

Jean Baudrillard and the Arts – a homage on his 75th birthday

Symposium in the presence of Jean Baudrillard
16 - 18 July 2004

Exhibition in the project space of the ZKM | Museum for Contemporary Art
(17 July – 12 September 2004)

Everyone is familiar with the French thinker, Jean Baudrillard. An expert on apocalypse, a renegade and melancholic, he is not a man who likes to be pigeon-holed as a sociologist or philosopher. "I don't come from any particular 'discipline'. I don't say that to act the amateur or dilettante. I simply don't have the requisite constancy to subject myself to a single discipline. I never had the courage to study semiotics in depth or to tackle psychoanalysis in any systematic way. I devote time to it but in a frivolous manner", he said in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* magazine in 1989.

The term most frequently associated with his name is *simulacrum*, which the Berlin publishing house, Merve Verlag, never failed to explain in an accompanying glossary.

Born on 29 July 1929 in the French city of Rheims, Jean Baudrillard is celebrating his 75th birthday this year.

He studied German language and literature, amongst other things, and translated works by Bertolt Brecht und Peter Weiss. From 1968 he spent several years teaching sociology at the University of Paris-Nanterre. His first book entitled *Le Système des Objets* appeared in Paris in 1968. The German translation *Das Ding und das Ich* was published six years later. This was followed by other publications, which have achieved legendary fame in the meantime. They include

Kool Killer oder der Aufstand der Zeichen, Merve Verlag, Berlin 1978

Agonie des Realen, Merve Verlag, Berlin 1978

Der symbolische Tausch und der Tod, Matthes und Seitz, Munich 1982

Die fatalen Strategien, Matthes und Seitz, Munich 1991

Transparenz des Bösen, Merve Verlag, Berlin 1992

Amerika, Matthes und Seitz, Munich 1995

Das perfekte Verbrechen, Matthes und Seitz, Munich, 1996

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Symposium
16 – 18 July 2004

Venue
ZKM-Media Theater
(Symposium)
ZKM | Museum for
Contemporary Art, Project
Space (Exhibition)

Admission:

Fri, 16 July 2004
(Welcoming address and
Exhibition opening
admission free)

2-day ticket Symposium
(Saturday - Sunday):
€ 20 / 12

Day ticket Symposium:
€ 10 / 6

Sat, 17 July 2004
6 – 10 pm,
Evening event
(panel discussion and slide
show)
€ 4,50 / 2,50

Exhibition
17 July – 12 September 2004

Address
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Der unmögliche Tausch, Merve Verlag, Berlin 2000

Das System der Dinge, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt/Main 2001, 2nd edition

Der Geist des Terrorismus, Passagen Verlag, Vienna 2002.

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Jean Baudrillard regularly rejected simple truths, as was the case when he wrote: "Mediatization obliterates any mention of reference and truth. The indistinguishability of truth and fiction therefore affects all spheres: the aesthetic sphere of the artwork, the historical sphere of occurrences and the memory, the political sphere of activities and opinions and even the scientific sphere of experiments and proof." Ideologies, dogmas and the suppression of opinions are alien to Baudrillard. On being awarded the Siemens Media Prize in 1995 at the Centre for Art and Media he specified his views on art, saying: "In modern art, for example, the lack of aesthetic criteria means that everything rests on authenticity, on the artist's initials on the works, which replace the real value."

Taking the central idea of the *Art and Philosophy* series as a point of departure, the exhibition and symposium will illustrate the far-reaching influence that Jean Baudrillard has had on contemporary art and culture.

As was the case in the previous events showcasing the work of Michel Foucault in 2002 and Gilles Deleuze in 2003, the concept this year again stems from Peter Gente, co-founder of the Merve Verlag in Berlin, which was one of the first publishing houses to include the writings of the French thinker in its programme. Together with Peter Weibel he has issued invitations to all those who enjoy a special relationship with the writings of Baudrillard, be it from a position of critical distance or one of theoretical agreement.

Jean Baudrillard will be attending the gathering at the ZKM in Karlsruhe and will participate in a panel discussion on modern art on Saturday, 17 July 2004.

To prevent the meeting from turning into a purely academic affair and to ensure that it remains open to enthusiasts, interested visitors, those who have read a lot of Baudrillard and others who are curious to find out more, a reading, a film night and discussions will ensure the requisite variety between the oral contributions from, among others, Gianni Vattimo, philosopher and Member of the European Parliament (Turin); Sylvère Lotringer, philosopher (New York); Mario Perniola, philosopher (Rome); Mikhail Ryklin, philosopher (Moscow), and Florian Rötzer, media philosopher and publicist (Munich).

Further information at <http://www.zkm.de/ baudrillard-treffen>

Programm

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Presentations in the language of the speakers; German translation will be available.

16 July 2004

5.15 pm Opening lecture: Gianni Vattimo, philosopher, Turin

7 pm Exhibition opening

- Photos by Jean Baudrillard
- Works by Andy Warhol
- *Passwords* documentation with German subtitles (Baudrillard explains the key terms in his work)
- Film documentations on Jean Baudrillard
- Photos by Marine Baudrillard *Baudrillard's land* in Comoro Islands
- Archives of the Merve Verlag, Berlin
- Sound documents, interviews

17 –18 July 2004

10 – ca. 5 pm Symposium

- Michael Wetzel, media scientist, Bonn
- Michaela Ott, philosopher, Stuttgart
- Marc Guillaume, economist, Paris
- Mario Perniola, philosopher, Rome
- Henri Pierre Jeudy, sociologist, Paris
- Aurel Schmidt, journalist, Basel
- Mikhail Ryklin, philosopher, Moscow
- Caroline Heinrich, philosopher, Mainz
- Christoph Wulf, anthropologist, Berlin
- Florian Rötzer, media theorist, Munich
- Douglas Kellner, media philosopher, Los Angeles
- Chris Kraus, film-maker, New York
- Sylvère Lotringer, philosopher, New York
- François L'Yvonnet, philosopher, Paris
- Régis Michel, art historian, Paris
- Rüdiger Schmitt-Grépály, Director of the Friedrich Nietzsche Kolleg at the Stiftung Weimarer Klassik und Kunstsammlungen, Weimar

(all the speakers have been invited to talk about Jean Baudrillard's work)

17 July 2004

6-7.30 pm Panel discussion on the subject of *Jean Baudrillard and Art* with

- Jean Baudrillard, Paris
- Peter Weibel, Karlsruhe
- Johann Gerhard Lischka, Bern
- Christoph Blase, Karlsruhe
- Sylvère Lotringer, New York

8 – 10 pm Slide show

- Chris Kraus: Jean Baudrillard beim Chance Event in Nevada

18 July 2004

10.45 am *Radical Thinking* by Jean Baudrillard read by Gisela Strähle