

The Body Missing Project, transcription of opening speech
Schatz - Raub - Bildersturm Symposium
Offenes Kulturhaus, Linz, February 16, 1996 Vera Frenkel

Preamble

In the context of the **Schatz - Raub - Bildersturm** Symposium which begins here tomorrow and where there will be experts on the several histories of art theft, war loot and cultural appropriation which we have met to consider, I would like to say that I'm neither a scholar nor a poet, but a practising artist, which is to say someone for whom a constant state of un-knowing is both necessary and desirable.

So, I am here to talk about some of the ways in which I don't know things and how this not-knowing opens out into my way of working. From that position, I will tell you about the beginnings of the **Body Missing Project** which started here in Linz, traces of which have been installed for you to see during the next two days.

We will talk as well about a special series of conversations that also began here in Linz and are continuing elsewhere in the world, which, although quite speculative at first, became, through the Internet, the basis for extending the **Body Missing Project** into cyberspace, with all its implications for changing one's assumptions of what is real.

Underlying both works is the notion of memory as a moral force; as the essential continuity without which all else is perhaps -- here are two German words I have just learned -- either **Wurst** or **Quatsch**, depending upon with which part of your sensorium you use, mouth or ear, to diagnose nonsense.

A Parenthesis

However, before I begin what I'm supposed to be doing this evening, I want to tell you a story. A parenthesis in the larger narrative. It's a true story, of course, as all stories in one way or another must be, if they are to be remembered at all. This one happened in the early eighties in Crete where I was travelling on a special errand.

I had been living at the British School at Athens, hanging around with archaeologists, historians and classicists, always a fairly dangerous thing to do. Sitting under the palm trees where Arthur Evans sat generations earlier and planned his dig at Knossos; eating unfamiliar food at a communal table; listening to thousand-year-old gossip; drinking Ouzo on the terrace and generally (as Canadians do, because we are so invisible) observing the eccentricities of citizens of our various parent countries -- in this case the British -- I found myself backstage at an intellectual feast, surrounded by those entrusted with the task of developing, analyzing and protecting cultural memory.

The time came when I could resist no longer the pull to Crete, the crucible, it is sometimes thought, of Western culture, and because the mail boats to the islands are sometimes unreliable, I became the courier between the British School on the mainland and its southern extension in Heraklion, the Villa Ariadne, nicknamed the Taverna by generations of resident archaeologists.

The journey was long and difficult as such journeys are supposed to be, but eventually I arrived at the door of the Villa, just along the road from Knossos. The door was opened by Sandy McGillivray, another Canadian, who was then in charge.

It is said that Greece is a country where the unconscious walks out in the open and synchronicity is always on the menu. Sandy introduced me to a small child playing with a ball of string: his daughter Ariadne. Saying her name, he smiled. I gave him the packet of mail while Ariadne played around our feet. We had coffee and began to talk. It turned out that, despite the highly chauvenistic and charged cultural

climate (during which Melina Mercouri as minister of culture led the outcry for the return of the Elgin marbles (now renamed the Parthenon Marbles), and various laws were passed controlling the activities of archaeologists from other nations working in Greece), Sandy McGillivray, a stranger, was somehow entrusted with the task of re-strewing of Evans's labelled items, or 'finds', and allowed to examine the physical evidence of his work.

It's not true that archaeologists only gossip about who seduced whom in the Nth century before Christ. They do that, of course, but if they are reasonably responsible they also keep detailed daily journals, each journal dedicated to and representing its sack of finds. As gatekeepers of the memory bank, the more precise and detailed the records they keep, the more transparent and accessible, or so it is believed, is the whole process of discovering who we are and how we came to be who we are.

It is meant to be possible to re-open the sack no matter how many generations later, to re-strew the material (spreading it out on a flat surface) and with the help of the previous archaeologist's notes, to reconsider the evidence. To open and re-examine the materials of the man who had Knossos (there were countless heavy cotton bags of his finds) was clearly for Sandy McGillivray an adventure and a privilege.

But that is not the story I'm going to tell you.
The real story is this:

In inviting Sandy McGillivray to re-work these finds, the Greek authorities allowed him access to the Museum of the Villa Ariadne, or the Knossos Museum, long closed not only to the public but to researchers. That summer, Sandy found himself alone in the building in the exact physical situation in which Evans had worked. As had been the case with Evans, Sandy had been provided with two large tables on which to strew all the bits of pottery and plaster and whatever else was in the sacks, and to start fitting the pieces together and make connections.

