

Pals

tomas schmit

Barbara Wien

Gelbe Musik

Otto Schwanz

Knud Pedersen

Graf Haufen

Copenhagen Museum of Modern Art

Anna Castberg

Robert Rehfeldt

Baader-Meinhof

John Cage

Eric Andersen

Francien van Everdingen

Pharaoh Islands

Goodiepal &





Unpredictability is a big part of my friendship with Goodiepal. He calls me from a train that he took from Copenhagen, Hamburg, London, or – most likely – Belgrade, where he and his musician collective now smuggle refugees over the EU border. He doesn't have a phone or any other device that can be traced, so he borrows a cell phone from a random person sitting next to him on the train. He will arrive in Rotterdam, he tells me, in one hour.

To date, I've always managed to pick him up at the station. One time, his harem pants were torn, and he was juggling three suitcases, one of them small and made of wood. As always, he was wearing his fake-Muslim skullcap, a gesture reminding me of the Berlin Dadaists who adopted English names to piss off German society and its anti-British sentiments after World War I. During a previous visit, Goodiepal's attire prompted a group of Dutch-Moroccan kids to shout that he was an Orthodox Jew.

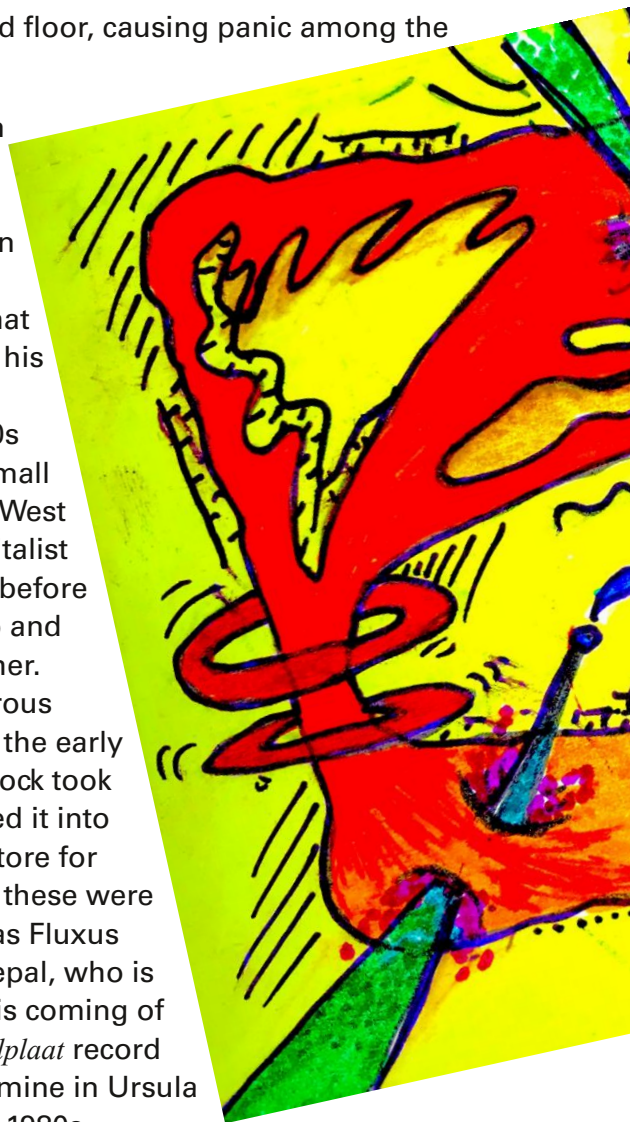
The last time I visited him in Copenhagen, I simply went to the National Gallery on a Sunday at noon, knowing that he would be giving his weekly public lecture there. In the past, Goodiepal had been an electronic musician and tutor at a conservatory, where he taught students to compose music *for* artificial and alien intelligences. After the conservatory found this (and him) suspicious and fired him, he renounced studio composition, teamed up with a cabin bicycle constructor, and built a custom bike with which he traveled through Europe, pedaling also to generate the electricity he needed for his concerts. Later, he completely renounced electronics, learned mechanical watchmaking, and built two mechanical singing birds.



