

PERSONAL STRUCTURES

TIME · SPACE · EXISTENCE

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TIME • SPACE • EXISTENCE

WITH THE PERSONAL PARTICIPATION OF THE FOLLOWING ARTISTS

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ • VITO ACCONCI • CARL ANDRE • JO BAER • ROBERT BARRY
NELLEKE BELTJENS • BRAM BOGART • CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI • LOUISE BOURGEOIS
WALTERCIO CALDAS • MAX COLE • TOSHIKATSU ENDO • VALIE EXPORT • HAMISH FULTON
LIAM GILLICK • ANTONY GORMLEY • DAN GRAHAM • MARCIA HAFIF • PETER HALLEY
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JOSEPH KOSUTH • WOLFGANG LAIB • LEE UFAN • HEINZ MACK • SANNA MARANDER
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JESSICA STOCKHOLDER • ERWIN THORN • RICHARD TUTTLE • JORINDE VOIGT
LAWRENCE WEINER • XING XIN

WITH THE PERSONAL PARTICIPATION OF THE FOLLOWING AUTHORS

PETER LODERMEYER • KARLYN DE JONGH • SARAH GOLD • KLAUS HONNEF
JOHAN PAS • KITTY ZIJLMANS • MICHEL BAUDSON

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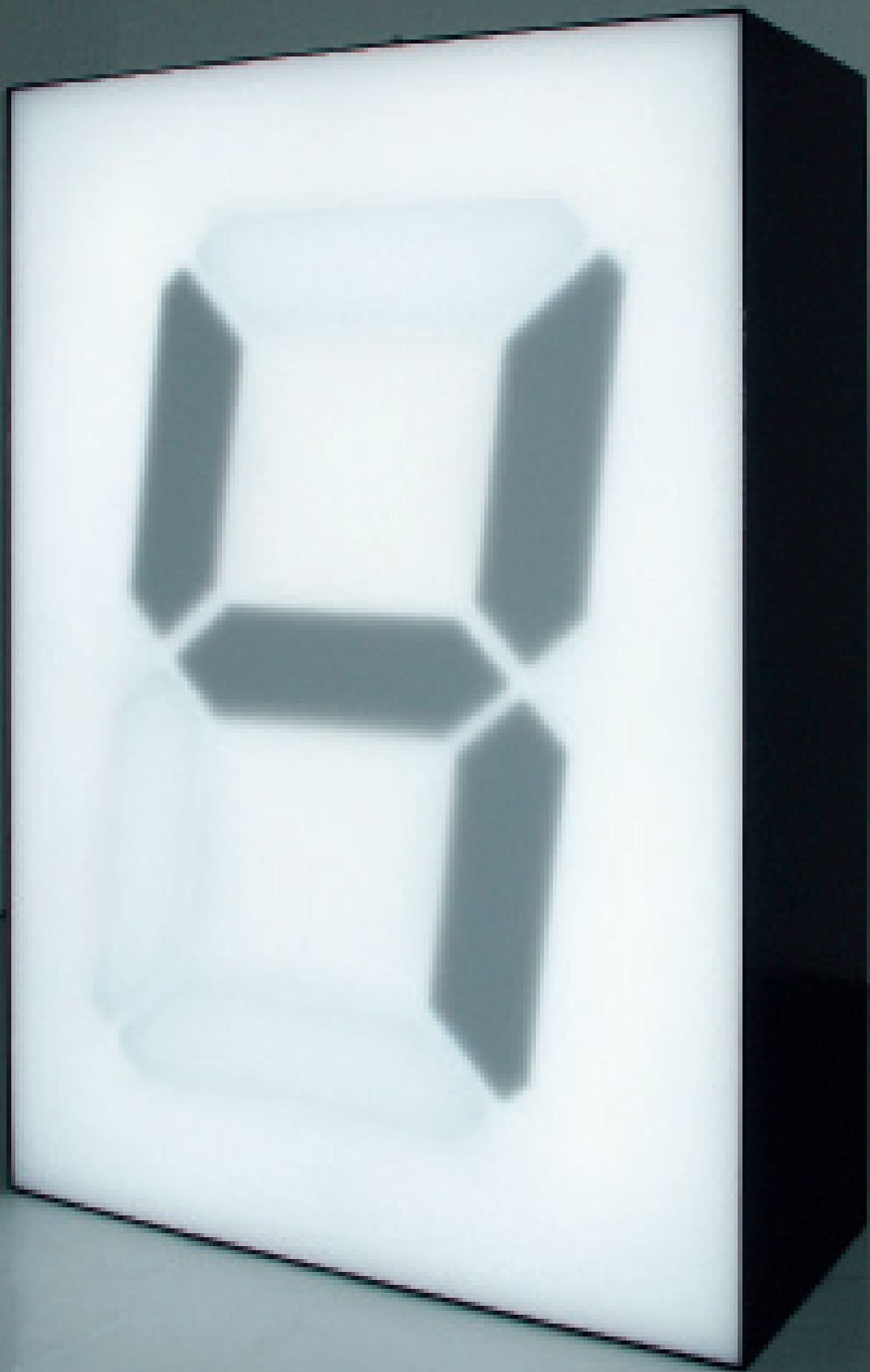
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Note:

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INTRODUCTION

By Sarah Gold

INTRODUCTION

By Sarah Gold

The making of *Personal Structures Time · Space · Existence*

The following words are an extract from the events that occurred from 2005 until 2009. It tells about how this project came into existence, about the difficulties and beautiful things that came our way in order to complete this publication.

In February 2005 I met the artist Rene Rietmeyer at the Rotterdam Art Fair in the Netherlands. I had just finished my Masters in Art History and I was working as an assistant curator for the Caldic Collection in the Netherlands. Rene Rietmeyer is the initiator of the project *Personal Structures*. He gave me a copy of the first publication of *Personal Structures, Works and Dialogues* from the year 2003, which he had made together with the art historian Dr. Peter Loder Meyer. Rene told me to contact him. I was 26 years old at the time, and this seemed like an interesting opportunity, to organize exhibitions and have the chance to work at an international top level. We started to cooperate and in that first year we held a symposium at the Ludwig Museum in Germany, published a little book about that and we organized several exhibitions in Europe, USA and Japan.

Rene liked the idea of organizing symposia, where artists speak for themselves. And then in order to not lose all these spoken thoughts and words, publish them in a significant publication. We felt that there is a necessity to do so; I also feel that words from a direct source give a better insight than the interpretations from an art historian. So we decided to ask whether artists would be interested to participate in future symposia which we would organize.

In June 2006 Rene Rietmeyer and I were in New York for some appointments. There we also visited Joseph Marioni in his studio on 8th Avenue and we came to talk about our projects. Joseph indicated that he liked speaking at symposia. Encouraged by that, we then decided to seriously start our quest to ask more artists.

Later on that month, we had the opportunity to meet the French-Polish artist Roman Opalka. We had called him and he told us that we could see him on the 27th of June, at 1 pm at the Musée d'Art Moderne in St. Etienne, where he had an exhibition at that moment. So, we drove the 2000 km (1300 miles) by car, to France and back, just to meet Roman Opalka. I remembered having seen his work at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in Germany and Rene had



encountered his work for the first time in the Centre Pompidou in Paris. We could have never imagined that our meeting with Roman Opalka would turn out to be so impressive. Inside his Octagon, Roman stated that he would keep on counting and painting his numbers to show his concept, the passage and infinity of time, until he could not stand "straight and proud" in front of his canvas anymore. Rene however tried to convince Roman that he was sure that Roman would keep on painting until the very end, like Matisse, painting on his deathbed with a brush on a stick. It was this meeting that made us decide that we, definitely soon, should try to organize an event, including Roman.

A few days later we had a meeting with the Dutch art dealer Paul van Rosmalen from Borzo modern & contemporary art, in Amsterdam. He told us that he was looking for a special event to take place at his gallery, with the possibility that this event would even travel and go to other cities as well. During this discussion we came to believe that the art world could use a serious project, with significant topics.

The following day, the first of July 2006, when Rene and I were on our way to Moordrecht in the Netherlands for an erotic evening, Rene said that the subject matter Time, Space and Existence are the most fundamental subjects he could think of. We came to the conclusion that Time, Space and Existence must be the most interesting philosophical subjects to mankind. Probably since long before these topics were discussed under a Greek olive tree, the thoughts about them have been made visual in art works. So, driving in the car, we decided to organize symposia, to which we would invite artists who have Time-Space-Existence as an important aspect in their work. To let them speak about their life and work in relation to these topics and then publish a book about that.

We started discussing our idea the days after, and one evening whilst sitting in a bathtub, we decided that, because of the complexity of the subjects, we should separate the topics. We should organize one symposium about Time, for which Amsterdam seemed to be the appropriate location, to discuss Space in Manhattan, New York, and I thought that for Existence an environment like Japan, for instance Tokyo, would be the right setting.

