, mutta niissä se mahdollisuus sivuutettiin.

Aino Korvensyrjä  
Jussi: Todellakin, Otso otsikoi hiukan pieleen. Hän myös kirjoittaa olevansa "hämällään" ilmiön eli rasismien edessä, pyydetäänkö meiltä tässä myötätuntoa? Kuka tarvitsee myötätuntoa? Ne "puolueettomat humanistit" ja "hyväntahtoiset liberaalitko" taas?

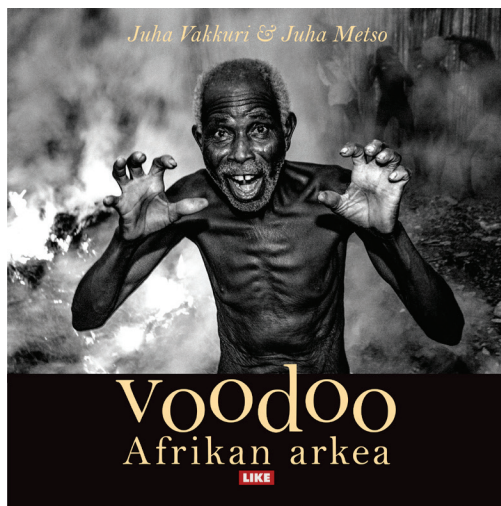
Aino Korvensyrjä  
mikä yhdistää brett baileyta, banksya ja otsoa?

Ahmed Al-Nawas  
Kiitos kaikille kommentaareille. Myös kiitos Pertulle lounaskeustelusta. Laadimme hitaan mutta pitkän artikkelin aiheesta. Mutta siihen asti, tässä on traumaattisia tulijaisia vuodesta 1966

Aino Korvensyrjä  
LIFE June 10 1966, artikkeli esittää rasistisen väkivallan mustien "ääriainesten" ongelmana.

(See the image on page 87)





*The book cover of “Voodoo – Afrikan arkea” (Voodoo – African Everyday Life) by Juha Vakkuri and Juha Metso.*

## ANNEX 15: THE DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED WHEN JUSSI KOITELA SHARED AL-NAWAS’ AND KORVENSYRJÄ’S ESSAY ON HIS FACEBOOK WALL

Jussi Koitela jakoi linkin 8. syyskuuta 2014  
 Fifi : Näkökulma: Musta iho, valkoinen naamio  
 “Rauma Biennale Balticumiin ei ollut kutsuttu yhtään mustaa taiteilijaa, mutta musta nainen oli vaiennettu mainoksessa”, kirjoittavat Ahmed Al-Nawas ja Aino Korvensyrjä.

Jussi Koitela  
 Toivottavasti instituutiokin lähtee dialogiin mukaan tällä kertaa sanomalla nyt vaikka ensi alkuun: ei ajateltu tätä ja nyt voidaan oppia tästä.

Jussi Koitela  
 Mä en muutenkaan ymmärrä, että miksi on niin vaikeaa tunnustaa, että toimii tietämättään vaikka rasisestisesti kai se on olennaisempaa, miten sen jälkeen toimii kun paremmin tietää.

Laura Kokkonen  
 Joo toivottavasti instituutio kommentoi. Samaa mieltä muutenkin. Tekstissä on kuitenkin pari virhettä/epätarkkuutta, joista olen tehnyt korjauspyynnön. Mulla on opinnäyte tekeillä aiheesta, mutta se ei ikävä kyllä valmistu tähän keskusteluun.

## ANNEX 16: THE DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED WHEN JUSSI KOITELA SHARED THE REPLY ON HIS FACEBOOK WALL

Jussi Koitela 2. lokakuuta 2014  
 Hyvä, että vastaus tuli, jospa tästä ihan keskustelu syntyy. Jännityksellä odotan.  
 Fifi : Näkökulma: Vastine kirjoitukseen Musta iho, valkoinen naamio  
 “Koemme, että dialogin puute on syynä moniin Al-Nawasin ja Korvensyrjän esittämiin ongelmiin”, kirjoittavat Rauman taidemuseon intendentti Janne Koski, EMMAn kokoelmaintendentti Henna Paunu, kuraattori, taidehistorioitsija Laura Kokkonen ja projektikoordinaattori Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez.

Heikki Kastemaa  
 On PC-puhe saapunut Raumallekin!

Jussi Koitela  
 Helsinkiin se ei ole tainut tulla, nämä jäivät aika lailla käsittelymättä:  
 (links to Enehielm and Retulainen cases)

Heikki Kastemaa  
 No sanos muuta. Ameriikoissa istutettu pc-minäni heräsi henkiin Cris Af Enehielmin näyttelyssä, kun kysyin itseltäni, että tällaista siellä Afrikassa sitten onkin? Juha Metson Voodoo-näyttely (“voodoo on eettinen koodisto ja bisnes”) Lasipalatsissa on vielä näkemättä. Hui kamalaa, mitähän siellä näkyy? Hannele Huhtala kirjoitti siitä Voimassa: “Merkityksellistä se on, sillä tällaisilla kuvilla jatketaan Afrikan toiseuttamista ja outouttamista. Ja toisaalta yksinkertaistamista.” <http://fifi.voima.fi/.../2014/syyskuu/mystiset-voodoomenot>



## 3 *Research Methodology*

As stated in the introduction, the thesis is a combination of practical experiences and theoretical issues. This chapter deals with the practicalities of concluding the case study in order to move on to theoretically analyzing its significance. In addition to discussing my position as a curator and a researcher, I will now link the research to both local and universal contexts. I begin the chapter by opening up the methods of this case study as qualitative research. I will then move on to shortly introducing how this Finnish context relates to postcolonial discussions and contemporary art internationally. After that, I will conclude the chapter by elaborating upon more private matters that are not part of the published materials that are discussed in the last chapter.

### 3.1 *Methodologies*

As Donna Haraway argues in her article “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and The Privilege of Partial Perspective”, having multiple viewpoints that are put into dialogue with one another is what gives our individual knowledge value. “Only partial perspective promises objective vision” because it is based on “limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object” (Haraway 1988: 583). According to Haraway, putting feminist objectivity into practice will lead to “knowledge potent for constructing worlds less organized by axes of domination” and could even lead to true objectivity (Haraway 585).

Haraway’s idea of situated knowledges is what I try to achieve by reproducing all the texts related to the exhibition and its discourses. As I cannot escape my partial perspective and my deeply conflicted position as a researcher of my own curatorial makings, the least I can do is to put multiple viewpoints into dialogue. This dialogue, I hope, will be achieved with the help of the theories I will introduce in the next main chapter. Considering ideas from a much broader global context enables indispensable insights into the images and the debate around them.

Haraway’s partial perspective is also an attitude that enables and justifies my research. Despite the issues and liabilities explained in the next subchapters, I am writing this thesis in order to bring forward knowledges that did not previously exist on the *Crime Scene* images and how they came into being. I hope that by expressing clearly the limitations of my own perspective on the one hand, and by discussing the topic together with associated materials as inclusively as possible on the other, the thesis is also able to produce alternate knowledges on the Finnish contemporary art field from a postcolonial per-



spective. I also believe that acknowledging the limitations of my partial perspective makes possible the thesis' reliability and integrity as research. To quote Haraway, "[A]ll knowledge is a condensed node of in an agonistic power field" (Haraway 577). This research and the *Crime Scene* images are the nodes in the knowledges related to the case's context.

This case study aims to formulate a so-called thick description of the events related to the subject matter of the *Crime Scene* images. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined "thick description" in the 1970s in relation to anthropological case studies. "Thick description" refers to a detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context. Thick description is opposed to "thin description" which is a factual account without any interpretation—like my explanation of the events in the previous research material chapter of the thesis (Geertz 1973: 12). According to Geertz, the researcher should present a thick description which is composed not only of facts but also of commentary, interpretation and interpretations of those comments and interpretations (Geertz 3–30).

Geertz writes about anthropology, but his idea has been applied to many fields of social sciences and is also a useful goal for this thesis. In the previous chapter I described the events from a superficial perspective that brought about only the most urgent and obvious interpretations. What now follows is my attempt to build a context for the *Crime Scene* images from the postcolonial, feminist and antiracist perspective that is, in my opinion, the most relevant. I connect the case within cultural studies discourses on difference, otherness and subalternity. This is, to my understanding, the thick description that Geertz insists upon, and is presented in addition to discussions of the applied interpretations from a critical perspective.

According to Robert E. Stake, who has written about qualitative research, a case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of object to be studied. His argument is that one of the most important questions in case studies should be: *what can be learned from the single case?* (Stake 1994: 236) This is a very relevant approach for this case study. As a singular event, the case of this thesis is most worthwhile when analyzed from Stake's perspective.

In this case, theory plays an important part in the process of answering Stake's question. I believe the case study teaches us best by analyzing it with the postcolonial and feminist theories that I will introduce in the next chapter. I will not use theory as a plain framework but as a tool to investigate and analyze the research material further, thus the theoretical and analytical parts of the thesis are bound together. As mentioned, I investigate how the images of this particular case study are representations of subalternity. The second part of the research question—what problems generally emerge from representing subalternity within contemporary art—is, I hope, my answer to Stake's question of what can be learned from the single case.

But before I move on to the actual analysis of the subject, I will now develop the groundwork of the case in two more subchapters that both elaborate upon my partial perspective as Haraway insists, and also provide part of Geertz's thick description for the case study. Next I will provide some insight into the geographical and social context in which



the case came about. These research foundations will also clarify my personal motive for such an extensive study on the subject of two images. After this I will move on to another aspect of the thick description of the case: the dilemmas of the exhibition context and my personal position as a curator-researcher.

### *3.2 Some Words on the Context in Finland*

Al-Nawas' and Korvensyrjä's text and its reply also received attention from a totally opposite perspective. There was a discussion on the topic in the Finnish "immigration critical" internet forum *Hommaforum* on October 1, 2014. The discussion illustrates something about the Finnish context. Discussions on race have been taboo for a long time, and only the extreme right and people associated with the Finns Party usually publicly discuss race at all. *Hommaforum* defines its goal as follows: "[The community's common principle] is primarily to maintain stigmatizing-free discussion on the important and even controversial phenomena that affect our society."<sup>21</sup> I interpret that this sentence means discussing migration and multiculturalism from a xenophobic and anti-immigration point of view without being accused of racism.

As the writer Albert Memmi has written, "there is a strange kind of tragic enigma associated with the problem of racism. No one, or almost no one, wishes to see themselves as racist; still, racism persists, real and tenacious" (Memmi 2000 [1982]: 3). Memmi's view is an applicable description of race and the Finnish public realm. Until recently, most people have avoided the topic completely. This has led to a situation of all voices that touch upon race and racism seeming inherently racist. There is fortunately an increasing amount of antiracist voices.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, postcolonial discourses are not yet a mainstream understanding of race but mostly addressed in artistic and academic circles. Finland is still a country of low immigration volumes and therefore has confronted the urgency to respond to a more pluralist social structure in a very late stage compared to other European and even Nordic countries. Most discussions about racism are usually centred

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<sup>21</sup> *Hommaforum* FAQ, <http://hommaforum.org/index.php/topic,101.0.html> (accessed on: 12 December 2014).

<sup>22</sup> For example, the collective Antirasismi X and its founder Maryan Abdulkarim have brought the topic forth continuously. Just now, in late July 2015, the Finnish right-wing politician Olli Immonen published a racist declaration of war ("This nightmare called multiculturalism [...]") on social media. His comment luckily resulted to an explosion of anti-racist comments and a demonstration of circa 10 000 people; how ironic it is though that this burst of anti-racism would not have manifested itself without the racist comment. Then again, many comments of the discussion still avoided the topic of race and focused on the liberal idealist view of "multiculturalism".



on immigration politics, and the liberal regime mostly disavows the topic of race.

The sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva has written about the same issue of racism without racists. He is concerned about “colour blind racism”, meaning white people who deny being racist by saying they do not see colour. Bonilla-Silva asks, how is it possible to have tremendous racial inequality in a country [USA] where most whites claim race is no longer relevant (Bonilla-Silva 2006: 2). Concerning discussions on race, Finland is far behind the USA because of the homogeneity of the population, even if racial inequality also thrives here. Race is strongly linked to social inequality, despite the liberal regime attempting to deny the difference it makes.

I began dealing with the topic of representations of race with the citations of Memmi and Bonilla-Silva in order to indicate the reasons for writing the thesis. I was working for an institution that was accused of racist representations. It would be easy to disavow the accusations due to one’s commitment to deeply anti-racist values and claiming that racism does not concern you. As well as Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä who are behind the accusation, I claim that silencing their criticism—despite the fact that I disagree with many parts of it—would lead to the persistence of racism within contemporary art discourses as well as in broader society. Finnish contemporary art circles cannot fend off dealing with the injustices white hegemonic culture causes.

I situate the thesis in the context of studies on contemporary art and representations on race from the standpoint described above. This context is internationally quite widely discussed but in Finland is quite narrow. The aim of this thesis is therefore to give strength and a multidimensionality of views to the discussions of Finnish cases. There are many artists<sup>23</sup> and researchers<sup>24</sup> who have worked on issues of nationalism and racism in Finland, but less case studies of actual representations on race within contemporary art discourses. Probably the most noteworthy is Johanna Tiainen’s master’s thesis on three Finnish contemporary art exhibitions that presented “African art” in 2008–2009, 2010 and 2011: *Africa/Now* at EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, *Peekaboo* at Helsinki Art Museum and *Ars 11* at Kiasma. Tiainen researched how eurocentric discourses determined the so-called African contemporary art in such exhibitions, especially in the discourses of their exhibition catalogues.<sup>25</sup>

Tiainen ended up with an interesting argument. She wrote that the writers of the exhibition catalogues were mostly aware of the postcolonial critique towards representing “the other” from an eurocentric point of view. She concluded that this apparent acknowl-

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23 Suohpanterror, Minna Henriksson & Sezgin Boynik, Sasha Huber, Filippo Zambon, Kalle Hamm and Dzamil Kamanger, to name a few.

24 For example Vesa Puuronen and Anna Rastas have published qualitative research on racism in Finland.

25 See also the article on the *Peekaboo* exhibition “Onko värillä sittenkin väliä?” [*Does color matter after all?*] by Helena Oikarinen-Jabai and Marjo Vepsä in *Voima* 8 May 2011, <http://uusi.voima.fi/artikkeli/2011/onko-varilla-sittenkin-valia/> (accessed on: 12 August 2015).



edgement of the pitfalls of representation would not necessarily lead to overcoming them in the texts. The writers of the catalogues acted as if self-reflexivity would keep them apart from cultural and social practices that were considered questionable from critical, postcolonial standpoints (Tiainen 2013: 72).

This conclusion can be extended to concern the arguments of this thesis. The texts Tiainen researched end up with the same complications that most cases of art and theory that try to “speak for the other” do, as I later argue with the support of texts by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Self-reflexivity on the one hand, and political correctness as avoiding the topic on the other, are very far from actively antiracist and counter-hegemonic practices. This is to say that more self-reflexive texts around postcolonial issues—such as this thesis partly is—is not what is urgently needed. I am very much aware of the fact that as a white woman my definition of racism is not valid and even less necessary. Therefore my aim here is not make myself an authority of the final interpretation of the *Crime Scene* images, but to bring together multiple viewpoints and add another dimension to the discussions on postcolonialism and antiracism in Finland. One of the endeavors of this thesis is to look for, and analyze the conditions of alternative, counter-hegemonic practices against global injustice, beyond self-reflexiveness.

### 3.3 *Partial Perspectives*

This chapter serves to open up the biases and commitments that formed the foundations of the actual events around the *Crime Scene* exhibition. I hope to clarify my problematic position both as a curator in the exhibition and now as a researcher of the thesis. This chapter deals mainly with the claims of Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä and explains the background of the institutional response. After these explanations, the thesis finally moves on to analyzing the case from a more universal perspective.

As in any job that has a public, a curator has to draw the line for publicity: what is private for myself, for the working team, for the artists, and what is public for everyone. In the face of responding to institutional critique, the line had to be re-positioned. Some matters that were considered private or irrelevant received public attention and needed to be addressed. The issues that were not considered interesting for the wider public now warrant explanation.

I had been involved as a freelance worker with Rauma Art Museum since 2004, first as a museum guard, and since my studies in art history (2007–2012) and curating (2012–2015) as a project worker in many contexts such as exhibitions and the museum’s collections. I had been involved in the previous four *Rauma Biennale Balticum* exhibitions: writing catalogue texts for the 2008 exhibition *Flower Power*, editing the publication of the exhibitions *What’s Up Sea?* of 2010 and *Human Nature* of 2012, for which I also planned and designed the content and layout. In other words, I had been in close contact with the museum for ten years, but never with a permanent appointment. I had the possibility to



be part of many challenging and rewarding projects.

I went on maternity leave in the end of the *Crime Scene* exhibition process, in April 2014, which meant I had to plan the production in advance and was partly absent for nearly two months of the most hectic part of producing the exhibition.<sup>26</sup> This was also the time the criticized images were produced and published. My position as a freelance employee and a partly absent curator turned out to be quite problematic. Another conflict was that the laboratory brought together two separate contexts in which I had been involved: Rauma Art Museum and people from Aalto University, whom I was familiar with. I had studied together with Ahmed Al-Nawas, who took part in the Laboratory, for two years in a group of eight people. Nevertheless, the museum was the party I represented as a freelance curator within the *Crime Scene* project. When the criticism towards the exhibition images came about, it was soon obvious that I could not, or want to, take responsibility or stand as an individual actor, but that the curatorial team was the functioning agent, however scattered and heterogeneous.

