



On the Brink of Forever

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Axel Kolb, Vinzenz Meyner, Ilaria Vinci, Amadeus Vogelsang

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I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -

As we enter the house, a world opens up to us. The space takes forms that we seem to react to intrinsically – associations deeply engrained in our subconscious. A little nook in the corridor may evoke reminiscent memories of a childhood hiding place, whilst other corners of the house are simply an eerie reminder of what once was. The strange familiarity remaining illusive, never quite graspable, as the empty house remains just that – an empty house.

*I heard a Fly buzz - when I died - The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air - Between the Heaves of Storm -*

The house as this somewhat unusual overlay of public and private space seems to mirror our own current condition. Having opened its doors to all types of public actors, the home is no longer solely a safe space to withdraw to, but an interface connecting both the interior and the exterior. *On the Brink of Forever* makes the relation of the house to other spaces unavoidable and it is precisely this linking, mirroring or juxtaposing of sites that creates a form of heterotopic space.

As we enter the vacant house, we find ourselves in an in between space that functions as a temporal vacuum – or as Michel Foucault puts it in his essay *Of Other Spaces*, there is a break with traditional time: one thing ends before another begins. As a threshold zone, the house becomes a place of contradiction that oscillates between oppositions in order to overcome binary structures, while inevitably remaining related to them. It is precisely this ambivalence of the liminal space that every transformation is based on. As we enter the vacant house, we find ourselves in a non-space that allows us to be part of its suspended state, yet offers no resolution. Rather, as participant of *On the Brink of Forever*, we get stuck in liminality without ever arriving.

There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz - Between the light - and me -

The different positions in *On the Brink of Forever* may bring forth a discussion of how these contradicting spaces allow us to experience different versions of ourselves. The site both an escape from reality as well as a direct confrontation with our dormant self – each position suggesting a brink of forever of its own.

As we cross certain thresholds in our lives, we come to learn that forever can never truly exist. Yet, some 'forevers' have been planted deeply in our minds – little idealistic dreams of a state that we know can never really be attained. And as we find ourselves on the brink of these dreams, it is only to consume a brief glimpse of what this break from reality might be.

I heard a Fly buzz -

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In four chapters, Axel Kolb guides us through the house – the individual pieces referring to the entrance area, corridor, cellar stairs and the cellar foyer. Movement is inherent to these spaces that we classify as passages – but *in between* explicitly demands that we remain still in physical liminality. Relying on the reverberation and resonant frequencies of the house, Kolb seeks a translation of the spatial experience, whereby the space is condensed as individual elements combine to form a narrative that is placed directly over the room. Again, we find ourselves in an emotional in between, because the multi-layered pieces open up spaces of thought. With *in between* Kolb examines the house in terms of its liminal character and allows us to absorb resonances of the house that were simply passed by before.

The harmonious pull that the architecture of the house has implemented is abruptly halted as we move into the south wing of the building and the doorway is found barricaded shut. We look at the barrier of white plaster bricks and sense disempowerment – the wall asserts direct control by isolating the space within: no one can enter and no one can leave. Similarly, the window that once set the room in direct relation to the outside world is now closed off. We barricade ourselves into our private rooms to escape the public space and declare our own personal perimeters to feel safe and intimate. Yet, this privacy or seclusion can also feel suffocating, making us long for a form of unlimited space outside of the constructed barriers; thus, the room as an open system becomes both prison and refuge. Vinzenz Meyner uses the concept of the closed-off room as a notion towards a space of contemplation – by closing one door he opens another. The vacuum that is created through his intervention allows the projection of our own memories and desires but also brings forth questions concerning existing power structures that pervade our private spaces. *Mädchen Zimmer oder Die Mauer gehört denen, die darin leben* is both frightening and exhilarating as we oscillate in a state that remains insoluble.

In *Seven days ago*, the bathroom now exists outside of traditional time. Camille Dumond explores the finiteness or infinity of spaces. As if the bathtub and sink were about to be completely emptied – the solid plaster freezes the moment. The poetic intervention is reserved and subtle but yet absolute: the room is deprived of any function. At the same time, Dumond's installation is reminiscent of a small memorial. Six burning candles solemnly repeatedly refer to infinite cycles – be it the simple transformation of energies or the transitions between life and death. The symbol of the circle or the sphere, which has neither a beginning nor an end, runs through Dumond's entire sculptural-installation work. In *Extra lives I & II* Dumond creates small proto-heterotopias – the spheres covered with mirrors absorb everything around them, whilst simultaneously rejecting it.

