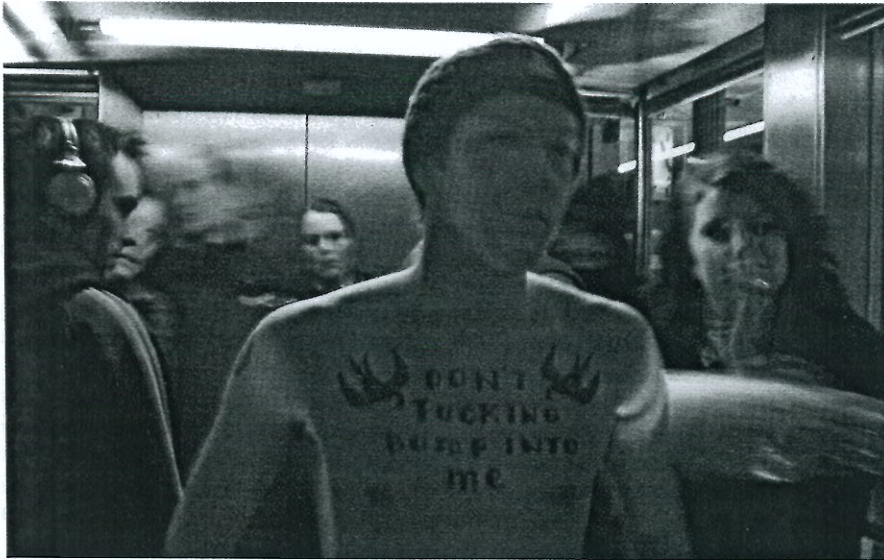


Fear_Tangent: Inviting Horror

Rotterdam

V2 - Institute for the Unstable Media



TANGENT_FEAR: Inviting Horror. Don't Fucking Bump Into Me © Photo: Maat Klaassen / Hermen Maat, 2006

Homeopathies of Fear

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To probe curatorial variants in the presentation of contents is the intention of the series *Tangents* –conceived by the new curator of V2, the enthusiastic **Stephen Kovats**– designing a flexible format that puts the spectator in contact –mediated or not mediated– with works, artists, and thinkers. A key investigation from the viewpoint of art as an act of communication and as social interface, in a telesthetic reflection, distant from traditional autonomous aesthetic objects, which rely on the presence (live or spectral) of the artist as mediator of the work.

Karen Lancel and **Hermen Maat** acted as first guests/hosts with the proposal *Fear_Tangent: Invitation to Horror*, a look at fear and phobic reactions spawned by the public space in the 21st C., updating in the post-Orwellian era of Google and the Internet the homeopathic therapy administered to Western masses by horror and crime movies during the Cold War. Today, terror has become its old self again while Eastern regimes and Western democracies are both transformed into theocratic plutocracies; when the horror produced by the unknown and the metaphysical secrets an excess of religious phosphorous that blinds the liberated secularised political vision. In addition, when for reasons of security the city becomes an electronic

panoptic and national borders the ideal skin for a political and biometric tattoo, public space becomes for many a phobic terrain, a landscape of horror that fosters agoraphobia and xenophobia.

In an exercise of negotiation between the flows of the private to the public and back, Lancel and Maat have deployed a dual strategy for their original invitation. First, they chose as a venue for their nomadic project *City Mobile Monument* the electronic facade of the building housing KPN, the Dutch telephone company, and called on citizens and artists to participate in the contents of the monument for a week. Second, for the V2 event, which was webcast live, they assembled videoconferences by Jill Magid (from Eyebeam in New York) about the performance works *Lobby 7* and *Evidence Locker*, dealing with the representation of her digital persona and the vulnerability of the subject in her intimate relationship with technology; by Dennis de Favero (from the ICinema Centre in Sydney) who spoke of non-linear narratives, of the world as an open system, and of the concept of traumatic body permeated by his interactive fiction *Pentimento*, which was present on a monitor *in situ*; by the Lacanian philosopher Marc de Kesel who in order to explain the interest of “inviting horror” argued –in person–

about the finitude and the infinitude of modernity, identity's fiction and the supremacy of the pleasure principle over the instinct for self-preservation, which becomes a mortal impulse that leads to the love-hate ambivalence of daily bourgeois paradigm. Lastly, Lancel and Maat spoke of the horror and beauty, fear of suspense rekindles in us, and the wariness fostered by urban space, “waiting for an event that may never happen”. However, one does not believe that the loss of control over our public image and our territoriality is resolved by inviting horror to trespass from now on upon what remains of our private sphere, in a total correlate of sadomasochistic submission, which allows the transferring of the power of society to a master/dominatrix able to exert absolute control over his/her victim, but rather that one must resist the contamination of politics by religion, with the precise marking of the boundaries between the private and the public, in order not to end up taking an obligatory leave, and be left, desolate outside of history (no longer of humankind, but of religions). Thence the useful socialising function of Public Art, its spiritual, lay mediation, between the State's Benthamian panopticism and the individual's exacerbated fears and desires. The homeopathic dose –dialogical, groupal, tangent– of public fear and horror was just right, but everyday we must take precautions against the lie of our domestic security.