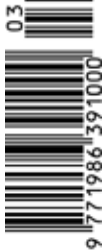


NAKEDBUTSAFE #3



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LINEAR

hero of the day: Keno

world tour

time to open the black boxes

exhibition review by Sozita Goudouna

The principal characteristic of a Black Box is that its inner components or rationale are not available for inspection. The majority of its available datum is held in a inner situation away from facile investigations. Its opaque colour disallows the observer to see its inner workings and codes. The inquiry is focused upon the Box that has no immediately apparent characteristics and therefore has only factors for consideration held within itself and hidden from immediate observation. In neural networking and in heuristic algorithms, a black box is used to describe the constantly changing subdivision of the program environment that cannot easily be tested by the programmers.

The black box can be seen as a simulation of the human mind, consciousness or psyche. In this case, how could someone test the ways and methods, in which a black box monitors the changing social and political environment, in the context of a social crisis. A black box is a liveless, inert, static object without a voice, unable to verbalise its reaction towards this changing environment. But what if there was a way to enliven its operating system, what if it consisted of a pulse rate, as an organism of a society, that might be set up to explode.

The mechanism of explosion would be connected to threat

> uncover the political corruption globally





Her latest exhibitions include:

- 2012 Its time to Open the black Boxes, presented at the Zoumboulakis Galleries in Athens.
- 2012 VS – ISTANBUL presented at the Sydney College of the Arts - SCA Gallery, Sydney.
- 2011 The River of Life presented at the Old Bath House of the Winds.
Organised by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens.
- 2010 ICESONGS presented at La Verrière (Fondation D' Enterprise Hermes), Brussels.
- 2010 Vital Space – Istanbul presented at Tophane in Istanbul.
- 2010 An invitation / commission by Istanbul Cultural Capital of Europe.
in the context of the international exhibition Lives and Works in Istanbul.
- 2007 OUT - 7 dividing lines presented at the Zoumboulakis Galleries in Athens.
- 2005 See Through presented at the Zoumboulakis Galleries in Athens.
- 1997 Desert Breath is a Land Art project covering 100,000 m2, located in the eastern Egyptian Sahara bordering the Red Sea. A collective work by D.A.ST Arteam,
(Danae Stratou, Alexandra Stratou, Stella Constantinides), Egypt.

This highly complex labyrinthian structure is intended to lead to a sacred comprehension of reality that is related to the polymorphous content of the box. In the expanse surrounding the viewer, words, figures and sounds change without warning, while the grid proclaims an acknowledgement of the sublime and the mysterious. Each word appears for a few seconds followed by a relevant figure and then both word and figure reappear in a cyclical sequence; the ending marks the beginning of a new cycle. This repetition is best understood as discovery and experimentation, a process that allows for new experiences, new affects, and new expressions to emerge. By repeating, we are able to affirm the power of the new and the unforeseeable. The repetition of words is infinite, the hypnotic effect of alternate repetition offers the possibility for reinvention of meanings. To repeat is to begin again and as such, repetition becomes a form of creative activity resulting in transformation.² The messages inside the Black Boxes are segregated in five divisions, determined by diverse statistical facts, measurement units and trends, population, economic growth and geographical factors. The viewers are invited to decode the conceptual content of the composition. The different divisions represent "negative" and "positive" factors, however, these values are often interrelated.



The mechanism of explosion would be connected to threat and terror, notions related to emotion, to the unexpressed and the pre-lingual, but that can also be seen as cardinal factors for affecting change. Threat and Terror are often caused by unknown grounds, in all cases, however, anything connected to terror and threat is, at least potentially a source of the feeling of the sublime. Terror, is either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime. Terror and the sublime go together and are even inseparable. ¹ Danae Stratou investigates the delicate balance between terror and the sublime by creating a global monitor of pulsating words and meanings. The installation consists of a meticulous structure of one hundred interrelated Black Boxes, that contain one Message, one Word, one Sound and a related Number. The structuring of one hundred boxes with screens, creates a complex spatial environment within the exhibition space that entails unique formal and technical qualities intrinsic to the artwork. Each box contains a word and a figure with a timer that is followed by a countdown (or, in some cases, a count-up), or a flatline, depending on the transmitted message. The site of meaning shifts from an inner, formal structure to the shared presence of work and beholder. The Black Boxes are associated with the creation of an almost "architectural" construction that the viewer must enter in order to experience its spatiality and substance from within. The beholder physically enters a maze of boxes; the horizontally and vertically expanding grid, provides an experience of the six directions of space, and calls for a "sacred centre."

