

Rules and Breaking Them

She belongs to the paradigms of modern art: breaking the rules. Every avant-garde movement has established itself by doing so. Even the last avant-garde, the wild painting movement, defined itself through redressing this paradigm and presenting the return of tradition as something progressive. Today's relationship between following rules and breaking them is probably more complex than it used to be. That partly has to do with a certain element of materiality typical of contemporary art, which is no longer clearly identifiable. An analog culture glides smoothly in and out of a digital. Painting's perimeters are the perimeters of photography and both easily interlace with one another. The rules of violating the rules thus refer just as much to the materiality of art itself. Both moments: the breaking of rules and the contingent character of materiality can be found in Angela Lubic's work in a unique way.

There is a knitting pattern with the subtext: "Act in Accordance with Certain Rules" on the second to last page in Angela Lubic's catalog "Althergebrachtes" ("Time-honored"), 1992. On the opposite page, we see the sentence "A Lace Letter for Franse" below a cryptic block of text. This is an explanation for the previously mentioned pattern that is more than the adherence of a rule, because the adherence to a rule is placed with equal importance right next to the image of that rule.

With this step, a controlled response is extended one dimension more, which is paradigmatic for contemporary art. The image of the rule does not only represent this, but is also a medium of reflection. If the rule is functioning up until this moment in the background so to say, it appears as such with the display of regular behavior. That also implies that the regularium loses some significance in this paradoxical reversal, because the image places itself in the foreground. An analog example can be found in the theory of information: if the attention is turned to the channel where information is transmitted, the information transmitted there loses significance.

Angela Lubic's works operate within this dynamic. They demonstrate to the viewer something that happens, in order to conceal themselves within this demonstration. Angelika Stepken found a formula for this: imagine the instructions — instruct the imagination.

The result can be a small paper ball, hidden in a 12 x 12 x 12cm cardboard box. The ball is the residuum of a performance called "Ein Tag" ("One Day"), where the artist took a hole-puncher and punched one hole for each second of a day. She then made a ball out of the small disks of paper left over. The object does not reveal the concept of its origin; there is only a reference to this placed outside of the work.

The word "rule" is derived from the rule of order of a mediaeval cloister, called *regula* in Latin. In German, *regula* was translated into "Richtholz, Richtschnur" (straightedge, plumb line) as well as "Maßstab and Regel" (scale and rule). To regulate, to rule and regular are derivations of this. In Angela Lubic's work, strings and thread take on a special role, as if the plumb line of a rule could find a material image.

Threads form the basis of many of her installation works that occupy the space in a unique way. These works first look like wall drawings from a distance, but on closer examination, you see that they are actually the result of a complex network of stretched threads secured to the wall with nails. The spatial extension from the surface into the room finds a residuum again later, by the thread and nails being securely placed in a box at the end of the exhibition. By "enclosing" the material in this way, Angela Lubic finds an autonomous rule for her work that does not only mean simple conservation. It becomes in this way a document, which goes beyond a photographic fixed record. This rule is subsequently used, changed and expanded on. Up to the point, where the elements of the presentation remain in the "suitcase" while the installation instructions are presented in the room as a simple reference to the contents in the room, as in the 2001 work "portable-tragbar", realized for an exhibition in Paris.

For one of the last exhibitions in the Galerie im Parkhaus, Berlin, the artist developed a so-called "mobile space unit" that, derived from the mass of the space of the gallery's foyer, represented an independent exhibition space. The act of the copying and reproducing of the original on a scale of 1:2,2 is a standard process whose rule can be read again in the

“reproduction”. To create a space within a space, the standardized elements can be assembled using socket-hinges. This fact is supported by a video in the mobile space unit, which demonstrated the installation and construction of the mobile space unit.

Rules become regularities that are re-interpreted into standards again. The breaking of rules is represented in the juxtaposition of two different standards, as taken on by Angela Lubic in a two-part work in 2001. Here, the mainly abstract thread drawing becomes concrete. Using thread and nails, Angela Lubic mapped out her own work space on one side of the room, and opposite this on the other side, a scientists work space.

Rules merge into other rules or conceal them. This can be seen in the complex 2001 installation “you get what you want”. What at first seems like a colorful ball game, is on closer examination, actually a reflection of the operating conditions of the art system in relation to art funding. The targets in the game are the amounts of prize money offered by various artists’ awards. The demarcations on the playing field are the different conditions for grants and awards. The rules of the game thwart the system and yet still create an answer.

If game rules just only sustain the system, then the intervention must recognize the weak point of the system it is attempting to expose. In this case the system is a computer game called “The Sims — The Full Life”. Angela Lubic integrated herself as an artist into the game, which plays out the daily lives of its inhabitants within a digital universe. However, the artist can not be integrated into this system, because she is requested to go to work. While neighbors leave for work punctually every day, the artist stays at home to work in her studio. This non-conformist behavior has its consequences. The house burns down. That would not have happened to her in the new economy, where the artist as freelancer is a model for the employee of the old economy. “The Full Life” is not the life of an artist or a post-fordistischen working world. The discrepancy between an advanced game system and the economy it depends on becomes very clear.

Rules constitute systems, systems are upheld with rules. The rule itself however can not do without ueber its violation, because without it, the rule would lack legitimacy. In its development and presentation, Angela Lubic’s work is a clarification of this relationship.

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