In the four small-format collages equipped with drawings and writing, all of which are untitled, Gilles Jacot confronts the viewer with familiar motifs. In regards to the chosen media, individual elements seem to be picked directly from our school days – our own memories are overlaid by the narrative of a dystopian schoolroom scene, which we believe we are attending – as if through a veil. There is a feeling of external control; Jacot's works refer to higher-level orientation or control systems on which we ultimately depend. At the same time, the work is characterized by a humorous handling of materials – the screw heads have a liberating effect as precisely inserted foreign bodies.

“At home” in itself is also considered a place of retreat. In the superimposition of the school and the house as a former home, the supposed boundary between the private and the public is examined and we ask ourselves: How far do the aforementioned mechanisms penetrate our home?

Drawn in by the idyllic glow of a sunset we enter a room to find an installation consisting of a two channel video projection, a bench and a bare mattress forced into the window frame, leaving the room almost entirely in the dark. With *Der kommt noch*, Vogelsang asks us to sit down. But still: Are we welcome? A void opens up between the projection and the viewer only to break our longing – a sun flickers on the wall that keeps rising and setting. *I take what you choose for me I let go what you take / Wherever you lead I will follow / Whatever you forbid I want to escape / Do as you like / I'm satisfied as long as we are not separated.* In *Honigloch* a voice adds another layer over close-ups of a wasp moving back and forth on the back of a hand and along the fingers. We become observers of an intimate scene of exchange between wasp and human. The different characters in Vogelsang's video installation move in and through relationships of dependency whereby ideas of autonomy and heteronomy are called into question. Where can our desire be traced back to and is it really our own? In

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deconstructing common narratives, Vogelsang tells a story that is not linear to read, but can be experienced as an intricate network in the superimposition of image, sound and spatial levels.

In *Tired of the usual forms of entertainment? Looking for a new diversion?* Ilaria Vinci examines a similar heterotopic space that fuses together collective memory and personal fantasy. The print uses clear visual language to frame and layer the image with motifs of longing that seduce us with the idea of a utopian world - the ants representing a strength in unity or an ideal society whilst the backdrop seems to epitomize the infinity of our desires. This conventionally charged imagery evokes prescribed notions of what we want or who we wish to be. In her works, Vinci navigates these distorted realities by semiotically stripping down how we construe meaning and confronting us with an uncanny representation of just that. *Emotionally Unavailable (+999)* exhibits a doodle on a 100 Euro bank note and reproduces an emotional gesture – the money being ascribed with new meaning as personal memories become intertwined with the conventional.

Doris Hardeman's installation *The Weariness of a Wet Cloth* consists of a bench, aluminum feet, fun gum, and a proposition for a game (a cup, two retainers and three gums scattered on a cloth). As we approach the setting an anticipation builds up that quickly becomes trapped in a form of dissonance. A frozen scene is dangled right in front of us – unravelling a hidden world that allows us to play a little game with our own fantasies. Chewed gum is scattered around the room, drawing awareness to little niches that previously remained unnoticed. We wonder who or what we interrupted with our presence when we stumbled into this paused arrangement. Childhood memories drag us back in time, whilst estrangement and unease simultaneously take hold through the teasing overlap of the different realities presented to us.

Ivana Kojić approaches the house with a burning ritual that combines folklore with personal heritage. *Vampir* plays with the fascination of the unknown – the *unheimlich* – that draws the individual into a world that can never be truly entered. It is here that fictional narratives find their origin and the repetition over generations adds layer over layer, as the stories allow us to experience the crossing of a threshold that in reality remains impenetrable. Kojić's practice with fire further plays into the liminality of the mystical or unknown. Its unpredictable, ephemeral nature seeming incorporeal – magical even – within our understanding of the natural world. But the attraction of the mystical also leads to fear of the unknown and we look to rituals to offer us protection. In *Protect Me, That's All I Want* a representation of a rural made of ashes offers a warning and establishes a protective zone against the perils of the outside world – the vampire is held at bay. We feel safe and empowered by the traditions in our lives that act as parameters to ensure our well-being; the house as a constructed space is made to keep us safe from all our deepest fears.

Julia Hegi und Antonia Truninger