

# THE PARALLEL

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AROUND 1960

## **Element 1.0: Problem**

The manifest of the Situationist International (1960) proclaimed what this 'organization' opposed and which alternatives its members found necessary.

Generally speaking, the problem was 'The Society of the Spectacle' or *La Société du Spectacle* - which also is the title of the famous publication from 1967 written by the central figure of the organization, Guy Debord. In this publication, Debord elaborates the situationist theory, expresses criticism of paid work, the production of consumer goods and generally speaking 'the spectacle' understood as social relation mediated by images.

The antithesis to *the spectacle* was the total participation in a society, where people were free to create their own lives. The strategy, that was to secure this freedom, was the creative play. According to the Situationists, the liberating potential of play was bound to its creative autonomy. By virtue of this, it could extend beyond the dichotomy: forced labor and passive leisure.

In relation to the visual arts, separation was a problem. The Situationists saw, that the contemporary artists were working in total separation, partly due to mutual competition; another symptom of an era that necessarily had to be ended in order to make room for the realization of new ideals.

Everyone was to become an artist - and at a higher level. The alienation in the relation of manufacturer/consumer was to be outbid by an all-encompassing cultural creating. The minimum target of the organization was a revolution of society through a revolution of the individual.

The Situationists also found, that the problem was manifesting in relation to urban spaces and architecture. Places existed, that were compatible with their ideals of community, but modernization quickly turned these into monotone and eventless spaces. This increasing sluggishness of the physical environment created individuals and a

society that no longer were sufficiently alive. The Situationists therefore wished to bring people back to life.

A vivifying strategy was to create situations. By doing so, people could participate and become active fellow players in the creation of their own lives, instead of merely absorbing representations of how they should be living it – as citizens of *the society of the spectacle*. People should become excited!

The creation of situations, could be organized wherever, by whoever. It was an activity centered around stepping out of daily routines and hackneyed rituals. As mentioned, play was a key way.

Besides architecture and urban development, the criticism of the Situationists was aimed at communication, consumer culture and the changes that followed the industrial revolution (the age of mechanical reproduction).

This period of abundance and exceedance was viewed as the main cause of the general passivity in society. In his study *The Making of Fin de Copenhagen & Mémoires; the tactic of détournement in the collaboration between Guy Debord and Asger Jorn* (2008), Bart Lans, who was a student at Delft University of Technology, wrote about Jorn's and Debord's history with the pivotal point being their joint 'art' books *Fin de Copenhagen* og *Mémoires*.

According to Lans, one of the things that led these two people together, was that they both wished to change the world and demonstrate, how we could live in it, in a better way.

Jorn and Debord both devoted their lives to create awareness of how political agendas and art, to an excessive extent, was accepted without questioning. People were spectators to *the spectacle*, where the only topic was material 'needs', which could only be satisfied through consumption.

As part of the avant-garde, Debord and Jorn wanted an art form that could contribute to creating the world, in which they believed. An art form that did not serve art alone, but was inseparable from contemporary political issues.

## **Element 2.0: Strategy**

In his contribution for the exhibition catalogue *EXPO JORN – Art is a Festival!* (Museum Jorn, 2014), art historian Mikkel Bolt writes about, how *Fin de Copenhagen* and *Mémoires* were created by the use of Debord's and Jorn's common situationist strategy '*détournement*'.

These books used clippings from other books, papers, photographs, cartoons, maps and the like. Each page was a collage consisting of such petty theft, which was either linked or overwritten by Jorn's colourful 'bearing structures' (courses of lithographic ink). This technique, where Jorn dripped colour down onto the pages, carried a reference to *action painting*, as it was known from Jackson Pollock.

As in all of Jorn's modifications, it was a case of simultaneous creation and destruction. The painting over of older, trivial and kitschy paintings together with squirts and courses of colour, can be seen as an occupying strategy, where already existing images (and also techniques) are recycled and given new meaning.

The way in which Jorn used the *action painting*-technique, Bolt explains further, reduced it to a social representation in line with the fragments of commercials and naked ladies from porn magazines that the painting technique came to sharing pages with. Jorn simulated expressivity: the dripping was demystified and reduced to a reproducible technique. A technique among so many others in *the society of the spectacle*.