We were able to get a symposium and exhibition date at the oldest art-society in Amsterdam, Arti et Amicitiae, so we started looking for



artists who could speak about Time. We had already the goodwill from Roman Opalka and we wanted also somebody from the Netherlands. Henk Peeters, the co-founder of the NUL-group, who was 81 years old at the time, welcomed us at his home and liked our project. In 1961 Piero Manzoni had declared Henk to be a “living sculpture” by putting his signature on him, and Manzoni was right.

That winter we stayed in Miami-Beach, Florida, USA, where Rene has one of his studios. We had organized some exhibitions in Florida and had to be present at the art fair in Miami in order to earn some extra money to finance the beginnings of our project. We knew we had no financial support to expect from anywhere and the finances would solely have to come out of the sales of the art works from Rene.

As usual money was scarce, but nevertheless, we started and back in Europe, we asked Hamish Fulton to grant us an interview. On the 27th of March 2007 we got up at 2 o'clock at night in the Netherlands, picked up our German author Peter Lodermeier in Belgium, drove to Calais, France, took the ferry to England and at 12 o'clock, we arrived at the home of Hamish Fulton in Canterbury. Peter Lodermeier conducted the first interview for this publication and 23 hours after we had left, we arrived back home.

One month later on the 28th of April we had scheduled a meeting with Joseph Kosuth in Vienna, Austria. Rene had met Kosuth in Tokyo in 1999 and back then Joseph had told Rene, if he ever could help him, he would do so. We met Joseph at a brunch-event at Georg Kargl Fine Arts Gallery and during that discussion Joseph said that he would be interested in coming to Tokyo and speak about Existence. He suggested we organize it in 2008 during the Sakura, the cherry blossom time.

But before going to Japan, we would have to make our first symposium and exhibition in Amsterdam happen. We were scheduled for the 15th and 16th of June 2007, and mainly with the help of Irene de Haan of the Caldic Collection and Thomas Rieger from the Konrad Fischer Galerie, we were able to put together the exhibition *Personal Structures: Time*. After having almost all speakers for the symposium and no budget left at all, I called Lawrence Weiner, from a public phone in Vienna, in New York. I told him that I had dreamt of him being present in Amsterdam and he said in his ever so deep voice: “Everything is possible in this life”. He later flew to Amsterdam, coun-

tered written attacks by Joseph Kosuth, spoke for hours and never asked for any compensation to cover his expenses.

It was very special to bring all these sincere people together and to hear them speak; some of them had not seen each other for decades. Like Michel Baudson and Roman Opalka or Lawrence Weiner, Jo Baer and Klaus Honnef, and although our event was only a few days after the opening of the 52nd Venice Biennale, everybody had come to us in Amsterdam.

We started to organize the next symposium, while Peter Lodermeier went on to conduct interviews with Wolfgang Laib, Ulrich Rückriem and others. We would have preferred to do the next symposium, *Space*, in November in New York, but we were totally broke and we could only continue because that September, a Belgian collector, Andre Carez, bought an installation from Rene. We were able to pay all our bills and visited Joseph Kosuth in Rome, Italy, to discuss the Tokyo symposium. Google showed us that the cherry blossom time was most likely to start in Tokyo in the first week of April. With the help of friends we were able to get a date scheduled at the Setagaya Art Museum for the 2nd and 3rd of April 2008.

That winter, back in Miami, I met Dan Graham, who agreed upon an interview. I also met Richard Flood, the chief curator of the New Museum in New York, who was interested to host our *Space* symposium. The New Museum was really new at that time, for a long time we had followed the construction of its new building in the Bowery, and we had always said that it would be fantastic, if we could organize our symposium there.

As always we were still struggling for money but we felt that, since our project was getting more complex, we needed to involve more people. At that time Rene sold an installation to the American collectors Rita and Joel Cohen, and some other installations at the art fair in Miami. So we asked Karlyn De Jongh, who had assisted us at our symposium in Amsterdam and recently finished university, to come and stay with us in Miami. Very quickly she became an important person within our project.

Together with Karlyn we flew to Tokyo in March 2008. We had rented a traditional Japanese house, with sliding doors, paper walls and an old Japanese toilet and bath system. Japan was a whole dif-



ferent experience. I noticed that what I consider to be logic is not universal and that sometimes I really have to except not to understand the argumentation for certain decisions.

We had contacted great artists for the symposium, but first we had to visit them in order to explain our project and gain their trust, which was only possible by having the artist Yuko Sakurai as mediator and translator. We met Heartbeat Sasaki who would do a performance; we visited Toshikatsu Endo at his studio north of Tokyo and we drove the whole day through the Japanese country side to meet Saburo Ota in Tsuyama. We had invited Tadashi Kawamata to the symposium as well but, due to serious difficulties of one of his installations at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, he had to cancel at short notice. We also arranged photographers, which turned out to be an interesting but successful undertaking.

Over the whole period we were in Japan preparing our symposium, it had been very cold and wet and the trees did not show any sign that there were any flowers to blossom soon. Also, for some weeks we had not heard from Joseph Kosuth. I was very happy when on the 31st of March, my cell phone rang and it was Joseph saying "I am in Tokyo, let's meet". The next day, out of nowhere, everywhere the cherry blossoms opened-up, Sakura had started. Joseph also had a surprise for us, he wanted his text to be translated and have it read out loud simultaneously in Japanese during his presentation. We had 2 days for that, it took 3 translators working overnight and some tears from them, but they managed and Joseph seemed satisfied.

The two days of the symposium were very interesting in an unusual way. We were unable to understand most of the spoken texts because our speakers mainly spoke Japanese. Besides that, I was not even able to interpret the expressions and gestures correctly, since Japanese have such a different culture. What I remember most from those 2 days was Toshikatsu Endo who represented Existence, sheer by the sound of his voice and his being; and the lunch breaks, everybody eating sushi and sashimi in the museum park under the cherry blossoms. We stayed in Japan for some more days, and it was during that time, walking between the cedar trees of the Old Tokaido route and experiencing space on the lake by Mount Fuji, that I felt, Existence in Japan.



After returning to Europe, we were broke as usual. I was able to place some art works from other artists in collections and Rene worked on a large installation for a public space in Japan. We recovered financially and even went on a small trip to Greece together with Karlyn to see traces from the past. Directly after that, in September 2008, the art world came almost to a financial standstill.

From different sides we were advised that it would be wise to postpone the last symposium and the printing of this book, but we felt that if we would do that, we might never be able to continue and complete this project. In the meantime Karlyn had conducted her interview with Antony Gormley, and also Peter had continued doing interviews. So, all of us decided not to stop, but use as little as possible money, and continue to give this project our best, the maximum of our capabilities.

I got into contact with Eungie Joo, a director at the New Museum in New York and she arranged that the New Museum would host our symposium Space at the 3rd and 4th of April 2009. At that time, we did not have any fixed speakers yet, but after some telephone calls we managed to put together a very interesting group of artists. Unfortunately Rene and I were not able to attend the symposium we organized. In real life we are living like nomads and therefore we were not able to get in time the visa which the USA required from us to "work" at our symposium. But nevertheless by communication via Skype, from a holiday home in the Netherlands, and with the help of Karlyn and Peter, who were able to be present in New York, it became a fantastic event. Robert Barry, Peter Halley, Richard Tuttle, Keith Sonnier, and all the others, they had taken this symposium serious. We followed it from a distance.

Now we had completed all three symposia and had collected and recorded a lot of spoken text. These texts together with all the texts from the interviews that Peter and Karlyn had conducted, all that material, had to be transcribed and edited. We had already started this procedure one year before, but it was time to settle down somewhere in Europe in order to finish this publication. Rene had been invited to participate at the 53rd Venice Biennial. Also, we had been asked if we could organize a small symposium during the opening of the Biennial; therefore we decided to rent an apartment in Venice. On the 4th of June 2009 Rene and Peter



spoke in Venice and after that we had a panel discussion with Marina Abramović, her appearance was impressive.

Being based in Venice, Italy, has been very positive for us; it seems that all the people we needed to meet come here. For a long time, Karlyn had been trying to conduct an interview with the Mexican artist Teresa Margolles and when we found out that she was representing Mexico at the Biennial this year, we took our chances and tracked her down. It was an adventurous undertaking and it worked out. We also met with Roman Opalka, Joseph Kosuth, Tatsuo Miyajima, Dan Graham and many others.

Through Daniel Marzona, the director of the Konrad Fischer Galerie in Berlin, we got introduced to Uta Grosenick who at that time was working for DuMont. Rene always had said that he wanted to find a well-known publishing company for our book. We could publish ourselves, but people seem to judge a book by its cover, and the name of the publisher. Since our goal is to spread as many books as possible, to raise awareness about Time, Space and Existence, this was a fantastic opportunity. Uta proved to have knowledge and understanding about contemporary art. She recognized our sincerity and the quality of our project; she offered us to acquire a certain amount of books and distribute them under the name DuMont. She hoped that we could have the book printed before the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009, which is in October. On the 7th of June 2009, Karlyn, Rene and I discussed it, and decided that if we worked, day and night, it should be possible to finish this publication in time, without compromising the quality of the content. We also decided that we would continue to include more artists. I was thrilled, when on the 6th of July 2009 I was able to get some answers from the 97-year-old French-American artist Louise Bourgeois, and after that, I interviewed the 28 year old Chinese performance artist Xing Xin.

