

Concept and Beginnings

On the morning of 1 May 1996, a group of artists centred on Friedemann Derschmidt started taking breakfast in the public sphere and has not stopped since. The basic idea: one person invites others to breakfast. The people invited (usually four) agree to organize a further public breakfast on the following (or next possible) day; in return their guests will hold another breakfast as soon as possible, and so on.

The public spaces where these breakfast meetings are held take on a different face in accordance with the needs of those breakfasting. The breakfasters, without much effort on their part, simply by their presence, start to communicate with their surroundings; they start to become their own medium, they gain ground, take up space, literally take possession of it and occupy it by themselves or by their concerns. People reveal their thoughts, tell things, have breakfast again. As long as someone picks up the thread, the game will go on.

As a matter of fact, public breakfasting increasingly became a cult activity, and people were seen more and more frequently gathering around a pleasant breakfast table, in squares and in parks, in empty fountains and vacant parking spaces; people who also understood their action as a form of surreal staged production. In addition to a multitude of breakfasts of which the news spread by word of mouth, hundreds of postal messages, together with photographs, give evidence of breakfasts in Prague, Berlin, Oslo, and New York, among others.

Announcing ever-new (breakfast) experiments in the public sphere on an ongoing basis, the website www.permanentbreakfast.org. (now a 10-language project) has increasingly also become a platform for discussion of content. permanent breakfast is an open-source project. It is used by independent groups, citizens' initiatives, religious communities, university seminars, tourism associations, families and freaks. The fact that this plurality is tackling the issue of artistic ownership in a very

fundamental way makes the project arrangement itself a field for experiment in terms of a broader concept of art. Especially as the chain has become so independent that some activists even regard themselves as the initiators of the project. Nevertheless, permanent breakfast works with clear aesthetics, which have become part of the „rules of the game“ and which allow the production of surreal images.

Permanent breakfast is simultaneously: a brainstorming generator; an „art – making – machine“; a think tank; a label under which various occupations of the public space occur. To name but a few examples for using or adapting the fundamental idea of permanent breakfast:

- The „monument breakfast“ as a questioning of the „collective memory“
- The candlelight breakfast as a fancy, non-economic variant of the restaurant terrace
- Border and thematic breakfasts within the framework of EU projects
- „Mur“ river breakfasts in association with „Graz 03“ Cultural Capital of Europe
- Guided tours to explore the public space and how it works
- Land-art: smaller breakfasts are celebrated to create a beautiful/edgy image (elegantly laid „solid middle-class“ table on a jeep in a rainy avenue in Bohemia), placed in the landscape as film stills.

New breakfast features are being developed on an ongoing basis, which venture into different hot spots of the social discourse, or are just plain fun.

Despite its independent character, the project feels a kinship to other world-wide „reclaim the street“ movements and considers itself as a real as well as virtual network for aesthetics and discourse.

Übersetzung: Sabina Illmer

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