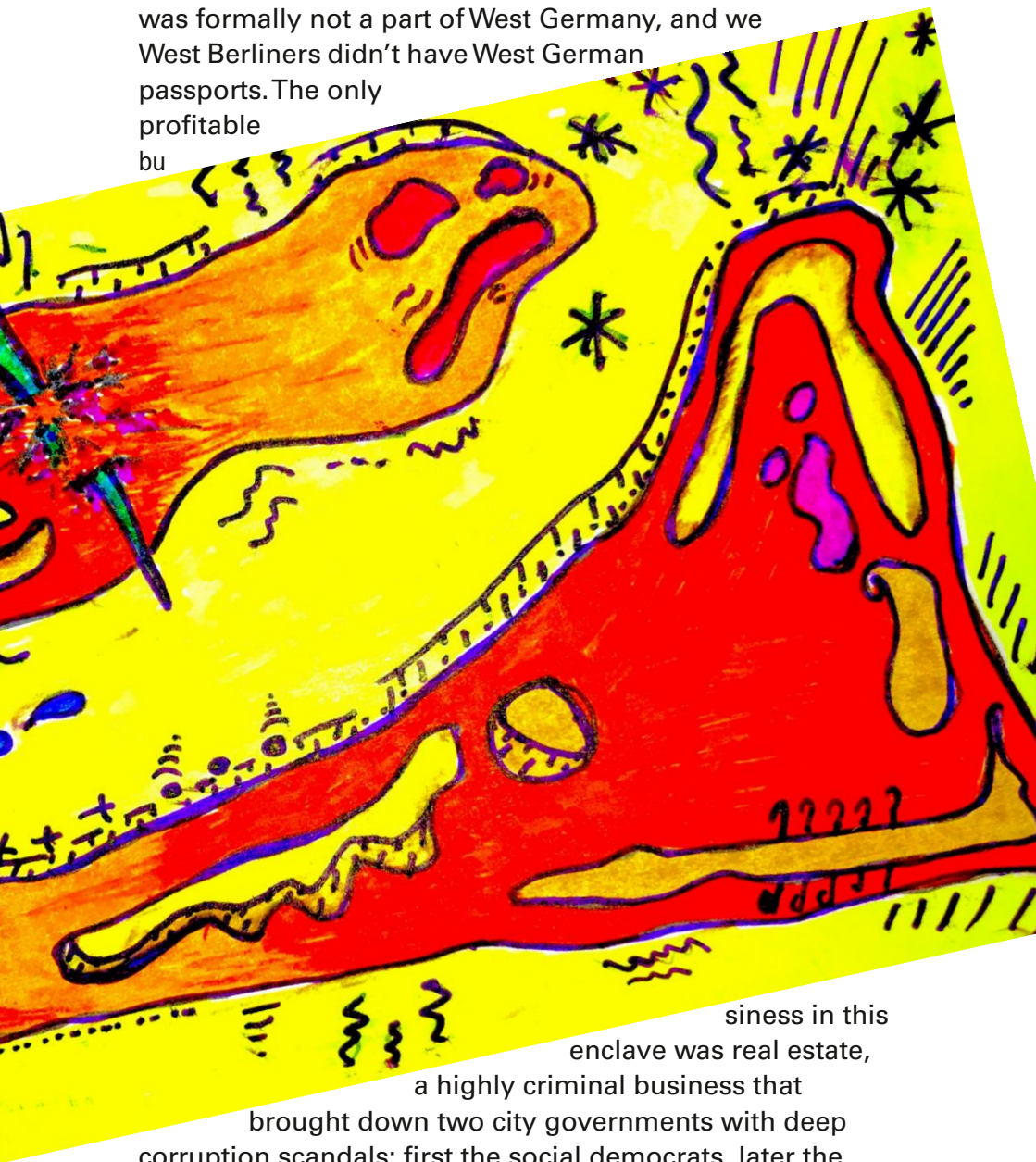
The National Gallery eventually bought one of his birds and two of his cabin bikes, and put them in its permanent exhibition. This is a public museum, with free entrance, so Goodiepal decided to utilize it as a radically public space. Since then, he has been using the museum installation

and a storage room to stow away his personal belongings. Music, books and artworks he likes and buys from his friends – which include many of my own friends in Rotterdam – thus end up in the museum collection. On this particular Sunday, he had invited the cabin bike constructor for a joint lecture. Afterwards, he took everyone to the museum installation, unlocked the two cabin bikes and let people race with them around the National Gallery's ground floor, causing panic among the security guards.

It was my second time in this museum. I had first visited it in the late 1990s, when I still lived in Berlin. In a local newspaper, I had read that René Block had donated his art collection to Copenhagen. In the 1960s and 1970s, Block ran a small gallery that featured the West Berlin artists of the "capitalist realist" school, decades before this name was picked up and repurposed by Mark Fisher. Block also hosted numerous Fluxus performances. In the early 1980s, his wife Ursula Block took over the space and turned it into the world's first record store for artists' records. Many of these were made by Fluxus artists, as Fluxus objects. Whereas Goodiepal, who is younger than me, had his coming of age in Amsterdam's *Staalplaat* record shop in the 1990s, I had mine in Ursula Block's *Gelbe Musik* in the 1980s.



