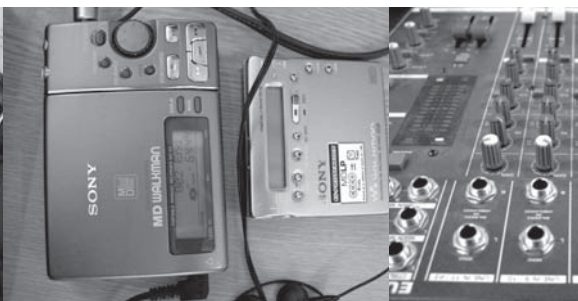




Phone Interviews

Eight-hour performance, publicly broadcast live and in real time in the exhibition space of Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland, 8 December 2002, 2-10 pm. Moderator: Alain Kessi. Idea and selection: Dimitrina Sevova and Alain Kessi. Transcription of the texts from the recordings: Alain Kessi. Technical support: Emil Miraztchiev and Alice Cantaluppi. The interviews are part of a week prepared by Dimitrina Sevova and Alain Kessi in the context of the two-month project “Konsequenz” curated by Frederikke. Hansen.



High and Low Technologies for Interviews Across Space

ALAIN KESSI AND DIMITRINA SEVOVA

We were looking for a way to present the Communication Front book in the context of the “Konsequenz” project, a way that would go beyond the stereotyped and well-known presentations of books and media platforms in an exhibition space and in front of a large audience. This is how we came to the idea of phone interviews as a performance creating a situation in which the visitors would be involved in an engaging meeting – something more than a verbal process of consuming artistic objects.

Via the methods of this old media, in relation to the Internet – the telephone –, we worked out an action with interviews publicly broadcast in real time, in which the visitors would be grabbed and thrown directly in the role of witnesses. Extending the real exhibition space where the objects are exhibited and the ideas outlined, we created a situation in which the theme of East-West would be confronted with the platform of the “Konsequenz” project, which investigates the correspondence between personal values and actual behavior.

Inevitably we stumbled on questions to do with the identity of the artist. Starting out with the personal, we had a “look” at the personal space of the artist or curator, at the space in which the objects and ideas are being prepared – their workday life and social background in which their everyday efforts as an art worker take place. Surfing between the personal and the public, we sought to personalize the discussion and explode the geography of the exhibition space.

The working language of the interviews is English. No direct translation was used for the visitors from English to German or back, or between some other language and yet another, or between

the moderator and the persons interviewed. At any rate both the participants and the public found themselves pressed, entangled, pulled into the diverse interpretations of the translation. In most cases the persons interviewed were forced to translate their ideas, to try to express themselves in a language that is to them rather formal. A working language different from the language they use in their everyday life and work. Most of the visitors were faced with the same problem, as they were forced to find an approach to a foreign point of view, conceptual framework or logical structure, but also to concentrate on the very process of translation. This leads us to the ambiguous language question well-known from networked communities like the different Internet societies, the globalized conference tours relating to various disciplines of knowledge, or the international art exchange.

Not only authors directly included in the CFront book were invited to participate in the phone interviews, but also other artists, theorists and activists involved in this East-West discussion. For this version of their publication we had to select and abridge, and are publishing here only a few of the interviews made. In our selection we were led by our wish to present those of the persons interviewed who are not only involved, in their artistic work, in the East-West topic, but who have also personally chosen to situate themselves, in terms of the material conditions of their lives, between these geographical and cultural spaces. Some of them were born in Eastern Europe and live and work in the West, or the exact opposite.

The full version of all interviews can be found at the address <http://konsequenz.cflow.net>.

We thank all those who have accepted to participate in the phone interviews: Athanasia Kyriakakos, Güven İncirlioğlu, Darko Fritz, Dimos Dimitriou, Susanna Paasonen, Nina Czegledy, Houben Cherkelov and Georgi Tushev, Iliyana Nedkova.

