

Société Imaginaire

SOCIÉTÉ IMAGINAIRE

at the



The Kennedy Center

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

6. – 10. November 1995 Washington D.C.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung · Batuz Foundation

Harvard Review · Georgetown University

Technische Universität Dresden

Société Imaginaire

This is not a catalogue in the usual sense. Rather this publication is intended as a work in progress. It gives the reader a glimpse at first hand of the S.I.'s working processes and reflects the work already achieved. At the same time, it invites the participants in the Kennedy Center events to continue their dialogue and elucidating, and thereby further the fundamental principles of the Société Imaginaire.

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Poet, USA

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Scrapbook

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President of Uruguay

Prologue to the Uruguay portfolio

Prof. Dr. Jochen Boberg

Director M. D., Senate of Berlin

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Kai Uwe von Hassel

Former Minister and President of the German Parliament

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Novelist, editor of the Harvard Review

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Artist, Germany

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*Chief Executive Officer, Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation,
Germany*

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Artist

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Antimanifesto

People ask, "What is the *Société Imaginaire*? Does it exist? Or is it an illusion?" The answer is: the *Société Imaginaire* exists, but it cannot be summarized without its subtlety being blunted or its fluency being compromised. It lives by refusal, by saying "no" to what other groups or societies depend on for survival. It has no manifesto, and will not be bound by any explicit formulation of its aims. It exists as a paradox; it is most alive when its life can be least assumed. Although it welcomes attempts to define what it is, it knows none will be right. If its members are evasive when asked to explain it, it is because they know that any answer, once uttered, comes too late. It is committed to "beyondness", to being always one step ahead of what can be said about it. Thus, it keeps growing. And though it has a history, a past amply documented with poems, prints, and statements of various sorts, it is always in the act of discarding them. Its archive is not just the natural by-product of its existence, but the repository of what should not be repeated. Its attention is fixed on the blank where the features of its new face will take shape. Its members are everywhere. They write to each other, and collaborate on projects that are dedicated to simultaneously establishing the *Société* and abolishing it, giving it an artifactual and literary history that it must forget. It is not dedicated to the cliché that we learn by experience. Rather, it believes that experience must be mistrusted, only then is learning possible. Its aim is not to describe the world, but to remystify it. It offers creation as a mode of life and a condition for living; at least for a time. This time.

Altzella, June 5, 1995

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mark Strand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Mark Strand

The *Société Imaginaire* as Method

Man's spirit oscillates between the desire, on the one hand, to reach the absolute, and disillusionment on the other with the meager results he achieves in this effort. In spite of being conscious of this inevitable, repeated failure, each individual, each culture attempts over and over again to devise a definition of its own world by its desire to achieve another, different from those already existent.

There are historians who compare cultures with plants, with something organic that is born, flowers and dies. Others present cultures already in dialogue, interpreting them as a kind of "response to a challenge", an incitement proposed by others. In this case there exists a gestation period, for absorbing and later integrating what is "new" into one's own culture. The *Société Imaginaire* proposes a third scheme, better adapted to the current times, being more contemporary and simultaneously antitraditional.

Highly advanced means of communication have radically changed the way we gain our information about the world. This forces us to focus the question of culture in a totally different way from the previously cited visions. News of events does not come to us as before in a linear and successive form, but rather all at once, everywhere in the world and simultaneously. So it is that thousands of new and living cultures seem to us like parts of an enormous electromagnetic field. It becomes difficult if not impos-

sible for us to grasp it all at once, even less to establish a scale of values, which is absolutely necessary for our understanding. The problem which faces us is not ideological but methodological. We have to focus on it with a new form of apprehending, one that responds to this simultaneity of things.

A visual example perhaps will be clearer. All of the prior visions of history could be conceived of in figurative ways; ours, however, can only be visualized abstractly. Let us imagine a huge abstract painting where innumerable forms of differing shapes and intensities advance toward each other in apparent disorder. This disorder is only apparent, however, because there exists an intimate relation between forms that "correspond." That is to say, each form shares something in common or possesses something which another form precisely is lacking, and this relation pushes them to communicate with each other. This is not exactly a dialogue, since all of the parts function in this same manner. There is a permanent play between these forms that incite each other, challenge each other, collide and attract at the same time; establishing thus an interrelation which is direct "correspondence."

The *Société Imaginaire* reflects in its real and daily tasks that which is known in the painting. In reality, it is the painting.



Batuz

Foreword

The Batuz Foundation and its project, the Société Imaginaire, have been closely tied to the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation by many years of trusting cooperation. The original task of this international cooperation has been to bring culture and art into a dialogue. Artists, scientists and politicians from various continents are brought together in jointly sponsored events in order to create networks of relationships, of intellectual exchange, an "imaginary polis". The worldwide contacts of the Batuz Foundation and the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation complement each other and enrich their joint resources.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation is very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute, within the framework of the 25th anniversary of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, to the deepening of the cultural and political dialogue with the United States of America.

President John F. Kennedy and Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II and for whom our Foundation was named, were leading creators of the transatlantic community: a community of Europeans and Americans which defends the values of the rule of law and democracy, and which protects peace and freedom in the world.

The world needs visions. Culture and politics can give life to these visions and contribute to the mutual understanding among nations. The dialogues of the Société Imaginaire are designed to further this aim.

For this reason the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation participates in this international cultural forum with great interest.


Lothar Kraft

Culture and Politics

The world is in transition. Farseeing politicians have created fifty years of peace on the old continent and preserved it. With the events of 1989 the world experienced an earthquake of unforeseen magnitude. The new rises on the horizon; no one can predict how it will look. But what is surely indisputable is that the future will succeed only if freedom, human rights and human dignity prevail, if people arise in all parts of the world who make this aim their own.

The aim would be unachievable if politicians alone were to try to attain it. It would not be realized without them. But if they were left alone their noble ideals

would disappear into the quicksand. The politicians, of whom I have been one for fifty years, need partners not like themselves but from other disciplines: writers, artists, and musicians.

A politician must have contemplated Grünewald's "Christus" and the stained-glass church windows of Chagall in order to understand what Jesus has meant for humanity for two thousand years. It will help him escape the narrowness of his political path to stand before the Hagia Sophia or a Buddhist temple. An Islamic fundamentalist should also occasionally sink into contemplation in one of our Gothic cathedrals; then he might perhaps learn toleran-

ce and meet the "infidel" in a different manner.

Dictators in the Black Continent must be prepared to face mirrors held up to them by their own great writers, Nobel Prize winners, showing how they lead their countries over the precipice out of pure selfishness. On the other side the arrogance of many a writer, many a self-appointed intellectual, would evaporate if he went to the trouble of getting to know the politician in his conceptual world. The writer or intellectual might even be able to comprehend, as if it were his own, what the so easily abused politician considers his own domain.

As a politician I admit that we too have not always attempted to make it easier for others to build bridges together. And these are necessary if we want to succeed in the task before us instead of having it overwhelm us.

Here the Société Imaginaire gives us precisely the great opportunity that all of this may happen not in one country alone but simultaneously in many countries and continents, and that it will succeed through a long-lasting and personal dialogue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kai Uwe von Hassel'.

Kai Uwe von Hassel

The Graphic Portfolios of the Société Imaginaire

1. The first of the portfolios was created and put together in Argentina. Five Argentinian artists took part who had just participated in a meeting of the Société Imaginaire and there met the writers from various continents whose work they wanted to illustrate. This began one aspect of the Société Imaginaire, international cooperation. At the same time the portfolios demonstrated the function of these portfolios to interconnect various art forms and the artists and writers.

A second portfolio, following this example, was created at Hartwick College in the USA; Polish artists illustrated texts from the USA and Latin America.

2. A further step was taken with the Uruguyan portfolio which followed: President Julio M. Sanguinetti practically assumed the role of a "curator". Together with Batuz he selected the Uruguyan artists. But above all he added in his own hand a text which determined the role of the Société Imaginaire not only to facilitate interaction between politics and culture, but to lead to concrete cooperation. That is particularly true for the portfolio to which Richard von Weizsäcker contributed a handwritten introduction. Ten artists from the new German states, i. e. the former GDR, illustrated original texts of world literature, an unprecedented event. The portfolio with the introduction by the president of the Slovak Republik, Michal Kovac, will be its counterpart for the countries of central Eastern Europe.
3. These portfolios therefore witness the age and are of permanent value. They are documents of their time and its artistic, literary and political characteristics. For that reason they are collected and preserved in the National Gallery in Washington (see the reprinted letter), the Kupferstich-Kabinett Dresden, universities and other national museums, as objects of scholarship and accessible to the interested public.



Jochen Boberg

National Gallery of Art

CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN THE VISUAL ARTS

Washington, D.C. 20565
Office of the Dean

17 January 1992

Mr. Mehr. Batuz
MacGibbon Hollow Road, #2
Walton, New York 13863

Dear Batuz,

This will confirm our conversations about the Société Imaginaire with respect to the collaboration of the Center in the programs of the Société.

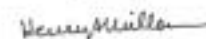
1. The Center is interested in serving as a repository for documentation about the interaction and collaboration of contemporary authors and artists. We are particularly interested in receiving copies of any portfolios that may result from this collaborative program. They will be accessible, thereafter, to any qualified user of the library or print room.

2. We recognize that the Société Imaginaire is an ideal vehicle for the realization of this interactive program. The method of translation and illustration you have devised is innovative and should generate increased awareness and understanding between peoples, as well as a cumulative continuity of exchange. Collaboration between individuals on the faculties of international universities will promote mutual understanding and insure the longevity of the program.

3. The Center is also pleased to accept applications for fellowships for research on understudied areas of the art of the 20th century, studies that may provide evidence for the revision of our several received histories of art.

Once again, I wish you success in your endeavor and am ready to assure our modest efforts in collaboration with the Société Imaginaire.

Warm regards,



Henry A. Millan

On the following pages
The German Graphic Portfolio

Nichts trennt die Völker mehr als
kulturelle Arroganz, kulturellen Hochmut;
nichts verbindet sie mehr als Kenntnis
von und Respekt für die anderen. Es
relativiert nicht die Bindung an die eigene
Kultur, im Gegenteil: es bestärkt die Zuneigung
zur eigenen Wurzel.

Auch wir in Deutschland und in Europa
sind unterwegs. Es gibt keine universale
Modernität oder Identität, die wir uns selbst
zu bezeugen oder zu exportieren hätten.
Wir suchen ständig unseren eigenen Weg
der Kultur.

Das ist entscheidend wichtig. Es darf uns
nicht in eine Frontstellung gegen das
technische Zeitalter treiben. Erst recht ist
es kein unpolitischer Weg. Aber es weist
über Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Umwelt hinaus.

Es ist ein Weg, der in unseren eigenen,
uns eigentümlichen geistigen Beziehungen
gründet und den Politik kontinuierlich gibt.
Kultur ist Politik. Kultur, verstanden als
Lebensweise, ist vielleicht die glaubwürdigste,
die beste Politik.