This devalorisation of the otherwise exalted, abstract expressionism from USA, is in line with the understanding of *détournement*, that art historian Roberto Ohrt stresses in his contribution to the exhibition catalogue *Asger Jorn - Restless Rebel* (National Gallery of Denmark, 2014).

The description is based on Jorn's definition, where *détournement* is like a game, which originates from the ability to devalorise. Only he who understands to devalorise, can create new values, and only where there already is something to devalorise, one can engage in the act of devalorisation. In extension of Bolt's pointe Ohrt notes, that the composition of the books - of advertising material and '*action painting*' also represents *Pop art*; a juxtaposition, you did not see anywhere else at this time, where Pop art was just about to take over the American art scene following the expressionism.

Lans elaborates on *détournement* by noting that the strategy was plagiarizing and a way to turn inside out the dominating significances and purposes within a discourse - especially discourses of commercials, visual arts and dissemination of news. It was a technique alike the montage with roots in Surrealism and Dadaism.

Even though Debord and Jorn shared political beliefs and artistic strategies, they were very different. On the complementarity of Debord's and Jorn's collaboration, Lans explains that where Debord had a theoretical and textual approach, Jorn was more artistic in his method. Where Debord was strategic and thought his actions through, Jorn resorted to action before theory. An overall consideration in relation to the

situationist kinds of resistance was, that resistance had to come from inside. By communicating counter-messages by the same media and in the same visual language as the commercial senders used, the Situationists would turn *the spectacle* against itself.

Therefore Debord and Jorn was aware, that the communication media they used, had to be those that already contributed to the creation of a passive mentality in society.

They experimented how one could use these media in new ways. In collaboration with different artist groups (many started by Jorn himself), Jorn worked with painting and collage, and searched for meanings and potentials of kitsch and Folk Art.

Debord examined the cognitive and textual aspects of language; an investigation field, which mirrored his involvement in the lettrist movement, which worked to deconstruct words and hereby breaking them down into their 'components': letters and phonetic elements.

The Lettrists also worked towards concentrating the focus of the spectator around the visual aspect of the text. The concept of 'play' was also important to the Lettrists. Play was understood as fundamental part of being alive - as it was an inseparable part of art. If rituals were not vitalized through play, they would end up empty, like art would become formalistic, if not brought to life by the creative figure.

*Fin de Copenhague* (1957) and *Mémoires* (1959) testify to these techniques and concepts, and they reflect the Situationists Debord's and Jorn's criticism of society and understanding of art.

According to Lans these works can be seen as expressions of the creation of situations, developed to induce action and move the spectator beyond word and theory: to generate feeling and reaction.

Debord's way from his engagement in the lettrist movement to the formation of SI and hereby his collaboration with Jorn started in September 1956 with The World Congress of Free Artists in Alba, Italy. Here arose important relations between the lettrist movement and Jorn, which together with the artist Pinot-Gallizio represented *Mouvement International pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste*. The two organizations were united in Juli 1957 as Situationist International: Internationale Lettriste, *Mouvement International pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste* and *The London Psychogeographical Association*.

As early as May 1957, Jorn had invited Debord and author Michèle Bernstein to Denmark in order to solve a personal matter. It was concerning an exhibition earlier that year, where Debord's psychogeographic maps should have been displayed, but were not - allegedly because of Jorn.

After visiting Jorn in Silkeborg, Debord and Jorn created *Fin de Copenhague* in Copenhagen. The story goes, that they started by stealing material at a newsstand. Later they spent a drunken afternoon assembling the pages. Finally they paid Jorn's printer V.O. Permild (Permild & Rosengreen) a visit. Here, Jorn climbed a ladder from which he dripped and threw ink down onto the printing plates.

The book was printed in an edition of two hundred, which were all signed and numbered by Jorn. This limited edition was bound in compressed pages of paper - imprinted with commercials from newspapers.

