STEPHEN WILLATS

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Born in 1943 in London, UK
Lives and works in London, UK

EDUCATION

1980   D.A.A.D. Fellowship, West Berlin, Germany

1963   The Ground Course, Ealing School of Art, London, UK

SOLO EXHIBITION

2024   TRANSITION TRANSFORM, Charim Galerie, Vienna, Austria

2022   Time Tumbler, Victoria Miro, London, UK
        Stephen Willats - An Introspective, Galerie Elisabeth & Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
        The Social Research Project for Tennis Clubs, Bonnington Gallery at Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

2019   *Languages of Dissent*, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, Switzerland
        Modern Buildings, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2018   *CONTROL*, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
        Endless, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany

2017   *Human Right,* MIMA, Middlesbrough, UK

2016   *Conversations With Buildings*, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
        Inside The *Night*, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
        THISWAY - Stephen Willats, Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden

2015   *Publishing Interventions – Stephen Willats – Selected Publications 1965 – 2015*, Tenderpixel, London, UK
        Step Change, Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands
        Man from the 21st Century, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Oaxaca, Mexico

2014   *Strange Attractor Series No 28*, Corner Space, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
        Berlin Local, MD72, Berlin, Germany
        How Tomorrow Looks From Here, DAAD Galerie, Berlin, Germany
        Attracting the Attractor, Anne Mosseri-Marlio Galerie, Basel, Switzerland
        Concrete Block, Drawings & Works on Paper, 1978 - 2005, MOT International, Brussels, Belgium
        Concerning Our Present Way of Living, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK
        Representing the Possible, Victoria Miro, London, UK
        Control, Stephen Willats 1962 - 69, Raven Row, London, UK

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2013   *Living for Tomorrow*, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
       World without objects, Annie Gentils Gallery, Belgium
       World of Objects, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
       Conscious Unconscious, In and Out the Reality Check, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK

2012   *Surfing with the Attractor*, South London Gallery, London, UK
       Secret Language The Code Breakers, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
       How the Future Looks from Here, April, Lumen Travo Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2011   *The Strange Attractor*, Reena Spaulings, New York, USA
       The Information Nomad, MOT International, London, UK
       Talking City, Centre d'Art Passerelle, Brest, France
       The West London Social Resource Project Public Monitor 1972, Chelsea Space, London, UK

2010   *Street Diagram*, Corner Space, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
       The World As It Is and the World As It Could Be, Victoria Miro, London, UK
       In Two Mind, Erna Hecey Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
       Counter Consciousness, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
       In Two Minds, Erna Hecey Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

2009   *In and Out The Underworld*, European Kunsthalle, Köln, Germany
       The Ideological Diagram, Galerie Christian Nagel, Köln, Germany
       Assumptions and Identity Identity And Assumptions, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, *Netherlands*
       Cybernetic Still Life, Balice Hertling, Paris, France

2008   *Democratic Mosaics And Conceptual Towers*, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
       The Architecture of Stephen Willats, LWL, Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster, Germany
       The Speculative Diagram, CASCO, Utrecht, Netherlands

2007   *Assumptions and Presumptions*, Art on the Underground, Film Commission by Transport for London
       for Rayners Lane and Sudbury Town Underground stations, London, UK
       Person to Person People to People, Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK
       Just Between People, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany

2006   *Publishing Interventions*, Connor Donlon Books, Herald Street Gallery, London, UK
       From My Mind To Your Mind, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, UK
       Wie die Welt ist und wie sie sein könnte, Stephen Willats, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen,
       Germany
       Gegenwartskunst Siegen, Germany

2005   *Street Talk Amsterdam*, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands
       Multichannel Life, Galerie Christian Nagel, Köln, Germany
       Going Home, MOT Gallery, London.

2004   *Messages From The Polemical City*, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany

2003   *Personal Encounters In Your Imagination*, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany

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2002   *Through Your Symbolic World*, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, UK
       Cognition Control. From The Archives of Stephen Willats, Institute of Visual Culture,
       Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK

2001   *Traces And Signs*, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands
       Rencontres et Cooperations 1970-2000, Galerie Gabrielle Maubrie, Paris, France

2000   *Macro To Micro,* Gallery Laure Genillard, London, UK

1999   *Multichannel Vision*, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany

1998   *Random Encounter*, Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, UK
       Changing Everything, South London Art Gallery, London, UK
       Creative Force, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, UK
       Multicult Berlin, Galerie Franck & Schulte, Berlin, Germany
       Concepts, Strategies & Models 1962 – 65, Gimpel Fils, London, UK
       Blind Date With Reality, Galerie Brandstetter & Wyss, Zürich, Switzerland

1997   *Street Talk*, Gallery Victoria Miro, London, UK
       Between Me And You, Middlesbrough Art Gallery, Middlesbrough, UK
       MULTICULT, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands

1996   *In Response To Each Other*, Galerie Brandstetter & Wyss, Zürich, Switzerland
       Du Hasard A l'Accord, Galerie Gabrielle Maubrie, Paris, France

1995   *Living Together*, Tramway, Glasgow, UK
       A State Of Agreemen', Galerie Franck & Schulte, Berlin, Germany
       Writing on the Wall, Galerie Kaj Forsblom, Helsinki, Finalnd
       Writing on the Wall, Reinhard Hauff at Galerie Archim Kubinski, Stuttgart, Germany

1994   *Multiple Clothing*, Daniel Buchholz, Köln, Germany
       Random Life, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, UK
       Museum Mosaic, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, UK
       Fateful Combinations, The British School at Rome, Italy
       Into the Infra-Structure, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands
       Urban Nomads, Galerie Gabrielle Maubrie, Paris, France

1993   *Buildings & People*, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, Germany
       Multiple Clothing, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, UK
       Walking Between Objects, Galerie Franck & Schulte, Berlin, Germany
       Buildings & People, Goethe Institute, London, UK

1992   *Signs of Living*, Galerie Gabrielle Maubrie, Paris, France

1991   *Publishing Interventions, 1963 – 1991*, National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK
       Concrete Window, Gallery Montevideo, Antwerp, Belgium

1990   *Mosaics*, Galerie Kaj Forsblom, Helsinki, Finland
       Stephen Willats, Galerie Barbara Farber, Amsterdam, Netherlands

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1989   *Secret Language,* Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester, UK

1988   *Transformers*, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, UK
        Code Breakers, Torch Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands
        Stephen Willats, Galerie Ralph Wernicke, Stuttgart, Germany

1987   *Contemporary Living*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Gent, Belgium
        Between Objects And People, Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds, UK

1986   *City of Concrete*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
        Grüße vom Modernen Leben, Städtische Galerie, Regensburg, West Germany
        Groeten uit het moderne leven, Museum van Hedenaagse Kunst, Utrecht, Netherlands
        Concepts and Models, ICA, London, UK
        Vier Hiizen in Den Haag, Haags Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag, Netherlands
        Striking Back, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, UK
        Fragments of Modern Living, Galerie Tanja Grunert, Köln, West Germany

1985   *Doppelganger*, Lisson Gallery, London, UK
        Double Crossing, Ralph Wernicke Galerie, Stuttgart, West Germany

1984   *Means of Escape*, Rochdale Art Gallery, Greater Manchester, UK
        Another City, Riverside Studios, London, UK

1983   *Angst in den Straßen*, Rudiger Schottle Galerie, Munich, West Germany
        Inside The Night, Lisson Gallery, London, UK
        Under Cover, Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, UK

1982   *Meta Filter and Related Works*, Tate Gallery, London, UK
        The New Reality, Orchard Gallery, Londonderry, Northern Ireland

1981   *4 Inseln in Berlin*, Goethe Institute, London, UK
        Mens en Omgeving, De Beyerd Centrum voor beeldende Kunst, Breda, Netherlands

1980   *The Lurky Place*, Galerie Jurgen Schweinebraden, East Berlin, East Germany
        Four Professionals, Lisson Gallery, London, UK
        Berlin Wall Drawings, Galerie Rudiger Schottle, Munich, West Germany
        Concerning Our Present Way of Living, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands
        4 Inseln in Berlin, National Galerie, West Berlin, West Germany

1979   *Concerning Our Present Way of Living,* Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK

1978   *Questions About Ourselves*, Lisson Gallery, London, UK
        Living Within Contained Conditions, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK

1977   *Attitudes Within Four Relationships,* Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, UK

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1976   *Life Codes And Behaviour Parameters*, The Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham, UK
        Social Structures: The Perception of Context, Stampa Gallery, Basel, Switzerland
        Attitudes Within Four Relationships, Lisson Gallery, London, UK

1975   *Coding Structures And Behaviour Parameters*, Massimo Minini, Gallery Banco, Brescia, Italy
        Meta Filter, A State Of Agreement, The Gallery, London, UK

1974   *Life Codes And Behaviour Parameters,* Gallery December, Münster, West Germany

1973   *The Artist As An Instigator Of Changes in Social Cognition and 'Behaviour',* Gallery House, London, UK

1968   *Visual Automatics & Visual Transmitters,* Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK

1964   *Chester Beatty Research Centre,* London, UK

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SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023   *Coded: Art Enters the Computer Age, 1952 - 1982*, LACMA, Los Angeles, USA
       A Tall Order - Rochdale Art Gallery in the 1980s, Touchstones Gallery, Rochdale, UK

2022   *L'école des créateurs: L'art de l'apprentissage des années 1960 à nos jours,* Centre Pompidou Metz,
       Metz, France

2021   *Light Works from the Tate Collection*, Museum of Art Pudong, Shanghai, China
       Rhythm and Geometry Constructivist Art in Britain since 1951, Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, UK

2020   *What If ... on Utopia in Art*, Architecture & Design, Neues Museum, Nuremberg, Germany *Objects of
       Wonder: From Pedestal to Interaction*, Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark
       Bodies - Cities: Collections and Excursions, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria

2019   *Chicago Architecture Biennial,* Chicago, USA
       Objects of Wonder – British Sculpture 1950 – Present, Palais Populaire, Berlin, Germany
       The Aerodrome: an exhibition dedicated to the memory of Michael Stanley, IKON Gallery,
       Birmingham, UK
       The Lie of the Land, MK gallery, London, UK
       Family Ties: The Schröder Donation, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany

2018   *The Value of Freedom*, 21er Haus, Vienna, Austria (2018 – 2019)
       Exchanges, the Whitworth, The University of Manchester, Manchester, UK
       The Medium is the Message, Heong Gallery, Downing College, Cambridge, UK
       Drawings, Models and Sculptures, Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds, UK
       Presentation of the Contemporary Art Collection, Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen, Siegen,
       Germany
       Dialogues With A Collection, LGLondon, London, UK
       Open Codes - Living in Digital Worlds, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany
       Front International: Cleveland Triennial of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, USA
       Fashioned From Nature, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

2017   *Space & Photography*, Museum der Moderne Mönchsberg, Salzburg, Austria
       Extra Bodies. The Use of the 'Other Body' in Contemporary Art, Migros Museum, Zurich, Switzerland
       Out of Line, The Meeting, Bill Cournoyer, New York, US
       The Making of Modern Art & The Way Beyond Art, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands
       Open Codes. Living in Digital Worlds, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany
       Control Issue 20, Laure Genillard Gallery, London, UK
       This Way Out of England. Gallery House in Retrospect, Raven Row, London, UK
       You've got 1243 unread messages, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Riga, Latvia
       Idea Home Show, Mima, Middlesbrough, UK
       Everything we see could also be otherwise (My sweet little lamb), The Showroom, London, UK
       Case Study, curated by Isabelle Cornaro, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
       Les objets domestiquent, curated by Keren Detton, Frac Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkirk, France

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2025   *Victoria Miro: 40 Years*, Gallery Victoria Miro, London
       The Quiet Rebellion of Things: The Schröder donation, Kunstmuseum Bermerhaven, Bremerhaven,
       Germany
       Berlin Local Films, 40/Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin, Germany
       Echos du passé, promesses du futur, Univers Programmés, Musee d"Art Contemporain, Lyon, France

2024   *Everything but the Kitchen Sink*, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin
       Electric Dreams, Art Before the Internet, Tate, London
       British Museum, Contemporary Collecting: David Hockney to Cornelia Parker,
       De Stadscollectie: In/Zicht, MUHKA, Antwerp
       Zone, Gallery Reena Spaulings, New York

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2016   *You Don't Need a Weatherman*, Galerie Thomas Schultz, Berlin, Germany
        Conceptual Art In Britain 1964 - 1979, Tate Britain, London, UK
        Translocaciones, Galería OMR, Mexico City, Mexico
        Crossing Media: Good Space - Political, Aesthetic & Urban Spaces, Villa Merkel, Esslingen, Germany
        Do Boomerangs Always Come Back, Castle d'Aspremont-Lynden, Oud-Reken, Belgium
        Art in Europe 1945-1968, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany
        Nervous Systems: Quantified Life and the Social Question, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany

2015   *Annexes*, Emanuel Layr Gallery, Vienna, Austria
        Subtle Patterns of Capitalism, Georg Kargl Gallery, Vienna, Austria
        An English Summer, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, USA
        Welfare State, MUHKA, Antwerp, Belgium
        Imaginary Audience Scale, Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand

2014   *West:Berlin*, Stadtmuseum Berlin, Germany
        Social Factory, Shanghai Biennale, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China
        Sleeping Producers - part of curated by_vienna, Galerie Charim, Vienna, Austria
        Traucum, Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-Les-Eaux, France
        The Promise, Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, UK
        Was Modelle können (What models can do), Museum für Gegenswart Kunst, Siegen, Germany *Nouvelle Generation (New Generation)*, Frac Nord - Pas de Calais, France
        Warm Math - Part 2, Balice Hertling, New York, USA
        Somewhat Abstract: Selections from the Arts Council Collection, Nottingham Contemporary, UK

2013   *Spot*, Balice Hertling with Galleria Nilufar and Giò Marconi Gallery, Hôtel de Miramion, Paris, France
        Signs and Messages, Kate Macgarry, London, UK
        Xerography, Firstsite Gallery, Colchester, UK
        Pop Art & Design, Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK
        L'Expérience des Marges, Un Coup de Dés.Net, Centre Photographique d'Ile de France, Pontault Combault, France
        'Mom. am I Barbarian' 13th Istanbul Biennial 2013, Istanbul, Turkey
        Prologue - Part One - References, Paperclips and the Cha Cha Cha, Arge Kunst, Bolzano, Italy
        Nessun Oggetto é Innocente - part of Les Pleiades, 30 Years of Fracs, Frac Corse, France
        The Content of Form, Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria
        Inseldasein, DAADgalerie, Berlin, Germany
        A World of Wild Doubt, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Germany
        Vertical Club (curated by Will Benedict), Gallery Bortalami, New York, USA
        European Kunsthalle in Bregenz, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria
        Keywords, Iniva, London, UK

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2012   La Collection Frac Haute-Normandie, La Maison Pour Tous, Sotteville-Lès-Rouen, France
        PVM-2130, Furnished Space, London, UK
        Fine Arts (curated by Thomas Locher), Galerie Georg Kargl, Vienna, Austria
        Reflecting Fashion, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Lugwig, Vienna, Austria
        A Drawing While Waiting for an Idea, Large Glass, London, UK
        Préférences Systeme, Édition et Photographie dans la Collection du Frac Haute-Normandie,
        ESADHaR Rouen, France
        God Save the Queen, Centraal Museum Utrecht, Netherlands
        Living with Art, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany!
        Salvo, Annie Gentils Gallery, Antwerp, Netherlands

2011   *United Enemies*, The Problem of Sculpture in Britain in the 1960's and 1970's, Henry Moore Institute,
        Leeds, UK
        'For Eindhoven' - The City as Muse, part of *VANUIT HIER - OUT OF HERE*, Van Abbemuseum,
        Eindhven, Netherlands
        Through Symbolic Worlds, July 2011, International Project Space, School of Art Bournville,
        Birminham, UK
        Final Exhibition, Kleingartenkolonie am Potsdamer Güterbahnhof, Berlin, Germany
        Stay Hungry, Group Exhibition, Kleingartenkolonie am Potsdamer Güterbahnhof, Berlin, Germany
        Aftermath: Objects from Projects, Chelsea Space Chelsea College of Art & Design, London, UK
        Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
        Indices, vestiges et prémonitions, Frac Corse, France
        Balice Hertling & Lewis, Front Desk Apparatus, New York
        The Logic of Association, MOMA PS1, Long Island City, NY, USA
        Signal : Noise, The Showroom, London

2010   *Moving Images, Artists & Video / Film*, Museum Ludwig, Köln, Germany
        Learning Machines, Nuova Accademia, Belle Arti, Milan, Italy
        Ground Level Arts, Milan, Italy
        Council Touring Exhibition, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton; Whitechapel Gallery, London;
        Oriel Mostyn, Wales, UK

2009   *Modernologies*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
        My Yard, British Council Collection Exhibition (curated by Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane),
        Whitechapel Gallery, London
        Revisiting the Shaping of the Social since the 20th Century, Central Museum Utrecht, Netherlands
        At the Edge British Art 1950 – 2000, Touchstones, Rochdale, UK
        Die Moderne als Ruine, Kunstmuseum, Lichtenstein
        Die Moderne als Ruine, Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria
        Oppositions & Dialogues, Kunstverein Hannover, Germany
        An Eye for an Eye, Glucksman Gallery, University of Cork, Ireland

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2008 *Monde e Terra*, La collezione del FRAC Corsica, Museo d'Arte Provincia di Nuoro, Italy
Volksgarten, Die Politik der Zugehörigkeit, Kunsthaus Graz, Graz, Austria
Be(com)ing Dutch, Vanabbemusem, Eindhoven, Netherlands
Oh Girl It's A Boy!, Kunsverein München, München, Germany
Punk No One Is Innocent, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna
Manifesta 7, Roveretor, Italy
Soziale Diagramme. Planning Reconsidered, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany
Cold War Modern. Design from 1945 to 1980, Victoria And Albert Museum, London, UK
Social Interactions: Beth Campbell/Stephen Willats, Seiler + Mosseri-Marlio Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Eclectic, FRAC Basse-Normandie, Caen, France
Building Dwelling Thinking (curated by John Slyce), Laura Bartlett Gallery, London
The Art of Participation 1950 to Now, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California, US

2007 *What Does The Jellyfish Want?*, Museum Ludwig, Köln, Germany
The Secret Public/ Last Days of the British Underground 1978-1988, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK
Centre of the Creative Universe. Liverpool and the Avant-Garde, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
Panic Attack/Art In The Punk Years, Barbicain Art Gallery, London, UK
Art Link, Göteborgs Konsthall, Göteborg, Sweden
Beyond The Wall, Stiftung Brandenburger Tor, Max Liebermamm Haus, Berlin, Germany

2006 *The Secret Public. The Last Days of the British Underground 1978-1988*, Kunstverein München, München, Germany
Art Link, Dötenborgs Konsthall, Götenborg, Sweden

2005 *Faltering Flame*, Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield, UK
Kritische Gesellschaften, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
Borders Dialogues, Barents Art Triennial, Kirkenes, Norway
Wie Gesellschaft und Politik Ins Bild Kommen, Generalii Foundation, Vienna, Austria

2004 *3rd Berlin Biennial*, Martin Gropius Bau. Berlin
L'Air du Temps, Migros Museum, Zürich, Switzerland
Streets, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Engagierte Kunst 70/90, Neues Museum, Nürnberg, Germany
Re:Location. 1-7 Shake, Halle für Kunst Lüneburg, Germany
Art & The 60's. This Was Tomorrow', Tate Gallery, London, UK
Art & The 60's. This Was Tomorrow', Birmingham City Art Museum, Birmingham, UK
La Collection Continue, FRAC Corse, Centre Culturel Una Volta, Bastia, France
Vanishing Points: Landscape Art Beyond The Horizon, Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, UK

2003 *Collection 001*, Frac Rhone-Alpes, Institut d'art Contemporain, Villeurbanne, France
In Portraiture Irrelevance Is Ugliness (curated by Claudia Seidel), Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
Bewitched Bothered and Bewildered, Migros Museum, Zürich, Switzerland
In Portraiture Irrelevance Is Ugliness, Museum Schloss Hardenberg, Velbert-Neviges, Germany
Art For Networks, Turnpike Gallery. Leith, Manchester, UK
Air Guitar. Reconsidering Rock Music, Tulie House Museum & Art Gallery. Carlisle, UK
Urban Codes, coder/decoder, Espace de l'Art Concret, Chateau de Mouans, Mouans-Sartoux, France
Independence, South London Gallery, London, UK

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2002   *Private Views*, London Print Studio, London, UK
        The Gap Show, Museum am Ostwald, Dortmund, Germany
        Air Guitar (traveling exhibit), Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK
        Art For Networks (traveling exhibit), Chapter Art Centre, Cardiff, UK
        Blast To Freeze. British Art In The Twentieth Century, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany

2001   *City Racing. A Partial Account*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, UK
        Conception. Conceptual Documents 1968-72, Norwich Gallery, Norwich, UK
        Double Vision, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, Germany
        Antagonisms, Musee d'Art Contemperani de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
        Arbeit Essen Angst, Kokerei Zollverein, Essen, Germany
        The Map Is Not The Territory, England & Co, London, UK
        Video Evidence, Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, UK
        Video Project Space, Anthony Wilkinson Gallery, London, UK
        Selbst Porträt, Schloss Agathenburg Agathenburg, Germany
        Stadsgezichten. Amsterdam vereeuwigd 1901-2001, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2000   *Democracy*, Royal College of Art, London, UK
        Live In Your Head, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK
        Protest And Survive, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK
        Raw, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, UK
        ein/raumen, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany
        Protest And Survive, Whitechapel Art Gallery.London, London, UK

1999   *Nur Wasser Lasst Sich Leichter Schneiden*, Hamburg, Germany
        Bildung, Grazer Kunstverien, Graz, Austria
        Borderline PILOT, Museum van Bommel van Dam, Venlo, Netherlands

1998   *Addressing the Century, 100 Years of Art & Fashion*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK

1997   *Sous le manteau*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropec, Paris, France
        The Grand Design, The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Baltimore Museum of Art, USA
        In Every Moment Everywhere, Porin Taidemuseo, Finland
        C'est ici que nous vivons (2), FRAC Rhones-Alpes, France
        Photographie d'une Collection 3/97, de la Caise des Depots et Consignations, Paris, France
        Wilson to Callaghan, Poster Studio, London, UK

1996   *Les Contes de Fees se terminent bien*, Frac Haute-Normandie, Chateau du Val Freneuse, Sotteville- sous-le-Val, France
        Radikale Images, 2nd Austrian Triennale for Photograph, Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria
        Everybody's Talking, Gemeentemuseum Helmond, Netherlands

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1995   *Mapping Knowledge*, The Minories Gallery, Colchester, UK
        Ars 95 Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
        I don't actually have to go, Galerie Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, Netherlands
        Imprint 93, City Racing, London, UK
        Temples, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, UK
        Ideal Standard Summertime, Lisson Gallery, London, UK
        La Transparence Dans L'Art Du XXe Siècle, Museum des Beaux-Arts Malraux, Le Havre, France
        The Edge of Town, Joseloff Gallery, University of Hartford, Conn, USA
        Paste-Up, Past & Present, Kent Gallery, New York, USA

1994   *Outsiders*, Camerawork, London, UK
        Visione Britannica, Valentina Moncada, Rome, Italy
        Sarah Staton Super Store Boutique, Laure Genillard Gallery, London, UK
        Conceptual Living, Rhizome, Amsterdam, Netherlands
        Looking at Words: Reading Pictures, Elms Lester Painting Rooms, London, UK
        Lesezimmer II, Kunstlerhaus, Stuttgart, Germany

1993   *Sixties Art Scene in London*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK
        Out of Sight, Out of Mind, Lisson Gallery, London, UK
        Public and Private, Stills Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
        The Ideal Place, HCAK, Den Haag, Netherlands

1992   *Wasteland*, Photographic Biennale, Rotterdam, Netherlands
        Real Stories, Museet fur Photokunst, Odense, Denmark
        Instructions and Diagrams, Victoria Miro Gallery, London

1991   Exhibition of Gallery Artists, Gallery Montevideo, Antwerp, Belgium
        Oikos, Galerie Gabrielle Maubrie, Paris, France
        Excavating the Present, Kettles Yard Gallery, Cambridge, UK
        Past Continuous, Artiste Trust, Bath Festival, UK
        Shocks to the System, ACGB Touring Exhibition, South Bank Centre, London

1990   *Art Creating Society,* Exhibition to accompany Symposium at the MOMA, Oxford, UK

1989   *Invisible City*, Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds
        Tekens Van Verzet, Beeld Museum Fodor, Amsterdam, Netherlands

1988   *British Modernist Painting*, Birch & Conran Fine Art, London, UK
        Beyond the City, The Metropolis, Triennale di Milano, Italy
        What is good appears, and what appears is good, Galerie Tanja Grunert, Köln, Germany
        New Urban Landscape, World Financial Centre, Battery Park, New York, USA
        100 Years of British Art, Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds, UK

1987   *Art and Craft made and designed in the Twentieth Century,* Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, UK

1986   *The Art of Peace Biennale*, Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany
        Androgyn, Akademie der Künste Berlin, Berlin, Germany
        Eye Level, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands

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1985   *Watch Your Step*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK
        Sculpture Alternatives - Aspects of Photography and Sculpture in Britain 1965 – 82, Tate Gallery, London, UK
        The British Art Show, National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand
        Summer in the City, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
        Human Interest, Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester, UK
        The British Show, Art Gallery of New South Wales, South Wales, travelling exhibition throughout Australia

1984   *Strip Language,* Gimpel Fils Gallery, London, UK

1983   *Place*, Gimpel Fils Gallery, London, UK
        New Art and the Tate Gallery, Tate Gallery, London, UK
        The Sculpture Show, Hayward Gallery, London, UK

1982   *Contemporary Choice*, Contemporary Art Society Exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, London, UK
        Noi altri wir anderen, Regensberg Stadt Museum, Regensburg, Germany
        Past - Present – Future, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany
        Enweiterte Fotografie, Wiener Secession, Vienna, Austria
        London - New York, Lisson Gallery, London, UK
        Aperto 82, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

1981   *Kunst und Politik*, Basischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
        Die Kehrseite der Wunschbilder, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany
        Sculpture in the Twentieth Century, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK

1980   *Artist and Camera*, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, UK
        Anglo-Belgium Exhibition, JP2 Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium

1979   *In Certain Art Anglais*, ARC 2, Museum of Modern Art, Paris, France
        Languages, Third Eye Centre, Glasgow, Arts Council of Great Britain, UK (touring exhibition)
        La Parola e le Imagine, Commune di Milano, Italy

1977   *Gallery Artists*, Lisson Gallery, London and then Fine Arts Building, New York, US
        Social Criticism and Art Practice, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, US
        10th Biennale of Paris, Paris, France

1976   *Artist's Bookworks*, Arts Council of Great Britain, UK (touring exhibition)
        Art as Thought Process, British Council (touring exhibition for France)
        Twentieth Century Artist's Photographs, Israel Museum, Israel

1975   *Structures and Codes*, Royal College of Art Gallery, London, UK
        Artist's Bookworks, British Council (touring exhibition for Germany)
        Body and Soul, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK

1974   *Art as Thought Process,* Serpentine Gallery, London, UK

1973   *Interact,* Edinburgh Festival, Edinburgh, UK

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1972   *Survey of the Avant-Guarde*, Gallery House, London, UK
        Cognition Control, Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham, UK
        Cognition Control, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK

1971   *Electric Theatre*, ICA Gallery, London, UK
        Invention of Problems, Leicester Polytechnic, Leicester, UK

1970   *Kinetic Art,* Hayward Gallery, London, UK

1969   *Five Light Artists*, Greenwich Theatre Art Gallery, London, UK
        British Movements, Onnasch Galerie, Berlin, Germany

1968   *Public Eye,* Kunsthaus Hamburg, Germany
        Preview London, Camden Arts Centre, London

1967   *K 4,* Brighton Festival, Brighton, UK
        Light and Movement, Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry, UK

1966   *Kunst Licht Kunst,* Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands

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SELECTED INSTITUTIIONAL COLLECTIONS

Amsterdams Historisch Museum
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney,Australia
Caise de depots et Cousiguations, Paris
Cleveland Gallery, Cleveland
Contemporary Art Society, London
De Beyerd Centrum voor Actuelle Kunst, Breda, Netherlands
Documentation on the West London
Social Resource Project commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain housed at Osterley Library
Southampton City Art Gallery & Museum
Kunstmuseum, Zurich, Switzerland
Haags Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag, Netherlands
The Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale, Greater Manchester
The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh
Tate Gallery, London
Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands
The Arts Council of Great Britain
Gimpel Fils Galery, London
Victoria & Albert Museum, Drawing Dept., London
Victoria & Albert Museum, Clothing and Dress Dept., London
The British Museum, Prints & Drawings Dept.,
London National Gallery,
Gdansk, Poland
Wadsworth Athenaeum, Conneticut, USA
Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds
Stadtische Galerie, Stuttgart, Germany
Museum of Contemporary Art, Utrecht, Netherlands
The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle
Helsingen Kaupungin Taidemuseo, Helsinki, Finland
Stichting Volkshuisversting in de Kunst, Ben Haag, Netherlands
Victoria & Albert Museum (Artist's Book Collection, archive of writings and publications)
Hounslow Borough Council, London
Museum de Beaux Arts, Le Havre, France
Frac Course Centre of Centemporary Art, Corsica, France
Frac Limousin, France
Rhone Alpes Frac, France
Porin Taidemuseo, Pori, Finland
Frac Haute-Normandie, France
Middlesborough Art Gallery
South London Art Gallery
Frac Poitou Charentes, France
Sud West Landesbank, Stuttgart, Germany
Frac Languedoc-Roussillon, France

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gallery@balicehertling.com www.balicehertling.com

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Henry Moore Foundation, Leeds
Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester
Fonds Regional Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France
Fonds National d'art Contemporain Paris, France
Folkwang Museum, Essen, Germany
Migros Museum, Zurich, Switzerland
National Portrait Gallery, London
Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany

SPECIAL PROJECTS

2013   *Oxford Community Data Stream,* Kennington, Blackbird Leys and Modern Art Oxford, UK

2007   *Person to Person, People to People,* Netherfield Estate, Milton Keynes

2003   *Meeting of Minds*, Sefton Park, Liverpool, UK

2000   *Multichannel Workshop Hamburg*, Hamburg, Germany

1999   *Eine Demokratische Reise*, Hamburg, Germany
       Democratic Journey, Liverpool, UK
       Multichannel Workshop, Graz, Switzerland

1998   *Creativeforce*, Sheffield, UK
       Changing Everything, Peckham, South London Gallery, London, UK
       Random Encounter, Southampton, UK

1997   *The Transormer*, Middlesbrough, UK

1996   *Chemins Imaginaires*, Champagne, Sotteville, Rouen, France

1994   *Museum Mosaic*, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, UK
       Private Journeys, Heston Farm Estate, Hounslow, West London "Taking the Short Cut", Roydon,
       Essex, UK
       Personal Interface, Galerie Franck & Schulte, Berlin, Germany

1993   *Personal Islands*, Samuda & Barkentine Estates, Isle of Dogs, East London

1992   *Living Tower,* Linacre Court, Hammersmith, London

1991   *Tower Mosaic,* Warwick & Brindley Estate, Paddington, London, UK
       Living Mosaic, Snowhill Estate, Bath, UK
       People Mosaic, Kettle's Yard Gallery, Cambridge, UK

1990   *Private Network*, Friars Wharf Estate, Oxford, UK
       Multi-Storey Mosaic, Homecourt, Feltham, West London

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1989   *White Towers,* Helsinki, Finland

1988   *Between Straight Lines*, Newcastle, UK

1987   *From Different Worlds*, Leeds, UK

1986   *Four Houses in Den Haag,* Den Haag, Netherlands

1985   *Brentford Towers*, Brentford, West London

1982   *Blocks*, Avondale Estate, West London

1981   *Two Worlds Apart,* Charville Lane Estate, Hayes, West London

1979   *Inside an Ocean*, Ocean Estate, Mile End, East London

1978   *Vertical Living,* Skeffington Court, Hayes, London, UK
         Contained Living, Museum of Modern Art Oxford and the Friars Wharf Estate, Oxford, UK

1977   *From a Coded World,* Perivale, London, UK

1973   *The Oxford Insight Development Project*, Oxford, UK
         The Edinburgh Social Model Construction Project, Edinburgh, UK

1972-73 *The West London Social Resource Project,* London

1971   *The Social Resource Project for Tennis Clubs*

1970   *The Man From the Twenty First Century*, Nottingham, UK

STEPHEN WILLATS

LECTURES AND PAPERS

2011   Street Talk, presentation of films by Stephen Willats, Tate Modern, London, UK
        Art Basel Conversation, The Future of Artistic Practice – The Artist as Urbanist, moderator
        Hans Ulrich Obrist, Basel, Switzerland

2006   *Multiple Clothing*, seminar and performance at Tate Modern, London, UK

2005   *Multiple Clothing,* Showstudio.com website project established

2003   Convener of the Seminars, Art Intervention, Control Magazine at Vilma Gold, London, UK

1991   *Stephen Willats - Printed Archive*, established at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

1990   Convener of the Symposium, Art Creating Society, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK

AUDIO TAPES

1986   Brentford Towers, Audio Arts Magazine, Vol. 8, No. 1

1983   Inside the Night, Audio Arts Special Supplement

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PUBLICATIONS

2017   "Publishing as cybernetic practice", Sarah Hamerman, *Control Magazine*, Nov 18, 2017
        "Stephen Willats", *Street Talk Amsterdam*, London, UK
        "Artwork as Social Model", *Cornehouse Books*, Manchester, UK
        "Stephen Willats, Vision and Reality", *Uniform Books*

2016   "Stephen Willats, The Cha Cha Club", *Flash Art*, Nov – Dec

2015   "The Idea of Art", Anthony Bond, *Art Gallery of New South Wales*
        "Stephen Willats, A Man for the 21st Century", *ModernMatter*, No 8, 2015, London
        "Berlin Local", Mark Prince, *Frieze d/e No 18*, April 2015

2014   "Stephen Willats, Concerning Our Present Way of Living", *Whitechapel Gallery*
        "Stephen Willats, Representing the Possible", *Victoria Miro Gallery*, London
        "Control, Stephen Willats, Work 1962 - 69", *Raven Row*, London
        "Was Modelle können", *Museum für Gegenwartskunst*, Siegen

2013   "World Without Objects", *Annie Gentils Gallery*, Antwerp
        "Night People, Stephen Willats", *Fluor No 8*, 2013/14
        "Stephen Willats, Conscious Unconscious In and Out the Reality Check", exhibition catalogue,
        Modern Art Oxford
        "A World of Wild Doubt", exhibition catalogue, *Kunstverein*, Hamburg
        "Conversation Pieces, Community and Communication in Modern Art", Grant H Kester, *pub.
        University of California Press*

2012   "Secret Language - The Code Breakers", exhibition catalogue, *pub. Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin*
        "The Performance of Information Flows in the Art of Stephen Willats", Sharon Irish*, Information and
        Culture Vol. 47*, No 4, 2012, University of Texas Press
        "Surfing with the Attractor", exhibition catalogue, *South London Gallery*

2011   "Review of recent exhibition", *Reena Spaulings,* New York
        "Stephen Willats - The World How it is and the World How it Could Be", Emanuele Guidi,
        Denkraun IV: Künstlerische
        "Praxisk Als Soziale Praxis", *Kunstforum International, Bd 207*, March - April 2011
        "Art Society Feedback, Stephen Willats interviewed by Emily Pethick", *Mousse Magazine*, No: 27,
        February / March 2011