Back then, West Berlin was an enclave that was artificially kept alive with West German tax money, even though it was formally not a part of West Germany, and we West Berliners didn't have West German passports. The only profitable business in this enclave was real estate, a highly criminal business that brought down two city governments with deep corruption scandals: first the social democrats, later the conservatives. The scandal I still remember from my teenage years at *Gelbe Musik* began with a shootout



between two pimp gangs in an underground parking garage only a few blocks away from the gallery. The boss of one of the pimp gangs who got arrested went by the name Otto Schwanz ("Schwanz" also means "cock" or "dick" in



German). He was a member of the Christian Democratic Union party and, as it turned out, had bribed a number of local politicians for real estate development projects. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was revealed that he was also an East German Stasi agent who worked for *Commercial Coordination*, the department that imported Western luxury goods for top-ranking Communist Party officials.

West Berlin's center of power and corruption was the charity organization for (West Berlin's) National Gallery, a club that served as a speakeasy for politicians and real-estate people. One of the collateral damages of West

Berlin's second-rate politics was the National Gallery's contemporary art collection, which was stuck in 1950s abstract expressionist painting, in the version of second-rate German painters. The more recent contemporary art was in the collections of the local real-estate oligarchs. So a public-private joint-venture was created, the Hamburger Bahnhof museum, whose inventory came from those private collections but whose building and curators (some of them advisors of the local oligarchs) were paid for by the public.

The Blocks refused to join, and instead donated their collection to Denmark. So of course I, and my partner at that time, had to go to Copenhagen to see it. But we couldn't find it: not at the National Gallery, not at the Statens

Museum for Kunst, not at the modern and contemporary art museum Arken outside the city. My travel guide for Copenhagen was a tiny, typewritten and self-published book "Der Kampf gegen die Bürgermusik" ("The Fight Against Bourgeois Music"), written and originally published in Danish by Knud Pedersen and translated into German by Ludwig Gosewitz, a West Berlin-based artist who had been affiliated to Fluxus in the 1960s. It was a cult



book for me and a friend of mine, Graf Haufen, who had been – among others – a cassette label publisher, “dilettante” performance artist, DIY noise musician, Mail Artist, splatter and exploitation movie expert, and owner of a video rental store that brought all these genres and interests together.