Randomness gave *Fin de Copenhague* its structure - a method, which especially reflected Jorn's working process, where intuition and spontaneity were allowed to guide the way. Debord and Jorn wanted the book to act as a satirical attack on the technological consumer society. By virtue of its 'detoured' elements from the commercial culture it was to undermine the very same.

In the case of Debord's and Jorn's second joint publication, *Mémoires*, Debord's working process was dominant. Unlike the international language of *Fin de Copenhague* *Mémoires* was written exclusively in French, and where *Fin de Copenhague*, according to Jorn, came into being in just 24 hours (as a result of spontaneous exertion), the markedly thicker *Mémoires* was commenced in close extension of *Fin de Copenhague* and first published in 1959.

The book took into use more or less the same techniques as *Fin de Copenhague*, but this time the images, text and drawings constituted the core of the book, which was enhanced by Jorn's structures which connected these elements visually. The pages gave to a greater extent direction to the reading, and the relations between the elements were less fluid than in *Fin de Copenhague*.

That Debord was central for the making of *Mémoires*, is also due to the book being a semi-autobiographical work. Bolt describes it in this manner that its components of clippings and courses of colour forms a psychogeographical atlas of The Lettrist International's early years and the activities of this group in Paris.

According to Lans another topic of *Mémoires* is one of the Situationist's other strategies, *dérive*. This was a part of the psychogeography, where you went on an unscheduled trip through an often urban landscape. During this journey you would let yourself be guided unconsciously through architecture and surroundings with the purpose of achieving a new, authentic experience and a greater freedom in the way you move about. In addition, Lans explains, *Mémoires* in itself allows for the reader to perform a *dérive*. On his way through the book, page after page, in search

of meaning, the reader finds it nowhere and everywhere. It arises and falls continuously amongst the fragments.

The cover of *Mémoires* bears witness to that fact that it might not have been intended as the most 'welcoming' book. It is made of sandpaper which is might be the most famous feature of the work. The cover was intended to ruin the neighboring books in the bookshelf, the highly polished coffee table and the reader's delicate fingers (the idea for the cover arose in a conversation between Jorn and Per mild).

In 1961, Jorn voluntarily withdrew from SI as a result to the increasing recognition he was receiving as an artist; something, which was out of touch with the situationist ideas.

But he remained in close contact with Debord, continued writing for the situationist releases and acted as sponsor for the activities of the organization.

### **Element 3.0: Premise**

In order to partake in the critical qualities of *Fin de Copenhague* and *Mémoires*, one must engage. One must gain access to the works and embark on a quest for the understanding of their fragmentations in order to experience the resistance towards customary patterns of reading, identification and consumption.

In the case of *Fin de Copenhague*, the two hundred copies meant, that the work was reserved for a small group. In addition, the copies were signed and numbered, which underlined their status of original works.

An even more exclusive group was granted *Mémoires* and thereby access to its qualities. Debord wrote about his book: "*J'ai offert cet anti-livre à mes amis, sans plus.*"

Bolt explains that the books, in general, were given away as gifts instead of being sold - as a way of avoiding for them to turn into commodities. However, this meant that they, for many years, remained unbeknownst to others than a very few. In addition to this, Bolt points out that the books today are rare and valuable art objects - which definitely was not intended by the artists. They have become collectibles in an expanding Jorn/Debord-industry.

The art historian Lars Bang Larsen puts forward a critique of the creative industries, or what he also refers to as immaterial labor. His critique of the term is based on economics professor Richard Florida's definition of 'the creative class'.

According to Florida being creative defies gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and looks. Creativity is a limitless resource - a potential,

which we all are in possession of and love to unfold, and which can be used for valuable purposes.

On the basis of this understanding, Florida appeals to us all that we, starting from ourselves, each contribute to complete the transformation towards a society which utilizes and rewards our full creative potential.

Bang Larsen explains how the discourses of the 1960s, on liberation through creation, can act as a benchmark for how creativity until recently had been considered something transgressive - as something capable of exceeding of the frames of society. Creativity was in other words viewed as a kind of life potential - suppressed by bureaucracy and routines, which could only be degraded if imagination came to power.

