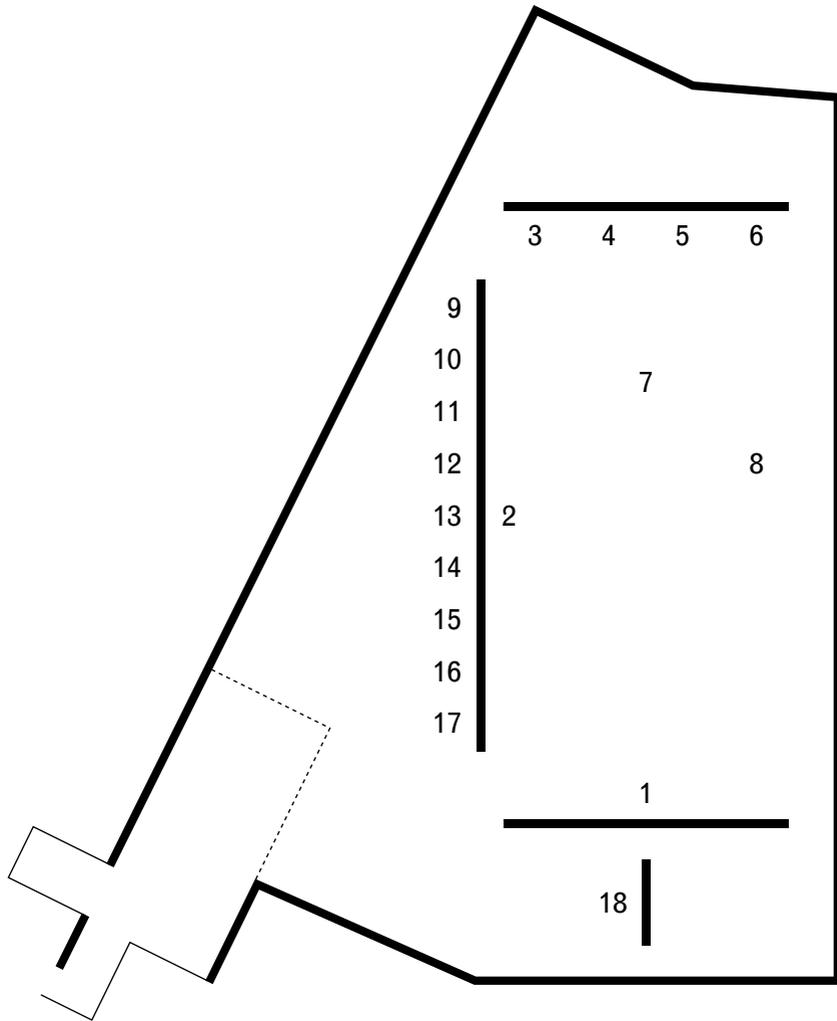


Floor plan



Peter Friedl *Blow Job*

Peter Friedl

Blow Job

30 May–27 July 2008

Curated by
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3

Untitled, 1999–2008
Wall drawing, marker
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

4

Untitled (Antwerpen),
2007
Color photograph
35.5 × 45 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

5

Snjókarl, 1999–2008
Color slides
Courtesy the artist

6

Hotel Libertas, 2003
Color photograph
80 × 120 cm
Courtesy the artist

7

La Bohème, 1997
Video, color, sound
4:37 min. loop
Courtesy the artist

8

Forty acres and a mule,
2001–08
Mule, rubber floor mat
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

9

Untitled (Copán), 2007
Color photograph
80 × 120 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

10

Untitled (Berlin), 1995
Color photograph
73 × 48.2 cm
Courtesy the artist

11

Untitled, 1998
Color photograph,
marker
13 × 8.8 cm
Courtesy the artist

12

Untitled, 1992
Color photograph
30 × 45 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

13

Untitled (1962), 2007
Color photograph
30 × 45.3 cm
Courtesy the artist

14

Untitled (Torino), 1994
Color photograph
8.8 × 13 cm
Courtesy the artist

15

Untitled, 1998
Color photograph,
marker
8.8 × 13 cm
Courtesy the artist

16

Untitled, 1991
Natural resin varnish,
oil on canvas
40.5 × 35 cm
Private collection, Italy

17

Kasperltheater,
1964–2008
Silkscreen on paper,
4 parts
208 × 168 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

18

King Kong, 2001
Video, color, sound
3:57 min. loop
Courtesy the artist &
Vanhaerents Art
Collection, Brussels

Peter Friedl *Blow Job*

Theater and its aesthetics have been a reference in Peter Friedl's work since the early 1980s, when he published a large number of essays on the subject. The theater embodies the whole complex of representation in the most direct form: the problem of 'speaking positions,' of transformation, and of acting – or, of what can be said and how, in what aesthetic genre and political context. In his exhibitions, Friedl uses a new concept of genre – strategies of bracketing, exposing, editing, and other contextual transfers – to discuss these questions in their respective institutional and historical frameworks and narratives. Throughout his artistic practice runs a deep concern about the language of the 'subaltern' – that is, what remains outside or excluded from accepted symbolic systems. Friedl's works are aesthetic models for disarming configurations of power.

