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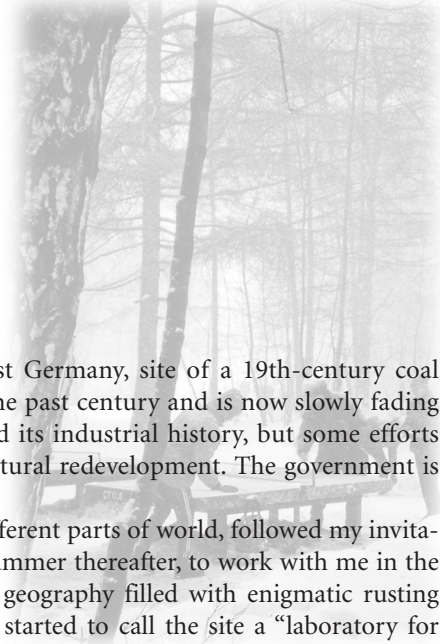
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Eye into Earth



Johannes Birringer

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 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

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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 Götterborn.

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.

Juli 2005

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



Figure 2. Koala Yip, "Oracle."

Source: courtesy of Interaktionlabor/Johannes Birringer (2003)

2.
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

Juli 2005