

TANYA LEIGHTON

PRESS RELEASE

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AYREEN ANASTAS AND RENE GABRI

THE MEANING OF EVERYTHING

ONE STEP FORWARD TWO STEPS BACK

13 February – 20 March 2010

PREVIEW Friday 12 February, 6 – 9pm

CINEMATIC EVENT 12 February (after opening) 9:30pm at Kino Arsenal,

Potsdamer Straße 2

TESTING NOTHING IN A LITTLE ROOM IS THE WAY TO USE THE ROOM AND NOTHING IS THEN

LOST AND THAT IS SUCH A CORRECTION

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Tanya Leighton Gallery is pleased to present the very first solo gallery exhibition by Ayreen Anastas (b. Bethlehem, Palestine) and Rene Gabri (b. Tehran, Iran). The Meaning of Everything. One Step Forward Two Steps Back is part of 'Forum Expanded' – a programme within the International Forum of New Cinema at the 60th International Film Festival of Berlin.

The Meaning of Everything is a long-term collaboration, which takes its title from a series of books of the same name. These books present a series of notes, questions, diagrams, and drawings, which trace or map the questions Anastas and Gabri share in the course of their work and life. One cannot say with precision what each of the books in the series will be about, nor what form they will take, as the life that will write them has yet to be lived. The current series is the artists attempt to give form to, and make public, the intellectual and affective movements or 'becomings', which constitute a life. There is a speculative and prospective dimension to the series as it will, at times, act as a script which can open up to events, actions, performances, videos, texts, gestures, and other unforeseeable incidents.

Vol. 1 (Background)

The first volume of The Meaning of Everything was produced during the summer of 2008, in the shadows of crisis and eruption, forcefully intertwining the personal, the economic, and the political. What is the status of work today? What is really of value? And how is one to resist the drive to put a price on every facet of one's life? Volume 1 (at Castillo/Corrales in Paris and Tanya Leighton in Berlin) traced the collision between a collection of books related to artistic practice today and the life experiences, everyday circumstances, and larger questions which inform one's work and one's presence in the world. Entirely handwritten, it put into question the ever-changing conditions of the blurring of art, work and life.

Vol. 2 (Foreground)

'Pasting nothing in a little book is the way to use the paper and nothing is then lost and that is such a collection.'

The second volume of The Meaning of Everything appears as a collection of

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elements for a newspaper and continues the rumination on crisis begun in the first volume. At the time when Volume 1 was being written, the pressures of the crisis were palpable, and the eventual crash of financial markets in the autumn of 2008 was only the perennial tip of the iceberg. Volume 2 grapples with the economic fallout while attempting to place it within a larger historical context. The notes, scraps of paper, headlines, and questions are gleaned from lectures and various texts related to capitalism, neoliberalism, financialization, crisis, value, ideology, communism, power and desire. The research and thoughts that comprise Volume 2 is the beginning for another work examining the period between 1989 and 2009 – what came before and might come after.

Vol. 2 (Footnotes)

The Meaning Of Everything. One Step Forward Two Steps Back is the title given to the exhibition. As part of volume 2, and within the context of the International Film Festival of Berlin, several footnotes from the book will be presented at the gallery, including:

the autobiography of any one being including every one before (2009). It is a publication within a publication, a footnote to Volume 2. It continues some of the reverberations of Volume 1, on the idea of a life, and navigates through a contemporary landscape of advertisements, media images, charts of slipping values, and an impersonal account of any one being. It is an attempt to juxtapose material, time-specific crises with asynchronous attempts at a subjective account of a life.

one step forward, two steps back (2009-2010) is an inquiry into another time, another set of questions, and another crisis. one step forward, two steps back is the title of a poster comprised of a translation and compression of the film 'Pravda' by the Dziga Vertov Group (including Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Pierre Gorin, Jean-Henri Roger, Paul Burrton, Gérard Martin, and Anne Wiazemsky) onto a single surface. 'Pravda' was shot in Czechoslovakia after the upheavals in Prague and the subsequent state violence. The film emerges out of the crisis that unfolded after '68, when the Left was still trying to understand the future of what has more recently been referred to as the Communist Hypothesis.

Cinematic event - testing nothing in a little room is the way to use the room and nothing is then lost and that is such a correction (2010). As with volume 1 of the Meaning of Everything, the artists' notes are not only a remnant of their collective inquiry, but also a potential ground for the development of other works. The exhibition at Tanya Leighton Gallery will serve in this case as the script for a possible "film." A screening of this imagined "film" will take place (after the opening) at Kino Arsenal, 12 February, 9:30pm. The resulting work emerges out of various lines of inquiry and influences ranging from Situationist experiments to the concepts of cinema verité as they were developed during the 1960's. This is an attempt at a non-repeatable cinema, open to chance, accidents, and traces of a lived experience.

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Ayreen Anastas was born in Bethlehem, Palestine. She currently lives in Brooklyn. Anastas is one of the organizers of the l6 Beaver group, an artist community that functions as a social and collaborative space on l6 Beaver street in downtown Manhattan, where the group hosts panel discussions, film series, artist talks, radio recordings, reading groups and more. Anastas' recent artistic projects and exhibitions include: Pasolini Pa* Palestine filmed while at Al-Ma'mal residency in Jerusalem in 2003 (shown at Homeworks III, Beirut 2005, and at Hebbel Theater, Berlin 2006), M* of Bethlehem (shown at Kettles Yard, Cambridge, 2009, Argos festival in Brussels 2005 and at CCA Glasgow - In the poem about love you don't write the word love? 2005), Thus I spoke, and ever more softly: for I feared my own thoughts and hinterthoughts (shown in Never Part, at BOZAR, Brussels. 2008 and at Homeworks V, Beirut 2010). Collaborations with artist Rene Gabri include: Camp Campaign, Artist talk, Radio Active, United We Stand, What Everybody Knows, Eden Resonating, 7X77, Case Sensitive America and more.

Rene Gabri. Born in Tehran and now lives in New York. He is interested in the complex mechanisms which constitute the world around us. His works employ a wide array of means, often loitering at the thresholds of cultural practice, social thought and politics. Although his works have been shown internationally, his inhibited or unfinished projects far outnumber his exhibited ones. His projects with Ayreen Anastas have evolved a great deal through their work at l6Beaver. Their Radioactive Discussion series was a physical counterpart to their fictional Homeland Security Cultural Bureau project. Together with Erin McGonigle and Heimo Latner, Gabri has also worked as e-Xplo, a collective, which has developed a vast group of largely public works engaging specific sites stretching from the mountain tops of Colorado to the shores of Sharjah. He organizes a yearly 10 week seminar on a topic of his choosing at the University of Architecture in Venice (IUAV).

With special thanks to Theresa Arndt, Jo Daly, Maribel Lopez, Joe Palmer, Maria Viessmann, Luke Warda, and Kino Arsenal - Institute for Film and Video Art e.V.

An illustrated catalogue for 'Forum Expanded' will be available at the gallery. For more information and images contact info@tanyaleighton.com or call: +49 (0)30 221607770.

Extended opening hours during 'Forum Expanded':

Sunday 14 - Sunday 21 February 11am - 6pm

Gallery normally open Wednesday - Saturday 12-6pm and by appointment.

