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24 Martin Krenn & Oliver Ressler, *Border Crossing Services*. 2001. Video stills.
Courtesy of the artists.

Chapter 1

DOING LANGUAGE:

NARRATIVES FROM AN ACTIVIST WORLD

IN THE ART WORLD OF THE 1990s

INTRODUCTION

After the decade of the 1980s, during which the interest in social or political interventions was flagging on the West-European art scene, the next decade saw a general turn towards engagement and activism. Brooded among artistic circles, art institutions and new social and political movements, hybrid practices of artistic and cultural activism emerged. Their focus was on social and political issues of the day. These issues were linked, for instance, to political and socio-economic developments following the 1989 fall of the Berlin wall: the opening of East European borders to the West, the introduction of capitalism to national contexts previously under communism, the mobility of people and capital that followed. Beyond European terrains, issues of globalization, the environment, gay and lesbian rights, biotechnologies and much more, gave artists additional motives and spaces for socio-political interventions.

Around 2000 interest in engaged art practices, often with a predilection for collaborative or participatory working formats, had reached a culminating point. Such formats did not only symbolically subvert the authority of the One author, the charismatic artist also favored by the art market, in addition they also made things possible practically. Artists worked closely with activists' campaigns, with social and political NGOs, local authorities, individual specialists such as sociologists and political theorists and, last but not least, with groups of people directly affected by the issues at stake. In short, participatory and collaborative methods made it possible for artists to directly enter the discourses, developments and audiences of issues they were interested in.

There are numerous aspects one can discuss concerning this phenomenon of combining activist and/or social and political work practices with artistic practices.¹⁹⁵

My concerns in this chapter lie specifically with the *narrations* of art activism, of collaboration and participation. To be more precise, I am concerned with the articulation of the narrations of projects, narrations that transfer the practices of participatory activism to verbal, visual or other narrative forms. Thematically the focus is on art activism that dealt with immigration into the E.U. during the 1990s. The selected case studies are from Austria: two projects on migration by the artists' group WochenKlausur,²⁰⁴ one collaborative project by artists Martin Krenn and Oliver Ressler and narrations of the artistic output of maiz, a migrant women activists' organization (Autonomes Zentrum von und für Migrantinnen).

To my understanding, the artists' groups transfer political practices to art activism practices. Whereas the women activists transfer artistic practices to their political activism practices. Thus a movement back and forth between political choices informing aesthetic choices and the other way round, constantly takes place. This movement is expressed in, as well as by means of, the narrations of activist art projects and practices. By which I mean that the narrations operate in terms of content (e.g., articulated intentions) and form (e.g., the articulation of intentions). Two central analytical questions in this chapter refer, first, to the constitution of the subject of the narration (narrating subject) and in the narration (narrated subject). For the theme in question, migration, the subject at stake is the migrant as subject. What this generalization, the migrant subject, means here, I will clarify later in the text. The second question refers to whether and how in these narrations power structures (socio-economic, political) that lead to the marginalization of migrants in European societies - and, consequently, to the attention of activists - are eventually challenged or confirmed.

There is an important differentiation between the object of analysis in the respective section of Part I, "Concepts and narratives," and in this chapter. In Part I, I discussed the production of the art practice as a production of concepts and narratives, in the sense that the art practice is type-set by the artist's various projects, all of which exist in a state of constantly re-narrated variations of long-term, participatory or collaborative processes. That analysis took as case study the practice of artist Jeanne van Heeswijk in general. The materials used there encompassed narrations produced by the artist (e.g., projects' websites, flyers, publications) narrations by various other individuals involved (e.g., interviews and informal discussions with members of staff from commissioning bodies, participants in projects, etc.), as well as by art critics. Whereas in this chapter, I will limit myself on specific projects and their "official" narrations. By "official" I mean narrations produced either as part of the art projects (e.g., videos, publications) or with the specific purpose to communicate the artists' intentions and interpretations of their work (e.g., artists' interviews).

The reason for choosing art projects on migration in this chapter that deals with the use of language, is because especially since the early 1990s, when various EU countries introduced very strict immigrations laws, the migration discourse evolved to an important extent into a battle over definitions.¹⁹⁶ This has been manifested on many occasions. For instance, for non-EU citizens to obtain papers (residence permit, working permit etc) they needed to be recognized as "asylum seekers" or "refugees". The status definition of one's identity as foreigner became the A-Z prerequisite for one's definition as an "illegal" or "legal" person within the so-called Fortress Europe.

On the one hand, as illegal one would be persecuted and deported or detained, regardless whether one had any criminal record or not. On the other, obtaining the wished-for definition of being a “legal” - thus accepted, thus acceptable – foreigner, meant that existence within the EU was permitted on the condition of remaining *by definition* a foreigner, before society, authorities and the law.

But even before receiving one’s status definition, applying for papers in the first place presupposed that one would have information and linguistic access to the host country’s laws and application procedures. And that, despite the fact that a migration law in some countries officially proscribed language lessons for detained “illegal immigrants.” Thus in terms of political rights, but also literally, people were rendered voice-less in the political and juridical battles over the definition of their identity and their right to speak.

The prominence of the battle over definitions and the use of language was manifest in the names of the French movement of the *sans-papiers* (people without papers) and the German campaign *Kein Mensch ist illegal* (No One is Illegal).¹⁹⁷ The names of both reveal the importance of the problem of language for immigrants: through the definitions of immigration laws and further also through propaganda by Western governments and media, people without papers became illegal-ized people, often regarded by EU citizens and treated by EU authorities as equivalent to criminals.¹⁹⁸

In the case studies of this chapter, issues of language and interpretation are directly thematized in Ressler and Krenn’s project *Border Crossing Services*, and indirectly in WochenKlausur’s project *Intervention in a deportation detention center*.¹⁹⁹ Krenn and Ressler target the contingency of German terms used to describe people who bring migrants illegally over the borders: “The goal of the project ‘Border Crossing Services’ (‘Dienstleistung: Fluchthilfe’) is to redefine and highlight the positive aspects of terms such as ‘smuggler’ or ‘trafficker’ which have been given a negative connotation through the dominant medial discourse.”²⁰⁰ WochenKlausur touches upon connotations of the term “Schubhaft,” which means detention pending deportation. Featuring the word “Haft” that means “arrest,” the term “Schubhaft” brings to mind police persecution and imprisonment. Thus both in people’s consciousness, but also in some detention centers, people without papers were equated with criminals, despite only small numbers of them having criminal records.²⁰¹

The selection of case studies from Austria was made upon several initial observations. Firstly that there were (and still are) a number of Austrian artists who are actively in contact with activist organizations. Secondly, they often work in collectives, emphasizing participatory and collaborative practice formats. Thirdly, the artists chosen here as case studies have become visible both on the contemporary art scene, as well as in activists’ networks in and outside Austria.

A probably too subjective observation was that the language used in mixed art-activism discourses in Austria was stronger, more literal, direct and concrete than elsewhere in Western Europe. This is reflected already in the titles of projects. WochenKlausur has actually been changing the titles of its projects, according to the impact that the artists wished for their linguistic articulations to have on their audiences. For instance, at first they emphatically used the motto “concrete intervention” to communicate direct action. As “intervention” was over-used in the 1990s art world, and therefore it soon sounded banal rather than provoking, today

WochenKlausur has completely removed it from all (old and new) project titles on its website.²⁰² Reading through titles of WochenKlausur's and Krenn and Ressler's projects, one is often addressed with very direct and literal statements: *Medical care for homeless people*, *Shelter for drug-addicted women*, *Initiatives for unemployed people* (WochenKlausur), *Institutional Racisms* (Krenn and Ressler), *Anti-Gen Worlds. Oppositions to Genetic Engineering* (Ressler), *Power and Obedience – School Instructs* (Krenn). In all these titles, big and controversial issues such as homelessness, drug addiction, institutional racism and so on are directly thematized. Particularly in WochenKlausur's titles, there is an implication of something socially good (medical care, shelter, initiative) being done by the artists for some socially weak group of people (homeless people, drug-addicted women, unemployed people). While in titles of Martin Krenn and/or Oliver Ressler's projects there is a sense of oppositionality or resistance to power structures. In both cases, the titles seem to be one step before defining binary relations of justice-injustice, right-wrong, weak-strong.

Research following the above initial observations showed that collectivity, participation, collaboration and, indeed, the question of language were indeed concerns expressed within the Austrian engaged and activist art scene.²⁰³ In what follows, I will start with descriptions of the projects and practices of WochenKlausur, Martin Krenn/Oliver Ressler and maiz. Inbetween, some information about the Austrian political art-activism scene at the time will also be provided. It should be noted that as extensive as my analysis might appear, just like in all three chapters of Part II it is restricted to one aspect of the projects and practices selected as case studies. Here this aspect is specifically the narrations of projects in their various articulations. So also my conclusions refer to this aspect in particular, leaving aside other important ones of these extremely polymorphous projects.

WOCHENKLAUSUR

The beginning of the 1990s seem to have left some people on the contemporary art scene of Vienna with a sense that what was presented as new, young and contemporary in exhibitions showed symptoms of conservatism, deadlock and a detachment from the social and political reality.²⁰⁵ Such were also the feelings that art critics were left with after the 1991 edition of the biennial exhibition "Younge Szene Wien" ("Young Scene Vienna" my translation) at Vienna's Secession.²⁰⁶ This triggered the art historian and curator Wolfgang Zinggl to introduce a whole new approach with a project described as *11 Wochen Klausur* (11 weeks enclosure) in the following edition of 1993. Zinggl's idea was that art should cease to concern itself about problems of form and materials and engage in solving social ones.²⁰⁷ A motto of "concrete intervention" was introduced, and it constituted WochenKlausur's practice for years.²⁰⁸

For that first project at the Secession Zinggl recruited nine artists, students at the Vienna Academy of Applied Arts, where he was teaching. Most of them also had some other training in addition to art.²⁰⁹ They collectively decided to engage in an *Intervention to aid homeless people*. Indeed they succeeded in a double concrete outcome. Firstly, a bus was equipped with medical facilities and a doctor and was

put in the service of homeless people free of charge. Secondly, it was arranged with aid organizations, day centers and shelters for a total of 200 lockers to be supplied permanently to homeless people.²¹⁰ Thus the artists implemented their stated goal of literally improving a social problem by means of an art project and within the duration of an art exhibition. And they also made an impact on the Viennese art scene.²¹¹ Furthermore, a basic formula was introduced for the methods and principles of *WochenKlausur*, which they developed and adjusted in later projects. Wolfgang Zinggl remained the group's leader till 1997 and its theoretician, prominent figure and public face long after.²¹² Pascale Jeannée also played a central role between 1995 and 2001, when she suddenly passed away. In each project different artists were involved, sometimes also from the places where *WochenKlausur* was invited.²¹³

According to the formula established already from the Secession project, the group has always worked upon invitation of an art institution, "which provide[s] infrastructural framework as well as cultural capital."²¹⁴ Especially the institutions' cultural capital was crucial in the first projects for the recognition of *WochenKlausur*'s social interventions as art. Besides, it helped in approaching various agents, potentially useful for a project's implementation.²¹⁵ As their name indicates, the projects are implemented within a few weeks of intensive work. The members work exclusively on the project, so as to achieve a maximum concentration of energy. It is mostly the group, rather than the inviting institutions, that decides which social problem to work on (e.g., problems of the homeless, women drug-addicts etc.). Selection is based on research on issues that have recently surfaced in local public debates, wherever *WochenKlausur* is invited.