Al-Nawas' and Korvensyrjä's essay was based on a manuscript that they had worked on together with other laboratory participants. But as mentioned before, no other participants wanted to sign the text because of its antagonistic tone. Their text was troublesome because it did not stick to analyzing the images. If that was the case, the discussion would have been much more useful and also easier to respond to. The writers wanted someone to blame for the images and because there was no clear target, they had to create one by telling a story of how the images came into being. When the criticism came about, my emotions were conflicted: I was accused of being part of a capitalist and racist regime that my whole identity is based on being against. I had to ask myself: have I gone blind? This whole thesis is then a result of this question, an attempt to see better what both the accusation and the images were about.

The process started by sorting out the explicit inconsistencies of the critics' text by writing the response. The writers claim that the bargained fee was the reason for the designers' artistic freedom. This claim was based on gossip and was simply not correct. They also refer to me having thanked the designers for the controversy of the images. That was also something that did not happen. It is a reference to a status update on Facebook where I thanked the participants of the biennial, and the designers for the "controversy" created by the car crash installation during the opening—as I thought the criticism of the *installation* that I had just witnessed on the opening night was hypocritical.

As mentioned earlier, the writers built their case on the claim that the museum was a deliberately neoliberal agent. Of course the museum functions under post-fordist and neoliberal circumstances, and by not actively opposing the hegemonic economic discourse is also partly reproducing it. But in addition to the fact that the museum is a non-prof-

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26 I was completely off emails from the end of April until the end of May. My child was born on May 9 and was one-month-old during the laboratory and the opening of the exhibition.



it institution, it is also run by essentially two people, both of whom are concerned with “enlightening the public” and “reaching audiences” that the writers mentioned as contradictory roles. Referring to these staff members as “two apparatuses” working to deliberately deceive each other in the name of pandering to “capitalist logic” and “the pursuit of profit” is an exaggeration.

Henna Paunu reflected upon it later in a personal e-mail: “The most disconcerting point was when completely external quarters came confidentially inside the institution and started acting against the institution. This is somehow a very undesirable situation, because the institution, that is in this case weak and marginal, working already over its own resources, still tried to function coherently and internally strong. The external participants had only a superficial conception of the limitations and the situation of the institution.”<sup>27</sup> I am an advocate of institutional critique as an artistic method and am, for instance, aware of labor struggles within the contemporary art field, as that was the original research subject for this thesis. Then again, I do not believe in allegations of conspiracies when they do not exist.

Like Paunu, Montes de Oca has also stressed the importance of trust. The concept of the whole laboratory was based on trust: the institution, on the one hand, had allowed the participants to work inside its premises during the hectic mounting period of the exhibition, while Montes de Oca, on the other, had planned the laboratory to be horizontal and open without strong authority figures deciding on matters. Montes de Oca has later analyzed that some participants of the group did not know how to handle such horizontality and its requirements for an open dialogue, mutual respect, and care. Perhaps that was the reason why the group’s dynamics evolved to be so intense.

An important point of the institutional reply was to bring forward the critics’ lack of dialogue. This point was not articulated clearly and was misunderstood in the comments that followed the reply. These comments prove that the readers who agreed on the critical visual analysis also believed the partially incorrect institution critical statements: if one is to agree with the fact that the invitation and the poster were stereotypical representations, it was clearly too easy to believe the whole story of the writers’ text. The response’s accusation of the lack of dialogue links to the dynamics of the laboratory and the personal relations between the authors and the curators. The critics give a false impression that the curators were strangers to them, and disavow the complex human side of the case by claiming that an unattainable structure or a monolithic regime would have been the functioning agent, when in reality the designers and we three curators mentioned by name in the critic’s essay were available to be addressed.

The critical comments that followed our institutional response are apt in the sense that it is—naturally—true that criticism does not have to be approved by the subject of criticism. The background of this case was nonetheless more complicated than publicly

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27 She kindly allowed me to publish her comment that was written on the 31st of July 2015.



appears, and we did not succeed in describing the complexity of the issue well enough in our reply. The critics' text was an end result of a collaborative workshop but the writers tendentiously left some of the participants—including Montes de Oca as the curator of the laboratory—out of the phase when the text was formulated, and never asked the curatorial team directly to take a stand. I consider picking random comments from Facebook not enough. Asking for a public comment would have been reasonable both in journalistic and collegial sense, if any quotes were to be used.

Responding to the criticism in September 2014 with one voice that was not completely my own was then the most difficult task of my career so far—an explicit apology for publishing the images would have legitimized the false accusations of the critics' text. My personal contradiction and self-reflexivity are not the most urgent issues, though: the unease of the task of writing the reply has made me learn that in order to ever be able to live in a more equal globalized world, we have to shift the focus from bemoaning the discomfort of the privileged white hegemony to something else. The most interesting part of *Crime Scene* was not the debate itself, or where it came from, but what we could learn from it: to understand better the various forms of representation and how they affect and are affected by power relations, is in my opinion, one of the most rewarding lessons of the debate. This is what I will now argue in the following theoretical chapters in my attempt to see better.



## 4 *Representation and the Subaltern*

In this chapter I will explore the central concepts and the theoretical background of the thesis that function as the tool for analysing the *Crime Scene* images. I will first shortly revisit the concepts of otherness and difference that form the foundation for all the other theoretical discussions. After that, I move on to defining the concept of subalternity in Antonio Gramsci and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's writings, and compare them to Judith Butler's concept of precarity. The first part of this chapter aims to answer the beginning of my research question, or in what sense are the *Crime Scene* images representations of subalternity? After that, I will detail how Spivak deals with subalternity in relation to representation, with the help of Peggy Phelan's ideas on representation without reproduction. This works to investigate the latter part of the research question: what problems generally emerge from representing subalternity within contemporary art, and how are they foundational to the following discussions on representation within political contemporary art?

### 4.1 *Stereotyping Otherness*

The whole case at hand is contingent upon the concepts of difference and otherness. As mentioned in the introduction, these philosophical concepts have long traditions that are not relevant to repeat here in detail. Nevertheless, a brief review of these concepts is necessary in order to understand the arguments of the thesis. I will focus here on how the concepts have been applied in political and cultural theories in the last decades; this excludes the fundamental philosophical discussions on the concepts by, for example, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze.

To put it plainly, otherness is sociologically understood by binaries and dichotomies, as Zygmunt Bauman has enumerated: "Woman is the other of man, animal is the other of human, stranger is the other of native, abnormality the other of norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, insanity the other of reason, lay public the other of the expert, foreigner the other of state subject, enemy the other of friend" (Bauman 1991: 8). In cultural theory, such differences are above all tools for human comprehension, and on no account are naturally existing categories. As concepts they are still



necessary; according to the political theorist Chantal Mouffe, for example, the us/them distinction is constitutive of politics.<sup>28</sup>

The cultural theorist Stuart Hall has sectioned four theoretical accounts that have in recent decades addressed the concepts of difference and otherness. According to Hall, difference matters firstly linguistically, because the concept is essential to meaning. We know, for example, what black means, because we can contrast it with its opposite, white. Secondly, we need the concept of difference because we can only construct meaning through dialogue with the other, as meaning is established in a dialogic manner. Thirdly, we need difference in the anthropological sense, because culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within classificatory system; difference is thus the basis of that symbolic order we call culture. Fourthly and lastly, difference is essential for our psychic lives: the other is fundamental to the constitution of the self for us as subjects, and to sexual identity (Hall 2013: 224–228).

Hall additionally notes the importance of failing to fit into the binary, dichotomic categories. The surplus of the categories is essential, and the fact that the surplus is culturally difficult to respond to proves how deep binary categories are in human comprehension. Hall also highlights the ambivalence of the categories of difference. Difference can be both positive and negative: “It is both necessary for the production of meaning, the formation of language and culture, for social identities and a subjective sense of the self as a sexed subject—and at the same time, it is threatening, a site of danger, of negative feelings, of splitting, hostility and aggression towards the ‘Other’” (Hall 224–228).

Difference then appears more problematic when it is used for “othering” and when it is a subject of power and representation, as is the case of the thesis. Hall describes how power operates in representation as follows: “power to mark, assign and classify, [...] *symbolic* power, of ritualized expulsion. Power, it seems, has to be understood here not only in terms of economic exploitation and coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something a certain way—within a certain ‘regime of representation’” (Hall 249). The *Crime Scene* images definitely make use of this power in representation, but the question remains if they are part of a certain regime of representation that can be categorized as ritualized expulsion of the other.

Of course the basic practice of contemporary art—exhibiting—is a lucid act of representational power. When the hegemonic side of the binaries of difference aims to represent its foil, serious considerations have to take place, as I later elaborate. Within contemporary art, naturally images and other artworks are acts of representational power. Although within the context of political art, the representational act is usually benevolent and done in good faith to foster greater visibility for the subjects represented. This thesis’ main concern are the *Crime Scene* images, but as I later argue, similar representational

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28 Mouffe has discussed the issue widely in her book *The Democratic Paradox*. I refer here to her later book *Agonistics* in which she has summarized some of the discussions.



issues emerge in cases of both exhibitions and artworks, and especially when the *subaltern* other is represented.

A particularly important aspect is representation that marks racial difference. Hall has written about how the racialized regime of representation actually works. An important aspect of representing racial difference is stereotyping; this is also what was claimed the *Crime Scene* images did. According to Hall, stereotyping has essentializing, reductionist and naturalizing effects: it reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented and fixed by nature. Further aspects of stereotyping that Hall examines are (a) the construction of “otherness” and exclusion; (b) stereotyping and power; (c) the role of fantasy; and (d) fetishism. Stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes difference. It also divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and unacceptable, and then excludes or expels everything that does not fit or is different. Hall posits that stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power, and power is usually directed against the subordinate or excluded group (Hall 247–248).

Here we come to how hegemony relates to stereotyping otherness. Hegemony is a form of power based on leadership by a group in many fields of activity at once—in addition to representation, it involves knowledge, ideas, cultural leadership and authority, as well as economic constraint and physical coercion—so that its ascendancy commands widespread consent and appears natural and inevitable. Therefore, according to Hall, hegemony plays a central role in stereotyping that classifies people according to a norm and constructs the excluded as “other”. Power cannot be thought of in terms of one group having a monopoly of power that radiates downwards on a subordinate group; it includes the dominant and the dominated within its circuits, and as Hall notes, the circularity of power is especially important in the context of representation. Everyone, the powerful and powerless, is caught up, though not on equal terms, in power’s circulation (Hall 248–251).

Both in the geographical and contextual discourses in which the *Crime Scene* images were published—in Finland, and within contemporary art—black people are subordinate; not only a minority but clearly not the dominant player in the hegemony. They are then, if we follow Hall, more vulnerable and precarious for being represented by means of stereotyping. This is to my understanding a reason for why the critics claimed that the *Crime Scene* images were stereotypes. They do not elaborate further upon the methods of stereotyping in this particular case, only that the black woman was represented with her mouth sealed. But as I read Hall, I do not see this as such a strong a stereotype.

Hall goes through three major moments in global history when the “West” encountered black people, all of which resulted in an avalanche of popular representations based on the marking of racial difference. As Hall argues, Western ideas about “race” and images of racial difference were profoundly shaped by “those three fateful encounters” (Hall 228). These stereotypes were formed in consequence of (1) the sixteenth-century contact between European traders and the West African kingdoms and its effects on slavery and in the post-slave societies of the New World, (2) the European colonization of Africa and the “scramble” between European powers for the control of colonial territory



and (3) the post-Second World War migrations from the “Third World” into Europe and North America. I will not go through these encounters here, but I will make note of the stereotypical attributes associated with black people that Hall refers to: Africa was represented as the primitive, the barbaric and as “the parent of everything that is monstrous in Nature”; the racialized discourse was structured by a set of binary oppositions of “civilization” (white) and “savagery” (black), “purity” and “pollution”, “culture” and “nature”; and black people “as a race, as a species” were associated with laziness, simple fidelity, mindless “cooning”, trickery and childishness (Hall 229–237). Hall then explores the traces of these racial stereotypes and how they have persisted into the late twentieth century, particularly in popular culture, as simplistic black “types” that are repeated over and over again. According to Hall, stereotyping can also be stressed in two extreme poles, on the one hand “blacks are poor, childish, subservient, always shown as servants, everlastingly ‘good’, in menial positions deferential to whites, never the heroes, cut out of the glamour, the pleasure, and the rewards, sexual and financial”, and on the other hand “blacks are motivated by money, love bossing white people around, perpetrate violence and crime as effectively as the next person, are ‘bad’, walk off with the goodies, indulge in drugs, crime and promiscuous sex, come on like ‘Super-spades’ and always get away with it!” (Hall 239–246, 261).

Stereotyping would then mean creating such a “type” by reducing everything about the represented person to traits of their roles or membership of different groups, linking them to their personality types, and then exaggerating and simplifying the attributes. The figures in the *Crime Scene* images are not that simplistic and they do not refer to any of the stereotypical attributes Hall refers to, but of course there are other stereotypes of black people that are not mentioned here. Then again, Frantz Fanon, as an example whom also Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä refer to, particularly stresses the blacks as victims of white hegemony: “The black man is, in every sense of the word, a victim of white civilization” (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 169).

This is to say that whatever the interpretation of the images, the subjects are more ambiguous and complex than the usual, simplistic stereotypes. The subject of the images can be interpreted as a victim, but in the other image she seems very confident. At the very least one should take into account what Hall writes: meaning can never be finally fixed, and only that offers us the possibility for counter-strategies and interventions (Hall 259).

There is still the fact that these so-called stereotypes were used for marketing purposes. This statement lays the ground for the entire criticism. But as I analyze in subsequent chapters, much like the interpretation of the images, the operations of power are also more complex and not so straightforward. Even if the images were interpreted as stereotypes, there are more multidimensional power structures behind the case and the representations that relate to the images.

I have now discussed otherness and difference with Hall, explained how I understand the concepts in the thesis, and conveyed how they relate to hegemonic power and stereotyping. I will now move on to the concept of the subaltern, which from the point



of view of hegemony, is the subordinate other. It is a more specific concept related to difference, and describes how the subjects of the *Crime Scene* images were seen: they were not only representations of otherness, but representations of the other as the subordinate within the hegemonic logic.

## 4.2 Subalternity

The Subaltern is the social group which is socially, politically and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure, or as the dictionary definition states, “of inferior rank”. My claim is that the *Crime Scene* images were representations of subalternity, and the theoretical analyses are based on this argument. The figures of the images were portrayed behind *Crime Scene* tape—so symbolically they were victims of crime—and they were black, so they were not the dominant but the dominated within the white hegemony of both the physical space in which they were represented, and the context of an exhibition that presented only white artists. But these are not the reasons to interpret the images as representations of subalternity. As I will explain here by introducing two understandings of the concept of the subaltern, the subalternity of the images is most importantly based on the fact that their mouths were sealed.

The concept of the subaltern was first formulated by the Marxist theoretician and politician Antonio Gramsci in his article “Notes on Italian History” that was published later on as part of his *Prison Notebooks* written between 1929 and 1935 (Gramsci 1999 [1929–1935]).<sup>29</sup> Gramsci writes about workers and peasants who were oppressed and discriminated against by the National Fascist Party and Benito Mussolini. Gramsci’s use of the term subaltern can be expanded to any person or group of people “of inferior rank” suffering hegemonic domination by a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation. Gramsci’s studies on subalternity were further scrutinised by the *Subaltern Studies* publication and The South Asian Subaltern Studies Group (Green 2011: 387).

According to Gramsci, the subaltern social groups are excluded from a society’s established structures for political representation, the means by which people have a voice in their society. Gramsci writes that the subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up: only “permanent” victory breaks their subordination (Gramsci 207). By Gramsci’s definition, subalternity is an attribute and condition related to class.

The literary and postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak later developed

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<sup>29</sup> Gramsci originally uses all the terms “classi strumentali”, “classi subalterne” and “classi subordinate” in parallel.



a more specific definition of Gramsci's concept and gave the term a new meaning in the poststructuralist context. In her classic essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Spivak takes Gramsci's concept to a more complex theoretical level. Spivak's conception of subalternity originates from Gramsci but she has used the term quite strictly, although she never fixes it to a rigid theoretical concept.<sup>30</sup> She famously answers the title question: *no, the subaltern cannot speak*—on specific conditions that I will discuss in the next subchapter.