Richard v. Weipert
August 1993

michel
butor

czeslav
milosz

hans magnus
enzensberger

mark
strand

olga
orozco

alvaro
mutis

milan
uhde

julia
hartwig

milan
rufus

enrique
molina



michael
morgner

stefan
plenkers

hans
scheuerecker

mark
lammert

tanja
zimmermann

michael
hengst

velt
hofmann

otto
sander tischbein

jürgen
köhler

ellen
fuhr

Cher qui que tu sois,
si j'avais écrit ton prénom sur cette page blanche, c'est sans doute
que je te connaissais depuis longtemps; et donc, à mesure que ces lignes
s'allongent, ne reviennent-elles pas des éclats de ton regard et le son de ta voix, les
souvenirs de moments passés ensemble, dans une lointaine enfance parfois,
ou de découvertes communes: lectures ou voyages.

Si j'avais écrit ton nom de famille, toujours précédé d'une apposition
honorifique: Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle (mais celle-ci s'utilise de moins
en moins), j'emploierais certainement la deuxième personne du pluriel, que
j'utilise d'ailleurs encore pour nombre de mes amis les plus chers et de
plus longue date; car le dévouement ne s'est jamais produit pour passer du
respect à la camaraderie, ce que je regrette parfois, mais qui ne change rien
à la profondeur de l'entente.

Par contre, il n'a jamais arrivé de tutoyer par lettre des gens que je
n'avais jamais rencontrés, mais avec qui j'avais travaillé à distance.

Si donc cette lettre te parvient, ô toi que je salue, elle ira fouiller,
sous nos entretiens habituels, en quelques souterrains à explorer, mes
d'or ou de sel qui glanberont un jour à l'air libre.

Parfois je ne te connais pas encore, je n'ai même pas reçu une lettre
de toi (lors de ces humilantes sollicitations par exemple, auxquelles nous
ne sommes que trop contraints, ô vous, tous mes correspondants connus ou
inconnus), et j'imagine un regard, une voix, aspirant une onctuosité au-delà des
tumultueuses immédiatités glacées de solitude et de surtoute, de malheur et
d'occasions perdues, sur lesquelles je lance cette boutade à la mer.

Michel



Wagner 14



Positive

James Smith was kind, positive because friends,
Gould & Dutton, & a note, some government
I witnessed strikes with me was always empty.
I am a heart to give myself, I was my wife's partner
Cautious, rather, as my friend, being in his words; I was still,
Only give in my friend's eyes to get me out.

The House

James showing in the sun, getting him of trouble fees,
From after, from somewhere beyond the river, echoes of
And the unhurried sound of a hammer gave by at only to me.
Before the five senses were opened, and earlier than any
They waited, ready, for all those who would call themselves:
So that they might praise, as I do, life, dirt is, happiness
words,

C. S. M. A.



Foreword

Nothing divides the nations more than cultural arrogance, cultural pride; nothing binds them together more than knowledge of and respect for others.

These ties do not relativize the tie to one's own culture; on the contrary; they strengthen the attraction to one's own roots. We in Germany and Europe are in transition as well. There is no universal modernity or identity which we need to preach to ourselves or to export. We search steadily for our own cultural way. This is decisively important. Our path should not lead us to a position diagonally opposed to this technical age. Even less is this path unpolitical. But it leads beyond science, economics and security. It is a path grounded in our own, specific, spiritual contexts, which gives continuity to politics. Culture is politics. Culture, understood as a way of life, is perhaps the most creditable, the best, politics.

Richard v. Weizsäcker
August 1993

Former President of Germany

You, whoever you might be:

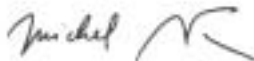
If I had placed your name at the head of this blank page, surely I would have known you for quite some time, and thus, as these lines would develop, flashes of your semblance would come to me, the sound of your voice, memories of past moments together, perhaps from a distant childhood, discoveries we had in common, readings, travels.

If I had written your name, of course, preceded by the well-known formula Mr., Mrs., or Miss (this last form now in disuse), I would most certainly have used the polite *vous* form, which to be sure I am accustomed to using with many of my friends even the oldest and dearest, since the step from respect to camaraderie was never taken, a thing which I often regret but which takes nothing away from the relationship.

On the other hand it has happened that I will use the familiar *tú* form in letters to persons I have never seen but with whom I have worked at a distance.

If this letter gets to you, whom I am addressing as *vous*, it will serve to uncover, through our continuing dialogue, who knows what unplumbed depths, gold mines, or perhaps mines of salt that someday will shine in the open air.

I certainly do not yet know you, nor have I even received a letter from you, and I imagine a face, a voice in expectation of comprehension over the vast and frozen expanses of foolishness and deafness, misfortune and lost opportunities, vast spaces into which I hurl this message in a bottle.



Michel Butor

Michel Butor is a French novelist.

Dear Butor:

The bottle which you dropped into the sea has found its way to one of the possible recipients of its message. I have always thought

that messages in bottles are a very unique and particular means of communication between shipwrecked persons. This case is no exception. Shipwrecked as we are on our island and surrounded by the sinister world of communication, where through the most sophisticated technological means, man has managed to achieve the ability to say everything to everyone and, in the end, to say nothing at all while he sinks in a sea of idiocy where words and images are just the flotsam of an unprecedented catastrophe at sea. Have you ever thought, perhaps, that in the Middle Ages man managed to communicate with his brothers in fuller and more efficient ways than today? That enormous bottle in the sea, received by all and understood by all: the work of Dante roars out to us to say that it was so. What to do then? Turn our backs, to be sure, on the disastrous call of the mass media and begin anew from zero. Such a beginning I see as possible, thanks to our *Société Imaginaire*, which was created (and this is important to keep in mind) by someone who put aside his undeniable possibilities in the world of painting, so that a few of us survivors might begin a dialogue without any other purpose than to share company in truth and courage and to say the two or three things that we need to say; nothing else. We are not going to save the world, nor decipher the role of the intellectual in the modern world; we'll not save the Third World nor the Fourth nor the Tenth. Let us return to the dialogue initiated by the Greeks and carried on, with a little less conviction, by the Romans, and continued to decline through that feeble century, the nineteenth. As an aside to these comments, I must express my admiration for your work. I speak now to a friend whom I hope someday to be able to address in the familiar *tú* with the deep sincerity of one who believes that this may be our only way out, the only way to win the game. Do you not see it this way also? I am sure your answer is, Yes. I send my best regards and also send my own, in no way *imaginaire*, Yes.



Alvaro Mutis

Alvaro Mutis is a Colombian poet.

Uruguay

A further step was taken with the Uruguayan portfolio which followed:

President Julio M. Sanguinetti practically assumed the role of a "curator". Together with Batuz he selected the Uruguayan artists. But above all he added a text in his own hand which determined the role of the Société Imaginaire not only to facilitate interaction between politics and culture, but to lead to concrete cooperation. This portfolio has been printed in the printroom of the University of Tucumán (Argentina) with the magnanimous support of Dr. Rodolfo Campero, president of that prestigious institution.

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE TUCUMÁN

FUNDACION BATUZ

Prólogo

julio maria

SANGUINETTI

haas magnus
ENZENSBERGER

lincoln
PRESNO

mark
STRAND

alfredo
TESTONI

jiri
GRUSA

nelson
RAMOS

rysard
KRYNICKI

vicente
MARTIN

tomas
VENCLOVA

espinola
GOMEZ

To the Société Imaginaire

We read, listen and watch; we, the everyday inhabitants of the nightly news. Catastrophes become instantaneous. We watch, but do we see? Do we know ourselves any better as a result of what we see? Do we really know what things mean in all of these different places? The TV viewing citizen, Homo Coca-Jeanens: does he have the world in his home, or is he more alone than ever?

The Société Imaginaire stretches a thread between cultures and weaves a dialogue. Poets and artists. Words and forms. The Americas and Europe. Latinos, Germans and Slavs. Human beings all of us in our strength and also in our frailty, understanding each other across oceans and distances, borders and silences.

Only by comparing do we nurture understanding. Nothing is learned nor can anyone be known in isolation. Beneath the surface there flows a deep and fresh current, humanistic, creative and universal. Horror has become too globalized for us to renounce bringing together the best of ourselves: pure forms recently created, words that are music, lines that are words. In creating we give life; we assume our miraculous condition and push away the demons that lie always in ambush, hiding behind ignorance that fills us with fear and draws us toward hatred.


When the imaginary is brought to paper it begins to live. That thread which here and now joins poets and artists begins to become real. And the Société comes to life.

Société Imaginaire
EDITION N° IV

Julio Maria Sanguinetti
Julio Maria Sanguinetti
President of Uruguay

// La Société Imaginaire

¿Seremos, oírnos, mirarnos, habitantes cotidianos de un telediario. Las acti-
stas se instantaneizarán. ¿Veremos ...
¿pero realmente seremos? ¿Nos conocemos
mejor por ello? ¿Sabemos qué quiere
decir cada cosa en cada lugar distinto?
El ciudadano televidente, el como sea "París"
¿tiene el mundo en su casa o vive más
solo que nunca?  -

La Société Imaginaire tiende un hilo
entre las culturas y seje un diálogo. Poetas y
artistas. Palabras y formas. Temática y
Europa. Latinos, germanos y colares. Pluma
nos por igual, en su fuerza y en debilidad,
entendiéndose más allá de muros y distancias,
fronteras e incomunicaciones. - 

Solo la comparación nutre el entendimiento.
Nada ni nadie se conoce en el aislamiento

to. Por debajo de las superficies,
fluye una corriente profunda y vasta,
humanística, creativa, universal. De-
mañado se globalizan los valores para
que renunciemos a acercarnos a 'trast'
de lo mejor de nosotros, semas fueros
nuestro creadas, palabras que son música,
líneas que son palabras. Cuando damos
vida, asumimos nuestra milagrosa condición
y alcanzamos los demonios que siempre acechan,
ocultos en el desconocimiento que nos hace
temer y la ignorancia que nos lleva a
odiar. — ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ☹️

Cuando lo imaginario llega a un nivel
comienza a existir. Ese hilo que aquí y hoy
son hechos y artistas empieza a ser real. Es
la Sordida a vivir. —

Julio María Sanguinetti
1993

Konkret

Der Gedanke hinter den Gedanken.

Ein Lied, Gedanke.

Unverändert, hat -

nicht zu verzeihen

löst sich nicht auf, steht nicht
zu Diskussion,

es was es ist,

unverändert nicht zu oder Ab.

Unverändert, nicht hat. Gedanke

Nicht neu, nicht oft.

Braucht keine Begründung,

verzeihen keinen Gedanken.