According to *WochenKlausur*, "many people have no lobby: on their own accord they can do little to make themselves heard or improve their situation."²¹⁶ *WochenKlausur* wants to show that "certain human living conditions do not necessarily have to be the way they are." The group developed and propagated a concept of concrete social interventions. Thus in each project they set for themselves concrete goals for specific, concrete improvements. Successful outcomes are then measurable against stated goals.

Central in their ways of thinking and working is the belief that artists are competent at finding creative solutions.²¹⁷ *WochenKlausur* claims that problems cannot always be "solved using conventional approaches and are thus suitable subjects for artistic projects." Therefore the group uses "unorthodox approaches," "clever maneuvering" and even – as for instance in the first project described below – "loopholes" in laws, so as to make possible what seems impossible.²¹⁸ Besides, to consider a project completed, the sustainability of its results should also be secured.²¹⁹

As the group's theoretician, Wolfgang Zinggl has supported the activist art example of *WochenKlausur*'s concrete interventions by giving it a place in a genealogy of 20th century activist art. In his text "From the object to the concrete intervention," published in the group's general publication *WochenKlausur. Sociopolitical Activism in Art* (2001) and on its website, Zinggl gives this genealogy starting with Russian Constructivism and reaching up to Krzysztof Wodisczko.²²⁰ In his text, he endows *WochenKlausur* with some highly esteemed historical predecessors, all of whom get somehow entrenched within an activist art paradigm. At the same time, he also distinguishes the group's practice that concentrates on modest contributions, on

“concrete strategies of effecting change,” instead of repeating their predecessors failed aspiration of changing the world.²²¹

During the 1990s WochenKlausur gained broad visibility within the Austrian and international contemporary art world. Indicative of their impact is that in 1997 Wolfgang Zinggl was appointed Bundeskurator (Federal Curator for Austria) and in 1999 WochenKlausur participated alongside other artists in Austria’s official representation at the Venice Biennial.²²² Till 2007, they developed interventions in Austria and abroad and worked on issues of migration, drug policy, schools, community development, the labor market and more. There were some skeptical voices about the integrity of their methodologies of, for instance, “want[ing] its political cake whilst eating it in the persisting institutional space of the gallery.”²²³

Projects on migration

Up to the time of my research in 2003-05 WochenKlausur had worked on the issue of immigrants in Austria in two projects, one in Graz in 1995 and one in Salzburg in 1996.²²⁴ The first one dealt with issues of integrating refugees in Austria. The second one focused on improving the living conditions of inmates of a detention centre pending deportation. This is apparent from the titles of the projects’ book publications, the first one being called *Eine konkrete Intervention zur Integration von Ausländern* (A concrete Intervention for the Integration of Foreigners) and the second one *Eine konkrete Intervention zur Schubhaft* (A concrete Intervention in Deportation Detention).²²⁵ The first project was commissioned by the annual festival Steirischer Herbst in 1995 and was presented during the following year’s festival, in 1996.²²⁶ (Fig. 25-27) The project’s short description on both WochenKlausur’s general book and their website (2008) reads as follows:

As a means of circumventing strict legislation concerning foreigners, seven immigrants were commissioned in Graz to produce Social Plastics. The project assured the participants’ legal residency in Austria.²²⁷

WochenKlausur engaged with problematic situations that Austrian immigration policy caused by separating residency and working rights.²²⁸ On the one hand, being granted a residence permit depended upon one’s showing proof of one’s means of subsistence. Nonetheless, the labor laws allowed for only up to a certain percentage of gainfully employed workers in Austria to be foreign, thus excluding everyone else regardless of any other criteria. On the other hand, “the right to pursue gainful employment depended upon the possession of a residency permit and a work permit with the latter being extremely difficult to obtain.” Therefore WochenKlausur decided to “loo[k] for loopholes in these extremely restrictive laws that could let us create new employment opportunities.”

Two possibilities were found. The one was based on the fact that the law did not cover freelance work. WochenKlausur’s idea was to set up an agency for self-employed foreigners. The idea was designed for unskilled workers’ jobs, such as cleaners, for which there was shortage in the market.²²⁹ Everything was planned and prepared down to detail by WochenKlausur. To establish the agency it was necessary

to secure authorization and start-up financing from certain entities including local and state authorities, the Chamber of Commerce and Graz's Labor Market Service. Eventually the attempt failed, because the Interior Ministry made the authorization of its contribution subject to "written confirmation from the Labor Market Service that WochenKlausur's project was in no way a circumvention of the laws regulating the employment of foreigners..." and "... predictably, the Labor Market Service refused to issue an official statement."²³⁰

The second idea was based on the exception that the immigration law made for artists. Artists were free to live and work in Austria, as long as they could show proof of adequate income in Austria solely from their artistic profession.²³¹ WochenKlausur succeeded in presenting seven refugees as artists creating "social sculptures" based on Joseph Beuys' related concept. The social sculptures were actually projects that produced aid such as baby food, children's clothing, toys and bicycles to be shipped to areas in urgent need such as Bosnia and Kurdistan. The idea's realization relied on the official acceptance of the refugees as professional artists by established art institutions. These arranged commissions and exhibitions of the "social sculptures." Additionally, several cultural, social, humanitarian or educational institutions and organizations undertook either the sponsoring, or the delivery of the "social sculptures" to their final recipients abroad.

The second project (Fig. 28-29) is summed up in the following lines in the group's 2001 publication:

A coordinating agency was created to provide social services to inmates detained pending deportation at the Salzburg Police Detention Center. It ensures basic standards of humane treatment.²³²

It was realized upon the invitation of the Kunstverein Salzburg, which in 1996 was showing different ways of making art with an emphasis on artistic research into social matters. WochenKlausur addressed itself to the detention conditions in Salzburg Police Detention Center, which were particularly degrading.

Austrian law was among the most restrictive in the E.U. towards refugees. Any foreigner without a valid residence permit or visa was subject to being put in detention. Detention was imposed even in cases of refugees who could or should not be deported according to law. Actually, for foreigners arriving to Austria by land, the Austrian refugee law that theoretically enabled them to apply for refugee status, was in practice made redundant by the so-called "third country clause" of the Alien Law, because Austria was surrounded by so-called "safe third countries."²³³

Beyond the above and many more complexities of the legal status of foreigners in Austria, the living conditions for detainees in the Police Detention Center in Salzburg were distinctly disgraceful. For instance, inmates were often not informed of their rights in time to apply for papers or in a language they could understand. Basic living needs and standards were either insufficient, dependent upon the judgment of guards, or often non-existent. That was the case with access to contact with relief organizations, basic hygiene, medical care, physical movement, open-air activities, contact with other inmates and with external agents, access to clothing,



25 - 27 WochenKlausur, *A concrete Intervention for the Integration of Foreigners*. Graz, 1995. © WochenKlausur.



28 - 29 WochenKlausur, *A concrete Intervention in Deportation Detention*. Salzburg, 1996. © WochenKlausur.

personal belongings, television or radio. WochenKlausur made contact with relief organizations, pastoral workers, attorneys, former guards and detainees, officers from the detention center, as well as with the initiative Hoffnung Konkret, an organization that showed substantial commitment to improving the conditions in Salzburg Police Detention Center.²³⁴

The intervention of WochenKlausur led to the establishment of a network of social services for the inmates, which was coordinated by a new agency set up for this purpose. WochenKlausur succeeded in securing financial and administrative support for the agency, in raising some media attention, in propagating against the broadly held assumption by locals that the detention was related to criminal activity. Most importantly, it succeeded in substantially improving detention conditions. Improvements related to both the inmates' access to information and external advice concerning their legal status and rights, as well as the quality of their everyday life inside the centre.

MARTIN KRENN & OLIVER RESSLER

Let me herewith turn to the second case study, the artists Martin Krenn and Oliver Ressler and, as example, their collaborative project *Border Crossing Services* from 2001. Both artists started working in the mid 1990s. Each has been following an individual career, but with an accentuated interest in collaborations mostly with other artists or activists. Together they have collaborated in numerous projects that focused primarily on issues of racism and migration.²³⁵ Their individual artists' statements, taken from their respective websites and reproduced here in Table I show some important similarities in their approaches to art-activism. Both start by referring to what kind of themes they work on, namely socio-political ones. Afterwards each refers to the media and forms of presentation they use, such as video, photography, exhibition making, the internet and projects in public spaces. Thus theme-specificity appears prioritized to forms and media. Ressler adds some of his themes of interest, such as racism, migration, genetic engineering etc.. Additionally, he points out the collaborative character of many of his projects, giving the names of his collaborators. While in WochenKlausur's case it seems that the specificity of the group's approach is what distinguishes their work, for Krenn and Ressler it is rather the specificity of the issues and the artists' political position towards them. More details on the artists' methodologies are usually given in interviews.²³⁶

For the interests of this thesis, I should emphasize that both artists quite often make works for public spaces, such as posters and banners. Almost always in their works verbal communication is at least as important as visual in conveying information, opinions, political messages etc.. For instance posters and banners mostly rely on text.²³⁷ Photographic projects by Martin Krenn come almost invariably with indispensable captions or texts. Ressler's videos, again almost invariably, feature interviews with specialists or activists on the socio-political issue at stake.