In a 1987 interview that was later published in *The Post-Colonial Critic*, Spivak mentioned that Gramsci's term derived from the fact that he was censored during his imprisonment. Spivak commented:

"I like the word subaltern for one reason. It is truly situational. 'Subaltern' began as a description of a certain rank in the military. The word was used under censorship by Gramsci: he called Marxism monism and was obliged to call the proletarian subaltern. That word, used under duress, has been transformed into the description of everything that doesn't fall under strict class analysis. I like that, because it has no theoretical rigor." (Spivak 1990)

This situationality is also my understanding of subalternity in this thesis. As Spivak demonstrates in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Western academia—more specifically Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze—has obscured subaltern experiences by disavowing the problem of representation. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak critiques Western academics and their attempts to represent and speak about "the other." This same criticism could be more widely applied to designers, artists and curators of this case study, and more generally. Spivak writes that Deleuze and Foucault romanticize in their writings the idea of the subaltern that could finally speak, but is herself very sceptical of that ever being possible—"the ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern is the left intellectual's stock-in-trade" (Spivak 2010 [1999]: 27).

By invoking the "Subject of Europe" as the active subject, these philosophers constituted the subaltern "Other of Europe" as anonymous and mute. Spivak suggests that any attempt from the outside to ameliorate the condition of subalterns by granting them collective speech will encounter the problem of a dependence upon Western intellectuals to "speak for" the subaltern condition rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Spivak also argues that by speaking out and reclaiming a collective cultural identity, subalterns will in fact re-inscribe their subordinate position in society (Spivak 22–66).

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30 There are two versions of the Spivak's essay, both of them published in the book *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* (edited by Rosalind C. Morris). The original essay was published in the book *Marxism and the Interpretation of History*. I will refer here to the later version that Spivak has revisited, that was first published in *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. In Spivak 2013 she states that her application of the term subaltern has been mostly influenced by Gramsci's "Southern Question" essay rather than his more general discussions of the subaltern.



Now we come to the first part of the research question for this thesis: in what sense do the *Crime Scene* images represent the subaltern? If we understand subalternity like Spivak does, the subalternity of the figures in the images is bound to their incapacity for speech and the fact their mouths have been sealed. The interpretation that the images are representations of subalternity is therefore conditional on the combination of the elements in the pictures. Spivak writes that subalternity is created in three instances: economic, power and race (Spivak 26).

I understand together with Spivak that race alone is not enough to define subalternity. Race is a signifier, but it is more likely the symbolically-covered mouth that makes the figures subalterns. The muteness then suggests that the figures are subalterns also by the structures of power and economy. This point can be reasserted also with Hall. As I mentioned before, according to Hall, the circularity of power means that the powerless are also embedded in the circuits of power (Hall 250–251). Spivak's subalterns are totally incapable of participating in the power structure namely because of their incapacity to speak within the hegemony. Spivak's concept is necessary because Hall does not speak of the group that is fundamentally incapable of participation within the hegemonic logic. The images mark racial difference, but the muteness suggests that their condition is subaltern beyond otherness.

It is relevant to mention that not all theorists agree with the muteness being the criterion for subalternity. For example, in his later afterword for *Orientalism* Edward W. Said, writes: “[...] if you feel you have been denied the chance to speak your piece, you will try extremely hard to get that chance. For indeed, the subaltern can speak, as the history of liberation movements in the twentieth century eloquently attests” (Said 1994: 335). According to Said, then, subalternity is not situational in the sense Spivak means. Taking Said's arguments into account as a more general analysis, in this case scrutinizing the *Crime Scene* images from Spivak's perspective is relevant because she relates subalternity to a situation of hegemonic dominance that manifests itself in the representational, and representation is the specific issue we are dealing with.

In both Gramsci and Spivak, a subaltern is always a subaltern in relation to hegemonic power structures, namely by exclusion. Spivak has noted some useful specifications of the term in her later essay “Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular”: “Subaltern is to popular as gender is to sex, class to poverty, state to nation. One word inclines to reasonableness, the other to cathexis [...] Subalternity cannot be generalized according to hegemonic logic. That is what makes it subaltern. Yet it is a category and therefore repeatable. [...] Subalternity is a position without identity” (Spivak 2013: 429–432). Then Spivak continues by analysing the term with Marx: “The idea of subalternity became imbricated with the idea of non-recognition of agency” (Spivak 432).

Within Spivak's arguments one could say that the *Crime Scene* images were representations of *subalternity* rather than of *a subaltern*: they represented the young black female subject under the condition of subalternity, or the incapacity of speech as a non-recognition of agency. They then reproduce the image of a black woman as a subaltern; in this sense the subalternity of the figure in the images is a tautology. I would not necessarily call



this a stereotype of how black females are usually represented in art and media. The black female as a victim can be interpreted as a subtle stereotype, but to my understanding it is not as common as the over-sexed, fetishized subject. The images are perhaps more about a condition of political underrepresentation of black women in the society that reproduces itself. Spivak continues in her later essay:

“[...]through the electronic circuits of globalization, the subaltern has become greatly permeable. [...] But the permeability I speak of is the exploitation of the global subaltern as source of intellectual property without the benefit of benefit sharing [...] There is no permeability in the opposite direction. That is where permanent effort of infrastructural involvement is called for. I am not speaking of organizing international conferences with exceptionalist “examples” of subalternity to represent collective subaltern will. The subaltern has no “examples.” The exemplary subaltern is hegemonized, even if (and not necessarily) in bad faith” (Spivak 2013: 440–441).

Hegemonizing, I believe, is also evident when one tries to represent subalternity and the act of representation is more violent when it is used as a tool for marketing purposes—even if the image was not a stereotype as such. As far as I can see, the stereotyping discussed earlier with Hall can be compared to Spivak’s understanding of hegemonizing. Spivak claims that subaltern has no “examples”, so no subaltern can represent a collective subaltern will, and therefore no image can represent subalterns as individuals. Rather, there are more specifically hegemonized representations of subalternity that could be considered stereotypes, or not.

I have here tried to define the concept of subalternity and how it relates to the research subjects of this thesis. In the next subchapter I will bring another layer to the the discussion by shortly introducing Judith Butler’s understanding of the concept precarity, and more specifically how it relates to performativity. I believe this discussions adds to the concept of subalternity and how it relates to the topic of the thesis. But Spivak’s core idea in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” was not only to define subalternity, but more specifically to critique attempts to represent subalterns. After discussing Butler, I will continue to Spivak’s main arguments around representation in order to suggest, what in my opinion, are the key controversies of the *Crime Scene* images.



### 4.3 *Precarity*

By definition, precarity refers to a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare. Precarity could function as a sister concept to subalternity, but if we follow Spivak, it is not synonymous. Both are situational conditions, but precariousness is bound to hegemonic dominance from a more passive point of view. Precarity is a term that is often referred to in labor struggles, and is then a condition that relates the subaltern and the living labor of contemporary art. But as I will discuss here, especially in the final chapters of the thesis, the precarity addressed in relation to subalternity is a far more involuntary condition. It is an attribute of people with no power within the hegemonic discourse, and a situation that can result in being represented by others instead of by oneself. As mentioned by Hall, precarity makes people more vulnerable and prone to being represented as stereotypes.

I will now discuss Judith Butler's understanding of the relationship between precarity and performativity, mostly informed by her article "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics" (2009). Butler's concept of precarity is related to Spivak's subalternity in the sense that when Spivak sees subalternity as a situational condition, and Butler sees precarity as a conditional state. Like Spivak's theoretical definition of subalternity, Butler's definition of precarity means remaining involuntarily outside of the hegemonic power.

According to Butler, precarity is also linked to hegemony in the sense that social and political institutions are designed in part to minimize conditions of precarity. Butler then argues that precarity refers to certain populations that suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. She continues:

"Such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection. Precarity also characterizes that politically induced condition of maximized vulnerability and exposure for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence and to other forms of aggression that are not enacted by states and against which states do not offer adequate protection" (Butler 2009: ii).

Butler asks: "What do we call those who do not and cannot appear as "subjects" within hegemonic discourse?" (Butler iii) This is a significant question for this thesis; it could be argued from Butler's point of view that the *Crime Scene* images are representations of these failings to appear as a subject. On the other hand, Spivak's concept of subalternity concerns those totally outside of the hegemonic discourse, given their condition's inherent incapacity for speech within the discourse. Spivak also writes about the same incapacity of appearing as a subject, but Butler is more concerned about recognizability as the performative condition of the self:



“[...] The desire for recognition can never be fulfilled—yes, that is true. But to be a subject at all requires first complying with certain norms that govern recognition—that make a person recognizable. [...] We think of subjects as the kind of beings who ask for recognition in the law or in political life; but perhaps the more important issue is how the terms of recognition—and here was can include a number of gender and sexual norms—condition in advance who will count as a subject, and who will not” (Butler iv).

Butler then brings up examples of such liberation movements that Said referred to in past writings, involving precarious or subaltern people exercising rights that, from a hegemonic point of view, should not officially, belong to them. In Butler’s case, this condition is represented by illegal immigrants assembling for public performance. After studying precariousness as a condition that is especially enabled by the concept of the nation state, Butler concludes with these questions: “How does the unspeakable population speak and makes its claims? What kind of disruption is this within the field of power? And how can such populations lay claim to what they require?” (Butler xiii).

These three questions must have been in the forefront of the minds of many researchers and artists, as there are many differing attempts to try and speak for the “unspeakable population” by benevolent means of representation. In her article, Butler does not discuss the many troubles and challenges of such attempts, so I turn again to Spivak. Having discussed subalternity and precarity as concepts that can be associated with the *Crime Scene* images, I will now move on to the general problems that emerge from representing subalternity.

In order to understand the problematic nature of trying to speak for the other, a distinction between the two ways of representation must be made. Before moving to defining the double session of representations that is very important for Spivak and essential for the arguments of this thesis, I would like to quote Rosalind C. Morris, who in her introduction to *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* wrote the following: “For, in Spivak’s definition, it [the subalternity] is the structured place from which the capacity to access power is radically obstructed. To the extent that anyone escapes the muting of subalternity, she ceases being a subaltern. Spivak says this is to be desired. And who could disagree? There is neither authenticity nor virtue in the position of the oppressed. There is simply (or not so simply) oppression” (Morris 2010: 9).

The state of oppression and subalternity that Spivak claims the Western philosophers Deleuze and Foucault idealize is, for some, the differentiation that is needed to exist in order to be able to continue producing critical texts and art that claims to resist injustice but are in fact structured on the existence of injustice. This is not to say that all such texts and art are unnecessary, but that one should bear in mind what Morris writes: it is desirable to cease being a subaltern. Both the attempt of speaking for the other by means of representations, and a critique of such attempts should progress strategies for overcoming the silencing of subalternity as their primary endeavor. In order to do so, recognition of the two aspects of representation is necessary: it is important to understand political representation and subject-predication representation, as well as the differences between them when conditions of subalternity are in question.



#### 4.4 *The Double Session of Representations*

In “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Spivak quotes Karl Marx in order to distinguish two different aspects of representation. This double session of representations is referred to by most philosophers who discuss the representational, but I will focus on the discussion that relates directly to Spivak’s classification and otherwise deal with postcolonialism and-or contemporary art, and not discuss the concepts in a comprehensive philosophical sense. This chapter builds the foundation for the main argument of the thesis: that artistic and curatorial methods that call for greater visibility for subalternity and precarity rarely take into account the power relations of agencies within such representational processes.

Distinguishing between the characteristics of the double session of representations originates from Marx, but can still be applied today in analyzing political contemporary art and its representations of “the other.” In my understanding, this is basically the same division Peggy Phelan makes in her book *Unmarked* when she tries to categorize the qualities of political and representational visible in contemporary culture.

Marx addresses the representational in the seventh chapter of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852): “They [the poor French peasants] cannot represent themselves; they must be represented” or “Sie können sich nicht *vertreten*, sie müssen *vertreten* werden”.<sup>31</sup> In his work, Marx has distinguished between the two German words for representation, *vertreten* and *darstellen*, and while this classification does not exist in the English language, it is very important for Spivak and the concept of this thesis. Spivak stresses that in the quoted passage Marx means representation as *vertreten*. *Darstellung* translates to representation as portrayal, description, and account while *Vertretung* translates to representation as replacement, appearing in one’s place, and agency. According to Spivak, because the peasants Marx discusses cannot form a *Darstellung* of themselves as a collective group, as a class, they must resort to a *Vertretung* who will represent them for themselves. Alternatively, because the *Darstellung* they form amongst themselves is not one of a class united by common interests but rather a mass of isolated individual families, they turn to a *Vertretung* as the best way to mobilize a force that appears to speak in support of their perceived

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31 Marx 1852. This is the whole passage: “Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not constitute a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or a convention. *They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.* Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, an unlimited governmental power which protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power which subordinates society to itself.”



interests. The image the class has of itself will determine the particular representative the class will accept as representative of its best interests.

This background information on how Spivak understands the two versions of representation inspired my strategy for linking to the thesis topic. Representation as *Darstellung* builds the foundation for the representation as *Vertretung* that then leads to action: visual and textual representations as *Darstellung* form our understanding of collective identities and therefore lay the ground for the political representation as *Vertretung*. From this point of view, all the images in art and media that present black females, like the *Crime Scene* invitation and poster, can play a part in the formation of a global *Darstellung* of constructed and imagined black female identity that would—as part of complex processes—then affect how black females are represented in society also in the sense of *Vertretung*. Images are clear examples of such *Darstellung* that is usually considered the representational in art. But in case of political contemporary art that sometimes tries to imitate real political situations, the two aspects of representation come together in a way that insists upon further scrutiny. I will return to these discussions in the next subchapters, but will first elaborate upon how Spivak sees power relations within representational processes.

As far as I can see, Spivak's criticism of Deleuze and Foucault could be applied to both the logics of representation of the *Crime Scene* images and to the criticism towards them. Spivak suspects that Deleuze and Foucault's ideas of the speaking subaltern is an illusion, due the fact that they run together two senses of representation:

“[...] representation as ‘speaking for’, as in politics, and representations as ‘re-presentation,’ as in art or philosophy. [...] These two senses of representation—within state formation and the law, on the one hand, and in subject-predication, on the other—are related but irreducibly discontinuous. [...] The banality of leftist intellectuals’ lists of self-knowing, politically canny subalterns stands revealed; representing them, the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent” (Spivak 2010 [1999]: 28–29).<sup>32</sup>

Here we come to one of Spivak's key arguments that can be used in analyzing political art. Trying to represent “the other” and not acknowledge your own position creates an illusion of transparency, as if the one who speaks would not be a subject at all. This creates a power structure between acting and speaking subjects, and the ones who are represented. The *Crime Scene* images suggest certain attributes as part of black female identity, but it is criticism that marries these attributes to stereotypical qualities. It is then both the images, and the criticism towards them, that reproduce the *Darstellung* representation of the black female subject as a subaltern.

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32 Spivak argues that the reason for this is because Foucault and Deleuze see theory as distinct from practice: “Since theory is also only ‘action,’ the theoretician does not represent (speak for) the oppressed group. Indeed, the subject is not seen as a representative consciousness (one representing reality adequately).” (Spivak 2010 [1999]: 28)



Spivak elaborates upon the two different types of representation: “[...] [*darstellen* and *vertreten*] are related, but running them together, especially in order to say that beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak, act, and know *for themselves*, leads to an essentialist, utopian politics [...]” (Spivak 30). She then continues criticizing Western intellectuals:

“[...] Such theories [that do not distinguish two modes of representation] cannot afford to overlook that this line is erratic, and that the category of representation in its two senses is crucial. They must note how the staging of the world in representation—its scene of writing, its *Darstellung*—dissimulates the choice of and need for “heroes,” paternal proxies, agents of power—*Vertretung*. My view is that radical practice should attend to this double session of representations rather than reintroduce the individual subject through totalizing concepts of power and desire” (Spivak 33).

The “agent of power” Spivak refers to is also, I would claim, the position of the “benevolent humanist” that I discussed in the previous chapters. This unbiased or benevolent humanist (also known as the “liberal” curator) who condones the publication of the images is under the same illusion as Spivak’s intellectuals. They believe that the subaltern could speak by being represented as *Darstellung*, and that by giving greater visibility to an image of the black female as the subaltern, one could assist in the process of them transcending the categorisation of subaltern. If we follow Spivak’s arguments, this is impossible. Spivak continues to define “the transparent intellectual”: “This S/subject, curiously sewn together into a transparency by denegations, belongs to the exploiters’ side of the international division of labor. It is impossible for the contemporary French intellectuals to imagine the kind of Power and Desire that would inhabit the unnamed subject of the Other of Europe.” According to Spivak, this is because

“[I]t is not only that everything they read, critical or uncritical, is caught within the debate of the production of that Other, supporting or critiquing the constitution of the ‘Subject as Europe’. It is also that, in the constitution of that ‘Other of Europe’, great care was taken to obliterate the textual ingredients with which such a subject could cathect, could occupy (invest?) its itinerary—not only by scientific production, but also by the institution of the law” (Spivak 35).