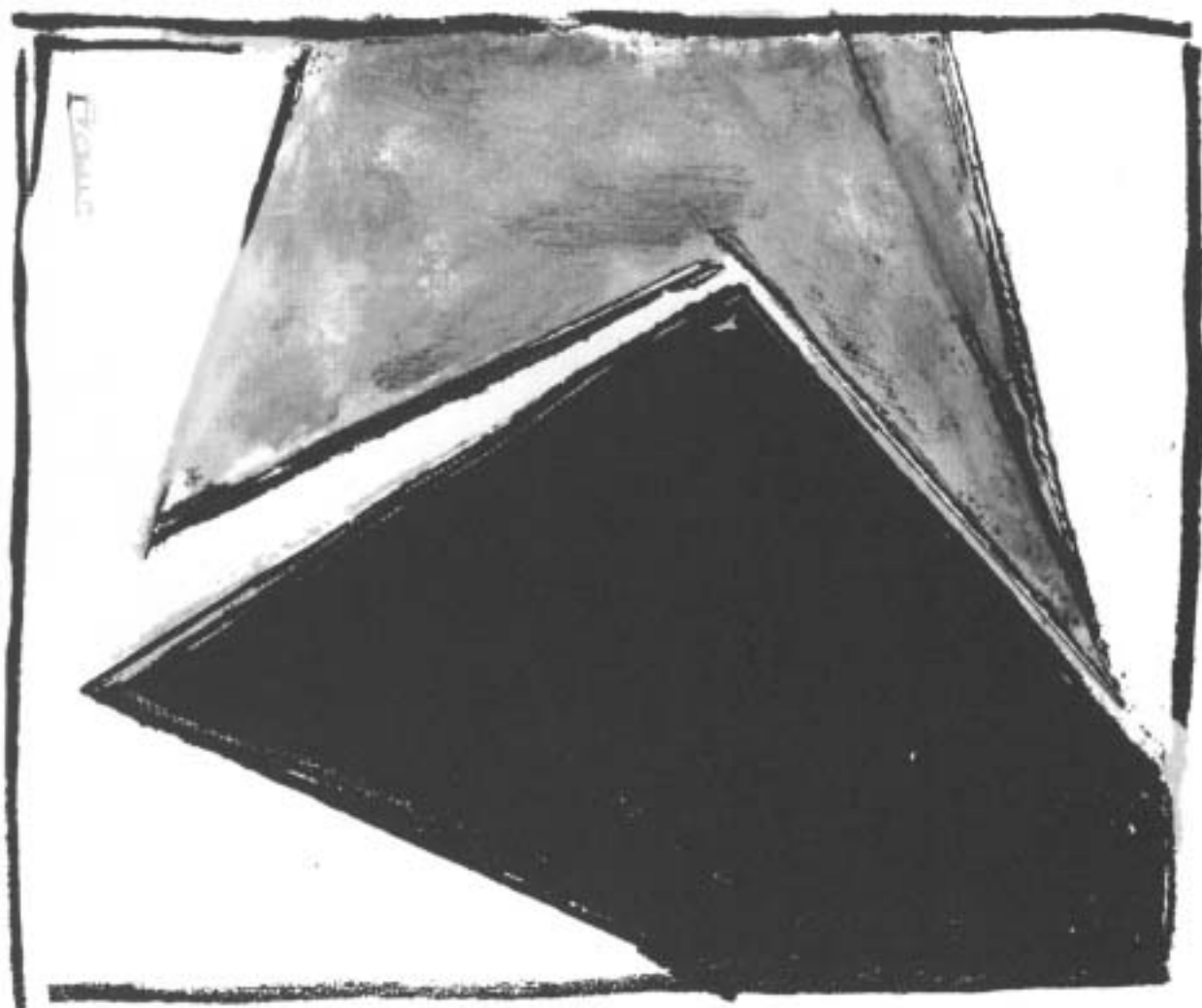
Der Gedanke nicht vorher zu ihm hat.