Since their projects result in videos, banners, books, installations etc., they are not ephemeral and process-based in the sense of, for instance, WochenKlausur's or Jeanne van Heeswijk's work. Nonetheless quite often, as also in *Border Crossing*

Services - at least as important as the produced video, book or exhibition are also the various types of participatory or collaborative processes of producing them in cooperation with students, migrants' organizations etc.. The same applies also to their reception by the public that the artists often monitor. Besides, many projects have more than one part or outcome, something that facilitates the staging of multiple approaches or angles of the same theme within the same project. To illuminate all the above I will turn here to the project *Border Crossing Services*.²³⁸ The statement of the project's goals, partly quoted already in the introduction to this chapter, reads:

The goal of the project *Border Crossing Services (Dienstleistung: Fluchhilfe)* is to redefine and highlight the positive aspects of terms such as "smuggler" or "trafficker," which have been given a negative connotation through the dominant medial discourse. In contrast to the widespread model for representation, the actual act of "smuggling" is not presented as a criminal exploitation of asylum seekers. Instead, we highlight the service character of this business made necessary by European policies of exclusion.²³⁹

The multiplicity of possible approaches and definitions of a certain action (*Fluchhilfe*) is expressed not only by means of words in the above statement, but also by means of the project's multiple forms of implementation. These function as stages for a multitude of voices.

The first part was an information brochure/magazine titled *Neues Grenzblatt* to which anti-racist groups and migrant organizations were invited to contribute.²⁴⁰ In these texts, the contributors inform the reader about conditions of contemporary migration and their own involvement in improving them. The brochure was distributed by direct mailing to households in Styria and in diverse events in cooperation with leftist groups. It can also be found on the project's website.

The second part of the project was the bilingual (German/English) video *Border Crossing Services*, subtitled *a four-part video on borders, migration and border crossing services*, which features long fragments of interviews.²⁴¹ (Fig. 24) On the one side, immigrants and persons involved in migrant activism are interviewed. On the other, three individuals working for the army and a border patrol officer represent the state and its anti-immigration policies and practices. Upon each interviewee's first appearance large letters on the screen give their names and the capacities for which they were approached for this video. The first interview is with Hirut Kiesel and Karim Duarte, free-lance journalists in Vienna. From their names and faces one can infer their migrant background. They initially talk about who has the right to migrate. Early in the video we also see a road shot by a border control station. A car waits behind a metal bar for passport control. Once done, the bar is lifted freeing the road. Driver and guards exchange papers through windows, so we see neither of them. The second interviewee is Grace Latigo, artist and political activist. She talks about her experience of being illegal until the point when a public statement she made during an activists' gathering brought her case to media attention. Thanks to the media, she and her brother were given papers within a week. The third interview is with Jean Jacques Effson Effa, activist of the self-organized refugee organization THE VOICE. Letters on the screen describe the organization as follows: "THE VOICE

fighters the residency requirement which says that asylum seekers are only allowed to leave their administrative district with an 'entitlement certificate'. Effa talks about the restrictions imposed by German law on foreigners who can neither obtain full residence and working permits, nor are they deported. They are allowed to live in specific areas, are given very little money and are prohibited from working, learning German, or travelling without an "entitlement certificate."

The following interview is staged at Vienna's Heldenplatz during the festivities of a national day celebration in which Austrian government members are participating and the national anthem is heard. Letters on the screen read: "Publicity for separation: on the national holiday the Austrian military advertises its newest war machinery and willingly distributes information." A helicopter pilot from the border security control forces is interviewed by the artists about high-tech detection systems. Additional information is given by a man inside a space with screens connected to detection cameras. He explains how air security systems function by means of heat-seeking devices, which detect living organisms on the ground through their body temperature. A second helicopter pilot specifies further that their hunting target are the "smugglers" rather than the "illegals," and explains the conditions of the patrol pilots' job. Furthermore, a German Federal border patrol officer called Bodo Kaping is interviewed in his office. He is asked to explain the meaning of "traffickers," "smugglers" and "Fluchthelfer." He distinguishes between "traffickers," who illegally and by risking people's lives, "capitalize on other people's misery and "Fluchthelfer," which is not a term applicable to the same matter, as it has positive connotations, historically referring to those who "at the time of the 'iron curtain' brought people from the East to the West." Asked whether there is a difference between those "Fluchthelfer" and today's "traffickers" in terms of placing refugees - that is, human lives - in danger, he refuses to comment on the matter.

Further on, a man called Dominique John, from the organization Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration in Berlin is interviewed. He nuances the topic considerably more than the previous speakers, outlining various routes and methods people follow to cross countries - a variety that reflects the differences between individual cases. A taxi driver, Hans Heim, from the taxistas-activist in Berlin, talks about the law imposed on German taxi drivers to check passengers' papers when the latter look as if they could be illegal migrants (e.g., dirty outfit). A man whose face we do not see describes areas by the borders and ways of fleeing hidden in cars or trains. Instead of announcing his name and capacity, the letters on the screen read: "The next person with whom we are talking will not be in the video in order to avoid possible criminalization of the person or surroundings." The cameraman walks along a borderline in the countryside, shooting at the soil and a border fence made of metal blocks and wires. Interestingly, the German version of the above cited text formulates the message differently: "Aufgrund von polizeilichen Ermittlungen bei Personen die der Linken Szene zugeordnet waren, wird die folgende Person im Video nicht gezeigt." Only in this version the person is described as classified by the police to belong to the Left political scene. The message points to a tension between the police and people classified as Leftist, which may evoke the tension between police and migrants. The video contains no other clear statement connecting the migrants with the political Left. Finally a foreign student in Vienna, Zinaida Skripic, is also briefly interviewed.

The interviews show an approach to art activism in which art, conventionally the domain of representations authored by artists, is turned into a podium for (self-) presentations staged by the artists. The artists themselves are heard or shown very few times as they ask questions and hold the microphone for the interviewees. The video was shown in an exhibition at the Kunstraum of the University of Lüneburg (see below), in numerous festivals, exhibitions or special screenings in Austria and abroad. Transcribed extracts are available on the project's website.

The third part of *Border Crossing Services* was an exhibition of the same title in the Kunstraum of the University of Lüneburg. It was put together collaboratively by Krenn, Ressler and students of the university, based on a seminar carried out by the artists.²⁴² To counteract hierarchical relations between artists and students, the exhibition included within a commonly created exhibition framework displays co-produced by everyone, independently by the artists, and independently by the students. The latter included a video, *Antiracist Perspectives*, based on interviews and conversations with other German students, as well as with representatives of migrant organizations in Germany.²⁴³ Further, the exhibition included a wall installation with texts, direct-mailings and flyers referring to the groups who wrote the articles in the *Neues Grenzblatt*. Quotes from literature used in a university seminar about racism were also added there.

From all the above it should have become clear that the various forms in which the project was realized relied primarily on text- and speech-based narrations. Through those narrations the project staged a multiplicity of voices and approaches to the issues of borders, migration and border crossings to EU states. Visual means such as the layout of *Neues Grenzblatt*, or the mostly fixed shots of the interviewees in middle portrait facilitate the audience in reading or listening without being distracted. Finally, the exhibition in Lüneburg seems also to have been an experience not of seeing, as much as of reading and listening to experiences and positions about border crossing.

The artists' position on the issue of border crossings becomes apparent as the activists' voices outnumber the voices representing state authorities. Besides, the staging of the latter is rather unflattering: the pilots talk in the middle of war machinery, describing its operational systems in a rather detached professional manner. The patrol officer sits in a discussion in which his arguments are easily brought to a dead-end. His final "no comment" reply is in strong contradiction to the eloquence of, for instance, Latigo or Effa.

One could claim that priority of linguistic communication and direct thematization of political issues characterizes the art activism of Krenn and Ressler in general. Additionally, in several projects they stage multiple voices on a theme, by means of collecting and presenting either interviews or short statements by individuals directly affected by, or involved in the issue at stake.²⁴⁴ These individuals can often be characterized as activists.

ABOUT THE AUSTRIAN POLITICAL ART SCENE IN THE 1990s

When in 1993 *WochenKlausur* and in 1994-95 Krenn and Ressler appeared on the Austrian contemporary art scene, they were not the only ones concerned with socio-

political issues and in search of new practices of collectivity and engagement, often at the borders between art and activism. One could name more art producers, even if they only comprised a segment of the scene.

Since the theme in focus is here immigration, one could start with Lisl Ponger for her project *Fremdes Wien* in 1992. This project consisted of a book and a series of photographs for exhibition. It dealt with the invisibility of migrant communities in Vienna. Migrants were already discussed as a “problem” in the Austrian media, but they were constantly talked about, rarely talking themselves.²⁴⁵ The same year the artists’ collective Klub Zwei was formed (Simone Bader, Jo Schmeiser). Up to the day of writing this chapter, they have been working at the borders of art, film, new media and theory with a socio-political thematology.²⁴⁶ By means of art works (e.g., *Willkommen in Wien*, video, 1992) and theoretical output (e.g., *Vor der Information. Staatsarchitektur*, edited volume, 1996) they have elaborated on questions of the representation of migrants and of racism. A further relevant example is the artists’ group gangart. They have been working in various media and ways (performance, video installations, architecture interventions, curating etc.) on related themes.²⁴⁷

Furthermore, one should mention Lukas Pusch for a public project in 1994. It consisted of photographic portraits of 36 members of the Austrian parliament and government. Over the photos a text was superimposed reading: “Wir haben es gesetzlich ermöglicht, J. Jafarzadeh zu verhaften und abzuschieben! (Im Iran droht ihm die Hinrichtung).” Below in smaller letters: “Danke für Ihr Vertrauen.”²⁴⁸ Pusch re-appropriated the aesthetics of election campaign posters, with which politicians advertised the public’s trust towards them.²⁴⁹

The phenomenon of art turning political during the 1990s was broadly evident in the entire German-speaking world.²⁵⁰ This is not the place to expand on German or Swiss artists, only the group Schleuser.net is particularly interesting. In their own words, Schleuser.net is “a lobby organisation for commercial enterprises active in the market segment of undocumented cross-border traffic in people. Schleuser.net was set up in 1998 – initially as schlepper.org – to ... and to work on improving the image of the people known as traffickers and smugglers’.”²⁵¹ The coincidence with the concept of *Border Crossing Services* is remarkable. Schleuser.net have also used the example of the positive connotations of “Fluchthelfer” in the BRD (Federal Republic of Germany) before 1989, versus the negative ones of “trafficker” and “smuggler” after 1989. They have developed projects in different directions to Krenn and Ressler’s aforementioned project in 2001. Yet the striking conceptual coincidence is indicative of the emphasis on migration activism in the German-speaking political art field.²⁵²

Something interesting for an external observer especially about the output of the politically engaged Austrian art scene is the quantity of text produced, whether printed or published online. This tendency becomes more obvious from the late 1990s onwards, when the internet became a broadly accessible platform and tool for the presentation, networking and publicity of some significant organizations and initiatives. One could name here the Public Netbase (Institute for New Culture Technologies), basis wien, IG Kultur Österreich, and, indeed, the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp).²⁵³ Their output varied from online platforms, web and printed publications, research projects, conferences in Austria and abroad, to involvement in art projects production. They played an important role for the politically engaged

art scene by conceiving and trying out new forms of (self-)organization, collectivity, networking, production, communication and critique of political art.