The *Crime Scene* images can now be read according to Spivak’s words as a constitution of the “Other of Europe.” By representing a black woman as speechless, the images engage in the creation of imagery portraying the “Other of Europe.” Even if this kind of imagery does indeed create greater visibility for the subaltern, it is highly debatable if this is necessary or beneficial. When Peggy Phelan announced via her book *Unmarked* her attempt to reclaim a belief in subjectivity and identity that is not visibly representable, she distinguished her aim from “calling for greater visibility of the hitherto unseen” (Phelan 2006 [1993]: 1). One of the central research subjects of this thesis is something along Phelan’s lines: the representation and visibility of the other, the subaltern, the precarious,



the less privileged, the unseen, and especially the indifference towards such greater visibility. One of Phelan's straightforward examples illuminates clearly how no greater visibility is needed:

"If representational visibility equals power, then almost-naked young white women should be running Western culture. The ubiquity image, however, has hardly brought them political or economic power. Recognizing this, those who advance the cause of visibility politics also usually call for 'a change' in representational strategies. But so far these proposals are rather vague. What is required in order to advance a more ethical and psychically rewarding representational field, one that side-steps the usual traps of visibility: surveillance, fetishism, voyeurism, and sometimes, death? How are these traps more or less damning than benign neglect and utter ignorance? There is an important difference between wilfully failing to appear and never being summoned" (Phelan 10–11).

Phelan has also criticized the illusion of representation as power as follows: "The pleasure of resemblance and repetition produces both psychic assurance and political fetishization." Phelan deals with performance art, and she sees performance as a method to overcome the violent power structures of visual representations: "Performance, insofar as it can be defined as representation without reproduction, can be seen as a model for another representational economy" (Phelan 3). Hall also suggests methods for contesting the racialized regime of visual representations: the strategy of trans-coding by reversing stereotypes and replacing negative images with positive ones, and most interestingly, by making the stereotypes work against themselves. Hall writes:

"[I]nstead of avoiding the black body, because it has been so caught up in the complexities of power and subordination within representation, this strategy positively takes the body as the principal site of its representational strategies. [...] Instead of avoiding the dangerous terrain opened by the interweaving of 'race', gender and sexuality, it deliberately contests the dominant gendered and sexual definitions of racial difference by *working on* black sexuality" (Hall 264).

These criticisms of visual representations date back to the 1980s and 1990s. A more recent discussion related to political contemporary art has been repeatedly mentioned but not yet discussed. In the next chapter we move from an analysis of ways to read the *Crime Scene* images back to the context of the entire *Crime Scene* exhibition and its curatorial aims. Similar representational troubles do emerge in art that does not simply produce representational images of "the other", but tries to engage with "the other", for example within participatory and conceptual artistic methods. These methods are, to my understanding, conceptually close to practices that can be referred to, via Spivak, as the exemplary subaltern that is hegemonized, "even if not necessarily in bad faith" (Spivak 2013: 440–441). The following chapter proves that even though political contemporary art deals less with clear visual representations than it probably used to in the 1980s and 1990s, it has still not



resolved all the issues entangled with representational power. This discussion provides another perspective to the case of *Rauma Biennale Balticum*: it indicates that in recent art, the same conundrum of the double session of representation arises even if traditional visual representations were not in use.

#### 4.5 Political Art and the Ethics of Representation

Here I will consider two possible criticisms about political contemporary art. This chapter suggests that although the *Crime Scene* images can be seen to be representations of subalternity, this is only one reading that scratches the surface of a multiplicity of similar representational power relations in use within contemporary art. First I will briefly discuss Jacques Rancière's chapter "Paradoxes of Political Art" in his book *Dissensus – On Politics and Aesthetics*. Then I will deal with the so-called "common pessimistic view" that political art has lost its power because artistic critique has become an important element for capitalist productivity. Such a view has been challenged by Chantal Mouffe, who has a more constructive belief in counter-hegemonic artistic strategies to offer.

Rancière describes some examples of political contemporary art as follows: "Notwithstanding their differences, these strategies and practices all presuppose a specific notion of art's efficacy. Art is presumed to be effective politically because it displays the marks of domination, or parodies mainstream icons, or even because it leaves the spaces reserved for it and becomes a social practice" (Rancière 2010: 134–135). Later he continues: "It thus appears that, from the outset, the idea of critical art itself is caught between two types of pedagogy: one that could be called *representational mediation*, and another that we might refer to as *ethical immediacy*" (Rancière 137). It is clear that most of this thesis' discussion of the *Crime Scene* images deals with representational mediation. In this chapter however, I suggest that art that deals with ethical immediacy is challenged by similar representational troubles.

Rancière's many artistic examples are comparable to many of the *Crime Scene* exhibition's projects and thus are considered to be part of the same discourse of political art. But the "paradoxes" of political art, as Rancière defines them are not key to appreciating the theoretical frameworks for this thesis. He writes: "As such, they [political art projects] may open up new passages for political subjectivation, but they cannot avoid the aesthetic cut that separates consequences from intentions and prevents them from being any direct passage to an 'other side' of words and images" (Rancière 151).

Rancière's analysis is important, but it does not take into account the representational problems that we face when political artists deal with otherness, subalternity and precarity. Political artists dealing with "subalterns" is the norm. As mentioned, political contemporary art is peculiar in the sense that it quite often combines the two dimensions of representation, *vertreten* and *darstellen*. Because it imitates political or "real life" situa-



tions, the *vertreten* side of the representational also comes into play in some cases. I would like to mention here that it warrants a debate about if these cases of political art are “effective” in Rancière’s sense, or if they remain as *Darstellung* due to the highly mediated context of contemporary art. However while this debate is relevant, it is not the primary focus of this thesis and will not be addressed further.

The debate around *Crime Scene* then arrives at the core problem faced by most forms of political art—not questioning the privileged position from which they speak on behalf of “the other.” It would however be even worse to simply ignore urgent political issues and social justice as subjects of artistic inquiry—Spivak mentions that rejecting both forms of representation would be even more dangerous for the precarious position of the subaltern. So how then do we not confuse this apprehensiveness around art’s capacity to effect change with consciously remaining silent when challenged by difficult issues such as race? Spivak can help us with this differentiation.

Spivak has written about the “new subaltern” in reference to the unorganized or permanently casual Third World female labor. “To confront this group is not only to represent (*vertreten*) them globally in the absence of infrastructural support, but also to learn to represent (*darstellen*) ourselves. [...] [This argument] would also question the implicit demand, made by intellectuals who choose the ‘naturally articulate’ subject of oppression, that such a subject come through a history that is a foreshortened mode-of-production narrative.” Spivak later continues, “that Deleuze and Foucault ignored both the epistemic violence of imperialism and the international division of labor would matter less if they did not, in closing, touch on third-world issues” (Spivak 2010: 43–44).

Spivak explains that Deleuze and Foucault have written of French colonies in the so-called developing countries, but in a way that resembles a “benevolent first-world appropriation and reinscription of the Third World as an Other [that is] the founding characteristic of much third-worldism in the U.S. human sciences today.” She then analyses the way Foucault writes about subaltern struggles: “[I]f its situation is universalized, it accommodates unacknowledged privileging of the subject. Without a theory of ideology, it can lead to dangerous utopianism. And, if confined to migrant struggles in Northern countries, it can work against global social justice” (Spivak 43–44). Spivak’s suggestion is therefore to be mindful of one’s own position, but not necessarily to overcome representation completely. We now arrive at the possibility of counter-hegemonic strategies.

In their book *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have argued that artistic critique, within its ideal of self-management, anti-hierarchical exigency, and demands for autonomy, has been harnessed in the development of the post-fordist networked economy to promote the conditions required by current modes of capitalist regulation (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). If we take into account Rancière’s concerns about the aesthetic versus the political, Spivak’s critique on the representational, and now Boltanski’s and Chiapello’s view of artistic critique harnessed by capitalism, it seems likely that political art would have little to offer today’s social struggles.

As mentioned, Chantal Mouffe has an alternative way of addressing these doubts.



According to Mouffe, Boltanski and Chiapello's analysis that first seems to support the pessimistic view about the end of a critical role for art can also be used to make an argument in support of the importance of artistic and cultural practices in the counter-hegemonic struggle (Mouffe 2013: 88–89). If we consider Mouffe's position, there are possibilities for effective political art after all.

Mouffe, like Spivak, is informed by Gramsci's theories about hegemony. Their arguments support and complement each other even though they are derived from two different perspectives. As Mouffe explains, Gramsci repeatedly emphasized the centrality of cultural and artistic practices in the formation and diffusion of common sense—his important concept—in order to underline the decisive role played by those practices in the reproduction of or disarticulation of a given hegemony. If it operates as the result of discursive articulation, as Mouffe continues, common sense can be transformed through counter-hegemonic interventions, and this is where cultural and artistic practices can play a decisive role (Mouffe 90).

Mouffe's view is important and can also be used to analyze the *Crime Scene* debate, which I will put into practice in the following chapters. Having presented the main theoretical concepts of the thesis, I will now move on to the final main chapter. The aim of this chapter is to suggest alternative concepts and strategies for analyzing both the *Crime Scene* images and the overall economic context for the actors within contemporary art production. This extensive chapter brings together the *Crime Scene* debate, the theoretical frameworks discussed above, and other artistic examples. These illuminate the case study and connect the discussions to more universal matters of contemporary art production. They also imply there are possibilities to engage in investigating counter-hegemonic artistic strategies that would lead to *hearing* or *speaking to* the subaltern instead of speaking for them.



## 5 *Overtures*

In this chapter I will first suggest parallel interpretations that expand the field of possible interpretations of the *Crime Scene* images. I will then move on to analyzing the functioning subjects that come together in contemporary art production in order to make visible how the agencies within the representational processes of the *Crime Scene* images were formulated. This analysis aims to bring together the main arguments of the thesis and seeks to suggest possible ways to overcome the problems emerging from representing subalternity within contemporary art.

### 5.1 *On Pessimism*

As previously discussed, Mouffe criticizes the pessimistic view that political art has lost its critical role. She expands upon Boltanski and Chiapello with an argument that is for me important in analyzing the criticism about the *Crime Scene* images. As Boltanski and Chiapello claim, today's capitalism relies increasingly on semiotic techniques in order to create the modes of subjectivation that are necessary for its reproduction. Mouffe explains: "The forms of exploitation characteristic of the times when manual labor was dominant have been replaced by new ones that constantly require the creation of new needs and the incessant desire for the acquisition of goods. In our consumer societies, advertising plays such an important role" (Mouffe 90).

Contemporary art, when produced by means of representational mediation, is visually close to other practices that employ photography—from photojournalism to advertising. This is to my understanding the context that Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä used in support of their following argument:

"Contradictory statements about the poster belonging to 'advertising' and at the same time to 'artistic autonomy' belong to this [Capitalist] Realism. The impotence of the so-called political or activist art can also be included in this 'genre' or 'style'. It is unfortunate, and not at all a coincidence, that this particular episode of Capitalist Realism was paid by the 'black woman', 'victim' and 'suspicious person'. The end product of the creative process was the reproduction of a stereotype".

In their text, Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä embody a pessimistic view about the possibility of critical artistic practices, be they representational or not. At the same time, Al-Nawas' and Korvensyrjä see themselves as transparent in a similar way to how Foucault and Deleuze are represented in Spivak's critique—they do not question their position or



acknowledge themselves and their textual reproductions of the stereotypically embodied black female subjects as inherently part of the same “Capitalist Realist” machinery they are themselves criticizing—we can refer to Hall who analyzed the circular nature of power that was discussed earlier. Although the images can be interpreted as problematic by means of representation, Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä do not actually reassess their means of representation—only the institution and the individuals who have produced and published the images—and therefore end up reproducing again the “stereotypes” of the *Crime Scene* images and stigmatizing their rigid interpretation as the only valid position.

This is the same conclusion Montes de Oca arrives at, although from a different theoretical frame. The following is Montes de Oca’s analysis of the debate:

“I find it not only problematic but also worrying and worth a serious reflection how some forms of intellectual and academic criticality reproduce dominant racial and capitalistic relations while not even being aware of it. From my view the approach that Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä take starts from and underlines a very confident victimization of the female black subject and, furthermore, seems to address the politics of representation and race in order to speak for the subaltern. It goes to claim compensation and a pay-off in a way that remains very much within the capitalistic system of debt and credit [...]” (Montes de Oca 2015, 444–445).

Montes de Oca here refers to Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s book *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (2013) which prompts him to ask: “Is this [critique] a way to break hegemonic forms of racial domination? Or is it merely a reproduction of dominant colonial frameworks and power relations?” He continues: “[...] antagonistic forms of criticality—at times also academic—may prevent the creation of articulations [of] social solidarity that counter structural power. Instead, these practices and standpoints sometimes end up strengthening the hegemonic power of capitalist and colonial forms” (Montes de Oca 444–445).

Mouffe can build upon Montes de Oca’s point. She writes about the pessimism that sustains the view that it is no longer possible for art to play a critical role because no critical gesture can escape recuperation. “A similar mistake is made by those who believe that radicality means transgression, and that the more transgressive the practices are, the more radical.” We can consider the laboratory’s transgressive interventions in reference to this statement. Mouffe continues:

“We should, for the same reason, find fault with the view that critical art can only consist in manifestations of refusal, that it should be the expression of an absolute negation, a testimony of the ‘intractable’ and ‘unrepresentable’, as some advocates of the sublime would have it. Another frequent misconception consists in envisaging critical art in moralistic terms, seeing its role as one of moral condemnation. Given the current situation, where there are no longer any agreed upon criteria for judging art production, there is a marked tendency to replace aesthetic judgements with moral ones. I regard all of these conceptions as ‘anti-political’ because they fail to grasp the nature of the hegemonic political struggle” (Mouffe 2013, 104–105).



Al-Nawas' and Korvensyrjä's text is in my opinion an apt example of Mouffe's definition of this pessimistic view; it is intractable, and states political issues as unrepresentable. It is also highly moralistic and rigid because it suggests that there are individuals at fault that need to be held accountable. Mouffe's theoretical ideas for counter-hegemonic artistic practices are very useful: "A counter-hegemonic politics must [...] foster other forms of identification. While one of the objectives of the hegemonic struggle has always been the agonistic production of new subjectivities, it is clear that, in the present stage of capitalism, such a terrain is more important than ever".<sup>33</sup>

Mouffe then defines another frequent misconception about political art that consists of envisaging criticality in moralistic terms and seeing its role as one of moral condemnation; she argues that political art has a tendency to replace aesthetic judgements with moral ones (Mouffe 2013, 104–105). It can be argued that Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä's texts are colored with moral judgements as they create polar opposites of right and wrong where they place the involved actors. Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä refer to themselves as "the killjoys", in reference to the feminist writer Sara Ahmed. According to Ahmed, "Willfulness [of the feminist 'killjoys'] could be rethought as a style of politics: *a refusal to look away from what has already been looked over*. The ones who point out that racism, sexism, and heterosexism are actual are charged with willfulness; they refuse to allow these realities to be passed over" (Ahmed 2010).

Ahmed also writes: "Racism is very difficult to talk about as racism can operate to censor the very evidence of its existence." This evokes the previously referred to sentiments of Memmi and Bonilla Silva. Ahmed continues: "Those who talk about racism are thus heard as creating rather than describing a problem. The stakes are indeed very high: to talk about racism is to occupy a space that is saturated with tension. History is saturation" (Ahmed). This is what Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä manifest when they declare they are killjoys, but in declaring themselves as the killers of the other laboratory participants' joy, they create antagonism where it does not truly exist while stigmatizing the other

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33 Recent local practices that have participated in dismantling the homogenous cultural hegemony in Finland include the most recent Mänttä Art Festival curated by Kalle Hamm and Dzamil Kamanger: as a culture-political statement they decided to focus on artists whose backgrounds are drawn from outside Finland. It could be interpreted as problematic to be invited to an exhibition just because of your foreign background, but in this case of Hamm and Kamanger, this criteria feels useful. There is still a difference in providing a greater visibility of representation and inviting professional artists to represent themselves in practices and discourses that are inherently their own, but have been earlier generally bypassed within hegemonic contemporary art discourses. Mänttä Art Festival is a review-like exhibition and does not present the artists according to their expected identities; foreigner is after all a quite different signifier than race. But even this kind of criterion for artists' selection according to their origin would probably not have been as unproblematic in other contexts; as mechanical it seems, such actively inclusive gestures are still needed in Finland.



participants as complicit with racist and sexist rhetoric. They then claim that the other laboratory participants were willing to “look away from what has already been looked over”—this is quite an overstatement given the time spent in the laboratory to collectively acknowledge and tackle these issues.

By following Mouffe’s view, and at the same time taking into account Spivak’s insis-  
tences on the double session of the representational, it would feel inconceivably stagnant  
to approve Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä’s moralistic claims as the only possible interpre-  
tations of the images. Even the overall context of “Capitalist Realism” is more complex  
than Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä describe; they cannot possibly isolate themselves out of  
the structure. However I do agree that many problematic issues related to political art and  
representations of otherness remain to be discussed. In particular, consideration of the  
subjectivities and agencies at play within such projects is needed. I will now move on to  
discussing these issues in relation to some comparable artistic examples.

## 5.2 *Doubts*

The laboratory participants do not refer to Grada Kilomba beyond the short citation, but  
I find it useful to quote what she writes in her essay *The Mask*: “[The fact that the Black  
subject is forced to develop a relationship to her-himself always through the alienating  
presence of the white other] is the trauma of the Black subject, it lies, exactly, in this state  
of absolute Otherness in relation to the white subject. This infernal circle, as [Frantz]  
Fanon writes, ‘[w]hen people like me, they tell me it is in spite of my color. When they  
dislike me, they point out that it is not because of my color. Either way, I am locked’  
(Fanon 1968: 116). Locked within unreason. Fanon therefore believes that Black people’s  
trauma stem not only from the family-based events, as classical psychoanalysis argues, but  
rather from the traumatizing contact with the violent unreason of the white world, that is,  
with the unreason of racism which places us always as ‘Other.’ The ‘Other’ of the white  
subject” (Kilomba 2008).