We could not realize all interviews we had hoped for. Because I was unable to fly to California, I could not interview Robert Irwin, who told me on the phone, after receiving my questions by email, that it would take at least one or two sessions in person, to answer them. And, Sophie Calle, who I had spoken to on the telephone while she was still in Paris, she would have liked to give an interview for our publication, but she was leaving for Sao Paolo and be travelling to the heart of Brazil. After receiving my questions, from Brazil she



wrote to me in an email: "the main problem is time and very soon not even mail. I am Sorry, sophie calle". Nevertheless we had more than enough to do. It was an enormous task, collecting, organizing, and preparing thousands of images of the artists, their work and our encounters with them. Transcribing interviews, editing, translating, editing again and placing it all on the computer in Indesign.

The book was growing, day by day, but therefore we barely saw the summer of 2009, and we barely managed to finance everything. But finally we arrived at the final stages. On Sunday, the 20th of September, we took the car and drove over the San Gotthard pass from Venice to Oberlimberg, in Germany where we had rented a holiday apartment close to the printing company. Rene has been printing by this company since 1999 and the owner, Andreas Krüger, trusted us so much that he promised to print our book and let us pay in installments. Without his help, we would not have been able to print at all. We started to work the next morning, rechecking and printing all the images as Epson-proofs, while Karlyn did the fine tuning of the texts, but we also had a cover to make. We had asked Joseph Kosuth for an image for that, but he answered: "Free up the space you are using that badly serves any artwork and put all the names of the artists in a larger point size on your cover instead. Make your background color in red or orange and the type in black or white. It will be clear, strong and bold". With this proposal by Joseph Kosuth as a starting point we finally decided upon the cover as it is now.

Today is the 27th of September and I am writing the last words for this introduction. Rene finally has time to edit his own text and Karlyn has just received the final version of her interview with Peter Halley, he made many last minute changes. We will start printing tomorrow, the 28th of September 2009.

We feel that, with this book, we have achieved the maximum we could have done at this point in time; in the most honest and sincere way we are capable of. Of course, there are various artists who should have been included, but we are already looking forward to *Personal Structures Time · Space · Existence* Number Two. For now, without a doubt, the publication of Number One as it is, can only be compared to Pheidippide's run to Athens in 490 BC, "Victory". The only difference being: we did not die.



PERSONAL STRUCTURES

TIME · SPACE · EXISTENCE

By Peter Lodermeier

TIME · SPACE · EXISTENCE

By Peter Lodermeier

I.

Time, space and existence are among the greatest of themes—so great that we could never be so presumptuous to think we could do them justice, and much too close to ourselves that we could ever escape them, whether with our thoughts or actions, in life or in art.

Apparently there are no longer any themes fundamentally closed to art. For centuries, post-antique art in Europe had more or less been limited to religious and political subjects (often inseparably interlocked with each other). During the Renaissance the field of the thematic possibilities was increasingly expanded—we need only think of the development of landscape and portrait painting in the 15th and 16th century, for example. In the face of this development, academic art theory had always endeavored to maintain a stringent hierarchy of themes worthy of art that was ultimately based on ontology. Modern art may be defined precisely through its claim of expanding the domain of art using everything in its power, and then bringing down this hierarchy. If you look back at the development of art over the past hundred years, you will recognize the ambition of the artists to keep ramming the boundary posts ever further outwards, and to make art capable of something it would have been excluded from earlier by its very definition. Just think of what all the Modern Movement has introduced to art: Exoticism, the unconscious, blasphemy, absurdity, the irrational, the immaterial, industrially-manufactured things, technology, elements of the trivial such as advertisements, pornography, everyday objects... etc., etc.—and last, but not least: pure forms with absolutely no claims for being interpreted objectively. Above all, however, it is about art itself. The questions concerning what art *is*, how it is perceived, what is particular about it, its functions, what its social contexts are, etc. were themselves to become a theme in the medium of art, especially in the 1960s and afterwards.

The desire to put art and life on a par with each other is a modern utopia that would have been utterly preposterous in earlier centuries. Due to the social upheavals during the 20th century, there is no longer any *one* more-or-less homogenous social class as upholders of civilization and culture, as had been the case with the upper bourgeoisie in the 19th century. It has long since been the most diverse groups, i.e.: interests, ways of thinking and aesthetics that nowadays manifest themselves

through and in art. Added to this is the fact that the attention to art is increasingly freed from its Euro-/Americo-centrism, while artistic achievements from Asia, South America, Africa, and Australia with their specific cultural backgrounds and perspectives are receiving growing recognition. The diversity of the art scenes (and there is far more than just one such scene) is greeted by some critics as an expression of the progressing pluralizing of society, while others deplore a mess of confusion that all too often drifts towards randomness plaguing our post-modern (or rather, most likely our post-post-modern) situation. In this respect, we should not forget, however, that such differentiation is being counteracted at the same time by the diametric process of aesthetic norming in the wake of globalization reinforced by the mass media. Finding an orientation in this confusing situation and being able to raise the question about even the most general themes of art seems, therefore, a worthwhile endeavor. This question is central to the project *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence*. It has often been said about literature as a form of art that there are really only two great themes, those of love and death (perhaps we might mention the striving for power here as well). But what would these basic themes be concerning what we only now refer to with some hesitation as the 'fine arts'? Are there themes any more basic than space, time, and existence? Perhaps form, color, light, and material come to mind, but we must not forget that there is no possible expression of these entities that do not *exist* in *space* and *time*.

II.

Time, space and existence initially seem to fall under the auspices of philosophy. It is necessary to briefly cast a glance in this direction in order to make it clear that these three concepts do not exist independently from one another, but rather display an inner connection. Several central views from Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* from 1927 come to mind, which have lost none of their relevance even after more than 80 years (and have not become compromised by the philosopher's later aberrations during the Nazi era). By existence, Heidegger means in particular man's own way of being that he calls 'Dasein', which differs from the mere existence of things and the lives of plants and animals by the fact that 'Dasein' manifests itself "in its very Being, that being is an *issue* for it".¹ In other words, we humans have a primal understanding of existence. At the same time, this means that we must constantly care for our existence. Being able to hope, desire,

worry about, plan, and despair are all things rooted in this. We can and must organize our existence, care about it, and do this with the knowledge that we will inevitably die. 'Being-towards-death' ('Sein zum Tode') is one of the major conditions of human existence. At the beginning of *Being and Time*, Heidegger anticipates the results of his research: "We shall point to *temporality* as the meaning of the Being of that entity which we call 'Dasein'. [...] Dasein *is* in such a way as to be something which understands something like Being. Keeping this interconnection firmly in mind, we shall show that whenever Dasein tacitly understands and interprets something like Being, it does so with *time* as its standpoint."² The human form of existence is certainly temporal, so much so that, in a lecture having to do with *Being and Time*, Heidegger stated: "[...] time is Dasein. [...] Dasein always is in a manner of its possible temporal being. [...] Dasein is its past, it is its possibility in running ahead to this past. In this running ahead, I am authentically time, I have time. In so far as time is in each case mine, there are many times. Time itself is meaningless; time is temporal."³

This last statement is of particular importance: There is no such thing as *time per se*, but rather it is always 'my' respective time, i.e., there is a tremendous plurality of times. Just as my Dasein is 'in each case mine' ('jemeinig'), and not delegable, not exchangeable, inalienable, neither is its temporal sense. The "homogenization" of "binding", measured time is, on the other hand, an idealization, "an assimilation of time to space, to Presence pure and simple. It is the tendency to expel all time from itself into a present."⁴ Measurable time is not lived temporality, the experienced existential temporality, but a simplification due to everyday requirements.

III.