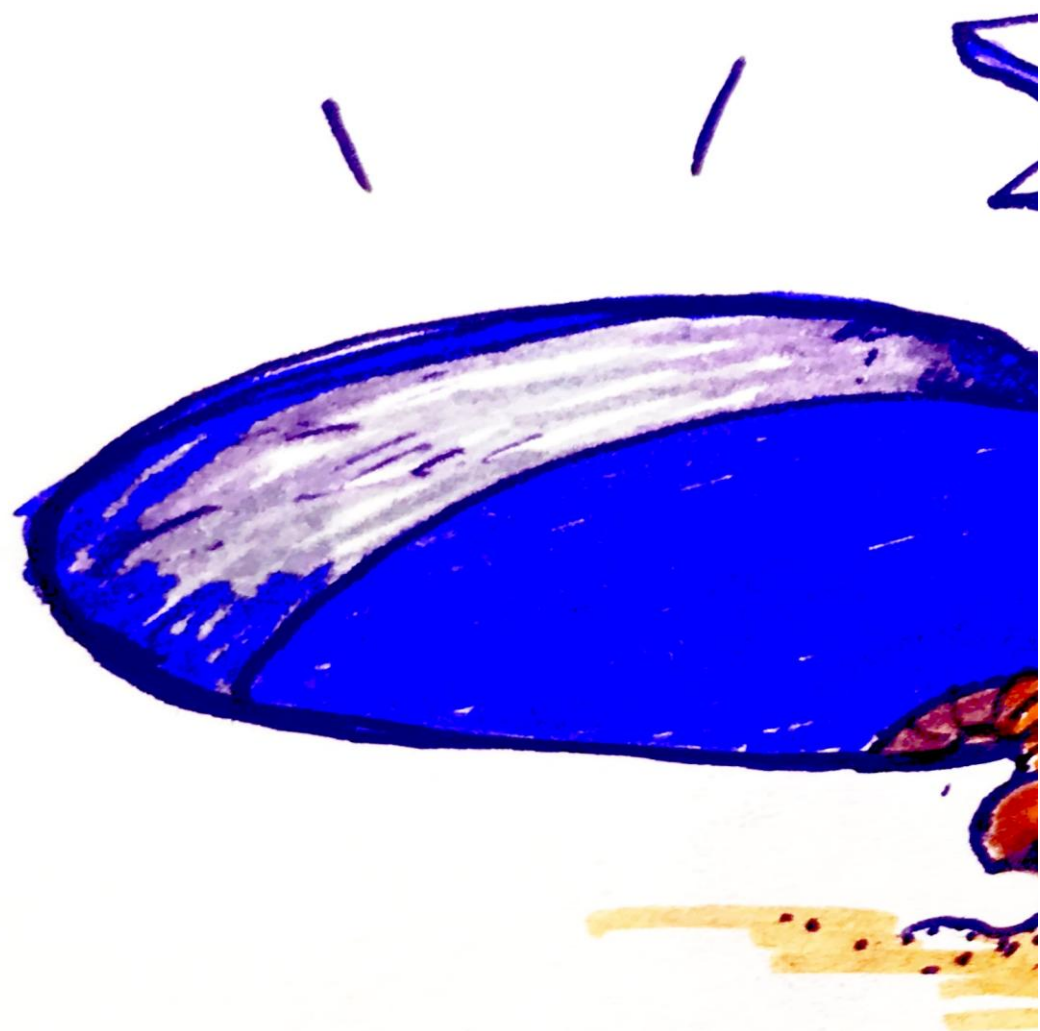
Haufen was also the person through whom I got introduced into Mail Art and Neoism in the second half of the 1980s. At that time, years before the fall of the Wall, he had extensive contacts with East Berlin’s underground Mail Artists. He regularly smuggled small publications across the border, from West to East Berlin and vice versa. The most well-known member of this scene was Robert Rehfeldt, who had succeeded in working and surviving as a professional artist in East Germany, even though his work defied socialist realism. After the fall of the Wall, in 1991, he was honored with a retrospective exhibition in the central district of East Berlin. When I went there, a hippie musician was sitting on the floor, playing acoustic guitar. It was Rehfeldt himself. I was in my early twenties, was very respectful and didn’t easily strike up a conversation. He asked me whether I had been in the army, because I was so stiff. (As a West Berliner, I hadn’t, since our part of the city was officially under American, British and French Allied authority until 1990. When I was retroactively drafted in 1993, the so-called Felix Krull strategy – of pretending to eagerly want to join the army while “unfortunately” lacking the physical capability – spared me from serving. Sitting next to me was a Turkish-German Berliner who had just managed to dodge the Turkish draft and was now facing German military service. He falsely claimed that his girlfriend was pregnant, and was sent home, too. The ones who really wanted and ultimately got drafted, were muscular fascist hooligans. This was a period of post-unification Eastern Germany, including Berlin, that only now is getting its proper attention from historians as the “baseball bat

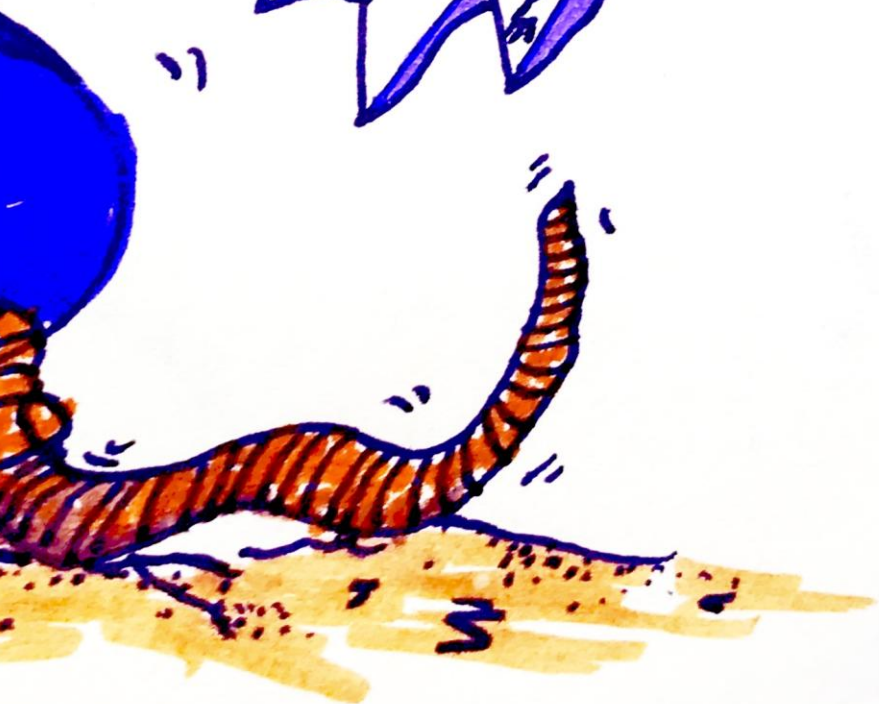
years")

