

Presentation of the Artist: Jakob Kolding

The work 'Spaced Out?' was originally done as a series of 14 large scale public billboards in Vienna. The billboards are gradually filled with elements from newly gentrified office/living areas which by now exist in most western cities. Areas increasingly regulated architecturally, commercially and legally. Luxury apartments, offices, commercials, security guards, business men and women, surveillance cameras and strict rules forbidding loitering, skateboarding, ball games, graffiti etc.

The transformation of these areas, which previously often consisted of industry and slum, indicates a global shift in divisions of labour and thus a shift in power relations and distribution of capital. The work points to global ways of domination by physical and social control, to ways of defining power and to the relation between urban planning and economy, politics and ideology.

Most of my work, in some way, deals with different aspects of space and place. Especially in urban and suburban contexts. How are different places described and understood? How can you get some kind of understanding of a place if you neither

grasp it in its interrelational context nor see it as a continuing process instead of as a static form?

What constitutes the identity of a place? Not only in the most obvious sense of architecture and inhabitants but including broader aspects of economy, politics, ideologies etc. Also, ideas of the perfect city and the consequences of such (utopian?) hopes are important parts of the works. What defines the perfect city? Who is part of it? Who is not? What are the actual consequences in planning and architecture? How are the inhabitants dealing with it?

What is the popular idea of specific housing areas, how are the areas seen by the inhabitants themselves and how does this understanding relate to the above mentioned politics and ideologies. For instance it seems to be a common perception that the typical 1960's and 70's concrete housing schemes pose extreme restrictions on the inhabitant's behaviour. That physical and social control is especially dominant in these areas due to the strict planning, the uniform housing, the concrete perhaps?

Following the same clichés, middle class neighbourhoods of detached housing are seen as much more free and pleasant areas. Here everyone owns their house, they have their own garden and are generally free to do what they want. It's a cliché often encountered in media representations of different kinds of housing: happy families consisting of a mum, a dad and two kids (one boy, one girl) living in this anytown of detached middle class housing. (Check out 9 out of 10 commercials on washing powder, insurance, banks, realtors etc.). The concrete housing estates are full of criminals, immigrants and single mothers with social problems (check the news).

And the different characteristics assigned to the areas in these representations are often considered, almost exclusively, as a direct result of the area's architecture, design or types of residents but many decisive factors, which have a very real effect upon the local community although not so easily observable, are thus ignored. E.g. a whole range of different policies, local, national and international economies, attitudes towards the area among its inhabitants along with the attitudes towards the area from people living outside the area, the representation of the area by the media, politicians etc. and last but certainly

not least the daily life activities of the inhabitants.

Architecture and planning, football, social studies, Gotham city (Batman), politics, the Death Star (Star Wars), economy, skateboarding, art, videogames, music etc. etc. Just a few of the things that you might consider part of a geographic milieu. Psycho-geographic feedback. The urban fabric is not something that exists independently of behaviour, of contemporary and historical context, whether at the level of urban planning, youth culture, group identities or art.

Jakob Kolding, May 2006

Information about the artist

Jakob Kolding is born in 1971 in Albertslund, Denmark. He lives and works in Berlin.

Education:

1990-1993: Social studies at Roskilde University Center

1995-2000: The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts

For further information:

<http://www.nicolaiwallner.com/>

<http://www.teamgal.com/>

<http://martinjanda.at>

The billboards can be seen on:

<http://www.mip.at/en/werke/614.html>