2010   "Art Society Feedback, Verlag fur Moderne Kunst Nurnberg & Badischer Kunstverein -
        essays by Anja Casser, Phillipp Ziegler, Andrew Wilson, Tom Holert, Brigitte Franzen, Emily Pethick",
        Ute Meta Bauer
        "The Social Meaning of Art, Stephen Willats interviewed by Hans Ulrich Obrist", *Abitare Issue 504*,
        July - August 2010
        "Modernologies: Contemporary Artists Researching Modernity and Modernism", Brian Dillon, *Artforum*,
        January 2010, New York

STEPHEN WILLATS

PUBLICATIONS

2009   "Beyond Architecture, Imaginative Buildings and Fictional Cities, Edited By Robert Klanten and
        Lukas Feiriss", *Gestalten*, Berlin
        "7 x 14", *Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden*, Germany
        "Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews Stephen Willats", *Abitare-International Design Magazine*, Milan, Italy
        "In and Out of the Underworld, Stephen Willats, Renate Purvogel", *Kunstforum International*,
        November 2009
        "Stephen Willats, European Kunsthalle, Catrin Lorch", *Artforum International*, New York,
        December 2009
        "Utopischer Untergrund", Barbara Hess, *Texte zur Kunst, BD 19, Nr 76*, December 2009, Berlin

2008   "A computer in the art room. The origins of British computer arts 1950-80", Catherine Mason,
        JJG Publishing, Norfolk, UK
        "Stephen Willats - Texte zur Architektur, Vrlan der Buchhandlung Walther König, Köln
        Volksgarten Die Politik der Zugehörigkeit", *Kunsthaus Graz*, Graz, Austria
        "Punk No One Is Innocent", *Kunsthalle Wien*, Wien, Austria
        "Manifesta 7. Catalogue", *Manifesta*, Amsterdam, Netherlands
        "The Everyday", Edited by Stephen Johnstone, *Documents Of Contemporary Art*, Whitechapel
        London, and MIT Press, US
        "Stephen Willats, Galerie Thomas Schulte", Saskia Draxler, *Artforum,* 21 Feb
        "Democratic Grids and Conceptual Towers", review of Thomas Schulte exhibition in
        Kunstforum International by Astrid Musla
        "The Art of Participation, 1950 to Now", *MOMA,* San Francisco, US
        "Thin Cities 100 Years of the Piccadilly Line", *Art on the Underground*, London

2007   "Centre of the Creative Universe. Liverpool and the Avantgarde", *Liverpool University Press
        in association with Tate Liverpool*
        "Stephen Willats. Victoria Miro Gallery", Melanie Gillagan, *Artforum International* XLV No.5
        "Networking, Stephen Willats", Tom Morton, *Frieze Issue 106*, April
        "Talking Art. Interviews with artists since 1976", edited by Patricia Bickers and Andrew Wilson,
        Art Monthly and Ridinghouse, London
        "Person To Person People To People, Stephen Willats", *Milton Keynes Gallery*, Milton Keynes, UK
        (Ex. Cat.)
        "Beyond The Wall. Berlin-Freihafen der Künste, Stiftung Brandenburger Tor, Berlin",
        Published by Nicolai! Panic Attack!
        "Art In The Punk Years", *Merrell*, London, New York
        "Collection Art Contemporain", Centre Pompidou, Paris
        "Punk No One Is Innocent", *Kunsthalle Wien*, Wien, Austria
        "Sculpture Projects Muenster 07", Christiane Mennicke, *Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther Kuonig*, Köln,
        Germany
        "Künstler & Fotografien. 1959- 2007", Museum Ludwig Köln, *Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König*,
        Köln, Germany

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2006   Stephen Willats, Galerie Christian Nagel, Koln, Catrin Lorch, *Frieze*, Issue 98, April
        "Kritische Gesellschaften. Ein Ausstellungsprojekt in vier Kapiteln", *Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg*,
        Badischer Kunstverein
        "Wie Die Welt Ist Und Wie Sie Sein Könnte", Stephen Willats, Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen
        "Conceptual Paradise", Stefan Römer, DVD
        "Stephen Willats", Niels Henriksen, *Camera Austria No.96*
        "Boy, das ist Kunst!", Das Kommunikationsarchiv des Stephen Willats im Museum für
        Gegenwartskunst in Siegen, von ulf
        "Emann Ziegler", Frankfurter Rundschau, 24/10 *Auflage* 196.542
        "Such nach multiplen Wahrheiten", review of Siegen exhibition by Katja Behrens, *TAZ NRW*, 04.10.
        Au- flage 82.000
        "Wie die Welt ist und wie sie sein könnte", Annelie Pohlen, *Kunstforum No 183*, December
        "Stephen Willats", Peter Suchin, *Art Monthly No. 300*, October

2005   "Stephen Willats: An Interview on Art, Cybernetics and Social Intervention", George Mallen, Page 60,
        Bulletin of the Computer Arts Society, Spring 2005
        "Magic Moments, 'collaboration between artists and young people'", Edited by Anna Harding,
        Black Dog Publishing
        "Tank", Emily Pethick, *Control Magazine Vol 4*, Issue 1
        "70/90 Engagierte Kunst", Freiderike Wrappler, Neuesmuseum Nürnberg, Verlaf für moderne
        Kunst Nürnberg
        "Tenant To Tenant. The Art of Talking with Strangers", Sharon Irish, *Places Vol 16, No.3*,
        University of California, Berkeley, California

2002   "The Gap Show. Junge Zeitkritische Kunst aus Grossbritannien", Renate Puvogel,
        Museum am Ostwall Dortmund
        "Beyond The Plan", *Art & Artchitecture No 56*, May
        "Model Dwellings Catalogue", Emma Mahony, *Air Guitar*, Milton Keynes Gallery

2001   "Channel Hopping", Adrian Glew of 'Art and Social Function', *in Art Monthly No 246*, May
        "Life Codes, Diagramme Und Schwarzweisskopien", Andreas Fogarasi, *Derive*, Heft, 4 June, Austria
        "Traces And Signs", Christel Vesters, *Tubelight 16*, July/August Netherlands
        "Double Vision", Andrea Schlieker. Galerie fur Zeitgenossische Kunst, Leipzig
        "Selbt Portrat", Schloss Agathenburg, Agathenburg, Germany
        "Conception. Conceptual Documents 1968- 1972", Norwich Art Gallery, Norwich, UK

2000   Democracy Royal College of Art, London, UK
        "Live In Your Head", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
        "Protest And Survive", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
        "Work becoming of the man about town", Morgan Falconer, Highbury & Islington Express

1999   "Deer ganz alltagliche Funktionalismus", Interview by Vitus Weh, *Kunstforum Bd. 143*, Jan – Feb

1997   "Stephen Willats", Middlesbrough Art Gallery, Matthew Higgs, *Art Monthly*, October No. 210
        "Realitybytes", John O'Riley, *The Independent*, Saturday 19th July
        "Les Arts Steve Willats", Alexandre de Cadeney, *Sleaze Nation, Nov/Dec, Vol. 2, No.1*
        "Stephen Willats, Art, Ethnography and Social Change", *Variant, Vol. 2, No. 4*, October
        "Photographie d'une Collection, 2, Caisse des Depots et Consignations", Hazen Paris
        "The Grand Design The Art of the Victoria & Albert Museum", Harry N, Abrams Inc, New York

STEPHEN WILLATS

1996   "Stephen Willats", Frank Hoenjet, catalogue for 'Everybody's Talking', Gemeentemuseum, Helmond, Netherlands
"Ich lebe in einem Betonklotz", Stephen Willats, Zurich, Tip 13th

1995   "Living Together, Tramway, Glasgow", Andrew Wilson
"Stephen Willats", *Harald Fricke in Neue bildende Kunst, No. 3*, Galerie Franck & Schulte, Berlin
"Konzeptuelles Leben Galerie Franck & Schulte", Berlin, Jochen Becker, *Zitty No. 8*, Berlin Nos. 5 & 6
"Kaupunkkirakenne ja ihmissuheet, Stephen Willats, ja modernin maailman Kuva", Kukka Haikkola, Taide 6/95, Helsinki
"Paste-Up, Past and Present", Kent Gallery, New York

1994   "Ideal Society", Phillip Peters in the published report made by the HCAK,
 Den Haag on the Ideal Place Project
"Stephen Willats: Galerie Franck & Schulte", Berlin, Peter Herbstreuth, *Falsh Art*, No. 174, Jan/ Feb
"Stephen Willats: Random Life, Victoria Miro Gallery", Clifford Myerson, Portfolio No. 20,
Stephen Willats, Renate Puvogel, *Artis No. 3*, April/May
"The Complexity of People", Gareth Jones, *Flash Art No. 179*, Nov/Dec

1993   "Channel Hopping", Adrian Glew of 'Art and Social Function', *Art Monthly No 246*, May
"Life Codes, Diagramme Und Schwarzweisskopien", Andreas Fogarasi, *Derive*, Heft 4 June, Austria
"Traces And Signs", Christel Vesters, *Tubelight 16*, July/August Netherlands
"Double Vision", Andrea Schlieker, Galerie fur Zeitgenossische Kunst, Leipzig
"Selbt Portrat", Schloss Agathenburg, Agathenburg, Germany
"Conception. Conceptual Documents 1968- 1972", Norwich Art Gallery, Norwich, UK

1990   "Conceptual Living", Stephen Bann, Victoria Miro Gallery, London (exh.cat.),
"Publishing Interventions", Stephen Willats and Simon Ford
National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum (exh.cat.)
"High Rise to Heaven: Stephen Willats", Andrew Wilson, Victoria Miro Gallery, *Artscribe*, Nov/Dec
"City of Concrete", Galerie Montevideo, Antwerp (exh.cat.)

1989   "Secret Language", Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester (exh.cat.)

1988   "Andrew Wilson: Review", Laing Art Gallery exhibition, *Artscribe*, Sept/Oct
"Transformers", The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, (exh.cat.)
"Code Breakers", Torch Gallery, Amsterdam (exh.cat.)

1987   "Between Objects and People", Leeds City Art Gallery (exh.cat.)
"Groeten van Stephen Willats uit het moderne leven", Phillip Peters, *De Tijd*, 2nd Jan., Amsterdam

1986   "Rob le Frenais: Brentford Towers", *Performance No. 38*
"Stephen Willats. Three Essays", ICA, London and The Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield (exh. cat.)
"City of Concrete", Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (exh. cat.)
"Margaret Garlake: Artists and Our Environment", *The Artist, Vol. 101, No. 7, Issue 665*, July "Gray Watson: Stephen Willats at the ICA", *Artscribe, No. 57*, April-May
"Michael Archer: Recent Project Works", ICA, London (exh. cat.)
"Manfred Schmalriede: In Berlin und Eindhoven geschaffene Werde" - catalogue text in
'Stephen Willats. Three Essays', ICA, London

BALICE HERTLING GALERIE

"Margaret Garlake: Artists and Our Environment", *The Artist, Vol. 101, No. 7, Issue 665*, July
"Gray Watson: Stephen Willats at the ICA", *Artscribe, No. 57*, April-May
"Michael Archer: Recent Project Works", ICA, London (exh. cat.)
"Manfred Schmalriede: In Berlin und Eindhoven geschaffene Werde" - catalogue text in
'Stephen Willats. Three Essays', ICA, London

1985   "The British Show", Richard Francis, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (exh. cat.)

1984   "Brian Smith: Soft Computing: Art and Designz, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, London
"Means of Escape", Rochdale Art Galery, Rochdale, Greater Manchester (exhibition catalogue)
"Nadine Descendre: Anatomie d'une Creation", *Autrement No. 6*, Paris, (London issue)
"Sarah Kent: Art and Artifice: Changing Attitudes", *Artscribe No 45*

1983   "Eli Pascal", *À l'Interieure de la Nuit Artistes No. 16*, Paris
"John Roberts, Willats in Derry", *Performance, Nos. 20-21*, Dec - Jan, London
"Christiane Bergob, Sprechen sie Cha Cha", *Kunstforum International, Band 61*, May
"Michael Compton: New Art", (catalogue essay) in New Art at the Tate Gallery, T
ate Gallery Publications, London
"Lewis Biggs: Under Cover", *Arnolfini Review*, May

1982   "Deirdre O'Connell, Steve Willats", *CIRC, No. 7*, Northern Ireland
"Michael Newman, Man's Place - Four Works", *Art and Artists No. 193*

1981   "Marina Vaizey, The Artist as Photographer", Sidgwick and Jackson, London
"The New Reality", Orchard Gallery, Londonderry, Northern Ireland (exh. cat.)
"Vergangenheit Gegenwart Zukunft", Tilman Osterwold, Wurtembergischer Kunstverein,
Stuttgart, (exh. cat.)
"Noi altri wir anderen", Viet Loers, Statdische Galerie, Regensberg, West Germany (exh. cat.)

1980   "Over onze aktuele leefwizjzwe", Frank Gribling, *Museum Journal*, 80/5, Netherlands
"Over onze actuele leefwije", Stedlijk Van Abemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands
"4 Inseln in Berlin", Nationalgalerie Berlin, West Berlin (exc. cat.)
"Jorg Johnen, Stephen Willats", *Kunstforum International*, Band 41, May
"The Lurky Place", Jurgen Schweinebraden, *Art Monthly No. 41*

1978   "Stephen Willats", Marina Vaizey, *Arts Review, Vol. 31, No. 2*, Feb
"Stephen Willats", Sandy Nairne, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels
"Concerning Our Present Way of Living", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (Ex. Cat.)

1977   "Richard Cork, Involved - Yet Semi-Detached", *Evening Standard*, 21 April
"Jane Kelly (with Willats), Contemporary Artists", ed. Colin Naylor and Genesis P. Orridge,
St James Press
"Report from a Coded World", Sandy Nairne, *Art Monthly No. 10*

1976   "Jane Kelly (with Willats)", Midland Group Gallery Exhibition Nottingham, *Studio International, Vol. 191, No. 981*, May – June

STEPHEN WILLATS

1975   "Meta Filter, interview with Stephen Willats", John Walker, *Studio International, Vol. 190, No. 977*, Sept
        "Nice to Meta You", Richard Cork, *Evening Standard*, 16 October

1973   "Behavioural Art", Rosetta Brooks, *Studio International, Vol. 185, No. 951*
        "Rationale Englishe Kunst-tendenzen", Martin Kunz, (11 Teil), *Kunst Nachrichtung*, March

1972   "Cognition and Control Project", Conway Lloyd Morgan, *New Scientist*, 26 October

STEPHEN WILLATS

Control, Stephen Willats
Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
25 April - 16 May, 2018

Founded in 1965 by the British artist and conceptual designer, Stephen Willats (born 1943), Control remains one of the few artists' publications from the 1960s thriving to this day.

Linking Willats' early cybernetic and behavioural artworks to the socially engaged projects he pioneered from the early 1970s onwards, the magazine is regarded as an artwork in dispersed form, articulating issues of meaning and function and the expression of social and community values in art practice. It continues to be relevant to contemporary artists and acts as a vehicle for proposals and explanations of art practice between artists seeking to create a meaningful engagement with contemporary society.

This will be the first retrospective devoted to Control and presents artworks, film and archival documents by major artists featured in the magazine. Drop in and experience the transformation of Tate Exchange as a dynamic live manifestation of the magazine and join us for a series of programmed live interventions and talks by contemporary artists.

Further details about the events programme will be announced soon.

Extract from the catalog
Control, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
2018

BALICE HERTLING
GALERIE

Control's main function will be to publish articles by the personalities which make up the new attitude in visual communication.
Control will be organic in the sense that each issue will either be given over to a group of people which present a unified point, or will deal with a specific subject, and various designers etc. with different approaches will be asked to contribute to an issue, this will insure that Control becomes fluid, and also vital in so far as it acts as a common forum.
It is the intention to increase the size and scope of Control in later issues, in other words this is only the beginning of something which it is believed will become increasingly important.
The next issue of Control will be on the Environment and its Effect on the Artist, for this issue (which we hope will be of increased size) the Editor invites articles to be sent in to him, he does however have the right to reject material which is unsuitable.

Editorial, Issue One (1965)

CONTROL

This publication has been produced as part of a project at Tate Liverpool dedicated to *Control*, a magazine founded in 1965 by Stephen Willats, who has continued editing, designing and publishing it intermittently. Tate has long been committed to Willats' work as a pioneer of conceptual art in Britain. *Control* itself warrants specific focused consideration, as a distinct element within his broader practice. Symptomatic of new attitudes to visual communication and artistic production emerging during the 1960s, the magazine is notable for being one of the few artists' publications from the period still thriving to this day. Twenty issues have appeared providing a vital link between Willats' early cybernetic and behavioural artworks to the socially engaged projects he pioneered from the early 1970s onwards. In many ways, the magazine—especially the first four issues—provided a vehicle for Willats to test his theories on the transmission of information with minimal interference between artist and audience. Its dispersal and circulation in the social realm can be regarded as an artwork in dispersed form, articulating issues of meaning and function and the expression of social and community values in art practice. It continues to be relevant to contemporary artists and acts as a vehicle for proposals and explanations of art practice between artists seeking to create a meaningful engagement with contemporary society.

Alongside this first survey devoted to *Control*, Tate Liverpool is hosting a live manifestation of the magazine through a series of programmed live interventions and public talks by contemporary artists including Andrea Francke, Matthew de Kersaint Giraudeau and Ross Jardine (Radio Anti), Ross Taylor, Rosalie Schweiker and Madalina Zaharia. Of course, projects such as this can only be realised through the commitment and open collaboration of artists, academics and curators. We would therefore like to extend our thanks to Bronac Ferran, Antony Hudek, Francesco Manacorda, Christabel Stewart and Andrew Wilson. At Tate Liverpool, we would like to thank Michael Birchall, Jessica Fairclough, Elisa Nocente, Darren Pih and Daniel Smernicki. We would also like to thank Colin Sackett for producing such a sensitively designed publication. Naturally, our foremost thanks go to Stephen Willats, who was supported tirelessly by Stephanie Willats. The generative conversations with the artist over many months have been essential in bringing this project to fruition. Last but not least, we would like to extend especial thanks to the Henry Moore Foundation for providing the essential support for this project.

Louise Shannon, Head of Programme, Tate Liverpool

BALICE HERTLING
GALERIE
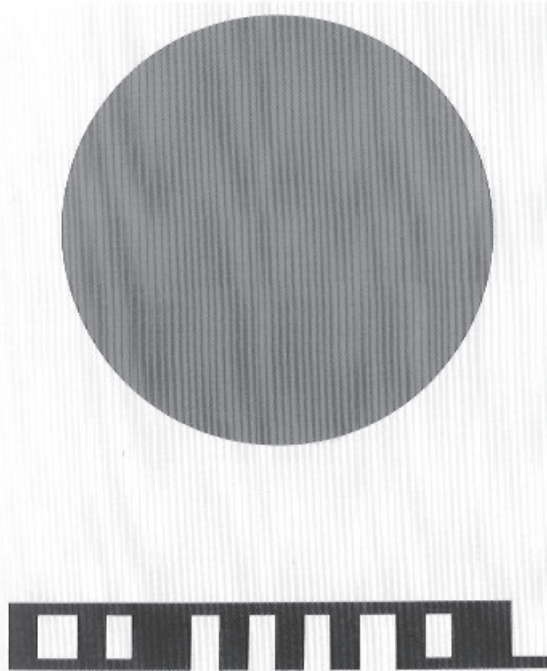
Issue One (1965) was almost a conceptual artwork in itself, the few texts are more like statements and the entire issue had a very graphical presentation. A young designer called Dean Bradley assisted Willats, producing the cover image and logo.

2

A SHORT SURVEY OF CONTROL MAGAZINE 1965–2017

In 1965 Stephen Willats was in touch with a group of artists, designers and art theoreticians to put together a new art magazine, which came to be called *Control*. It cost £67 to print, 460 copies were made and sold for 3/- each, as a not-for-profit magazine without adverts or any other commercial linkage, selling mostly through independent bookshops and, in addition, there was a small exhibition of the magazine at a bookshop in Charing Cross Road. Issue One was anonymous, with no date and no editor listed. However, by Issue Three in 1967, both Stephen Willats as editor and a date for the Issue were included as Willats had been told it was illegal to omit this information. The title *Control* was intended to be polemical, to state the difference between two radically different forms of control: not that one entity had control over another, but that control could be seen as a self-organising system that determines itself.

This first issues were aimed at bringing together and externalising ideas so as to create a network among artists that challenged and re-defined mainstream notions of art and its societal functions. All contributions to the magazine were to be original, not published elsewhere, and this policy has continued throughout all the issues. As the editorial in Issue Two stated "It is of vital importance that a platform exists outside of the old established mechanisms of the art hierarchy which allows for completely free discussion of concepts by the artist—this magazine is an attempt to provide this position."

Texts such as that by Roy Ascott reinforced the magazine's graphical aspect.

To control ones environment is to assert ones existence. In controlling my identity I define it. The Free Man has control of every aspect of his world and creates his role within it ("remakes himself" in Nietzsche's terms). Although through science we strive for this total freedom, it may never be attained. Art, however, provides the means to win this freedom and to act it out—symbolically. In Art the will to control is expressed through processes of restricting experience and of creating in familiar relationships within a universe of visual discourse. In this way the Artist becomes the Free Man. Just as my own artwork feeds back to affect my subsequent behaviour, so in society generally the artist activity may function as some kind of ritual control mechanism. Both individual artworks and cultural clumps can act as behavioural triggers. But the cultural force not only controls a Social Situation it constantly assigns to it fresh goals. This is not a steady state control—it is one affecting a changing fluid field. This is one kind of value, amongst others, that I want my public art to have. It requires the New, unfamiliar forms and unpredictable relationships. These come only out of creative behaviour—unlearned, non-routine constantly shaken up. It involves taking risks, stretching the intuition. There is a splendid paradox in Art that often the wildest, most far out, random unprogrammed activity can in the end produce work which may exercise the most profound and fruitful control on the human situation.
ROY ASCOTT

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Extract from the catalog
Control, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
2018

BALICE HERTLING
GALERIE

By Issue Three, the magazine was moving from the earlier philosophical statements towards more documenting of practice by artists. Willats would always write to invite artists to contribute to *Control* as in this letter to Peter Stroud in August 1966: "I am sending this information about your article… The third issue is on control operating in the art work, or in the control of an observer, this is just a platform which you are invited to use so that the issue has some direction. You could write about your relation to the object and the control exercised in it, or how your work relates to the observer and how you operate any controlled responses or both…" Stroud wrote a short text about his constructions: "The problem of control interests me mainly in terms of how the artist almost unconsciously organises constructions. The viewers' reaction by his use of means and materials…"

By 1968, the issue of control was also central to Issue Four, which was directed at pulling together a group of artists who were in some way or other trying to rethink the artist's relation to society, and the controls available to them. As Willats wrote to Victor Burgin: "For this coming issue the platform the magazine will operate from is: 'What hope has the artist got of any social control given this situation or any other', one would not expect a contribution to be specifically about this but the area of Social Control would be essential to the contribution."

POEM BLANC
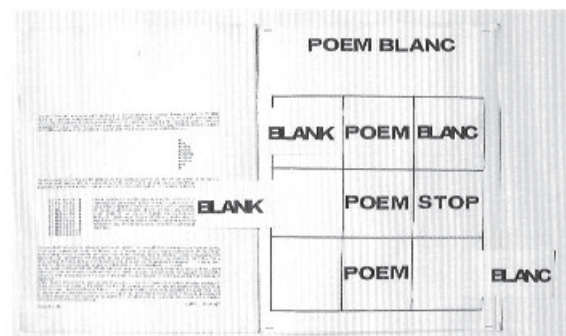
Willats was always interested in moving away from straight text, as he wrote "the demonstration of an argument is wide open in terms of materials … if you wish to use other materials we could discuss the best way to do it." For Issue Three, Joe Tilson contributed a questionnaire, Noel Forster included three slides as 'Light Modulators' inside an envelope that the viewer was invited to project and then superimpose the images and devise their own ways of using them. Peter Cook made a two-page drawing titled 'Control or Choice', Peter Upward a hand made drawing, John Sharkey contributed 'Poem Blanc' (above) with its moveable card and text.

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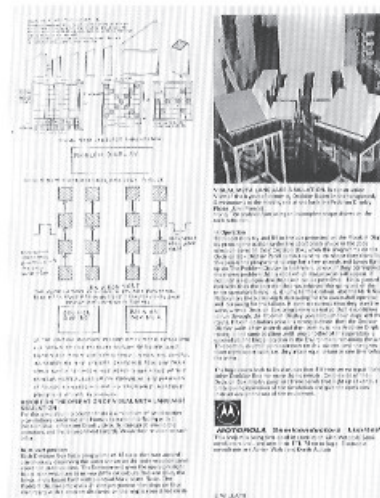
Extract from 'Visual Meta Language Simulation', Stephen Willats, *Control* Issue Six, 1971.

Issue Six was based on the various projects that had made up Willats' 'Cognition Control Project' at Midland Group Gallery including discussion of projects such as 'Man From The Twenty-First Century' or 'Visual Meta Language Simulation' by Willats, Jan Kosirski's 'After-Image Game', Ernest Edmonds 'Communications Game', Jack Shotcott's 'Behavioural Maze Project No.1' or David Bugden's 'Dissemobila'.

By Issue Five, 1969, Willats is looking at ways of developing the content: "While *Control Magazine* will continue to explore conceptual models, the policy with earlier issues being that a platform was set up and artists from different, and perhaps opposed stances being asked to comment or operate from it, with this issue however it is made up of artists and theorists that are either thinking within the area that concerns the magazine or are operating within them… While *Control Magazine* will continue to explore conceptual models and directions, what is felt is needed at the present time is hard information about the actual trialling of these models."

After Issue Five, Willats was considering stopping *Control Magazine*, but the development of his new project, Cognition Control at the Midland Group Gallery in 1972, persuaded him he needed to make a new issue. Consequently, Issue Six resulted from the presentations and projects associated with this event.

In a similar way, Issue Seven, 1973, reflected the activity that took place around The Centre for Behavioural Art (1972–3), that Willats had set up within Gallery House on Exhibition Road. Gallery House was initiated in 1973 by Ziggy Kraus and Rosetta Brooks in response to an invitation from the young German cultural

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Extract from the catalog
Control, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
2018
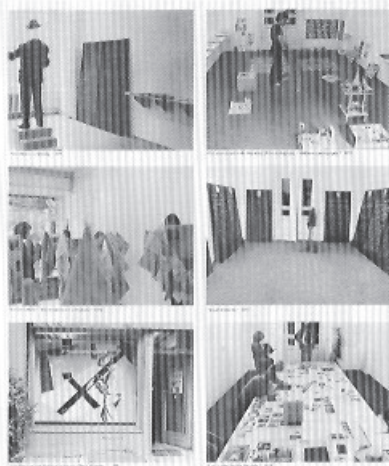
Extract from 'The Artists' Political Work Begins With His Work', Dieter Hacker, *Control* Issue Eleven, 1979.

In a letter to Dieter Hacker, Willats explained that "...the contribution that I would like to get from you concerns the role of the gallery as work, its relation to content and to the audience. I want to bring together in the new issue a number of different practices that I consider to be counter to dominant stereotypes and are self-determined."

attaché for them to show new avant garde art in a building that was owned by the Goethe Institute. Rosetta Brooks gave Willats the use of the third floor and the artists in the magazine were those that were associated with the activities around the Centre for Behavioural Art. The Centre was concerned with developing purposeful frameworks for the artist which attempted to realize the relationships (possible and probable) between the social context, the function proposed by the artist, and the behaviour and language of the audience.

There is more of an emphasis on explanation, on cybernetics, information technology and art practice in texts in the Issues of the 1970s and this probably reflected the political atmosphere and social landscape of that time. Many contributors describe projects they carried out, for example, Kevin Lole's 'Survey of Distance Models of Art' or Peter Dunn and Loraine Lesson's 'Adjusting Culture to Practical Function'. But the other noticeable change is the introduction of contributions from European and American artists. By Issue 9 in 1975 there are texts from Dan Graham, New York; Herve Fischer, Paris and Landfried Schroeper, Heidelberg. Women artists are also represented with Loraine Leeson, Mary Kelly's discussions of the 'Post-Partum Document and Femininity' and writings by Jane Kelly and Fern Tiger.

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By Issue Eleven in 1979 the magazine reflected Willats' time in Berlin as a DAAD Fellow and the theme and sub-title of the Issue is 'Self Organisation—The Expression of Counter Consciousness'. In particular the growth of producer's galleries in Berlin, as alternatives to the market based gallery system, is recorded with Dieter Hacker's text, 'The Artist's Political Work Begins with his Work', Raimund Kummer and Hermann Pitz describe their 'Lutzowstrasse Situation 'along with the co-operative, Galerie in Friedrichstrasse's 'The Association for Research in to the Full Employment of the Unnoticed'.

By Issue Thirteen, 1982, the magazine again changes radically, Willats is writing to Tony Bevan saying, "I think the magazine will be a radical departure from the heavily theoretical issues of the 70s and will be more visually expressive."

There was no editorial to this issue, but it was made up of works by artists—with the group of young sculptors around the Lisson Gallery predominant—produced specially for the magazine to reflect the changing cultural sensibilities of the time and the artists were asked to contribute visual and text statements about their practice. Many of the contributions were purely visual such as those by Bill Woodrow, Kate Blacker, Sue Arrowsmith and Tony Cragg and others featured some hand-made element such as the orange paint by Glenys Johnson or the blue plastic beetle made by Anish Kapoor. This beetle was then glued into the magazine and some blue dye scattered over it. It could lead to certain problems

Cover: Issue Thirteen, 1982

Control Magazine frequently had an element of the hand made. The covers of Issues Six to Twelve were silkscreen printed at 5 London Mews by Willats with the assistance of various artist friends. Issue Thirteen had a red cross individually painted by Willats and this hand painted mark was repeated in the blue circle on the cover of Issue Fourteen.

The beetle used to create the artwork page made by Anish Kapoor in Issue Thirteen.

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Extract from the catalog
Control, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
2018

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Endless
Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
2018

BALICE HERTLING
GALERIE

Strange Attractor No. 23, 2013 (Detail) / Fotoabzüge, Acrylfarbe, Fotofarbe, Bleistift auf Papier / 84 x 132 cm
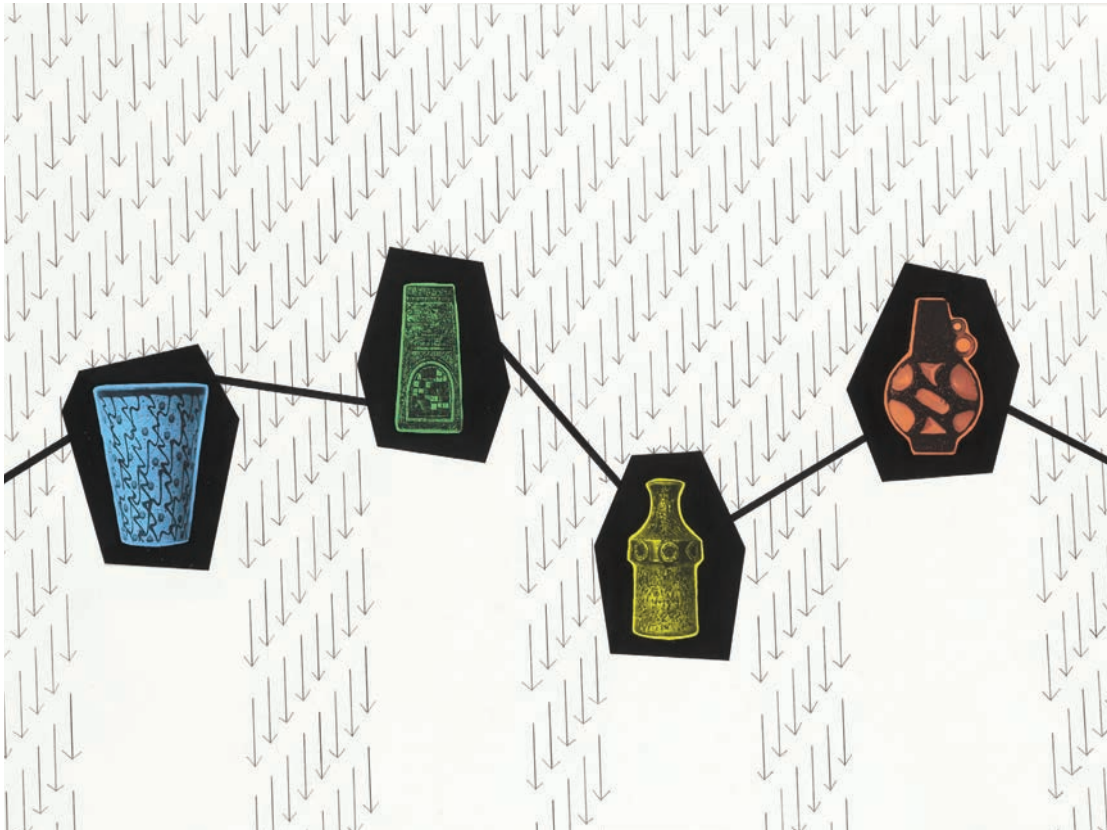
STEPHEN WILLATS
ENDLESS

GALERIE
THOMAS
SCHULTE

27. JANUAR – 10. MÄRZ 2018
ERÖFFNUNG FREITAG, 26. JANUAR, 19ᵒᵒ – 21ᵒᵒ UHR

Mit „ENDLESS" präsentiert die Galerie Thomas Schulte die achte Einzelausstellung von Stephen Willats. Die Ausstellung mit Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1977 bis heute zeigt Filme, Collagen sowie Zeichnungen, in denen er sich immer wieder mit der Frage beschäftigt, wie Menschen mit den Objekten und Symbolen ihrer Umgebung umgehen, welche Beziehung sie zu ihnen aufbauen, sie sich aneignen, umdeuten und transformieren.

Seit den 1960er Jahren gilt Stephen Willats als einer der wichtigsten Vertreter der internationalen Konzeptkunst in England. Seinen Fokus richtet der Künstler auf die Untersuchung urbaner Zustände anhand von Kommunikationsprozessen, Netzwerkbildungen und Strukturen. Er blickt in seiner Arbeit auf den persönlichen Lebensraum und die individuellen Werte jedes Einzelnen, wie dieser seine Umgebung empfindet, sie definiert und für sich gestaltet. Dabei geht es jedoch nicht nur um das Verhältnis sozialer Gruppen und Individuen untereinander, sondern auch um die Beziehung zu den Zeichensystemen, die in Form von Architekturen, Objekten und Geräuschen täglich auf uns einwirken und unser persönliches und gesellschaftliches Ich prägen.