Rehfeldt told me how he had first traveled to the West in 1977. He had been invited to the 6th Documenta in Kassel, and obtained a special permit and visa from the East German authorities, because he had worked as a courtroom sketch artist in the past and could pull some strings at the Ministry of Justice. All trains between East and West Germany, as well as all West Berlin train stations, were operated by the East German Reichsbahn railways at the time. Until 1989, the Reichsbahn trains from Berlin to Hanover were commonly called "interzone" trains (referring to Germany's postwar Allied occupation zones, not to the writings of William S. Burroughs). Rehfeldt told



me how traveling from East Berlin via West Berlin through East Germany made him paranoid. He suspected all fellow travelers in his compartment to be Stasi spies. In Hanover, he changed trains to Kassel. The longer he sat in that train, the emptier it became. Shortly before Kassel, he was the only person left in the whole wagon. When he stepped out of the train, he was suddenly faced by machine guns. He





was pushed to the ground and searched – but released as soon as the special command unit found his East German passport.

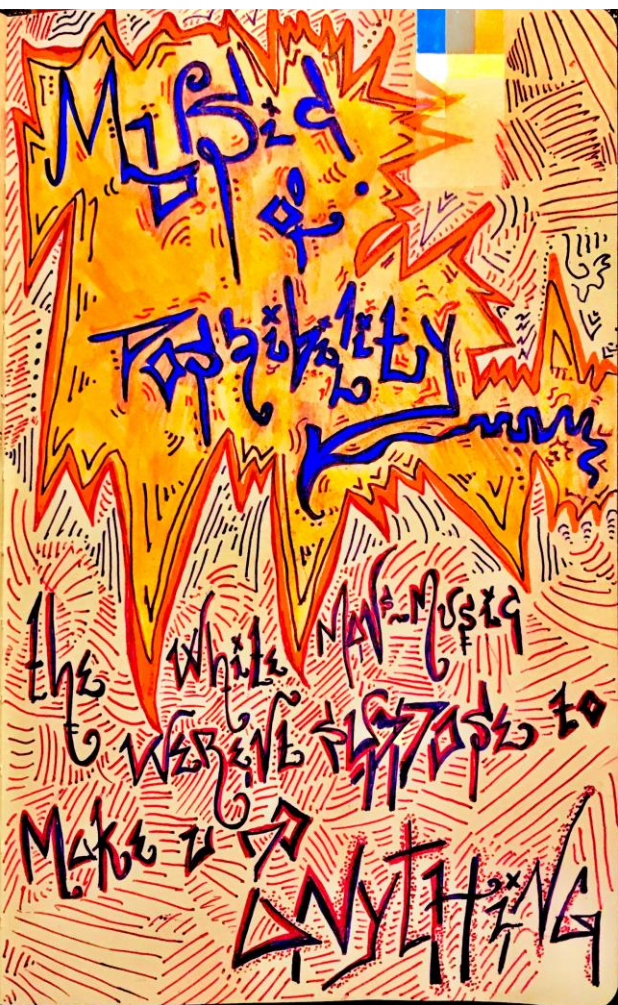
1977 marked the culmination of the Baader-Meinhof terrorism scare in West Germany. In the spring and early summer of that year, the Public Prosecutor General of the Federal Court of Justice and the CEO of a major bank were assassinated by the extreme-left – actually Leninist – group. Later, they also killed the president of the German Employers' Association. This was followed by the death of group leaders Baader, Meinhof and Ensslin in prison. "Wanted" posters of the group members could be seen everywhere, in post offices, in schools, and on billboards in the streets. I was eight years old. In the yard of my elementary school, we didn't play cops and robbers, but Baader-Meinhof Group against West German Federal Police. At the end of the game, all the terrorists would get shot by the police. In the train to Kassel, meanwhile, someone had wrongly identified Robert Rehfeldt as one of the people on the "wanted" poster. The train had been discreetly cleared, and a special command unit dispatched to Kassel's Central Station.