At the end of the 1990s - early 2000 the interest in collective artistic and cultural projects dealing with migration and racisms culminated. One could mention further examples such as the projects of the temporary, project-based formations of *Dezentrale Kunst* (Eva Dertschei, Carlos Toledo, Ulrike Müller, 1999-2000) and *Dezentrale Medien* (Eva Dertschei, Carlos Toledo, Petja Dimitrova and Borjana Ventzislova in cooperation with the NGO Initiative Minderheiten, 2003), as well as projects in the frame of the *Soho in Ottakring* festival in Vienna, established in 1999.²⁵⁴

The national parliamentary elections of October 2000 gave the nationalist FPÖ party of Jörg Haider an impressive 27%. During the months right after, people from the cultural field engaged in direct political action protesting against official policies of xenophobia and racism. Such policies had been promoted by the extreme right already for years.²⁵⁵ It is interesting to refer here to a view expressed by art critic Christian Kravagna back in 1995. According to Kravagna, the problems of foreigners in Austria, of refugees' rights to asylum, of (il)legal refugee status – the entire “Ausländerfrage” – was kept at the centre of internal political discourses from the summer of 1993. That is, since the government had tightened the Austrian immigration laws. While these issues had preoccupied political life in most West European countries since 1989, Kravagna maintained that the severe immigration measures in Austria primarily served agendas of internal political balances. The governing parties' coalitions saw Haider's rising popularity as a threat. In responding they let themselves be dragged into more extreme right positions and policies in order to stop voters from leaking to Haider.

What one could infer from Kravagna's point is that for all the sincere engagement of art and cultural producers with anti-racist and migration issues, they were partly trapped in a vicious circle. Any public attention they could attract to those matters could unwittingly fuel a debate triggered and sustained by political opportunism, for which the “Ausländerfrage” was exploited. Eventually, if artists consciously addressed that aspect too, the discourse could anyway lean foremost towards the problems of Austrians, rather than of foreigners.

The 1990s had also seen an increasing activity from social and/or political activist initiatives and NGOs, old and new. Cultural programs and cooperation with artists constituted an ever more important part of the activities of many of them. For instance, *Wochenklausur* often turned to more or less broadly accepted social, humanitarian or Christian organizations such as Caritas or in the Salzburg project the initiative *Hoffnung Konkret*. Krenn and Ressler, working together or separately, sought their contacts mostly in self-organized and/or leftist initiatives, in some of which migrants played a central role.

MAIZ (AUTONOMOUS CENTER OF AND FOR MIGRANT WOMEN)

One of the latter is *maiz*, an organization formed by and for migrant women in Linz. In Table II one can read the description, mission statement, areas of interest and target groups, as they are given on the organization's website.²⁵⁶ It started in 1994-95 on the

initiative of three Brazilian women: Tania Araujo, a feminist theologian, Luzemir Caixeta, philosopher and feminist theologian, and Rubia Salgado, with an academic background in languages and literature.²⁵⁷ As determining conditions that led them to organized action they cite the following: on one side, their own personal experiences and positions as migrant women in Europe and, on the other, particularly in Austria, the migrant women's confrontation with racism and the exceptionally degrading living and working conditions.²⁵⁸ Many of them cleaners, sex-workers, babysitters or housewives, they seemed to have no better future prospects. Such restricted horizons originated in their limited rights whether as legal or illegal migrants, dependency on employers or spouses and often poor education. As women of color, many of these reasons linked to sexual and racial discrimination they experienced, both in their countries of origin and in Europe. Especially for sex-workers, on whom a great part of the work of maiz concentrates, their main problems stem from social discrimination and taboos around their work, which force them into social marginalization and invisibility.

Maiz started with informal meetings held with Latin American women and soon paid particular attention to migrant sex-workers. Within a few years their initiative expanded significantly, offering literacy and German language courses, legal advice and support, publicity work, workshops and courses including professional orientation and self-defense, activities for the second generation, research projects, lectures, discussions, networking and, very importantly, cultural work. Within Austria maiz has evolved into a vocal and vibrant autonomous activist organization for migration and feminism.

The term "cultural work" (Kulturarbeit) in maiz also encompasses art projects. It includes performances, exhibitions, a shop-window gallery in the old city of Linz and various collaborations with artists. In maiz cultural work is intended to contribute to political work. As Luzemir Caixeta writes:

Unsere Experimente verfolgen anti-rassistische und anti-sexistische Wirkungen und Ziele: Kulturarbeit bietet uns dabei eine „Vermittlungsform“ von politischen Forderungen. Letztendlich wollen wir die politischen und auch kulturpolitischen Rahmenbedingungen verändern: rechtliche Gleichstellung, Selbstvertretung statt Stellvertretung. Politische Bildungsarbeit steht in engem Zusammenhang mit unseren Tätigkeiten im Kulturbereich, *denn im Rahmen dieser Arbeit entwickeln wir die Konzepte und Prozesse, die wiederum als Kulturarbeit realisiert werden.*²⁵⁹ [my emphasis]

In maiz, participation of migrant women from the conceptualization down to the presentation of cultural projects is indispensable. A concept of "anthropophagischer Protagonismus" ("cannibalistic protagonism," my translation) encapsulates the perception and importance of participation in maiz's cultural work. It combines legacies of Latin American literary and artistic traditions surrounding cultural "anthropophagism," with the demands for equal social and political rights for foreign women in Europe.²⁶⁰ Projects in which art was employed for publicity and political education included, for instance, the exhibition-performance *PEEP-SHOW einmal*

anders (Linz, 1996-97), which confronted visitors with the situation of migrant sex workers in Austria.²⁶¹ MAIZ AIRLINES in 1996-97 was an exhibition designed as an interactive installation on the themes of international sex tourism, trafficking and forced prostitution of women.²⁶² A project in which the participation of migrant women was more explicitly visible in the production process and the presented outcomes was *Kartographische Eingriffe* in 2001, in collaboration with Klub Zwei. It dealt with migrant women in public spaces, included workshops, an exhibition and public discussions. Questions that were handled revolved around possibilities of and impediments to the participation, visibility, and transgression of barriers in public spaces. Eventually, the making of urban spaces one's own. Fictional city-plans were produced by workshop participants, which visualized their conceptions, desires and wishes, and were presented in the exhibition. The project was repeated with new participants in other Austrian cities and in Italy and Spain.

Generally speaking, there is rather little, if any, visual documentation and limited descriptive detail about individual projects on the organizations' website and in the numerous texts written by the organization's three initiators. However, in those texts, where ideas, principles, practices and goals of maiz are narrated, one can sometimes see how the authors get their accounts to enact, by its narrative and textual means, the "anthropophagischer Protagonismus" that the concepts and practices of participatory cultural work in maiz stand for.

Maiz as an organization and its initiators and members individually have cooperated or contributed in the production and/or presentation of projects by Martin Krenn (e.g., *Border Crossing Services*, *City Views*), Klub Zwei (*Kartographische Eingriffe*), Dezentrale Medien (presentation of *herein.at* at the shop-window gallery, 2001) and by other artists or artists-activists from various disciplines. Such contacts and cooperation are particularly significant for this chapter. They are indicative of a local environment of cultural activism, within which migration and anti-racism are prominent discourses, and co-operations a favored way of working. In this context it is easy to imagine that the practices of different agents inform one another, leading to mutual exchange and confrontation.

FROM POLITICS TO ART

In the introduction I mentioned that two major aspects in the "problem" of migrants in Austria (and other EU countries at the time to various manners and degrees) were, firstly, that migrants were not given access to social and political rights preserved for native Austrian citizens. Secondly, that they were denied the right to speak for themselves and present their cases in front of authorities, and in political and public debates.²⁶³ In that sense, the participatory or collaborative forms of activist art projects seemed to render possible in the domain of art or by means of art, what was not allowed to be possible in "real" life.

In Part I I maintained that in long-term and process-based art projects the articulation of the process (say, the construction and sequence of concepts, relations and events that together comprise the project) remain in time in the form of narrations. These would include verbal and visual narrations articulated by the artists or others

involved, whether in “official” narrations as in projects’ publications, or in any secondary, “unofficial” renderings as in conversations, art reviews and so on. Here I am limiting the object of analysis only to “official” narrations.

For the discussion of art activism on migration in this chapter a central question regarding the narrative form of projects refers to the formation of subjects: subjects articulating the project’s narrations, but also subjects formed in, and/or by means of, the narrated projects. In other words, who, in what capacity and by what means becomes an acting and speaking subject? Who is talking and who is talked about in projects? Eventually, these questions go part and parcel with the object of enquiry: is it about the problem of foreigners (Ausländerfrage) or about the foreigners’ problems? How are participation and collaboration processes articulated structurally in artistic projects, and how are the participatory/collaborative projects of art activism articulated in their narrations? Do the structures of participation and/or collaboration proposed by activist art projects produce concepts and narratives in which power structures of “real” life are challenged and reinterpreted?²⁶⁴

In the last question stakes and priorities from political life are transferred to art. By which I mean that the demand for the participation of migrant subjects in political discourses was transferred to art, in the form of the migrants’ participation as subjects both in production processes and resulting re-presentations of art projects. Stakes and criteria from political life became regulatory criteria for both artists structuring their projects, as well as for art critics and theorists. Consequently, a certain activist “political correctness” (participation as the manifestation of inclusion) was emphasized as a criterion for re-presentations produced in art projects. A “political correctness” that was counter or compensatory to the unjust or missing re-presentations of migrant minorities in political life.