Die in der Ausstellung gezeigten 18 Arbeiten auf Papier hängen auf einer Wandzeichnung aus schwarmartig gruppierten, gleichförmigen Pfeilen. Zwei Berliner Arbeiten, die 1983 in den modernistischen Siedlungskomplexen des Märkischen Viertels und in Gropiusstadt entstanden sind, sind Bestandteil der Serie „Tower Block Drawings". Es handelt sich um eine mit Farb- und Bleistiften bemalte und mit Pfeilen durchzogene Collage aus Fotografien, die kreisförmig um die Hochhäuser angeordnet wurden. Fotografiert wurden die Bewohner und ihre Dinge, von denen sie in ihrem privaten Lebensbereich umgeben sind – wie beispielsweise Telefon, Fernseher, Esswaren und allerlei Nippes. Objekte, die sie mögen, die sie brauchen und zu ihrem Lebensraum gehören, die modern sind beziehungsweise waren und die ihren Besitzern ein modernes Lebensgefühl gaben. Während hier reale Beziehungen collagiert werden, schafft Willats in der Serie „Buildings and Vases" neue. Die Vasen sind in diesen Arbeiten so monumental wie die Hochhäuser, denen sie gegen-übergestellt werden. Auf struktureller Ebene könnte man sagen, dass Gebäude wie Gefäße sind, die etwas in sich aufnehmen können. So wird das Hochhaus, das Willats aufgrund seiner kontroversen Struktur vielfach in seinem Werk verhandelt und ihm als Untersuchungsgegenstand dient, mit seiner reduktiven und modernistischen Fassade gleichermaßen zum Objekt, das jedoch ein höchst komplexes und zelluläres Innere hat: mit Menschen, die dort tatsächlich leben und individuelle Realitäten schaffen. In Werken der Serie „Conceptual Tower" hingegen zeigt Willats mit intensiver Farbigkeit in die Fläche und ins Geometrische abstrahierte Objekte und Gebäude, die er mit feinen Pfeilen verbindet. Sie bilden eine weitere Variante seines diagrammatischen Systems, das Transformations-, Beziehungs- und Kommunikationsmodelle abbildet oder auch erfindet. Mit ihrem eindeutigen Titel erscheint die vierteilige Arbeit *Life in Various Forms* geradezu als Manifest des Künstlers.

Willats hat für die Ausstellung einen Film mit dem Titel *ENDLESS* geschaffen. Der Film nimmt Bezug auf die Gedankenwelt des österreichischen Kybernetikers und Philosophen Heinz von Förster, dessen Konzepte und Begriffe für Willats Arbeit sehr wichtig sind. Förster beschreibt eine unbekannte und unsichtbare Kraft als Motor in Situationen, die man nicht lenken oder vollkommen verstehen kann, die jeder sich jedoch durch Kontextualisierung individuell aneignet.

Obwohl Willats' ästhetisch strenge und zugleich anziehend bunte Sprache seiner quasi wissenschaftlichen Diagramme bekannt zu sein scheint, bleibt sie uneindeutig, weil sie letztlich die Schöpfung eines Künstlers ist.

Stephen Willats, geboren 1943, lebt und arbeitet in London. Zu Willats' wichtigsten Einzelausstellungen zählen „Human Right" im MIMA Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (2017), „Man From The Twenty-First Century" im Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2015), „Surfing with the Attractor" in der South London Gallery (2012), „Counterconsciousness" im Badischen Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (2010), „Multiple Clothing: Message Interaction Exchange" (1965-1998) in der Tate Modern, London (2006), „How the World Is and How It Could Be" im Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen (2006), „Live in your Head" in der Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2000), „Buildings and People" in der Berlinischen Galerie (1993), „Meta Filter and Related Works" in der Tate Gallery, London (1982), „4 Inseln in Berlin" in der Neuen Nationalgalerie, Berlin (1981), „Concerning our Present Way of Living" im Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1980) und „Concerning Our Present Way of Living", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1979). Willats war außerdem teilnehmend in unzähligen Gruppenausstellungen u.a. im San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2008), im Ludwig Museum, Köln (2007), im FRAC Rhones-Alpes (1997) und FRAC Haute Normandie (1996) sowie bei Biennalen in Berlin, Paris und Venedig (1979, 1982, 2004). Seit 1962 ist Willats Gründer und Redakteur des Control Magazine.
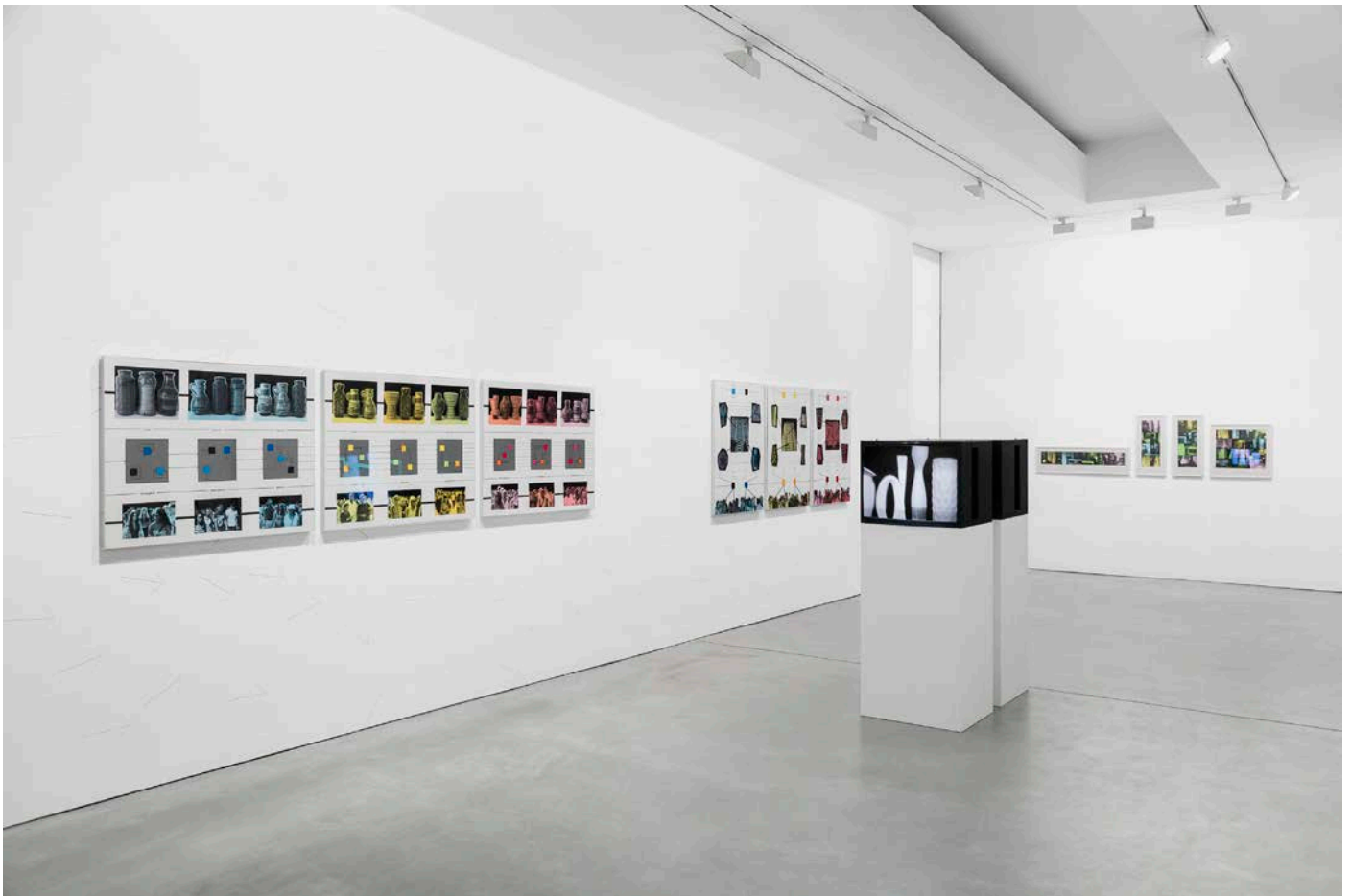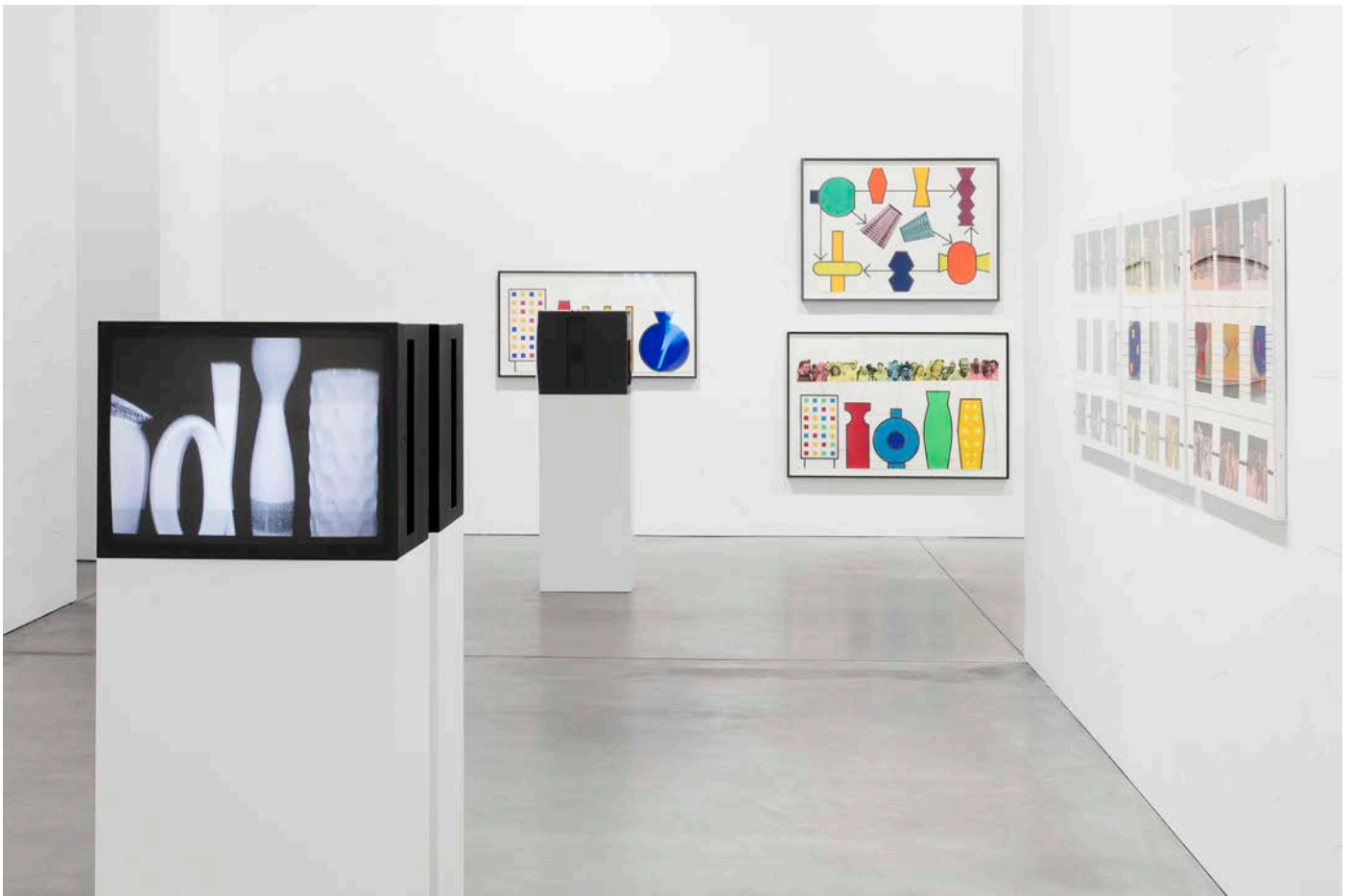
STEPHEN WILLATS – JANUAR 2018

Exhibition view
Endless, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
2018

Credit : © hiepler, brunier

Exhibition view
Endless, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
2018

Credit : © hiepler, brunier

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Endless, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
2018

Credit : © hiepler, brunier

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition view
Endless, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany
2018

Credit : © Mathias Schorman

Conscious, Unconscious Continuous Discontinuous
2013
3 panels, photographic prints, photographic dye, acrylic, ink, Letraset text on card
(3x) 81.5 x 103 cm each (32 x 40.5 in. each)
Framed: 82.5 x 104 x 2.6 cm (32 1/2 x 41 x 1 in.)

Credit : © Mathias Schorman

In Two Minds
2010
3 panels, photographic prints, photographic dye, acrylic, ink, Letraset text on card
(3x) 107 x 76 cm each (42 x 29.9 in. each)
Framed: 274.32 x 195.58 x 6.6 cm (108 x 77 x 2 2/3 in.)

Credit : © Mathias Schorman

Life in Various Forms
1994
4 panels, photographic prints, photographic dye, acrylic, Letraset
text on card
(4x) 84 x 57 cm each / 33 x 222.4 in each | (4x) 84 x 57 cm each / 33 x
222.4 in each
Framed: 87 x 60 x 1.2 cm | 34 1/4 x 23 2/3 x 1/2 in

Credit : © Mathias Schorman

In Transition Series No. 1
2017
photographic prints, photographic dye, acrylic, pencil on paper
67.5 x 133 cm (26 1/2 x 52 1/3 in.) - Framed: 78.5 x 144 x 5 cm (31 x 56 2/3 x 2 in.)

In Transition Series No. 2
2017
photographic prints, photographic dye, acrylic, pencil on paper
75 x 127.5 cm (29 1/2 x 50 1/4 in.) - Framed: 86 x 134 x 5 cm (33 3/4 x 52 3/4 x 2 in.)

Credit : © Mathias Schorman

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Space & Photography
Museum der Moderne Mönchsberg
Salzburg, Austria, 2017

Exhibition view
Space & Photography, Museum der Moderne Mönchsberg, Salzburg, Austria
2017

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition view
Space & Photography, Museum der Moderne Mönchsberg, Salzburg, Austria
2017

**BALICE
HERTLING**
GALERIE

Exhibition
Extra Bodies. The Use of the 'Other Body' in Contemporary Art
Migros Museum
Zurich,Switzerland, 2017

STEPHEN WILLATS

EXTRA BODIES –
THE USE OF THE 'OTHER BODY'
IN CONTEMPORARY ART

November 18, 2017–February 04, 2018

Ai Weiwei, Vanessa Beecroft, Guy Ben-Ner, Oscar Bony, Christoph Büchel, Clegg & Guttmann, Gino de Dominicis, Maria Eichhorn, Jens Haaning, Yves Klein, Teresa Margolles, Yoshua Okón, Yuri Pattison, L.A. Raeven, Edwin Sánchez, Christoph Schlingensief, Santiago Sierra, Jonas Staal, Stephen Willats, Carey Young, Artur Żmijewski

The exhibition sheds light on a phenomenon in art that first rises to prominence in the 1990s and then explodes in the early years of the new millennium: the artistic practice of resorting to and deploying 'extra bodies'. Artists select these 'other bodies' because of their specific social or biosocial role—which is why they may also be characterized as extras. All works on view share a basic 'performative' or 'theatrical' quality. Strikingly, the viewer is neither drawn into the action nor invited to participate. Unlike many artistic productions discussed under the rubric of relational aesthetics, these pieces do not demand his active engagement. Taking up both exhibition floors at the museum, the extensive group exhibition featuring numerous works from the collection scrutinizes the various modes in which extras with their social and biosocial roles are presented, and function, in art.

The show assembles major positions making use of 'other bodies', though it does not aspire to draw up a comprehensive canon of this thematic field. It eschews the real presence of the 'other body' in the gallery, although such presence is a constitutive element in the genesis of the kind of work it examines, instead focusing on the different modes of presentation that allow for a discussion of the phenomenon of the 'other body' in contemporary art from a variety of angles. In most of the works, the human being takes the stage not as an individual but as part of a group or formation, a 'collective body'. Conspicuously, the growing visibility of the 'extra body' in art coincides with the deregulation of markets in the early 1990s. The defining feature of this development is that human labor, thanks to a global expansion, becomes ever more inexpensive — a phenomenon Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello have portrayed as the "New Spirit of Capitalism". Maurizio Lazzarato has trenchantly pinpointed their basic hypothesis, noting that life, in today's economy, has become a currency.

The extensive group exhibition is on view of both gallery floors at the museum and includes several pieces from the collection. The majority of the works on the ground floor were created in the first decade of the twenty-first century; this section is rounded out by selected examples of historic art. The upstairs gallery is reserved for three artistic positions (Jonas Staal, Guy Ben-Ner, and Artur Żmijewski) that reflect on the theme of the 'other body' in light of the contemporary situation. Created over the course of the past year, these works address the migrant body, which, as Mark Terkessidis has argued, may be regarded as "Westerners' unloved 'shadow ego': globally oriented, mobile, flexible, willing to make sacrifices." No other 'extra body' has figured more prominently in the social and political debates of the past few years. The role it plays can be read in the mirror of socioeconomic changes and is integral to the discursive field around biopolitics, globalization, and neoliberalism.

BALICE HERTLING
GALERIE

MIGROSMUSEUM
für Gegenwartskunst

For the project *Fairytale* (2007), **Ai Weiwei** (b. 1957 in Beijing, China) sent 1000 Chinese citizens for a month to Kassel 'cost-free'. The artist includes himself among the 1000, thus producing the number 1001 – a number that has special significance due to its connection to fairytale literature. This project evoked two contradictory Western notions which have been made current by globalisation: the fear of mass immigration and foreign domination, but also curiosity about foreign cultures. An integral part of the project was the inclusion of 1001 wooden chairs from the Qing dynasty, available for use in all the exhibition spaces. Due to their serial arrangement and their large number, the chairs appeared to be identical and industrially manufactured. However, upon closer inspection, they each had unique characteristics – a feature of the craftsmanship from the Qing dynasty. The chairs represent each individual body, while also suggesting a shift in values taking place in Chinese culture. Similarly, the 1001 portraits represent each person as an individual, but due to their quantity, they appear uniform and replaceable.

The works of **Vanessa Beecroft** (b. 1969 in Genoa, Italy) frequently comprise formations of young women who have to stand still for hours in a composed spatial arrangement – a frozen corps that eventually begins to fall apart when the individual participants become exhausted. The young women whom Beecroft employs for her performances are often professional models. The very title of her work, *VB35: Show* (1998), already indicates an act of showing, or exhibiting, the models, whose nakedness further reinforces the idea of being exhibited. Beecroft controls the situation, down to the last detail, by means of very strict instructions for the participants. She reproduces the models' everyday work life, which consists of waiting and posing. Just like the fashion industry, Beecroft has the models at her command: they are puppets without individuality, a screen upon which others can project their ideals and fantasies. Here, the artist takes a value system oriented towards beauty and luxury and transfers it to the art world.

The film *Escape Artists* (2016) by **Guy Ben-Ner** (b. 1969 in Ramat Gan, Israel) documents a series of film workshops that the artist conducted at the refugee camp Holot in Israel over approximately two years. The camp, situated in the Negev Desert, functions as a 'detention centre' for around 500 migrants. The famous documentary film *Nanook of the North* (1922) by Robert J. Flaherty, which portrays the way of life of the Inuit Nanook, served as a starting point for the workshops. In the study of cinema, this film is of particular significance for its cutting and editing techniques and also because it represents an early example of a critical analysis of the politics of representation with regard to the 'other' and construction thereof in the medium of film. In his work, Ben-Ner explores the issue of using cinematic documentation to convey and shape reality. For the protagonists of *Escape Artists*, mastering film's techniques of manipulation provided a kind of escape and an opportunity to reclaim self-empowerment.

For the piece *The Working Class Family* (1968/1999), Argentine artist **Oscar Bony** (b. 1941 in Posadas, Argentina, d. 2002 in Buenos Aires, Argentina) hired a working-class family to be put on display in the exhibition space. In the tradition of the tableau vivant, the family was placed on a pedestal. For his participation, the family's sole breadwinner, Luis Ricardo Rodríguez, a die-caster, earned twice as much as he would have from his normal job. *The Working Class Family* was exhibited for the first time in 1968, in an era of mobilisation against the military and subsequent repressions. The political unrest and changes in economic policy caused the general wage level to drop, with serious consequences for the working class in particular. This piece raises issues of social class and exploitation, thematising the distribution of employment as an instrument of power in capitalist society.

Along with his large-scale installations that transform and pervade existing architectural structures, **Christoph Büchel** (b. 1966 in Basel, Switzerland) is also known for using extras in his works. For his contribution to the Biennale of Sydney in 2008, Büchel established a thematic link to punk rock subculture by arranging for a group of elderly women to practice the Sex Pistols song, *God Save the Queen* (1977), which was originally to be called *No Future*, in a band rehearsal scenario. The rehearsal session was recorded on video and eventually presented as an exhibit under the title *No Future* (2008). In this work, Büchel not only plays with the biosocial role of the extras by contrasting the women's ageing bodies with the youthful, rebellious song, but he also plays with Australia's history as a former colony.

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

MIGROSMUSEUM
für Gegenwartskunst

AN INSTITUTION OF THE MIGROS CULTURE PERCENTAGE

One of the main groups of works by artist duo **Clegg & Guttmann** (Michael Clegg, b. 1957 in Dublin, Ireland, and Martin Guttmann, b. 1957 in Jerusalem, Israel) consists of single, double and group portraits which take their place in a line of art history and iconography that extends from Titian and Caravaggio to Frans Hals and Rembrandt. Meticulously staged in a highly artificial way, these portraits thematise the societal power relationships and instruments associated with this historical form of representation. In the monumental photograph *The Art Consultants* (1986/2015), the artists arranged a number of curators in the foreground of a mirror-inverted copy of the painting *Einzug des Senats in das neue Stadthaus am 26. 10. 1897* (1904) by Hugo Vogel. The subjects of the photograph all work as art consultants for various company collections – for instance, the tableau features the collection purchasers from AT&T and Citibank. With their 'family portrait', Clegg & Guttmann bring together a group of people whose control over finances means that they have a powerful role in the art market and thus significantly shape the art world.

The work of **Gino de Dominicis** (b. 1947 in Ancona, Italy, d. 1998 in Rome, Italy) is characterised by his interest in themes like immortality, mythology and the invisible. For *Seconda soluzione di immortalità (l'universo è immobile)*, his contribution to the 1972 Venice Biennale, Gino de Dominicis integrated a young man with Down's syndrome, Paolo Rosa, who spent the exhibition's opening hours sitting in the corner of a room and looking at three earlier works by de Dominicis. This piece only featured Paolo Rosa on the opening day, June 8, 1972. The artist's presentation of a young man with Down's syndrome in the exhibition space caused a huge scandal. The photograph that documents this act shows a visitor, visibly unsettled, pulling off her glasses, apparently unable to deal with the real presence of such a 'body'. The media scandal triggered by this act eventually led to the removal of the work. Not only can this 1972 piece be read against the tradition of the tableau vivant, but also with regard to the politics of representation that regulate the biosocial roles of certain individuals.

The art of **Maria Eichhorn** (b. 1962 in Bamberg, Germany) questions the fixed norms that regulate everyday life and art. In her works, which are based on extensive research and analysis, she re-enacts established procedures, renders them ineffective, and thus provides an opportunity for critical scrutiny. For 輸入禁制品 / *Prohibited Imports* (2003), the artist sent various publications on subjects like sexuality, AIDS and gender issues to Japan by mail. The Japanese customs authorities censored the book *Mapplethorpe: Die große Werkmonographie* by erasing the male genitalia with a sanding pen. All the other books remained uncensored. Here, the customs officials can be described as extras, acting in their social role as an executive arm of the Japanese legislature. A second copy of the book, which was also sent from Berlin to Japan, remained uncensored. The presentation of the two Mapplethorpe books side by side makes it clear that the censored areas become the centre of attention in an unintentionally humorous manner as a result of the act of deletion, while also emphasizing the arbitrariness and opacity of censorship methods.

In his artistic works, **Jens Haaning** (b. 1965 in Copenhagen, Denmark) explores themes surrounding work culture and immigration policy. In one of his most famous pieces, he installed a textile factory – complete with staff, many of them with migration backgrounds, at the art institution Vleeshal in 1996, thereby introducing reality into the art space. Haaning also incorporated the topic of immigration into the series of twelve photographs exhibited here, the titles of which are male first names such as 'Murat', 'Hakan' and 'Faysal', which allude to a different cultural sphere. The realistic, full-body portraits, which are similar to how fashion magazines portray urban street style, show the young men mostly standing in cool, expectant poses. Each person's name appears at the edge of the image along with a detailed list of the brands and prices of their clothes. Thus, the bodies of these people, who have a migration background, are given an economic value and read in terms of a value ratio.

Yves Klein (b. 1928 in Nice, France, d. 1962 in Paris, France) is particularly known for his monochrome visual compositions in an ultramarine blue that he developed from the late 1950s onwards. At around the same time, Klein also began his series *Anthropométries* (1960). On March 9, 1960, Count d'Arquin put his gallery for international contemporary art in Paris at the artist's disposal: For 20 minutes, three naked women repeated the same action – first covering each other in ultramarine blue paint, then pressing their bodies against sheets of paper. The imprints of their bodies remained on the white sheets. For this work, the artist adopted the role of someone conducting an experiment, controlling the situation, but not coming into direct contact with the models or the paint. Here, the imprint became an image of a reality, as well as its indexical trace. Yves Klein is an early example of a visual artist who worked with 'other bodies'.

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For her works, the artist and forensic physician **Teresa Margolles** (b. 1963 in Culiacán, Mexico) often uses bodily remains or materials that have come into contact with dead bodies. The furniture in *Mesa y dos bancos* (2013) was made from a mixture of cement and the blood-soaked earth on which the body of a person who was murdered at the northern Mexican border once lay. This work can be read as a memorial to the extreme violence in the northern Mexican border city of Ciudad Juárez and the drug war that is raging there, the victims of which are frequently buried in anonymous mass graves. Margolles puts these bodies' social role (which they cannot discard even in death) at the centre of her works. She attempts to make visible the victims of a corrupt system, driven by capitalism, be they anonymous homeless people, drug dealers or their customers, innocent people caught in the middle, or the young female factory workers of Ciudad Juárez. The artist shows that these social roles continue to exist even after death and makes it undeniably clear to the observer that those who cannot live in dignity are unlikely to be treated with it after their demise.

Yoshua Okón (b. 1970 in Mexico City, Mexico) has been addressing the relationship between truth and fiction since the 1990s. In his seemingly sociological experiments, carried out on camera, he combines staging with documentation to question a habitual perception of reality and morality. In the filmed tableau vivant *Freedom Fries: Still Life* (2014), the observer sees a heavily overweight person lying on a table. The way in which the artist has arranged the body not only renders the performer anonymous (no face can be seen), but also makes the body mass appear as amorphous material. The site of the act is a branch of the fast food chain McDonald's, as can be determined from the company's logo on the window pane, which is being cleaned by an employee. The artist does not add any commentary, thus allowing a void to emerge that can be filled independently by the observer.

In the video *Outsourced Views, Visual Economies* (2013–2014), artist **Yuri Pattison** (b. 1986 in Dublin, Ireland) takes as his theme work that is performed in the digital domain. For this project, Pattison used *Amazon Mechanical Turk*, a platform for facilitating 'micro-work' on the Internet. The work assignments posted here, such as complex search tasks for instance, are carried out by anonymous contractors who are usually paid just a few cents. Pattisson posted assignments that required workers to take a photo of the view from the window nearest their computer. Although this type of assignment is practically forbidden on the platform, because the workers should remain as anonymous as possible, the artist managed to build a collection of images that can be seen in the video as a visual sequence showing workplace scenery that ranges from views of tropical nature to grey cityscapes. With this deployment of extras, Pattison shows how work is changing in our digitised world; he visualises the global digital job market by revealing the surroundings of the anonymous workers as they carry out their poorly paid, closely monitored work.

L.A. Raeven (Liesbeth & Angélique Raeven, b. 1971 in Heerlen, the Netherlands) engage the female body for their works. For *Test Room* (2000), a piece originally exhibited as a performance, they used a casting process in which the central factor was not the casting itself, but rather the time that the candidates spent waiting in the anteroom. The eight models who took part did not receive any further information about the project. They were each given an identification number, had to strip down to their underwear, and made to wait in a room that they were not allowed to leave. In their role as a model, as a changeable, perfect body surface that oscillates between self-determination and heteronomy, the participants were particularly suitable for this experimental arrangement – one that can also be found in numerous television formats. Casting shows reflect society's development towards a willingness for the individual to constantly improve herself and to be evaluated while remaining good-humoured throughout.

The works of artist **Edwin Sánchez** (b. 1976 in Bogotá, Colombia) oscillate between reportage and art. He conducts field research in the urban space and his artworks frequently feature bodies that are highly stigmatised by society, such as the homeless, prostitutes or drug addicts. In the piece exhibited here, *Clases de Cuchillo (Knife Lessons)* (2008), the artist accompanies Jimmy, a street thief. In three short segments in the style of a video tutorial that uses instructional drawings, Jimmy explains the various types and functions of knives, how they can be made from scrap metal, and how to most efficiently use them to kill someone. The observer feels sympathy for Jimmy, who reveals his knowledge honestly, while also being repulsed by the brutality that he describes.

For his artistic projects, be they films or plays, **Christoph Schlingensief** (b. 1960 in Oberhausen, Germany, d. 2010 in Berlin, Germany) frequently used an 'other body' that was assigned a biosocial or social role stigmatised by society. These figures did not take on any acting role in the traditional sense and were not able to discard their biosocial or social role in the context of the theatre. The cinematic installation *Ohne Titel (Hasenverwesung; Drosophila Melanogaster; Holländer 2C. Ausweitung der Dunkelphase; Fremdverstümmelung)* (2007) consists of several films that originated from Schlingensief's opera productions, of which *Fremdverstümmelung* is an example of Schlingensief's handling of 'other bodies'. For this piece, produced in connection with the opera project *Freax*, the artist thematically incorporated Tod Browning's film *Freaks* (1932), in which the main characters are people with mental and physical impairments who end up taking revenge on the 'normal' bodies of others for the humiliations to which they were subjected.

The conceptual works of **Santiago Sierra** (b. 1966 in Madrid, Spain) are characterised by the use of specific bodies, particularly those belonging to societally and politically marginalised groups, whose social roles are defining factors for the artwork. For *Object measuring 600 x 57 x 52 cm constructed to be held horizontally to a wall* (2001), Sierra hired two asylum seekers, who were placed in the middle of an exhibition space, to hold an 'object measuring 600 x 57 x 52 cm' perpendicular to the wall. Sierra's concept for this work, which was made accessible to the visitors as a wall text, describes the employment contracts: According to Swiss labour law, asylum seekers are not normally allowed to work. However, the authorities do tolerate it when no workers with a legal permit can be found for the position in question, which mainly applies to jobs considered 'sub-standard'.

The artistic and political organisation *New World Summit*, founded by **Jonas Staal** (b. 1981 in Zwolle, the Netherlands), can be described as an 'alternative' parliament that provides a platform for political and legal groups who are currently excluded from democratic processes. Its goal is to oppose a concept of democracy that the initiators criticise for being committed to expansionist, military or colonial purposes. In 2015, Staal was invited to Rojava to design a public parliament building for the city of Dêrik and to hold a *New World Summit*. Rojava, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria, which was declared an autonomous territory on March 17 2016, is a result of the political autonomization of the region during the civil war in Syria. The installation in the exhibition space documents this 'project'. In this setting, the project becomes an opportunity to document and reflect upon these geopolitical changes, while also providing a forum to discuss the principles and authority of nation states and the ways in which they act upon 'other bodies'.

Since the 1960s, **Stephen Willats** (b. 1943 in London, Great Britain) has been using his socioscientific theories and methods to study the living environment of social communities in the urban space. Much like a sociologist, Willats assembles project teams, conducts interviews and asks questions about life plans, environments, dreams and realities. Willats analyses these and presents his (in part subjectively informed) results in the form of questionnaires, audio tapes, Super-8 films, photographs, collages and texts. *A Difficult Boy in a Concrete Block* (1983) portrays a young man named John, a resident of the Sandridge Court building in the North of London in 1983. The work addresses the conditions of council housing and its restricting effects, as well as the issue of individual lifestyle. Through interviews and photographic documentation Willats foregrounds the individuality of the occupants in his works; he analyses the mechanisms that they have developed as a means of expressing their individuality in opposition to the buildings' uniformity and their forms of self-organisation.

Since the late 1990s, **Carey Young** (b. 1970 in Lusaka, Zambia) has been examining the growing legal structures that are increasingly influencing and shaping the individual and its reality. With her performance-based piece *Obsidian Contract* (2010), Young thematises the disciplining of the body in the 'public space' by the state under the rule of law. Only with the aid of the mirror can the observer decipher the legal agreement that is applied to the wall as mirror-inverted adhesive lettering. The text reads: "By viewing your reflection within this black mirror for longer than ten seconds, you declare and agree that the space visible to you within the mirror is common land, within which the following activities are permitted: Sleeping, loitering, public access, public assembly, sexual activity [...]." By reading this text the observer becomes both a part of the work and the object under scrutiny. The viewers become 'extras' through their involvement in Young's work, which addresses them in their social role as 'common citizens' and legal entities.

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The video *The Singing Lesson II* (2002) by **Artur Żmijewski** (b. 1966 in Radzymin, Poland) is based on an experimental project that involved a group of hearing-impaired youths rehearsing and eventually performing a Bach cantata in St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. Although Żmijewski's work makes formal reference to the conventions of documentary film, no commentary or voiceover explanations are provided. Żmijewski attended the events merely as an observer. After the rather playful rehearsal scenes in the first part of the film, the performance follows, in which a professional soprano now sings the aria from the Bach cantata *Jesu, der du meine Seele*. This creates an element of tension; two principles of humanist society are positioned in relation to each other and remain incompatible: the appreciation of high culture, symbolised by Bach's cantata, and the appreciation of the human being, who, in this case, is impaired. The double trapdoor that Żmijewski opens here is perilous: the observer either accepts the 'beauty' of the atonal cawing and ignores Bach's composition or does exactly the opposite.

For his cinematic work, **Artur Żmijewski** often uses extras with societally stigmatised biosocial roles. His works are characterised by the video camera's ostensibly neutral documentation and by participants who supposedly act freely. The video piece *The Making of* (2013) is the result of a workshop that Żmijewski held in a women's prison near Warsaw. The artist hired a full team, consisting of a hairdresser, a make-up artist, a stylist and a photographer, to give the inmates a 'makeover'. The women were taken out of their grey, everyday prison routine for one afternoon, professionally made up, coiffured and given new clothes – a process that culminated in a short fashion show. In this piece, Żmijewski demonstrates what it means to be in prison: it is not only the loss of freedom of movement, but also the restriction of access to products that help shape individuality.

The makeshift architectures of refugee camps in Berlin and Paris, as well as the (now destroyed) camps in Calais and Grande-Synthe in France, serve as locations for the cinematic work *Glimpse* (2017) by **Artur Żmijewski**. In the first half of this 14-minute film, the temporary homes of these 'other bodies', their belongings and finally the residents themselves are portrayed. Head-on, quasi-documentary visual and narrative rhetoric deliberately turns the refugees into objects of examining gazes once again. In the second part of the film, the artist initiates various performance-based acts with the refugees, which culminate when the artist covers the face of a dark-skinned refugee with white paint – a gesture that can be read as the authoritarian appropriation of the 'other body'. When read consecutively, the gestures of compassion are thus followed by instances of making the extra's body productive, as it is impelled to work, and eventually assimilated to the point of invisibility by means of physical adaptation. In this way, the artist wrenches the observer out of habitual reception patterns and ultimately denies him or her any cathartic release.