In 1979, Knud Pedersen, the author of "The Fight Against Bourgeois Music", briefly dabbled in Mail Art and sent a bottle to Rehfeldt in East Berlin, declaring the bottle as the letter's envelope so that he only had to pay letter-rate postage – a typical Pedersen move. Graf Haufen and I had discovered his little book independently from each other, at the artists' bookstore *Wien's Laden* (now Gallery Barbara Wien). This was West Berlin's other resource of Fluxus and DIY publications, alongside *Gelbe Musik*, and the other, even more significant place where I came of age. The store had been co-founded by tomas schmit, a first-generation Fluxus artist and close friend of Gosewitz. I became friends with tomas in the years before his death (while Goodiepal was close to Gustav Metzger in London in the years before

Metzger's death). He often stood at the bookstore's counter, making sure that the heroin junkies in the neighborhood were not playing tricks to run away with the cash register. One day a customer, visiting from America, came to buy one of his self-made books. Tomas offered him to sign it, but the customer – thinking that he was

dealing with a mad person – recoiled in horror.

I remember that Graf Haufen had called "The Fight Against Bourgeois Music" his favorite book of all times. In the 1960s, Pedersen had been part of Copenhagen Fluxus. In a former church turned into an artist-run center, he installed a jukebox that played John Cage and other avant-garde music. Likely, this was Haufen's inspiration for taking the jukebox equivalent of 1980s working-class culture, the video rental store, and running it in new ways. In the 1970s, Pedersen opened a



gallery, in a tiny and dark basement, which would not sell art but only rent it for affordable rates. In the 1990s, he was still running it. So I decided to visit and ask him whether he knew where the Block collection was.

First, however, we talked about the gallery-library itself. He showed me its official postcard: the front side consisted of a full-size black-and-white photograph of a monumental brutalist building, the back side featured the text "Copenhagen Museum of Modern Art" along with the gallery's address. Pedersen explained that, of course, he had never claimed any connection between the picture on the front – actually, the building of the Danish National Bank – and the address on the back. Furthermore, he had legally registered the name "Copenhagen Museum of Modern Art" for his basement gallery. The city did not have a modern art museum of its own at that time. As a result,



either of the picture on the postcard or of the name registration, he, the director of the Copenhagen Museum of Modern Art, had been invited to be a curator for, among others, the Venice Biennale.

When the city of Copenhagen later, in the 1980s, decided to build a museum for modern and contemporary art, it

soon found that the name had been taken. The designated museum director came to visit Knud Pedersen in his basement and negotiate a solution. In Pedersen's words, "she looked like Meryl Streep". He melted away and would have handed over the name without a single act of resistance if she had politely asked him. But instead, she had decided to play hardball and sue him. She didn't know that his son was, according to Pedersen (as well as a number of Danish people I later asked), one of the most notorious hardball lawyers of Denmark. The museum lost the case.

In 1996, the museum finally opened under the name "Arken" ("The Ark"), with a retrospective of the now-controversial German expressionist painter Emil Nolde. The press apparently lauded the director's courage and unconventionalism in opening a contemporary art museum with Nolde. Shortly after, the director – the same person who had sued Knud Pedersen for fraudulently using the museum name – was exposed as an impostor. She had faked all of her references and art history diplomas. Emil Nolde was one of the few artists with whose work she was actually familiar. Of the two tricksters and con artists who faced off in the basement, the one who had gone through the school of Fluxus had the last laugh.

In the 1960s, Copenhagen was not only a hotbed of Fluxus, but also of Situationism. Asger Jorn lived there, as did his brother Jørgen Nash who sawed off the head of Copenhagen's Little Mermaid sculpture. But just as Situationism had split into a French and a Nordic faction, Fluxus was – as Knud Pedersen explained – divided into an American-dominated, minimalist school influenced by John Cage and La Monte Young, and a European-Nordic shamanist school influenced by Joseph Beuys. In Copenhagen, these two schools collided. The Fluxus artist Eric Andersen, who had lived and worked in New York,

represented minimalism, while the Fluxus composer Henning Christiansen, a collaborator of Beuys, represented Nordic shamanism.