This movement from the political to the artistic, with reference mostly to how subject positions are formed and power structures addressed, has played an important role in the field of activist art theory and critique. It has opened a great terrain of discourse, where political and philosophical ideas by theorists such as Hardt and Negri, Deleuze and Guattari, Mouffe, Laclau and others have been processed and reworked.²⁶⁵ In this context it sometimes seemed that attention to conceptual and theoretical analysis of artistic projects pushed aside the consideration that form itself operates in its own ways on the audience’s perception. So an artistic decision that might appear as politically just – and in that sense “politically correct” – may not really operate as intended when rendered into visual, verbal or other forms in projects. Or it may not resonate with other meanings that the same, selected form itself might produce.

In what follows, I will approach the three case studies by examining the formation of subject positions and confrontation with power structures, as I see them derived from structural, visual or verbal articulations of their projects’ narrations. Eventually, the discussion will conclude with using aesthetic criteria or, to put it differently, aesthetic effects as criteria to consider the effects of political art activism.

THE ARTICULATION OF PARTICIPATION

According to WochenKlausur's approach to art-activism, the artists' skills in finding new and unorthodox ways to deal with problems is a response to dead ends to which the orthodox, professional approaches of social workers and politicians often come up against. Thus WochenKlausur emphatically calls artists to turn from formalist questions and art objects, towards socio-political questions and interventions. In terms of intentions and content, this proposal seems to aim at shifting attention away from self-absorbed aesthetics and autonomous art, towards a socio-political arena. Interestingly enough, in the reception of WochenKlausur especially during its early years, discussions constantly returned to questions of what was the art in their practices. This is testified to not only when reading critical reviews about WochenKlausur. It is most strongly evident in texts written by the group's most central figures, Wolfgang Zinggl and Pascalle Jeannée. It also covers eight out of nine of the F.A.Q. on the group's website and in their general publication.²⁶⁶ By and large, in any presentation of WochenKlausur especially during the 1990s, elaboration on their philosophy and methodology of *art-activism* played a protagonist role.²⁶⁷

The effectiveness of WochenKlausur's projects relied on the creative thinking of artists especially when they work together. Consequently, the protagonists in the interventions collaboratively produced as art are above all else the artists themselves. They are the central acting subjects in the projects' implementation. They are also the speaking and writing subjects recounting the projects' stories. These stories provide WochenKlausur's perspective on the confrontation with each project's issue at stake.

As for target groups worked for and about, these are chosen by the artists' team. In Graz these were the refugees seeking possibility of work and in Salzburg the foreigners in the deportation-detention centre. WochenKlausur persistently lobbied for them and effectively helped them within the framework of each project's planned interventions. During the Salzburg project WochenKlausur's decisions about what improvements should be targeted regarding the detention conditions were based primarily on past and present inmates' recommendations. However, in the projects' "official narrations," members of the target groups themselves hardly ever appear as team participants or anyhow as acting subjects beyond activities delegated to them by WochenKlausur, such as the production of "social sculptures" in Graz. In WochenKlausur's general methodology and practice of art activism the target groups are implicitly positioned as *de facto* socially weak and politically dependant upon help from Austrians. Of course in cases like the Salzburg detainees, active participation in the art project would be probably too much to ask.

The above approach to target groups sometimes leads to paradoxical situations. For instance in the Salzburg project, amongst the most crucial improvements for inmates was that contact possibilities with external social services and relief organizations were made possible. Inmates could hence receive adequate information about their legal and political rights, and in a language they could understand. In that sense, the intervention provided detainees with the means to communicate their positions to external organizations and authorities, as well as tackle the language barrier problem. This means that, while the project enabled the detainees' official speech in "real" life

practices, members of the target group are nowhere mentioned as being given the symbolical or practical initiative or voice in the enabling process.²⁶⁸

In order to speedily achieve the projects' target, WochenKlausur's approach to art activism strategies has been to exploit systematically, but in that way also *to confirm*, the status and hierarchies of existing structures. The latter varied from the cultural capital of art institutions, the established status of Christian or social relief organizations, to the politicians' decision-making power and the media's pressure power.²⁶⁹ Thus the hierarchies and conditions under which socio-political deficiencies and the marginalization of social groups have come about in the first place are neither questioned, nor re-imagined. Therefore, also, the success of some interventions as single cases – e.g., creating possibilities of work in Graz for seven out of thousands of migrants – are likely to operate as exceptions again confirming the rule. They might even facilitate the political and legal authorities in closing their loopholes, rather than setting examples for possible alternatives. This is a critique WochenKlausur has heard before.²⁷⁰ It is met in critics' writings, and is given a response in WochenKlausur's F.A.Q.. There, the group acknowledges the above criticism. It responds by arguing, firstly, that eventually it is the state that enables the improvements, since the art institutions that invite WochenKlausur are state funded. Secondly, that it is better to do a little something instead of nothing, with the excuse of one's powerlessness against the deep and complicated roots of socio-political problems.²⁷¹

Critical and self-critical voices in the discourse of engagement with anti-racism, minorities and migrants were anyway heard on the German-speaking, political art scene.²⁷² While soon after the mid-1990s the above critical reflections were spreading, new groupings and networks of activists were simultaneously developing. They were involved in anti-globalization, anti-racist, environmental and other campaigns. Not surprisingly, the perspectives and practices developed by younger artists and activists responded both to state policies, as well as to what was considered by some as problematic aspects either in earlier or in other art-activist approaches.²⁷³ Martin Krenn and Oliver Ressler, and their project *Border Crossing Services*, could be considered examples here.

Martin Krenn & Oliver Ressler In publications, websites, brochures and other resources where their projects are made public, the content focuses exclusively on the social or political issue at stake. Presentation or explanation of their personal approaches and strategies to political art or art-activism are provided separately, for instance, in interviews. Even though they are not a permanent artists' duo and their approaches are not identical, they seem to share some common perspectives. Art forms and methods they choose for each project are meant to be tailor-made to the particularities of the selected issue.²⁷⁴ Both tend to address huge issues such as capitalism, state ideologies, globalization. In other words, issues that underlie the socio-economic and political interests and structures that lead, amongst others, to the marginalization of minorities such as migrants.²⁷⁵ They are also self-conscious about hierarchies produced during the process of making participatory/collaborative art projects, as well as in the (re-)presentations of such projects' presented outcomes.²⁷⁶ The consideration of all the above points can be seen in *Border Crossing Services*.

As the project aimed at opening up terms such as “smuggler” or “trafficker” to positive interpretations, the various forms in which the project was realized staged the voices - and hence interpretations - of individuals or organizations on the theme of crossing the EU borders - German and Austrian in particular. This is evident in the juxtaposition of opinions by various agents, the participatory or collaborative approach during the production process and in the project’s concrete outcomes - brochure, video and exhibition. As said earlier, the artists operate largely as editors and microphone holders. They set the theme and decide on the format that serves best to stage invited contributors. This is the case with the texts contributed by anti-racist groups and migrant organizations in *Neues Grenzblatt*.²⁷⁷ Accordingly, the video is structured by alternating extracts from interviews from both “camps”: representatives of migrant and German activists, as well as of military and border police forces. The former are clearly favored in terms of the time allocated to them, yet extensive pieces from all interviews are featured. One may notice the emphasis on featuring individuals who are migrants and activists. For the exhibition in Lüneburg, the intention was that the artists’ and the students’ contributions should be as horizontally structured as possible.

The organizations and initiatives approached and staged are mostly autonomous, “alternative” ones to those featured in WochenKlausur’s Graz and Salzburg interventions. They are not the established social or Christian relief organizations like Caritas. Rather they are the smaller, self-organized and mostly leftist activist formations that made their presence more strongly felt from the mid-1990s onwards. Hence, the selection of participants and/or collaborators also expressed the intention of organizing oneself on “alternative” terrains to those provided by existing social and political institutions.²⁷⁸ While in *Neues Grenzblatt* the narrations contained collective perspectives and goals, in the video it is the narrations of personal experiences and perspectives of individuals, who are connected to related activist groupings.

Summing up the above points about *Border Crossing Services*, one can say that the organization and structures of the project’s participatory/collaborative methods brought members of the groups concerned (migrants, Fluchthelfern, Austrian authorities) in juxtaposition to one another. They are presented as speaking and acting subjects, with an emphasis on providing a platform mainly for those usually not heard and seen in public discourses. At the same time, social and political organizations that were invited to contribute to the project represented an alternative to mainstream socio-political institutions.

Let me remind us here of the departure point of this discussion: namely the transfer of models of participation from political practices to art activist practices, so as to render possible in the domain of art or by using art, something barred in the domain of political life. In the two case studies so far, WochenKlausur and Krenn and Ressler, one could observe the following: on the one hand, WochenKlausur opted for taking advantage of the capital and status of established hierarchies and capitals, as it found them already constituted in cultural, social and political institutions and the media. In this way, it managed to make possible specific practical improvements that otherwise seemed impossible. On the other hand, Krenn and Ressler did not render possible any practical changes previously regarded as impossible. However, by staging the marginalized voices and self-organized groupings, they rendered possible *the thinking of the possibility* of another process, other institutions, other structures

and hierarchies. Ideally, they rendered possible the thought of rendering possible today's impossibilities as a rule, rather than as exception.