This trauma is the flipside of the discussions of otherness—the subjective expe-  
rience of being excluded as the other. The trauma causes unease among the privileged,  
anti-racist white people and leads to acts of goodwill and benevolence; many people have  
risen up to make the other’s voice heard. The trauma is also a reason for why we cannot  
yet overcome troubles of racialized representations. Speaking for the other requires confi-  
dence and opportunities that only the privileged can possess, and therefore it is always an  
act of representational power. I would now like to make the distinction between the liberal  
and the critical approach towards such benevolent endeavours.

The debate about the *Crime Scene* images was not only a question of ethics but also  
a question of positions. In my opinion there existed two different discourses within the  
contemporary art world that came together in the context of the *Crime Scene* exhibition:  
the critical and the liberal. These terms do not refer here to any actors as individuals but



as attitudes, and to be precise, attitudes towards the art system and art itself. Liberal refers here to cultural liberalism rather than other understandings of liberalism such as economic liberalism or neoliberalism. The liberal point of view would then be that the *Crime Scene* images are not problematic, because they call into question what they seem to present. This is also the standpoint of the Barbican's Brett Bailey case that I mentioned earlier, and the Barbican's insistence on freedom of expression. The critical point of view would then argue that such stereotypical images should not be reproduced at all.

I will now come back to the problem of the double session of representations, this time in reference to a couple of artistic examples. With these examples, some of which came about from the *Crime Scene* discussions, I hope to shed light on how representational power structures still manifest themselves within contemporary art, in cases of representational mediation (through the visual representation of black skin), and ethical immediacy (through engaging Congolese people in empowering workshops)—to follow Rancière's terminology.

The desire to speak for the other is raised repeatedly in discussions around political art, and at the same time such a desire positions the other as the other. A similar desire manifests itself within the field of documentary photography and photojournalism. Recent Finnish cases include the photographer Meeri Koutaniemi's series of two Kenyan maasai girls before and after undergoing genital mutilation. With these photographs Koutaniemi aimed to rally against female genital mutilations, but in addition to abundant praise she was also seriously criticized when the images were published in *Helsingin Sanomat* in January 2014.<sup>34</sup> The images resulted in an official complaint of indiscretion towards minors, addressed to the Finnish Council for Mass Media, but the judgement was not guilty. Photojournalism is conceptually quite an explicit example of the benevolent aim to "speak for the other", however contemporary art brings forward examples that are more complex.

The same desire to speak for and represent the other arises in more subtle forms in most political art, be it representational, conceptual or participatory. Both critical and exoticist attempts are easier to evaluate when they function representationally as *Darstellung*. As mentioned earlier, political art combines both types of the representational, *Darstellung* and *Vertretung*. There are many cases of political, participatory art that aims to "give a voice" to the other, in the political sense of *Vertretung*.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Brett Bailey's installation *Exhibit B* and Banksy's graffiti were compared to the *Crime Scene* case. A few other examples of Finnish exoticist practices were raised in discussions: Cris af Enehielm, Anna Retulainen and Juha Metso. What distinguishes the *Crime Scene*, Barbican and Banksy cases from the others is that their representations aimed to be critical, whereas Enehielm, Retulainen and Metso's images were unequivocally exoticist. The cases of *Crime Scene*, Barbican and Banksy were different

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34 The images can be seen here: <http://www.hs.fi/datajournalismi/a1305766700849> (accessed on: 14 July 2015).



in the sense that they had “good intentions”—Enchielm, Retulainen and Metso did not illustrate this awareness and were fundamentally archaic in their representational visual language that presented “Africa” as the primitive, exotic other.

A recent example of an artist’s relationship that interrogates notions of the “Other of Europe” is the Renzo Martens project “Enjoy Poverty” (2002–) and related Berlin-based exhibitions “The Matter of Critique” at KW Institute of Contemporary Art (2.5.–7.6.2015) and “A Lucky Day” (2.5.–26.6.2015) at KOW Gallery. Within these projects, Martens has aimed to “gentrify the jungle”, as his self-critical and humorous statement goes. He has worked in the Democratic Republic of Congo for many years within the Institute of Human Activities in order to create an alternative for the Western aid programs he considers hypocritical. He aims to document and empower the local people, and is himself critical of the art world and art’s political and economic presence. His recent exhibition in Berlin exhibited self-portraits by Congolese artists, spurred by an ambition to remove the Westernized perspective of his projects.<sup>35</sup>

Nora Kovacs’s critique of a panel on Martens’ project in the KW Institute in Berlin grapples with the complexities of the case:

“Though I agree with most of the contradictions Martens set forth throughout the discussion, standing there in a crowd of well-dressed 20-somethings, I could not help but be skeptical of Martens’ skepticism. Something was just off, from the video of himself and Richard Florida, an American urban studies theorist, having a skype conversation in front of a crowd of seemingly confused Congolese natives to his rehearsed ability to respond to any and all criticisms made against him before they were even fully presented. After all, who is Renzo Martens, a white, heterosexual, Dutch man, to speak for the entirety of exploited peoples of the Congo?” (Kovacs 2015)

Despite its self-assertion, the problematic nature of Martens’ project comes to light when considering the same question of representation that challenges the “benevolent humanists.” Even though Martens’ project was originally based in Congo and not in an environment of white hegemony, its primary context of presentation was the gentrified, white hegemonic contemporary art discourse. As mentioned, dismantling white hegemony does not happen by simply acknowledging its existence, or by being “politically correct” by avoiding difficult topics such as race. A better way to react would be to engage in and build such social practices that can dismantle white, Western privilege. While Martens set out to achieve this, he was unable to overcome criticisms towards the structures of power and representation manifested by both senses of *Vertretung* and *Darstellung*. Dismantling white and Western hegemony does not happen by gathering white people in a room

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35 See on the exhibition at KOW and many links: [http://www.kow-berlin.info/exhibitions/renzo\\_martens\\_\\_institute\\_for\\_human\\_activities](http://www.kow-berlin.info/exhibitions/renzo_martens__institute_for_human_activities) (accessed on: 1 August 2015).



together to discuss contemporary art, so the European representational component of the project can be considered to be contentious.

As Spivak notes earlier, radical practice should attend to the double session of representations rather than reintroduce the individual subject through totalizing concepts of power and desire (Spivak 2010 [1999]: 33). This can help us progress with the issues at hand. My interpretation would be that attending to this double session of representations would firstly require an acknowledgment of one's position as the white, privileged curator or artist. Secondly, instead of engaging with practices of representing the other by simple means of *Darstellung*, it is necessary to develop counter-hegemonic strategies while leveraging the privilege of being part of the hegemony by means of *Vertretung* (although one might argue with Rancière that this is not possible in the context of contemporary art). The critique towards the *Crime Scene* exhibition insisted upon mechanically representing artists according to the color of their skin as a means of calling for greater visibility for black artists. Both Spivak and Phelan would be highly skeptical of these strategies that would be neither counter-hegemonic nor conscious of the double session of representation.

As Spivak argues in an earlier version of the essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", when academics make claims about the subalterns, these "in the long run, cohere with the work of imperialist subject-constitution, mingling epistemic violence with the advancement of learning and civilization. And the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever" (Spivak 2010 [1988], 266). Consequently, the subaltern woman is effectively silenced by the theorist that is claiming to speak for her. The position of the curator or the artist who feels the urgency to deal with political issues that touch upon the "Other of Europe" is easily unresolved: the subject cannot escape their privileged position. Hall also notes that there are no correct answers for questions concerning representations of race. "They are a matter of interpretation and judgement," Hall continues, "I pose them to drive home the point about the complexity and ambivalences of representation as a practice, and to suggest how and why attempting to dismantle or subvert a racialized regime of representation is an extremely difficult exercise, about which—like so much else in representation—there can be no absolute guarantees" (Hall 267).

Having analysed the positions of the represented, the representers and their relations, it is pertinent to look at the *Crime Scene* images once more. Some characteristics of their visual language insist upon further examination. Before moving on to suggesting some approaches that could lead to counter-hegemonic strategies, I will now revisit the images and bring them together with some earlier artistic examples.





Still photo of Keith Piper's work (delete where appropriate) : LOCAL/STRANGER. Image courtesy: Virtual Migrants/Terminal Frontiers exhibition.

### 5.3 The Body and the Gaze

Art historian Kobena Mercer wrote about British artist Keith Piper's work in the 1990s. Piper used the method of collage to reappropriate the historically burdened imagery of a black male body. He is an early multimedia artist and has researched science, technology and science fiction from a postcolonial and antiracist standpoint.

Mercer identifies three overlapping strands that have consistently featured in Piper's projects:

“[A] concern with unravelling the constitutive role of representation in the West's ‘racializing’ perceptions of difference; how the black body thus comes to be visually produced as both an object of fear and fantasy and as a site of colonial power and knowledge; and an interest in the political consequences of such fantasia in disciplinary practices of policing urban space, which seek to control that excess or surplus of symbolism with which the ‘otherness’ of the black male body has been historically burdened” (Mercer 1996: 132).

These three strands of Piper's work that Mercer analyses can also be identified in the *Crime Scene* images, although they might be operating in a different manner. The *Crime Scene* images are also representations of black skin that in a white hegemonic context stress difference. One could also argue that the images become objects of fear and fantasy within a context of colonial power and knowledge—this is one interpretation of the victimizing white *Crime Scene* tape. Above all, the images bring a similar quality of fantasia to



an urban space policed by disciplinary practices, as they are also advertisements in public space.

The difference is that while Piper appropriates the visual burden of the imagery he uses, it is debatable if the *Crime Scene* images appropriate or reproduce. The final judgement of the *Crime Scene* images could be summarized by this question of reproduction or reappropriation. If we keep on insisting they reproduce stereotypes, is it because white males designed the images? Or is it because they were used for marketing purposes and they very tangibly instrumentalized the black faces they represented? The question could then expand to this: As long as we live in a culture of white hegemony, is a representation of a black person always a statement? The fact that no black artists were exhibited emphasizes the black skin as a symbol for subalternity within the contemporary art field. Even if one insists on a “liberal” interpretation of the images, race cannot be bypassed or denied.

As Mercer analyses, Piper’s collages invoke fragmentation of the colonized subject into body-parts under the master-gaze of Europe’s anthropometric photography. Fragmenting the body reduces the portrayed human to a symbol, or a node of symbols, and restricts it to an object and a center of references. When the body parts cease to be a whole human being anymore, they become a nucleus for other meanings. The cropped eye in the *Crime Scene* poster is similarly a fragmentation, however the eye can represent many meanings in comparison to other body parts. It symbolizes personality and individuality, while presenting as an active body part that gazes, looks, sees, watches, views, stares, regards and observes.

Can it be compared to the fragmented body parts of Piper’s? Not directly, but analyzing the differences between the *Crime Scene* images and Piper’s art give us additional insight to the case. Henna Paunu has also suggested an interpretation of the *Crime Scene* images worth mentioning here. According to her, the images emphasize the gaze that is active and ambiguous. Covering the mouth could also relieve the subject of sexuality; the body is not central but it is the gaze that represents the intellectual and universal quality of individuality that is the focus.<sup>36</sup>

It is the gaze too that insists upon further scrutiny. Peggy Phelan’s reading of the artist and photographer Lorna Simpson’s work can help us here. Simpson has repeated the image of a black, anonymous female body during her artistic career. Usually the subject’s face is left out of the picture, and as Phelan writes, her work has raised the question of the relation between “the about face” and “the black face”. Phelan describes Simpson’s work *Guarded Conditions* (1989) in which the artist reassembles the fragmented polaroid images of a black woman’s body. The subject’s back faces the viewer. The images are segmented in three sections vertically and repeated serially in six horizontal panels, so effacing her is made impossible. Phelan continues her analysis of the image:

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36 This interpretation came up in a personal email.



“While Simpson’s work is overtly about the documentary tradition of photography, a tradition that has strong ties to the discourse and techniques of criminality, in *Guarded Conditions* she also poses a deeper psychoanalytic response to the violence of perception itself. At the bottom of the image march these words: ‘Sex Attacks/Skin Attacks/Sex Attacks/Skin Attacks.’ Racial and sexual violence are an integral part of seeing the African-American woman. Her response to a perception, which seeks her disappearance or her containment within the discursive frames of criminality or pathology, is to turn her back. [...] The back registers the effacement of the subject within a linguistic and visual field, which requires her to be either the Same or the containable, ever fixed, Other. To attack that, Simpson suggests, we need to see and to read other/wise” (Phelan 158).

Seeing and reading otherwise is what also Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä’s criticism towards the *Crime Scene* images fail to do; as mentioned, they also affirm the black female subject as subaltern. The images can be seen to reproduce the idea that womanhood and blackness are attributes for subalternity. The criticism does not suggest otherwise but in fact reasserts that there are no further interpretations possible.

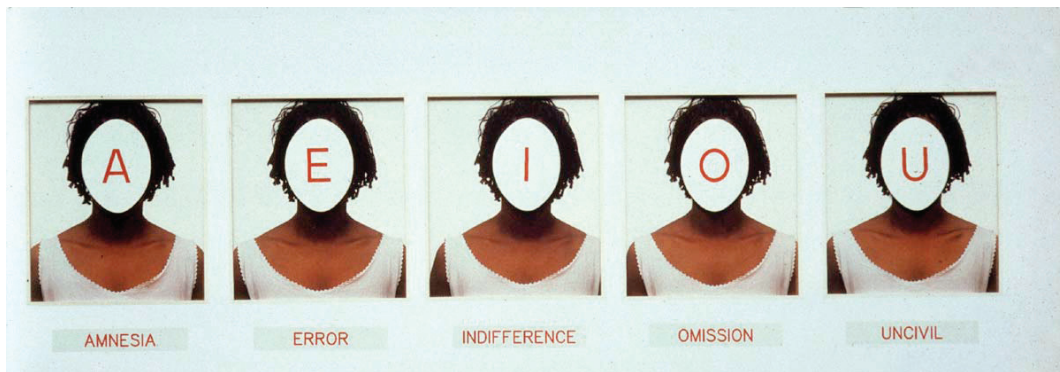
I again return to Phelan, because she comes to a point that can be used to clarify what makes the *Crime Scene* images different from Piper and Simpson’s representations of black bodies:

“Sight is both an image and a word; the gaze is possible both because of the enunciations of articulate eyes and because the subject finds a position to see within the optics and grammar of language. In denying this position to the spectator [...] Simpson also stop[s] the usual enunciative claims of the critic. While the gaze fosters what Lacan calls “the belong to me aspect so reminiscent of property” (Lacan 1978, 81) and leads the looker to desire mastery of the image [...] in Simpson’s work, the “belong to me aspect” of the documentary tradition—and the narrative of mastery integral to it—is far too close to the “belong to me aspect” of slavery, domestic work, and the history sexual labor to be greeted with anything other than a fist [Phelan refers to Robert Mapplethorpe], a turned back, and an awareness of her own “guarded condition” within visual representation” (Phelan 158).

Phelan’s reading of Lorna Simpson’s work highlights the issue we are tackling here. The woman in the *Crime Scene* images is gazing at the viewer. Despite the argument that the eye symbolizes individuality, according to Phelan and Lacan we can consider it in an opposite light: the gazing eye actually proves that the looker is the master of the image. The black woman of the *Crime Scene* images is looking the viewer in the eye and saying: “See me as the Other.” This is to me a more relevant and less stigmatizing critique of the images.

If we go back to Lacan’s original passage and explore the context beyond the often quoted sentence, we discover he referred to George Berkeley and the early phenomenologist idea that one cannot exist without being perceived. Lacan brings the ontology of being to the psychoanalytic perspective. He writes, referring to Sartre: “The gaze I encounter [...] is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other.





*Lorna Simpson's work Easy for Who to Say, 1989.*

*Image courtesy: Media Center for Art History & Archaeology, Columbia University.*



*Lorna Simpson's work Guarded Conditions, 1989.*

*Image courtesy: Media Center for Art History & Archaeology, Columbia University.*



[...] A gaze surprises him in the function of voyeur, disturbs him, overwhelms him, and reduces him to a feeling of shame. The gaze in question is certainly the presence of others as such” (Lacan 1978: 84).

So according to Phelan and Lacan, the images do not get rid of the typifications of “victims” and “suspicious persons”, or of a logic of identification that classifies people according to their color and sex. But the identification is in my opinion not as straightforward as it is represented in Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä’s criticism: “[...] racist and sexist pictures as framings of certain groups of people.” If we follow Lacan, the representational is not only a matter of the represented subject, or of the discourse that produces the representation. It is also a matter of how the subject perceives. In the eyes of the black female subject, the perceiver sees themselves seeing the black female subject as a representation of subalternity; and themselves as the other of the other.