This exhibition takes its cue from an internet project, *Blow Job*, initiated by Friedl in 2001 and set up as an anonymous blog: a brief scenario full of biographical, historical, and fictional references including seven acting characters. Running dialogues, stage directions, or prose insertions could be contributed to the website anonymously. It was conceived as a self-generated portrayal of a specific social situation in a specific place (Berlin) and time, but also as a reflection on participatory art, open structures, and post-dramatic theater. For the Antwerp exhibition, Extra City commissioned Peter Friedl to edit this trash material, which has now become anachronistic. Following Friedl's previous text-based projects, such as the children's monologues of *Kromme Elleboog* and *Four or Five Roses* or the interviews in *Working at Copan*, *Blow Job* raises questions of authorship, institutional practice, and visibility. The drama text will be published by Sternberg Press and will become the source for realizations and collaborations in various institutional contexts, beginning in São Paulo and Berlin in the fall of 2008. The exhibition brings together a selection of older and new works selected from the perspective of this commission.

The entry piece is the silkscreen *Kasperltheater* (1964–2008), based on one of Peter Friedl's children's drawings, which were also included in his recent retrospective exhibitions and in documenta 12. 'Kasperltheater' is (or was) a popular form of puppet theater for children, perhaps many people's first encounter with theater. The original drawing is part of the series of 45 drawings that are presented here chronologically from 1964 to 2008, many of them for the first time.

The site of action for the video installation *King Kong* (2001) is Sophiatown on the outskirts of Johannesburg. During the destruction of Sophiatown by the apartheid regime in the late 1950s, which turned it into a white-only neighborhood named Triomf, it was chosen as the scenery for the South African jazz opera *King Kong*, whose tragic hero was the boxer Ezekiel 'King Kong' Dhlamini. In Friedl's subtle deconstruction of a video clip, U.S. songwriter Daniel Johnston, surrounded by playing children, performs his own 'King Kong' song which retells the story of the Hollywood film.

Since 1992, Friedl has been collecting pictures from newspapers and magazines for his long-term project *Theory of Justice*. 'As the art of observation, every theory draws a picture of the world. But what happens if the images themselves want to become theory?' he asks. The title refers to the attempt at renewing social contract theory undertaken by the U.S. philosopher John Rawls (1921–2002). As classic examples of political liberalism, these advocate a well-ordered society based on overarching consensus among its members. But in the current global drama of exclusion and marginalization, conflict – politics as resistance – takes the place of consensus, and employs the logic of the political as opposition to the *dispositifs* of administration, police repression, and institutional regulation. Friedl's photographs single out motifs from his archival collection rephotographed with black and white negative film. As the document turns into an artifact with small shadows, the pictures give rise to a momentum of autonomy.

For the 48th Venice Biennale (1999), Peter Friedl collaboratively produced his own family and work history in drawings reworked on the computer and later printed as a coloring book. Several motifs are now used for an iconoclastic wall drawing. Perhaps a comment on participatory art, it certainly refers to the relation between memory and history, reminiscent of the Freudian image of memory as a palimpsest.

The slide projection *Snjókarl* documents children at the Living Art Museum in Reykjavík. They build a snowman from papier-mâché

Untitled, 1995
(11 November)
Ballpoint pen,
watercolor on paper
29.5 × 21 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

*The man who walked
through the wall*,
1995–96
(16 November 1995 and
14 June 1996)
Ballpoint pen, felt-tip
pen, watercolor on paper
20.9 × 29.4 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1998
Pencil on paper
35 × 27.7 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1998
Pencil on paper
21 × 14.5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 2003
Colored pencil on
photocopy
21.1 × 16.2 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 2003
(30 April)
Pencil on paper
16.2 × 9.1 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 2008
(7 January)
Gouache on paper
29.8 × 20.9 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 2008
(18 March)
Pencil on paper
29.7 × 21 cm
Courtesy the artist

2

Theory of Justice,
2006–08

Untitled (1885), 2008
Black and white
photograph
55.5 × 74.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (1920), 2008
Black and white
photograph
55.5 × 74.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (1927), 2008
Black and white
photograph
50.2 × 37.8 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (1960), 2008
Black and white
photograph
50.2 × 34 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (1973), 2008
Black and white
photograph
80.5 × 66.2 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (1993), 2006
Black and white
photograph
55.5 × 69 cm
Courtesy the artist

*Untitled (7 November
2000)*, 2008
Black and white
photograph
55.5 × 74.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (20 April 2003),
2008
Black and white
photograph
55.5 × 74.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (May 2005),
2007
Black and white
photograph
34 × 50.2 cm
Courtesy the artist