Nevertheless, if one takes some more time to look at the migrant subjects, as they are presented to be presenting themselves, the aesthetic articulations of the artists' political intentions may lead to representations at more than one level, sometimes with an impact diverging from that most likely intended by Krenn and Ressler. I take here as example particularly the video of *Border Crossing Services*. The artists invited those people usually not heard in mainstream political and public discourses on migration. These people are given subject positions, they speak for themselves and present how they act for themselves (activists) in "real" life. The story of Grace Latigo summarizes a central point that seems to underlie some important formal decisions about the presentation of narratives in the video. Latigo recounts how in a gathering of the campaign *Kein Mensch Ist Illegal*, run back then by the Evangelical diocese, someone came to her and said: "we will speak for you." She was sitting there and thought, "you don't have to speak for me, I can speak for myself, but you simply don't let me speak." So she stood up and said, "Good evening, my name is Grace Latigo and I can speak for myself! I have been illegal for seven years." And further she explains, "naturally that set off a huge chaos and I had to explain to the people why it was important that they let me speak. So first I did it for myself, but when I make my case public then I am thinking of others who are affected, as I can better relate to their position." Watching Latigo speaking to the camera, she definitely seems capable of speaking. She is dynamic, eloquent and fluent in German.

The artists present the individuals by their name and the capacity in which they are interviewed – thus participate – in the video. Their private names, real stories, real fears, experiences, claims and struggles are made public. On the one hand, this is a "politically corrective," almost compensatory movement for official Austrian politics. The politics that leave foreigners invisible and voiceless, through policies that illegalize them, keep them financially weak and bar them from German language classes. These are the very policies that consequently feed the public's prejudice against foreigners, as the latter hide from the police, look poor and uneducated. However, on the other hand, in the video, by standing up as private subjects for their social and political rights in a public discourse, they are also brought to a position that exposes and renders them vulnerable. This remains the case, even if the artists may wish to show processes of individual empowerment (Latigo, Effson Effa) and to address the partial interpretation of "traffickers" as criminals. By bringing the private individuals to the foreground regarding a collective, social problem, they turn them into representative figures on the issue (migrants' legal, social, political condition in the EU). While the persons talk about private facts, they become examples for a broad socio-political issue and, thus, operate as public symbols.²⁷⁹ Indeed, the interviewees are most likely conscious of that, as Latigo's words quoted earlier demonstrate. Anyhow, brought to this position, the private individual that becomes a public symbol, becomes something that exceeds itself, the private self. Thus it is once again submitted to the same public, socio-political discourse.

Now let me return to where I started, the transfer of participation models from political practices to artistic practices, and the formation of subject positions. The

political activists' "politically correct" movement seemed to grant the members of the disenfranchised minority visibility and a voice to speak for themselves, so as to turn external representation and determination to self-presentation and self-empowerment. Nonetheless, following the aforementioned track of thought, the presentation of the self might easily slip into the exposition of private individuals' operating as symbols. This serves a larger cause. But as private persons renders them vulnerable, not least because they appear as individuals to oppose something as enormous as governments and state apparatuses, elected and run by the local majorities.

Still, these individuals do not stand for helplessness. They embody and represent self-empowerment. They are also associated with organized activism groups represented in *Neues Grenzblatt* and in printed materials available in the Lüneburg exhibition. As the artists' framework hosts the narratives of their real stories of migration, real facts and figures, real claims, the language used is direct and literal. Like the language conventionally expected from official political discourse about public issues, rather than from the realm of metaphors, fiction and symbolic language conventionally attributed to artists. This is actually quite interesting, as at the centre of *Border Crossing Services* stand the various positive and negative connotations of the terms "Fluchthelfer," "trafficker" and "smuggler," for which the artists maintain that the state cultivates prejudices through partiality and undeclared interests. For instance, authorities requiring of taxi drivers to check papers of foreigners who board their vehicles in dirty clothes, because they look as if they could be illegal migrants who have just arrived from across some border.²⁸⁰ Or personal documents of non-Western-looking foreigners on public transport are often scrutinized, conveying the impression to other passengers that non-Western-looking foreigners are more often than others likely to be suspects of some sort.

Now, regardless whether one subscribes fullheartedly to the content of the artists' criticism against state authorities, policies and ways of treating people, there is something problematic about the formal means, about the aesthetics of fact and fiction there, about how the critique is performed in the narrative formats of *Border Crossing Services*. Namely, the artists seem to mobilize fact to counter fiction - or narratives of facts to counter fictional narratives. To be more precise, they mobilize factual narratives – such as people with their real names, witnesses of their own lives, real stories, real problems. And they employ a language drawing heavily from documentary (in the video), from news media (direct mailing brochure) and from political protest (direct mailing, flyers and brochures of activist organizations in the exhibition) - thus a language standing for truth. They do that to counter partial narratives cultivated in real-time politics – most notably the constructed negative image of illegalized migrants and their helpers. Even more, it becomes manifest how partial, contingent and manipulative institutional interpretations can be, thus very close to fictionally constructed (e.g., "Fluchthelfer" vs. "trafficker"). However, in this way they risk rendering their own argumentation and position problematic in a twofold manner.

On the one hand, I see a vicious circle being created: if the narrative formats and language of fact from a depository of political and news media are mobilized by the artists to demonstrate that politicians in real-time politics and media are in fact cultivating partial narratives, then the artists put their own argumentation at the

risk of being turned on its head. This is because they employ in their argumentation the very narrative means and ways of those – politicians, news media – whose argumentational content they have proven unreliable. In doing so, they undermine, in turn, the reliability of their own argumentation.

On the other, there seems to be an underlying identification and equalization of a series of binary oppositions: fact and fiction, with truth and lie, with justice and injustice. It runs through the narrative construction of the entire *Border Crossing Services* project. The binary oppositions are given articulation in a narrative context and the language of activism in the 1990s. The speaking and acting migrant subject is identified as an “activist.” Processes of self-empowerment, understood as processes of assuming control over one’s being as a self-presented in speech and act subject, are channeled into political protests formatted in schemata of an alternative political scene - Western leftist activism. After 1989, the political Left urgently needed to re-conceptualize and reorganize itself, its causes and targets. In laying down some common transnational causes, leftist activists in EU countries derived the argumentation, inter alia, from supporting the rights of the new classes of the socio-politically suppressed and disenfranchised. In some cases referred to as a precariat due to the precarious conditions of, for instance, their legal existence and subsistence, these classes included also the new immigrants.²⁸¹ That was a very important step, as left politics stand for social justice. However, at the level of the representation of socio-political struggle, which in a wide sense is what art activism does, a danger lies in formatting “other” people’s struggles to fit “local” people’s political thinking. In *Border Crossing Services* the conceptualization schemata and aesthetics of resistance and oppositionality – into which the struggles of migrant subjects are inserted - appear somewhat narrowly formatted to the local leftist alternatives. These subjects are different in many ways to the migrant subjects. This is not least because for the latter the Western states and their governments were not necessarily ideological political opponents from the outset. For many they represented the wished-for lands of economic opportunity or political shelter.

As a consequence, while the intention might be to nuance the local political activist movement, in order to adjust their causes to the representation of new subjects, a danger lies in unwittingly adjusting the represented subject instead. By which I mean leaving unattended cultural and conceptual nuances within what becomes a generalized migrant (activist) subject. Such nuances, as I will soon try to show in the example of maiz, might produce different articulations of protest, as well as of individual participations in protest. Articulations that may express an-Other logic of existence, Other subject positions and ways of assuming them. To my understanding, activism and participation in maiz re-present such a fundamentally different perspective on protest and self-empowerment, articulated in, and by means of, artistic projects and narrations.

Let me still remain briefly at *Border Crossing Services*, and particularly at the artists as subjects-authors and their central goal of rethinking the terms “smuggler” and “trafficker.” Juxtaposing them to the positive connotations of “Flunchthelfer,” they proved the official state interpretations that legitimize or il-legitimize the same activity to be dependent upon governments’ interests.²⁸² I would view this issue as belonging to the issue of foreigners in a West-European state, an issue perceived by

the authorities as a problem, leading to strict policies and institutional racisms that cause, in turn, problems to foreigners. The decision to pose as the project's central goal a question, i.e. the "Ausländerfrage," which represents the Austrian majority's problem rather than the migrants' problems, can in a certain sense be regarded as "politically correct" and "corrective." It could be viewed as "politically correct" in terms of political art-activism, because the representation of minorities and their problems by members of the dominant majority and on the latter's initiative, could lead to patronizing representation politics. It would be "politically corrective" for Austrian/EU internal state policies, compensating for unjust and discriminatory, immigration policies.²⁸³

Now, if one combines the above point regarding which subject's problem (the Austrian majority/the migrants' minorities) is represented in the art project's goal, with the point made earlier about dangers lurking in formatting the migrant protests into the local leftist movements' oppositionality protest, one might come to some disconcerting thoughts. Namely, that the political activists' practices, as presented in the art projects' choices and aesthetics of representations, may unwittingly be enacting a parallel operation to that described by Christian Kravagna in 1995 with respect to Austrian politicians and the internal political reasons underlying the great emphasis and strictness that the government was showing in the Ausländerfrage.²⁸⁴ To be more precise, to some extent, the strategies and handling of the problem of immigration both by the government and leftist activists operated partly as a catalyst or a vehicle for addressing their own internal political and organizational needs. In the first case, by adjusting Austrian immigration policies, politicians tried to keep voters from leaking into Jorg Haider's nationalist party. In the second case, by adjusting their programs and targets to the existence and needs of new suppressed classes – amongst which, the precariat of the sans papiers - the leftist activists tried to reinvent the causes, justification and argumentation of leftist ideologies in post-1989 Europe.

To my understanding, this redirection of the leftist movement was only to be applauded. Yet the produced narratives of an activist world in the art world of the 1990s could easily run the risk of turning on its head the aesthetics of their politics, when transferring political practices to art activism practices. By which I mean that participation, presentation, and relations of fact and fiction, do not operate in the same or equivalent ways in the domains of art and of political life. Rather, their impact on subjects, objects, audiences and "left-overs" of the produced narratives in art and in politics might prove to operate in importantly different ways.