Wohin es geht,

Wohin es steht. Ohne ihm

Wohin es steht.

~~~~~



## Poland

"Correspondence" is the third in a series of portfolios produced in celebration of the international dialogue between artists and poets inspired by Société Imaginaire of the Batuz Foundation.

The portfolio consists of five poems in the handwriting of the poets, five prints by graphic artists from Warsaw, Poland and is the inaugural project of the Round House Press at Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York. This project was initiated by Tim Keating.

One of the images is an original lithograph drawn and printed by Czesław Podgorski, Artist-In-Residence at the college for this endeavor. The original drawings sent from Poland by the other four artists were photographically reproduced as etchings or lithographs and printed by hand on Rives BFK paper by Gloria Escobar and Katharine Kreisher. Janet Garber was the etching assistant. The text was handset and letterpress printed by Jo mish.

This is portfolio number

enrique  
MOLINA

czesław  
PODGORSKI

gyula  
KODOLANYI

julian  
RACZKO

mark  
STRAND

janusz  
PRZYBYLSKI

stanisław  
BARANCZAK

zygmunt  
MAGNER

juan  
SANCHEZ PELAEZ

jan  
LESNIAK

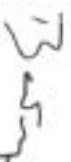
Images are universal, whereas language limits itself. One unites; the other separates. Our intention is to find in another's work what unites, not what separates. Direct and personal involvement with the work of another goes beyond the task of a simple translation; it helps us to understand not only the work but also the manner of thinking of the other.

Elation in discovering coincidences, our own equivalent in another's culture: this is perhaps one of the greatest of human satisfactions.

I am convinced that this collaboration in the future will not only overcome barriers of a linguistic nature, but all of those borders that separate us, achieving in this fashion our longed-for society, not just an imaginary one.

Société Imaginaire  
EDITION N° V

Batuz



## Société Imaginaire

«*La société imaginaire* est une «*théorie*» mise en œuvre par Durkheim, qui vise à expliquer la formation et le maintien de la conscience collective. Cette théorie est développée dans son ouvrage *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, où il propose une explication de la religion en fonction de la société. Durkheim considère que la religion est une projection de la société sur le monde extérieur, et que les rites religieux sont des actes de communion sociale. Cette théorie a été critiquée pour son manque de rigueur scientifique, mais elle a également été saluée pour sa contribution à la compréhension de la religion et de la société.

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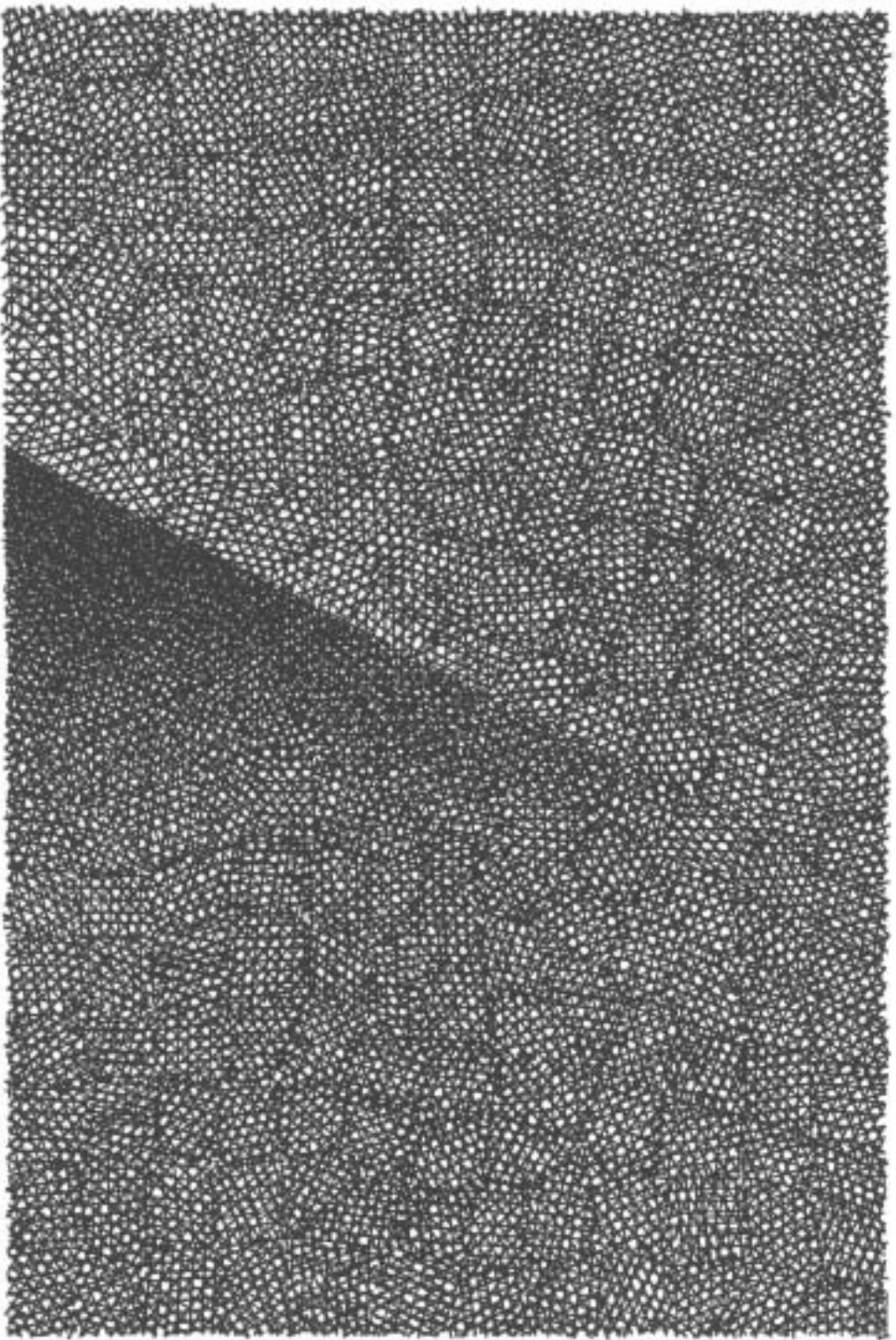
سکس

Kinnabjörp

Deurkapellen isit tiet crönd kunnain.  
A fluttu viä foddodid, elinud.  
Föddilager, a godafat, isit ta elit.

K. K. L. 3. 5. 18

"*U. Picturata* *U. Picturata*"



*Julien Henry & Co. 1882.*

415045, PO CATCH

"Kikuyu, po (catch), Kikuyu panya nam rayi."

All Kikuyu - miyo are panya, are panya  
al to miyo, Kikuyu are others al, jini are others,

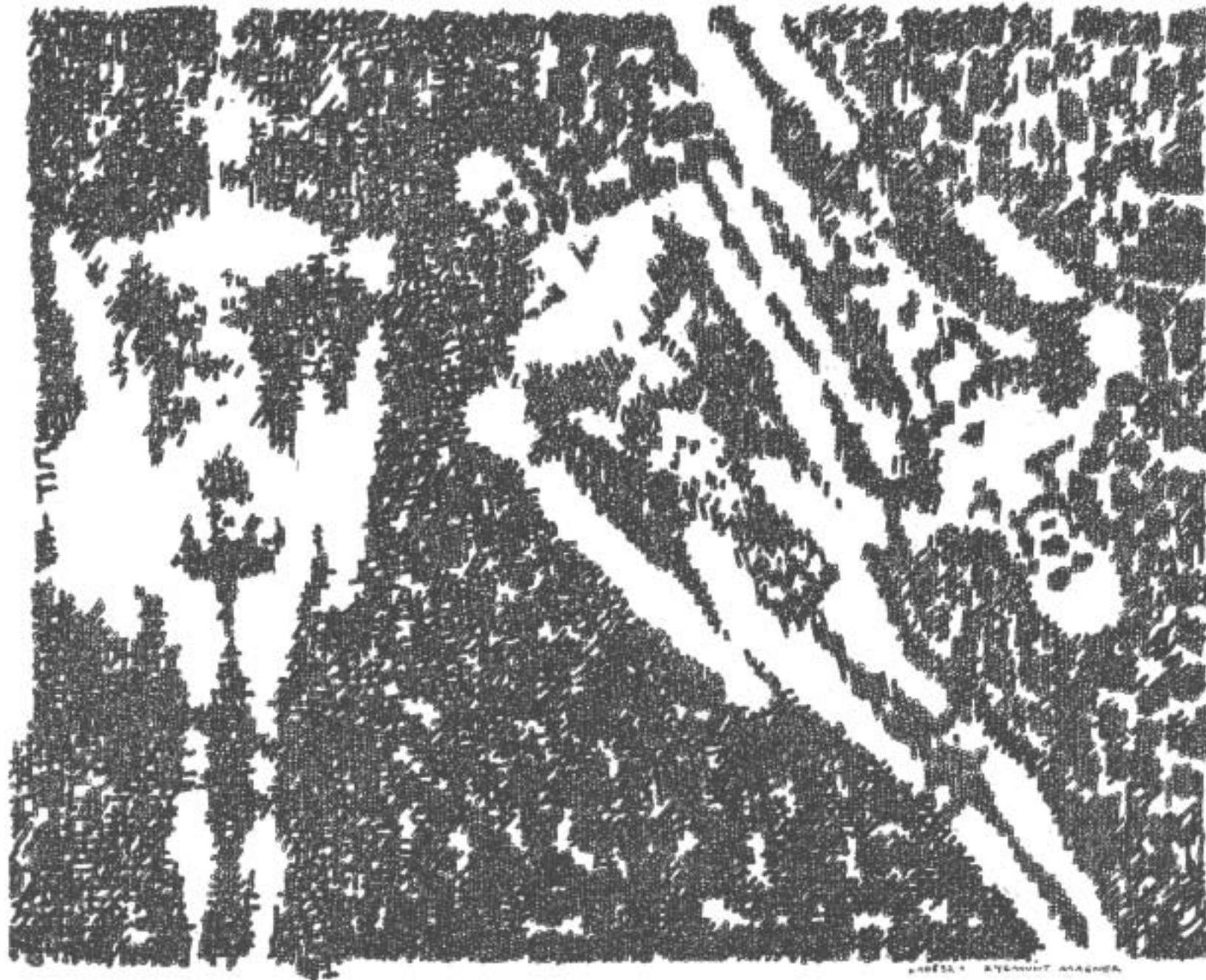
Kikuyu

being good people make pinya also going,  
part being Kikuyu mystical & vice versa  
& others previous al & all, yelani &

& small Kikuyu, let panya : and yelani yelani  
most are happy, by in some working,  
are some others, in some circumstances rayi.

James James





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## Slovakia

The handwritten prologue of Michal Kovac, President of the Slovak Republic, continues the tradition of the Société Imaginaire Graphic portfolios initiated by Julio M. Sanguinetti and followed by Richard von Weizsäcker, where the presidents of the countries in which the artists produced it entered the dialogue personally among artists, writers and poets.

This portfolio has been printed by each of the Slovak artists in their own studio. It was coordinated and organized by architect Stefan Slachta, President of the Academy of Art in Bratislava with the support of Jana Vargova from the Slovak embassy in Berlin.

dusan  
KALLAY

vojtech  
KOLENČIK

robert  
JANČOVIC

igor  
RUMANSKY

jozef  
JANKOVIC

igor  
PIACKA

daniel  
FISCHER

rudolf  
SIKORRA

kamila  
STANČLOVA

tamara  
KOLENČIKOVA

arthur  
MILLER

enrique  
MOLINA

stanislaw  
BARANCZAK

julia  
HARTWIG

olga  
OROZCO

charles  
SIMIC

james  
MERRILL

jan Josef  
SZCZEPANSKI

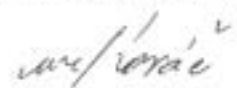
czeslaw  
MIŁOSZ

mark  
STRAND

It may be unusual for a politician to present introductory remarks to an album of graphic prints. But after all, linking the words of a politician with the art might prove to have its worth.

Just as the transient grazes the eternal, the sensual the transcendental, the horizontal the vertical, creating together new and unique forms, politics and art might find certain meaningful points of contact. For, I am convinced that mutual alienation, so visible in this century of cataclysms, helps neither the art nor the politics.

I have no objections to art pursuing its own exclusiveness, I really don't - even if it reaches out to nought with one hand if it so wishes, for that is also a struggle, that is also an opportunity to touch beauty or, at least, to imagine it. But I also urge the art to keep its other hand on the tangible, on human pain, not to turn away with a scornful grin from everything that is part of a complex and contradictory human organization, including the politics. It would be risky if each of us encloses oneself in one's own ivory tower, one's own vernacular, without finding a common name to refer to identical phenomena. This would be risky for both sides, the politician and the artist alike.



Bratislava, 30. August 1995

Michal Kováč

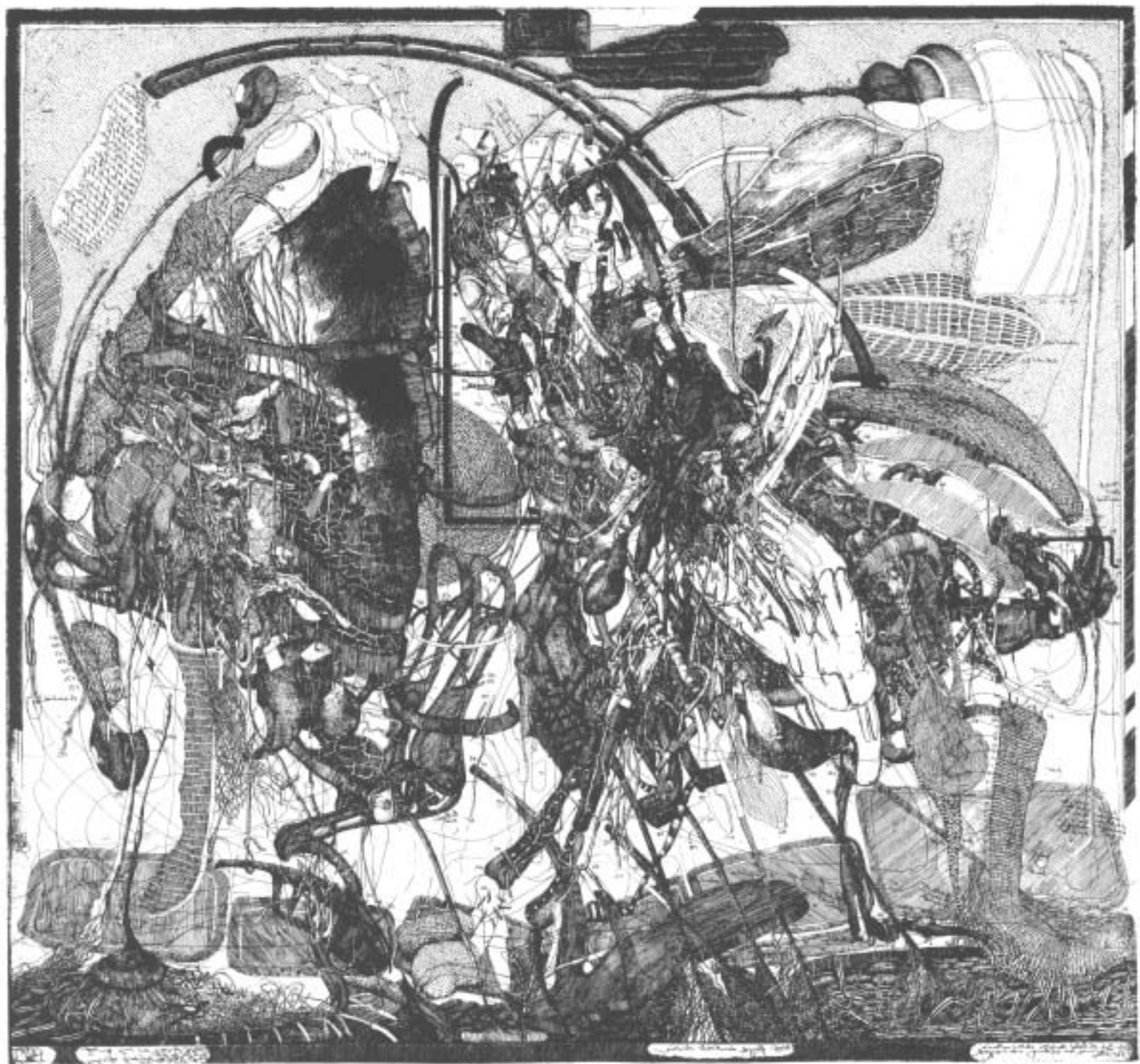
President of the Slovak Republic

Société Imaginaire  
EDITION N° V



We listened without hearing,  
Looked without seeing,  
Touched without feeling  
Smiled without joy,  
Went without knowing,  
People saved their  
And saved them a world of care.

Carla Olson



2/4

1.3.2

Forster 2/4





Thine, on the artist's calling and  
on the empty space between;

Now the great ones take the air;  
The miles' calls take depth on and  
Resonance. They take a rough west-hall  
Their note and, spring into long wings,  
Flights, unguided and apart,  
To calmer the blind squares their voices  
Over the dead white fields the dead  
Gleam woods where they take  
Sounding on nothing fast, take  
Sounding on each other, each alone.

W. D. Snodgrass (from "Ode")  
Red Pine, January  
January 25, 1991

## Argentina

### The graphic Portfolios of the Société Imaginaire

1. The first of the portfolios was created and put together in Argentina. Five Argentinian artists took part who had just participated in a meeting of the Société Imaginaire and there met the writers from various continents whose work they wanted to illustrate. This began one aspect of the Société Imaginaire, international cooperation. At the same time the portfolios demonstrated the function of these portfolios to interconnect various art forms and the artists and writers.

alexandr  
KLIMENT

zulema  
MAZA

alvaro  
MUTIS

mabel  
RUBLI

w. d.  
SNODGRASS

reina  
KOCHASIAN

jacek  
BOCHENSKI

rodolfo  
AGÜERO

nicolas  
COCARO

alicia diaz  
RINALDI



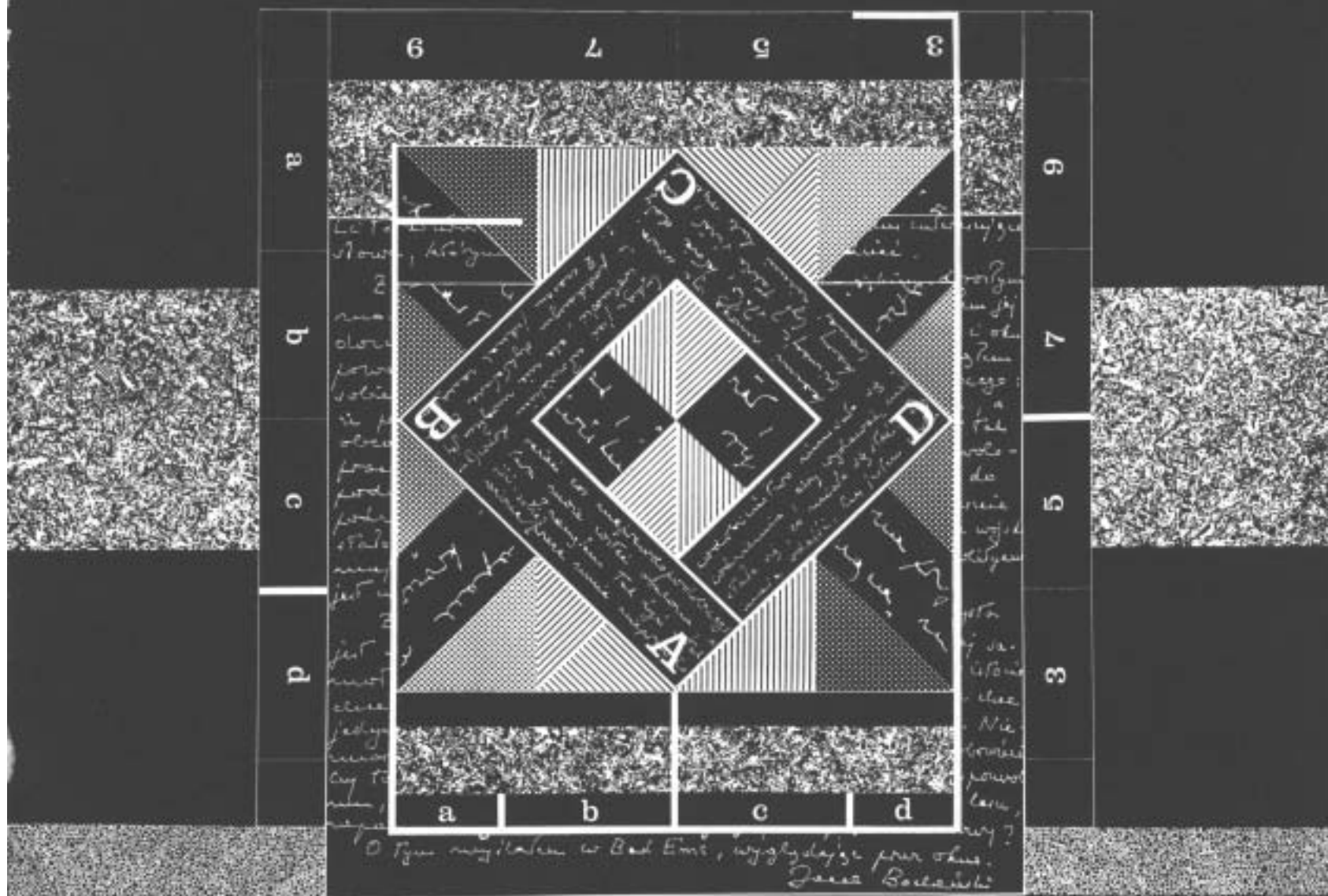
## Societ' Imaginarii

Z pamiętych przemyśleń, których to nie gubię, kiedy  
chwytam sobie wątek ię i lin. kade. Myślenie  
wielu ię to manifestacji. Odkryłem wtedy, że wcale  
nie ma czego być. Wszak, jeżeli nie ma, to nie ma  
niczego. Wszak, jeżeli nie ma, to nie ma niczego. Wszak,  
jeżeli nie ma, to nie ma niczego. Wszak, jeżeli nie ma,  
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Przedmiot



## Translating in the société imaginaire

Timothy Keating  
Franklin College  
Lugano, Switzerland