According to Bang Larsen, Florida's ideas can be seen as an echo of such concepts. But when creativity in this way is claimed to be an universal resource, an essential, individual creativity, which is not inscribed in the culture, this causes the concept of creativity to become basically apolitical.

In addition, Bang Larsen comes with a critique of what he calls 'the democratization of art'. From a philosophical point of view, this trend is characterized by a movement from work to spectator, which is understood as being in an active dialogue with the work - as interpreter or co-creator.

Historically, he explains, this democratization, as it takes place within the dissemination of art within the experience economy, can resemble a delayed version of 'the open art work'. A term with roots in the avant-garde's and the neo-avant-garde's dissolution of the art object into forms, which does no longer belong to an ingenious and self-expressing individual, but rather belongs to the cultural community.

In this manner, the open art work confronted the power which tradition had build into art's 'being in itself' - a development which today is reflected in the audience involvement of the experience economy, where analysis and interpretation of the work are displaced in the direction of elementary forms of aesthetic action (physical interaction or involvement in scenarios, where the spectator can choose, arrange and so on).

According to Bang Larsen, this type of involvement bears witness to a literal understanding of the open art work. One might say, that the open art work in the experience economy's dissemination is equaled to 'the available art work'. A movement from open to available, which can be explained by that which Bang Larsen sees as an important parameter to the experience economy: quantity or the fact that, a large and paying audience exists. In this connection, he underlines that the existence of a mass audience does not equal democratization, and that democratic sense

has nothing to do with the act of consumption, which is the mass audience's typical mode of conduct.

Bolt writes that the consumer culture of capitalism, according to the Situationists, not only had occupied the physical surroundings, but also the human imagination. The abundance of society (including consumer goods, gadgets and objects) led to a certain way of life. Jorn and Debord wanted a society, where everyone participated actively in order to create a life *beyond* capitalism.

As an elaboration of this critique of the commodity culture, Ohrt gives an example of Jorn's understanding of the value of the commodity in relation to that of art.

A devalorisation of the commodity and its content happens according to Jorn through consumption. In contrast, art preserves its qualities, even though it loses its value. This is possible because the value does not lie in the art work, but occurs with the viewer. It is so to say 'self-refilling'. In this connection, Jorn stresses that the value of art can only be liberated by the viewer, if he or she is capable of it.

If you are entirely unable to make the effort required in order to liberate the value of art, then you, Ohrt quotes Jorn, must despise art.

## AROUND 2010

### **Element 1.1: Problem**

In his trilogy *Kunst er norm* (2008), *Organisationsformer* (2009) and *Spredt væren* (2010) art historian Bang Larsen points out, that a change has happened to the position of art.

Once, art could act critical due to its 'outstanding' position, which enabled it to provide an overall perspective of society. Today it can no longer be considered an ideal or extraordinary phenomenon beyond the order of society.

Since the 1990s, art has moved into the heart of society's functioning, where it acts as a model and motor for subjectivity, sociality and economy. A development, which Bang Larsen calls "a mutation in the DNA of art" and a benefit to the experience economy and the creative industries. The term experience economy, was coined by the management thinkers James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine in the work *The Experience Economy: Work is Theater & every Business a stage* (1999).



Since experiences equal the commodity in the experience economy, the foremost important thing is to sell the experiences that the commodities cause: experiences, which create profit by being memorable and by means of authenticity effects.

It is in connection to the latter, that art can be instrumentalized: due to its authenticity appeal. Art is namely understood as something original, innovative, provocative and so on.

Bang Larsen provides examples of an experience economic way of thinking: Valve manufacturers can increase 'the pumping experience', furniture manufacturers 'the sitting experience' and dealers of household appliances can capitalize 'the washing experience'. Since the value within the experience economy lies in the secondary and derived properties of the product, according to Bang Larsen, reality becomes hard to verify. When it is no longer the tangible product that you mainly pay for, but mediated effects and moods, which increase the intensities of feeling, the materiality of situations or objects experienced, ceases to be relevant.