One of the key problems of the criticism towards the images was the monolithic view of agency that I addressed earlier with Mouffe: the writers see political issues as intractable and unrepresentable. The critics do not suggest other forms of identification, or question their own position or agency as the perceiver. If we follow Lacan and phenomenology, the typifications of the images do not exist without being perceived as such. Al-Nawas and Korvensyrjä write: “We have discussed racist and sexist pictures as framings of certain groups of people, framings in which we refuse to participate. We have referred to them as perpetuating certain power relations from which we distance ourselves. We have also asked, where is the responsibility of institutional individuals in this particular case.” I would now respond to them by stating that refusal and distancing yourself is not enough. In order to overcome stigmatizing representations, one has to develop alternative identifications.

The liberal interpretation of the poster is based on the idealist humanist concept that there is no problem in representing the other as long as you have antiracist purposes. As I have earlier analyzed, this point of view does not take into account the problems of representation as proffered by Spivak and Phelan. But according to my reinterpretations, the representational relations of the *Crime Scene* images are still unresolved. I will now come back to the political aspect of the debate. In the next two subchapters that conclude the thesis, I analyze the *Crime Scene* images and their context with two parallel allegories of the the mask in order to shift the focus from antagonism to the responsibility of those who are not subalterns—the actors within contemporary art production.



## 5.4 *The Mask of Identity*

The mask is a concept that binds together the “victims” of unwilling representation, the subalterns, and various agencies within contemporary art. The mask is also Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä’s reference. The mask I refer to here is not something that the institution or other actors embedded within “Capitalist Realism” force on the represented subjects, but is rather a symbol of the fluidity of identities both within post-fordist economies and within the shifting relations of being the perceiver and the perceived.

The mask as understood within the discussions of this thesis is a metaphor first introduced by Frantz Fanon in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). It was used to explain the feelings of dependency and inadequacy that black people experience in a white world. As I referred to with Kilomba, the divided self-perception of the black subject who has lost their native cultural origin and embraced the culture of the mother country can produce an internal inferiority complex and result in an attempt to appropriate and imitate the culture of the colonizer. According to Fanon, such behavior is more visible in upwardly mobile and educated black people who can afford to acquire status symbols within the world of the colonial ecumene, such as an education abroad and mastery of the language of the colonizer, the white masks.<sup>37</sup>

To understand how Fanon’s mask relates to the *Crime Scene* images, we must now return to the legend of Anastácia. Both *Crime Scene* images represented a black woman with a sealed mouth in reference to the rhetoric of silencing, so Al-Nawas’ and Korvensyrjä’s evocation of Anastácia was not completely far-fetched. I believe that the resemblance of the two female subjects is not as astonishing as the writers claim, and their being the same person it is hardly the sole possible interpretation of the duo. The eyes of the invitation are warm brown, and the poster’s eye is dark grey, perhaps with a hint of blue, if one interprets tendentiously. So there are several possibilities for interpretation, even from the critical side of the debate.

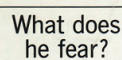
Fanon’s mask is partially voluntary and laden with symbolic violence, while Kilomba’s Anastácia mask is physically brutal and violent. The invitation image reminds me more of Fanon’s mask: in the image the black subject is covering her face with white tape that could be interpreted as a reference to a mask. The poster seems to me more violent: the eye looks frantic, as if the act of covering had been aggressive. It still does not resemble the Anastácia mask to me, but more likely refers to the idea that the act of covering would have been committed in order to force the person out of sight.

However the *Crime Scene* images cannot be read without the *Crime Scene* text. The white mask on the subjects’ faces is *Crime Scene* tape: it not only suggests, but goes without saying that when the figures are behind *Crime Scene* tape they are somehow related to

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37 See the foreword in Fanon 2008 [1952] by Kwame Anthony Appiah.





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Or order directly from the publisher. (Please enclose payment with order.)  
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87



crime, and must be seen symbolically as either the witness or victim of crime.<sup>38</sup> The figure in the invitation image is actively conveying that she is a victim or a witness, as the poster image is tied to a *Crime Scene*. The *Crime Scene* tape of the images is not the common yellow type seen in American movies, nor it is the dark blue of Finnish police, it is totally white.

Whiteness infiltrates the black skin; it symbolically and violently covers faces in order to make them partial, then anonymous, as in Piper's technique of fragmentation. The images are to me allegories of white hegemony, and seem to operate more like reproductions than reappropriations. Montes de Oca also refers to the whiteness of the tape: "After some visual analysis I could see in those images a person who, in fact, is holding the white tape (the whiteness), perhaps in order to show it to us. If not, why was she holding it? I also saw an active subject that was coming to us making herself visible and willing to confront us. Her eyes look brave and perhaps she was ready to speak up—the tape never touches her mouth" (Montes de Oca 444).

The images are not physical performances like Brett Bailey's *Exhibit B* that the Barbican cancelled.<sup>39</sup> They are representations and therefore do not physically oppress real black bodies, but they do reproduce the image of a black face as subaltern. In the aforementioned June 1966 *Life* magazine image, the gaze of a black man penetrates a hole in white material. The gaze is aggressive and suggests the disruption of nice white harmonious consensus. The *Crime Scene* poster image is contrary: the white tape is the aggressive and active element in the picture. It is a mask the black face is forced to wear—the mask of a victim, or a witness, of white hegemony.

In this sense Fanon's white mask is a mask of fluid identity. Fanon describes the psychological relationship between blacks and whites: "[W]hen Blacks make contact with the white world a certain sensitizing action takes place. If the psychic structure is fragile, we observe a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an *actional* person. His actions are destined for 'the Other' (in the guise of the white man), since only 'the Other' can enhance his status and give him self esteem at the ethical level." (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 132). Here Fanon describes "the inferiority complex" of the colonized, a device of social alienation which is both personal and historical.

Fanon later continues, "in the collective unconscious, black = ugliness, sin, darkness, and immorality. In other words, he who is immoral is black. If I behave like a man with morals, I am not black." (Fanon 169). Therefore, the white mask serves as a liberating option for conformity in the total mental stasis of the racist stereotype, and provides

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38 The point of the witness was raised in a meeting by Henna Harri as the instructor of the thesis.

39 It is noteworthy that Barbican's institutional response accused the critics for silencing art: "We believe this piece should be shown in London and are disturbed at the potential implications this silencing of artists and performers has for freedom of expression." <http://www.barbican.org.uk/news/artformnews/theatredance/barbican-statement-cancellation-> (accessed on: 23rd June 2015).



black people with the opportunity to move from a condition of collective absence to one of individual presence. It makes a solid identity impossible. In Fanon, the mask is a poetic allegory of the loss of self-worth for a black person. It could be said that the *Crime Scene* images serve to make the white masks visible. The mask can also be addressed from a different angle that ties it to economy, as I will now explain.

### 5.5 *The Mask of the Mercenary*

We can add another dimension to the metaphor by discussing the mask as an economic allegory, and as a mask of agency. Since 1980s postcolonial studies we have entered a post-fordist era that forces us to face the consequences of globalized capitalism. These economic conditions have created a multitude of precarious subjects and complicated the binary power structures that were still possible to analyze in the 1980s. Spivak made note of this in the later versions of her essay. The current circumstances of this economic framework in which curatorial and artistic production happen create precariousness and negative freedom for a multitude of the field's actors.

Hito Steyerl discusses this negative freedom of post-fordist and neoliberal economy in her article "Freedom from Everything: Freelancers and Mercenaries", that is

"the flipside of liberal ideas of freedom—namely, the freedom of corporations from any form of regulation, as well as the freedom to relentlessly pursue one's own interest at the expense of everyone else's—[that] has become the only form of universal freedom that exists: the freedom from social bonds, freedom from solidarity, freedom from certainty or predictability, freedom from employment or labor, freedom from culture, public transport, education, or anything public at all" (Steyerl 2013).

Steyerl then positions the freelancer as the

"particularly pertinent aspect of the condition of negative freedom today [...] the new mercenary [the freelancer]—who is supposedly free from everything—is no longer a subject, but an object: a mask. It is a commercial object, licensed by a big corporation and pirated accordingly. [...] This overdetermined object [the mask] represents the freedom not to be represented. A disputed object of copyright provides a generic identity for people who feel they need not only anonymity to be represented, but can only be represented by objects and commodities, because, whether free lances [sic] or even mercenaries, they themselves are free-floating commodities" (Steyerl 2013).

The mask Steyerl describes is not shrouding a victim, but covering a subject of possibilities. Being a mercenary of the post-fordist era, as Steyerl concludes, does not exclude solidarity: we are free to give for what we are prepared to take. This concerns us who, in



the words of Spivak, are on the exploiter's side of the international division of labor; us who can speak, us who know our conditions, and us who are not excluded.

In another article, the preface to the German translation of Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Steyerl brings the concept of subalternity together with more recent discussions on labor, reaching a similar conclusion to those found in "Freedom of Everything". In both articles she stresses the responsibility of those who are not subalterns:

"Constituting a political subject beyond the realm of state, culture and identity is precisely what appears to be structurally impossible today and is therefore all the more urgent. Perhaps an opportunity may be found, however, in that the subalterns and the proletariat have become mutually translatable in a new way. [...] The legacy of Spivak's text is the indication of this moment of fracture—and the task that it still presents to us today does not consist in strengthening the autistic 'speaking for oneself' of individual subjects, but rather in hearing their shared silence" (Steyerl 2007).

But what can "hearing their shared silence" mean in practice? We can consider a final quote from Spivak that illuminates the condition of the subaltern in comparison to those who can speak: "I think it is important to acknowledge our complicity in the muting, in order precisely to be more effective in the long run. [...] All speaking, even seemingly the most immediate, entails a distanced decipherment by another, which is, at best, an interception. That is what speaking is" (Spivak 2010 [1999]: 64).

To conclude, the serious troubles of trying to speak for the other leave us with the possibility for hearing. In her article, Spivak also suggests that "in seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual systematically 'unlearns' female privilege" (Spivak 2010 [1988]: 266). Thus the intellectual, or the curator, or the artist, has to learn to be critical of their own roles in patriarchal culture and postcolonial theory and unlearn their approach to their subject. This task of "unlearning" and learning to "speak to" is a responsibility the female intellectual "must not disown with a flourish" (Spivak 266). It should be noted that the concepts of *hearing* and *speaking to* are worth intense scrutiny which is not possible within the parameters of this thesis.



## 6 Conclusions

The current circumstances for contemporary art production create several challenges for acting consciously. This is a sentence that I wrote in the beginning of the process of writing this thesis. Now its meaning has expanded and become more complex. Earlier I was referring to a challenging and precarious economic framework with contradictory ethical demands. Now I see the core problem can be found in the act of the representational. This contradiction should not lead to paralysis, but curators and artists alike should engage in thinking about counter-hegemonic strategies (as Mouffe insists) and deciphering or at the very least hearing the voice of the subaltern (as Spivak suggests). However it is essential to do this without falling back on moralism or claiming political issues are unrepresentable.

I have gone through the main events that relate to the visual identity of the exhibition *Rauma Biennale Baltic 2014 – Crime Scene* in order to create Geertz's thick description. I have discussed two images accused of stereotyping black female subjects as a case study for this thesis. I have argued that racialized representations have to be taken seriously and addressed repeatedly by taking into account the complexity of representational processes, and I have examined how power relates to these processes. With help of several theorists such as Hall, Spivak, Phelan, Rancière and Mouffe, I have suggested parallel readings of the images to prove that several interpretations are possible. I have also pointed out that there are serious controversies related to the means of representations within the wider context of political contemporary art, not only in visual representations.

In the beginning of the thesis I asked in what sense the *Crime Scene* images are representations of subalternity. I then came to a conclusion that if we agree with Spivak's definition of subalternity as a condition of involuntary incapacity of speech that makes claims within hegemonic discourse, then the images can be seen as a tautology of subalternity. I was also concerned about the problems that emerge from representing subalternity within contemporary art. Together with feminist and postcolonial readings, I concluded that investigating methods of *hearing* or *speaking to* the subaltern is necessary. It remains outside of the thesis' aims to explain what this could mean in practice, however artists and curators alike are encouraged to test and explore this in their own work.

Post-colonial and anti-racist discourses are still quite marginal in Finland, but there is an increasing urgency to disseminate and normalize them. This thesis has aimed to integrate discussions into an analysis of contemporary art practices in an attempt to proliferate these discourses. The thesis also sets the scene for further critical research on the subject of representing the subaltern within contemporary art practices (in both embodiments of representation). Further studies on past cases is needed, but a more urgent requirement is to investigate methods for counter-practices, and also to research if any possibilities remain for the representational within contemporary art.



While developing the exhibition *Rauma Biennale Balticum – Crime Scene I* simultaneously studied methods of post-representational curating. Writing this thesis has made me learn that simply overcoming representation is not a sufficient goal. While representation is something that is essential to address critically, mechanic avoidance of its contradictions and challenges cannot suffice. As this thesis proves, the racialized regime of representation cannot be bypassed by simply avoiding representations or disavowing racial inequality. As I invoked with Hall, there are no simple answers for how to represent race. This conundrum is extremely difficult and has to be continuously contested. I would claim from this position that the most urgent concerns are the means of representation and the power relations within them.

Donna Haraway's partial perspective has now become a tool for me to relate to the process of the exhibition, the debate that followed it, and the writing of this thesis. It is not possible for the curator nor the researcher to escape their position and liabilities, but they can still find ways to operate within this contested discourse. The complexity of human relations and behavior is also something that cannot be bypassed by generalizations or by reducing individuals to representatives of certain regimes. Curating is a social practice of constant negotiation, research is always partial and incomplete, and the acknowledgement of these conditions is what gives results their reliability and integrity.

I doubt that conscious curating that takes into account all possible elements of ethical engagement is ever possible. I stated the aim of this research was to investigate what can be learned from a single case. I am certain these questions could also be applied to curatorial and artistic practices on a larger scale.



# *Annex*

Annexes 1–16 are attached between the text pages.

Annexes 17–30 present the *Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014 – Crime Scene* exhibition. The texts have been written by me, Janne Koski or Henna Paunu, and translated from Finnish to English by Jüri Kokkonen. The photos that accompany the texts are taken by Titus Verhe.

Annex 31 is a reproduction Pessi Rautio's review of the exhibition in *Taide* magazine.

Annexes 32–33 present the rest of the artworks that were produced during the laboratory. The texts have been written by the artists and the photos are taken by Titus Verhe.



## ANNEX 17: EVGENIA GOLANT



Evgenia Golant has painted portraits of illegal migrants from the Caucasus working in St Petersburg. When painting, Golant meets people with whom middle-class Russians do not normally communicate and her works bring forth their stories. The paintings give a face to inequality and challenge viewers to see people as equal. Golant most paints outdoors using models. Interaction with the subject is important — portrait painting is a different process than, for example, the momentary act of photography. The depicted persons react to Golant's paintings in highly different ways. Some have hated the artist's expressive style, while others have been overjoyed. For Golant herself, the most important things are discussion and the sharing of experiences. She has also carried out interventions in urban space. In 2007, she painted Georgian vendors in a market place in St Petersburg. Later, during the war between Russia and Georgia, she returned to the market place and saw that all the vendors had disappeared. She staged an exhibition of the portraits in the empty market place. On display at Rauma Biennale Baltica are paintings by the artist from 2007 and new ones painted at Rauma.

## ANNEX 18: ARAM BARTHOLL



The Internet has gradually become a new environment, new nature, for people. Originally trained as an architect, Adam Bartholl makes art of the Internet, but his conceptual works are not on the Net. Instead, digitized phenomena acquire a material form in his works. Bartholl's projects move between two worlds. Through networks of information, the physical location of information and its users have lost their significance. Bartholl gives physical form to the immaterial phenomena of the Internet that have changed our world. New information technology permits a great number of things for us. It can make life better, but man with his moral problems still remains the same. In 2012 the social network LinkedIn.com got hacked and lost its whole user database. A few months later parts of the decrypted password list surfaced on the Internet. "Forgot Your Password?" consists of eight bound books containing 4.7 million passwords hacked from the LinkedIn in alphabetical order. Exhibition visitors can browse the books and look for their own passwords. Bartholl's version of a peer-to-peer network is "Dead Drops", a world-wide project launched in 2010 which anyone can join. The material version of this digital network, in a physical environment, consists of USB memory sticks in public places. The USB sticks are plastered or attached to walls, stairs or other public locations with only their metal ends showing. Anyone can go to the sites to upload material to the memory sticks or to download whatever files there may be on them. When installed, each stick is empty with only a small readme.txt file containing a description of this project.



## ANNEX 19: DOROTA NIEZNALSKA



Dorota Nieznalska's works include installations, videos, photographs and sculpture. Her art has addressed, among other things, the culture associated with the tradition of the Catholic church of Poland and stereotypes of masculinity. For several years the subject of her analysis has been the phenomenon of violence. Recently her works include projects relating to public space, also in historical context. In 2003 Nieznalska was given sentence for blasphemy for her work entitled *Passion*. She worked on her "Greater Finland" installation in the HIAP artist residence programme in Helsinki in 2011 and 2012. In "Greater Finland", Dorota Nieznalska studies how social, political and cultural structures influenced the visual expression of monuments of the Finnish Civil War of 1918, and the meanings with which works of art depicting these tragic events are laden. The starting points of "Greater Finland" are Viktor Jansson's (1886–1958) monument erected at Tampere after the Civil War of 1918 and the Sword Oath speech given by Marshal Mannerheim at the Antrea railway station in February 1918. In Jansson's Statue of Freedom a standing male figure defiantly raises his sword towards the sky. In Nieznalska's installation, the same figure is on the ground on all fours. The work includes photographs related to the Civil War and a video projection presenting archive materials.