Almost anyone who reads a translation of a literary work unconsciously expects something like a photocopy of the original, simply resolved in the language of translation. It ought to be easy: put the original in a machine, push a button, and out comes a translation. But any reading, even within the same native language for reader as for writer, is an act of translation, and in this act there is misinterpretation as well as understanding, serendipitous illumination as well as opaque incomprehension. This is true, as George Steiner suggests, because of the time lapse and multiplicity of changes in the linguistic context from one period of time to another (Steiner, *After Babel*), but it is also true at a very fundamental level because the linguistic/cultural context, the very consciousness for the writer is never 100 % the same as that of the reader. This doesn't necessarily mean that a text is open to so many possible readings that it is unknowable, but it does mean that translation photocopies of original texts are not realistic possibilities. Even the photocopies of original texts are not realistic possibilities. Even the texts of Borges' Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote, though identical to those of Cervantes, were curiously richer, different.

In the Société Imaginaire there are many writers who are engaged in translation, and the context for these efforts can lead to a rather full and rich dialogue in pursuit of good translations; meta-translations perhaps would be an accurate term because in addition to the discrete texts which are produced, there is also a kind of critical edition which results in the form of a record of the dialogue that ensued in making the translations. This is yet another example of the efforts to develop correspondence, in this case between writer, translator and reader.

In 1982 a colleague, the poet Robert Bensen and I, took on the apparently modest task of translating three poems of Alvaro Mutis for the *Harvard Review*. Mutis and I had met and struck up a warm relationship earlier in Berlin at a meeting of the Société Imaginaire. I mention this anecdotal detail because it is important for what would later transpire: an intensive dialogue via rapid interactions by fax that exemplified the goals and

aspirations of the Société Imaginaire in miniature. Three people in active correspondence over three texts. Dozens of revisions ensued, subtle changes and refinements, provoked certainly by the distinct linguistic contexts that each of us would have simply as three separate individuals with our own different personal, and thus, linguistic itineraries. Thus far, nothing too out of the ordinary in the world of literary translating. The remarkable part came over time, through an ongoing willingness to enter each other's world, to share in each other's "vivencias", (translatable as "experiences which, with the conscious or unconscious participation of the subject, become part of one's personality". *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española*).

The next step, of course, is to extend the communication process to a larger group of friends or kindred spirits. In the early years of the Société Imaginaire there was a shared sense that we are routinely faced with a superabundance of information, with the threat of suffocation from more information than one can possibly absorb. In view of this perhaps it is enough that a small circle of knowing readers read each other's work, react to it, grow to understand it and appreciate it. The question of greater exposure than that is a commercial or egotistical pressure. It is in this spirit that the attempt to translate with deep insight and penetration, mutual respect and admiration, loving treatment of texts, can become a rich and full reading for anyone who also has available the texts and the background dialogue.

Practically speaking, the rich record of correspondence that is left behind may be useful to the curious and scholarly who, years hence, may find it illustrative of the linguistic matrix that we, speakers of Spanish and English in the late twentieth century, shared through a project of "correspondence" sponsored or provoked by a rather inspired organization known as the Société Imaginaire.

Here follow three poems by Alvaro Mutis and their translation, the result of a correspondence among the author and translators.

### Nocturno

Esta noche ha vuelto la lluvia sobre los cafetales.  
Sobre las hojas del plátano,  
sobre las altas ramas de los cámbulos,  
ha vuelto a llover esta noche un agua persistente y vastísima  
que crece las acequias y comienza a henchir los ríos  
que gimen con su nocturna carga de lodos vegetales.  
La lluvia sobre el zinc de los tejados  
canta su presencia y me aleja del sueño  
hasta dejarme en un crecer de las aguas sin sosiego  
en la noche fresquísima que chorrea  
por entre la boveda de los cafetos  
y escurre por el enfermo tronco de los balsos gigantes.  
Ahora, de repente, en mitad de la noche  
ha regresado la lluvia sobre los cafetales  
y entre el vocerío vegetal de las aguas  
me llega la intacta materia de otros días  
salvada del ajeno trabajo de los años.

### Nocturne

Tonight the coffee plantation turns again to rain,  
rain upon the leaves of the plantain  
and the high leaves of the cámbulo -  
persistent rain returns, an ample, vast rain -  
rain that swells ditches and crests rivers  
groaning under their load of clotted leaves and mud.  
Rain on the zinc roof sings me from sleep  
and makes way in me for its restless current  
in the freshening night, in the night that streams  
under the vaulted coffee trees  
and seeps down the huge, infirm trunks of balsa.  
And now suddenly, deep in the night  
rain has returned on the coffee plantation  
and within the swollen voice of the waters  
something of the life of other days reaches me intact,  
salvage from the alien work of those years.

## Harvard Review and the Société Imaginaire

Two and a half years ago Stanislaw Baranczak, a prominent poet and professor of Polish Literature at Harvard University, introduced the Société Imaginaire to America through the pages of Harvard Review, exposing me to Batuz's thought: "While an ever increasing communication system exposes everyone to the 'same' (pop) culture, thus accelerating a process toward an unavoidable but superficial 'integration', our knowledge about the true values of the different cultures decreases in the same proportion."

This is the right thinking and voice at the right time, was my response. In recent years I too had been subjected to media barrages and tech talk, and to institutional pressures to embrace the panacea of electronic communication—pressures that in this case were accompanied by a subtle anti-book talk. At this juncture perhaps you should learn that I am not only an author but also a librarian, and that the very institution that I had been appointed to protect and preserve, a small contemporary poetry library, was being pointed at as a symbol of a by-and-large defunct era.

You wouldn't hear such things as "Who needs poetry?" and "Who reads poetry?" But you would hear, quite frequently, "Today's libraries must become information-age institutions!" Imagine a poetry library becoming an information library. Not a repository of poetry and literature, of history, and of ideas, but a conduit of information about literature and history and ideas. Does this sort of thing happen at Harvard? On occasion the Corporation, like any corporation, does succumb to the pressures of new trends. At any rate, it was during such a phase that the challenge to the Poetry Room became explicit, and that the Harvard Review was born and immediately put into service. The idea was to increase, through the printed word—poetry, short fiction, literary essays, letters from abroad, and dozens of book reviews—the visibility of the Poetry Room, nationally and even internationally. To make a long story short, today the Poetry Room is alive and well, and the Review has grown to become one of the most exciting literary periodicals worldwide.