Ai Weiwei
Fairytale, 2007
Single-channel video on monitor (color, sound)
152 min.
Courtesy of the artist; Leister Foundation, Switzerland; Erlenmeyer Foundation,
Switzerland and Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing/Lucerne

Ai Weiwei
Fairytale People, 2007
C-Print
16 of 1001 parts: each 100 x 100 cm
Courtesy of the artist; Leister Foundation, Switzerland;
Erlenmeyer Foundation, Switzerland and Galerie Urs Meile,
Beijing/Lucerne
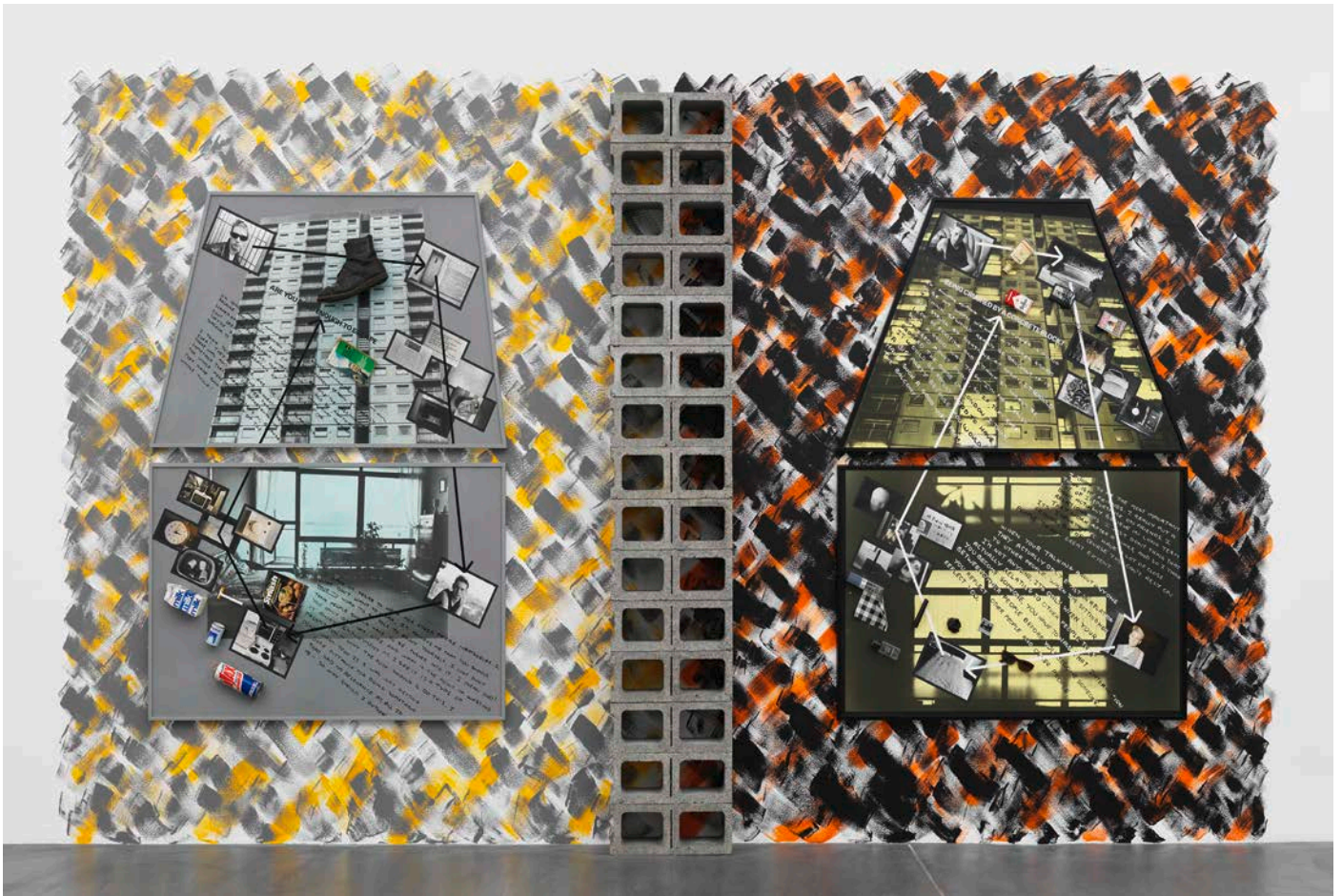
A Difficult Boy in a Concrete Block, 1983
Black and white photographs, photographic dye, Letraset text, acrylic paint, felt pen, objects, concrete blocks
290 x 500 x 17 cm

Credit : © Stefan Altenburger

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Open Codes. Living in Digital Worlds
ZKM | Center for Art and Media
Karlsruhe, Germany, 2017

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition view
Open Codes. Living in Digital Worlds, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany
2017

Photo: Jonas Zilius
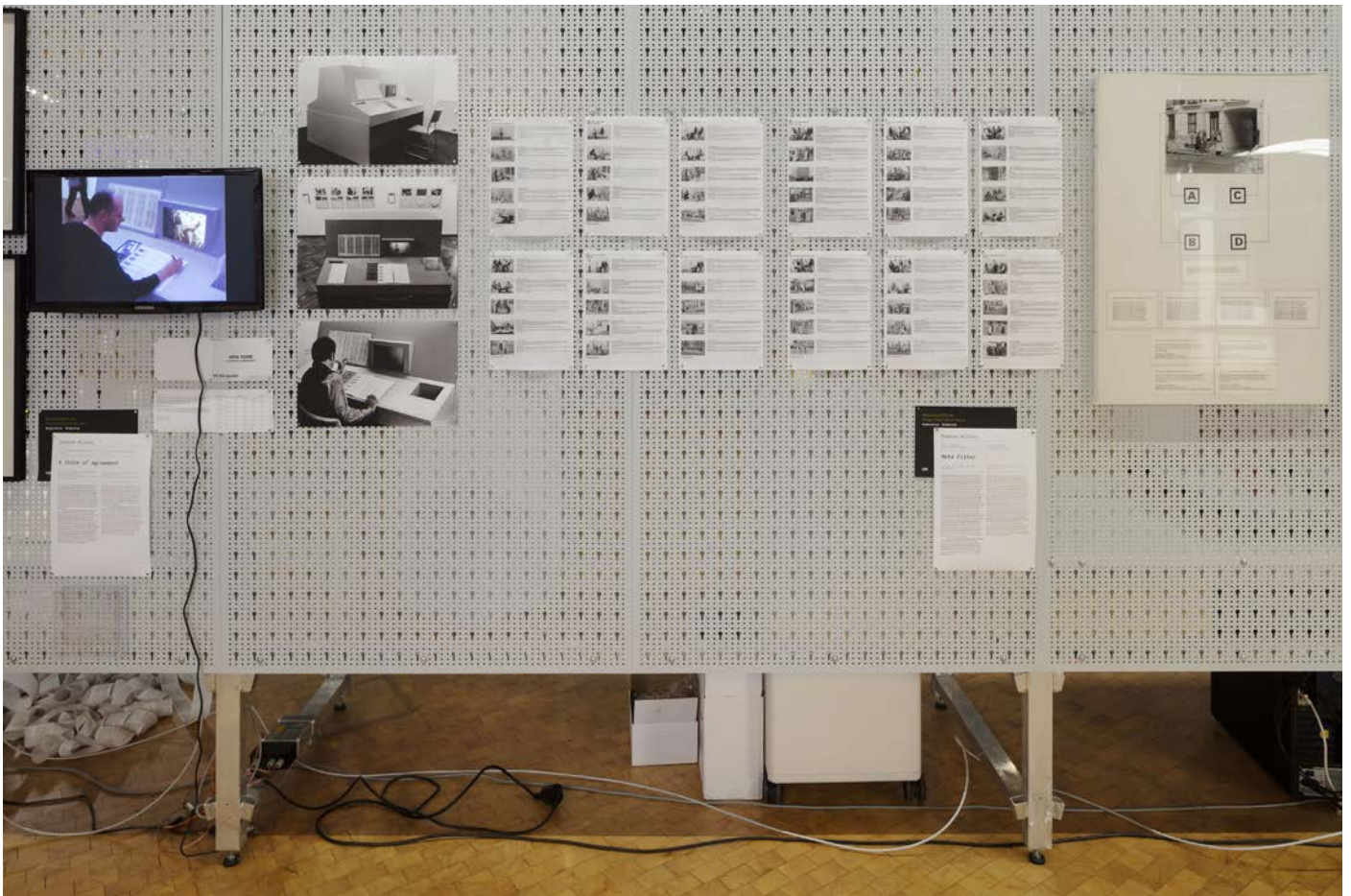
STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Open Codes. Living in Digital Worlds, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany
2017

Photo: Jonas Zilius

Exhibition view
Open Codes. Living in Digital Worlds, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany
2017
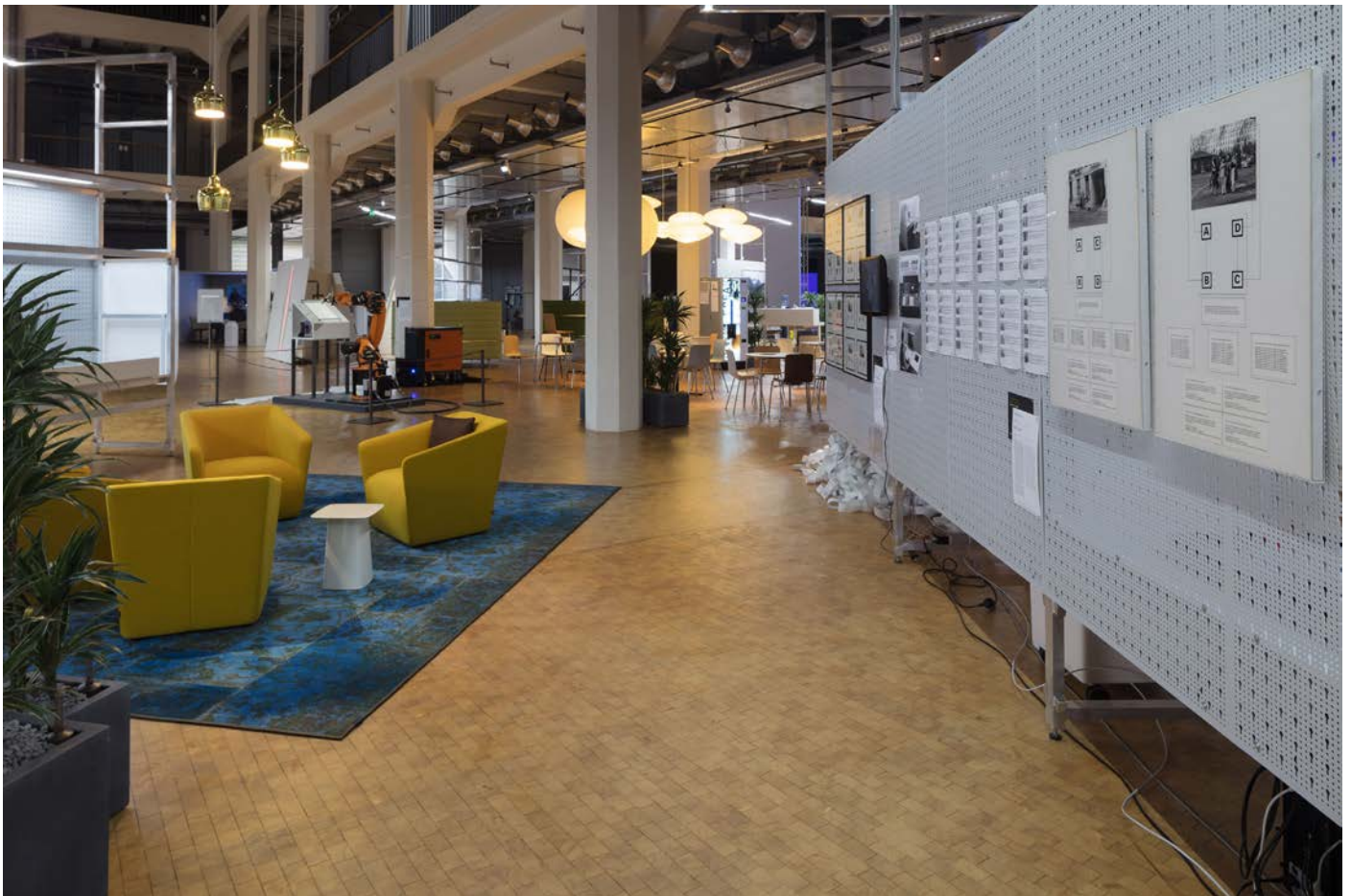
Photo: Jonas Zilius

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Out of Line
THE MEETING
New York, US, 2017

Exhibition view
Out of Line, THE MEETING, New York, US
2017

The old artists, some working today,
are still making an illusion, even
Mondrian, and others whose ideas
were in a three dimentional concept,
worked on canvas constructively
whose ideas were on a kinetic basis.
They also called for colour in three
dimensions but their work was physi-
cally static and the colour of their
materials were accepted to a point.
The end products of their research
was a man-made environment.   Life
does not exist on a two dimentional
basis.   When one walks down a street
the sensation is not only a visual
one, but a tactile and sound ex-
perience.   The artist can no longer
concern himself with illusions, he
must work on a realistic basis.

Exhibition view
Out of Line, THE MEETING, New York, US
2017

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Exhibition view
Out of Line, THE MEETING, New York, US
2017

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition view
Out of Line, THE MEETING, New York, US
2017

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Exhibition view
Out of Line, THE MEETING, New York, US
2017

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Exhibition view
Out of Line, THE MEETING, New York, US
2017

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Exhibition view
Out of Line, THE MEETING, New York, US
2017

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition
Case Study (curated by Isabelle Cornaro) Balice Hertling
Paris, France, 2017

Stephen Willats
Recycling the past
1982
Photographic prints, ink, pencil on paper / Impressions photographiques, encre, crayon sur papier
80 x 130 cm

Exhibition
Case Study (curated by Isabelle Cornaro), Balice Hertling, Paris, France

Stephen Willats
Between Day and Night
1982
Photographic prints, ink, pencil on paper / Impressions photographiques, encre, crayon sur papier
80 x 135 cm

Exhibition
Case Study (curated by Isabelle Cornaro), Balice Hertling, Paris, France

BALICE
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Exhibition
Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation
Stockholm, Sweden, 2016

Exhibition view
Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden
2016

Exhibition view
Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden
2016

Exhibition view
Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden
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Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden
2016

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Exhibition view
Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden
2016

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Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden
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Exhibition view
Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden
2016

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Conversations With Buildings
Galerie Reinhard Hauff
Stuttgart, Germany, 2016

STEPHEN WILLATS

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Exhibition view
Conversations With Buildings, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
2016

Exhibition view
Conversations With Buildings, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
2016

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Exhibition view
Conversations With Buildings, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
2016

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2016

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2016

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2016

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2016

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2016

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Exhibition view
Conversations With Buildings, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
2016

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**BALICE
HERTLING**
GALERIE

Exhibition
Inside The Night
Balice Hertling
Paris, France, 2016

Exhibition view
Inside The Night, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2016

Exhibition view
Inside The Night, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2016

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Inside The Night, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2016

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Exhibition view
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Exhibition view
Inside The Night, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2016

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Exhibition view
Inside The Night, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2016

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Man from the 21st Century
Museo Rufino Tamayo
Oaxaca, Mexico, 2015

Exhibition view
Man from the 21st Century, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Oaxaca, Mexico
2015

Exhibition view
Man from the 21st Century, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Oaxaca, Mexico
2015

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Man from the 21st Century, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Oaxaca, Mexico
2015

Exhibition view
Man from the 21st Century, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Oaxaca, Mexico
2015

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Man from the 21st Century, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Oaxaca, Mexico
2015

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Traucum
Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-Les-Eaux, France, 2014
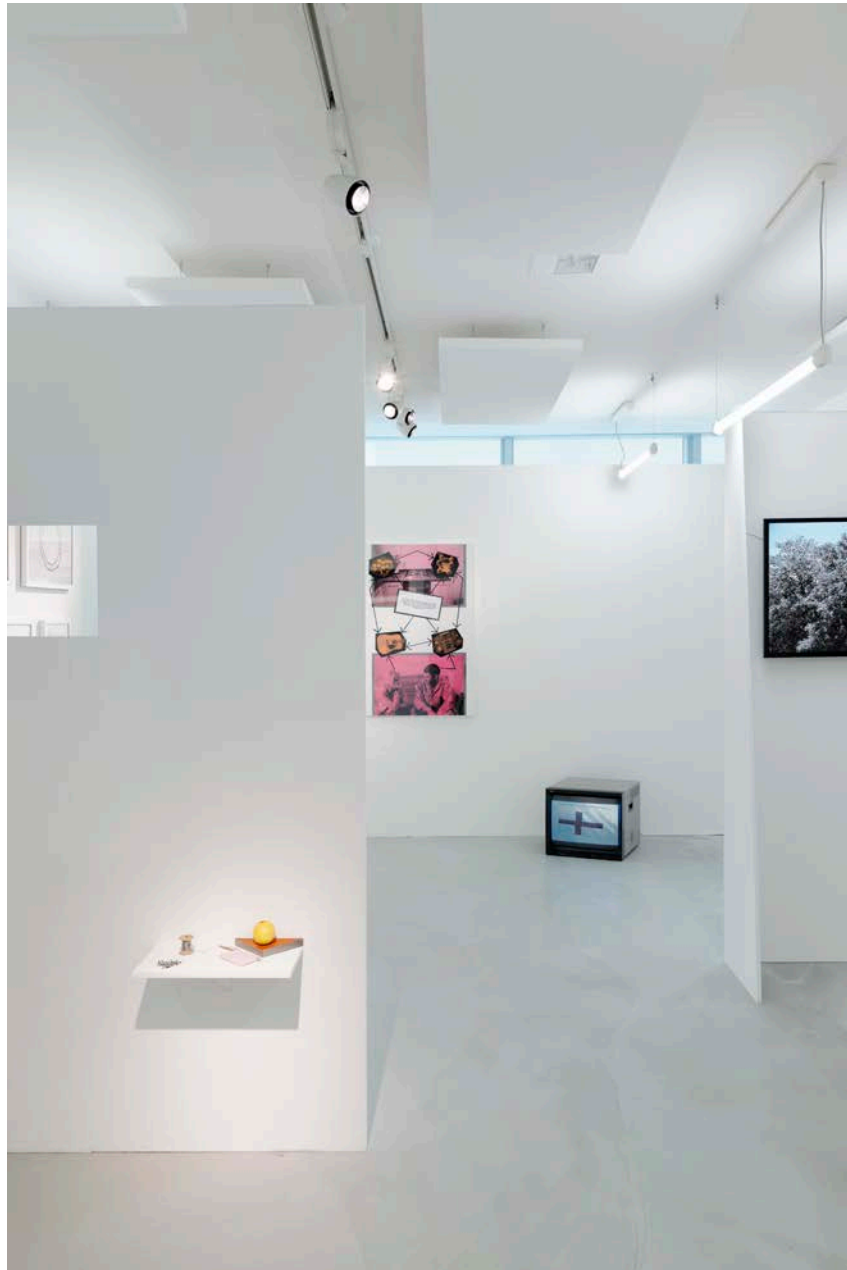
STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Traucum, Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-Les-Eaux, France
2014
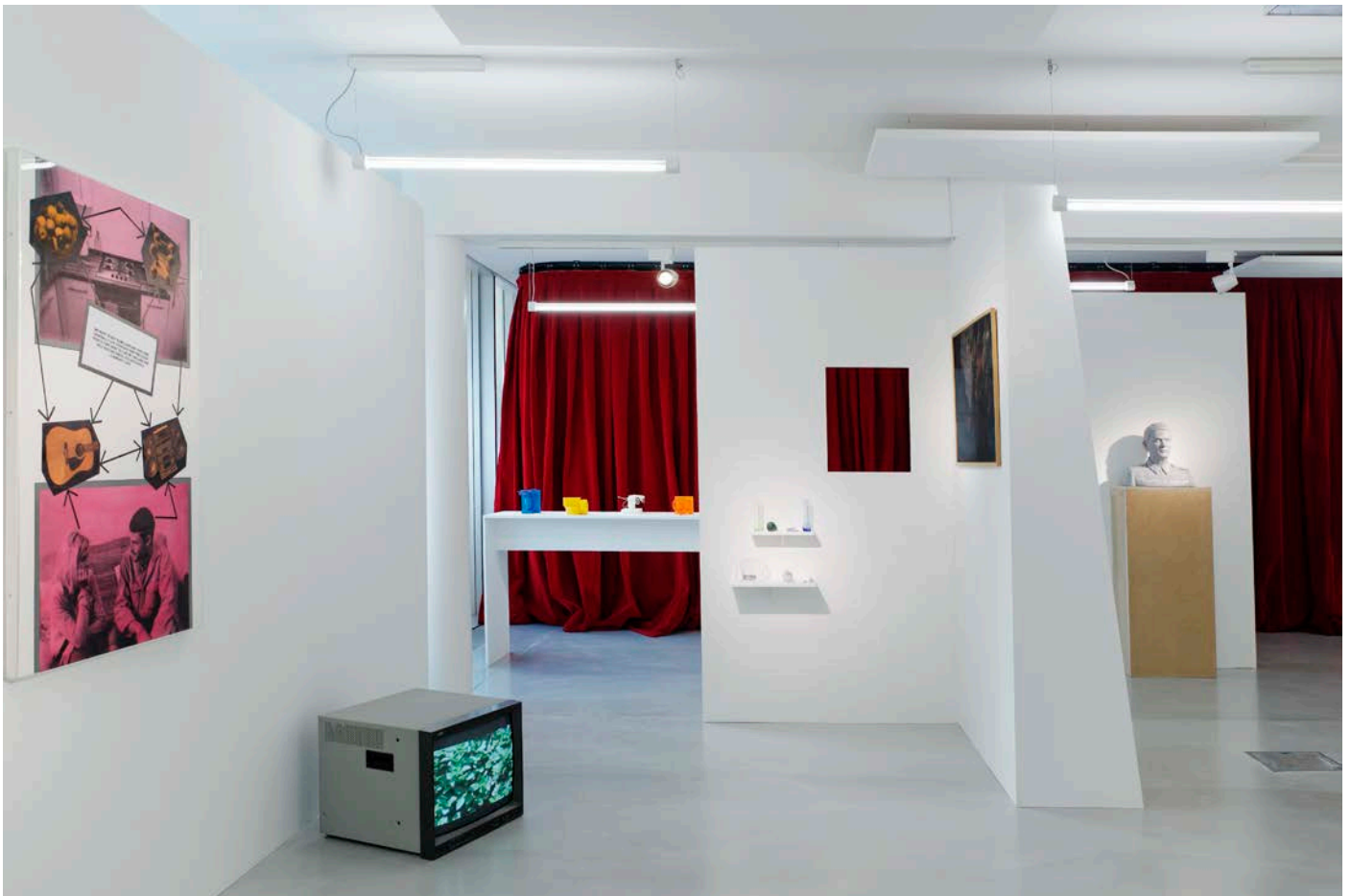
Exhibition view
Traucum, Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-Les-Eaux, France
2014

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Traucum, Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-Les-Eaux, France
2014

Exhibition view
Traucum, Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-Les-Eaux, France
2014

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Control, Stephen Willats 1962 - 69
Raven Row, London, UK, 2014

Exhibition view
Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

Exhibition view
Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
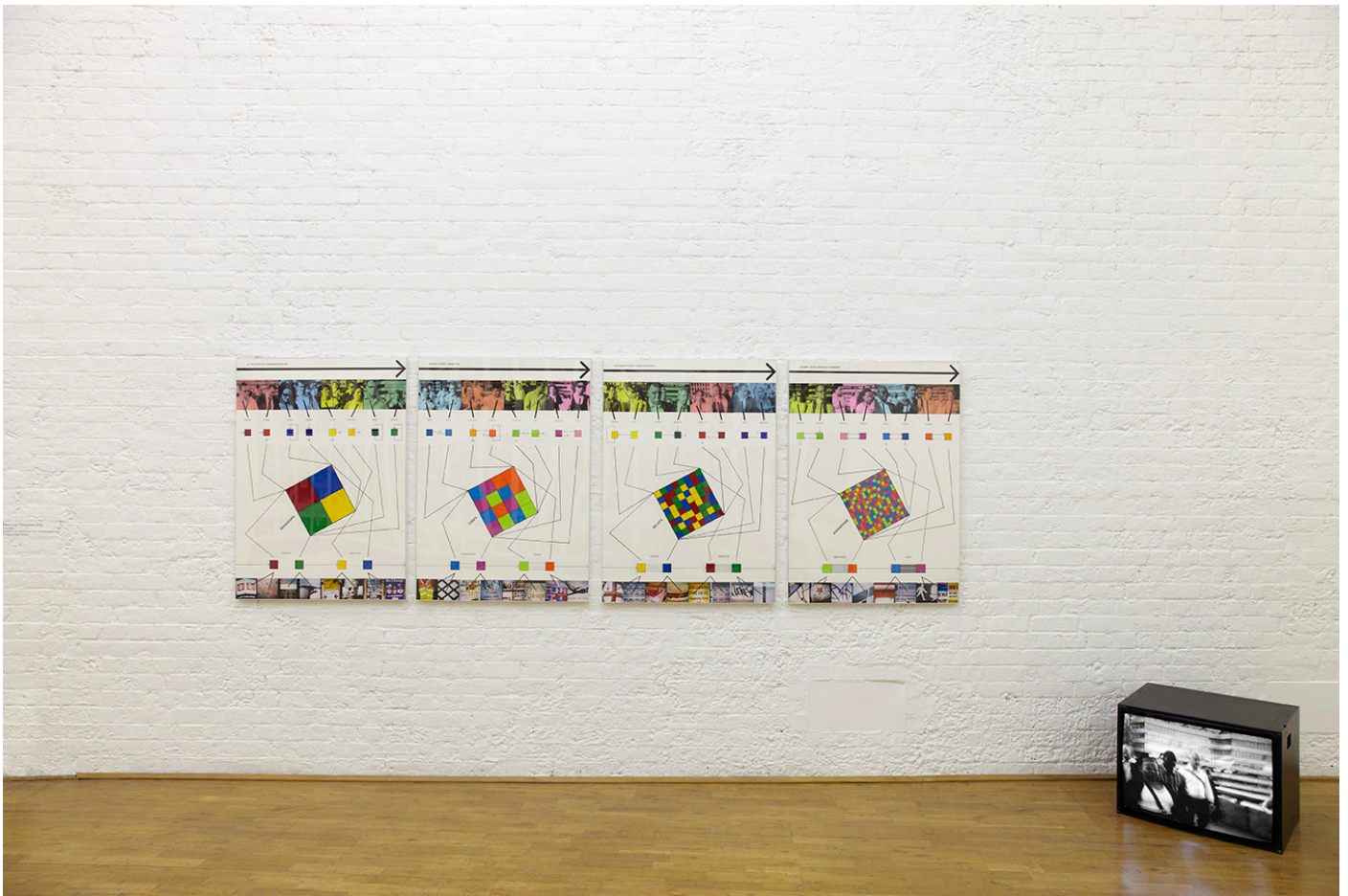2013

Exhibition view
Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
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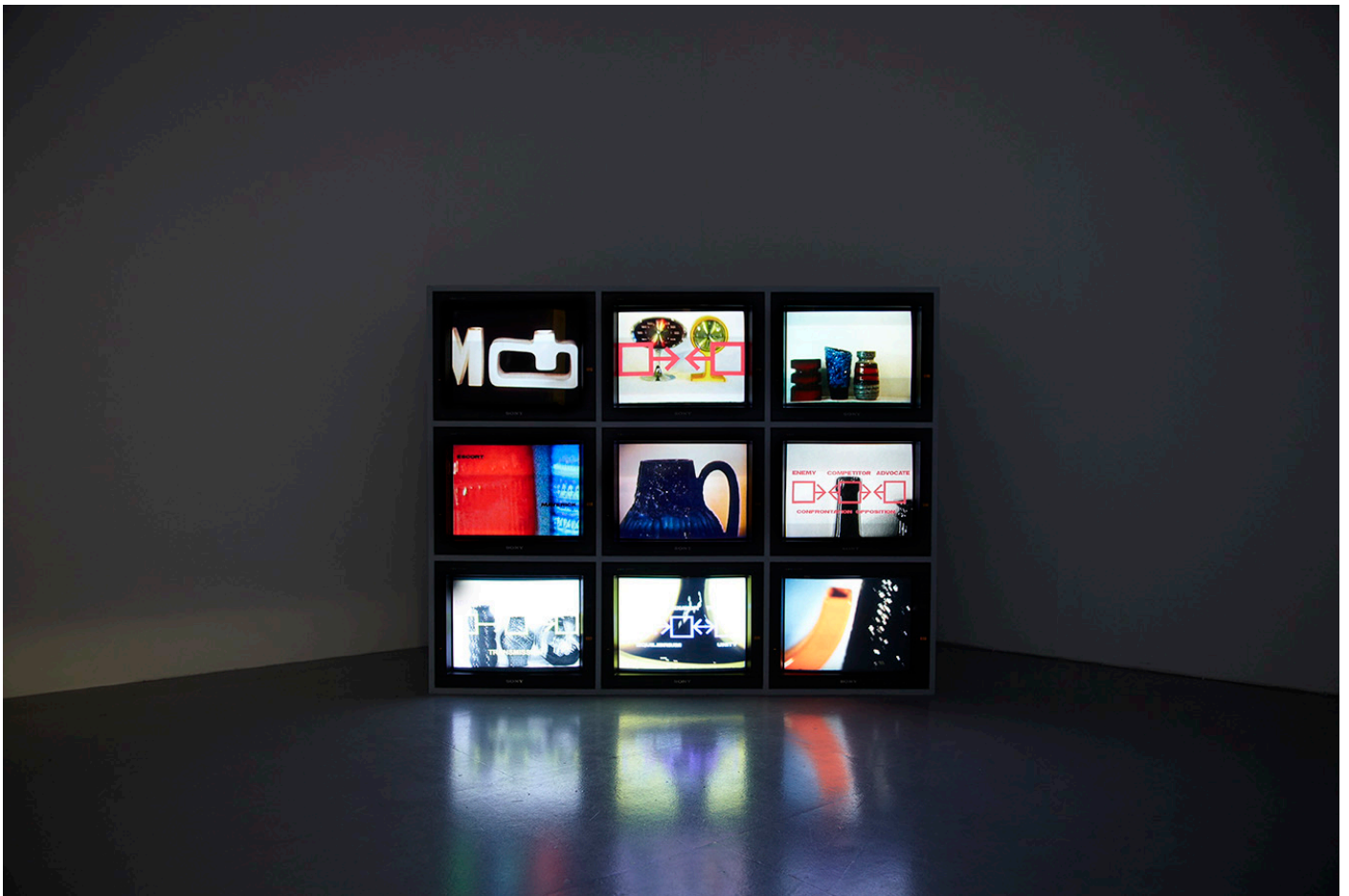2013

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Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
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STEPHEN WILLATS

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Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

Exhibition view
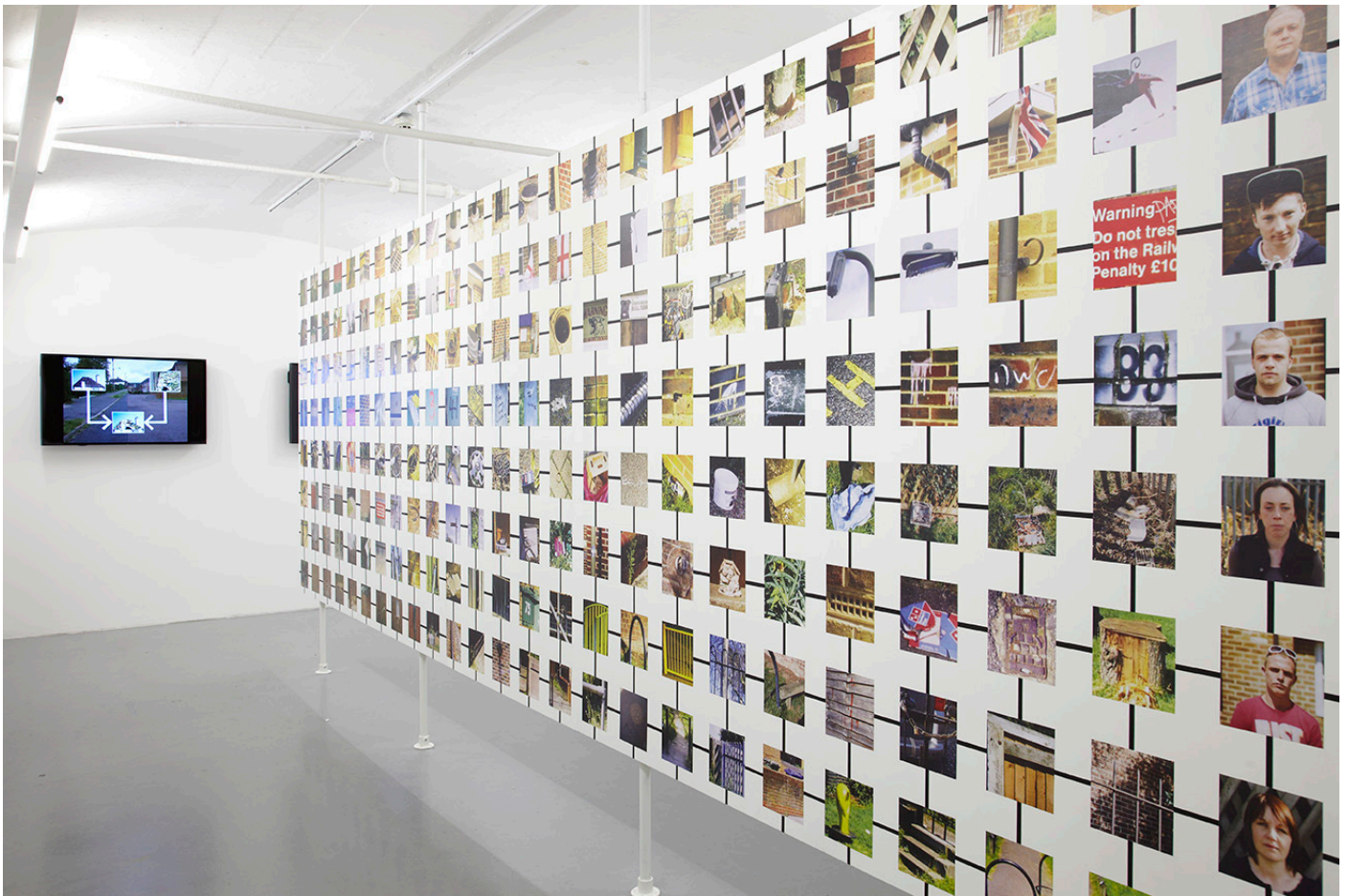*Conscious Unconscious*, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

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Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition
Conscious Unconscious, In and Out the Reality Check
Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK, 2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

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Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

Exhibition view
Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
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STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

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2013

Exhibition
Living for Tomorrow
Balice Hertling
Paris, France, 2013

Exhibition view
Conscious Unconscious, *In and Out the Reality Check*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK
2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Living for Tomorrow, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2013