Ja. Und wir nehmen immer mehr Platz in Anspruch. Zwischen Vernunft und einer anthropophagischen, lachenden Haltung schaffen wir uns Räume der Bewegung und des Widerstandes. (Caixeta and Salgado)²⁸⁵

Während das System unsere Sprache einnimmt und die Ästhetik (Form) von der Ethik (Inhalt) und den inhaltlichen Strategien trennt, integrieren wir und machen den Zusammenhang zwischen Ästhetik, Ethik und Strategien sichtbar. Wir durchbrechen Stereotype, bringen das Element des Grotesken ein, der Provokation, des Ungehorsams, des Aus-dem-Rahmen-Fallens, des konstanten Bruchs. Als Mittel verwenden wir Performance, Ironie, Parodie, Satire und Fiktion. Ästhetik und Sprache, die sich permanent außerhalb des

Maiz

Rahmens und der Vorgaben stellen. (Caixeta, 2000) (English translation, app. III.3) ²⁸⁶

Art, politics, anthropophagism. What kind of logic brings these three together? Art in maiz is used for political work. As part of their cultural work it provides a space within which concepts and processes for the transgression of political and social barriers can be refined and tried out in projects.²⁸⁷ For instance in *Kartographische Eingriffe* ideas and processes concerning the conception and occupation of public spaces by migrant women were developed during workshops and given visual form for the exhibition. Through the exhibition presentation of their fictional city maps in several gallery spaces, the women symbolically also occupied these public spaces of culture.²⁸⁸ According to performance theorist Marty Huber, sceptical critics who characterized the women's works "artistically uninteresting" were missing the point: "...geht es in diesem Fall überhaupt um Kunst, oder handelt es nicht vielmehr um eine Penetration des Kunstraumes?"²⁸⁹ (English translation, app. III.4)

Various forms of artistic expression are employed, whether performative, visual or literary. As Caixeta writes in the second quote used above here as epigraph, they apply "irony, parody, satire, fiction." As, for example, when in 2000 the maiz Samba School demonstrated against the Austrian government. The women were marching, drumming and dancing, wearing grotesque pink hearts on their chests reading: "Österreich wir lieben dich!" And on their backs: "Und wir werden dich nie verlassen!"²⁹⁰ (English translation, app.III.5) Or like in the cooking performances they made in the project space Transpublic and in the old market of Linz.²⁹¹ The women cooked under the motto of Anthropophagism.²⁹² Representation, metaphor and parody are chosen over mere direct presentation of factual information, when the migrant women themselves participate in such public manifestations. A justification given for this choice sounds close to what I maintained earlier regarding the vulnerable positions that persons are brought into, when they expose themselves as private individuals exemplifying political, public issues:

Die Ergebnisse [i.e. of maiz cultural work], die nicht als Endprodukte, sondern als Teil eines Prozesses gesehen werden, können dann in der Öffentlichkeit präsentiert werden. Hier können auch wir auftreten. Nicht als einzelne Personen, sondern als Figuren, als „Personae“ einer fiktionalen Darstellung. Hier können wir unsere Anliegen thematisieren... *Es ist eine Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, die als kulturelle Betätigung realisiert wird und die aus der politischen Bildungsarbeit entspringt. Eine Arbeit, die uns sichtbar macht, ohne uns persönlich zu exponieren.*²⁹³ (my emphasis; English translation, app.III.6)

Participation and "protagonism" of migrant women in artistic and cultural projects are central concepts in maiz. According to Rubia Salgado, process-based, participatory work serves in twofold ways: "... we are convinced that within this type of process we can also carry out work on political education. On the other hand, we want to position ourselves as creative subjects in the field of symbolisms."²⁹⁴ "Protagonism" means that the women – be they cleaners, sex-workers, housewives or academics – are not

given a stand by “members of the dominant society” to express themselves.²⁹⁵ Rather, they find the ways to conceptualize and construct their own subject position, and strategically select collaborations with artists, provided they can co-determine their roles.

Following all the above, maiz’ approach to the use of participatory practices in political art activism enacts a reverse movement to the approach of WochenKlausur and Krenn and Ressler. While the latter transferred forms of participation from political practices to art-activism practices (e.g., active participation in public discourses about their rights), maiz transfers forms of participation from artistic and cultural practices to its political activism practices. This is done through both form and content, and in this respect brings to mind Caixeta’s quote in the epigraph. To paraphrase her sayings, the dominant “system” that they find themselves both within, and confronted with, as migrant women, weakens them by taking their language and disintegrating the coherence of aesthetics, ethics and strategies expressed in the content. Indeed, in maiz the point seems to be not only to express their demands and to find an appropriate stand to express them from. More than that, the aesthetics of performing the claims’ utterance, the language in which the claim is articulated, all these seem to be consciously and culturally integrated. In the following I will try to show how indeed also in the narrative of protagonist participation in cultural work, one can see how by means of art a coherence is being created between aesthetics, ethics and strategies. Thus “in the field of symbolisms,” they create a language of protest that has their own distinct aesthetics corresponding to their political work. The concept of “anthropophagischer Protagonismus” encapsulates this strategy: “Wir fressen euch schon seit sehr langer Zeit. Jetzt bist du dran. Schon meine indianischen Vorfahren haben euch verspeist, nicht viele von euch, aber doch einige: die braven kämpferischen bewundernswerten unter euch. Anthropophagie. Ja, das Fressen von Menschen. ... Um sich das Bewunderte anzueignen.”²⁹⁶ (English translation, app. III.7)

The concept of cannibalistic protagonism is taken from the so-called Movimento Antropofágico (Anthropophagic Movement) and the Manifesto Antropofágico written by the Brazilian author Oswald de Andrade in 1928. Andrade thought of the adaptations of African and Polynesian art by Picasso and other European artists as a distortion of the “exotic.”²⁹⁷ He confronted this distortion by his own “anthropophagic” concept. He proposed the absorption of various influences of European modernism by Brazilian culture, incorporating their strengths and resulting in a mixture that would correspond to a Brazilian hybrid culture. This concept was inspired by Francis Picabia, temporary editor of the French magazine *Cannibale*. While the term “cannibale” had been used before with reference to the European avant-gardes, for example to describe that “Surrealism ha[d] eaten Dada and ha[d] digested it” ... and “the qualities of the devoured had entered into the strengthened body of the survivor.”²⁹⁸

Andrade’s anthropophagic concept has been taken up by the Brazilian initiators of maiz and transformed into “anthropophagischer Protagonismus.” This is not the first time that Andrade’s concept resurfaces in Brazilian culture. Most notably in the 1960s it was taken as conceptual departure point in Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica’s work.²⁹⁹ By turning to Andrade the maiz women draw from the depository of their own culture. Not, however, in search of distinct, non-Western cultural elements. Rather, in

search of a way of assimilating Western elements as their own. Producing a synthesis that is “ethically” based on strategically returning to the West what the latter had made out of the aesthetics and politics of the “exotic.” Thus cultural assimilation, which is a permanent expectation of migrants in Europe whether officially admitted or not – not, when it sounds “politically incorrect” for those Western societies that propagate multiculturalism – is acted out in reverse. It is not the other’s culture that gets absorbed by the dominant. To the contrary, reading Salgado and Caixeta: “Diesmal haben *wir* jedoch die Rolle der Protagonistinnen übernommen: *wir* assimilieren euch, *wir* drohen euch, *wir* fressen euch.” And elsewhere: “Migrantinnen als Protagonistinnen bedeutet eine ethisch-politische Positionierung, die sich in einer angemessenen, aber dissonanten Ethik ausdrückt.”³⁰⁰ (English translation, app. III.8)

In the production process and the performative events of participatory projects, the ethics and aesthetics of cannibalistic protagonism are expressed in the structure of participation, when, for instance, migrant women remap the city. And simultaneously they are expressed visually and performatively, for instance, in the satire and parody of the visuals of sex- and housework as in the demonstration and cooking events. As already mentioned earlier, in the narrations of their cultural work the maiz authors do not usually provide detailed documentation of projects. Instead, the ethics, aesthetics and strategies of “cannibalistic protagonism” are transferred and enacted on the page by literary, narrative and linguistic means.

Anthropo- A most pertinent example for this is the text “Anthropophagischer Protagonismus”
phagischer by Rubia Salgado and Luzenir Caixeta. The text is included here in Appendix IV.
Protagonismus The concept and strategies of cannibalistic protagonism are presented by Salgado and Caixeta in the text, as well as by means of the text. Throughout, the authors enact their “cannibalistic protagonism” on the reader in multiple ways. Let me start with some literary means and then move to textual and linguistic ones. They explicitly declare Andrade’s “Manifesto Antropofágo” as their source of inspiration. What this cultural anthropophagism is all about, they do not only explain, but they enact it in the ways in which they appropriate Kafka and his literature. Their text opens with a brothel scene, where men meet women. One woman is of colour. She is referred to as “Äffin” (female ape) and initially dismissed by a client. Hovering around him more than the others, she eventually convinces him to take her into a separee. Seducing him like this, she seems to confirm his racist and sexist stereotypes of exotic females: a cycle of degradation and fascination is set forth. The non-human creature of the Äffin is not Salgado or Caixeta’s literary construction. They appropriated the male ape from Kafka’s text “Ein Bericht für eine Akademie” (“A report for an academy”).³⁰¹ Thus they did not construct their own original parable. Rather, they appropriate a European one, the story, the characters, the words of it, but also the cultural weight of the author as both a classic and an “other” in European culture. They take all that and turn them into their own device.

Kafka is amongst the classics of German literature. But he himself was a Jew living in Prague, where German was the dominant language under the Austro-Hungarian empire. Thus Kafka was bilingual and basically wrote in German. Actually a characteristic of his literary style is that he sometimes used German words in equivocal ways, puzzling translators who have later tried to transfer his meanings to

other languages. Thus he plays with and within the dominance of German language. Furthermore, according to one interpretation of “Ein Bericht für eine Akademie” the ape is a symbol for Jewish people feeling like the “others” of Europe. Though not a confirmed interpretation, an argument employed for it is that Kafka’s text was first published in the German monthly *Der Jude* (*The Jew*), along with another story, “Schakale und Araber” (“Jackals and Arabs”), which can also be given interpretations relating to prejudices.³⁰² Whereas according to another interpretation, the ape shows that “identity is performance,” a constantly re-enacted self-presentation.³⁰³ Both interpretations of the parable, whether about European racism and the “other” as the other side of the self (Jewish-Christian traditions), or about identity being constructed in performance, fit into the cultural activism concepts and strategies of maiz’ women migrants in Europe.