The fact that Heidegger's analysis of Dasein not only reveals its temporality, but that it also basically contains a theory of its original spatiality is something that has not yet received sufficient attention. The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk has taken note of this: "Only a few interpreters of Heidegger seem to have realized that with the sensational programmatic title of *Being and Time*, there is also a kernel of a revolutionary treatise of existence and space."⁵ By calling attention to the fact that Heidegger perceives Dasein as 'being-in-the-world', whereby the 'in' does not simply denote being present in a 'spatial container', but rather designates a complex happening of spatially defined attitudes, Sloterdijk gains important reference points for his own ambitious *Spheres* project, an attempt to portray man's multi-layered reference to space.⁶ A significant point of departure in this is sections 22 to 24 in *Time and Being*, in which Heidegger provides several references to an existential analysis of space: "When we let entities within-the-world be encountered in the way, which is constitutive for Being-in-the-world, we 'give them space'. This 'giving space', which we also call 'making room' for them, consists in freeing the ready-to-hand for its spatiality. [...] Space is not to be found in the subject, nor does the subject observe the world 'as if' that world were in a space; but that 'subject' (Dasein), if well understood ontologically, is spatial. And because Dasein is spatial in the way we have described, space shows itself as a priori."⁷

An important difference (one of many), in which Sloterdijk goes far beyond the spatial analysis that Heidegger only sketched out, consists in his viewing Dasein not as one-sided, as a 'being-toward-death',

but also always under the aspect of its 'natality', its 'coming-into-the-world'.⁸ The fact that we are born, and must leave the first place we have ever lived in, the womb, without changing into an ambience that is nature-like is more than a biological fact. It is existential, driving us to orient ourselves to the world and set ourselves up there: as living, living together, creating orders, as stays in highly-complex, changing systems of spatial environments that interlock with each other. "When 'life' seems boundlessly diverse in forming spaces", Sloterdijk writes, "then not only because each monad has its own environment, but what is more, because all of them are interlocked with other lives, and are composed of numerous units. Life articulates itself on stages simultaneously interlocked. It produces and consumes itself in workshop networks. But decisive for us is: It produces first of all the space it is in, and which is in it, respectively."⁹

IV.

Perhaps there are no longer places of wilderness; but the wild, the ever new is still: time.

Peter Handke, Über die Dörfer

Space is not only high, it's low, it's a bottomless pit.

Sun Ra, Space is the Place

What is that, to exist—and not we or the world—but existence per se?

Fernando Pessoa, Faust-Fragmente

In as much that we exist as 'Dasein', we are spatially and temporally 'in-the-world' in a primal sense. And thus, time, space and existence are the givens, which stand closest to us—and at the same time, as soon as they force themselves upon us, they become the strangest and most enigmatic things of all. The 'wild' part about time, i.e. what is not to be controlled or what eludes us, the bottomless abyss of space and the infathomableness of existence at all, expressed in the quotes above by an Austrian and a Portuguese author as well as an Afro-American free-jazz musician, are experiences we constantly encounter in life. One of the most ingenious places in the analyses contained in *Being and Time*, is when Heidegger shows us how we necessarily "proximally and for the most part" succumb to "everydayness", warding off the strangeness of our existence with "idle talk", with "vulgar" notions.¹⁰ An even deeper confrontation with it is—and this is what is remarkable—not restricted to any lofty philosophical thought, but can affect any of us at any time. States of fear, boredom, sleeplessness, for example, are superb opportunities for confronting our existence as a whole.

What is not mentioned in *Time and Being* is the encounter with art (in the broadest sense of the word), which in its own specific way may also ensure an experience of space, time and existence extending beyond our everyday preconceived notions. Even though a binding definition is impossible, we may still say that art is (also) always man's conception of himself. "With the concept of self-conception we can explain the value of art as follows: The value of art consists in its making special aspects of the world, in which we live, and ourselves understandable for us."¹¹ The fundamental aspects of 'Being-in-the-world', however, are time, space and existence. Art has always dealt with these themes—for the most part not explicitly, and embedded in certain ideological contexts. Just to give a random example: A

medieval altar painting showing the 'Last Judgment' emphatically portrays time (earthly time and eternity), space (the topography of the here and the hereafter, earth, heaven and hell) and existence (exaggeratedly, as eternal blessedness or damnation).

Modern art, and non-objective art in particular, has increasingly detached the themes of time, space and existence from their preconceived narratives (mythological, religious, political, etc.) and thus been able to show them with growing explicitness. Especially in the diverse artistic trends after World War II, much 'fundamental research' has been taking place on the theme of art. Questions concerning how space may be defined and structured, what formal solutions may be found for portraying temporal processes, and how art may be used to prove individual existence are among the typical issues of art of the 1960s and 70s. To refer to these questions today certainly seems to be important to us, especially at a time when the increasing commercialization and, along with this, the trivialization of art in connection with making it a marketable, streamlined, art business are greatly lamented. It is a major intention of *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence* to remind us of the basic questions of art, admittedly not in the sense of a return to the discussions of the past decades (that would be senseless and destined to fail from the onset), but as a platform where these issues may be further discussed and from which possibly new answers may be explored.

V.

The importance of artists grappling with the themes we have discussed here, precisely with respect to today's situation of art and society, seems obvious to me. We need only point out several aspects of the theme of 'space' as an example. Without a doubt it is no coincidence that the number of publications dealing with the theory of space has grown dramatically in recent years. It may not be overlooked that our living spaces, both natural and cultural, rural and urban, have been changing quickly. Ecological changes, the effects of the globalized economy and worldwide expansion of media and telecommunication technologies are simply the most obvious reasons for this process. That the utopia of the ZERO artists concerning a reconciliation between nature and technology may not merely be cast off as wishful thinking, but must rather finally be put into practical action, is more and more urgent in light of the worldwide climate change. The relationship between public and private has shifted completely in an age of technological mass media. Artistic suggestions for dealing with public space in a new way, such as Dan Graham and Vito Acconci undertake with their completely different works between art and architecture, may be instrumental in thinking the concept of public space anew. Where space and rooms are rigorously subjected to all kinds of monitoring, planning, and commercial interests, free artistic spaces are vital as counter concepts. Thus, for example Lee Ufan's sculptures are models of an open and unbiased encounter with the Other. In the face of the omnipresence of mass-media aesthetics that is threatening to dominate and deform our perception, the spaces of wax of someone like Wolfgang Laib have a virtually therapeutic effect by lastingly confronting the visitor in an intense way with the most primal existential conditions such as birth and death. May these examples

suffice, though the list could easily be continued with names of other artists and by means of the themes of time and existence.

VI.

The project *Personal Structures* has a somewhat longer prehistory. Initiated by the Dutch artist Rene Rietmeyer and accompanied by me in terms of its conception, it went public for the first time in 2003 with the book *Personal Structures—Works and Dialogues*¹². 16 artists from 11 countries were introduced in that first book, all working more or less with 'minimal' formal means. The focus was on the issue of concerning how personal, subjective components could also be revealed in 'minimalist' structures. The consciously contradictory title *Personal Structures* connects the supra-personal, or impersonal, through which structures are defined, with the personal and subjective components inherent to the works of art we presented. An apparent difference to this book as opposed to the first *Personal Structures* project may be seen in the selection of artists taking part. The departure point was a statement made by the Austrian art historian Johannes Meinhardt, which I already approvingly quoted in the first book. It goes: "Painting"—and here I mean "contemporary art" in general—which has not forgotten its own history, and which not only understands history as a collection of things that may be used again [...], is based today upon the great new approaches of the 1960s".¹³ In the first book from 2003 only artists took part, who *tied in with the tradition* of the new approaches of the 1960s. In conjunction with the second book the question now was: What about the artists of the 1960s themselves? And not only these people, what about the ZERO artists, who had already in the 1950s anticipated many things that later became famous as happenings, land art (earth art) etc, or what about the performance artists of the 1970s? Most of them are still highly active, having developed their art further over the past 40 years, refining it, partially taking it in different directions, sometimes revising it (to cite only two examples of this: the painter Jo Baer switched from minimalism to figuration in the mid-1970s and the previous performance and video artist Vito Acconci has been dealing with architecture since the 1980s). In deliberating about how the *Personal Structures* project might further develop, it seemed logical and consequential to learn from the huge treasury of experience these older generations of artists dispose over. We wanted to know firsthand how artists who have already written art history, decisively expanding the definition of what art is, think today about the basic themes of time, space and existence. In selecting the artists it did not make sense to us to simply dutifully follow the old well-trodden paths of art history. Our concern was rather for the individual personalities, not for their belonging to certain styles, genres and groups.

Be that as it may, neither does this book merely present positions that have become established. Precisely the combination with younger artists seemed attractive, as have rediscoveries, such as the work of Erwin Thorn. It is our endeavor to show the greatest possible diversity of personalities, views, and perspectives, which have resulted before various cultural and personal backgrounds, and also from the various stages of life (the youngest artist in this book Xing Xin is now 28, the oldest artist, Louise Bourgeois, is 97 years old).

VII.

Subsequent to a lecture about the *Time · Space · Existence* project I presented on 17 December 2008 at the Sculpture Park Cologne, a gallery-owner I know asked me whether we used a standardized questionnaire for our conversations with the artists taking part and if, at the end, we would conduct a statistical analysis of the responses. At first, I was speechless, since this question brought up exactly the opposite of what we are trying to accomplish. The focus of this book is upon the individual, the personal, the mutuality of life experiences and the views towards time, space and existence tied to this. But there is no science about the individual, as Aristotle already knew.¹⁴ For this reason the book was not to become a scientific treatise, no book of theories, no art historical compendium, no evidence for any theses, nothing of a statistical analysis. Time, space and existence immediately pertain to life. And for this reason we wanted to discuss these themes in a lively manner, in a way open to different aspects, to interpretation and theory as well as to the anecdotal, polemical, to humor, philosophy, and the wisdom of life. In short, it was our dream to write a 'Book of Encounters'. The concept of encounter, which the artist Lee Ufan placed central to his existence as an artist,¹⁵ seemed to us to provide the keyword for our book, because space, time and existence meet in the encounter, and in a way are brought into focus by it. It is no coincidence that the two most important media of our project, the symposium and the interview, are media of encounter.