It was in this very situation that Arthur Evans had developed the dating system which has been adopted almost universally since then (and rarely questioned except perhaps most notably by Emmanuel Velikovsky who postulated a 900 year repetition in Evans' system which, if eliminated, would allow the reported catastrophes of the ancient world to line up with the accounts of them in the Bible; an interesting walk on the fact/fiction border which was firmly discredited by the profession and relegated to the science-fiction section of the library.)

But in 1982, Sandy, faced with two tables and many cotton sacks, said no, this is crazy. There's just too much material. Two tables simply won't work. And he requested that more tables be brought. After the usual demurrals and delays, tables were produced and situated nearby. I can't remember now whether he said that three more arrived, making five all together, or whether they brought five, but the number five stays in my mind. In any case, he began to spread the labelled specimens over the larger strewing area, and this permitted him a far greater flexibility and variety in juxtaposing the fragments. And with five tables and what they made possible, Sandy realized that what he was seeing was almost certainly calling into question the structure of Evans's dating system. In a very direct way, space was translatable into time, the translation changing with the number of surfaces available on which to spread the evidence.

So, lesson number one of hanging out with a certain kind of archaeologist is that space is time, that nothing is sacred, and that reality shifts with the furniture.

There were other lessons. Since I was already at Knossos, it seemed sensible to visit the site itself. There I found myself faced with clear evidence of the mutability of memory. As those of you know who have been there, in the presence of the oldest throne in Europe, and have anticipated an unmediated experience, an epiphany of

some sort, no site in the western world is as commented on, as layered with voices as is Knossos. There may be a cool and quiet moment at dawn in which to contemplate the ruins, but by mid-morning buses arrive by the dozen and the tour-guide choreography begins. For days I sat there, just listening, in my quiet Canadian fashion, to a special kind of *Quatsch*; a cycle of disquisitions on site in English, German, Italian, French, all contradicting each other, with very few areas of agreement in the tale told. The reinvention of history was taking place in front of me in half a dozen different ways.

Between the shift in world view of Evans's dating system and the several different truths languages and surrounding his site, the whole notion of memory itself was in question. And with it the moral thread to which we have grown attached.

A few days later, reflecting from a distance on these experiences, a further lesson greeted me in the form of an unexpected brush against the fortress of culture, money and power: At dinner at the Taverna one evening, drinking good wine and listening to some of the most famous archaeologists in the English-speaking world banter and flirt and gossip, I made the mistake of saying something mildly critical of the re-election campaign strategy of Margaret Thatcher, then Prime Minister of England. Suddenly I had crossed an invisible threshold. Guest or no guest, I was reprimanded firmly for my misguided 'naivete'. From the heated discussion that ensued, it became clear that archaeology -- as it was practised in the eighties, and perhaps still is -- was a rich man's game, an arena of colonizing assumptions.

I was reminded vividly that I was in the presence of the guards of the master-narratives, being perceived by them, perhaps correctly, as the enemy. The most esteemed practitioners of the making of meaning seemed oblivious to the contradictions and uncertainties that I had witnessed in Knossos, with their implications of change and contradiction at the root of the discipline. They knew exactly what the world was about. Questioning by visitors was not on the menu.

What interests me in all this is how, even where there is a strong and declared desire to fix what is true and to protect and promote it, the ground continues to shift. This in turn raises the question regarding what happens in a climate of indifference and denial, a situation where there is a vested interest precisely in not knowing what happened? And that thought brings me back to the **Body Missing Project**, the work that has engaged me over the last years.

Body Missing

The **Body Missing Project** began with an invitation from the Offenes Kulturhaus and art historian/curator Sigrid Schade, to make a work for the exhibition, **Andere Körper**, in September 1994. In the catalogue, you can see the very rich and diverse range of approaches in that exhibition to issues of otherness and the body, which suggests by implication the curatorial generosity that allowed me to work on questions that interest me such as, for example, the power of absence, the consequences of denial, the nature of collecting fever and the toxicity of shame.

Preparing a work for **Andere Körper** allowed me to respond specifically on site to an aspect of the recent history of Linz as the formative childhood milieu of Adolf Hitler, site of his second largest dream as an adult, the desire to build here as a monument to his power the largest and most important museum in Europe, the Führermuseum, of which he himself would be the first curator.