Another consequence lies in, what Bang Larsen calls 'absolute synchronicity'. The synchronized occurs when art is 'prepared for' the existing culture and targeted the experiencing subjects. Art hereby comes to revolve around 'my experience' in 'my time'. In this way it becomes one with the present and separated from its historical given issues.

In this way, the experience economy's way of instrumentalizing art, causes the individual to lose his ability to genuinely relate reflectively and critically. It is instead encouraged to self-consumption. Bang Larsen elaborates on this - when the principle of the experience economy is applied to things, it creates a distance to the user value of the things through the experience, and in regards to peoples own, lived time, it produces a distance to themselves. In other words, people are turned into consumers of their own lives, and subjectivity becomes a product. It is as such essential for the consumer of culture continuously to increase its self-identity by consuming itself.

This self-consumption, which Bang Larsen describes, results in the subject losing will and ability to trust its own experiences. Instead it is manipulated through the experience economy's authenticity effects, whereby its world becomes 'defactualised'.

Defactualisation is defined by Bang Larsen as a counteracting of the transparency of the production relations and hereby a counteracting of the knowledge of, what exists and how. This becomes an obvious problem, because if we cannot imagine things differently (because we are not able

to evaluate, what exists at all), our mental freedom is inhibited in a way, which makes it basically hard to act (freely).

To sum up, according to Bang Larsen, the operating methods of the experience economy has several negative consequences, including synchronicity, self-consumption and defactualisation.

In spite of these consequences, Bang Larsen finds that we, through our thinking, have the opportunity to block the experience economy's instrumentalization of art.

In accordance to Bang Larsen's idea about a change in the position of art, cultural theorist Henrik Kaare Nielsen talks about 'culturalisation' and that the individual, on the basis of an overall and dominating technocratic discourse, rather is articulated as consumer than citizen (cf. Kaare Nielsen's contribution to the anthology *Smagskulturer og formidlingsformer*, 2006).

### **Element 2.1: Strategy**

A way to counteract this dominating technocratic discourse, can be done through a specific experience process, which, by functioning through the particular patterns (which dominates the identity work), can exceed the horizon of these patterns and thereby allow for general reflection perspectives.

By 'general' Kaare Nielsen does not refer to a transcendental generality or universality in a Kantian understanding, but an immanent potential in the experience formation.

The experience process, which Kaare Nielsen refers to, is the aesthetic experience based on Kant's understanding of the term.

According to this understanding, aesthetic experience is connected to the reflective judgment. This kind of judgment puts itself on side of the distinctive and maintains its uniqueness, which causes, all present generalities to fall short. In this manner, an, in principle unending, intellectual search process is released - between an object, which cannot be determined and a general concept that does not exist.

According to Kaare Nielsen this unending generates aesthetic effect, in that intellectual reflection and sensual-emotional experience integrates.

Kaare Nielsen underlines that aesthetic experience as such, does not point to new, edifying alternatives. It points beyond itself without pointing out an alternative. He ascribes aesthetic experience an empowering quality only, when it is processed.

Kaare Nielsen here touches upon his own instrumentalization of aesthetic experience and art, with the purpose of critical reflection and empowering.

In the predominant cultural practice, Kaare Nielsen finds a need for 'the classical publicity principle's universal reflection perspective'.

A principle, which seeks dialogue across cultural borders and taste preferences for hereby to allow for a mutual critique and qualification between particular taste- and subcultures.

In his thinking of a solution he suggests a kind of 'Trojan horse-strategy': "(A promising strategy seems) *to be thinking in specific target groups and to make an experience appeal the starting point, thus in addressing broad, obvious taste orientations within the target group; but in the further organization of dissemination to challenge these obvious experience wishes and expectations through contrasting and nuancing elements of expert knowledge along with other societal discourses and ways of experiencing and creating experiential anchored, dialogical connections across these. Hereby the dissemination will be able to transform an, at the outset, private, taste-oriented experience process into an aesthetic experience process - and thereby achieve its educating aim.*"

In this way, one 'lures' the individual with an experience appeal by addressing broad, obvious taste-orientations. Then the 'trap shuts', when the established expectations are challenged through involvement of expert knowledge, other experience processes and by creating dialogic connections.