Time, space and existence inevitably play a role when people encounter one another in order to enter into a conversation. Such an encounter with an artist takes place at a certain place, a certain time and under not completely foreseeable and not completely repeatable circumstances. The interview and symposium texts as well as the photographs are the lasting documentation of what takes place at such an event. Their particular value lies in the uniqueness of each encounter. That is why we were not concerned with making the individual contributions uniform. They were supposed to be individual, 'colored' by the peculiarities of each individual meeting, which already begins with the highly differing length of the texts and interviews. Length is no criterion for the value. The short sentences by Carl Andre ("short but sweet", was how he put it) as answers to the questions I was allowed to ask him by way of exception, bear the same weight as the long discourses of a person like Toshikatsu Endo in this book.

VIII.

We may not refer to encounters as a means to bring time, space and existence into focus without saying a word or two about language and the languages we dealt with in producing this book. The way we form concepts, how we think, perceive, and feel has a considerable amount to do with the language at our disposal. In this book, people are represented who come from different languages and cultural backgrounds. All texts appear in English here, the main language of the globalized world, and also of the art business. Several of the texts appear additionally in the original language. It is inevitable that the problem of translation arises in this context. Basically, already the transcription of a conversation into written language is an act of translation. Of course, the texts must be revised, but it would not suit a book called *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence* if the articles collected here would have been reduced to talks taking

place under 'laboratory conditions'. An interview taking place under stressful conditions at the opening of the Biennale, such as was the case between Teresa Margolles and Karlyn De Jongh, will necessarily have a different character than one conducted in peace and quiet for hours between Gottfried Honegger and Sarah Gold. The person speaking in his native tongue will express himself differently than someone communicating in a foreign language. All this belongs to the nature of human communication and should be accepted as such. It is to be hoped that the reader, despite the translations, will nevertheless be able to detect what is special and unique in each of the respective encounters.

Especially my interviews with Lee Ufan taught me that it is not always possible to equate a concept on a one-to-one level in other languages. Not only the three basic themes of this book, but also apparently notions such as that of the body are fraught with highly different traditions of language and thought in Europe and Asia. The fact that this sometimes leads to mutual misunderstandings is no wonder, but it is also not to be lamented. It is very simply an impetus for continuing the dialogue.

IX.

I have referred to this book as a 'Book of Encounters'. This applies not only to all who have contributed to its coming about, but also hopefully applies above all to the readers who may encounter numerous artists and works of art in texts and photographs. The many individual texts may be read in random sequence. It may be hoped that, in doing so, an effect will come into being such as we know from seeing an exhibition where works from different regions and epochs are presented alongside one another. New neighborhoods may be able to make visible heretofore-unnoticed characteristics of a work. That something comparable might happen in reading this book, that new things may show up in things that are known and familiar, and that in turn familiar things show up in the unknown, and that many red threads of unexpected correlations running through this book may be discovered, this is the hope with which I close my part of the work on this book. To all who have contributed to its realization, especially to Rene Rietmeyer, the 'motor' of this project, my sincerest and heartfelt thanks.

1 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Malden, MA / Oxford / Victoria AUS 1962, p. 12.

2 Ibid., p. 17.

3 Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*. Translated by William McNeill, Oxford / Malden, MA 1992, pp. 21-22.

4 Ibid. p. 18.

5 Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären I. Blasen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, p. 336.

6 Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären I - Blasen, Mikrosphärologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1998; *Sphären II - Globen Makrosphärologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1999; *Sphären III - Schäume, Plurale Sphärologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 2004.

7 *Being and Time*, p. 111.

8 See, for example, Peter Sloterdijk, *Zur Welt kommen—Zur Sprache kommen*. Frankfurter Vorlesungen, Frankfurt a. M. 1988.

9 Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären III. Schäume*, Frankfurt a. M. 2004, p. 24.

10 *Being and Time*, §§ 35-38.

11 Georg W. Bertram, *Kunst. Eine philosophische Einführung*, Stuttgart 2007, p. 45.

12 Peter Lodermeier, *Personal Structures. Works and Dialogues*, New York 2003.

13 Johannes Meinhardt, *Ende der Malerei und Malerei nach dem Ende der Malerei*, Ostfildern-Ruit 1997, p. 9.

14 Aristotle, *Met. III*, 1003a.

15 Lee Ufan, *The Art of Encounter*, London 2004.

TIME · SPACE · EXISTENCE

Von Peter Lodermeier

I.

Zeit, Raum und Existenz gehören zu den ganz großen Themen – zu groß, als dass man sich einbilden könnte, damit jemals zurande zu kommen, und viel zu dicht an uns selbst, als dass wir ihnen jemals entkommen könnten, sei es im Denken oder im Handeln, im Leben oder in der Kunst.

Es gibt offenbar keine Themen mehr, die der Kunst grundsätzlich verschlossen wären. Die nachantike Kunst in Europa war über Jahrhunderte mehr oder minder auf (oft untrennbar miteinander verzahnte) religiöse und politische Sujets beschränkt. Im Laufe der Neuzeit wurde das Feld der thematischen Möglichkeiten zunehmend erweitert, man denke nur etwa an die Entwicklung von Landschafts- und Porträtmalerei im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. Die akademische Kunsttheorie war angesichts dieser Entwicklung stets darum bemüht, eine strenge, letztendlich ontologisch begründete Hierarchie der kunstwürdigen Themen aufrechtzuerhalten. Die Kunst der Moderne lässt sich geradezu definieren durch den Anspruch, den Geltungsbereich des Künstlerischen mit aller Macht auszudehnen und diese Hierarchie umzustürzen. Wer auf die Entwicklung der Kunst in den letzten hundert Jahren zurückblickt, wird den Ehrgeiz der Künstler erkennen, die Grenzpfosten immer weiter „außen“ einzurammen und das zuvor noch *per definitionem* aus der Kunst Ausgeschlossene kunstfähig zu machen. Was kam mit der Moderne nicht alles in die Kunst: Exotik, das Unbewusste, Blasphemie, Absurdität, das Irrationale, das Immaterielle, industriell Vorgefertigtes, die Technik, Elemente der Trivialkultur wie Werbung, Pornografie, Alltagsgegenstände... usw. usw. – und nicht zuletzt: reine Formen ohne jeden Anspruch auf gegenständliche Lesbarkeit. Vor allem aber: die Kunst selbst. Die Fragen danach, was Kunst *ist*, wie sie wahrgenommen wird, was ihre Besonderheiten, ihre Funktionen, ihre gesellschaftlichen Kontexte sind usw., wurden insbesondere ab den 1960er-Jahren zunehmend im Medium der Kunst selbst thematisiert.

Kunst und Leben zur Deckungsgleichheit bringen zu wollen ist eine moderne Utopie, die in vorausgegangenen Jahrhunderten nicht einmal denkbar war. Aufgrund der soziologischen Verwerfungen während des 20. Jahrhunderts gibt es nicht mehr *eine* mehr oder weniger homogene kulturtragende Schicht wie das gehobene Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert; es sind längst unterschiedlichste Gruppen, und das heißt: Interessen, Denkweisen, Ästhetiken, die sich

heute künstlerisch manifestieren. Dazu kommt noch die Tatsache, dass sich die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Kunst mehr und mehr aus ihrem Euro-/Ameriko-Zentrismus löst und künstlerische Leistungen aus Asien, Südamerika, Afrika und Australien mit ihren spezifischen kulturellen Hintergründen und Perspektiven international wachsende Beachtung finden. Die Vielfalt der Kunstszene (es gibt deren weit mehr als nur eine) wird von manchen Kritikern als Ausdruck der fortschreitenden Pluralisierung der Gesellschaften begrüßt, von anderen als unübersichtliche und allzu oft ins Beliebig abgleitende Konfusion unserer postmodernen (oder, eher noch, post-postmodernen) Situation beklagt. Dabei darf man jedoch nicht vergessen, dass diese Ausdifferenzierung zugleich von dem gegenläufigen Prozess der ästhetischen Normierung im Gefolge der massenmedial verstärkten Globalisierung konterkariert wird.

In dieser verwirrenden Situation Orientierung zu suchen und nach den *allgemeinsten* Themen der Kunst zu fragen, scheint daher eine sinnvolle Unternehmung. Diese Frage steht im Zentrum des Projekts *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence*. Von der Literatur als Kunstform wurde oft gesagt, es gebe für sie eigentlich nur zwei große Themen, die Liebe und den Tod (vielleicht sollte man auch das Streben nach Macht noch erwähnen). Was aber wären die Grundthemen dessen, was man nur noch widerstrebend mit dem schon anachronistisch anmutenden Begriff „Bildende Kunst“ bezeichnen möchte? Gibt es grundlegendere Themen als Raum, Zeit und Existenz? Wem etwa noch Form, Farbe, Licht oder Material in den Sinn kommen, sollte bedenken, dass kein mögliches Beispiel dieser Entitäten vorstellbar ist, das nicht in *Raum* und *Zeit*... *existierte*.