To leave the author and the potential interpretations of his cultural identity and literary intentions, the ape in Kafka’s story is an animal caught in an exotic African country and brought to Europe. His report to an academy is about his transformation to human-being. To survive in Europe as “free ape,” he saw two possibilities: “Zoologischer Garten oder Varieté. Exotisches Tier oder bewundernswert assimiliertes und angepasstes Tier” (see app. III.9 for all English translations in this paragraph). The ape learned to imitate humans so well that he claims to have forgotten what it used to be like, when he used to be an ape. Nonetheless, it is for his “äffisches Vorleben“ and his admirable assimilation into human culture that he has been invited by the academy to talk. His speech perfectly imitates an academic style. Salgado and Caixeta appropriate his speech, his subject-voice, his protagonist character, his talk’s meanings and wording (direct citation). Most significantly, Salgado and Caixeta draw the parallel between the ape’s parable and the exotic migrant woman’s reality: “Anpassung und Prädestinierung, Stereotypen zu entsprechen ... Rassismus und Exotismus ... Degradation und Faszination ... exotisches Tier oder bewundernswert assimiliertes und angepasstes Tier.” This way or the other, “Prädikat ändert sich je nach Situation. Das Subjekt bleibt jedoch gleich: ein Wesen nicht menschlicher Natur.” For the exotic animal or woman, the dominant criteria remain the same: “Hier herrschen zwei Maximen: Anpassung und Prädestinierung, Stereotypen zu entsprechen.”

One could extract two key words here: “stereotypes” and “assimilation.” But in Salgado and Caixeta’s text these concepts do not work in the ways of Kafka and his ape. Rather, Kafka’s classic literary status, and the meanings and ways of his text are eaten up and digested by the maiz women (“Wir fressen euch...der braven, kämpferischen, bewunderten Eigenschaften wegen. Um sich das Bewunderte anzueignen.” Just as in Andrade’s cannibalistic concept: after European avant-garde art had adapted and distorted the “Exotic” of African and Polynesian art, Brazilian hybrid culture in turn absorbed the thereof derived European cultural constructions. It incorporated their strengths and resulted into a mixed art tailored to Brazilian hybrid culture. So also in Salgado and Caixeta’s digestion of Kafka, “the qualities of the devoured ente[r] the body of the survivor.”³⁰⁴

Now let me leave Kafka and the cannibalistic literary appropriations of him that are quite performatively enacted in Salgado and Caixeta’s text. Furthermore, there

are also textual tricks and constructions. The authors start abruptly with the place, laid bare to its absolute basics: “Ein Bordell, nichts besonders, ein Bordell eben. Im Bordell einige Frauen. Einige Männer, Gäste.” (English translation, app. III.10) At first they use short and simple phrases with nouns, verbs, adverbs, without any adjectives or attributive adjectives. No nuanced characters or detailed descriptions are offered, apart from one particular elaboration that lasts some 8-9 lines: the distinction between people we know, with whom we feel more or less familiar, and guests in a brothel paying for services. Additionally, there are no good and bad characters in this story. No victimizers and victims as there seemed to be from the start in the art activism narratives of WochenKlausur or Krenn and Ressler. And no clear-cut, universal conceptions of humanitarian or socio-political justice.

But this is where the point lies in Caixeta and Salgado's story. In situations like this, things are given expression in reverse formulations. Which is what the ape's story manifests. The woman who is different, the ape, is not wanted. So she has to try for the client more than the others (“Alle versuchen, den Kunden zu beeindrucken. Nichts Besonderes: Wettbewerb ist überall. ... Doch nach dem (wahrscheinlich) anstrengenden Umherrennen, geht er mit der von ihm als Äffin bezeichneten Frau ins Separee” (app. III.11 for all English translations in this paragraph). However, the hierarchies of dominance operate in reverse ways to their appearance. Degradation and fascination operate in supplementary rather than antithetical ways. When the authors explain this, the articulation of their text becomes more complex than before, with longer and compound words and syntax: “Die Ver-körperung der nur schein-bar wider-sprüchlichen Ver-bindung zwischen De-gradation und Faszination wird fort-gesetzt”.

And then without any introduction Kafka's extract is inserted. A free ape presents himself (“ich, freier Affe”), revealing his secret (“fügte mich”) in front of a public of male academics (see app. III.12 for all English translations in this paragraph). First person, direct speech, an un-introduced new context, and the previous object of degradation and desire (“die von ihm als Äffin bezeichneten Frau”) the only link with the present speaking subject (“Ich, freier Affe”). From the “Separee” to the “Akademie.” In the next three paragraphs (“*Rassismus und Exotismus,*” “*Möglichkeiten,*” “*Überraschung!*”) the authors introduce the binary pairs that appear contradictory, but in essence constitute mutually complimentary conditions of existence in Kafka's sarcastic parable and the migrants' real situation: “Anpassung und Prädestinierung Stereotypen zu entsprechen... Rassismus und Exotismus... Degradation und Faszination... exotisches Tier oder bewundernswert assimiliertes und angepasstes Tier.” The text simultaneously confuses and enlightens the reader. Towards the end, the binary pairs boil down to their common denominator, the subject (“Das Subjekt bleibt jedoch gleich”), and its survival strategy - “anthropophagy.”

The following two paragraphs (“*Feststellungen,*” “*Strategien*”) operate as a kind of illocutionary speech. (app. III.13 for all English translations in this paragraph) As direct speech (“wir fressen euch...”) that in a certain way enacts performatively on the reader what it says at the moment of saying it.³⁰⁵ By which I mean that the authors seem to want to linguistically affect on their addressees the unpleasant and discomfiting feeling of being aggressively and degradingly treated, threatened and hitting back. This is performed by means of the direct address (“wir fressen euch ...

Jetzt bist du dran...”), the parading terminology of sex, pain, violence and bodily parts (“Die Schmerzen, die Verwaltungen, die vorgespielten Orgasmen”), even by the metaphoric mix of the migrant women’s penetrated bodily parts with geographical terms (“Und der Boden unter meinen Füßen, alle Böden, die sie schon berührt haben, alle Wege und Stürze, Kurven und Berge”). Besides, the use of direct speech (“wir/euch”) unjustified and irritatingly identifies the reader and the women’s addressee.

To make the above point more clear about how the illocutionary speech acts enact and affect on the reader the women’s unpleasant feelings, one could juxtapose their speech to the speech of the migrants interviewed in the *Border Crossing Services* video. There, the interviewed subjects explained their situation, experiences, claims and practices to the audience in perlocutionary speech. Meaning that the intentions of the speakers, the effects they wished to cause by their utterance, would be the indirect influence on their audience after the latter had watched the film. In that sense, the speaking subjects’ intentions are placed outside the moment of their utterance. The same could be maintained generally about the narrations of participatory art practices produced by WochenKlausur and Krenn and Ressler, to the extent that some of those narrations can be characterized as speech.³⁰⁶

Let me return to Salgado and Caixeta’s text. One could go on explaining ways in which, paragraph by paragraph, they play with and attack their reader. The reader who is invariably addressed in the second person (“euch”) as the “dominant,” male, Western subject. Somewhere between parody, irony and self-sarcasm, they demonstrate the “anthropophagic” strategy with which they symbolically subvert hierarchies of cultural dominance by performing their identities: who is “eating” whom, who is hosting and who is hosted, white men, black women in the E.U.’s brothels.

Now, after doing all that, after having snared the reader with narrative and textual means and tricks, the style of the text becomes more and more sober, literal rather than literary in referring to the situation of migrant women in Europe. They describe their organization’s character, aims and practices. In the very last paragraph (“*Kämpferischer Schluss*,” see app. III.14 for all English translations in this paragraph), when they conclude with the claim for subject positions in the own struggles (“als Protagonistinnen unserer eigenen Geschichte”), and for the removal of social prejudices, racism and exploitative structures, they come quite close to the ethical principles and political claims of Krenn and Ressler (“... der ethischen Notwendigkeit, sich gegenüber ungerechten Strukturen zu empören”). However, until then, the text has manifested by means of content and form, the important differentiations between their approaches to art-activism. The concepts and forms of their participatory art practices have been transferred to a performative practice of narration and speech. Thus, they have articulated a strategy and simultaneously constructed an aesthetics that nuance and empower the subject of political protest, by making it its own. This is something that the politics of protest articulated as aesthetic strategies in the projects and narratives of the artists’ participatory activism ran the risk of missing (e.g., the activist “political correctness” of the migrant subject presenting its real self). Tending, rather, towards a cultural generalization and political narrowness of the migrant subject as political activist.

Conclusions

In conclusion, in this chapter I have tried to investigate visual and verbal forms in which narrations are rendered in art projects. This was an investigation in the articulations by means of which, as well as in which, the projects communicate their message. Firstly, it examined the constitution of the migrant as subject of the narration (narrating subject) and in the narration (narrated subject). Secondly, it looked at the question of whether and how in these narrations power structures that lead to the marginalization of migrant minorities are challenged or confirmed. Each case study represents a different approach, that to an extent may be considered as responding – consciously or not – to one another. *WochenKlausur*'s approach brings about specific concrete changes in the lives of target groups. But these groups hardly ever become subjects of and in their stories in *WochenKlausur*'s projects. Moreover the social, political and economic structures that have led to their marginalization are opportunistically exploited rather than challenged. In the case of Krenn and Ressler's project, the artists do indeed create platforms (the video, the exhibition etc.) in which migrant subjects and organizations may themselves articulate their stories and positions. At the same time, the selection of collaborators approached by the artists expresses the latter's search for affiliation with alternative organizational structures and formats of action. Nonetheless, looking more closely at the narrations themselves, one might find the narrative forms and means producing further effects and interpretations, which might even counteract the artists' agenda. The mechanisms of this double effect I have tried to connect to the artists' attempts to transfer a set of activist "politically correct" agendas and priorities from political practices (democratic equality and participation) to art activism practices. In the last example, the maize women enact the reverse movement. They inform their political work with the outcomes of artistic experimentation, and with no moral imperative towards a mistreated "Other" at work in the aesthetics and politics of their artistic activist practices. Something that emancipates them to explore possible spaces for their articulations and protests as subjects at the borders of what is conventionally considered aesthetically and ethically righteous or acceptable (see "anthropophagischer Protagonismus").

What should not go unnoticed in the above juxtaposition of case studies is that they are all constituted in discourse. The one articulation has directly or indirectly been informing the other. In this way the one renders visible or legible for the other the elements that differentiate their positions and approaches, and thus provide them with the tools to articulate this differentiation. Something that is, in essence, an aesthetic process of nuancing cultural and political subjects' identities.