"Société Imaginaire: a New Context for Dialogue" declared Stanislaw Baranczak, a man whose perceptions and body of work (poetry, essays, translations, and classroom instruction) are an institution in themselves. No doubt, we were sharing the same concerns, expressing identical needs: true communication. Not "information", not headlines, not the cramming of the air with a cacophony of peddlers of personal or industrial ads, but a dialogue person-to-person and page-to-page, regardless of culture or language. Here, anyone who has something worth saying or writing about our time and its predicaments, something worth responding to, is automatically an affiliate of the Société Imaginaire.

Last June, Vaclav Havel, playwright and President of the Czech Republic (and an affiliate of the Société), gave the Commencement Address at Harvard, and I was astonished to see an audience of thousands of "the best and the brightest" responding spontaneously to him as he expressed our common concern for the well-being of the human race—at the turn of the century and the millennium—with rare intelligence and eloquence. Indeed, as I see it now, the Société would be no more than an elite entity or a club, if this "context for dialogue" did not reach—better yet, did not include—the greater community.

The task of Harvard Review, in the past two and a half years, has been to move, judiciously, beyond the dissemination of fine new literature and to provide a context and a forum for dialogue among any number of artists and intellectuals whose ideas are vital to our survival and well-being. In the near future we will devote an entire issue of the Review to the direct exchange of ideas through literature and the arts, regardless of language.

Also in the works is The Société Imaginaire Reader, a collection of new work by some of the most gifted and thought-provoking poets and writers of our time, aiming again at discourse and follow-up translation into other languages for further debate and response or exchange.

Yet another possibility being contemplated at this time involves a gathering at Harvard of some of the prominent affiliates of the Société, with the intention of



translating each other's work, discussing it, reading it, and finally reproducing it in print and in audio or video disk - as a model for expanded activity.

Our argument does not focus on the medium of communication but rather on the essence of it. For this reason, we emphasize direct, person-to-person exchange of ideas and texts, and the dissemination of exemplary works for further debate - and, yes, delight.

True communication knows no borders-as long, that is, as what is being communicated is worth the effort. Harvard Review will continue to provide a context and a forum for dialogue, while at the same time serving honorably the great educational institution after which it was named.

Stratis Haviaras

### **Société Imaginaire: A New Context For Dialogue**

Much as we curse the meaningless symposia and other events of that sort, little as we can understand the principles underlying the erratic choices we do need authentic exchanges of ideas with other writers and genuine insight into what is the best in foreign literatures.

Since I first heard of the Batuz Foundation and its Société Imaginaire, can't shake off an instinctive feeling that this may be a case in point; that this seemingly utopian idea may be not that utopian after all. This is what Batuz himself - an artist, therefore a person who definitely knows what he is talking about when speaking of the situation of contemporary culture - writes about the Société:

We are living in a period of great historic changes in which political, economic and social questions capture almost all of our attention. Meanwhile in the cultural sphere an even greater change has occurred. We should give it more consideration since it has not historical precedent.

The change is in cultural processes which show a contradictory tendency. While an ever increasing communication system exposes everybody to the "same" (pop) culture, thus accelerating a process toward an unavoidable but superficial "integration", our knowledge about the true values of the different cultures which are in the process of integration decreases in the same proportion.

We are all conscious of these facts. Nothing can show us better than the thousands of symposiums and conferences dedicated to this subject all around the world. Still their approach, even with all their good intentions, is doomed to fail, since such complex questions cannot be dealt with in the span of a couple of days. There is another factor: every participant "sees" the question solely from one point of view, and through this partiality, never can grasp the totality and wholeness of the process of cultural integration.

With a one-dimensional viewpoint, we cannot approach a phenomenon which has "nuclear" characteristics. We must realize that we are living already in a "nuclear culture" which is a culture that contains all other cultures: overlapping, superimposing, opposing each other.

If we must face and deal with a new, multicultural, simultaneous world with innumerable possibilities of interrelations, it must be evident that it demands of us an equally new method of apprehension

However, it must also be clear to us that none of the structures of currently existing societies are able to contain a comprehensive global culture. Until the present time all ideologies aiming at a global culture of worldwide integration were tied to local interests or those of a polis, a state or a nation, and therefore outside of these spheres of interest had to remain either purely theoretical or fall under the influence of power politics. Therefore, the realization of this new idea had to occur at the same time and in many places simultaneously, in an imaginary space, like a field of energy spanning the continents, a place devoid of local interests: in the Société Imaginaire.

Thus Batuz. Sounds idealistic? But let us realize three facts that are distressingly obvious. First, there will be no future for this planet if its inhabitants don't start trying to comprehend each other, to see some common human core underneath the appearances of difference. Second, it is culture that is largely responsible for this still-not-really-begun process of mutual communicating and understanding. Third, culture will never accomplish its task if it stays within the currently existing structures of communication, which have so far managed to accomplish only one - but truly amazing - feat, namely combine extreme rigidity with extreme randomness.

We need a combination of the opposites of these two qualities: flexibility in exploring new, unorthodox ways of communicating and exchanging ideas, plus ability to select what is genuinely valuable in other's cultural past and present. It seems to me that Société Imaginaire can be precisely this: an extraterritorial domain of cultural understanding - one without any boundaries, but, at the same time, one not without principles; one that opens you up while also putting you on a firmer ground of value.

Stanislaw Baranczak

### **To Speak Only to Oneself?**

In his latest novel "Immortality", Milan Kundera produces a dialogue between Goethe and Hemingway. "You write books about me", complains the modern author to the classical poet, "but my books you do not read".

The so-called imagologists have gained control over the knowledge of things and human beings. Journalists, critics, interpreters, and intermediaries create false images. But because they have the technology to consolidate and disseminate those false images, the public prefers these to reality; more precisely, the public does not become aware of the reality at all.