Exhibition view
Living for Tomorrow, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
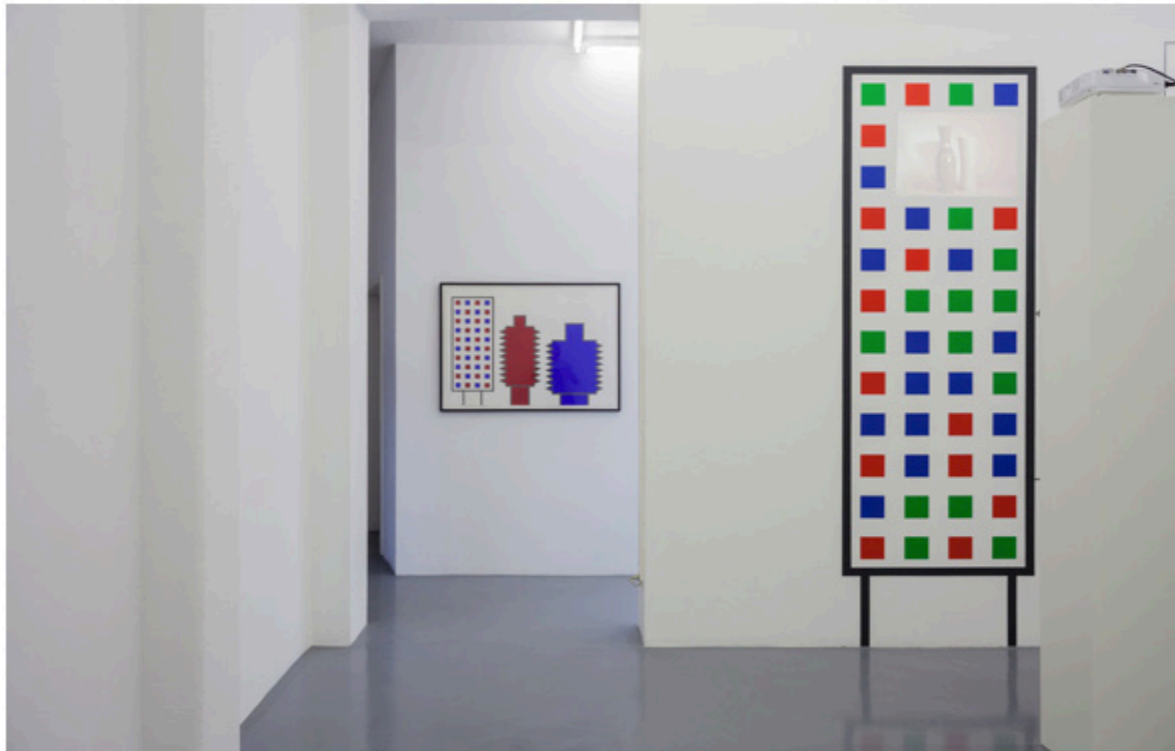2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Living for Tomorrow, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2013

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2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Living for Tomorrow, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
World of Objects
Galerie Reinhard Hauff
Stuttgart, Germany, 2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
World of Objects, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, Germany
2013

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2013

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition
Counter Consciousness
Badischer Kunstverein
Karlsruhe, Germany, 2010

Exhibition view
Counter Consciousness
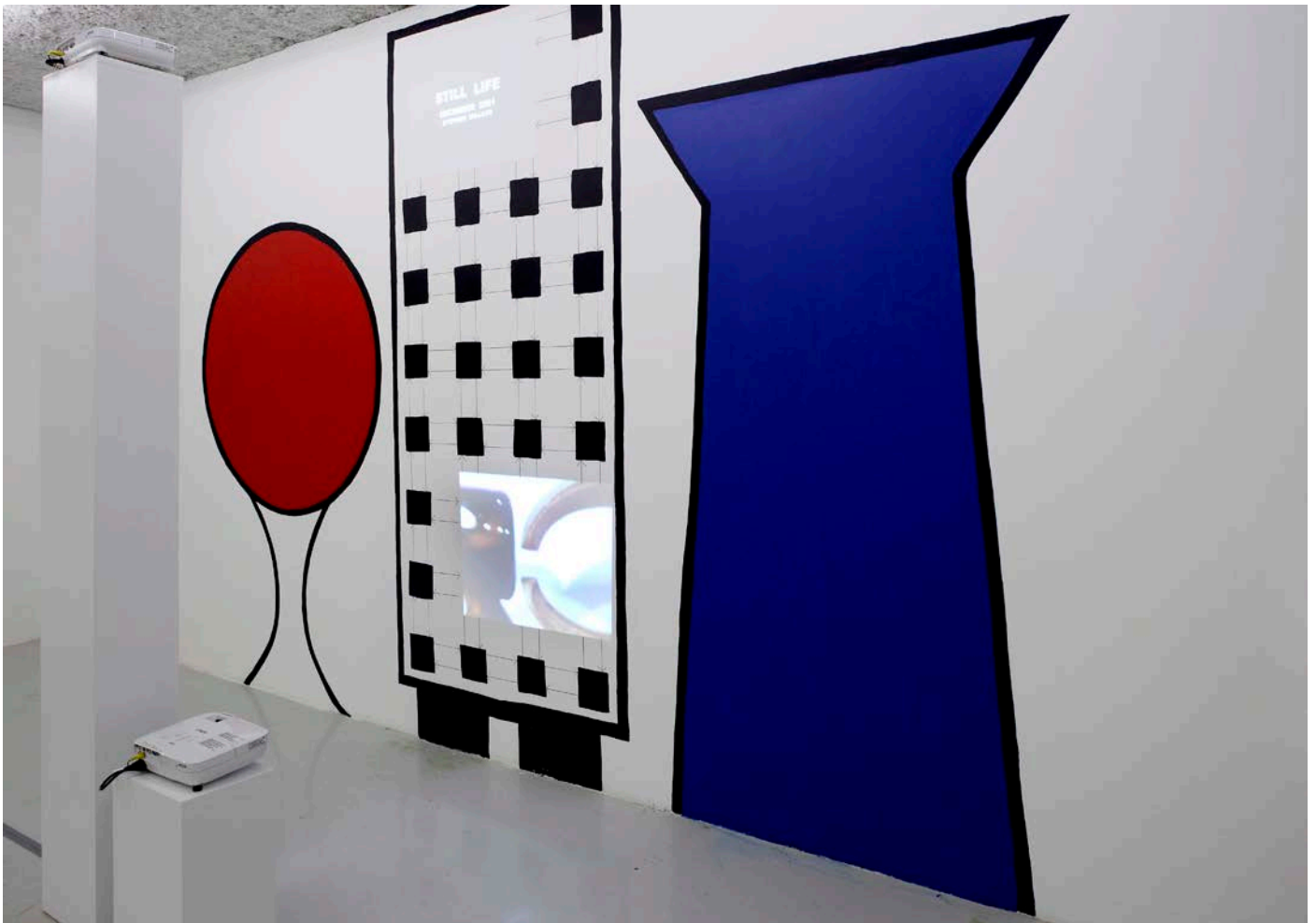Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
2010

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Counter Consciousness
Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
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Exhibition view
Counter Consciousness
Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
2010

STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE HERTLING GALERIE

Exhibition view
Counter Consciousness
Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
2010

Exhibition view
Counter Consciousness
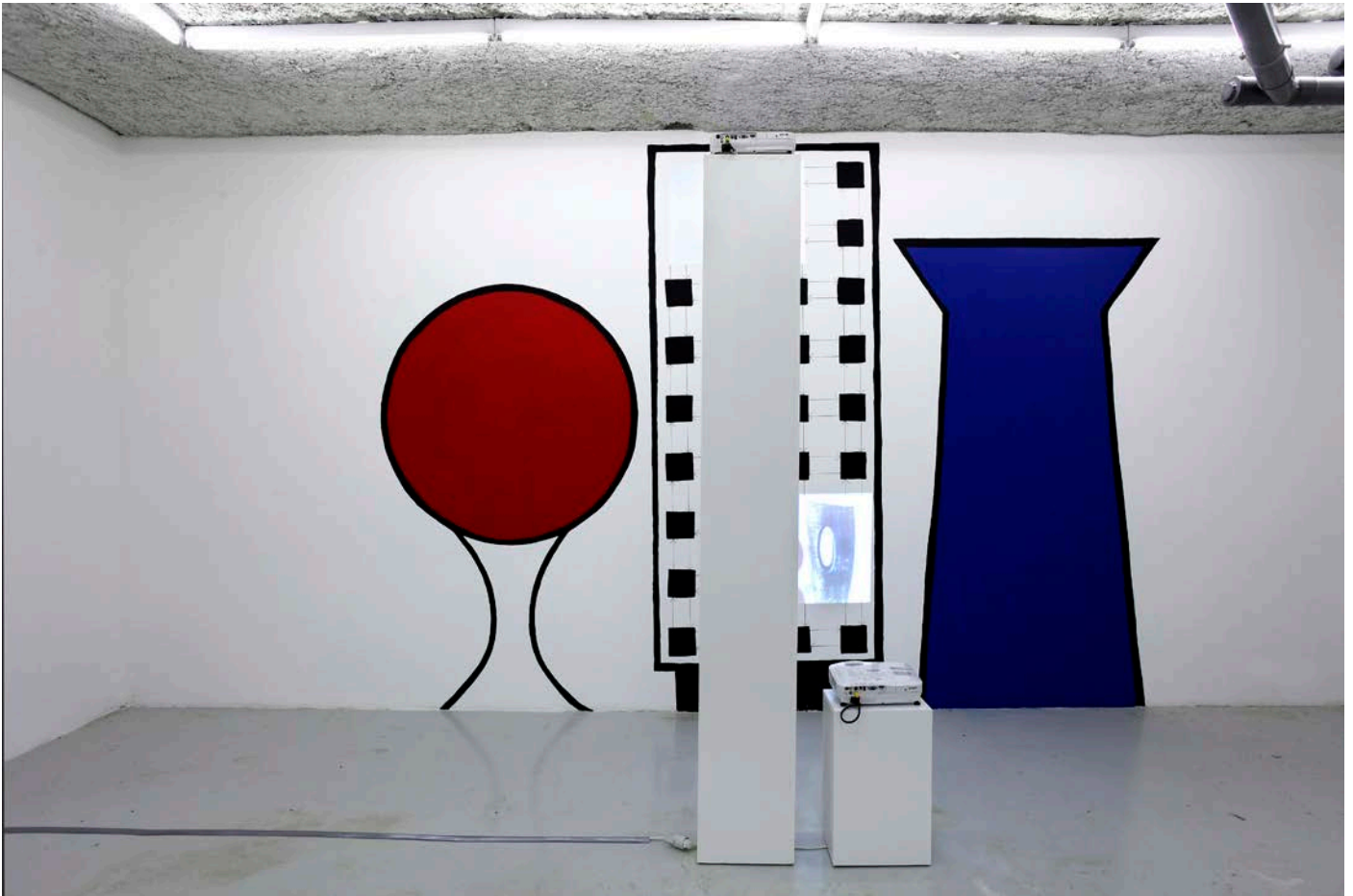Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
2010

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Counter Consciousness
Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
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Counter Consciousness
Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
2010

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition
Cybernetic Still Life
Balice Hertling
Paris, France, 2009

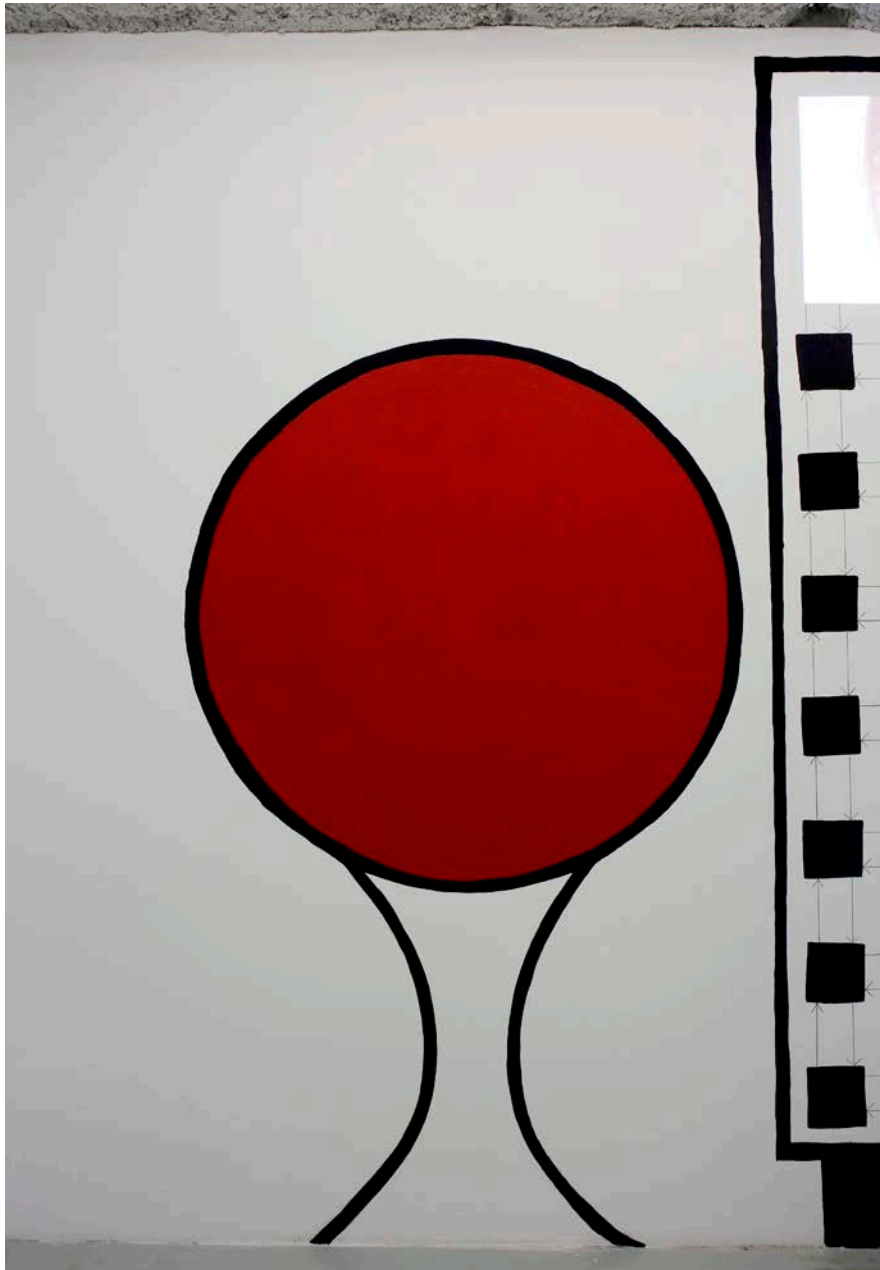STEPHEN WILLATS

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition view
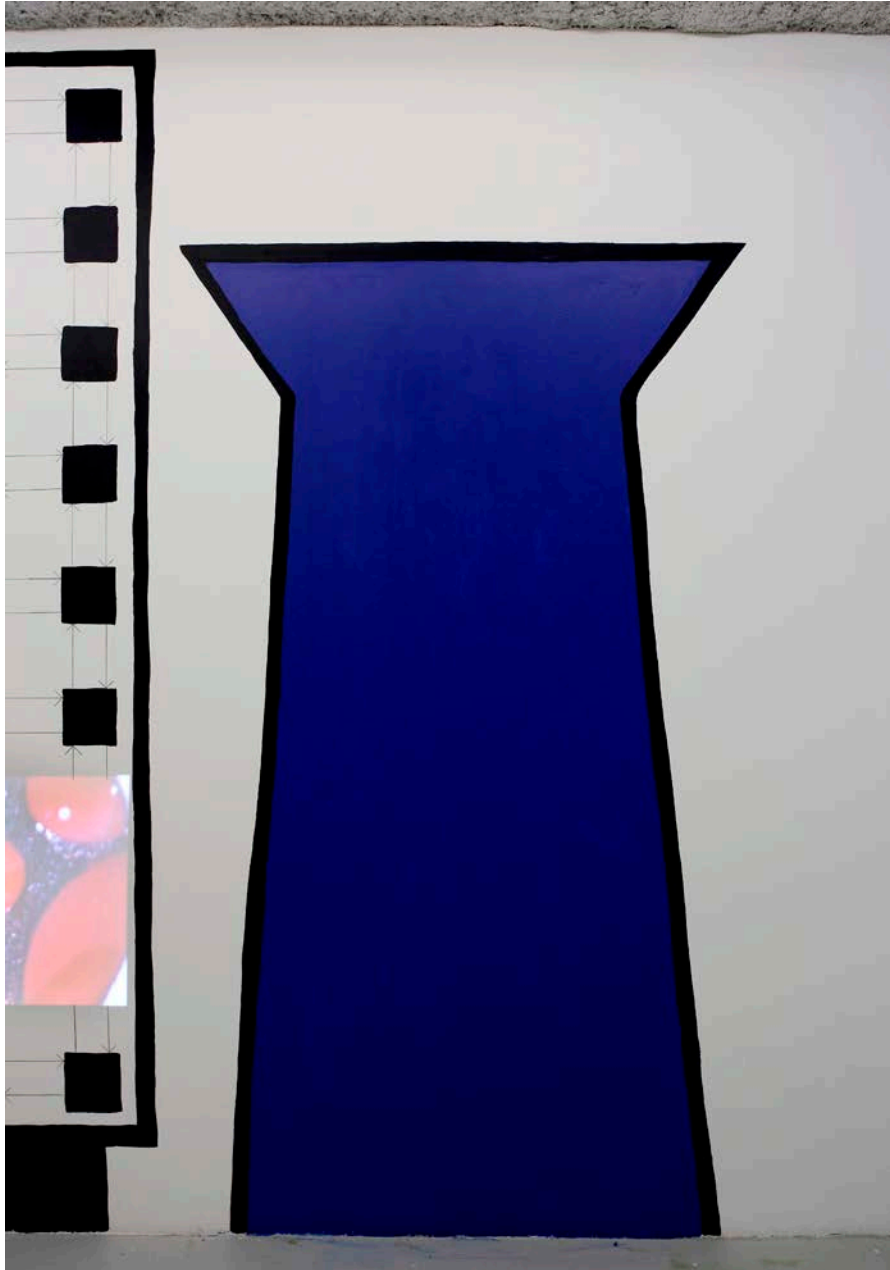*Cybernetic Still Life*, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
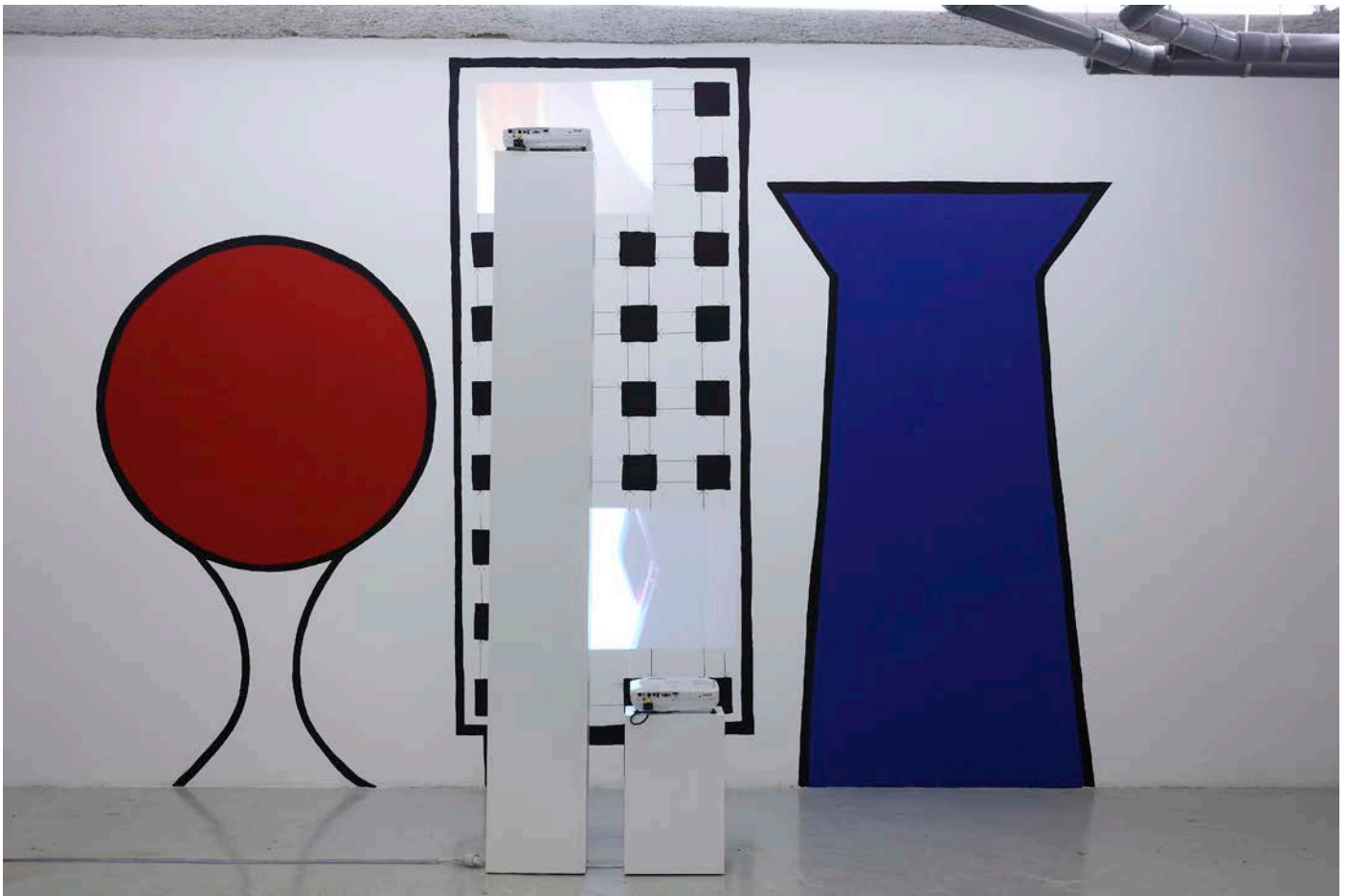2009

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Cybernetic Still Life, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2009

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STEPHEN WILLATS
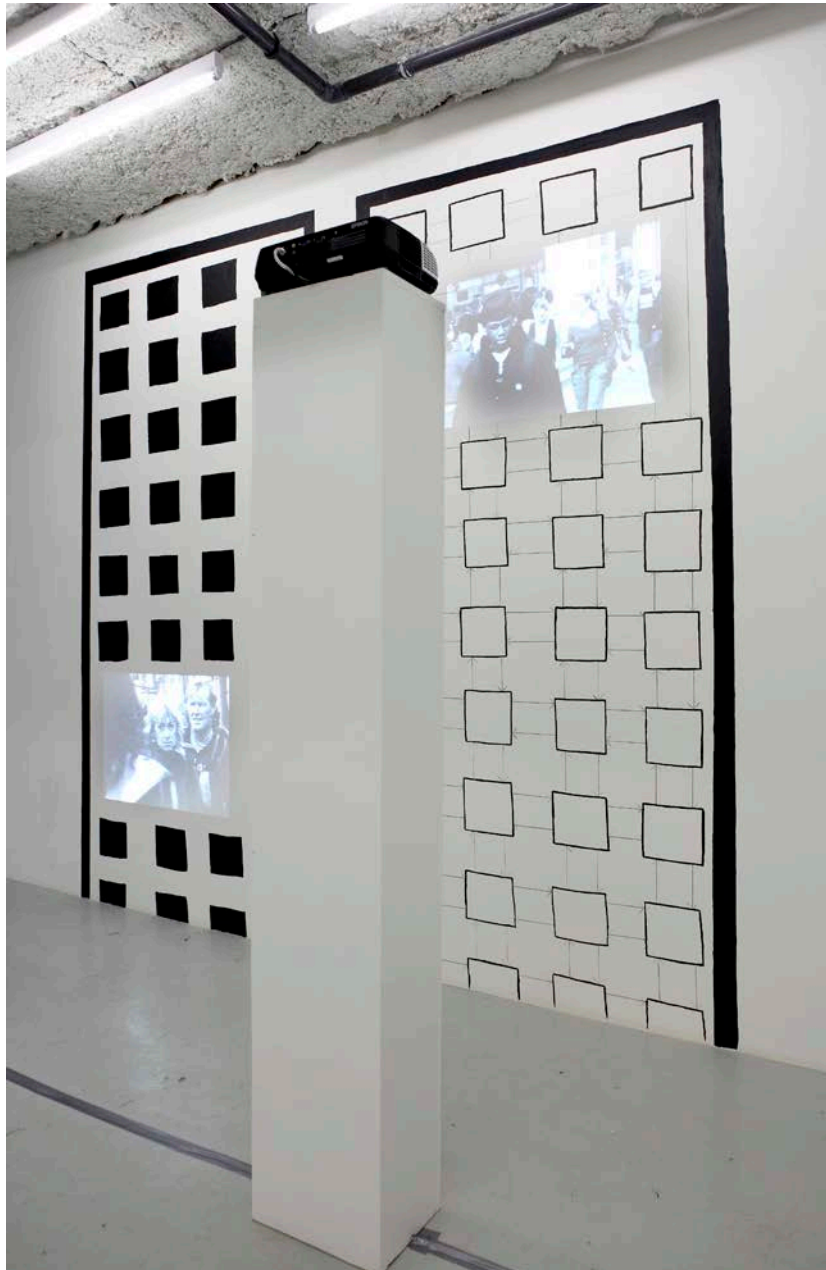
BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

Exhibition view
Cybernetic Still Life, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
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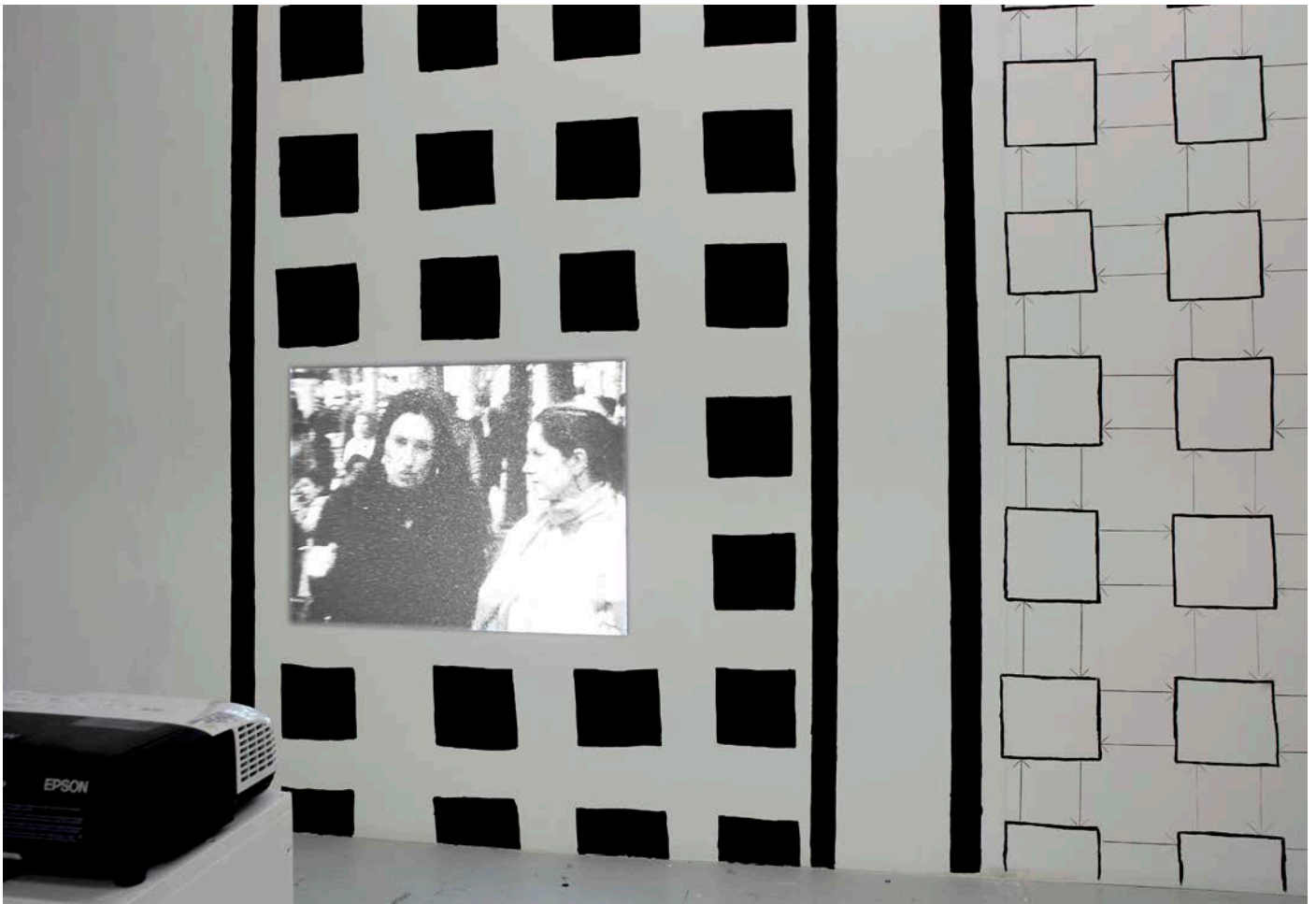Exhibition view
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STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
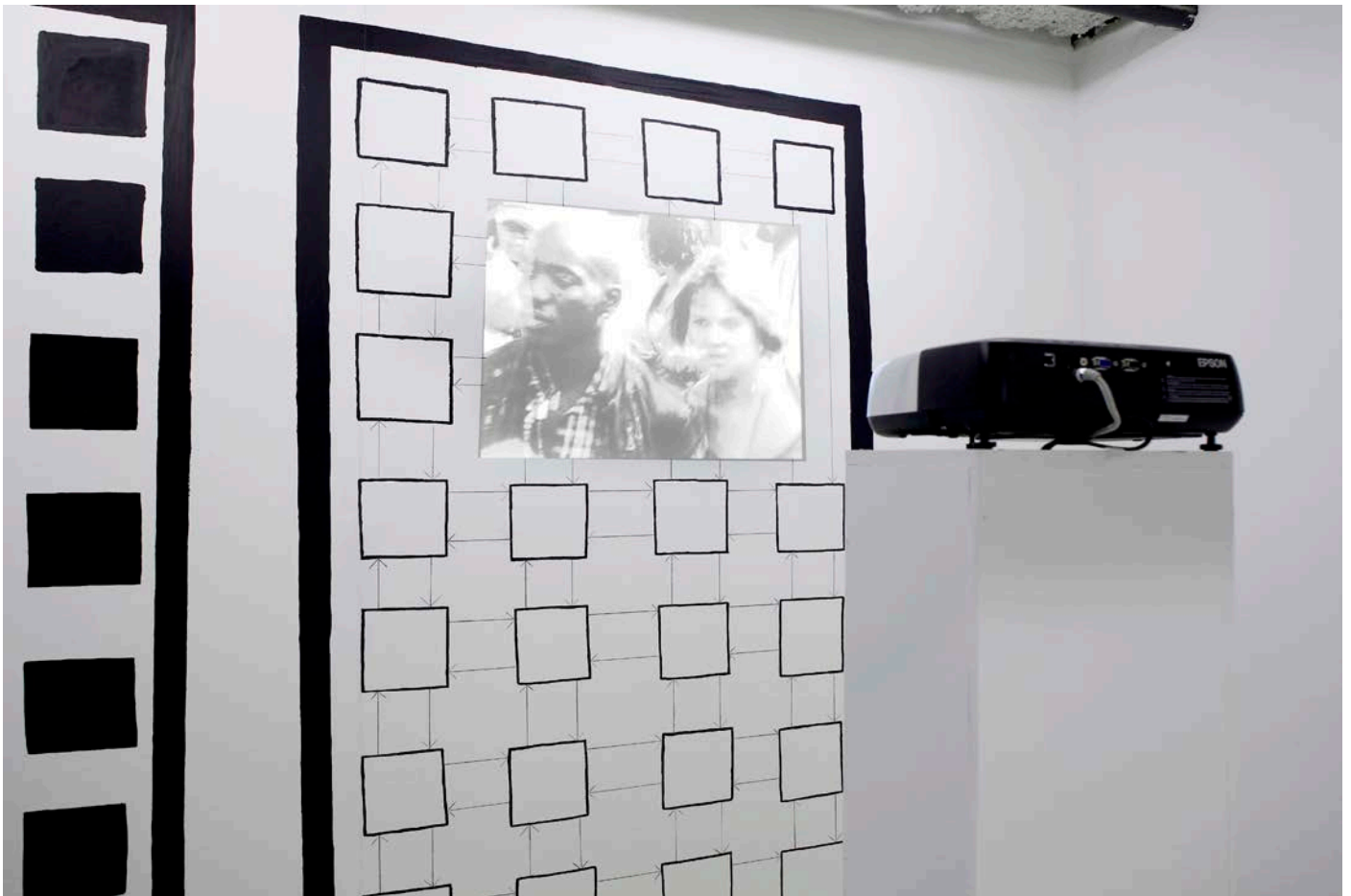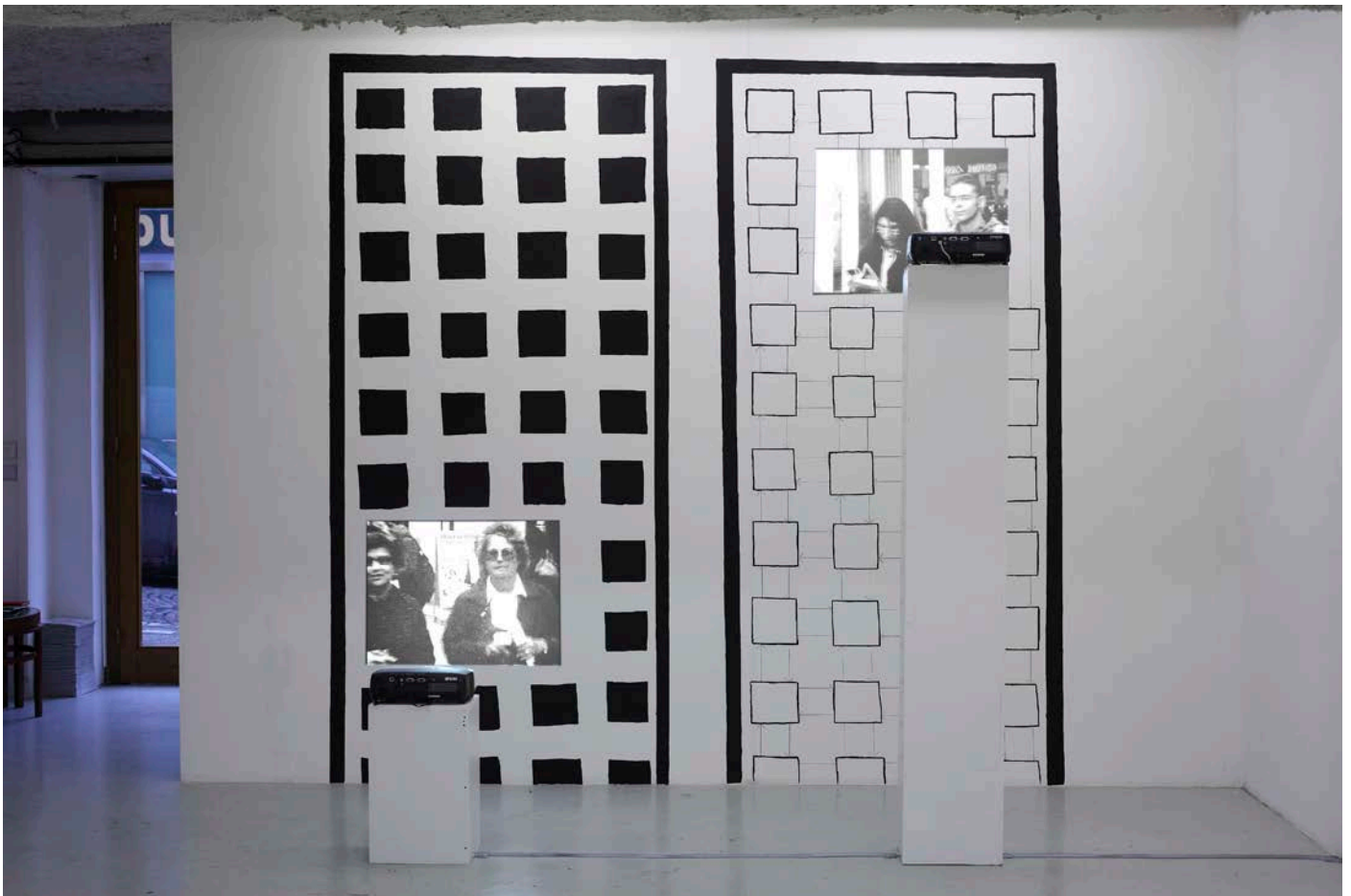*Cybernetic Still Life*, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
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Exhibition view
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2009

STEPHEN WILLATS

Exhibition view
Cybernetic Still Life, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
2009

STEPHEN WILLATS

SELECTED PRESS

Stephan Willats, Max Glauner, 3 Aug 2019

Max Glauner
in girum imus nocte et consumimur igni

Stephen Willats. Languages of Dissent – Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich

Veröffentlicht am 2019/08/03

By Max Glauner

A stranger? A misunderstood perhaps? Shooting after the articles in Kunstforum International, hardly. The work of Stephen Willats, born in London in 1943, has been covered regularly since 1980 (see volumes 42, 61, 126, 131, 143, 169, 183, 199, 207, 240). Nevertheless, the impression that the stubborn British artist belongs to the group of artists, undiscovered by the general public, is not deceptive. Art as research, participation and empowerment of the public, art as social practice, Willats introduced it into the art world in the early 1970s. Contrary to expectations, however, his name is missing both at Documenta and at relevant biennials, apart from the 3rd Berlin Biennial 2004. In addition to Signpost's To The Future (2003), an investigation into the socio-structure of Berlin-Neukölln, which culminated in a multimedia installation, he showed two other works that were created between 1979 and 1980 during a DAAD scholarship as critical inventories of the Märkisches

Viertel: Living in Isolation (1979 / 1980) and How I Discover That We Are Dependent on Others (1979 / 1980).