The causes and effects of the economic crisis are expressed with words like bankruptocracy and their corresponding number is in a scale beyond human reach (600,000,000,000), connected with the sound of a ticking bomb, akin to an alarm that alerts us to some lurking threat. Elements that threaten the environment, outcomes of the economic crisis and threatening state of affairs are also "negative" factors that are connected with similar sounds. In reverse, we find natural elements that we want to protect, and concepts and values that we want to preserve, like love or freedom, words that have humans as their measure, thus are connected to the sound of a heartbeat in a flatline. The diagram provides information on how these operational units are organized as a temporal mechanism. Danae Stratou's interactive installation fills these Black boxes with observable elements, despite their immateriality. Elements that enter the imaginary space of the boxes and supply them with notions, concepts and feelings, both idealist and pragmatic. A set of different outputs that emerge and become observable as they express the public's opinion and emotional expanse. One hundred Words linked in their indeterminacy, created by a public dialogue, expressed as respiration, as a heart beat or as a bomb mechanism, depict a threshold between one reality and another, that is yet to be experienced.

Terror is seen as the outcome of this transitional moment, whereas the black box records the moment that oscillates between our two stages, between our past and our future and is able to determine the facts of our personal and social life. Like the audio recording device in the cockpit of an airplane or helicopter, that in aviation records the conversation of the pilots during a flight, so if something goes very wrong, investigators can use the black box recording to determine what happened. (By engaging into an inquiry into the cause of a plane crashing, where the plane is caused to become wreckage). And if someone were to determine what had happened after seen the wreckage, the process of network synthesis from the transfer functions of black boxes could be traced in the form of a game of words. Words that have to be protected or Words that threaten the public, a synthesis of pulsating immaterial words, that have their meaning questioned from the banality of current affairs or endorsed by hope for change and for another future. Death, Consent, Unemployment, War, Crisis, CDS, but also Trust, Freedom, Peace, Humanity. By breaking open the sealed containment of the black box we stop guessing. The boxes start to be defined only in terms of their function and of their word. Their meaning is revealed and despite the shocking effect, the terror that was provoked while hidden, is challenged. The operating system is disclosed, the underlying structure, mechanism, and dynamics of fear and terror balance themselves in relation to notions that have to be protected. Threat and protection are both secured and trapped in the Black Box, while the sound of time points to their potential to activate freedom and change.

¹See Edmund Burke
²See Deleuze.

Danae Stratou
Visual Artist, born in Athens, Greece.
Graduated in 1988, BA (Hons) Fine Art - Sculpture,
Central St. Martins College of Art and Design.
Since 2007 she is an Adjunct Professor,
at the Superior School of Fine Arts in Athens, Greece (Masters of Fine Arts Degree).
Danae Stratou represented Greece in the 48th Venice Biennale (1999).
She also participated in the main programs of:
The 1st Valencia Biennale (2001) in Spain, BIDA 2005,
Biennial International del Deporte en el Arte (2005) in Seville | Spain;
the 5th International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2006), Gyumri, Armenia,
the 1st Thessaloniki Biennale (2007) in Greece,
Istanbul - Culture Capital of Europe 2010 Visual Arts Program (2010),
The Adelaide Festival, International Visual Arts Program, exhibition Restless (2012).
The main body of her work consists of large-scale outdoor and indoor installations. In her
work she uses elements of nature, which she incorporates with new technologies, such as
video, photography and sound thus creating audiovisual environments | installations.
Through her work she aims to invoke the senses and address the inner rhythm of life and being.
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¹fovos", fear

HOPE