Regarding **Body Missing**, there was a body of sorts, the body of art gathered under the *Sonderauftrag Linz* and stored in the salt-mines at nearby Altaussee. Some of these artworks had vanished, though whether forever or only for a time remains unclear; and yes, there was a special history for me in this part of the world since I was born not far away, in Bratislava, of which, however, all conscious memory was annihilated by war and emigration. So it is not surprising that the

question of memory and the meaning of commemorative acts should enter my work as a sub-text of the project.

Though most of my life has been spent in North America, I have a European's response to the words, "the war". For many of my friends and colleagues, those two words connote more readily the anguish of Viet Nam. For those a generation older, of Korea. But for those of us deracinated, dispossessed and displaced by it and haunted by its complex legacies, "the war" means World War II, and World War II means a special history of terror and irretrievable loss of innocence, and even today, when so much is openly acknowledged, in matters concerning the Third Reich, a heightened awareness of the continuing oscillation between questioning and denial.

I'm sometimes described as a multidisciplinary artist, meaning that I use whatever combinations of media carry the work's meaning most effectively. Or a site-specific artist responding to a particular time and place. Or as someone who makes interventions into existing situations in order to question received ideas. In the case of **Body Missing**, I am all three.

SLIDES OF THE OFFENES KULTURHAUS INSTALLATION, SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER, 1994 AND OF THE SETAGAYA MUSEUM INSTALLATION, TOKYO, JANUARY-APRIL, 1994; ARE SHOWN AND DISCUSSED. (SINCE THEN, THE BODY MISSING INSTALLATION AND WEB SITE HAVE BEEN SEEN IN MUSEUMS IN SCANDINAVIA, POLAND, THE UNITED STATES, GERMANY AND FRANCE.)

Slide-Tour and Commentary:

This is the front facade of the OK as it was in 1994 when **Body Missing** was installed for the first time, with the three storeys of photo-murals inserted in the windows all the way up. I don't know what will be front or back after the renovation, but at the time this was the entry point into the exhibition. The images were drawn from visual material in the six video-tapes, and the windows with the translucent images were lit at night to be visible from the street.

Some of the images are familiar: the crowds on either side of the Landstrasse waiting for Hitler's arrival; the hands raised in salute in the Hauptplatz when he gave his Anschluss speech; the hands of Hitler himself and his followers, in the bunker, gesturing above the model of the great centre of culture that Linz would become ...

As you enter the building, moving up the stairs beside the photo-windows, you are almost in a kind of aquarium or series of lenses, a time-lapse version of the video, the three storeys of images interrupted only by spaces where windows have been removed completely and replaced with black curtains that move to and fro in the wind. Through the day and night-time translucency of the images, and the movement of the black curtains at certain intervals there was acknowledgment of the relationship between inside and outside spaces.

There were six video stations, each with a different six-minute tape loop. Some were on the stairs and others in different spaces throughout the building.

The first station was downstairs in the basement, where the memory of the building's history as a Wehrmacht prison seems most present. From each station you can hear, in the distance, the voices of the next, and you can see, as mentioned, the relationship between the material on the tapes and the material in the windows.

The text you see on the wall under the raw, hanging lightbulb at Station I, is also in the catalogue and is the governing narrative for the installation and for its Website extension.

In that narrative we are told that the Transit Bar, a six-channel video installation which I built at documenta 9 in Kassel, is now downstairs in the Offenes Kulturhaus, where it has become a gathering place for

artists from different parts of the world. At their *stammtisch* they are discussing what became of the stolen art stored in the salt mines down the road, some of which disappeared before the Allies opened the mine. In the Bar the artists are talking about what it means that a whole body of work has disappeared, or been re-named or are somehow in semi-hiding,, kept underground for private delectation.

These speculations became part of a dialogue I wrote, centering on the notion that it might be possible to restructure some of the missing works, or to make a new work as an homage or a commemorative gesture to an absent work and a past artist. This dialogue, spoken as voice-over on the video-tapes, was a complete fiction. It was only later, as real artists entered the project, that the work that began as a fiction started actually to be realized.

Here we are at the OK again. Video Station 4 was in the room next to where we are sitting now, and Video Station 5, was situated on the landing between the two floors of the old central wooden staircase (my favourite part of the building, but gone, since the renovation.) At the foot of the old staircase you can see empty wooden art-crates. In each instance, when **Body Missing** was installed, we combined our light-boxes with existing crates from the site.