Although Willats, represented by galleries, remains present in solo and group exhibitions afterwards – the Siegen Museum of Contemporary Art is showing its first overview exhibition in 2006 – the actual breakthrough failed to materialise. All the more meritorious is the fact that the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Zurich is organizing the retrospective exhibition Languages of Dissent for him after a long cooperation this summer. With almost 150 works, this is the largest to date. A remarkable feat of strength also for the house, which had to cope with the task without a partner institution. Thematically and chronologically, the work of the conceptualist – „The artist can no loger concern himself with illusions, he must work on a realistic basis," Manifesto says in 1961 – can spread from its beginnings to the present.

The required basis gives him early involvement with cybernetic models. He transformed them into suprematist concrete drawings (Maze Drawing No. 2, 1967), paintings (Democratic Surface, 1961), schematic diagrams (Drawing for a Project No. 19, 1967), and kinetic light sculptures (Visual Transmitter No.2, 1968). This shows an artist whom one did not know in this way, whose systemic approach was carried a short time later from the mathematical-aesthetic to the social sphere. At the beginning of the 1970s, Willats was not alone in bringing art and reality together. But no one succeeds in doing so so radically. While most of them were concerned with bringing the audience into the sphere of art as partners, Willats was concerned with immersing himself as an artist in artless realities. What could have led to field research, documentation and agitation led to an elaborate

process, the temporary conclusion of which was not a work of art, but the self-empowerment of the people involved, its audience. The artist compiled handouts from the process in the form of brochures or placards that reflected the entire process. A sociological evaluation was also omitted. Everyone had their say. Commonalities and differences became visible and enabled communication and communities where isolation had previously been programmed. In contrast to a widespread notion of artistic research, Willats not only reveals differences, but keeps them open. He leaves it to his partners to make them fruitful. Already in his first participative projects in 1971, The Social Resource Project for Tennis Clubs: Nottingham, and The West London Social Resource Project: London, 1972 / 1973, the latter documented in the exhibition with photographs and questionnaires of the respondents, the artist saw himself not as a designer, but as an initiator of an open-ended process in precarious urban environments. His slides, collages, and videos document the essence of the transitory moment of individuation of his potential or real collaboration partners.

In no other group of works does this become as clear as in the large-format works on London's punk scene at the beginning of the 1980s. In A to B, 1985, the fetishes of a schizoid banker revolve around his desk, under which he appears as a party bulldog. On stage-like assemblages, mannequins can also stand there as queer representatives of a community that has set out to strip itself of norms and restrictions, as in Living Like a Goya, 1983. Twenty years later, with Cathy Wilkes, they only become socially acceptable beyond the attitude of Pop Art.

So why isn't Willats traded higher? The answer is surely in his discreet attitude. But the Zurich exhibition also suggests a second reason: his refusal to accept digital media, apart from videos. The Meta Filter, 1975, conveys the impression of a high-tech apparatus. Two test persons have the task of exchanging information on word lists and photographs. But where visitors expect computer screens today, they find slide lights, pencils and paper. Despite his affinity for system theory and cybernetics, Willat's art remains persistently analogous, while Instagram and Tinder have long since taken over the core business.

First published in Kunstforum international Bd. 262, August 2019

BALICE
HERTLING
GALERIE

The Cha Cha Club, Flash Art, 18 January 2017

Flash Art

Feature (http://www.flashartonline.com/article-category/feature/) / 311 November – December 2016 (http://www.flashartonline.com/issue/311-november-december-2016/)
Share (http://www.facebook.com/share.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.flashartonline.com%2Farticle%2Fthe-cha-cha-club%2F)   Tweet (https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.flashartonline.com%2Farticle%2Fthe-cha-cha-club%2F&text=The+Cha+Cha+Club&via=FlashArtOnWeb)   Mail (mailto:?subject=I wanted you to see this post&body=http://www.flashartonline.com/article/the-cha-cha-club/)

The Cha Cha Club

by Stephen Willats

Are You Good Enough For The Cha Cha Cha (Panel Three) (1982). Courtesy of the Artist and Tate Britain, London.

In 1981 my engagement with the culture of counter-consciousness, self-organization and DIY was stimulated by an accidental meeting on the Earls Court Road with an ex-student of mine, now a painter, named Kevin Whitney. This encounter led me into the world of the night emerging in London, centered on small, spontaneously created clubs. The scene was being fashioned by communities or individuals who felt alienated from the "normal society" that they associated with daytime, and who needed a context in which they were free to express their own sensibilities. Kevin told me he was just coming back from the Cha Cha Club, which was located in an old railway arch under Charing Cross Station. How he then went on to describe the club immediately opened up for me the prospect of a new area of representation in my work.

The Cha Cha Club was, in fact, one of the many private clubs that sprang to life in the early 1980s during a kind of post-punk fragmentation of sensibilities and codes, with different communities and groups creating their own environmental catalysts in which they could meet like-minded individuals and feel free and personally expressive. The individuals who initiated the private clubs usually did so by hiring the venue from another regular nightclub on one of its weaker evenings, changing the name for the night, and then asking all their own friends along, which resulted in the breaking

down of social distinctions between organizers and members. Money was definitely not the prime motivation. Much more important was providing a context for the group to become a community and for the manifestation of something extreme through creative forms of self-identity: clothing, makeup, hairstyles, etc. These private clubs built up a capsule into which different groups such as the Mohicans, the Futurists, etc., could escape and forget about the rest of normal society.

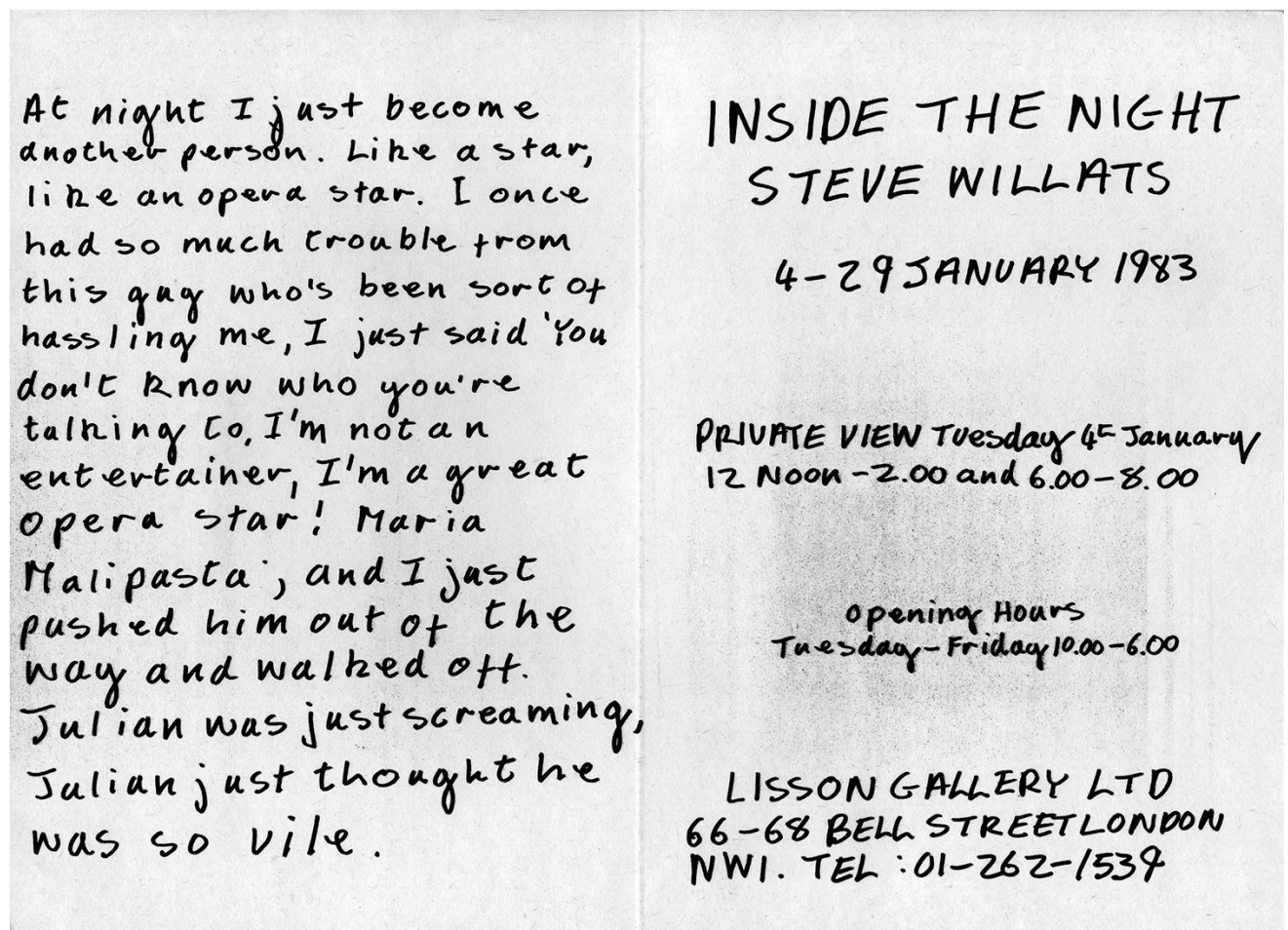*Cover of "Cha Cha Cha" (1982). Courtesy of Coracle and Lisson Gallery, London.*

The private clubs brought together distinct groupings of people dedicated, through displays of dress codes, attitudes, music, and so forth, to that particular context, often unaware of what was happening in other clubs. But the Cha Cha Club did seem special. Perhaps because of its central and romantic location, it drew individuals from diverse parts of London and its suburbs, there being a core of regulars around which a secondary group, transient but larger, came and went. In the context of the early 1980s, the club seemed to me to epitomize a force in cultural development that was important to a vision of the future, for it was articulating and refining the ethos and motivation of punk into a new culture founded on informal networks that were contextualized in their creativity to the sensibilities and priorities of participants. These networks, while in a state of alienation to the dominant culture of property and authority, operated as an ad hoc anarchic parallel network.

I am always looking for modern, contemporary symbols to embody in my work, to create an immediate and meaningful connection for the audience with the polemics of the world around them. Consequently I entered into a long relationship with the Cha Cha Club and, in particular, with Michael and Scarlet, who were its principal organizers. This is what I wrote in 1983:

When I first went to the Cha Cha Club I found the rough, tense atmosphere there very difficult to cope with, and it took me several visits before I felt confident enough to start photographing inside the club. The tension of the place was very similar to the feelings of tension and aggression I had noticed developing in the housing estates where I had been working, where people sensed things were going wrong for them but had no means to do anything about the situation. This tension in the Club was expressed in the way people dressed, all of which was highly individualistic, an outward manifestation of their psychological, sexual and intellectual states. In fact there was such a diverse variety of styles that this in itself was a code at one level, and a real explosion of creativity about "right now" on the other. During the weeks in which I was acclimatizing to the club and then later on when taking photographs there, Scarlet and Michael made a number of tape recordings at my studio, at first individually and later together, where they discussed the relationship of the club to their own lives.

At night I just become another person. Like a star, like an opera star. I once had so much trouble from this guy who's been sort of hassling me, I just said 'You don't know who you're talking to, I'm not an entertainer, I'm a great opera star! Maria Malipasta', and I just pushed him out of the way and walked off. Julian was just screaming, Julian just thought he was so vile.

INSIDE THE NIGHT
STEVE WILLATS
4-29 JANUARY 1983

PRIVATE VIEW Tuesday 4th January
12 Noon - 2.00 and 6.00 - 8.00

Opening Hours
Tuesday - Friday 10.00 - 6.00

LISSON GALLERY LTD
66-68 BELL STREET LONDON
NW1. TEL: 01-262-1539

Mailing card for "Inside The Night," Lisson Gallery, London (1983). Courtesy of the Artist and Lisson Gallery, London.

My work *Are You Good Enough For The Cha Cha Cha* (1982) is structured between day and night over three panels, each dedicated to different aspects of the couple's alienation: psychological, economic and cultural. In each panel the day is associated with determinism, which Michael and Scarlet were individually escaping from, and the night with the freedom they were seeking. [Stephen Willats, "Inside the Night," *Art Monthly*, no. 62, December 1982–January 1983]

After about three visits to the Cha Cha Club, just taking photographs of the members, I started to collect the discarded rubbish from the floor to use in the work so as to present my audience with the club's physicality. We then had a number of working sessions at my studio in which we jointly mapped out quotations from the transcribed interviews, which Scarlet then wrote directly onto the panels, and finally the rubbish was fixed on.

For two or three years after making the Cha Cha Club work I continued my nightly practice in London with more and more individuals with whom I had discovered the private club scene in 1981. But increasingly the landscape was changing; punk no longer felt relevant, having abandoned the front rooms of suburban housing estates and, in the process, becoming a commercial parody of itself, appropriated by the very forces of which it was so critical. A new area of super-normality seemed to be upon us all.
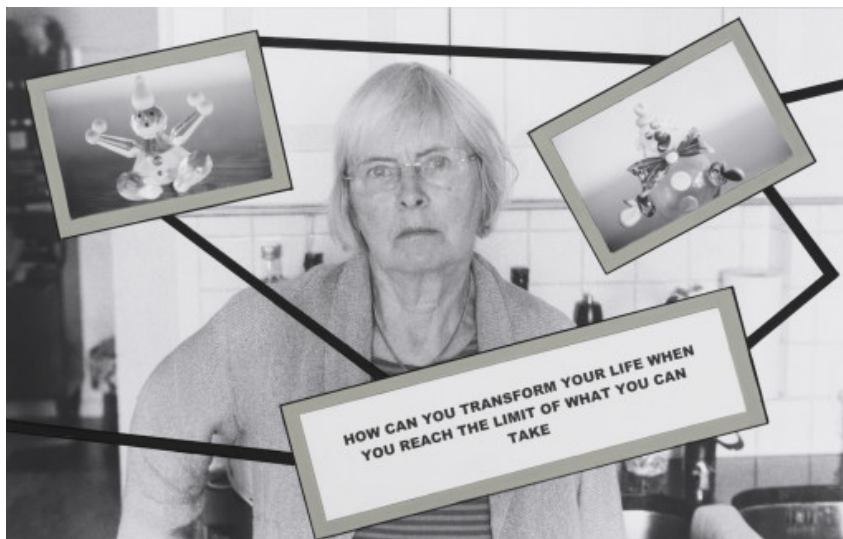
Stephen Willats (b. 1943, UK) is an artist. He lives in London.

Kunstkritikk

Tio frågor: Stephen Willats

By Stefanie Hessler

Stephen Willats, *THISWAY–*, 2015–16.

Stephen Willats konstnärliga arbete handlar om människors liv. Sedan över 50 år tillbaka har den brittiske konceptkonstnären producerat verk som undersöker de sociala relationernas variabler och fungerar som katalysatorer för förändring. Willats arbete utgår från skilda fält, som teorier om lärande, reklam, semiotik och cybernetik, vilka han använder för att utforma sina idéer. Hans konst handlar både om att dokumentera och kartlägga sociala kontexter, och att skapa självorganiserade dynamiska modeller som griper in i de strukturer som definierar människors relationer med varandra och till den materiella världen runt dem.

Willats studerade för den brittiske systemkonstnären Roy Ascott vid Ealing School of Art mellan 1968 och 1973. Senare arbetade han själv med utbildning vid Nottingham College of Art and Design, där han införde ett icke-hierarkiskt system för självorganisering och eget ansvar. Under en kort period på 1960-talet beskrev han sig själv som en «konceptuell designer» och skapade kläder som möjliggjorde för de som bar dem att mediera sina relationer med andra människor. Han byggde självorganiserade möbler och startade tidskriften *Control Magazine*, som han än idag redigerar och publicerar.

I Stockholm har Willats under det senaste året arbetat nära tre individer från olika delar av staden. Utställningen *THISWAY–* är ägnad förändring och transformation, och öppnar ikväll på Index. Den visas även i skyltfönster på Kungsholmen, på Yas Café i Husby och i Moderna Museets foajé.

Kunstkritikk mötte upp Stephen Willats för att ställa några frågor om hans praktik och den kommande utställningen.

*

Stephen Willats.

For your exhibition at Index you spent a prolonged period of time working with three individuals living in different areas of Stockholm, individuals who are facing change, both personal and in terms of their socioeconomic conditions. Can you tell me more about this process and how it is linked to the transformation of a particular place?

The invitation to work at Index was a rare opportunity for me to express a model of art practice that was contextual in nature and rooted in a particular place, so that it expressed some issues and polemics that would be connectable to an audience from that place. Instead of the kind of blandness of much contemporary art practice, which assumes universality, here we have another model of practice that works with the relativity and the contextual nature of meaning.

The idea of transformation in *THISWAY*– is about step change and the possibility of revolution in our life. At the moment of change you are moving fast into the future, and somehow in that moment the past doesn't exist. It is about thinking how the world is and how it could be.

How did you engage with the city and the specific contexts of three individuals?

I don't see the project as a representation of Stockholm, but it is important that the viewer can see that the project is part of the city, that it connects, and that the people involved are people living in the same place as themselves.

As for the participants, I discuss the idea of the work with them and what I want to do with them. My job is to bring out what is important to them in their frame of reference, and what is relevant to the idea of the work, and to externalize it. It's about the person, while the environment is just a background giving you the stable reference for it. In the exhibition you are presented with fragments from the working process, which is like a tool or a kit of elements: text, photographs, film and audio, that you can use as a tool to look at yourself.

In Sorting Out Other People's Lives *(1978), you also worked with a local community. The work depicts a woman in a contained environment in which she acts as a catalyst for change. How do you see the relationship between the individual's agency for change and her or his surroundings?*
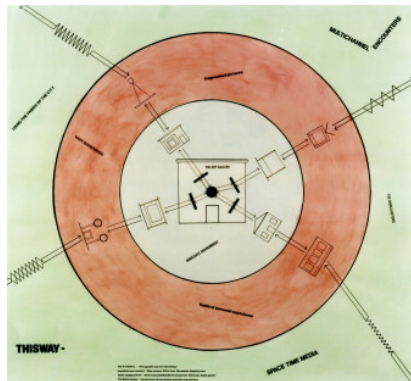
Stephen Willats, *THISWAY*–, 2015.

In 1978, I was asked, in a very similar way to the invitation to come to Stockholm and work with Index, to make a project in East London for the Whitechapel Art Gallery. I had a similar desire to the one underpinning the work in Stockholm, which was to create a relationship with the community around the gallery. I wanted to externalize the museum into the community, and internalize the community into the museum. The work resembled an interactive interface between the internal realm of the gallery and the neighbourhood around it. I wanted them to connect and for the gallery to have a meaning to people living nearby. To do that I looked for polemics, conflicts and issues which were of importance to the people living there, but that also had a wider meaning that could be understood by people who didn't live there. I recognized that there could be two audiences – what I call a primary audience that has an immediate language of the neighbourhood, and a secondary audience coming from wider surroundings. *Sorting Out Other People's Lives* looked at the power of individuals to transform their situation, and to create a new vision of the world around them.

Much of your work combines sociological mapping and relational and open-ended social interactions. How much do you intervene in the situations you encounter?

I don't seek to intervene at all. My relationship with people and the context is quite casual and informal. I think that's how it should be if you want it to grow. Time is important, you have to allow for relationships to develop and evolve over a period of time. In so doing, you get involved in things that are really of interest to people. You connect to their frame of reference and their priorities, and consequently when you enable them to develop another vision of those priorities, and transform their perception of the future, it does have a profound effect on people. There is no question of that!

When you started working in the 1960s, you got engaged in Systems Research with people like cybernetician Gordon Pask. Can you tell me what you did at the time, and specifically about your early interest in cybernetics?

Cybernetics was an important vehicle for modelling in the 1960s and subsequently. In my case it was one of many disciplines I got involved in. I thought at the time that the straitjacket of 1950s art history was inhibiting us from embracing the new reality that seemed to be developing in the early 1960s. There was

new, open and lateral thinking going on, and I needed to think outside of the box to progress with my work. Consequently, I looked at all sorts of disciplines concerned with communication, including learning theory, advertising theory, cognitive theories, mathematical theories, semiotics and phenomenology, and cybernetics was part of this realm of different disciplines.

Stephen Willats, *People and Diagrams*, 2015.

You said elsewhere that you saw that Systems Research or advertising were doing things more relevant to the time than much of the art scene, which still thought of art as pictures on the wall. How do you see this today? Is the art scene up to date or out of step with the world we are moving into?

I feel that the art world at the moment is predominantly descriptive, in the sense that it is reflecting existing morals and values, amplifying them, celebrating them and projecting them. This is the kind of art practice that the status quo supports. The art that seeks to transform existing norms and values is a much smaller realm, and a much harder road to take. Nevertheless, in the end it is important because it actually transforms the way we see things and opens up new languages and new visions.

I would say that the art world we are in at the moment is very normative, and that it is reflecting the Western culture we are locked into. Of course, it doesn't have to be this way, and there are other visions. Interestingly, philosophical ideas and models developed by such disciplines as cybernetics in the 1960s have influenced the way we think about the world we are in, for instance that it is complex, fluid, relative and transient. The world is not made up of monuments and objects of immortality, but is in fact a fluent and ever-complex state. There is a richness within that because there are more variables, whereas the world of monuments is merely reductive.

At one point in the 1960s you started wearing a white coat and called yourself a "conceptual designer". Can you tell me how this came about and how you define conceptual design?

In the mid 1960s I lost confidence in the idea of the artist. I felt the artist wasn't going to be able to develop interesting cultural practices that would be relevant to this new world that we felt we were heading towards. We're talking about 1964 and 1965. I felt that the artist was redundant, so I called myself a conceptual designer. At that point I started working with interactive clothing works that would mediate your relationship with the people around you. You could interact and organize different languages between you and other persons. Similarly, I made furniture which was self-organizing and developed an educational practice that was based on the idea of mutuality and self-organization. And I started Control Magazine. All of these were the outcomes of the idea of the conceptual designer. After about nine months I lost momentum with this idea and called myself an artist again. It was an interesting period during which people were feeling that the idea of exclusivity and determinism was redundant. Everybody was an artist in a way, and everybody was a designer. It was up to you. It was all about the idea of sharing information and of going sideways – going sideways to go forward.

Today we see much of the legacy of cybernetics and the attempt of "designing freedom", as cybernetician Stafford Beer's 1974 collection of essays was titled, translated into instant feedback mechanisms and rhizomatic control online. Returning to my questions regarding the agency of the individual, has the cybernetic promise failed us?
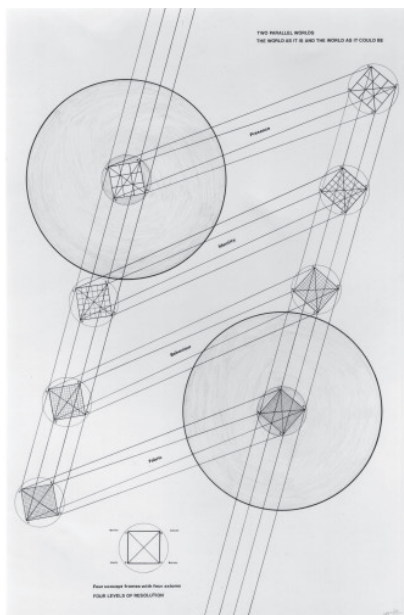
Stephen Willats, *The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be*, 2006.

My critique of the moment, which underpins the exhibition project at Index, is that we are in a cultural polemic where despite the influence of these philosophical ideas on engineering and the development of new technologies that have profoundly affected the way we think about ourselves and our relationship with other people, we're still dominated by last-century ways of thinking of possessive objects and celebrating property. The art museum, for instance, is full of monuments and these monuments don't do us any good at all. They don't allow any potential for the development of ourselves. They tend to be icons to be worshipped. It's a strange polemic between community and society, objects and property. On the one hand we realize that the world is fluid and complex, and on the other hand the world is dominated by the legacy of the last century. This will probably change and is gradually being chipped away. I think it is an interesting polemical time but a polemic very few people seem to realize.

You attended the Ground Course at Ealing Art School run by artist Roy Ascott, which encouraged your interest in cybernetics and learning theory. You have also worked as an educator yourself. I am curious about your models of experimental education. Would you like to tell me more about this?

In the 1960s education was providing a vehicle and a context for me to express my ideas. Education itself was a kind of work, based on working with people. In the practice I have established with various places, like Ipswich and the Nottingham College of Art and Design, there was no difference between students and staff. We were all part of a self-organizing network where we assumed self-responsibility. It was a network that assumed mutuality between all participants. There was no individual work done, all of it was collective. The students self-assessed their own work and decided what degree they should award themselves. There was no external evaluation. That actually involved the students in a very critical process. It was an interesting period, but unfortunately it was heavily stamped on by the authorities. They didn't like it. By 1973, the possibilities of education that I was involved in had been neutralized by the educational establishment.

The exhibition is spread out all over town, and aside from Index the sites include shop windows on Kungsholmen, Yas Café in Husby and the foyer of Moderna Museet. Can you tell me what we can expect at Index and at the other venues?

The project at Index comprises two ideas. One idea is a signpost that expresses a way in which we might see culture, and a way forward in our practice. It also expresses real issues that affect people's lives. It refers to the possibility of transformation of the self from one state to another, from one situation into another. In that sense it is a dual signpost.

The second idea is the way in which the project is physically presented. You experience fragments of it in different locations. You might casually come across a part of it and then come across another part of it. There is a concentration leading to the immediate neighbourhood of the gallery where there are externalizations of what is presented in the gallery. You come across elements of the work in various gardens, shop windows, bus shelters and so on. In the gallery itself a sort of core is presented, surrounded by various models. They are diagrammatic models that I developed, which describe the parameters of the work. The work comes from a way of developing a way forward and a way of thinking. I hope that this exhibition offers a possible way out of the impasse that most contemporary art practices unfortunately are locked into, looking instead at how the world is organized, transformed and how it could be different.

Stephen Willats, *THISWAY–*, 2015–16.

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Stephan Willats, Frieze.com, 20 Feb 2015

FRIEZE.COM

REVIEW - 20 FEB 2015

Stephen Willats

daadgalerie & MD 72 Berlin

A crucial impulse behind early Conceptual art of the 1960s and '70s was a sense of frustration with the solipsism of 1950s formalist painting and sculpture. The painted square had come to seem a cage; objectivity, logic, rationality would be its key. British Conceptualist Stephen Willats, whose work reflects this transition, is still drawing squares but asking them to signify something. And yet, if his eerie 1960s gouaches – perhaps the highlight of a selection of his early work at Raven Row in London last year – are formalist studies looking for a narrative, his subsequent social, interactive works are still haunted by a formalistic indeterminacy, the sense that a shape's capacity to signify cannot be taken for granted. Willats has always been as much a romantic artist as an autodidact sociologist/inventor. He speaks of how 'relativistic' is the 'certainty' we impose upon 'a random world'. The subjectivity of empirical representation might be his central theme. Indeed, the look of his work, stranded in a pre-digital version of modernist design (hand-coloured grids, curved-screen consoles, half-tone printing), is as indica-tive of the partiality of any representational language, as it is a precise index of early Conceptual aesthetics; that is, both a critique of the limitation of aesthetics and an aesthetic in itself. After all, wasn't this look invented in the 1960s as a sign of anti-aesthetic objectivity?

In *How Tomorrow Looks From Here* – Willat's show at the daadgalerie – a pamphlet which accompanies his *Imaginary Journey* (2006) instructs us to: 'imagine starting a journey from this place. Describe the scene in

front of you' – the first of seven prompts issued, one to each of seven participants who were asked to take a short journey across west London with a recording device of their choosing. The results, comprised of short descriptions and unartistic snapshots of urban flux, were displayed on the wall in a grid of seven columns, in conjunction with a column of stills from Willat's own filmic record of the journey. At their foot were three monitors showing black-and-white film footage the participants had shot. Willats's instructions have a metaphysical solemnity absurdly out of proportion to a short trip across the suburbs, but this incongruity is typical of an early conceptualist method – both its emphasis on the local as universal (now so refreshingly jarring, given the currently fashionable rhetoric of globalization), and its staunch obliviousness to the irony its gestures appear calculated to inspire. Willats writes that the work's destination is 'a symbolic world', and we should probably resist a postmodern-ironic appraisal, and take him at face value. Wearing his romantic hat, he is directing us to a potential for transcendence in these quotidian scenes.

But such expansiveness is held in check by the gridding of the tinted photographs, each containing its anonymous passersby. The figures are both isolated and placed into the framework of a community, like the inhabitants of a tower block – a central Willats motif. We are, each in our own box, matrixed by the larger infrastructures which connect us. The twin, baby-blue, interactive consoles of *Free Zone* (1997) resemble the set of a low-budget TV game show, circa 1975; but for all its absurdity, the work is a sorry enactment of social disconnection masquerading as a tool for comparing and sharing perceptions. Two participants, asked to make their virtual way along London's Oxford Street by answering a series of questions, are separated by a wall which offers them a range of possible answers. Only when they happen to agree can they progress, but the likelihood of that, given the 300 possible answers to choose from, is pitiably slight.

At *Berlin Local* – Willat's concurrent show at MD 72 – the equivalent of these separated compartments is a series of twin monitors, two to a room, each pair showing Super-8 images of the area surrounding the gallery, as filmed by the proprietors of local establishments – a bookshop, a garden centre – with whom Willats collaborated, and at whose premises he has installed an 'intervention' (*Berlin Local*, 2014). But the effect of this relativizing of views of the locale is to confine each perceptual locus to its monitor. The participants are pictured on suspended vinyl posters, overlaid by networks of symbols – a calculator (technology!), a classical bust (art!) – along with a few, worthy, social-democratic soundbites. A poster diagram on the wall shows the gallery's relation to its satellite sites in what looks like a group of space shuttles launched from a home station. The telling contrast is between this cod-scientific (or cod-science-fictional) earnestness, which proposes a diagrammatic order to the world's contingency, and the monitors flashing at various off-sites, like marooned beacons of meaning. In the window of a second-hand car dealership around the corner from the gallery, the quirky positivism of two screens of neighbourhood footage seemed belied by the old cars ranged behind them like lonely mannequins.

Stephen Willats
GALERIE BALICE HERTLING

Stephen Willats's Super 8 film *A Progression of Signs*, one component of his mixed-media work *In the Beginning*, 2011, recalls Hollis Frampton's *Zorns Lemma*, 1970. In both films, shots of public space click by in a steady rhythm: street signs, homemade posters, advertising, litter. Frampton gives each of his New York sites a linguistic equivalent, decontextualizing and ordering it as a letter of the alphabet. In contrast, the images in *Progression of Signs* remain part and parcel of Lewisham, the London neighborhood in which they were filmed. A newly married couple recorded the footage in the area around their apartment building. It plays on a floor-level television to the left of three collages of photographs of the couple's apartment and interview quotes about their expectations for the future. Arrows connect the collage elements: Toothbrushes point to garbage cans, a childhood toy to a teapot, individual objects to interior spaces, the private environment to portraits of the couple. The film yokes their immediate external world with this network of lived spatial and material experience. Despite Willats's reputation as one of the UK's first Conceptual artists, this work is the antithesis of what Benjamin H. D. Buchloh calls Conceptualism's emblematic "aesthetic of administration." Willats's subjects are not

Stephen Willats,
In the Beginning,
2011, mixed media.
Installation view.

simply contained and controlled by the architectures in which they dwell. Instead, administrative strictures are negotiated with, subtly altered, rendered personal.

As demonstrated by the recent works in this show, "Living for Tomorrow," Willats's aesthetic has remained consistent since the late 1970s. Long before Thomas Hirschhorn began staging interventions in lower-income communities, Willats was interviewing residents of modernist housing blocks, tracing the ways in which, through subcultures connected to feminism, drugs, and music, identity is asserted amid collective life. This practice derives from an abiding interest in cybernetics. He drew "art society feedback" loops as early as 1959, and in 1962, while at Ealing Art College, Willats first encountered the cybernetician Gordon Pask, for whom he later worked on studies of conversation and learning. In 1969, Willats drew abstract renderings of William Ross Ashby's self-regulating Homeostat system, replete with connective arrows, which would influence his formal language from that point forward. He later devised the Centre for Behavioural Art, 1972–73, which initiated the first of his interactions with social groups with the aim of "the operation of a socially orientated stance by the artist."

Pursuing an artistic practice founded in social science and research methodology without merely visualizing content is a difficult balancing act. The array of houses, siding, pavements, and signs that confront the viewer in the collages of *Yesterday Today Tomorrow*, 2011, could eas-

ily be mistaken for a postmodernist hodgepodge of everyday images, when in fact the collection essentially denotes relationships between texts and urban design in a specific locality. At his best, Willats celebrates the potential ambiguities of his diagrammatic lexicon. In *No. 44* and *No. 45*, both 2011, from the long-running "Conceptual Tower" series begun in 1984, photographic prints of housing blocks are inexplicably linked to brightly colored polygons. The images of the buildings, rendered trapezoidal by the ground-level perspective of the photographer, are turned at unexpected angles and colored pink and blue. While the arrows here still connect elements, their logic is now obscure, even playful. Another work, *People in Pairs*, 2013, maps boxes and arrows in different configurations over video footage of couples walking along crowded streets. The colors and orientations of these diagrams keep shifting, as if caught up in the dynamism and ambiguity of feedback itself.

—*Daniel Quiles*

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Stephan Willats, Paul Pieroni, Frieze.com, 6 June 2014

Stephen Willats | Frieze

REVIEW - 06 JUN 2014

Stephen Willats

BY PAUL PIERONI

Stephen Willats, *Visual Transmitter No. 2*, 1968, Perspex, wood, resin, electrical components, 150 × 305 × 92 cm

In 1959, the British scientist and novelist C.P. Snow issued a famous plea to form bridges between the so-called 'two-cultures': the natural and technical sciences on one hand; the humanities, arts and literature on the other. His statement chimed with an interdisciplinary spirit that was already evident in postwar British visual art. Encouraged by the pedagogy of Richard Hamilton, the Independent Group, which met at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, had, by the early 1950s, embraced various open, analytic and networked approaches to artistic practice. Ten years later, in collaboration with the artist Roy Ascott (who had been a student of Hamilton's) and having studied on Ealing Art College's experimental 'Groundcourse', a young Stephen Willats began his own explorations into cross-cultural production.

