

<http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/part-of-the-festival-the-dialogue-of-four-cultures/>

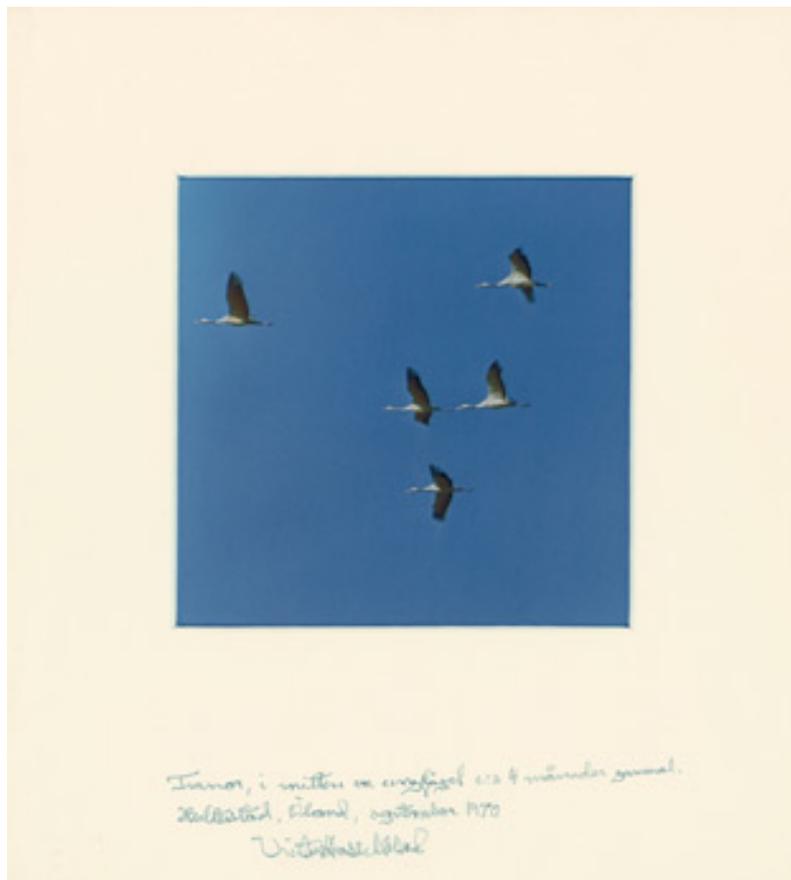
Part of the Festival the Dialogue of Four Cultures

ANABASIS. RITUALS OF HOMECOMING

05.09 – 04.10.2009

Artists: Lida Abdul, Helena Almeida, Mieke Bal, Yael Bartana, Rita Sobral Campos, Jonas Dahlberg, Danilczyk & Krakowska, Edith Dekyndt, Elmgreen & Dragset, Famed, Jaroslaw Flicinski, Kasia Fudakowski, Tadeusz Kantor, Agnieszka Kurant, Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler, Lothar Hempel, Marine Hugonnier, Susanne Kriemann, Sharon Lockhart, Ernesto Neto, Adrian Paci, Mai-Thu Perret, Agnieszka Polska, Pedro Cabrita Reis, Mathilde Rosier, Esther Stocker, Andrey Tarkovsky

Curator: Adam Budak



Susanne Kriemann "One Time One Million (Migratory Birds – Romantic Capitalism)", 2009

Photo by Viktor Hasselblad, 1970

"Roads of the world, we follow you. authority over all the signs of the earth. O traveller in the yellow wind, lust of the soul!" ...with these words French poet, Saint-John Perse concludes his poem "Anabasis" (1924) which depicts "the earth given over to explanations" and as such it sketches out the century's epic dimension. It is there where the notion of "anabasis" receives its most profound – contemporary – meaning. Referring to a narrative by Greek soldier and writer, Xenophon entitled "Anabasis" which reported an expedition of a troop of Greek mercenaries from a coastline up into the interior of a country, "anabasis" is the name for the "homeward" movement, the movement of lost men, out of place and outside the law and as such, according to Badiou, it may serve as a possible support for a meditation on the XXth century and beyond.

The Greek word "to anabase" which means both "to embark" and "to return" seems to aptly describe the century which ceaselessly had been oscillating between its own beginning and end. This century is marked by the urge for and a necessity of a movement – homecoming, search for roots, desperate need to construct a "new" order, an experience of beginning. "Anabasis" indicates such a movement: the ceaseless journey, displacement, a principle of lostness and an unprecedented return from (eternal) wandering lie at its root. Perse defines this notion in the most picturesque and sincere way, writing about childhood, memory, never-ending travelling, experience of exile and community, love and... wind. Badiou confronts Perse's version of the anabasis with the one depicted in the poem by Paul Celan (1963). For Celan, we are not at home, we haven't succeeded neither to begin a journey according to previously recognized path and planned itinerary: "we are, in what constitutes an admirable nomination of the anabasis as well as of the entire century: 'far out / into the unnavigated'".