Station 6 was on the back stairwell. When I look at this image, I hear Sigrid Schade's voice at the close of the last videotape reading a list of works of art to be reconstructed by each artist, estimating how long it would take in each case for an artist to reconstruct a personal version of the work that is missing.

The text which appears both in the installation as a wall placard and also in the catalogue is a point of connection between the Transit Bar and the **Body Missing** installations. According to this bartender's account, the Transit Bar is now situated in Linz in place of the Gelbes Krokodil, downstairs in the very building we are in at this moment. The artists are already there and are talking about the missing art works. They are considering how to make art works of their own as commemorative gestures in relation to works of art originally destined for the Hitlermuseum but lost. This fiction, initially invented to fuel the video narrative, has since then become true on the **Body Missing Website**, where artists began to do what at first I had only imagined. And it is on the Website that the text, the Transit Bar and the **Body Missing** projects all come together, in the presence of historical documents and eye-witness accounts never before published. On the Web pages you first arrive at images of the bar. The artists' workspaces, the piano and video pages, the research centre, the bartender's stories and dreams, the bibliography and the message pages, can all be reached from that meeting point.

Entry Points, Site-Specificity, Clues and Sources:

It is in the nature of multidisciplinary projects to offer several points of entry. Once inside an issue or zone of issues, complex forms of integration are required, both by the artist and by the viewer.

Among the several ways to approach **Body Missing**, we can start with the following three interrelated points of entry:

- The cult-like nature of Nazi gender construction, with all that that implies regarding notions of absolute maleness or femaleness as defined in that regime;
- The prevalent notion at that time regarding representations of the whole body, and as a corollary, the presumed decadence of the fragment;
- The enigma of the dispersed and in some cases untraced body of art destined for the Fuehrermuseum.

And of course there is the question of site-specificity, the way in which the work responds to that particular site, and its resulting relation with it. In addition to these work points, I found myself very absorbed by the city and regional land-marks such as the **Dreifaltigkeits-Säule**, the **Hotel Wölfinger**, the original **Pest-Säule**, the salt-mines at Altaussee, the former **Hermann Goering Werke** – all highly charged elements for anyone working in this realm.

It began to seem possible to look at the madness of art acquisition, in this case linked to nationalist power-dreams, as a kind of totemic force carrying certain delusions. This allowed me to look sideways, if you like, at the paradox of a pathology disguised as a generally approved cultural practice: The curious habit of gathering and housing works of art from one's own and other cultures is claimed as a sign of civilization when in fact it is a kind of cannibal practice.

One more motivating germ for the **Body Missing** project came during a conversation with Heidi Grundmann and Bob Adrian in Vienna the night before I left for Linz. Over dinner, in the warmth of friendly talk, I was encouraged by them to describe my project. At one point in my description, Heidi remembered a nursery rhyme from her childhood, a kind of lullaby called "Maikaefer flieg". I asked her to write it down for me. (*Maikaefer flieg. Der Vater ist im Krieg. Die Mutter ist im Pommerland; Pommerland ist abgebrandt. Maikaefer flieg!*) The rhyme is one with which not only Germany, but half of Europe has been familiar for centuries, though, with its open acknowledgment of disaster, the German version is perhaps the most disturbing.

Haunted by the song throughout the train journey to Linz the next day, I wondered how it might feel as a child if sung to sleep every night with these words. But despite the implied threat there seems to be a certain affection surrounding both the words and the melody. And everyone in the Offenes Kulturhaus, from the Director to the Caretaker, sang it for me, both separately and in concert, in harmony and in canon form, and their voices can be heard interwoven with the narrative on the videotapes.

On the one hand, the Maikaefer song, on the other, an article by Gertrud Koch on Siegfried Kracauer formed the twin poles of the arena I was slowly allowing myself to enter. (**Not yet accepted anywhere:** *Exile, Memory and Image in Kracauer's Conception of History*. New German Critique, #54, pp 95 - 109) Koch quotes Kracauer's notion that certain dreadful things can only be looked at indirectly. To look at the Gorgon, so as not to be paralyzed by direct contact with evil and escape without permanent damage, Aeneas needed the mirror of Athena,. The **Body Missing** project was my mirror; a way of looking at things that otherwise might be unbearable.

The Body Missing Website

It's a truism to talk about the absence of the body in relation to new media and to the Internet in particular. We accept that the World Wide Web is a site of virtuality of all kinds, where lies and truths confound each other at every turn. Extending this project into cyberspace, given the Net's implicit acknowledgment of the power of absence, gave me the sense that I wanted to maintain in this work of the unfinished journey and a chance to work with artists from several countries, continuing to consider the missing art.