Willats's attempt to establish a 'total system', synthesizing the otherwise distinct realms of scientific research and artistic creation – a journey that would see him draw from a skein of theories in the air at the time – was, in many ways, the dominant theme of 'Control. Stephen Willats. Work 1962–69', a recent survey of the artist's early career curated by Alex Sainsbury at Raven Row.

Containing diagrams, sculpture, archive documentation and 'conceptual design', this compendious exhibition stood as a welcome corrective for those familiar only with the cool analytic poise of Willats's later work (for example, the community observation project *Concerning Our Present Way of Living*, 1979, subject of an archive

STEPHEN WILLATS

display at Whitechapel Gallery that ran almost concurrently to the Raven Row show). Against this – perhaps even contra the titular idea of 'control' itself – here was an opportunity to witness some unbridled experimentation from an artist otherwise appreciated for his formulaic consistency.

Numerous hand-drawn diagrams and sculptural experiments show that, from the early 1960s, Willats was keen to explore constructivist ideas regarding audience participation and interaction. Seeking what he described as a new 'functionality for art', early projects such as *Organic Exercise No. 1, Series 2* (1962/2013) – which, re-created here, offered gallery-goers the opportunity to rearrange a set of plaster tablets sitting on the gridded surface of a low plinth – corresponded to Willats's hope, put to curator Emily Pethick in a recent interview, that with such work 'any engagement by one person was as meaningful as any other. It was about what it meant for them – nothing was predetermined'.

Aware of certain limitations that producing 'art' proper implied for reaching larger audiences, and foreshadowing the decisive shift from the gallery to 'society' he would make in the early 1970s, in the mid-1960s Willats underwent a self-rebranding exercise. Abandoning the title 'artist' he became what he called a 'conceptual designer'. His output from this period ranges from the seminal (the eponymous *Control* magazine – a publication-cum-art work first published in 1965; the anthological site of his own projects and those of others dealing with what he saw as 'a new attitude in visual communication') to the somewhat questionable (the galactic 'Helmets', 1965, wearable headgear complete with exchangeable coloured visors to augment the wearer's visual experience). In addition, Willats fabricated 'Corree Design' (1965), a prototype line of modular furniture and a fashion range that included Variable Sheets (1965), a period mini-dress fronted by vinyl pockets into which the wearer could slide text panels featuring simple words such as 'easy', 'bold' and 'pure'.

With the exception of *Control* – which is still being published – Willats's other projects from this period were soon abandoned. He returned to art production with a significant body of kinetic sculptures, created for the solo show, 'Stephen Willats. Visual Automatics and Visual Transmitters', at the Museum of Modern Art Oxford in 1968. Raven Row faithfully restaged the exhibition in a darkened environment that dominated the lower-ground-floor gallery, providing the show with its most immediate and spectacular component. In response to research into the variability of brainwaves by American-born British neurophysiologist and cybernetician William Grey Walter, the 'Visual Automatic' works emit light sequences at a frequency known as the 'alpha-rhythm'. An oscillation of approximately ten cycles per second, the alpha-rhythm mimics the wave patterns of a relaxed human brain (incidentally also the frequency accessed by the stroboscopic 'dreamachine' developed by Brion Gysin, William S. Burroughs and the computer programmer Ian Sommerville in 1961). In the same dimly-lit space were a series of floor-based 'Visual Transmitters'. Begun in 1965, these works continued Willats's interest in the alpha-rhythm – albeit on a larger scale. One such machine on display, the astonishing *Visual Transmitter No. 2* (1968), was a near-impossible Heath Robinson-esque contraption of fidgeting, spinning

STEPHEN WILLATS

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04/02/2017   Stephen Willats | Frieze

components, clustered geometries and lucent emissions. A truly remarkable thing, this work encapsulated just how gloriously immoderate Willats's output had become by the late '60s.

With science and information technology increasingly shaping some of contemporary art's most pressing questions, and the ticklish subject of 'participation' refusing to go away, 'Control' appeared as a timely act of historical curating. As the exhibition makes clear, between 1962 and 1969 Willats worked with a very specific ambition in mind. He wanted to involve audiences directly, to merge theoretical models such as communications theory, behaviourism and cybernetics with notions drawn from the artistic avant-garde in order to create feedback loops between viewer and artwork with the ultimate aim of 'remodelling' consciousness, as he described it.

Whether, and according to what criteria, it is possible to determine if these art works were successful in doing so remains highly doubtful. What is plain to see is that the brilliant yet odd intensity of Willats's art has derived from its sustained relationship to ideas, rather than its capacity to yield objective results and firm analytic understandings. A little bit of fabulation in the face of science, then: perhaps the real value of integrating art into 'total systems' thinking.

PAUL PIERONI

BALICE HERTLING
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Stephen Willats at Raven Row - artforum.com / critics' picks, 2014

ARTFORUM

London

Stephen Willats
RAVEN ROW
56 Artillery Lane
January 23, 2014–March 30, 2014

Stephen Willats produced the work in his latest exhibition over just seven years, between 1962 (when he was nineteen) and 1969. During this time, Willats wanted to rediscover art's social role and mistrusted modernism's self-referentiality, but these forty-five works on paper—pencil armatures flooded with bright gouache and oils—have a striking visual language unusual for an artist primarily known as a Conceptualist. Most, like the two gum-pink conjoined polygons that encase the irregularly spaced, multicolored rectangles in *Architectural Exercise in Color and Form No. 3*, 1962, seem like exuberant blueprints for some real-world place or some intended action. The titles of the three drawings series (e.g., "Organic Exercise," "Drawing for a Project," "Area Development") and their recurring socket, grid, and circuit-board shapes reinforce the sense of these abstract geometric forms as descriptions of potential relations.

View of "Control. Stephen Willats.," 2014.

There is nothing staged nor nostalgic about revisiting this tightly bracketed time span in the 1960s: Willats's absorption in cybernetics and media theory centered on fundamental concepts of human communication, such as feedback and agreement, and almost miraculously avoided hokey futurism. An exhibition within the exhibition reconstructs for the first time Willats's 1968 solo show at the Modern Art Oxford: A darkened, black-walled maze leads viewers through a sequence of encounters with kinetic machine works, three-dimensional wall-mounted constructions with lights that blink at random and blocks whose rotation is cued to the speed of brain waves. Intended to stimulate viewers' awareness of their states of consciousness, the machines blink like wordless ads or deprogrammed traffic lights, familiar semaphores isolated and abstracted just as in Willats's drawings.

The exhibition closes with the artist's 1963 *Environmental Box*, a wooden console with compartments full of different textured substances (pebbles, velvet) that viewers open and touch. Signaling Willats's increasing investment in sociological methods, a stack of questionnaires beside the box offers viewers a chance to draw a response to the tactile stimulus.

— *Julia Langbein*

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Stephan Willats, Charles Marshall Schultz, Art in America, 28 Dec 2011

Art in America

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REVIEWS DEC. 28, 2011

Stephen Willats

NEW YORK,
at Reena Spaulings

by Charles Marshall Schultz

Data collection and organization is an art form at which the British conceptualist Stephen Willats excels. His solo exhibition "The Strange Attractor," the first in New York for this sexagenarian artist, included a series of charts and diagrams relating to observations made on New York City streets. In addition to a number of works on paper, Willats produced a group of videos, some of which were screened in neighborhood shops, and a large installation that served as the show's centerpiece.

Willats's information-based work tends to have a tripartite nature; projects are often oriented to social and civic engagement, informed by scientific discourse and organized according to Willats's esthetic sensibility. His installation Data Stream: A Portrait of New York (Delancey Street/Fifth Avenue), 2011, exemplifies this approach. First, Willats sent a team of data collectors (Spaulings staff and a few artists from the gallery's stable) to gather visual and auditory samples from two Manhattan streets. He then assigned each sample to one of 10 categories, or streams, such as facial expressions, ambient sounds or description of atmosphere. Eight-inch-square cards, each printed with an image or a text from the samples, were arranged in a grid on both sides of a freestanding wall that bisected the gallery. To portray New York as a grid is logical enough; what gave the piece character were the isolated bits of sensory data, quotidian and poetic, that were assembled into a richly defined landscape.

The term "strange attractor" comes from physics and abstract mathematics, where it is understood as the focus of a chaotically behaving pattern; one example could be the activity on a city sidewalk. While Data Stream engages with the activity on the streets, the works on paper serve more as sketches or blueprints. Using Letraset text, ink and pencil on paper, The Strange Attractor (2010) shows the movement of a square traveling inward on a spiral. As it does so, the space inside the square is continuously divided by multiplying lines into ever-smaller subsections. When the square reaches the center of the spiral there is no longer any divisible space; the lines have filled the square.

The video series "People in Pairs (with Diagrams)," 2011, captures unsuspecting and unrelated passersby as they stroll down a sidewalk. Willats overlaid the footage with squares and arrows, creating visual relationships between the pedestrians. These "pairs" were purely a function of who happened to walk into the frame-a further example of a pattern built from randomness. In the variations that appeared in windows of three nearby storefronts, Willats brought his relationship to sidewalk amblers full circle; instead of the cameraman selecting random subjects to film, people happened upon the film at random. In these instances Willats's work went further than portraying or employing a scientific phenomenon; by attracting the attention of people who were not planning to stop, he participated in the pattern of seemingly chaotic behavior that is pedestrian life in New York City.
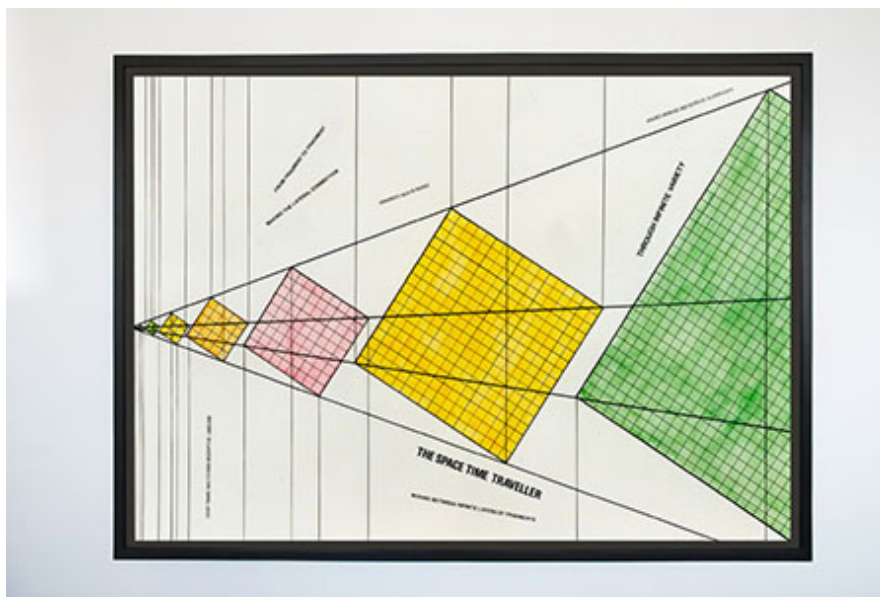
BALICE HERTLING

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Stephan Wilats, Nick Aikens, Frieze Magazine, 1 Nov 2011

FRIEZE.COM

REVIEW - 01 NOV 2011

Stephen Willats

BY NICK AIKENS

Stephen Willats *The Space Time Traveller*, 2011, Watercolour, ink and Letraset on paper

The Space Time Traveller
Watercolour, ink, Letraset text on paper.
87 x 126.5cm
Stephen Willats, 2010

I'm a big admirer of the work of Stephen Willats. This frighteningly prolific British artist, whose career spans more than 50 years, has continually operated on the fringes of art-world circuits. His collaborative system of working and his studies of social groups, based around ideas of 'feedback' developed in cybernetics and black box theory, reverberate in much of today's socially informed, participatory and process-based practice. (The Showroom's conference 'Signal: Noise' in London earlier this year, where Willats's conceptual diagrams provided the backdrop for discussions on how 'feedback' is deployed by contemporary cultural producers, is a case in point.)

MOT International, the small, fifth-floor unit in a imposing block in East London, was an appropriate location for such a show: the artist has used the tower block as a conceptual and (what he terms) 'polemical' device since the 1970s. 'The Information Nomad', Willats's second exhibition at the gallery, comprised his signature diagrams.

These have been at the core of his methodology since the 1960s, when he became interested in semiotics and information theory through practitioners such as Roy Ascott and Gordon Pask. Here, *The Space Time Traveller* and *The Information Nomad* (both 2011) expanded on ideas first put forward in the better-known Five Actions

of Transformation (1998). This earlier work investigates how we perceive objects via a series of squares – developing from a simple black outline to a solid black box – through increasingly dense grids, with each square corresponding to a further variable such as presence, identity or behaviour. In *The Space Time Traveller* and *Information Nomad*, time is added to Willats's perceptual equation and we are presented with an expanding field from left to right, within which are seven squares, showing how our understanding of objects or ideas progress 'frame by frame' into the future.

The notion of the future was developed with *In the Beginning* (2011). Willats has used photo-diagrams of this kind since the 1970s, allowing him to create visual, causal relationships between people, objects and places. Here, a couple with a young baby were asked about their hopes and anxieties: 'this moment is a special moment' / 'people need to slow down a bit, that is our worry'. The sentiments formed part of a flow diagram with objects from the couple's home (a teapot, a toothbrush and children's toys) laid over images of the couple. Willats focuses on what we surround ourselves with, what he calls 'life objects', and how they reflect people's engagement with the material world. But In the Beginning lacked any specifically contemporary imagery or terminology. Like many of Willats's frames of reference and modes of presentation, the photo-diagrams were the product of a vastly different cultural moment; today, his aesthetic and sentiment can feel a little dated. Equally, in contrast to landmark works such as *West London Social Resource Project* (1972), which relied on a sustained and evolving relationship with a group of residents, surveying responses to a series of questions about their surroundings through distributed manuals and questionnaires, here the artist's engagement with his subjects felt rather fleeting, the process of addressing the future somewhat rudimentary. The sense that art practice could shape the couple's way of living – a central wager of Willats's approach and one which *West London Social Resource Project* could stake a genuine claim to – seemed a big ask.

The main work in the exhibition, *Signs and Messages from Suburbia* (2011), covered one wall of the gallery and comprised a grid of more than 200 black squares, Willats's 'homeostats'. Amongst the squares were four projections roughly positioned at the top, bottom, left and right of the wall, corresponding to north, south, east and west London. The squares were interconnected by arrows, whose direction and subsequent flows across the wall were determined by rolling dice with numbers delineating different directions – a realization of the 'randability' and 'probability' Willats first explored in his early 1961 manifesto 'The Random Event'. The four projections showed footage shot in the London areas of Kingston, Ilford, Harrow and Bromley, where the artist had documented road markings, signs or rubbish on Super-8 film. Here was a succession of public codes, the components of urban life.

Willats, always trying to de-author the art work, collaborated with a gallery staff member, Hana Noorali, and the writer Charles Arsène-Henry who visited the suburbs to collect sounds and record feelings expressed when

04/02/2017 there. Arsène-Henry's texts intersperse the footage, adding a human presence – 'the place is closed and empty' / 'a rush of lavender covers your eyes' – to an otherwise dry sequence of documentary images.

Within the context of Willats's substantial contribution to conceptual, site-specific and participatory practice, 'The Information Nomad' was somewhat formulaic – his examination of this particular set of people and places under-developed and rather fleetingly considered for such a meticulous practitioner. In contrast to iconic works such as *Meta-Filter* (1973–5) – a large computer, designed to construct a society based on agreement – or the interactive 'Multiple Clothing' series (1965–98), this group of diagrammatic charts felt insufficiently analogue and too static for today's networked society.

Art Society Feedback

BY EMILY PETHICK

Cybernetic Still Life No. 5, 2010. Courtesy: the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London.

Opposite — Meta Filter, 1973-75. Collection Fonds national d'art contemporain, Paris.

Self-organization and counter-consciousness are buzzwords for Stephen Willats. The conviction behind all his artistic output from the 1960s to the present is that people have great potential to bring about change, through creative resistence to imposed squalor. In this context, the artist's diagrams are dynamic models of a new reality traditional artistic theory cannot grasp. With the artist, Emily Pethick reviews the meaning of his multidisciplinary incursions, from cybernetics to philosophy.

Emily Pethick: Let's talk about a new book, *Art Society Feedback*, published by Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg, for the exhibition at Badischer Kunstverein.

For those not familiar with your work, you were one of the first UK artists to take work out of galleries into society, making the audience active, examining social functions and meanings of art in society. The book has two parts: a collection of your writings since the early '60s, and a essays about your work by Andrew Wilson, Brigitte Franzen, Tom Holert, Ute Meta Bauer and myself.

Reading it, I was struck by the relationship between practice and theory, especially in the diagrams, a constant in your work since the late 1950s. One early piece, *Art Society Feedback* (1959), shows a conceptual model of connections between artist and social context, feedback between artist and environment. An example of the conceptual models you create, which feed into works made in collaboration with people in social contexts outside the gallery.

Stephen Willats: My development of concepts and models is related to perception of the function of the artist in relation to the world. I was conscious of the fact that the work I was proposing was going to be part of society. An initial observation was that artwork is completely dependent on its audience. We could almost say viewers are its reason for being, without them it doesn't exist. It is essential for artists to realise they are somehow part of society. The next observation was that most art

used as a language for forming models, but also as a tool for planning projects. Your use of them was also influenced by exposure to theories outside art, like cybernetics, systems theories, black box theory.

sw: The diagram is a dynamic picture, a model in a dynamic state. I saw that other languages were needed to provide a vision of a future possible world. The languages available to me in the world of historical art were inadequate to describe the new reality, the new world I was encountering (late '50s and early '60s), that seemed to be emerging. So I became interested in languages from outside art. The emerging sciences of cybernetics and information theory were especially exciting, as were the nascent philosophies of semiotics. All kinds of new ways of thinking were appearing and could be drawn into practice. It was just a natural way of representing ideas and social relationships in a dynamic way. If the artist was in a relationship with the audience, and the audience was part of society, the artist was in a relationship with society, so there was feedback. This is how my diagrams originated.

ep: One of the most striking early works is *Homeostat Drawing* (1969), installed as a wall drawing at Badischer-Kunstverein and then at Casco in Utrecht; we are now installing it again for "Signal:Noise", an upcoming event at The Showroom, investigating the legacy of systems theories and cybernetics in art practice. This diagram depicts an endless network of interconnecting parts. Can you talk about

practice was describing existing values and beliefs, amplifying what was validated in existing society. Then there was another smaller, much more difficult but ultimately more meaningful role, concerning transformation; the notion that the artist can transform existing values and provide a vision of the future, a different perception of the world and a language for that. I saw that practice was nothing more than a vehicle, embodying the language. You have got to have a model to represent reality, models are representations of an external, encountered or possible reality.

ep: Diagrams have been a central aspect of your practice from very early on. They are

where this came from, what it represents as a social model?

sw: In the mid 1960s I encountered the work of Ross Ashby, who developed the homeostat. His representation was a model with four nodes, totally interconnected by input-output relationships. The important thing for me was that it showed a possible form of relationships and information within society. Though I don't think Ashby saw it this way; his was a mechanical model. Nevertheless I could glimpse social ramifications. The homeostat model posed another notion, illustrating the difference between our historical systems of control – where information is contained within a set

hierarchy – and the idea of a continually shifting, self-determining system. This is another model of control; to make information available throughout structures, so this one-layer network could be seen as a new social model. I was interested in the notion of another society, moving away from the straitjacket I perceived in the 1950s.

This early work led to simulation works showing a decision-making model of society based on mutual cooperation, like *Visual Homeostatic Information Mesh* 1969 and *Visual Homeostatic Maze 1968*. Simulations that represented the self-organising model of society in a dynamic state, and involved people in making decisions about their relationships with others. I have always been interested in cooperation, a comparative critique between competition and cooperation in decision making.

ep: The *Homeostat Drawing* is also based on an idea of agreement, a frequent notion in your work, especially later works like *Meta Filter*.
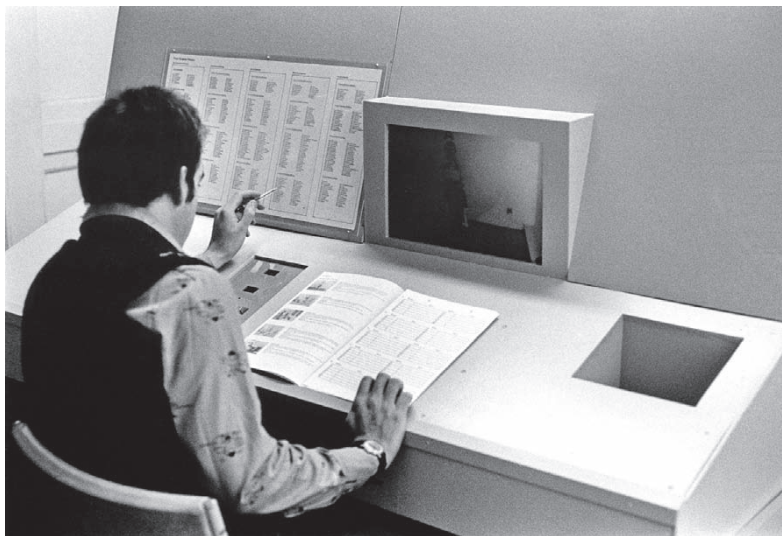
sw: Yes, I saw agreement as a fundamental state. Agreement is not compliance, acquiescence; it involves perceptual recognition of mutuality. It requires a complex series of exchanges. Agreement is a social state between people, not a mechanistic thing; if one is conforming it may seem like agreement, but it is not.

ep: The concept of self-organisation is something you were interested in very early on, and explored in different ways; the individual's capacity to self-organize, non-conformity regarding imposed social structures. Resistance to control emerges when you look, for example, at the planned environment, at how tower blocks or modernist housing structure people's lives, how their inhabitants develop their own subcultures and languages.

sw: Absolutely. In the early 1970s I was consciously looking for polemics to represent in my work, and I thought about externalizing these observations and ideas. I saw that people were in a state of what I call counter-consciousness: they lived in a reality that was determined for them in a mechanistic way. They had to adapt to it, so they created their own counterculture. I don't think this movement or force was rationalized, that came later with the post-punks in the early '80s; it was a sort of a basic human reaction to a crushing state of determinism. I felt the spirit of self-organisation was alive even in the most depressing environments. I noticed this in tower blocks, where residents were isolated from external reality, physically and socially, but still fought back and managed to create a kind of symbolic society for themselves, to find mutual relationships. The development of a counter-consciousness was really important; without it, people would have collapsed. It helped them to maintain their own identity.

ep: You have talked a lot about the artist as someone concerned with transformation, also in relation to the individual's capacity to transform, through the works you have made on housing estates.

sw: I saw my practice as a way of engaging with other people, forwarding a vision of society that has to be in a language people can understand. The traditional art world has its own special, exclusive languages. People know this, and I wanted to extend the meaning of my work beyond this exclusive environment. I had to find a way to build

a bridge and make my propositions meaningful to them. That meant creating a symbolic world for an audience to enter, and articulating this symbolic world in a familiar language. The most appropriate language was their language, so embodying the audience's language in the work helped me to create the symbolic world too. One thing was to set up a relationship with the audience, a feedback between creator and observer of the work. The audience entering the symbolic world could make inferences to their own reality, looking at the world around them, then seeing how it could be transformed. I was working with people on the margins, alienated from the normal, predetermined behaviour of society. At the time, people said this was crazy and tried to stop me, but I said no: these people are important to the future because they embody the act of transformation, developing other languages to denote other ways of viewing future society.

ep: In one of your early manifestos, "The Artist as Philosopher", you talked about how the artist is concerned with finding the boundaries of things and returning them to society. Taking this literally, maybe it relates to a number of works that have explored the margins of society, the borders of towns, wastelands and uninhabited areas, like the glue sniffers' camp; examining these places outside that kind of planned environment, investigating the margins even in a physical sense.

sw: When I made that statement I was thinking artists could take risks because they weren't inside the box, they could go outside, wherever they wanted. They could go to the edge, where other people wouldn't, so they sort of lived on the edge, where they felt free.

ep: In the exhibition at Badischer Kunstverein and in Tom Holert's text in the book there is a particular focus on works from the '80s. You made works that stemmed from your interest in underground clubs, like the Cha Cha Cha, and collaborations with Leigh Bowery. In another sense, these work involve people who were quite literally transforming themselves.

sw: A heuristic progression of interests. In the '70s I was working in the wastelands in West London, at what would now be seen as the origin of punk. What was interesting to me was this language of resistance people used to denote their social separations from the dominant, deterministic society. By the late '70s/early '80s what started as pure self-organisation on a local level had become a cultural phenomenon, a sort of underground night culture. By the early 1980s there were small, private clubs that different communities of young people had spontaneously set up around London, to create an environment for their own society. Generally speaking, these groups associated the world of the day with boring determinism and made clubs using the cover of the night, quite spontaneously, just for friends. Every club had its own identity and was linked to a particular group. This phenomenon came out of punk, but it wasn't really punk. People developed codes of dress and behaviour, speech, music, environment. It had a lot to do with externalization of sexuality, of previously repressed homosexuality. A generation came out to be who they wanted to be, but still there were different sensibilities in different groups. I saw people creating this counterculture and I thought this had great implications for a way forward. The world we live in is increasingly conformist and normal, and you can see this everywhere. But that was a moment of resistance, and I wanted to confront the audience immediately with this phenomenon in my work.

ep: Reading the book *Art Society Feedback*, there are some recurring principles of your work that become clear, connected to a reluctance to see things as fixed, or from one perspective, favouring dynamic states, open systems, acknowledging the complexity of people and experiences. This is something that can be addressed using the language of the diagram, but also through working with people, involving multiple authors. To explore more than one perspective, coexistences, multiple channels, uncertainties. Something very striking in your work is that you have often resisted a singular, authoritative perspective, in favour of open situations.

sw: What is fundamental to these models is the idea of self-organisation and cooperation. I'm interested in acknowledgment of relativity, transience, fluidity, complexity. I think in the last three decades some very important things have become guiding principles. These ideas didn't exist in the '30s, '40s or '50s. Last century thinking said the world was simple, authoritative, monumental, immortal, etc., but in the world currently opening up before us we acknowledge the richness of complexity, transience, multi-channel fluidity, self-organisation.
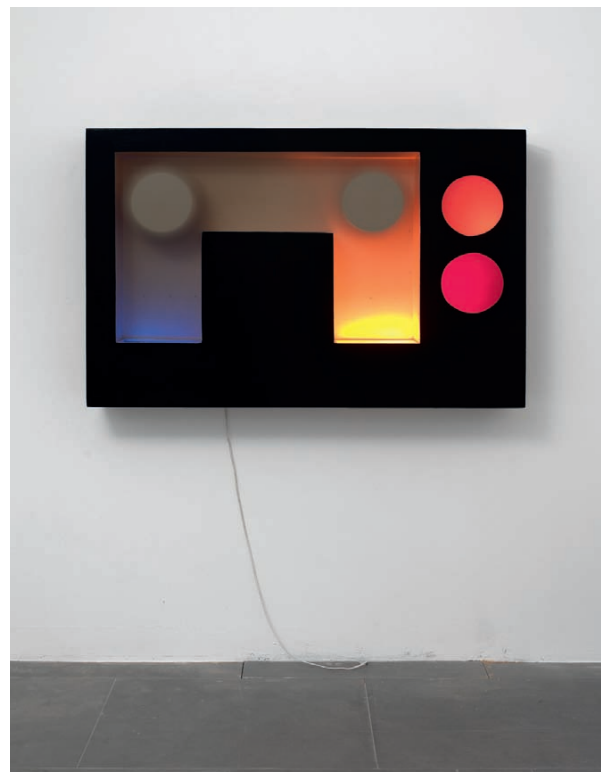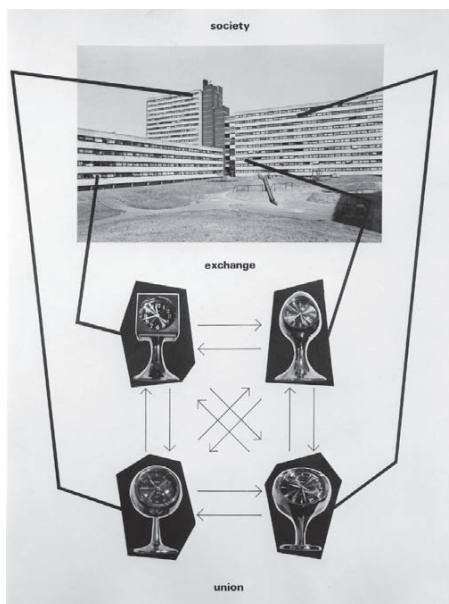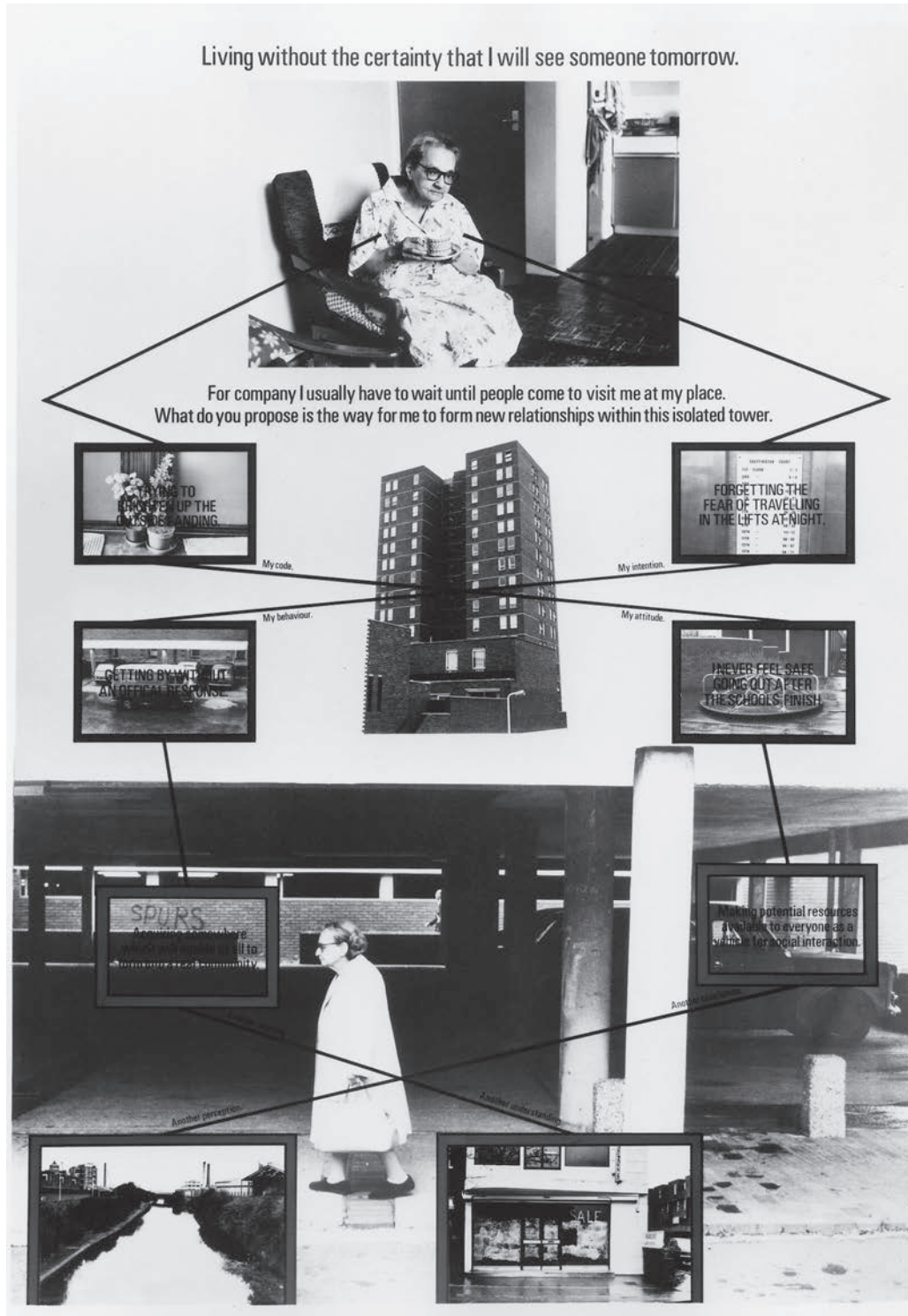
Mousse 27 ~ *Stephen Willats*
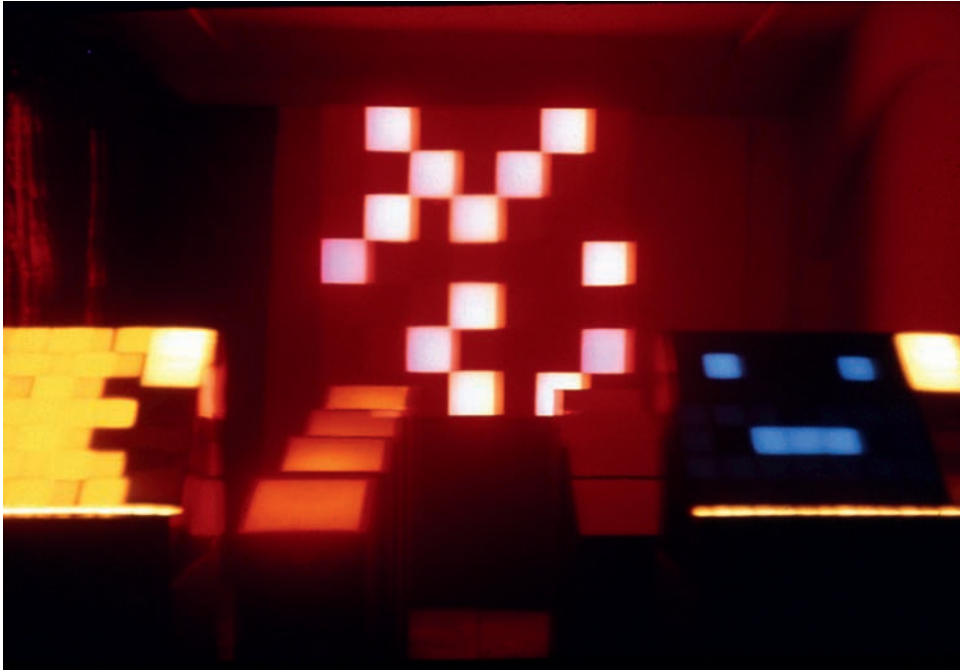
Above — <u>Visual Meta Language Simulation</u>, 1971-72. Courtesy: the artist.

Bottom, left — <u>Our Interpersonal Home</u>, 1990. Courtesy: the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London.

Bottom, right — <u>Visual Automatic No. 4</u>, 1965. Courtesy: the artist and Lisson Gallery, London.

Opposite — "In and Out the Underworld", installation view, European Kunsthalle c/o Ebertplatz, Cologne, 2009. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne. Photo: Simon Vogel.

Living with Practical Realities, 1978.
Tate Collection, London.