To discover ways of counteracting the negative consequences of the experience economy, Bang Larsen asks: What defines an experience?

To answer this question, he refers to philosopher Theodor W. Adorno, whom finds that, an experience is more superficial and subjective than "erfahrung" (in English one does not have a word for this distinction), which contains a critical and cognitive aspect - a reflection upon the experienced.

Through 'erfahrung', the subject can have its expectation horizon for what it can experience, moved, because the formation of the subject gets changed instead of merely confirmed; a moving, that takes place by virtue of a certain negative aspect of the 'erfahrung', which prevents the experienced to be added to other experiences without further ado.

In contrast to 'erfahrung', an experience should surprise, but not to the extent that it causes negativity within the experiencing subject.

In the booklet *Interventionskunst - kunstens aktuelle evne til at iagttage* (2004), didact, Lene Tortzen Bager, points to the fact that Kaare Nielsen also distinguishes between experience as sensory stimulation and 'erfahrung' as a process, which involves a reflective processing of experience impulses.

According to Bang Larsen, the new scope of capitalism is characterized by the emergence of an 'ontological capitalism'. A capitalism, which does not 'merely' have to do with production, circulation and consumption of physical objects and images, but which infiltrates opportunities of being. In extension hereof, he introduces the term 'the materiality of affect'. A term which can be used to clarify how subjectivity is produced within this kind of capitalism. The materiality of affect is namely understood as the production relations within a logic, where subjective being manifests through affectedness. Bang Larsen describes the materiality of affect like this: *"Subjective being manifests through affectedness, affect; our desire and feelings, the conceptions which form them and the languages which communicate them. Within the new scope of capitalism in subjectivity and cultural value, we must try to trace the materiality of affect. By materiality, I mean production relations, the story of the things and the life forms. How did the things come here? What decisions have produced the things [...]? The question of the materiality of affect thus consists in how 'facts' and goods are produced in our nervous system."*

Affect is understood as 'the production relations of the senses'. However it is not to be understood as immediate sensing, but as an affectedness consisting of two things: a sensing or perception and the concept, which accompanies it.

Affect is thus a sensing, which occurs in a reciprocal interaction between the concept or idea, which evaluates it, ei. whether or not something is pleasant.

Affect can as such be put in line with Kaare Nielsen's understanding of aesthetic effect, as result of an, in principle unending, intellectual search process between an object, which cannot be defined, and a general concept, which does not exist.

If one compares 'a definition of an object' with the aspect of affect, that Bang Larsen calls 'the sensing or the perception', and 'the search for a general concept' with what, Bang Larsen calls 'the idea, which evaluates the perception', one might say, that the aesthetic experience, through a kind of suspension dissolves the affect into its components - components, which one hereby can relate to as 'made visible' or 'clarified'.

In connection to this Bang Larsen writes, that a discourse on the materiality of affect can deconstruct our cultural nervous system by separating the affectedness from the discourses, which rationalizes it. Thus it is the materiality of affect, that art should give form.

In the previously mentioned booklet, Tortzen Bager describes that the strategy of an art form can be viewed in accordance with Bang Larsen's and Kaare Nielsen's criticism and ideas. This art form is art intervention.

The fact that art intervention can be seen in line with Kaare Nielsen's ideas, is evidenced directly from Tortzen Bager's text, where she describes, which potentials he considers it to have. Including the ability to open up for a sensory anchored rethinking.

She explains: *"Art intervention belongs among the artistic strategies - called social sculpture, relational art, context art - which appeared in the late 1990s. It is about de-objectualized works, which seeks to create reflective difference and establish room for reflection through a social, an ethical or a political engagement."*

This 'de-objectualisation' can be said to support Kaare Nielsen's above mentioned 'promising strategy' or 'Trojan horse' by means of being an obvious way for art to operate in hiding.