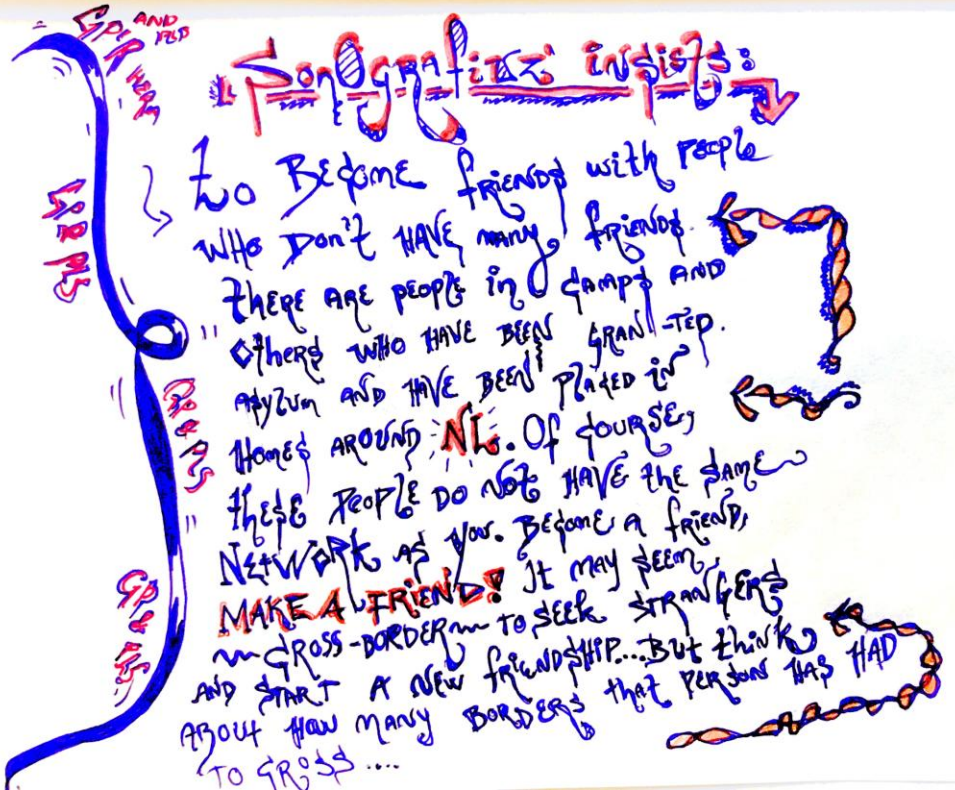
According to Pedersen, Andersen hated shamanist Fluxus with a passion. When he heard that the Blocks were donating their collection to Copenhagen – to the National Gallery, as it turned out – he became furious. In his opinion, the Block collection was biased towards Beuys and the shamanists. Including it into the permanent collection of the National Gallery would, he feared, cement the wrong version of Fluxus in his hometown.

Knud Pedersen described Andersen as follows: a sharply intelligent, perfectly polite person who sometimes visited the gallery for a cultured conversation; but he, Pedersen, wouldn't be surprised if one day, Andersen would come to the basement with a Kalashnikov and shoot everyone dead.

After the Block donation had been in the Danish news, Andersen gave an interview to a major newspaper. According to Pedersen, he roughly said the following: "René Block ran a gallery in the 1960s where Fluxus artists came and performed. After their performances, he cleaned up the space and picked up the remains. These became his art collection. *Did any of the artists ever sign a paper stating that these objects are in the legal possession of René Block?*"

Upon reading this the next morning, the National Gallery curators withdrew their agreement with the Blocks. The collection is now rumored to be in a barn somewhere on the Danish peninsula of Jutland. Two decades later, another National Gallery of Denmark curator attended an international expert meeting in the Netherlands on the preservation of electronic art, and gave a lecture where she discussed the difficulties of dealing with Goodiepal and his use of the museum.

When Goodiepal and I got off the tram near my home after his surprise arrival in Rotterdam, I noticed that he was carrying only two of his three suitcases. He had forgotten his small wooden suitcase on the tram. The doors had already closed. We did our best to run after the tram, but couldn't catch up with it. Fortunately, there were only two



more stops to its final destination. While we were running, a car stopped with screeching tires, the driver opened the door telling Goodiepal "I will do everything for a Muslim brother", and let him in.

I stayed behind while the two drove after the tram. After ten minutes, they returned, with the recovered suitcase. In the meantime, the conductors had noticed the suitcase, remembered the person who had left it there, and called

the bomb squad.

On an earlier visit, I had introduced Goodiepal to my friend Francien van Everdingen. We came to her house unannounced, as Goodiepal always does, and talked for about fifteen minutes. Francien is an artist and experimental filmmaker who, years ago, converted to Islam. She is a serious student of the religion. One of her works, which should be in every history of performance art or of John Cage's music, was a performance of the silent piece 4'33" sitting at the public piano at Amsterdam Central Station wearing a niqaab. The police arrived before she had finished the performance, with the officers nervously inspecting her stopwatch and bringing her in for questioning afterwards.