MOUSSE 27 ~ *Stephen Willats*

DI EMILY PETHICK

Auto-organizzazione e contro-coscienza sono le parole d'ordine di Stephen Willats. La convinzione che ha mosso tutta la sua produzione artistica dagli anni '60 ad oggi, è che la gente abbia grandi potenzialità di attuare un cambiamento, una resistenza creativa allo squallore imposto. In questo contesto, i diagrammi dell'artista sono modelli dinamici di una nuova realtà per cui la teoria artistica risulta insufficiente. Emily Pethick ha ripercorso con l'artista il senso delle sue incursioni multidisciplinari, dalla cibernetica alla filosofia.
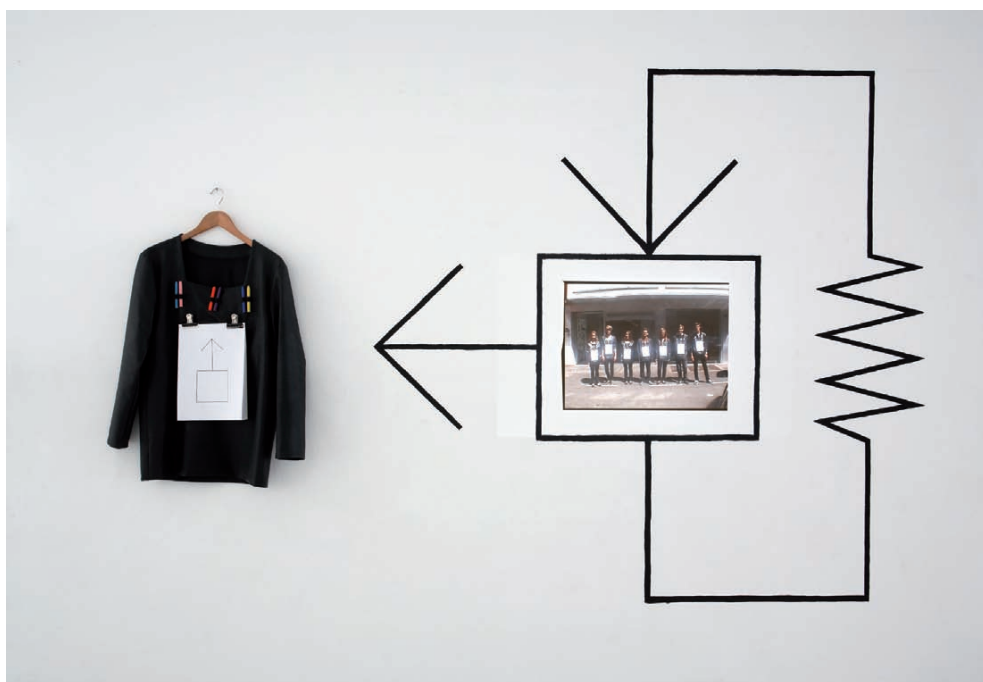
Multiple Clothing. Self Expressions, 2008.
Courtesy: Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne/Berlin/Antwerp.
Photo: Simon Vogel.

Emily Pethick: Parliamo di un nuovo libro, *Art Society Feedback*, pubblicato dalla Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg per la mostra alla Badischer-Kunstverein.
Per coloro che non hanno familiarità con il tuo lavoro, tu sei stato uno dei primi artisti britannici a portare le tue opere fuori dalle gallerie e dentro la società, attivando il pubblico ed esaminando le funzioni sociali e i significati dell'arte. Il libro è diviso in due parti: una raccolta dei tuoi scritti, a partire dagli anni Sessanta, e saggi sul tuo lavoro scritti da Andrew Wilson, Brigitte Franzen, Tom Holert, Ute Meta Bauer e me.
Leggendolo sono rimasta colpita dal rapporto tra pratica e teoria, in particolar modo nei diagrammi, una costante del tuo lavoro, già a partire dalla fine degli anni Cinquanta. Una delle tue prime opere, *Art Society Feedback* (1959), mostra un modello concettuale delle connessioni tra l'artista e il contesto sociale, del feedback tra artista e ambiente. Si tratta di un esempio dei modelli concettuali che crei e che sfociano in opere realizzate in collaborazione con la gente, in contesti sociali esterni alla galleria.

Stephen Willats: Lo sviluppo di concetti e modelli è legato alla percezione della funzione dell'artista in rapporto con il mondo. Ero consapevole del fatto che l'opera che proponevo sarebbe stata parte della società. Un'osservazione iniziale è stata che l'opera d'arte dipende completamente dal suo pubblico. Potremmo quasi dire che gli spettatori sono la ragione del suo essere; senza di loro l'opera d'arte non esiste. È essenziale per gli artisti rendersi conto che, in un modo o nell'altro, essi sono parte della società. L'osservazione successiva è stata che la maggior parte dell'attività artistica descriveva valori e convinzioni esistenti, amplificando ciò che era avvalorato dalla società esistente. Poi vi era anche un ruolo più piccolo, molto più difficile, ma in definitiva molto più significativo, che riguardava la trasformazione, la nozione, cioè, dell'artista capace di trasformare i valori esistenti e di offrire una visione del futuro, una diversa percezione del mondo ed un linguaggio adatto a ciò. Ho visto che la pratica non

era altro che un veicolo che incarnava il linguaggio. Bisogna avere un modello per rappresentare la realtà; i modelli sono rappresentazioni di una realtà esterna, incontrata o possibile.

ep: I diagrammi sono un aspetto centrale della tua pratica artistica fin dagli inizi. Sono usati come un linguaggio per formare dei modelli, ma anche come strumento per pianificare i progetti. L'uso che ne fai è stato influenzato anche dal fatto di essere venuto in contatto con teorie estranee al campo dell'arte, come la cibernetica, la teoria dei sistemi o quella della scatola nera.

sw: Il diagramma è un'immagine dinamica, un modello in una condizione dinamica. Ho visto che per offrire una visione di un potenziale mondo futuro erano necessari altri linguaggi. Quelli che avevo a disposizione nel campo della storia dell'arte erano inadeguati a descrivere la nuova realtà, il nuovo mondo che stavo incontrando (fine anni Cinquanta e inizio anni Sessanta), che sembrava emergere. Così ho cominciato a interessarmi a linguaggi esterni al campo artistico. Le scienze emergenti della cibernetica e della teoria dell'informazione risultavano particolarmente stimolanti, così come le nascenti filosofie della semiotica. Stava facendo la propria comparsa un gran numero di nuovi modi di pensare, che potevano essere messi in pratica. Si è trattato semplicemente di un modo naturale di rappresentare idee e rapporti sociali in modo dinamico. Se l'artista era in rapporto con il pubblico e il pubblico era parte della società, allora l'artista era in rapporto con la società, dunque vi era un feedback. Questo è il modo in cui sono nati i miei diagrammi.

ep: Una delle più notevoli tra le prime opere è *Homeostat Drawing* (1969), la cui installazione è avvenuta sotto forma di disegno murale alla Badischer Kunstverein e poi alla Casco di Utrecht; adesso la stiamo installando nuovamente per "Signal:Noise", un evento che avrà luogo prossimamente a

MOUSSE 27 ~ *Stephen Willats*
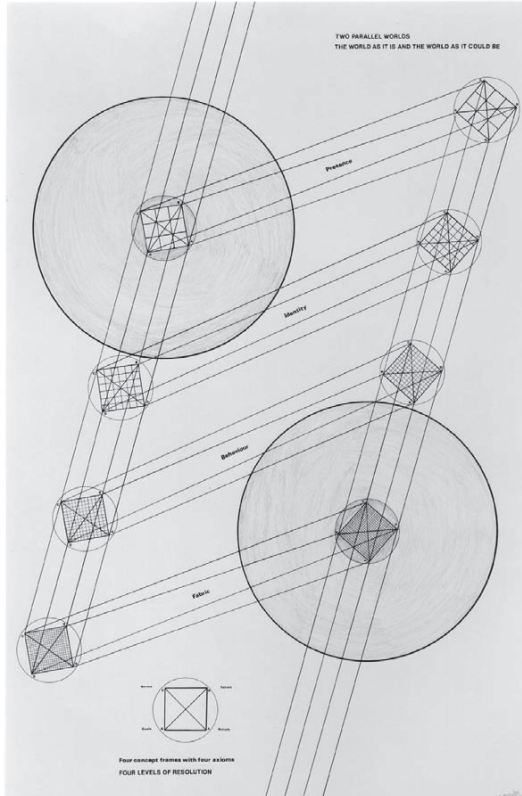
Above — <u>During the Lunch Break</u>, 2004, installation view, "Social Interactions: Beth Campbell / Stephen Willats", Galerie AG, Zurich, 2008. Courtesy: Galerie AG, Zurich.

Left — <u>The World as It is and the World as It Could Be</u>, 2006. Courtesy: the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London.

Bottom, left — <u>Two Worlds, Glue Sniffers Camp</u>, 1981.

Courtesy: the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London.

Bottom, right — <u>The Twin Towers</u>, 1977. Tate Collection, London.

Opposite — <u>Conceptual Tower Drawing No. 5</u>, 1985-2009. Courtesy: Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne/Berlin/Antwerp. Photo: Simon Vogel.
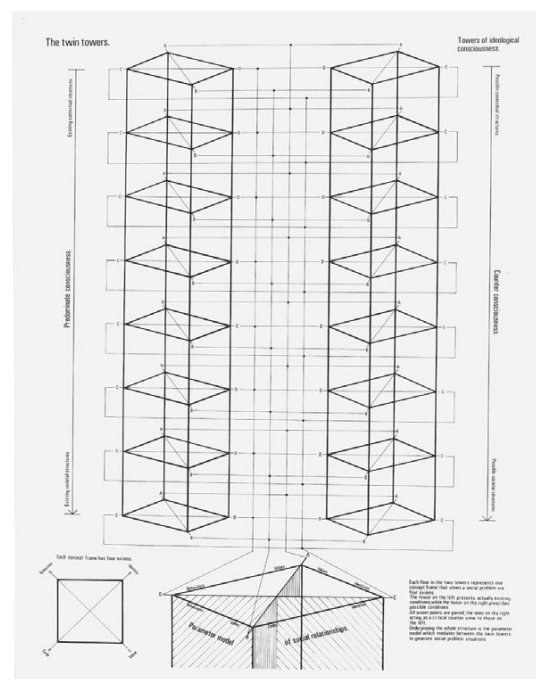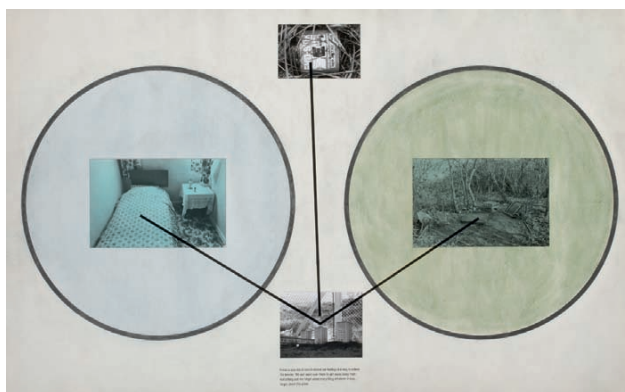
The Showroom, e che indaga le eredità lasciate dalle teorie dei sistemi e dalla cibernetica nella pratica artistica. Questo diagramma ritrae un'infinita rete di parti interconnesse. Puoi dire qualcosa su come è nato e che cosa rappresenta in quanto modello sociale?

sw: A metà degli anni Sessanta mi sono imbattuto nel lavoro di Ross Ashby, che aveva sviluppato l'omeostato. La sua rappresentazione era un modello con quattro nodi, totalmente interconnessi grazie a rapporti di input-output. La cosa importante, per me, era il fatto che mostrava una possibile forma dei rapporti e delle informazioni all'interno della società. Non credo, tuttavia, che Ashby la vedesse in questo modo; il suo era un modello meccanico. Nondimeno riuscivo a scorgere delle ramificazioni sociali. Il modello dell'omeostato ci offre una concezione diversa, illustrando la differenza tra i nostri sistemi di controllo storici – dove l'informazione è contenuta all'interno di una determinata gerarchia – e l'idea di un sistema che è in continuo movimento e che si autodetermina. È un altro modello di controllo, che rende le informazioni disponibili in tutte le strutture, cosicché questa rete, da un certo punto di vista, potrebbe essere considerata un nuovo modello sociale. Mi interessava l'idea di una nuova società, che si allontanasse da quella sorta di camicia di forza che percepivo negli anni Cinquanta.
Questa prima opera ha condotto a dei lavori di simulazione che mostrano un modello decisionale della società basato sulla reciproca collaborazio-

ne, come *Visual Homeostatic Information Mesh* 1969 e *Visual Homeostatic Maze 1968*. Simulazioni che rappresentavano il modello auto-organizzante della società in una condizione dinamica e che coinvolgevano le persone nell'assunzione di decisioni riguardo ai loro rapporti con gli altri. Mi hanno sempre interessato la cooperazione e la critica comparativa tra concorrenza e collaborazione nel campo dell'assunzione di decisioni.

ep: L'*Homeostat Drawing* si basa anche sull'idea di accordo, una nozione spesso presente nel tuo lavoro, specialmente in opere successive come *Meta Filter*.

sw: Sì, consideravo l'accordo uno stato fondamentale. L'accordo non è condiscendenza, acquiescenza; implica il riconoscimento percettivo della reciprocità. Richiede una complessa serie di scambi. L'accordo è una condizione sociale tra persone, non una cosa meccanicistica; il conformarsi potrebbe apparire come accordo, ma non lo è.

ep: Il concetto di auto-organizzazione è qualcosa a cui ti sei interessato fin dagli inizi e che hai esplorato in modi diversi; la capacità dell'individuo di auto-organizzarsi, la non conformità per quanto concerne le strutture sociali imposte. La resistenza al controllo emerge quando si guarda, per esempio, all'ambiente pianificato, a come i condomini o gli alloggi modernisti strutturano la vita delle persone e a come coloro che li abitano sviluppano delle proprie sottoculture e dei propri linguaggi.

sw: Assolutamente. All'inizio degli anni Settanta ero alla consapevole ricerca di polemiche da rappresentare nel mio lavoro e pensai di estrinsecare quelle osservazioni e quelle idee. Vedevo che le persone erano in quello che io chiamo uno stato di controcoscienza: vivevano in una realtà per loro meccanicisticamente determinata. Dovevano adattarvisi, e così crearono la loro personale controcultura. Non penso che questo movimento o questa forza fosse razionalizzato; fatto che avvenne più tardi, con i post-punk degli inizi degli anni Ottanta. Era una sorta di reazione umana basilare a una schiacciante condizione di determinismo. Percepivo che lo spirito dell'auto-organizzazione era ancora vivo, perfino negli ambienti più deprimenti. L'ho osservato nei grandi condomini, dove i residenti erano isolati dalla realtà esterna, fisicamente e socialmente, ma continuavano a lottare e riuscivano a creare per sé una sorta di società simbolica, a trovare rapporti di reciprocità. Lo sviluppo di una controcoscienza è stato molto importante; senza di essa le persone sarebbero crollate. Le ha aiutate a mantenere la loro identità.

ep: Attraverso le tue opere sul tema dei complessi edilizi, hai parlato molto dell'artista come persona con un interesse per la trasformazione, anche in relazione alla capacità dell'individuo di trasformare.

sw: Consideravo la mia pratica artistica come un modo per confrontarmi con le altre persone, proponendo una visione della società che fosse espressa in un linguaggio comprensibile dalla gente. Il

mondo artistico tradizionale aveva i propri linguaggi speciali ed esclusivi. Le persone lo sanno, e io volevo estendere il significato del mio lavoro al di là di questo ambiente esclusivo. Ho dovuto trovare un modo per costruire un ponte e far sì che le mie proposizioni avessero un significato per loro. Per far questo ho dovuto creare un mondo simbolico dentro cui il pubblico potesse entrare e ho dovuto esprimere questo mondo simbolico in un linguaggio familiare. Il linguaggio più appropriato era il loro linguaggio, così il fatto di dar corpo al linguaggio del pubblico nell'opera mi ha aiutato anche a creare il mondo simbolico. Un obiettivo è stato quello di stabilire un rapporto con il pubblico, di dar vita a un feedback tra creatore e osservatore dell'opera. Il pubblico che entrava nel mondo simbolico poteva trarre conclusioni rispetto alla propria realtà, osservando il mondo che lo circondava e poi vedendo come poteva essere trasformato. Lavoravo con persone ai margini, alienate dal comportamento normale, predeterminato, della società. All'epoca le persone dicevano che era una cosa folle e cercavano di fermarmi, ma io ho detto no: queste persone sono importanti per il futuro, perché incarnano l'atto della trasformazione, sviluppando altri linguaggi per denotare altri modi di vedere la società futura.

ep: In uno dei tuoi primi manifesti, "The Artist as Philosopher" (L'artista come filosofo) parlavi di come l'artista si occupi di trovare i limiti estremi delle cose e di restituirli alla società. Questa affermazione, presa alla lettera, forse può essere messa in relazione con numerose opere che hanno esplorato i margini della società, i confini delle città, delle aree desolate e disabitate, come l'accampamento degli sniffatori di colla; esaminando questi luoghi al di fuori di quel genere di ambiente pianificato, esplorando i margini anche in senso fisico.

sw: Quando ho affermato ciò, pensavo che gli artisti avrebbero potuto assumersi dei rischi, perché non erano rinchiusi dentro la scatola, ma potevano uscire fuori quando lo volevano. Potevano spingersi fino al margine, dove altre persone non si sarebbero spinte; così, in un certo senso, vivevano al limite, dove si sentivano liberi.

ep: Nella mostra alla Badischer Kunstverein e nel testo di Tom Holert vi è un'attenzione particolare per le opere degli anni Ottanta. Hai realizzato opere che sono nate dal tuo interesse per i club underground, come il Cha Cha Cha, e dalle collaborazioni con Leigh Bowery. Lette in altro modo, queste opere riguardano persone che, in modo piuttosto letterale, si stavano trasformando.

sw: Vi è stata una progressione euristica degli interessi. Negli anni Settanta lavoravo nelle aree abbandonate di West London e a quella che ora sarebbe considerata l'origine del punk. Quello che trovavo interessante era questo linguaggio di resistenza che le persone usavano per denotare il loro distacco sociale dalla società dominante e determinista. Alla fine degli anni Settanta/ inizio degli anni Ottanta, quella che era iniziata come pura auto-organizzazione a livello locale era divenuta un fenomeno culturale, una sorta di cultura *underground* notturna. Agli inizi degli anni Ottanta diverse comunità di giovani avevano dato vita a piccoli club privati per creare un ambiente adatto per la loro società. In generale, questi gruppi associavano il mondo diurno con la noia del de-

terminismo e crearono i club servendosi della copertura della notte, in modo abbastanza spontaneo, solo per gli amici. Ogni club aveva la sua identità ed era legato a un gruppo particolare. Il fenomeno nacque dal punk, ma non era veramente punk. Le persone inventarono codici di abbigliamento e di comportamento, modi di parlare, generi musicali e ambienti. Grande importanza aveva l'estrinsecazione della sessualità, dell'omosessualità precedentemente repressa. Si fece strada una generazione che riusciva a essere ciò che voleva. Tuttavia nei diversi gruppi continuavano ad esserci differenti sensibilità. Vedevo le persone creare questa controcultura e pensavo che ciò avesse delle implicazioni importanti per il futuro. Il mondo in cui viviamo è sempre più conformista e normale e questo lo si può osservare ovunque. Ma quello era un momento di resistenza e volevo che nel mio lavoro il pubblico dovesse confrontarsi direttamente con questo fenomeno.

ep: Leggendo il libro *Art Society Feedback* appaiono in tutta la loro evidenza alcuni principi ricorrenti del tuo lavoro, connessi a una riluttanza a vedere le cose come fisse, o da un'altra prospettiva, a favorire gli stati dinamici, i sistemi aperti, riconoscendo la complessità delle

persone e delle esperienze. Questo è qualcosa che può essere discusso usando il linguaggio del diagramma, ma anche attraverso il lavoro con le persone, il coinvolgimento di più autori. Per esplorare più di una prospettiva, le coesistenze, i diversi canali, le incertezze. Una cosa che colpisce nel tuo lavoro è il fatto che spesso ti sei opposto a una prospettiva singolare e autoritaria, in favore di situazioni aperte.

sw: Fondamentale, per questi modelli, è l'idea di auto-organizzazione e di cooperazione. M'interessa il riconoscimento della relatività, della transitorietà, della fluidità e della complessità. Penso che, negli ultimi tre decenni, alcune cose molto importanti si siano trasformate in principi guida. Queste idee non esistevano negli anni Trenta, Quaranta o Cinquanta. Il pensiero del secolo scorso presentava il mondo come semplice, autorevole, monumentale, immortale, ecc., ma nel mondo che ci si spalanca davanti al giorno d'oggi riconosciamo la ricchezza della complessità, della transitorietà, della fluidità multi-canale, dell'auto-organizzazione.

Top — <u>Eine Postmoderne Lebensform</u>, 1993. Courtesy: Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne/Berlin/ Antwerp. Photo: Simon Vogel.

Middle — <u>A Journey to Be Continued Tomorrow</u>, 2009. Courtesy: Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne/Berlin/ Antwerp. Photo: Simon Vogel.

BALICE HERTLING
GALERIE

Stephen Willats at Reena Spaulings Fine Art - artforum.com / critics' picks, 2011
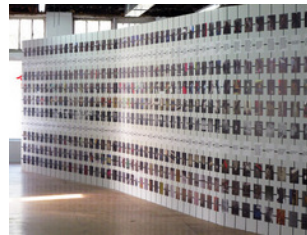
ARTFORUM

New York

Stephen Willats
REENA SPAULINGS FINE ART
165 East Broadway, 2nd Floor
September 17, 2011–October 23, 2011

Photographed, diagrammed, and invaded, New York—a "strange attractor" of a place—is the topic of Stephen Willats's first solo exhibition in the city. On the streets near the gallery you can find stickers with two squares connected by directional arrows, or a monitor in the window of Essex Street's Café Grumpy where the same motif is superimposed on footage of pedestrians. It repeats inside the gallery, too. *Strange Attractor Series No. 2* (all works 2011) is a big grid of the squares, with some tinted to form an angled spiral. Indigo on the outside, it travels the spectrum to end back near blue. Like most of Willats's work, this schema of centripetal urban energy makes arbitrary, even fanciful misuse of diagrammatical conventions to model reality in a way that accommodates the forces of imagination immediate to our engagement with it. Text on another geometric drawing dances around the margins, a concrete poem: IN AND OUT OF THE VORTEX/THE THRILL OF THE UNKNOWN/EXPLOITING THE DYNAMIC OF THE ALLURE/SURFING ON THE SPELL . . . OF THE STRANGE ATTRACTOR.

Stephen Willats, *DATA STREAM: A Portrait of New York (Delancey Street/Fifth Avenue)*, 2011, ink-jet prints and acrylic on freestanding wall, 8 x 42".

Willats came of age in the 1960s, when the vogue for cybernetics spread virally across disciplines. Its union with linguistics spawned some rich theories, like Roman Jakobson's that language is generated by operations along the axes of selection and combination, which find their most acute expression in the poetic figures of metaphor and metonymy. This model is called to mind by *DATA STREAM: A Portrait of New York (Delancey Street/Fifth Avenue)*. A wall in the center of the gallery displays a grid of over a thousand elements—snapshots of people, signs, graffiti, refuse; brief texts describing the seen and transcribing the heard—where like elements are ordered horizontally and the vertical suggests the syntax of a methodically observant pedestrian's senses. Its blunt deliberateness makes it look more like the product of a nonprofit's residency program than the kind of work you expect to see in a downtown gallery. But it also speaks forcefully to an analytic urge to understand while ultimately denying its satisfaction. Drawing us down an uneven path toward the north wall's windows, the *Portrait* is a big arrow that points to the truth outside.

— *Brian Droitcour*

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HERTLING**
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Stephen Willats,e-flux, 21 sept 2010

e-flux

41 Essex street
New York, NY 10002, USA

September 21, 2010
Badischer Kunstverein

COUNTERCONSCIOUSNESS
Stephen Willats

24 September – 21 November 2010

Opening:
23 September 2010, 7 pm

Waldstraße 3
D - 76133 Karlsruhe
Germany

www.badischer-kunstverein.de

The Badischer Kunstverein is pleased to present the London artist Stephen Willats in an extensive solo exhibition. From the 1960s until today, Stephen Willats has developed a pioneering practice based on collaboration, interactivity and participation within the variables of social relationships and settings. Willats creates multi-sensory, multi-dimensional environments to encourage viewers to engage with their own creative and cognitive processes, to re-examine and transform the way they perceive existing reality.

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The show, which comprises more than forty artworks, concentrates on Willats' works on the wasteland-, night- and post-punk context of the late 1970s and 1980s. Several of these works have been shown rarely or never at all and were selected with the artist in a close process. The media range from photo, text and object collages to diagrams and large spatial installations. One room is especially devoted to books and texts by the artist and issues of the magazine Control, which he has edited and published since 1965.

COUNTERCONSCIOUSNESS offers a new and surprising perspective of Willats' artistic practice, as the selected works are characterised less by order and precision that he is known for, than by an expressive handling of diverse colours, objects and materials. Priority is given here to the technique of collage: photographs are combined with texts and found materials, they are framed by coloured surfaces or developed sculpturally—as in the two installations Living Like A Goya or Secret Prima Donna—from the surface into the space.

Willats' works on the "counter-cultures" as specific movements contrary to the dominant system – such as the post-punk scene during the Thatcher era, the creatures of the night or the occupants of various wastelands – are exemplary displayed in the Kunstverein. A repeatedly occurring image in these works is the facade of modern tower block architecture, which represent a counter-image to the collective and individual needs of their residents. Thus the biographies of the punks or glue sniffers are often linked to the reality of their lives in the tower blocks, and it is from there that they set out on their "journeys" to the parallel worlds in the clubs and wastelands.

Stephen Willats (b. 1943) lives and works in London. He is one of the most important representatives of international Concept Art in England. Solo exhibitions (selection): The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be, Victoria Miro, London (2010); Cybernetic Still Life, BaliceHertling, Paris; In And Out The Underworld, European Kunsthalle, Cologne (2009); The Architecture of Stephen Willats, LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster; The Speculative Diagram, CASCO, Utrecht (2008)

The exhibition takes place in conjunction with Thermostat, Zusammenarbeit zwischen 24 centres d'art und Kunstvereinen (a cooperation among 24 art centres and art associations).
www.project-thermostat.eu

Supported by The Henry Moore Foundation and British Council

Friday, 22 October 2010, 8 pm
BOOK LAUNCH: Stephen Willats – ART SOCIETY FEEDBACK
Presentation of a comprehensive publication on Stephen Willats' works from the 1960s till today, published by Anja Casser and Philipp Ziegler, Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg. The book contains texts by Ute Meta Bauer, Brigitte Franzen, Tom Holert, Emily Pethick and Andrew Wilson as well as a selection of texts by the artist, some of which have not been published.

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or visit www.badischer-kunstverein.de

Opening hours:
Tuesday–Friday 11 am – 7 pm
Saturday, Sunday & Holidays 11 am – 5 pm
Closed on Mondays

Badischer Kunstverein

In the studio with Stephen Willats, Time Out London, 21 May 2010

Time Out London

In the studio with Stephen Willats

Art: In the studio

Stephen Willats in his studio - Photo Martin Coomer

By Martin Coomer   Posted: Fri May 21 2010

Stephen Willats has made stridently socially engaged art since the 1960s, creating multimedia works that examine the structures that govern us, the ways in which we interact with one another and art's role as an agent for change. His latest exhibition, 'The World as it is and the World as it could be', at Victoria Miro, features projects from the past five years. He lives and works in Paddington.

Have you noticed marked changes in your work over the years in relation to the economic, political and social climates of the times?

'Absolutely. I don't think you can divorce these things. But what was interesting in the late '70s and early '80s was the way that a cultural reaction externalised itself and you could see it on the street. What surprises me at the moment is that I can detect very little of that - in relation to the banking crisis and so on. You have a world of normality, a world that seems to have acquiesced.'

Is that world reflected in the moving image element of your 'Cybernetic Still Life'?

'Those films are about the relationships between people and objects, that we live in a world of society, between people, but in a culture of objects. On one side of the work you have this continual flow of people, then on the other side you have a continual flow of objects. I wanted to express the idea that the world is transient, that it's not made of monuments. You've only got to look back, say, 20 or 30 years to see how things have moved on. You can be several different people in your own lifetime now, which you couldn't do 50 years ago very easily.'

We might like to believe that but, in terms of social mobility especially, aren't positions as entrenched as they were a century ago?

'Don't believe it. It wasn't that long ago that if you were homosexual you could go to prison. Or if you were communist, you had a very hard time.'

Has the art world moved on?

'Institutions of art are still object-based, based on the idea of mortality, a celebration of icons of ideal types and so on. I'm very interested in how artists might operate within institutions, how we might use them in a different way, because the world we live in doesn't have to be this way, it could be different. You can take something that seems set in stone but it isn't really, it's just your perception of it.'

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Tell us about your use of diagrams as a way of distilling complex ideas.

'I've always been interested in the diagram as a way of representing flows of information. It's like a sort of encryption, you can load a diagram with your own personal variables, your own reality, and you can see the idea of the diagram in your own world. It's like the work in the exhibition where you have the world as it is and the world as it could be. We live in this parallel situation, where we have the world that we feel is true to ourselves and the world we have to live with. We build a kind of a buffer between the two, and when that buffer collapses there's trouble.'

I felt a lot of optimism in your show, particularly in the work about the woman who takes small steps to change her immediate surroundings. How did that piece come about?

'What she did was fantastic. I was working in Milton Keynes and developed this work person to person. Lisa had gone to live on this housing estate which was completely a no-hope kind of place and she transformed it. Often within situations that are written off you get individuals who act as social catalysts, who transform the society around them. These are usually unsung people but they have that ability. It's a fantastic symbol of what's possible.'

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Stephen Willats at Galerie Thomas Schulte - artforum.com / critics' picks, Artforum, 2008

ARTFORUM

Berlin

Stephen Willats
GALERIE THOMAS SCHULTE
Charlottenstrasse 24
January 19, 2008–March 8, 2008

This exhibition consists entirely of conceptual drawings produced by English artist Stephen Willats between 1983 and 2007. They are not project sketches for the installations and social interventions for which he has been known since the late 1960s but, rather, are discrete artworks. The "Conceptual Towers," 1984–2003, are drawings of residential towers that are shaped like the eccentrically designed flower vases Willats collects. He once remarked that certain architects build houses as design objects and not as urban spaces for communication or living, and that these structures are then inhabited by people who surround themselves with lifeless design objects. The diagramlike compositions in the "Democratic Grids Series," 1989–2002, feature variously colored squares grouped together like endlessly expandable, hierarchy-free structures, which Willats calls "democratic surfaces." Connected by arrows that are meant to represent directions of communication, each of the squares depicted in *Democratic Grid No. 6*, 1990, represents a different human role: worker, lover, teacher, neighbor, creator, director. The grid shown in *Acid (LSD) Grids*, 1989, includes larger rectangles with psychedelic spirals ringed with purple, orange, and green. Willats is interested in relationships, movement, and the way people and objects interact; his favorite subjects are, he claims, "networking," "self-organization," and "communication." Yet despite their source material, Willats's whimsical studies are less sociological investigations than aesthetic methodologies for finding the patterns of form and the fields of forces in human behavior and urban design.
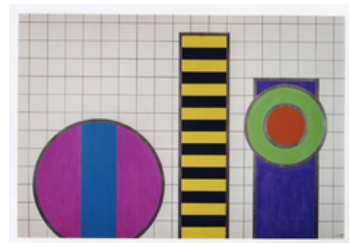
No. 35, May 1994, poster paint and pencil on paper, 29 1/2 x 39 3/8". From the series "Conceptual Towers," 1984–2003.

— *Saskia Draxler*

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Stephen Willats, Frieze, Catrin Lorch, 2 Arpil 2006

FRIEZE.COM

REVIEW - 02 APR 2006

Stephen Willats

BY CATRIN LORCH TRANSLATED BY NICHOLAS GRINDELL

Printed along the top in clean Letraset type: 'Ich fürchte meine Kinder haben ein gefährliches Alter erreicht' ('I'm afraid my children have reached a dangerous age'). Below, collages of housing estate snapshots assembled like the prefabricated elements of a concrete tower block: monotonous surfaces, clumsily formulated scrawls, smeared window panes – the façades of defunct residential Utopias. 'How do you think we can show that we are alive, creative, not dead yet?' asks the text under one collage.

Stephen Willats' life in Berlin in the late 1970s and early '80s is one point of departure for his exhibition 'Multichannel Life'. The British artist pursued his Conceptual work, occassionally in German, focusing on 'the periphery of society' by talking to people, taking photographs and assembling the results in such a way that

STEPHEN WILLATS

they look like posters or illustrated charts. His work combines the graphic qualities of documentary photography, the pictorial languages of diagrams and the exaggeration of propaganda – and yet is something else. Early works such as Lift Drawing (1979), One Must Take into Consideration the Neighbours (1980) and My Children Have Reached a Dangerous Age (1979–80) show that Willats has worked continually over a period of decades on a concept that sites both art and lived experience as part of a participatory oeuvre. It reads the reality of the suburbs today like the Structuralists read a text, and often refuses simplistic answers.

Looking at Ourselves (1976) consists of four works on paper in pale wooden frames. The focus of each is a photograph: four young people, talking among themselves or getting into a car. Above their heads are shapes like angular thought bubbles. Willats has drawn in connecting lines, leading to explanatory boxes which reveal that each of the men and women has an origin, a future and an intention. This is the moment at which four lives intersect more or less by chance, a point that could be measured diagrammatically in terms of time, place and sociology.

Willats is interested not only in chance meetings and meanings but also in the question of who decides how they are represented. In Nothing Is Quite As It Appears (2000) a television on the floor plays a loop of a woman walking beneath an overpass. But the scene is broken, like a Cubist nude, by repeated shifts in perspective and camera angle – the direct result of Willats' invitation to four different directors to shoot the same sceene. These multiple views are spread over diverse media, with a tape recorder supplying the sound, a simple printed pamphlet offering information about the concept, and photographs that compare the sequences.

The artist often invites people to participate in his work. In his view art is the result of social interaction, not the product of a single author. At the same time – and this is the focus of interest in 'Multichannel Life' – he has meticulously deconstructed his understanding of the world around him with his discovery that 'the fabric of this daily reality is filled with signs and symbols that radiate their messages to me without my intervening or having any influence over them, constructing the consciousness I have of myself and the world in which I live'. The work entitled Multi-Channel Vision (1999), for example, breaks down into a wall full of details – street sign, manhole cover, car tyre, graffiti – circled, marked and cut out. The picture of a street has disintegrated into shards. Even before satellites looked down on the earth and allowed us to view the planet in segment, Willats had created his composites, fragmenting the world like kaleidoscopes, breaking down the closed semantics of a street to discuss the methods by which streets are planned, built, furnished, inhabited and subsidized.

The exhibition also includes recent works such as In Relationships Never Ending and During the Lunch Break (both 2004). The images in the diagrams show people on the phone or in conversation. The photographs tinted in pale tones appear to have been specially prepared for the diagram, which consists of arrow links and open-ended connecting lines. But the terms attributed here and there – 'jealous', 'diffident', 'egotistical' – offer no

further clarification. The core of each piece is a collage – staggered high-rise silhouettes, or a four-pointed star assembled out of skyscrapers – which acts not as a background but as an embedded point of reference. The city is seen as a model, and as a reality remains quite literally at the centre of Willats' thinking.