*Untitled (12 December
2005)*, 2008
Black and white
photograph
34 × 50.2 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (2007), 2008
Black and white
photograph
55.5 × 74.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled (August 2007),
2008
Black and white
photograph
50.2 × 34 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1991
(28 February)
Stamp-pad ink,
watercolor on paper
14.4 × 20.6 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1991
(20 August)
Ballpoint pen,
watercolor on paper
29 × 20.9 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1991
(30 September)
Watercolor on paper
13.3 × 10.5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1991
(8 October)
Pastel chalk on paper
18 × 12.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1991
(31 October)
Ballpoint pen, stamp-
pad ink on paper
29.7 × 21 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1992
(26 January)
Pencil, watercolor on
paper
21 × 23.2 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1992
(26 January)
Watercolor on paper
21 × 23.2 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1992
(1 March)
Pencil on paper
10 × 7.2 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1992
(24 June)
Ballpoint pen on paper
19.4 × 11.1 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1992
Gouache, oil on paper
21.3 × 16.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1992
(16 August)
Crayon, watercolor on
paper
20.5 × 14.7 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1992
(12 September)
Pencil, gouache on
paper
23.9 × 33 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1992
(31 December)
Pencil on paper
17 × 24.1 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1993
(9 January)
Pencil on paper
21 × 14.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1993
Ink on paper
24.5 × 18.2 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

Untitled, 1993
(16 April)
Pencil on paper
24.1 × 32.1 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1993
(22 April)
Ballpoint pen, marker on
paper
18.5 × 14.7 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1993
(18 May)
Pencil on paper
13.4 × 10.5 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1993
(May)
Color pencil on paper
21.1 × 29.6 cm
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1995
(9 November)
Ballpoint pen on paper
29.6 × 21.1 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna
Hécey, Brussels

following a draft by Friedl's son. It should have reached the height of the artist, yet the young sculptors decided to stop at 140 cm. *Snjókarl* is like a film in the form of still images. The slides, taken in 1999, have not been exhibited until today.

Originally, *forty acres and a mule* (2001) – another work dealing with inadequacy – consisted of a living mule, a black rubber floor mat (any dimensions possible), and a series of five photos based on *Theory of Justice* pictures. The aesthetics of minimalism are charged with political history: '40 acres and a mule' is the compensation that was to be awarded to freed African-American slaves in the aftermath of the Civil War (1862–1865) – a promise never fulfilled and still haunting U.S. society.

La Bohème (1997) documents a performance in Berlin. Friedl designed a poster advertising 'La Bohème'; the event took place in an attic (like two scenes of Puccini's *La Bohème*). Rather than staging a performance for an audience, the audience was staged for the performance.

Other works on display include a color photograph of a stone relief in Copán, a Mayan site in present day Honduras. The picture appeared first in the context of Friedl's *Working at Copan* book addressing the fate of modernism. *Working at Copan* was released before the exhibition and is available at Extra City and in bookshops. The photo functions as a reference to the archaeology of performance which has become more prominent in recent years.

Peter Friedl's work has been exhibited worldwide, including at documenta X (1997) and documenta XII (2007), the 48th Venice Biennale (1999), the 3rd Berlin Biennale (2004), and the 2nd International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Seville (2006). Solo exhibitions include the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (1998); Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (1999); Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg (2001); Chisenhale Gallery, London (2001); Institute for Contemporary Art, Cape Town (2002); Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne-Lyon (2002); Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main (2004); Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2004); Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2006); and Kunsthalle Basel (2008). In 2006 the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) organized a comprehensive retrospective, which was subsequently shown at Miami Art Central/Miami Art Museum and the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Marseille.

List of works

1

- Untitled*, 1964
(March)
Oil crayon on paper
24.5 × 38.6 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1964
(May)
Ballpoint pen on paper
24 × 19 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna Hécey, Brussels
- Untitled*, 1966
(8 February)
Pencil, colored pencil on paper
21 × 29.7 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1966
(23 February)
Oil crayon on paper
42 × 29.6 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1969
Pencil on paper
9 × 14.6 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1972
Pencil, gouache on paper
42.9 × 30.8 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1985
(3 October)
Felt tip pen on paper
20.7 × 14.5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna Hécey, Brussels
- Untitled*, 1986
Charcoal, pastel on paper
10.6 × 8.1 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1986
Charcoal, pastel on paper
11 × 13 cm
Courtesy Galerie Erna Hécey, Brussels
- Untitled*, 1987
(9 March)
Charcoal, colored pencil, pastel on paper
10.8 × 8.3 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1987
(31 March)
Charcoal, colored pencil, pastel, watercolor on paper
17 × 12 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Monte Cavallo*, 1988
(July)
Pencil, watercolor on paper
20.7 × 14.8 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1989
(19 February)
Charcoal, pencil, watercolor on paper
30 × 39.9 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1989
(23 February)
Pencil on paper
30 × 39.9 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1989
(4 July)
Pencil, vegetable color paints on paper
29.8 × 39.7 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1989
(12 July)
Ink, watercolor on paper
30 × 42 cm
Courtesy the artist
- Untitled*, 1990
(29 August)
Watercolor on paper
20.9 × 15 cm
Courtesy the artist