II.

Zeit, Raum und Existenz scheinen zunächst in die Zuständigkeit der Philosophie zu fallen. Ein ganz kurzer Blick dorthin ist unverzichtbar, um deutlich zu machen, dass diese drei Begriffe nicht unabhängig voneinander bestehen, sondern einen inneren Zusammenhang aufweisen. Hier ist insbesondere an einige zentrale Einsichten von Martin Heideggers *Sein und Zeit* von 1927 zu denken, die auch nach mehr als 80 Jahren nichts von ihrer Relevanz eingebüßt haben (und auch von den späteren nationalsozialistischen Verirrungen des Philosophen nicht desavouiert sind). Heidegger versteht unter Existenz insbesondere die dem Menschen eigene Seinsart des „Daseins“, die sich von dem bloßen Vorhandensein der Dinge und dem Leben der Pflanzen und Tiere dadurch unterscheidet, dass es dem Dasein in seinem Sein *um* dieses Sein selbst geht.¹ Anders gesagt, wir Menschen haben ein ursprüngliches Seinsverständnis. Das bedeutet zugleich, dass wir in ständiger Sorge um unser Dasein sind. Die Fähigkeit hoffen, wünschen, bangen, planen, verzweifeln zu können usw., hat darin ihren Grund. Wir können und müssen unser Dasein gestalten, für unsere Existenz Sorge tragen, und das vor dem Hintergrund des Wissens, dass wir unvermeidlich sterben werden. „Sein zum Tode“ ist eine der wesentlichen Bestimmungen menschlicher Existenz. Heidegger benennt zu Beginn von *Sein und Zeit* vorausgreifend das Ergebnis seiner Untersuchungen: „Als der Sinn des Seins desjenigen Seienden, das wir Dasein nennen, wird die *Zeitlichkeit* aufgewiesen. [...] Dasein *ist* in der Weise, seiend so etwas wie Sein zu verstehen. Unter Festhaltung dieses Zusammenhangs soll gezeigt werden, daß das, von wo aus Dasein überhaupt so

etwas wie Sein unausdrücklich versteht und auslegt, *die Zeit* ist.“² Die menschliche Existenzform ist durchweg zeitlich verfasst, so sehr dass Heidegger in einem Vortrag im Umkreis von *Sein und Zeit* sagen konnte: „Zeit ist Dasein. [...] Das Dasein ist immer in der Weise seines möglichen Zeitlichseins. [...] Das Dasein ist sein Vorbei, ist seine Möglichkeit im Vorlaufen zu diesem Vorbei. In diesem Vorlaufen bin ich die Zeit eigentlich, habe ich Zeit. Sofern die Zeit je meinige ist, gibt es viele Zeiten. *Die Zeit* ist sinnlos; Zeit ist zeitlich.“³

Diese letztere Aussage ist besonders wichtig: Es gibt nicht *die Zeit* schlechthin, sondern immer „meine“ jeweilige Zeit, d. h. eine riesige Pluralität von Zeiten. So, wie mein Dasein „jemeinig“ ist, nicht delegierbar, nicht austauschbar, nicht veräußerbar, so wenig ist es sein zeitlicher Sinn. Die „Homogenisierung“ der „verbindlichen“, gemessenen Uhrenzeit ist dagegen eine Idealisierung, „eine Angleichung der Zeit an den Raum, an schlechthinige Präsenz; die Tendenz, alle Zeit in eine Gegenwart aus sich fortzudrängen.“⁴ Die messbare Zeit ist nicht die gelebte, die erlebte existenzielle Zeitlichkeit, sondern eine Vereinfachung aus Gründen der alltäglichen Erfordernisse.

III.

Dass Heideggers Analyse des Daseins nicht nur dessen Zeitlichkeit aufzeigt, sondern im Kern auch eine Theorie seiner ursprünglichen Räumlichkeit enthält, ist noch viel zu wenig gesehen worden. Der deutsche Philosoph Peter Sloterdijk hat dies bemerkt: „Nur wenigen Heidegger-Interpreten scheint klargeworden zu sein, daß sich unter dem sensationellen Programmtitel von *Sein und Zeit* auch eine keimhaft revolutionäre Abhandlung über Sein und Raum verbirgt.“⁵ Indem er darauf aufmerksam macht, dass Heidegger Dasein als „In-der-Welt-Sein“ begreift, wobei das „In“ nicht einfach ein Vorhandensein in einem „Raumbehälter“ meint, sondern ein komplexes Geschehen von räumlich verfassten Verhaltungen meint, gewinnt Sloterdijk wichtige Anhaltspunkte für sein eigenes ambitioniertes *Sphären-Projekt*, den Versuch einer Darstellung der vielschichtigen Raumbezogenheit des Menschen.⁶ Ein Ausgangspunkt sind dabei die §§ 22-24 von *Sein und Zeit*, in denen Heidegger einige Hinweise gibt für eine existenziale Analyse der Räumlichkeit: „Das für das In-der-Welt-sein konstitutive Begegnenlassen des innerweltlich Seienden ist ein ‚Raum-geben‘. Dieses ‚Raum-geben‘, das wir auch Einräumen nennen, ist das Freigeben des Zuhandenen auf seine Räumlichkeit. [...] Der Raum befindet sich nicht im Subjekt, noch betrachtet dieses die Welt, ‚als ob‘ sie in einem Raum sei, sondern das ontologisch wohlverstandene ‚Subjekt‘, das Dasein, ist in einem ursprünglichen Sinne räumlich. Und weil das Dasein in der beschriebenen Weise räumlich ist, zeigt sich der Raum als Apriori.“⁷

Ein wichtiger Unterschied (einer von vielen), in denen Sloterdijk weit über die nur in Ansätzen entwickelte Raumanalyse Heideggers hinausgeht, besteht darin, dass er Dasein nicht einseitig als „Sein zum Tode“, sondern immer auch von seiner „Geburtlichkeit“, seinem Auf-die-Welt-Kommen her betrachtet.⁸ Dass wir geboren sind und unseren ersten Aufenthaltsort, den Mutterleib, verlassen müssen, ohne in ein naturhaft vorgegebenes Ambiente überzuwechseln, ist mehr als eine biologische Tatsache. Es ist ein Existenzial, das uns dazu treibt, uns in der Welt zu orientieren und einzurichten: als Wohnen, Zusammenleben, Schaffen von Ordnungen, als Aufenthalte in hochkomplexen, veränderlichen, ineinander verschachtelten Systemen räumlicher Umgebungen. „Wenn ‚Leben‘ grenzenlos

vielfältig räumebildend wirkt“, schreibt Sloterdijk, „so nicht nur, weil jede Monade ihre je eigene Umwelt hat, sondern mehr noch, weil alle mit anderen Leben verschränkt und mit zahllosen Einheiten zusammengesetzt sind. Leben artikuliert sich auf ineinander verschachtelten simultanen Bühnen, es produziert und verzehrt sich in vernetzten Werkstätten. Doch was für uns das Entscheidende ist: Es bringt den Raum, in dem es ist und der in ihm ist, jeweils erst hervor.“⁹

IV.

Vielleicht gibt es keine Orte einer Wildnis mehr; aber das Wilde, immer Neue ist noch immer: die Zeit.

Peter Handke, Über die Dörfer

Space is not only high, it's low. It's a bottomless pit.

Sun Ra, Space is the Place

Was ist das, existieren – und nicht wir oder die Welt – sondern die Existenz an sich?

Fernando Pessoa, Faust-Fragmente

Insofern wir als „Dasein“ existieren, sind wir auf ursprüngliche Weise räumlich-zeitlich „in der Welt“. Und somit sind Zeit, Raum und Existenz die uns nächsten Gegebenheiten - und zugleich, sobald sie sich als sie selbst aufdrängen, die fremdesten und rätselhaftesten überhaupt. Das „Wilde“, d. h. Unbeherrschbare und Unverfügbare der Zeit, die bodenlose Abgründigkeit des Raumes und die Unergründlichkeit von Existenz überhaupt, die in den oben angeführten Zitaten eines österreichischen und eines portugiesischen Autors sowie eines afroamerikanischen Free-Jazz-Musikers aufscheinen, sind Erfahrungen, die sich im Leben immer wieder einstellen. Es gehört zu den genialen Stellen in den Analysen von *Sein und Zeit*, wenn Heidegger aufzeigt, wie wir notwendigerweise „zunächst und zumeist“ der Alltäglichkeit verfallen und uns mit „Gerede“, mit „vulgären“ Auffassungen das Befremdende unserer Existenz vom Leibe halten.¹⁰ Eine tiefer gehende Konfrontation mit ihr ist – und das ist das Bemerkenswerte – nicht irgendwelchen philosophischen Höhenflügen vorbehalten, sondern kann jeden von uns jederzeit betreffen. Zustände der Furcht, der Langeweile, der Schlaflosigkeit z. B. sind hervorragende Gelegenheiten, um uns unserem Sein im Ganzen zu konfrontieren.