## ANNEX 20: JP KALJONEN

What does it feel like to live in a foreign country in an isolated environment hundreds of kilometres from home? Thousands of East European migrant workers who left their families and came to Finland in the hope of a better income have worked in the building project of the Olkiluoto nuclear power plant near Rauma. Most of them have lived in a temporary housing village near the power plant, apart from other housing in the area.

The project aimed to establish a cultural center into the Olkiluoto Nuclear Power Plant Accommodation Village in order to increase interaction between the Olkiluoto construction site migrant workers and local residents. Owing to their lack of language skills and outlying location, the residents of the housing village are excluded from many opportunities to spend their leisure time, and despite several months spent there, the housing area with its lack of impulses offers hardly anything to do. In the middle of the project the building of the power plant was paused and the workers sent home. "Down-low on a Nuclear Plant" portrays the process related to the project from the point of view of local cultural- as well as migrant worker participants. Kaljonen is interested in marginal communities remaining outside society and interaction between them. During the summer of 2011, he, Johanna Raekallio and Haidi Motola set up "Dublin2", a live role game simulating a refugee camp in Lasipalatsi Square in Helsinki. Last autumn, he worked with a cultural festival in Bangladesh, seeking to improve interaction between the middle-class Bijoy Nogor housing area and the slum of Laldiarchor which had grown next to it.







## ANNEX 21: INGA ERDMANE

Inga Erdmane was arrested in June 2011 on her birthday at the Latvian border. She was driving with her boyfriend from Amsterdam to Riga. A small number of cannabis flowers were found in their car, turning the couple immediately from ordinary people to criminal suspects. They risked prison terms of 5 to 12 years according to Latvian law. Erdmane noticed that regardless of certain facts, their case was investigated in a highly conflicting way within the judicial system. In *I Agree I Have Blundered* (Criminal Case No. 15890013311), Erdmane considers her personal experience of being arrested. The traces of the Soviet Union can still be seen in a system of justice that seems to be absurd and is marked by problems of internal communication and inconsistencies. In her works, Inga Erdmane explores situations in which the individual encounters society, and the private encounters the social. In the background are the artist's studies in psychology, and her own life is often associated with the events documented in her artworks. Erdmane mostly works in photography, expanding the photographic medium into installations and artist's books.



## ANNEX 22: NUG & PIKE

Nug (Magnus Gustafsson) became known at the Market Art Fair of Stockholm in 2008 for his "Territorial Pissing" video. In this piece, a masked figure is spray-painting the interior of a Stockholm underground train carriage. The action appears heated but all the other people in the carriage are sitting calmly in their places. At the end of the video, the masked figure jumps head first out of a window of the carriage onto the platform and leaves the site. The video aroused a great deal of attention and, among others, Swedish Minister of Culture Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth reacted in a markedly negative way, stating that it was not art. It was reported to the police, but the matter was dropped, because the person in the video could not be definitely identified.

Nug's art arouses questions. Are the events of painting real, stages or completely or partly produced digitally? In this and other works by Nug, painting does not consist of text or figurative images as in ordinary graffiti. The line is spontaneous movement on the wall of a public space or gallery. Painting as a physical event and its provocative nature are a central part of the artwork. Nug's graffiti art entails the uncompromising and unconventional nature of Buto dance. Nug is a graduate of the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design (Konstfack) of Stockholm. The uncompromising concept of the "Territorial Pissing" is found already in videos Nug made together with another Swedish artist Pike (Jonas Dahlström) in 2001–2003: "It's so fresh I can't take it", "Best Things In Life Are For Free" and "Su Casa Mi Casa". Pike graduated as master of fine arts at the Royal Art Academy, Stockholm.





## ANNEX 23: TELEKOMMUNISTEN

Dmytri Kleiner, Baruch Gottlieb "Covert action requires clandestine networks. Data hidden in public space. Seemingly random numbers spoken on the radio. What does it mean? There must be a system! How do you join the network? Can you be counted on? Are you committed? Do you have what it takes to join the network?" Telekommunisten (Telecommunists) is a group that investigates the political and economic basis of communication technology. The Numbers Station installation of the exhibition was designed by Dmytri Kleiner and Baruch Gottlieb with Jonas Frankki, Kristoffer Ström, Diani Barreto and Leif Ryge. Kleiner is a software developer, artist and the author of The Telekommunist Manifesto (<http://media.telekommunisten.net/manifesto.pdf>). Gottlieb is a researcher and an artist. According to the group, the capitalist system is incompatible with free networks of information and free culture. Social inequality is inbuilt in the infrastructure of communications technology and freedom is not realized where the components of computers are made. The ideal of freedom of the early stages of the Internet has become blurred. The opposite face of community offered by social media is the gathering of the personal data of the users of these services to be applied as efficiently as possible for purposes of economic profit for the good of those who control the services. According to the group, Twitter, for example, which operates on business principles is not synonymous with freedom of expression. With their conceptual networks of communication operating in surprising ways, the Telekommunisten are clearing a path beyond mainstream media. The group's art projects are small, even humorous, gestures standing out against the societal limitations of the Internet and social media.



## ANNEX 24: KAREL KOPLIMETS

"My new work 'Case No. 8' is a room installation consisting of photographs, video and sculptural objects. On the one hand, Case No. 8 deals directly with the topic of crime scene, and on the other, it is a study of criminals, crime and crime scene in general. According to the statistics, most of the killings in Estonia take place on private property (e.g. private houses, apartments etc.), and the killer and the victim know each other. In almost all the cases the people involved in the crime, have been drunk and used a sharp everyday tool as a weapon. The central piece of the installation is a series of photographs taken of the windows of apartment buildings during the late hours — places where this kind of crimes might take place. The second part of the installation consists of body bags lying on the floor. The number of body bags refers to the number (according to the statistics) of people getting murdered during these 'misunderstandings' in one quarter of year. The third part of the installation is a video edited from several videos downloaded from the Youtube, illustrating conflicts taking place during parties and drinking. The photographs and the video are only accessible if the viewer passes by the body bags. 'Case No. 8' is the expansion of one of my latest pieces 'Suburbs of Fear' (2012) that deals with the fears of becoming a crime victim while passing the suburb streets during the night. With this new piece I move from the streets to the indoors, inspecting the crimes taking place in these same neighbourhoods, but mostly behind closed doors — where these fears might sometimes turn out to be reality."



## ANNEX 25: LAURI ROTKO AND JUKKA RAPO



"See the Baltic Sea" is a photographic project with the Baltic Sea in the leading role. Rapo and Rotko began to photograph for the project four years ago. They have had a distinct division of tasks, with Rapo photographing underwater and Rotko above the surface. They have photographed the Baltic Sea in the territories of all of the countries along its shores. The Baltic Sea is a sea belonging to people. Its ecosystem has changed into its present state because of the activities of the human race over the past century. The reason for the environmental problems of the Baltic is ultimately quite simple. This shallow sea cannot withstand the strain caused to it by man. There is not enough water in the sea in relation to the loads on it. Adding to vulnerability is the fact that the sea is almost closed, with water changing slowly through the Danish Straits. Approximately 85 million people live in the catchment area of the Baltic and this equation has had the result that the sea is unwell to a high degree. Jukka Rapo's underwater photographs show the unwell sea in its present state: dark, murky, eutrophied and green. Rapo has not always looked for clear water and has photographed even when underwater visibility is close to zero. On the other hand, some of his pictures are like a reminder from decades ago when you could see the bottom of the sea even to a depth of ten metres. In Lauri Rotko's photographs, the Baltic is neither an embellished image nor a postcard, but instead real, accessible and of an everyday nature. Rotko's pictures address the human relationship with the sea and responsibility for the Baltic. His works are not traditional nature photographs from which man and his activities have been cropped out. In these images nature is not made for man. Tourists take the place of observed wildlife and a sunset scene is replaced by a view from the deck of a car ferry.

## ANNEX 26: GROUP HELM



"Hall of power" is a room installation, consisting of sound and video projections and multiple objects. Each individual has some sort of relationship with power. Power represents an individual's or group's ability to exercise physical strength, or political or social control over other people. Through the times there has been people who have felt irresistible desire to exercise the unlimited power over others, even over others life and death. In the society like in a gym atmosphere power games are taking place, it has been built, trained, exercised. Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the most powerful of all? Liisi Eelmaa: "I collect mistakes what I see in myself or around me. I fix the problem and then I like to replay the situation again in my own language. I select the main feeling, understanding and have a look at what it is. I like to create fictional and imaginary elements and place them into reality, creating bizarre and impossible scenes, taking the audience in purgatory feeling of being in real or fiction. As a set designer, I am always interested in the place, room and how people interact with what surrounds them." Minna Hint: "I am a visual artist who uses a documentary style approach to create film works and art installations. Through my work I try to raise questions and search answers to simple, yet hard to define daily matters, such as time, work, money, love, power etc. I try out different angles and often experiment with various natural or recycled materials, possibly engaging all senses in the created space. My intention is to offer the audience either a bit twisted mirror reflection of themselves or an alternative outlook on problematic issues."





## ANNEX 27: GEIR TORE HOLM AND SOSSA JØRGENSEN

Geir Tore Holm and Søsja Jørgensen apply the means of contemporary art from photography to performance while combining their work in art with their everyday lives on Ringstad farm at Skiptveit near Oslo. Holm and Jørgensen have combined their artistic work with everyday life since the early 1990s, when they established their Balkong gallery space in their own home. In their works, Holm and Jørgensen study how industrialized society has altered opportunities for traditional ways of life. At Rauma Biennale Balticum, they have an installation with three video pieces from over a period of fifteen years. "Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara — The Life of Bengt Jernelöf" (2012) subtly presents cultural and ecological change in the Kiruna region of North Sweden through the life story of a third-generation miner. "Johnny" (2001) is a portrait of a former fisherman through which the artists tell of post-war cultural colonialism in the Sámi regions of Norway. In "Western Way" (1999) people who have moved to the countryside tell of horses, farming and the impact of American consumerist culture. The works of Holm and Jørgensen subtly divert attention from the mainstream towards an alternative way of life. Music and choices of material are central to their works. Life at Ringstad farm combines the couple's artistic work with issues of economy, ownership, natural resources and agriculture. The main themes of their works have been the utilization of nature, ecology, the dissemination of information and building.



## ANNEX 28: STINE MARIE JACOBSEN

Consider films of violence and horror that you have seen. Is there a scene that has remained in your mind as particularly distressing and traumatic? Stine Marie Jacobsen approached random passers-by in Berlin with this question. She then asked her interviewees if they wanted to re-enact the film scenes that they described. The result was the "Direct Approach" project (2012–2014), a part of which is on show at Rauma in a cinema-type setting. The participants were free to choose their roles, turning from film viewers into active participants. For them, participating in Jacobsen's work resembles the methods of therapy. The viewer addresses the completed work from various starting points, with issues of violence emerging in this context. While violence in concrete terms does not belong to the everyday lives of the majority of people in the Nordic countries, we come across it continuously in film and other areas of the entertainment industry. "Direct Approach" is not a violent work of art, but it makes its viewers consider the position of someone who has suffered violence and how violence, or on the other hand violent entertainment, affects the mind. Stine Marie Jacobsen works in a multidisciplinary manner with artworks, and in curatorship and writing. Her projects explore subjectivity and narrativeness, and she often includes humour in her works. Jacobsen is interested in the formation of individual identity and how fiction and reality are interwoven.



## ANNEX 29: HAIDI MOTOLA



Mold Poisoning: "Nothing prepared me for it — I was extremely happy when I got into The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts; everything seemed so perfect and possible. I could never imagine the danger that was hiding there. My work is the outcome of my traumatic experience that started in the school, in my studio where I got sick from toxins and mold. It was a process of getting sick, realizing that I'm left alone, that I can't trust the people around me, and then a long recovery period in the desert, where I slowly found back my health and myself. An important part of that process was meeting and talking to other people who had experienced the same. I found out that the problem was huge in Finland and that the same negligence, hiding, and silencing repeated itself in many places. Now I want to tell you the story of a sickness that doesn't exist officially; of people who don't get any treatment and who are left alone to struggle against a blind bureaucracy. In my work I examine the borderlines between a healthy and a sick body, the limits of science and medicine and their political and social aspects. I'm trying to make a movie that I was missing when I got sick."

## ANNEX 30: COOLTŪRISTĖS



Cooltūristės is an anonymous feminist artist group. Its name refers to cool, culture and tourism, and women bodybuilder (kultūristė in Lithuanian). Its works address inequality between women and men in the art world and in public space. In its first joint work National Male Awards (2005), the group demonstrated how the national art and culture prize of Lithuania had been awarded to 110 men and only 17 women between 1989 and 2005. Cooltūristės went on to investigate the symbolic manifestations of sexualities. In its works, the group juxtaposes hard "male" symbols, such as public works of sculpture and buildings with soft "feminine" elements, such as textiles. Vilnius in Your Stocking, for example, is a poster of tourist attractions in Vilnius, such as the Church of St. Catherine, covered with pantyhose. Cooltūristės has declared that all buildings covered and hooded for repairs are works of art from now on. Cooltūristės plans a performance for Rauma Biennale Balticum that will take place at its opening. This performance addressed public works of sculpture in Rauma and flowers. Flowers have a strong symbolic significance, with many political dimensions. Feminine flowers pay honour to masculine monuments and memorials: Flower-vaginas that eat objects which they worship. The common sundews eat flies which they adhere to their red sticky stems. The stems look like little blood drops. One drop of blood and the smell of it lingering in the air. It gathers and grows lush until an event becomes inevitable. History ends and there is no way back. When this drop will accumulate enough weight it will fall down. Opening a crime scene. Later text published in the printed leaflet:

Cooltūristės plans a performance "Autonomous Crime Scenes" for Rauma Biennale Balticum that will take place at its opening. This performance is about flowers. Flowers have a strong symbolic significance, with many political dimensions. They could be a sign of victory and sacrifice or failure. Feminine flowers pay honour to masculine monuments and memorials.

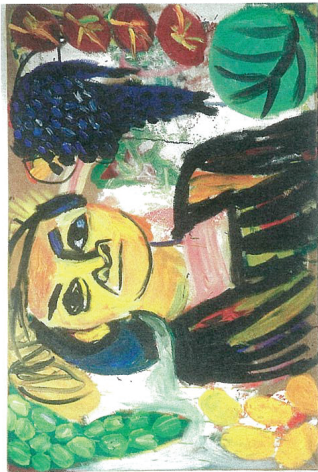
"Fire and Thunder I. The Tower of Flowers" documents a 9th of May celebration at the Memorial of Soviet Soldiers. The Russian minority celebrates it as the end of the World War II and a victory against fascism. For Lithuanians, this day means the beginning of soviet occupation.

"Fire and Thunder II. Little Green Men Landing" shows the day after the celebration. No people show up in the rain and thunder, but little green men appear. Do they also belong to "the forces of self-defense who purchased their uniforms in a local store" (Putin), first spotted in Crimea?





Fernando Garcia-Dory Dept. of Islands, Aegien Chapter 11



Evgenia Bolent, 2007 Temera, öly kovalleville

teidän tuen muodossa satsata, suuntaa varmasti taiteen teemoja. Tähtään on pidetty kartettavana.

HIAP (Helsinki International Artists Programme) on Suomenlinnassa, suojatussa paikassa, toimiva varsin aktiivinen ja iso residentsijärjestö, joka esittelynsä mukaan "panee alulle ja tukee uusia lähestymistapoja taiteen tuottamisessa, ymmärtämisessä, oppimisessa ja arvottamisessa". Se siis yksiselitteisesti uudistaa taidetta – kaikkea taiteessa. Se pitää näytelyitä, keskustelutilaisuuksia ja muita tapahtumia tasaiseen tahtiin. Mutta en juuri ole kuullut, että moni taideammatin ulkopuolinen olisi niissä käynyt. Organisaatio onkin kai syytä nähdä taitelijoiden sparrauspaikkana, jossa keskinäisessä vuorovaikutuksessa syntyy uudenlaista näkemystä.

HIAP:in Dissolving frontiers -näyttelyn oheistekstit ovat pitkiä, ja niitä lukiessa alkaa tuntua, että kaikki teokset käsittelevät kaikkia oleellisia seikkoja.

Koko näyttely ymmärtääkseni tarkastelee kriittisesti ainakin modernin ajan uskoa järkeen, jatkuvan talouskasvun ajatusta, kansallisvaltioita, ja "se löytää rakenteensa siitä jännitteestä, joka on modernististen ihmiselämän organisointitapojen ja niiden uusien näkökulmien tarpeen välillä, jotka vaativat oletettujen to- tuuksien purkamista ja poisoppimista samoin kuin spekulatiivisempien lähestymistapojen käyttöönottoa". Näyttelyn olemus kiteytetään näin: "siinä on katoamisia, jälkiä ja uusia yhteyksiä". Tämä kaikki siis vain englanniksi ilmaistuna. Sitä on toki osattava, jotta voisi olla globaalisti yhteiskunnallinen. Vaikkeas menee. Mutta kun näyttelyn teema kuitenkin olisi se kaikkein tärkein: ihmisen talouskasvuajatuksen kyseenalaistamattomuuden aiheuttama totaalinen tuho koko ekosysteemille.