Tortzen Bager writes further about art intervention: *"[I]ts weak work-signs allows the art intervention work to be invisible as art, and thereby the opportunity for the work [...] to interfere and intervene with the culture and its processes of creating meaning."*

In addition, art intervention avoids becoming rhetoric: *"A great deal of art intervention is engaged in the culture, understood broadly [...]. Nevertheless, the engagement of art intervention is not aimed directly at creating political or social change. Rather to create a reflective effect."*

Tortzen Bager goes on to write about, how you can see the possibility of art intervention due to the development of the understanding of art throughout the last century: *"The particularity of art occurs due to the latest century's artistic experiments with the autonomy to be so strong, that it can be compressed into a focus on meaning construction. Because of this quite special ability art can situate itself. Relate itself. Contextualize itself [...]. The art work can as [...] a [...] place of observing meaning construction act as a kind of satellite dish, which can transmit this certain focus out into the surroundings. The focus can in principle be raised anywhere, onto anything."*

In connecting to this, she writes: *"In return, the culture acts as a kind of co-transmission pole, where art also receives signals back onto itself."*

*The intervention with meaning-making processes in the culture grants art a place of self-observation."*

Here you might say, that Tortzen Bager equals art and a reflective or critical potential in that, art can be compressed to a focus on construction of meaning.

According to Tortzen Bager this ability allows art to situate itself and act as a 'satellite dish', which can transmit this focus out into the surroundings, to which the culture functions as a 'co-transmission pole'.

As I understand it, this comparison can be seen as a way to describe how art (cf. Bang Larsen) can make the production relations of the art and the culture 'visible'. However, I do not think it is entirely appropriate, since art (like Kaare Nielsen's Trojan horse) rather functions 'through contexts' than 'through contextualization'. In this case it will not make sense, that art can 'transmit a focus out', nor can it be described as 'a place'.

An alternative comparison could be, that art is like a 'short circuit', which suspends more or less transparent routines of interpretation, whereby one gets aware of these and the 'needs' or concepts which rationalizes them.

### **Element 3.1: Premise**

Tortzen Bager comes with a description of, what you can call the premise of art intervention:

*"[T]he ability of art intervention to intervene [is] tied to the reception in the specific sense, that the right focus is crucial in order to give rise to the work: without the aesthetic view the intervention falls beside in the reception."*

This can be understood in the way that the realization of art as 'erfahrung' is invoked by the right (intervening) relationship between a work's more or less material organization, discourse and 'viewer'.

The example, that Tortzen Bager brings of art intervention is one, she herself has experienced.

In the late summer of 2003 she and her husband received a letter from 'The Department of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration'. The letter

included a survey, which asked about household's view on contributing to integration through private accommodation of immigrants: How many refugees would you be able to accommodate? How many rooms would you be able to make available? Are there countries, from which you will prefer receiving immigrants? How would you prefer the rent to be paid: as deductions or monthly payments?

All questions were presented as part of a survey and thus not binding. None the less, the letter sparked a lot of discussion. After the survey had been returned, Tortzen Bager and her husband asked their neighbors, how they had reacted to the questions. It here turned out that none of their neighbors had received the letter.

A couple of weeks later Tortzen Bager received 'another' letter from The Department of Refugees, Immigrants and integration announcing, that it was not them, who had mailed the survey.

Since art intervention in this manner functions in the hiding and through the discourses it wishes to arouse critical reflection upon, it is in principle independent from an artistic discourse. It does not necessarily require any art theoretical preunderstanding in order to become realized as a reflective potential with the viewer.

Nor does art intervention entail a demand for the viewer to engage in order to realize its potential. This does in turn mean, that it can be viewed as 'violent', since the receiver is not being 'asked', whether he/she would want to be exposed to it.

If one compares the issues, the Situationists saw in their contemporary society, with those Bang Larsen and Kaare Nielsen sees in ours, then it is a common denominator, that you cannot expect, everybody (in a society with types of communication and consumption, which 'dulls' the individual's ability to act independently) to take the initiative to seek out 'the negative aspect within the experience', which, as Bang Larsen points out, allows you to go from experience to 'erfahrung'.

Therefore the invisibility of art intervention is an asset - viewed from a desire to offer resistance towards the issues, which the criticism here accounts. Like a Trojan horse, art intervention can infiltrate frozen conceptions from within and without asking permission.