It was a Sunday afternoon when Goodiepal arrived, and we needed to find new pants for him even though most shops were closed. Biking through Rotterdam's Charlois district, in a street full of artist-run spaces, we spotted a tiny shop that sold second-season sportswear. It was still open, and turned out to be run by two men who had immigrated from the Dutch Antilles. Seeing Goodiepal walk in, the shop owners asked him where he was from, resulting in the following conversation:

Goodiepal: Faroe Islands.

Shop owner: Pharaoh Islands? Must be a lot of black people there. But you aren't black.

Goodiepal: We got colonized.

Me [explaining the geographical location of the Faroe Islands to the shop owners, in Dutch].

Shop owner: In the north? They got colonized, too? But those people don't care because they're all rich up there.

the ~~1st~~ Dutch Revolution

THIS IS THE DUTCH REVOL-
UTION! THE ROYAL KINGDOM
AND ALL THE POLITICIANS
HAS AGREED TO OPEN THEIR
HEARTS AND THEIR HOMES.
PEACE PALACE IS BECOMI-
NG A TRUE PEACE PALACE
IS OPENING ALL THE DOORS
FOR OUR BROTHERS AND
SISTERS ON THE OUTSKIRTS
OF EU. WILL BE LET IN! WE
HAVE A SPACE FOR U. WITH
355 ROOMS. THEY ARE ALL
FOR U, YAY!

Disclaimer: everything told here is the truth.

Florian Cramer grew up in West Berlin and lives with a German and NSK passport in Rotterdam. As a writer, he works like a designer: all of his work has been on commission. He received his education in post-punk and post-Fluxus DIY cultures as well as in academic humanities, and ended up working in between both, in Rotterdam's art and design school which (luckily for him) positions itself as an art and design school attempting to leave behind the terms "art" and "design". In recent years, he has become an intersectional political activist, although he still identifies as a reactionary – in his case, against fascism – and thinks that fascism deserves no monopoly on hate. He usually avoids using his own name outside of paid work, and enjoys being part of anonymous and pseudonymous collectives.

Johanna Monk is roughly one half of the artist collective Vanita & Johanna Monk, which for more than three decades now has been stubbornly building and inhabiting its own context and cosmos, communicating intermittent reports and myths using words, music, noise, pictures, objects, bodies, and any other means necessary or available. Johanna currently serves as the collective's main provider of golden eggs, supplementing its otherwise squalid living conditions through copywriting, ghostwriting, text editing, translation, structured text design, and other odd jobs in the field of physical, ephemeral and hybrid publishing. Johanna tentatively identifies as an atheist mystic, an intergender biological female (on a good day), and a radical activist of antisocial creative practices.

Dalin Waldo aka. SiSTOR a transylvanian tranSISTOR or a REsistor, is a true Persian resister to the normative ways of articulating in the world of ART and beyond. SHE's

currently driving around the Netherlandic on a sonological study in the WORM studios, while also tweakin' some delicious potentiometers and verbalizing trends in the electronic music environment in order to launch an avalanche of radical POC rock.

She has given lectures in DK and several European countries about the so-called EMA, Emotional Machine Activation, in Danish Rømantisk Lyðgenerering and also laments a lot about esoteric engineering and eloptical energy through The Lake Radio every Wednesday and Thursday with Sonografiuz Lydkatalog.

She is the founder of the Collaboratory – a fabulous multimedia collective and she is a member of GP&PLS, which basically makes the cool activistROCK to be able to earn MØNT for refugee friends at the outskirts of Europe.

Through these sheets SHE stands as the blind dancer with some colorful pens.

Lula Valletta is a cut-up and bibliophile, stuck in purgatory. Desperate of being born about 75 years too late, she tries to pick up where the hobbyhorses of the avant-garde left off; rejecting logic, reason and aestheticism of modern capitalist society, instead expressing nonsense, irrationality and anti-bourgeoise protest. She has been cutting and pasting since Kindergarden. At the age of 18, she wandered to Berlin for the sake of art only to return 8 years later arm aber sexy after years of being a GlueHead. Together with underdog poet Mr Pelham she forms cut-up collective Arpsianism. She gave the world C.U.M. (Cut Up Manifesto) and strongly believes that collage is the base of all art and creation. Specimina of her collage art are self-published in a series of booklets; an agglomeration of m  l  e into blobs and misprints. To make a living she promotes, archives, and assists in the process of creating printed matter.

www.lulavalletta.com

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