The artists who are contributing commemorative re-enactments to the Body Missing Web site are as different from each other in their cultural formation, and in their studio practices, as they are in their specific reasons for wanting to be engaged in this project. There are ten artists involved so far and, as we continue, there will be fifteen or more. Two of them, Anja Westerfroelke and Betty Spackman are here this evening and we will have a chance for the first time to see their contribution to the

project.

*(INTRODUCTION BY BETTY SPACKMAN AND ANJA WESTERFROELKE OF "PLOT" THEIR PROJECT FOR THE "GARDEN" OF THE OFFENES KULTURHAUS AS IT APPEARS ON THE **BODY MISSING WEB SITE.**)*

Betty Spackman:

I have been working together with Anja Westerfrölke for about four years.

I have been coming back and forth from Canada in order to work on a number of projects here in Linz.

As a North American coming into another culture and another language, I've come to know my undetermined and unsettled borders because they hit me in the face every day just trying to talk with Anja.

The basic challenge for me is working with a member of another culture and dealing with issues that North Americans tend to deal with very well because everything we know about the rest of the world - perhaps especially in my generation - is mediated and false. Being involved with this project gave me the opportunity for some "hands-on" connections to reality that artists don't often get to touch.

When Vera Frenkel invited us to participate, the only image that I had was the shovel. This was the image I could think to work with. Anja and I talked about it faxing back and forth between Toronto and Linz, and decided that it really was for us the quintessential metaphor for this whole project. Not only in relation to digging for the information that we're dealing with and our whole working process, but the act of digging itself is what is happening on this website - searching for what has been buried and uncovering what is hidden.

So there is the shovel and the title of our work "PLOT" in English. In German ... ?

Anja Westerfrölke:

..... a secret story, a piece of ground - sorry, - eine mysteriöse Geschichte, ein Stück Land - ich bemerke oft nicht mehr ob ich englisch oder deutsch höre. Ich möchte das ansprechen, weil es wesentlicher Bestandteil unserer Zusammenarbeit ist, daß wir in 2 Sprachen miteinander reden. Dieses ständige Übersetzen zeigt uns aber auch, wie sich die Sicht der Dinge oft in der anderen Sprache verändert.

Zu unserem Beitrag von BodyMissing möchte ich kurz etwas erzählen:

Es ist Ende Januar 1996. Wir sind mitten bei der Arbeit. Die Schaufel ist unser Thema im Garten.

Bei diesem Werkzeug geht es um die Bodenbearbeitung.

Ich weiß nicht, ob schon erwähnt wurde, daß der "Garten" sozusagen der "link ist,

wie man von Vera's Projekt in unseren Beitrag kommt.

Mit der Schaufel sind wir dabei den Boden - eigentlich Geschichte - zu bearbeiten. Meist in Form von Texten, dazu schreiben wir auch Geschichten, die uns erzählt wurden. Es geht darum ein Konzept zu finden, mit dem wir den Umgang mit Geschichte thematisieren können.

Während dieser Arbeit lassen uns die aktuellen Berichte über Lambach in den Medien aufhorchen:

Lambach ist ca. 40km von Linz entfernt und derzeit wird dort ein Wasserkraftwerk gebaut.

Schon seit längerem gibt es Kontroversen über die Nutzung heimischer Energien durch die Elektrizitätswirtschaft und die Zerstörung der Landschaft. Die Proteste der Umweltorganisationen sind sehr heftig.

Inmitten dieser Tagespolitik werden in Lambach auf der Baustelle Knochen gefunden, Knochen von Menschen ausgegraben.

Nicht nur, daß es für diese Funde an dieser speziellen Stelle die verschiedensten Erklärungen

gibt, es also Knochen von verschiedensten Menschen aus den verschiedensten Zeiten sein

können, es wird der Öffentlichkeit auch deutlich: wer immer sich diese Knochen näher anschaut, er bringt seine eigene Sichtweise dazu mit.

Somit waren die aktuellen Ereignisse zum Anschauungsmaterial für Inhalte unserer Arbeit geworden.

Aber nicht allein der Umgang mit Geschichte, mehr noch unsere persönliche Sicht von Geschichte ist ja die Grundlage dafür, wie wir uns äußern, was wir entscheiden, was für einen nächsten Schritt wir jetzt in der Gegenwart tun. Wir hoffen, daß unsere Arbeit Ihnen für Ihre eigene Auseinandersetzung dient.