Was in *Sein und Zeit* keine Erwähnung findet, ist die Begegnung mit Kunst (im weitesten Sinne des Wortes), die auf ihre spezifische Weise ebenfalls für eine über das alltägliche Vorverständnis hinausführende Erfahrung von Raum, Zeit und Existenz sorgen kann. Auch wenn eine verbindliche Definition unmöglich ist, kann man doch sagen, dass Kunst immer (auch) eine Selbstverständigung des Menschen über sich selbst ist. „Mit dem Begriff der Selbstverständigung kann man den Wert der Kunst folgendermaßen erläutern: Der Wert der Kunst besteht darin, dass sie für uns besondere Aspekte der Welt, in der wir leben, und unserer selbst, verständlich macht.“¹¹ Die grundlegenden Aspekte des „In-der-Welt-Seins“ aber sind Zeit, Raum und Existenz. Die Kunst hat immer schon über diese Themen gehandelt – meist unausdrücklich und eingebettet in bestimmte weltanschauliche Zusammenhänge. Um ein beliebiges Beispiel zu nennen: Ein mittelalterliches Altarbild, das „Jüngste Gericht“ zeigend, bringt eindringlich Zeit (irdische Zeit und Ewigkeit), Raum (die Topographie von Diesseits und Jenseits, von Erde, Himmel und Hölle) und Existenz (zugespielt als ewige Seligkeit oder Verdammnis) zur Anschauung.

Die Kunst der Moderne, insbesondere die gegenstandslose Kunst, hat die Themen Zeit, Raum und Existenz zunehmend aus vorgegebenen narrativen (mythologischen, religiösen, politischen usw.) Kontexten gelöst und sie damit immer expliziter zur Geltung bringen können. Insbesondere in den diversen künstlerischen Strömungen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg wurde „Grundlagenforschung“ zum Thema Kunst getrieben. Die Fragen, wie sich Raum erleben und strukturieren lässt, welche formalen Lösungen für die Dokumentation zeitlicher Abläufe zu finden sind, wie sich Kunst als Nachweis individueller Existenz verwenden lässt, gehören zu den typischen Themenstellungen der Kunst der 60er und 70er Jahre. Daran gerade heute anzuknüpfen, zu einer Zeit, in der immer wieder die zunehmende Kommerzialisierung und, damit einhergehend, Verflachung der Kunst zu einer marktgängigen, stromlinienförmigen Kunstbetriebskunst beklagt wird, erschien uns überaus wichtig. An die basalen Fragen der Kunst zu erinnern ist ein Hauptanliegen von *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence*, freilich nicht im Sinne einer Rückkehr zu Diskussionen vergangener Jahrzehnte (das wäre sinnlos und von vornherein zum Scheitern verurteilt), sondern als eine Plattform, auf der diese Fragen weiter diskutiert und von der aus womöglich neue Antworten gesucht werden können.

V.

Die Wichtigkeit der künstlerischen Auseinandersetzung mit den hier behandelten Themen gerade in der heutigen Situation von Kunst und Gesellschaft scheint mir auf der Hand zu liegen. Als Beispiel sei hier nur auf einige Aspekte des Themas „Raum“ hingewiesen. Es ist zweifellos kein Zufall, dass die Zahl der Publikationen zur Theorie des Raumes in den letzten Jahren dramatisch angewachsen ist. Es ist unübersehbar, dass sich unsere Lebensräume, die natürlichen wie die kulturellen, die ländlichen wie die städtischen, in schnellem Tempo wandeln. Ökologische Veränderungen, die Auswirkungen der globalisierten Wirtschaft und die weltweite Verbreitung der Medien- und Telekommunikationstechnologien sind nur die offensichtlichsten Gründe für diesen Prozess. Dass die Utopie der ZERO-Künstler von einer Versöhnung zwischen Natur und Technik sich nicht einfach als Wunschdenken vom Tisch wischen lässt, sondern dass sie endlich nach einer praktikablen Umsetzung verlangt, wird angesichts des weltweiten Klimawandels immer dringlicher. Das Verhältnis zwischen Öffentlichkeit und Privatheit hat sich im Zeitalter der technologischen Massenmedien völlig verschoben. Künstlerische Vorschläge für einen neuen Umgang mit dem öffentlichen Raum, wie sie etwa Dan Graham oder Vito Acconci mit ihren sehr unterschiedlichen, zwischen Kunst und Architektur changierenden Arbeiten machen, können dabei helfen, das Konzept „public space“ neu zu denken. Wo Raum und Räume rigoros allen Arten von Überwachungs-, Planungs- und Verwertungsinteressen unterworfen werden, sind künstlerische Freiräume als Gegenentwürfe unverzichtbar. So stellen etwa die Skulpturen von Lee Ufan Modelle einer offenen und unvoreingenommenen Begegnung mit dem Anderen vor. Vor dem Hintergrund, dass die Omnipräsenz der massenmedialen Ästhetik eine Überformung unserer Wahrnehmung zu bewirken droht, entwickeln die Wachsräume eines Wolfgang Laib einen geradezu therapeutischen Effekt, indem sie den Besucher nachhaltig mit den ursprünglichsten existenziellen Gegebenheiten wie Geburt und Tod konfrontieren. Diese Beispiele sollen genügen. Sie ließen sich mit anderen Künstlernamen und anhand der Themen Zeit und Existenz mühelos weiterführen.

VI.

Das Projekt *Personal Structures* hat eine längere Vorgeschichte. Von dem niederländischen Künstler Rene Rietmeyer initiiert und von mir konzeptuell begleitet, trat es 2003 mit dem Buch *Personal Structures – Works and Dialogues*¹² zum ersten Mal öffentlich in Erscheinung. In jener Publikation wurden 16 Künstler aus 11 Ländern vorgestellt, die alle mit mehr oder minder „minimalen“ formalen Mitteln arbeiten. Im Mittelpunkt stand die Frage, wie persönliche, subjektive Anteile sich auch in „minimalistischen“ Strukturen zeigen können. Der bewusst widersprüchliche Titel *Personal Structures* verbindet das Über- oder Unpersönliche, wodurch Strukturen definiert sind, mit dem Anteil an Persönlichkeit und Subjektivität, der den Kunstwerken, die wir präsentierten, innewohnt. Ein offensichtlicher Unterschied des vorliegenden Buchs gegenüber dem ersten *Personal Structures*-Projekt zeigt sich bei der Auswahl der beteiligten Künstler. Ausgangspunkt war eine Aussage des österreichischen Kunsthistorikers Johannes Meinhardt, die ich bereits im ersten Buch zustimmend zitiert hatte. Sie lautet: „Malerei“ - und hier setze ich „zeitgenössische Kunst“ allgemein ein -, „die ihre eigene Geschichte nicht vergessen hat und Geschichte nicht nur als wieder verwertbare Ansammlung [...] versteht, gründet sich auch heute auf die großen Neueinsätze der 60er Jahre“.¹³ Im ersten Buch von 2003 waren nur Künstler beteiligt, die an die Neueinsätze der 60er-Jahre anknüpften. In Zusammenhang mit dem zweiten Buch war die Frage nun: Was ist mit den 60er-Jahre Künstlern selbst? Und nicht nur mit ihnen, wie steht es etwa mit den ZERO-Künstlern, die schon in den 50er-Jahren vieles von dem vorweggenommen haben, was dann später als Happening, Land Art usw. bekannt geworden ist, oder mit den Performance-Künstlern der 70er Jahre? Die allermeisten sind ja noch höchst aktiv, haben ihre Kunst in den vergangenen 40 Jahren weiterentwickelt, ausdifferenziert, zum Teil in andere Richtungen getrieben, zum Teil revidiert (um nur zwei Beispiele zu nennen: Die Malerin Jo Baer wechselte Mitte der 70er-Jahre vom Minimalismus zur Figuration, und der frühere Performance- und Videokünstler Vito Acconci befasst sich seit den 80er Jahren mit Architektur). Bei der Überlegung, wie das Projekt *Personal Structures* sich weiterentwickeln könnte, schien es uns logisch und folgerichtig, von dem riesigen Erfahrungsschatz dieser älteren Künstlergenerationen zu lernen. Wir wollten aus erster Hand erfahren, wie Künstler, die bereits Kunstgeschichte geschrieben und die Definition dessen, was als Kunst zu gelten hat, entscheidend erweitert haben, heute über die Basisthemen Zeit, Raum und Existenz denken. Bei der Auswahl der Künstler schien es uns nicht sinnvoll, brav den kunsthistorischen Trampelpfaden zu folgen, es ging uns um die einzelnen Persönlichkeiten, nicht um Stil-, Gattungs- oder Gruppenzugehörigkeiten.

