
*Titel: Feldstudie (Field Study) Teil II
von Beuystoys and Mudisten: FHNW, HGK Institut Kunst Basel
act'12 Bern Dampfzentrale 15.4.2012*

Feedback von Erin Mallon, HGK, Institut LBK Basel

This time we're not dealing with amateurs; the white T-Shirts are gone, replaced by well-kempt suits and bow ties, leather pumps and straight black skirts; the clipboards by a neatly centered projection screen and a clunky grey projector. Arching away from the screen's sides are two perfectly symmetrical rows of seated frowners, looking all business and peering up at us spectators critically.

Schoch introduces the event again: and it's a perfectly-articulated annoyance: tight-lipped art-theory meets late-night educational television. He quotes Kandinsky, though i'll be damned if I know why; and though he defines space and their mission in researching it several times, I'm baffled.

As each member takes his/her turn, we learn a little more about the ACT Basel; or so we are told. Whether or not we need to know how many steps were taken on average throughout the evening, whether we really need to see a stop-motion-style diagram charting the way the movements of viewers in the crowd affect other people in a ripple-like manner....well that's arguable.

They can't mean this seriously. It's too ridiculously nerdy. And that makes it funny. We, the lookers, giggle occasionally at the pseudo-science we're being fed. I watch carefully for some sign of the performers' own awareness of this sarcasm, but there is no smile, no acknowledgement that we are being gently tortured by dry intellectualization of the most banal order. It leaves me insecure; I even feel a little embarrassed for the seriousness with which they present their ludicrous findings.

After all the results today are the tail-end of a whole lot of work; and work done seriously, or at least, with enough composure to convince me that it was meant seriously. This entire study seems meaningless; but the conviction with which the Beuystoys and Mudisten carried it out seems inconsistent with the irony I read in the whole thing.

When I applaud at the end, it's this ambiguity I am clapping for. That a senseless investigation of ACT Basel took place is secondary to the calm intention with which a group of young artists conducted it. Of course it is a senseless study, and of course they all know that, but how better to say, "how boring," about a theoretical approach to art than to be as boring as possible while playing theorist?