Armature of the Site: The OK as Interface

The structural metaphor for the **Body Missing Website** is the Offenes Kulturhaus as it was in 1994. My memory of the building, together with the original floor plans, became the structuring armature for the work. Each participating artist then chose a different part of the building or discovered or invented additional spaces outside the building. Between these fictional extensions and the actual renovations, reality shifted again many times. (The architectural structure on which the interface was based is already gone) The rough hand-drawn site-map was prepared before the garden existed, but if I take you to the opening page of the Artists' Spaces, you will see the Garden listed with the others. And here is the Garden, and "Plot", the newest addition to the project.

So the historic plans of the Offenes Kulturhaus serve as a structural device and metaphor for the design of the Internet extension of the video project. The site also features research and documentary threads, plus a bulletin board or message centre, where we receive comments and inquiries, personal histories, offers of works of art and the like.

I find this blurring of the art/life border interesting. When the rules of the game of history seem to shift, not unlike the impact of the re-strewing of Evans's finds at Knossos, the wall between art and life is traversed, to the benefit of both, and a special kind of uncertainty sets in, characterized by a useful alertness, or skepticism, which permeates everyday thoughts. With the benefits of this uncertainty, the questions arise, *'Whose thought is this? How did it find its way into my head, and why?'*

Pier-Paolo Pasolini used to say that he worked always under the sign of contamination, a comment I like very much, and see as one way of thinking about multidisciplinary practice. As an instance of this contamination, when a work oscillates between dream and archive, it opens a kind of inquiry that can sometimes nudge the culture.

Art Theft as Cargo-Cult Practice

In addition to these thoughts on my approach to and the structure of the project, I would like to say something briefly about its relation to so-called cargo-cult practices, a phenomenon that has interested me for many years.

The emergence in the South Pacific, in Papua-New Guinea for instance, of various new and seemingly arbitrary ritualistic behaviours, has been understood as a response to the impact of colonizing forces arriving with all their methods and machines to look for gold, or for oil or to set up military bases. Where local populations had never seen an aeroplane before, or a telephone, or a camera, especially if their founding myths featured the arrival of a Messiah as a big bird, there would be a kind of explosive shock at the moment of first contact between colonizer and colonized, triggering an old longing for redemption by a messiah that comes in times of need.

Watching the planes and the ships carrying so much cargo arrive into their barren terrain, and observing the curious rituals of the strangers, the natives began to believe that if they too performed the behaviours which they observed, the gods might be persuaded to send them their own cargo-filled boats and planes. So, using some of the visitors' debris, the foreign items themselves, or their improvised surrogates, sometimes risking all they owned, they invented redemption rituals, mimicking the behaviour of the invaders.

In thinking about the appropriation of art from other cultures, or *Kunstraub* of any kind, it seems to me that the practice of art-theft was and is a kind of cargo-cult practice in which the art serves as a kind of fetish for the world that is lost, or is longed for, and which others appear to have easy access to. The underlying notion of the thousand years of bliss common to both cargo cult practitioners and the

rhetoric of the Third Reich, seemed to me another way of entering into a discussion of the Hitlermuseum and related events.

I have noticed, however, that in public discussions on almost any aspect of the Third Reich, there's a temptation towards a kind of homogenization. Whether one prefers to think of evil as sacred or as banal, in matters as charged as war-theft it seems tempting, if only somehow to share an unbearable sense of responsibility, to generalize, to say, well, everybody has always stolen art, and let's all neutralize and universalize the phenomenon and look at it as all one.

And of course the forceful accumulation of cultural artifacts, a desire to own the strength of the other by swallowing its totems, is not a practice unique to National Socialism. It is a practice that has probably gone on since art began, and we know that art itself is pre-human.

It seems wise, however, in aspiring to the long view and the sweeping gaze, to nevertheless retain the specificity of each circumstance and not to universalize. We are standing in a place which has been the locus within living memory of symptoms of a vast delusional fantasy, a systematic plunder and an eloquent absence, a place in fact where the cargo-cult came to a stop, where the fetish failed to protect and where the mask, in time, fell. It is important to acknowledge that, and to look, without evasions, over the edge of the cliff at what was actually intended and what actually took place.

And if as artists, using a certain kind of mirror, a small heterogenous group of us can open a connection to the past -- however many or few our tables are for reviewing and sorting the evidence -- we are at least *looking*, and that's the task.