Not very long ago I was visited by an American journalist. He asked me about the quarrel that had erupted between the Czech readers and Milan Kundera and the reason for this quarrel.

I asked the journalist which novels of Kundera he had read. His response was that he had not read a single one. I asked him how he dared pose questions concerning an author of whom he knows nothing. He explained to me that he was not interested in the author, just in the quarrel.

I told him that I did not know anything of the quarrel.

Only when I saw the journalist to the door did I realize I had not spoken the truth. I do not know anything about Kundera's quarrel with his readers, it is true, but I recalled a hidden, simmering quarrel which, however, never did erupt fully: a quarrel between a group of Czech writers dissenting with their countryman living in Paris. It might not even have been a quarrel, but that is beside the point. To talk of it to a journalist would not only have been futile, but in the long run damaging. Truth simply does not belong to the imagologists. It cannot be conveyed to them.

A world fallen victim to the imagologists is a world without relations.

Still, there are people, things, and relations among them in the original sense of the word. But this concerns people outside politics and art and therefore outside the "public".

The modern artist, having anticipated this, began to speak for himself, and finally also to himself.

He does not want to project himself anymore. His work waits to be discovered, like an unusual stone in a brook somewhere high up in the mountains.

Perhaps this is not only what remains of the artist, who has rendered himself at some previous time, but also a hope for its renewal.

Milan Uhde

Milan Uhde is President of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.



# Bridge

## Motto

Who would have thought that one day I would be starting to construct a bridge?  
Batuz has already named it: The Bridge of Budmerice.  
Because it is here that we have gathered one October day.  
It will not be a bridge of iron and steel.  
It will not be a bridge of wood, nor will it be a dam of stones.  
Yet when looking from afar it may appear  
That we are not walking on the bridge, but just on water.

The neural point of every art is its relationship to reality. Every artist strives toward it, be he poet or fiction writer, painter or playwright.

In his message to the Société Imaginaire, Milan Uhde says that the image of things, people, and relationships - created by the journalists and critics and popularized by the techniques of mass communication - forces such falsification upon us that genuine reality becomes unattainable by the public.

Confronted with this everyday falsification, art retreats to a defensive position and begins to talk to itself. The message of Milan Uhde ends with a beautiful image but one that does not promise great hope, that of a piece of art waiting to be discovered like an unusual stone submerged in a brook high in the mountains. The same problem is also of interest to Stanislaw Baranczak in his article entitled „Société Imaginaire: A New Context for Dialogue.“/\* Yet this time it concerns a necessary but so often disappointing intermediary between the artist and his work, on the one hand, and the recipient on the other. This time it is not the problem of the communication process, but of the editor, the publishing houses and art dealers, not to mention the role of the critic. Thus the object of falsification is not reality, but art itself. Both Milan Uhde and Stanislaw Baranczak are aware of how painful the lack of direct communication is, and they long to come back to the clear streams now clouded by the powerful intermediaries to whom reality and art are negligible. These intermediaries move around in a world of self-serving fiction. In both messages reality - things, people, and the relationships among them - finds its most honest reflection in art. But no doubt Baranczak and Uhde have no illusion that the reality revealed in art will find its way to a large number of people.

From here we arrive at a comparable question rooted in the past: What ray of hope illuminated the creative determination of Vincent van Gogh? Did he paint initially and primarily for himself? (He surely painted with every fibre of his existence.) What were the expectations of the poet and painter William Blake? Maybe his creativity was directed to a Higher Being not indifferent to metaphysical dimensions and hopefully receptive to artistic values. Likewise the stones of Blake as well as of van Gogh were found in the stream one day and taken out. (Here again arises the question as to the nature of the stone, but the answer must be left, whether we like it or not, to the discoverer.)

On this occasion it is difficult to resist the temptation of quoting another passage, which by an interesting coincidence relates an event whose hero is a man we all know, Batuz, the initiator and founder of the Société Imaginaire, a society we are happy to be a part of. This event was related by Jacek Bochenski and took place while he and Batuz were walking together in the Polish Tatra. There, to the great astonishment of his companion, halfway through their march and high in the mountains, Batuz, concerned about losing his car keys, declared that he would hide them under a stone and pick them up again on his way back. Upon Jacek's question as to how he would recognize the stone under which he had hidden his keys, Batuz did not give a satisfactory answer. On their way back Batuz suddenly disappeared again and returned after a short while with the keys in his hand.

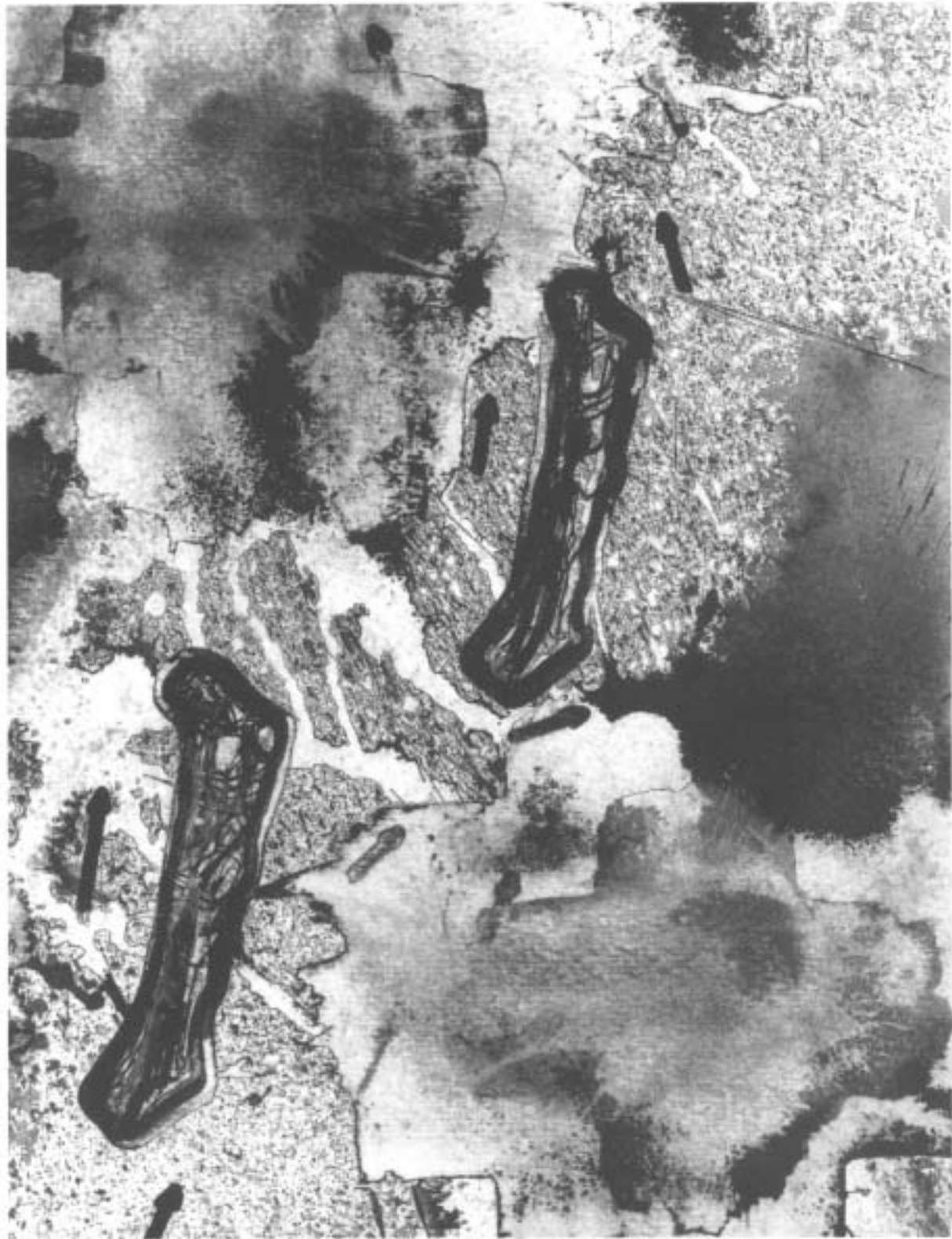
How did he find that particular stone among the thousands of other stones? That has remained his secret until now.

In light of the preceding quotation this story appears to me today as a parable. From every parable emerges a lesson, although you cannot always extract it through formula. It is usually a truth or hope. The stone in the brook of Milan Uhde, and the keys of Batuz and Jacek Bochenski under the stone, do not only function in the realm of what you can touch; they also constitute the reality of art.

Julia Hartwig

Julia Hartwig is a Polish poet.

\* See Harvard Review, Number Two, Fall 1992, pp. 160-162.



Resurrection  
1993

## Michael Morgner

In history periods recur in which violent regimes of the most various kinds repress the people living under their dominion, tie their creative work and spiritual freedom up in straightjackets, and wish to force them to live contrary to their convictions.

It is a fact that most give in to this violence and willingly subordinate themselves. But it is equally true, and good to know, that in these dark and negative epochs there are time and again individuals who will not be bent and continue on their path in an upright manner.

The "Strider" whom Morgner describes here is he himself, and is true. This truth of his life is mirro-

red in his work. Expression, artistic form and testimony correspond with each other. His unconditional engagement within the framework of the Société Imaginaire is equally consequent and clear; after the disappearance of a threatening but nevertheless visible enemy of art there are now other dangers, less obvious, but perhaps more dangerous precisely for that reason. What direct repression of art could not do might yet be accomplished by the leveling and total commercialization of art.

To resist that, what is needed is again the individual who stands up and shows us the way.

Berg



## The "Strider"

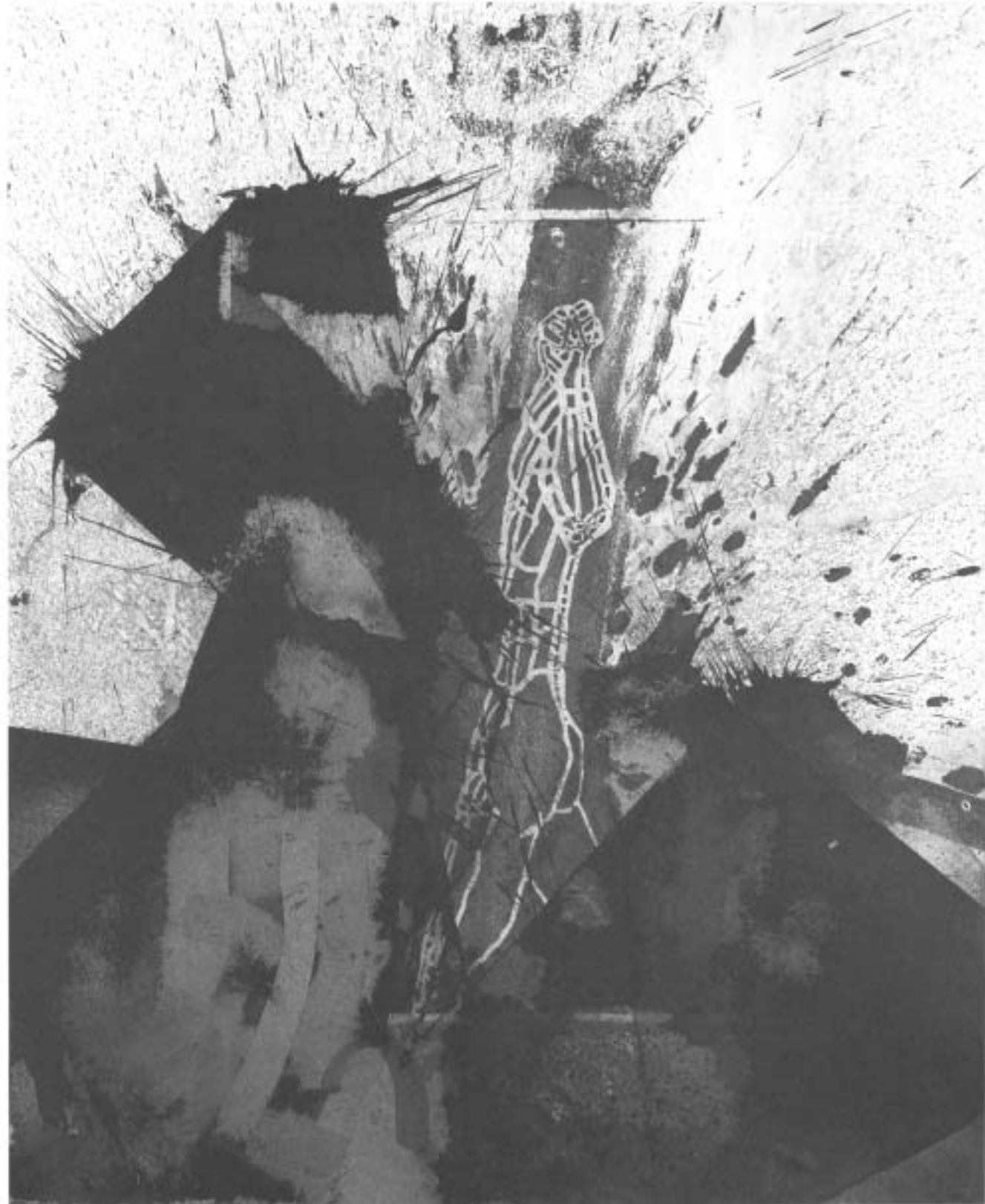
Stride - walk - walk upright - upright walk. Two words. The fates of millions are determined by these words. Why do so few attempt this walk? Is man perhaps not the creature blessed with reason and erect bearing? Why do those who are bent, stooped over, find it so difficult to bear the sight of an attempt at "walking upright?" Is it conscience, is it hate or envy or weakness?