Raumalla on päätetty jo vuodesta 1985 lähtien järjestää tameren alueen kokeilevampaa taidetta promoitvaa Biennale Balti-

**S**en lisäksi, että on paljon taidetta, joka harjoittaa muotojen, tyylien, katsomisen ja niiden tunnevalikutusten havainnointia, on taidetta, joka haluaa puuttua asiantiloihin, tuoda näkyville ja havaittavaksi yhteiskunnallisia ongelmakohtia. Edellinen on periaatteessa aina myytävänä, jälkimmäisen toimintamekanika on usein provokaatio tai saarna. Siitäkin syystä näille taiteen lajeille on alkanut muodoutua erilliset esittämisyhteydet. On syntynyt yhteiskunnallisen taiteen piiri, jolla tuntuu välillä olevan oma jossain määrin esimerkiksi muuta kulttuuria kuluttavasta heilpouden ja kaviätkukujen diktatuurilta suojattu aseman. Hyvällä asialla oleva selvää, koska sillä sentään vielä on omia rahoituskanaviaan: säätöiden, EU:n ja muita harkinnanvaraisia tukia. Kun asia on yleishyvä, on hyvä, että sille annetaan tullea.

Tämä rakenne saattaa kuitenkin paradoksaalisesti sisäpiiriyttää tätä yleisesti tärkeää taidetta. Epäkohtiin tarkentava taideteos voi usein jo alheensakin takia olla "hankalaa katsottavaa", mutta kun sille on tämän lisäksi alkanut vakintua hankala muotoikin, joka johtunee taiteellisen jäsentelyn ja tiivistämisen vähäisyydestä, kun suuri osa taitelijan työajasta kuluu teosten rahoituksen ja tentän rakenteen vaatimaan kuvataiteellisen selittämiseen ja jargonin kirjoittamiseen. Esimerkiksi EU-rahoitusta on mahdollista saada varmemmin tiettyjä EU:n tuettaviksi päättämistä aiheita (esim. reuna-alueet, ekologia, rajojenvälisyys) käsitteleviin teoksiin. Silloin järjkevin tapa päästä kiinni työskentelyyn on kiinnittää huomio tekstiin, joka perustelee projektin. Projekti tehdään, seminaarit, residenssit ja työpajat käydään, mutta asian lopullinen tulostaminen, taideteos voi olla vähän väsähtänyt, katsojalle ylivertaisen vaativa läjä muistimpanoja, raakamateriaalia. Lisäksi se, mihin sisältöihin esimerkiksi EU-tasolla pää-

cumia, joka ei ole koskaan kaihtanut vaikeita aiheita ja esittämistapoja. Nyt teemana oli peräti rikos, *Crime Scene*. Varsinaisen kriminaalipolitiikan asemesta teosten esittämät kysymykset pyöri-vät yhteiskunnassa syntyvien rakenteellisten väkivaltaisuuksien tiimoilla – rikospaikka on kaikki tämä ympärillämme, median mahdollistama idiotismin lietsominen, saastuminen, taustallamme oleva vakolli. Isoja asioita siis käsitellään molemmissa näytelyissä.

Nyky-yhteiskunnallinen taideteos vaatii lukijaltaan (tai siis katsojaltaan) ensi näkemältä yhteen liittymättömiin lankojen yhteen sitomista, halua jäädä ajan kanssa pohtimaan aiheita, jota ei välttämättä taidenäytelyssä ole ajatellut haluavansa pohtia. Kun yhteiskunnallisia teoksia vieläpä on useita samassa näytelyssä, saattaa näyttelyvieras joutua paneutumaan kymmenkuntaan yhteiskunnalliseen seikkaan vierailunsa aikana – aikana, jona olisi katsonut ja ehkä omaksunut huolellisesti laaditun dokumenttielokuvan, yhdestä aiheesta. Siksi on kai olennaista poh-tia miten yksittäinen taideteos asiansa katsojalle esittää?

Teos saattaa käyttää yhteiskunnallisen valvutuneisuuden ele-menttejä, joskus melkoisiakin määriä erilaisia aa-nelosisia kää-näntäöntä tekstiä, dokumenttikuvia, kaaviotia, tunntikaupalla vi-nä mitenkään. Ei ole järkevää odottaa että löytyis teoksen kaikkien elementtien havaitsejia, saati niiden ymmärtäjiä. Teos jää sovitukseksi signaaliksi hyvästä tarkoituksesta. Esimerkin tällai-sesta tarjosi HIAP:issa Fernando Garcia-Dory, jonka teos oheis-tekstin mukaan käsittelee "kulttuurin ja luonnon nykyisyyttä jot-ka ruumiillistuvat maiseman, maalaisuuden, identiteettiseikkoi-

hin liittyvien halujen ja odotusten, kriisien, utopioiden ja sosi-aalisten muutosten konteksteissa."

Teos voi kuitenkin olla huolellisesti käsikirjoitettu, tiivistetty ja silti moniselitteinen ja syvä, kuten *Nestori Syryllän* teoksessa *Raimo*, jossa *Esko Roine* esittää kuvitteellisen Raimo Sallan –ni-misen henkilön synkkää ajatuksia maailman lopusta. Toinen jut-tu on tietysti se, että tämä pienoismonologi voisi tavoittaa laa-jemman yleisön televisiossa, tai jopa näyttämöllä. Pakottaako ku-vataiteen puolelta saatu rahoitus pysymään väijäämättä pie-nemmän yleisön piirissä, kuvataiteen esittämiskonventioissa?

Aina oltaessa yhteiskunnallisesti aktiivisia joku esittää sen är-syttävän latistavan kysymyksen, onko juuri *tämä* se tärkein asia josta meidän tulisi huolehtia. HIAP-näytelyssä on kuitenkin ar-kaillematta esillä kaksikin liikkuvan kuvan teosta merenpinnan nousun uhkasta Malediivelle. Niissä kiteytyy paljon yhteiskun-nallisen nykytaiteen toiminta-alueesta. Libanonilaistaustaisen **Khaled Ramadanin** teos on hyvin tehty, miltei koukuttava, do-





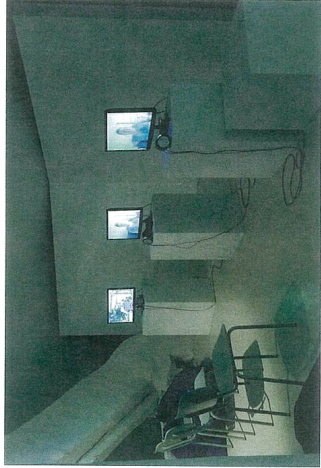
Khaled Ramadan, Maledives to be or not, 2013

kumenttielokuva, jopa sen lajityyppiä lievästi uudistavakin sikäli, että tekijän ääni ja epäroinnit totuuden monimuotoisuuden ja hahmotumattomuuden edessä tulevat esiin ihmisten puhuessa ristikkäisiä totuuksia. Parin kosmopoliittin, **Hanna Husbergin** ja **Laura McLeanin** yhteisteos taas on visuaalisesti kuin "runollinen" kooste erilaisia välähdyksiä: kuvia, tilastograafisen näköisiä kuvia, veden kellontaa, pätkiä filosofian konferenssista. Edellisen teos on tulkittu, ainooksi aktivistiseksi kysymykseksi jää taas se, onko taidenäytely Suomenlinnassa tehokkain paikka Malediivien tilanteen esittämiseen, jos tarkoitus on vaikuttaa. Jälkimmäisessä kysymyksenä on se, voisiko kerättyä materiaalia la saada aikaiseksi jokin havaittava ajatuskulkukin, eikä vain yhteiskunnallisen ja "tutkimuksellisen" näköistä esteetiikkaa.

Jos kolmen vierekkaista monitoria erillisine kuulokkeineen kaluttavat kukin eri ihmisten puhuvina päänä kertomia kokemuksiaan homemyrkytyksestä, kuten **Hadi Motolan** teoksessa, vaaditaan katsojalta varmaankin omakohtainen yhteys aiheeseen. Se, löytävätkö tällaiset osapuolet toisensa yhteiskunnalli-

sesti virittyneestä biennaalista, ei ole laisinkaan varmaa. Oma-kohtaisesta aiheesta tehty yhteiskunnallinen teos voi olla kosketävän, ja sitä kautta tehokkain, mutta siinä voi myös olla riski, että kontaktipintaa ei löydykään. On niin paljon muita, perinteisesti yhteiskunnallisermaan tuntuisia asioita.

Mikä sitten olisi juuri kuvataiteelliselle ilmaisuille ominainen tapa olla yhteiskunnallinen, se mitä juuri kuvataide voisi parhaimmin kuin muut ilmaisun alueet tuoda lisää yhteiskunnalliseen keskusteluun? Voiko velstos olla yhteiskunnallinen, entä piirros? Maalaukset yllättävät iloisesti Rauman näytelyssä. **Evgenia Golant** haki vuonna 2007 maalausaihetta Pietarissa, ja keksi tehdä paikallisissa kauppahalleissa nopeita muutokuvia Georgianisista toimimyistä, ja sittemmin muusia laitomisista siirtolaisista. Teokset assosioituvat viehättävän vanhakantaisesti varhaiseen avantgardemaalukseen, mutta samalla niiden tekemisprosessi lähensi näitä kadunhämisiä kuvataiteen "modernielmiin" virtauksiin ja tekevät museossa esillä ollessaan ohittamattoman kommentin ihmisistä, joita ei pitäisi oikein näkyvissä ollakaan.



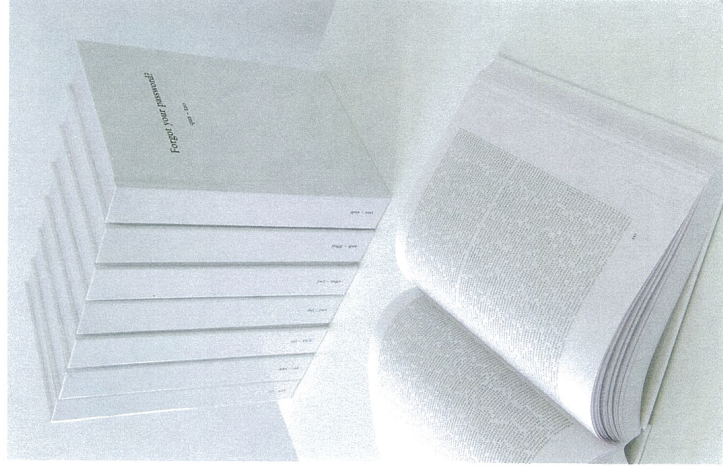
Heidi Motola, Myctoxicoisis II

Barthol Aram, Forgot Your Password, 2013, kahdeksan kokeellista kirjaa.

Asioiden mittasuhteiden havainnollistaminen on toisinaan tehokas taktiikka. Tanskalainen **Aram Bartholl** on painanut kahdeksaan kirjaan aakkostettuna 4,7 miljoonaa salasanaa, jotka hakerti oli 2012 murtanut ja julkaissut verkossa. Löysin kirjasta omani – se kyllä sävyitti oudosti

Pelkkä näyttäminen ja kasaaminen voi kuitenkin olla tehokasta. Virolainen **Group Helm** on tehnyt kuntosali-installaation, jonka tv-monitorissa (kuntosaleilla taitaa aina olla sellainen päällä) pyörii hurjasti iskevaksi leikattu virta mielipuoisuksia tv- ja youtube-virrasta. Kaikki kuvat ja sanat pyörivät *uallan eli powerin* käsitteen ympärillä. Sekö maailmaa näin vahvasti pyörittää? Teos saa assosioimaan hurjia ja jää vähän päälle.

Yhteiskunnallisuuden jääminen tietynä muodoksi, ja "vaikeita kysymyksiä" esille tuovaksi eleeksi, yhdistettynä siihen (itse asiassa hyvin olkeistolaiseen) ajatukseen, että virallinen yhteiskunta aina väijäämättä on suppressiivinen, alistava koneisto ilmenee kiusallisimmin taidekentän ihailussa vanhakantaisia "street arttia", graffitia (eli konservatiiville "töhräy") kohtaan. Senhän alinaa yhteiskunnallinen ulottuvuus ja viesti on pyrkimys oikeuttaa



yhteisen, julkisen tilan alistaminen yksilön maineen ja "itseismäisun" pohjaksi.

Totaalisen tuhoavan röhrimisen aiheuttaman – itse asiassa varsin ennalta aavistettavan reaktion – kotimaassaan Ruotsissa videoteoksillaan aikaansaanut **NUG** (tietenkin nimenmukki) oli edellisen kulttuuriministerimme – ja tämän Rauman näyttelyn suojelijan – kuvataiteellinen suosikki. Yhteiskunnalliseen näytelyyn sekkin taas oli pitänyt ottaa, oleellisia asioita näytävien ja asioiden pohtimista yrittävien taiteosten sekaan ja siivelle arvoa saamaan. Provosoimaan provosoinnin vuoksi.

**DISSOLVING FRONTIERS**, HlAP Gallery Augusta, Suomenlinna, 13.6.–17.8.

Crime Scene, Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014, Rauman taidemuseo, 14.6.–14.9.





**ANNEX 32: WORKS BY  
GIOVANNA ESPOSITO  
YUSSIF AND DAVID MUOZ,  
PRODUCED DURING THE  
LABORATORY**

Subjects Of Unwilling Representation - 1885 circa., 2014 (Installation) From the series In The Mirror, The Black Matters Appropriated material

Inscribed in the image of the female subjects there is a representational crime. The appropriated images, found in a book from late 1800's, portray archetypes that have sedimented in the imaginary of the commons. The image is bound to an "identity" set that has been fixated to the subject without even questioning the violence this act of reproduction implies. Can the subject be free of representation or is bound to be inscribed in archetype repeated in perpetuum?

Fire at Will, 2014 (Installation). 2 gallons of gasoline, lighter, wood pallet.

An incitation. An attempt to overcome the symbolic representation of the object. An act for realising a sense of presence. A threatening presence as a fact, as a statement, as an irreversible question. A concrete piece of materiality. An open possibility. An unavoidable matter. A call for commitment. An act of making tangible power subjections. A void filled with a static doubt directed to shake ambiguity. Another object took into custody. A passerby taken violently as an accomplice. An attempt to unsettle stillness. At the end, seems more important who guides the discourse of speculation about a threat, than the threat as a reality itself.



### ANNEX 33: PERFORMANCE 1'1" PRODUCED DURING THE LABORATORY



performance 1'1"

brief: locked up in a cellar for one hour. one minute to reflect upon it.

by: coolturistes, inga erdmane, carolina trigo  
with the participation of: ahmed alnawas, gerardo montes de oca valadez, otto kaarlo konstantin leivo

The work questions imprisonment and invisibility. What is it like to be cast aside, cut off from social solidarities? To remain invisible to others, perhaps even forgotten? What are the operations of power at stake here? Participants were locked up in a cold dark cellar for one hour, and when released given a minute to reflect upon their impressions in front of a camera. The shift from inner space to outer space— from dark to light, from personal to social—was often jarring and revealing. Some could speak, others could not. Some sang out loud, others hid themselves from the gaze of the camera. The performance itself took place behind locked doors, inside each of the individuals who participated, invisible to those who remained outside. The video documentation exposes the moment when these spaces meet.

Participants were asked to write a brief statement of what went on inside them when locked up. here are some excerpts: (we intentionally kept these texts anonymous). you can pick one or two if you wish

—

"Total darkness makes me feel smaller. I shrink, I am

becoming abject — not dead yet, not alive either. Then slowly the light appears from a small window. It feels safer to see the space. I measured it: 13,5 feet on 14,5 feet. Almost a square. I'm sitting in the middle on a small chair. I remember all the stories I've read or seen on TV about people who were locked in the basements. Austrian monster Fritzl, who kept his daughter in a cellar for 24 years, raping her. American teenage girls locked in the house of a school bus driver. How does it feel when you don't know what's next? I feel a deep emotional connection with them. I want to free everyone, even my cat. I want to be with my beloved people. I want to get out. To feel the sun on my face."

—

"In. Speechless hour. out. 1 min to reflect. Nothing to say. Speechless again. In."

—

"Darkness turns blue. I have to feel things, don't know where things end. Textures. Temperatures. Can't stay still. I see my shadow. Crouch on the ground and feel the dirt. Cold. I start to play with the surface of the chair, my nails go in rounds and a soothing sound appears... I think of my mother outside. What if your life didn't matter?"

—

"At the beginning everything turns blue then I notice the ventilation hole. Calm breeze fills my skin. The shaman comes holy fuck :D"



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*Thank you*

Henna Harri for invaluable support and guidance through difficult moments  
Gerardo Montes de Oca Valadez, Stine Marie Jacobsen and Henna Paunu for relieving discussions  
Katie Lenanton for preciseness and helpful insights  
Pekka Toivonen, Jari Sorjonen and Titus Verhe for allowing me to reproduce your work  
My fellow CuMMA students, teachers, and visiting lectures for inspiration  
*Rauma Biennale Balticum 2014* artists and laboratory participants  
The artists whose works I have discussed  
All of you whose comments and texts I have quoted  
Titus and my parents for taking care of the little one and providing me the possibility to write