As an integral part of the Festival of Dialogue of Four Cultures, which this year is programmed around the issues related to the notion of TERRITORY, the exhibition "Anabasis. Rituals of Homecoming" considers various dimensions of homecoming – between intimacy and public exposure, interiority and a monument, personal and collective mythologies – as templates to rethink our relationship towards the past, history and memory. Here, childhood, migration and exile, leaving aside your national belonging, coming back from a factory, and all other ordinary returns that belong to the practice of everyday life and the cultural/political heritage are perceived as rites that negotiate passages of our life. Home as an archetypal place and its prototype, home as a mythological and a real place we come from, the primal shelter and the site of unmediated presence; a homecomer – the conceptual personae of the Socius – as an active agent in the formation of territories; and a homecoming as a primordial act we carry with ourselves through the entire life of ours: sentimental ('will I be missed?') but traumatic too and perceived as an experience of repression ('home is the place you left'). This exhibition approaches an act of homecoming critically as a heterotopic experience and a

crucial component of becoming but also as a phantasmagoria. Homecoming “writes” pages of life as a journey out of oblivion and one’s identity as an on-going act of wandering. It is a method and a reference, a sensation: the vibration, the embrace or the clinch, or the withdrawal, division, distension (Deleuze).

Partly homage to a city of a wounded fabric, this exhibition is a reflection upon a situation that generated an impossibility of homecoming. As a stage for a mental quasi-reenactment of a mythical return, Lodz – a modern city of a future, another attempt of utopia, ‘promised land’ – appears as both a void of no integral identity and a receptacle of failed in-placements and constant displacements, a matrix of failure, indeed. Rootless and ungrounded, temporary and transitory, it brings in a peculiar definition of home, which oscillates between the parasitic and the appropriate. Rapid economic growth and industrial boom of the mid-19th century, as well as dramatic political upheavals of the last two centuries and the current lame development in the shadow of the capital – turned Lodz into an urban and cultural edifice of a porous identity, an intercultural zone of diversity, on the one hand, but on the other – of broken tides, unwanted belongings and instability. Here, the rhetoric of a house and a politics of place and homecoming are conducted upon the absence of the vernacular – in a network of lines of flight and deterritorializations that generated a city as a place inhabited but unsettled. Historically and contemporary, Lodz has always been a para-site: ‘never quite’ taking place as part of its performance, of its success as an event, of its taking place; being neither inside nor outside a house, that which is beyond, and yet essential to, the space. Thus Lodz – the ghost town and an uncanny site, where we are “not at home”, constantly alienated, detached and defamiliarized, an estranged place of ‘far away so close’ – functions as a machine to disfigure the understanding of home as a desire: a site of belonging and proximity, the proper (oikeios) place of Celan’s ‘We’.

“Anabasis. Rituals of Homecoming” has been choreographed as a set of tentative chapters: contemplation of a home, home as a process, belonging to a place, fate of place (a residue and a site of transformation), impossible homecoming and a trauma of displacement, performing nostalgia and longing, ruin and the architecture of memory, childhood rites and the ethics of labor, reenactments of personal memory... They operate as mirrors reflecting back the individual and the collective, the political and the private, overlapping singular biographies and volumes of history, along the curved lines of the past and the present. All invited to this exhibition artists perform a tension that on the one hand alludes to the inner voyage of Andrey Tarkovsky’s “Mirror” (a fetishisation of home and necessity of inner exile) and on the other, it echoes an ironic and decadent study of nostalgia and the subject’s deconstruction in Jean-Luc Godard’s “Le Mepris” with its ironic reenactment of Odyssey as yet another potentiality and symbolic of the archetypal theme of homecoming.

"Anabasis. Rituals of Homecoming" takes place in charming interiors of the late 19th century villa of German industrialist, Ludwik Grohman, one of Lodz's first luxury residencies that proved a high economic prosperity of a town around the turn of the centuries. Designed in 1889 by Hilary Majewski, its architecture alludes to Italian renaissance. A special part of the exhibition, including a unique set of Andriej Tarkovsky's polaroids ("Instant Light") has been staged in located nearby villa of Henryk Grohman (built in 1892), with eclectic interiors, referring, amongst others, to Viennese Secession, partly and most likely designed by Otto Wagner, now becoming a home of Book Art Museum, with an exceptional collection of art books, owned by Jadwiga and Janusz Tryznowie and a unique atelier with old printing machines.

The extended vernissage (September 5/6) includes performances (Mathilde Rosier, Danilczyk/Krakowska, Kriemann/Roelstraete), late-night screenings (Lockhart, Tarkovsky, Godard), and talks (roundtable with the artists as well as the conversation with the son of Andriej Tarkovsky, Andriej A. Tarkovsky).

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue with a rich visual material (including exhibition's installation shots) and essays by Suzanna Milevska, Mieke Bal, Dieter Roelstraete, Krystian Woznicki, Alain Badiou, Doreen Massey, Adam Budak, Kaja Pawelek, Agnieszka Kurant, Tomasz Majewski, Jaroslaw Lubiak.