Jedoch sollte dieses Buch auch nicht bloß durchgesetzte Positionen präsentieren. Gerade die Kombination mit jungen Künstlern schien uns reizvoll, ebenso mit Wiederentdeckungen wie etwa dem Werk von Erwin Thorn. Wir wollten eine möglichst große Diversität an Persönlichkeiten, Ansichten, Perspektiven zeigen, die sich aus unterschiedlichen kulturellen und persönlichen Hintergründen, aber auch aus verschiedenen Lebensaltern ergeben (der jüngste Künstler in diesem Buch, Xing Xin, ist zu diesem Zeitpunkt 28, die älteste Künstlerin, Louise Bourgeois, 97 Jahre alt).

VII.

Im Anschluss an einen Vortrag, den ich am 17. Dezember 2008 im Skulpturenpark Köln über das Projekt *Time · Space · Existence* gehalten

habe, fragte mich ein befreundeter Galerist, ob wir für unsere Gespräche mit den beteiligten Künstlern einen standardisierten Fragebogen benutzen und ob es am Ende eine statistische Auswertung der Antworten gebe. Ich war zunächst sprachlos, weil in dieser Frage das genaue Gegenteil dessen aufschien, worum es uns zu tun ist. Der Focus dieses Buchs liegt auf dem Individuellen, dem Persönlichen, der „Jemeinigkeit“ der Lebenserfahrungen und der damit verbundenen Ansichten über Zeit, Raum und Existenz. Vom Individuellen aber gibt es keine Wissenschaft, wie schon Aristoteles wusste.¹⁴ Daher sollte dieses Buch keine wissenschaftliche Abhandlung werden, kein Theoriebuch, kein kunsthistorischer Abriss, kein Beweis für irgendwelche Thesen, nichts statistisch Auswertbares. Zeit, Raum und Existenz haben unmittelbar mit dem Leben zu tun. Daher wollten wir, dass diese Themen auf lebendige Art diskutiert werden, in einer Weise, die für Aspekte offen ist, für Interpretation und Theorie ebenso wie für Anekdotisches, für Polemik und Humor, Philosophie und Lebensweisheit. Was uns vorschwebte, war, kurz gesagt, ein „Buch der Begegnungen“. Das Konzept der Begegnung (encounter), das der Künstler Lee Ufan ins Zentrum seiner künstlerischen Existenz gestellt hat¹⁵, schien uns das zentrale Stichwort für unser Buch zu liefern, weil sich in der Begegnung Raum, Zeit und Existenz treffen und gewissermaßen bündeln. Die beiden wichtigsten Medien unseres Projekts, Symposium und Interview, sind nicht zufällig Medien der Begegnung.

Zeit, Raum und Existenz sind unvermeidlich im Spiel, wenn sich Menschen begegnen, um miteinander ins Gespräch zu kommen. Solch eine Begegnung mit einem Künstler, einer Künstlerin geschieht an einem bestimmten Ort, zu einer bestimmten Zeit und unter nicht vollständig vorhersehbaren und nicht vollständig wiederholbaren Bedingungen. Interview- und Symposiumstexte sowie Fotografien sind die bleibende Dokumentation dessen, was sich bei einem solchen Ereignis abspielt. Ihr besonderer Wert liegt in der Einmaligkeit jeder Begegnung. Daher lag uns nichts an einer Vereinheitlichung der einzelnen Beiträge. Sie sollten individuell sein, „gefärbt“ durch die Besonderheiten jedes einzelnen Zusammentreffens; das fängt bereits mit der höchst unterschiedlichen Länge der Texte und Interviews an. Umfang ist kein Kriterium für Wertigkeit. Die kurzen Sätze von Carl Andre („short but sweet“, wie er es nannte) als Antworten auf meine mir ausnahmsweise gewährten Interviewfragen haben in diesem Buch dasselbe Gewicht wie die langen Ausführungen eines Toshikatsu Endo.

VIII.

Man kann nicht von Begegnungen als Verdichtung von Zeit, Raum und Existenz reden, ohne ein Wort über die Sprache und die Sprachen zu verlieren. Wie wir Begriffe bilden, wie wir denken, wahrnehmen, fühlen, hat ganz wesentlich mit der Sprache zu tun, die uns zur Verfügung steht. In diesem Buch sind Menschen aus unterschiedlichen Sprach- und Kulturkreisen vertreten. Alle Texte erscheinen hier in Englisch, der Hauptsprache der globalisierten Welt und auch des Kunstbetriebs. Mehrere Texte erscheinen zudem in der Originalsprache. Unvermeidlich kommt hier das Problem der Übersetzung ins Spiel. Im Grunde ist schon die Übertragung eines Gesprächs in geschriebene Sprache ein Übersetzungsakt. Selbstverständlich mussten die Texte redigiert werden, jedoch stünde es einem Buch mit dem Titel *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence* schlecht zu Gesicht, wenn es die darin versammelten Texte

auf ein Reden unter „Laborbedingungen“ herunterredigiert hätte. Ein unter dem Stress der Biennale-Eröffnung gehaltenes Interview wie das von Teresa Margolles mit Karlyn De Jongh hat notwendigerweise einen anderen Charakter als ein in aller Ruhe geführtes langes Gespräch wie etwa das von Gottfried Honegger mit Sarah Gold. Wer in seiner Muttersprache spricht, drückt sich anders aus als jemand, der in einer Fremdsprache kommuniziert. All das ist Teil menschlicher Kommunikation als solcher zu akzeptieren. Es ist zu hoffen, dass man aus allen Texten, auch durch die Übersetzungen hindurch, das Besondere und Einmalige der jeweiligen Begegnungen herausspürt.

Insbesondere meine Interviews mit Lee Ufan haben mich gelehrt, dass man Begriffe nicht immer eins zu eins in andere Sprachen übersetzen kann. Nicht nur die drei Grundthemen dieses Buchs, auch scheinbar selbstverständliche Begriffe wie der des Körpers sind in Europa und Asien mit jeweils sehr unterschiedlichen Sprach- und Denktraditionen geladen. Dass das manchmal zu gegenseitigem Missverstehen führt, ist nicht verwunderlich, aber auch nicht zu bedauern, ist es doch nur ein weiterer Ansporn den Dialog fortzusetzen.

IX.

Ich habe dieses Buch ein „Buch der Begegnungen“ genannt. Dies gilt nicht nur für alle, die an seiner Entstehung beteiligt waren, es gilt hoffentlich vor allem für die Leser, die hier in Texten und Fotografien zahlreichen Künstlern und Kunstwerken begegnen können. Die vielen Einzeltexte können in beliebiger Reihenfolge gelesen werden. Es ist zu hoffen, dass sich dabei ein Effekt einstellt, wie man ihn von Ausstellungen kennt, in denen Werke aus unterschiedlichen Gegenden und Epochen nebeneinander präsentiert werden. Neue Nachbarschaften können bislang noch unbemerkte Eigenschaften eines Werks zum Vorschein bringen. Dass etwas Vergleichbares beim Lesen dieses Buches geschieht, dass Neues auch im Bekannten und Vertrautes im Unbekannten aufblitzt und sich viele rote Fäden unerwarteter Korrespondenzen entdecken lassen, ist die Hoffnung, mit der ich meinen Teil der Arbeit an diesem Buch abschließe. Allen, die dazu beigetragen haben es zu realisieren, insbesondere Rene Rietmeyer als dem „Motor“ dieses Projekts, gilt mein tief empfundener Dank.

1 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*. Sechzehnte Auflage, Tübingen 1986, S. 12.

2 Ebd., S. 17.

3 Martin Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit. Vortrag vor der Marburger Theologenschaft, Juli 1927*, Tübingen 1989, S. 26.

4 Ebd., S. 24.

5 Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären I. Blasen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, S. 336.

6 Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären I – Blasen, Mikrosphärologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1998; *Sphären II – Globen, Makrosphärologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1999; *Sphären III – Schäume, Plurale Sphärologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 2004.

7 *Sein und Zeit*, S. 111.

8 Vgl. z. B. Peter Sloterdijk, *Zur Welt kommen – Zur Sprache kommen. Frankfurter Vorlesungen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1988.

9 Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären III. Schäume*, Frankfurt a. M. 2004, S. 24.

10 *Sein und Zeit*, §§ 35-38.

11 Georg W. Bertram, *Kunst. Eine philosophische Einführung*, Stuttgart 2007, S. 45.

12 Peter Lodermeier, *Personal Structures. Works and Dialogues*, New York 2003.

13 Johannes Meinhardt, *Ende der Malerei und Malerei nach dem Ende der Malerei*, Ostfildern-Ruit 1997, S. 9.

14 Aristoteles, *Met.* III, 1003a.

15 Lee Ufan, *The Art of Encounter*, London 2004.