Eye into Earth

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Göttelborn is a small town in southwest Germany, site of a 19th-century coal mine that was closed in the final years of the past century and is now slowly fading from memory. The region has discontinued its industrial history, but some efforts are under way to define ideas for infrastructural redevelopment. The government is waiting for investors.

A group of artists, many coming from different parts of the world, followed my invitation to come here in July 2003, and every summer thereafter, to work with me in the abandoned buildings and the surrounding geography filled with enigmatic rusting machinery and overgrown slack heaps. We started to call the site a “laboratory for interaction.” Our tools are our bodies, our imagination, and our media instruments (cameras, computers, microphones, mobile devices, sensors). The mine offers its own stories. We no longer go under (inside the earth) but stay afloat, transient, in a temporary state of experimentation, departing and returning. With our media, we tend to look at space as virtual, transformable; we process a different kind of information.

Eye into Earth

1. a former territory
   now merely an opportunity
   to channel future industries
   along abandoned corridors
   toward presumptions of sustainability
   a theatre in firm hands
   of management
   seeking investors to define a new place
   a stage filled with question marks
   you encounter a lost landscape
   a former pit
   whose holes into the center of the earth are filled up
   and sealed
the surface is over grown
weeds and rusting metal
our meeting place
oddly unreal, second floor
of a building called black and white
below us empty showers
dark rooms
and height filled with
thousands of baskets
slow motion
across slanted passage ways
takes us to the end:
a gaping eye in the cement
looking upward from the
centre of the earth

Figure 1. Coal Mine Göttelborn.
Source: courtesy of Interaktionlabor/Klaus Behringer (2003-06)
2.
change rhythms
unbalance your body
as you listen to slippage of gravity
la cité is the fiction
beyond the perimeter
where grass grows downward
from the ceiling
heavy metal echo
as we turn on computers
and focus our cameras
the echoes are sign language
from the below, the ghosts
of miners buried underneath
future here comes in circular
motions, loops of security
in the head
but the country has lost
all order
the former slipped into
the networks
distributed
this is no pit
but an experimental movie
the eye turned inside
white wetness
of remaining tears
when the head is tilted
like in dance
when you lose the ground
under your feet.

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Ague zur Erde

1.
ein ehemaliges Gelände
nach-haltigkeits und gelegenheitsforschung
das theater in fester hand
investoren gesucht zur neustandortsbestimmung
eine begegnung mit verlassenheit
einer ehemaligen industrie
unser labor eine merkwürdigkeit, 2.stock, schwarz-weisskaue
unten sind leerstehende duschen, dunkelkammern
ein langer gang verbindet uns zu zugeschütteten schächten
auf der schrägen ebene entstehen langsame gänge
am ende ein gähnendes Loch
das zur Mitte der Erde führen könnte
rhythmusveränderung
je nach dem, gravitätsverfall, eine cité in lauerstellung,
im oberen stock einer ehemaligen direktion wächst gras aus der decke
ein labor-team stellt computer und kameras an, mikrophone überhören ein pochendes
echo
klopfzeichen der geister von verschollenen
zukunft entsteht in kreisbewegung, vergangenheit ist nachhaltig nur
wenn zuviel sicherheit im kopf beginnt
ordnung ist ins netzwerk gerutscht. dies ist keine grube, sondern versuchsanordnung
das auge sieht nach unten in leere
aber kopf verdreht sich nach oben
wie im tanz, wenn man den boden verliert

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