When I had returned to my studio, three months after a skiing accident and with a foot lamed by an operation, I made, on a first attempt and using a broad-nibbed pen, a small drawing. It became, unintentionally, without any afterthought and completely automatically, the figure of the "Strider". With raised arms, vulnerable and delicate, the outline of an uprightly walking human being appeared. In 1985 it developed into an exhibition in the Gallery Oben Karl-Marx-Stadt (since reunification once again Chemnitz). Friends immediately understood this symbol, and so did enemies. 120 Stasi spies once again had work to do - the GDR after all had no unemployment -, their task consisting of not letting "the Worm", the name under which I had been spied on by the Stasi since 1976, out of their sight, not his family, not his friends.

Then came 1989. Suddenly, for a short time, millions of people in the GDR were walking upright. The ancients running the regime were so startled that they capitulated without a fight. This was the period of the creation of five 250 x 200 mm pictures with the figure of the "Strider" in the center, and 30 drawings of a "Strider" and "Burning Man". They were dedicated to the 9th of November 1989, the day the Berlin Wall fell.

Years earlier an etching of the "Strider" had already arrived at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Dr. Werner Schmidt, director of the Dresden Gallery of Etchings, had carried it across the Wall in order to trade it for American art for Dresden.

*Michael Morgner*  
Michael Morgner





## Mark Lammert

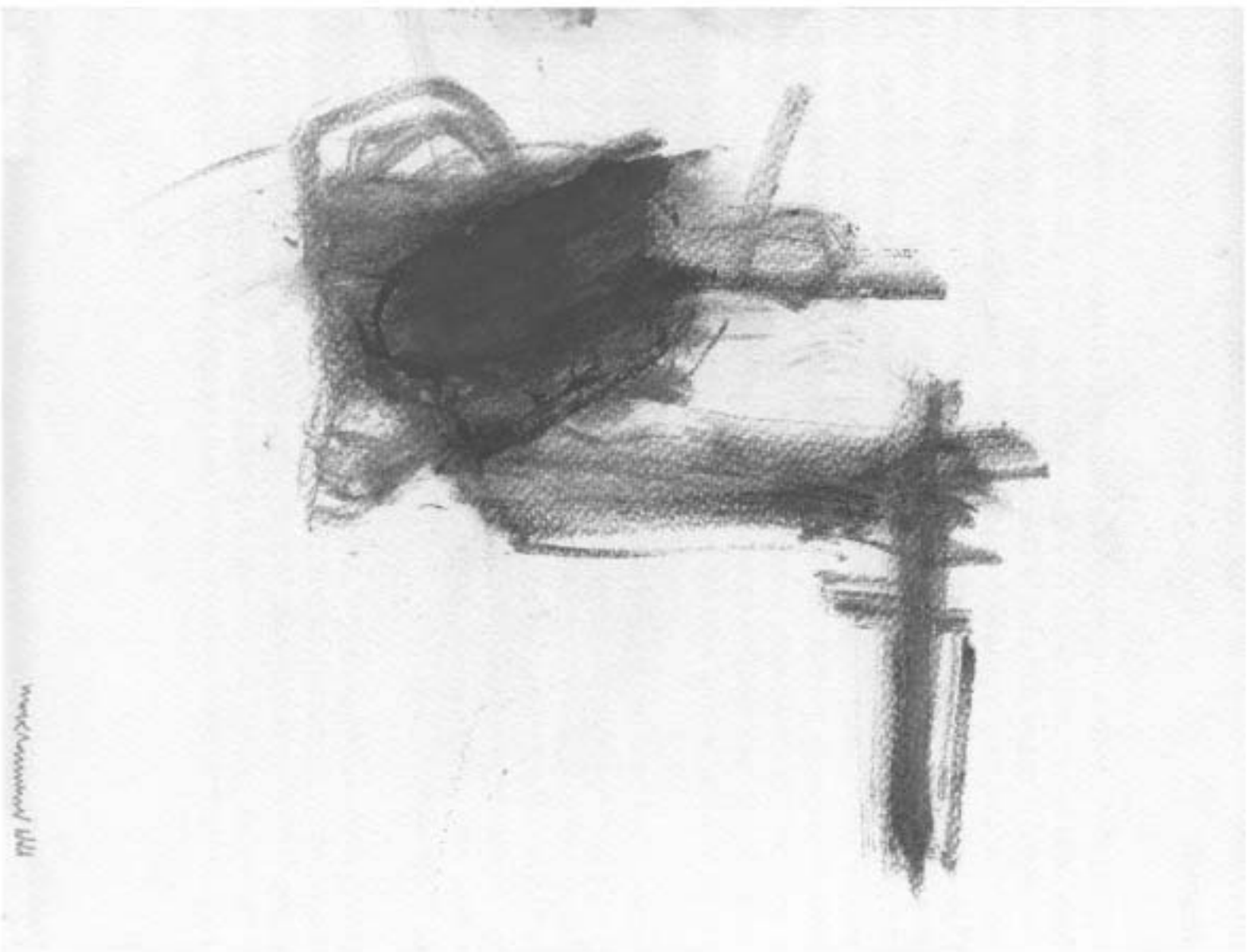
There are only a few ways in which to escape the prescriptive totalitarian systems, and all of them are filled with obstacles, to say the least. It is therefore astonishing that so much authentic art could be created in the niches of GDR society. Only now, however, are the contours of this treasure becoming evident.

Among those who managed to resist the pressure of the state and the exigencies of the times was Mark Lammert, who quietly but unmistakably articulated an independent image of mankind. His conception is an individualized image, with a focus on the head, on the human figure. As Michael Freitag wrote of Lammert: "His drawings are inventions of a pure reality of image-making. They are governed by a rational process of recognition that affirms that visual reality can itself only be comprehended as process." The superficial motive of the observed object is therefore superseded by his art.

By these characteristics Mark Lammert and his art can be connected to the Société Imaginaire, which, as Mark Strand said, only represents the result of the activities of the individuals from whom it consists and to whom it is obliged. This sense of obligation is traceable even more strongly in artists of the Communist sphere than in the Western democracies, and demands our special attention when it was fulfilled. We exhibit the works of Mark Lammert in the context of the Société Imaginaire for that reason also.



Jochen Böberg





## Inge Morath

A multiplicity of distinctive individuals from different cultures with their pictures, works and ideas, who are in continuous dialogue with each other: that is the Société Imaginaire. No one has made this clearer than Inge Morath. That did not happen accidentally: her photographs accompanying Michel Butor's text "Méditation sur la Frontière" about the work of Batuz gave her access to the latter's painting and the concepts expressed in it. The photograph of Batuz with his work "Omen I" shows how clearly Inge Morath understands the relationship between artistic expression and the development of ideas in Batuz. Inspired, she followed this path and thus became the photographic chronicler of the Société Imaginaire. She created a gallery of portraits which forever and truthfully documents the common labor of the notable people who gathered here. Inge Morath has laid the foundation stone for a museum of photography to which in future other artists, who will work with the Société Imaginaire, will contribute.

This museum will have its opening next year in Altzella, and in homage to her pioneer work it will bear Inge Morath's name. Besides the pictures about the Société Imaginaire the museum will permanently exhibit a selection of the classic and world-famous works of Inge Morath. The Foundation already owns more than 200 photos. A museum will thereby be created which will make this important aspect of the international art world accessible, and at the same time give witness to the work and development of the Société Imaginaire.

As already noted in this pamphlet, every meeting of the Société Imaginaire results in a work created by the participants in close cooperation (see Scrapbook Mark Strand). Something similar applies to Inge Morath. Through her photographs she not only expands the portrait gallery, but her pictures mirror the continually growing interconnections by making the faces visible in ever new constellations and changing surroundings.

1.2.80





Mark Strand

Alexandr Kliment

Juan Sanchez Peláez

Iván Klímá

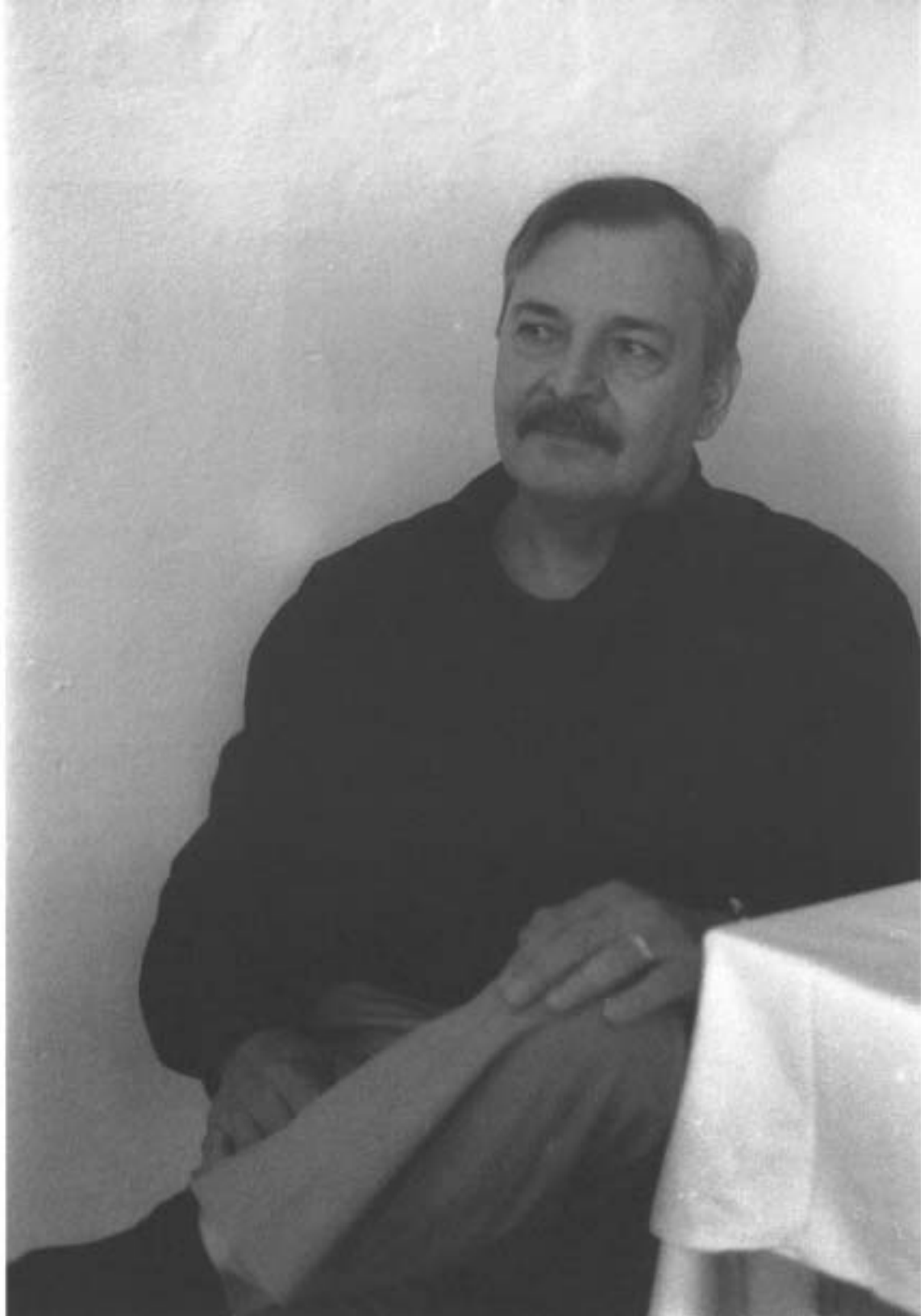


Alvaro Mutis



Zygmunt Magner

Stratis Haviaras





Miklós Mészöly

Alexandr Kliment

Marcos Aguinis  
Nicolas Cocaro





Abdon Ubidia



Batuz – Günter Meyer  
Kurt Biedenkopf



Hanna-Renate Laurien



Batuz – Milan Uhde



Julia Hartwig und Jacek Bochenski in Budmerice

Julia Hartwig



# NAKIAN

*"I look at this age as an age of zombies. My work comes out of art history. It's tradition. Art has to be a branch coming out of a tree. Most of the stuff being done now is just weeds coming of the ground."*

There are not only isolated cultures, but also individuals who in their own cultures get isolated and ostracized.

This is the case of Reuben Nakian, one of the greatest sculptors America has had. Even though his work is amply represented in almost every mayor Museum - in sight of everyone - still, very few see him.

Several writers, poets and artists from all parts of the world have written poems and prose texts in admiration and appreciation of his work: each one dedicated to one of his sculptures.

The Société Imaginaire is planning to issue a hand printed portfolio on hand made paper, made in our own workshop in Altzella in a limited edition signed and numbered by the participants, as an homage to Nakian's 100th anniversary 1997.



Reuben Nakian

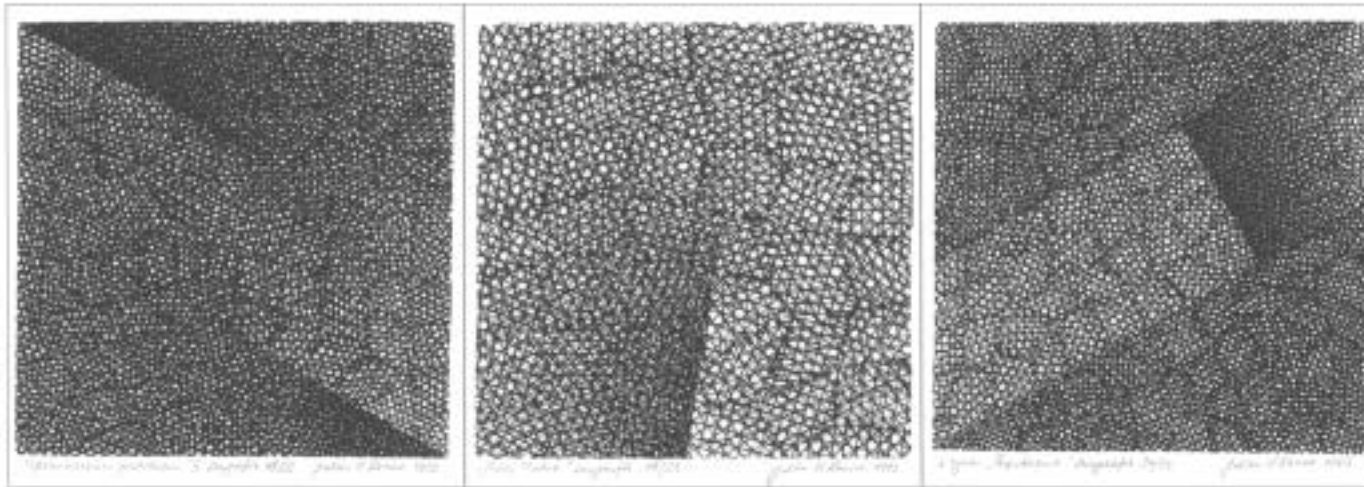


## **Constructivism**

Prof. Dr. Steven Mansbach  
Dean, American Academy in Berlin

Constructivism was one of the most essential classical components of modern art and modernist aesthetics. Its aspirations to universality-intellectually, culturally, and socially-correspond ideally with the objectives, practice, and accomplishments of the Société Imaginaire. Thus, it is fitting that among the Société's on-going projects is a commitment to investigate, analyze, and present the global breadth and significance of constructivist art, from its generation in Eastern Europe through its seminal variations in Western Europe to its extraordinary adaptations in South America.

To make these worthy objectives compellingly visible, the Société has established permanent exhibition rooms in which to juxtapose works by leading constructivist artists, creative figures who may have been continents apart geographically but who were spiritually very close. Thus painters from Argentina or Uruguay can communicate through their works with artists from Poland or the United States in the hospitable halls of the Société's seat in Altzella, just outside Dresden. The dialogue thereby fostered among the artists and apologists of constructivism earlier in our century may inspire today's members of the Société Imaginaire toward building similar bridges between regions, peoples, and projects better to make visible the universal connections that have resulted in and continue to lead to creative expression.



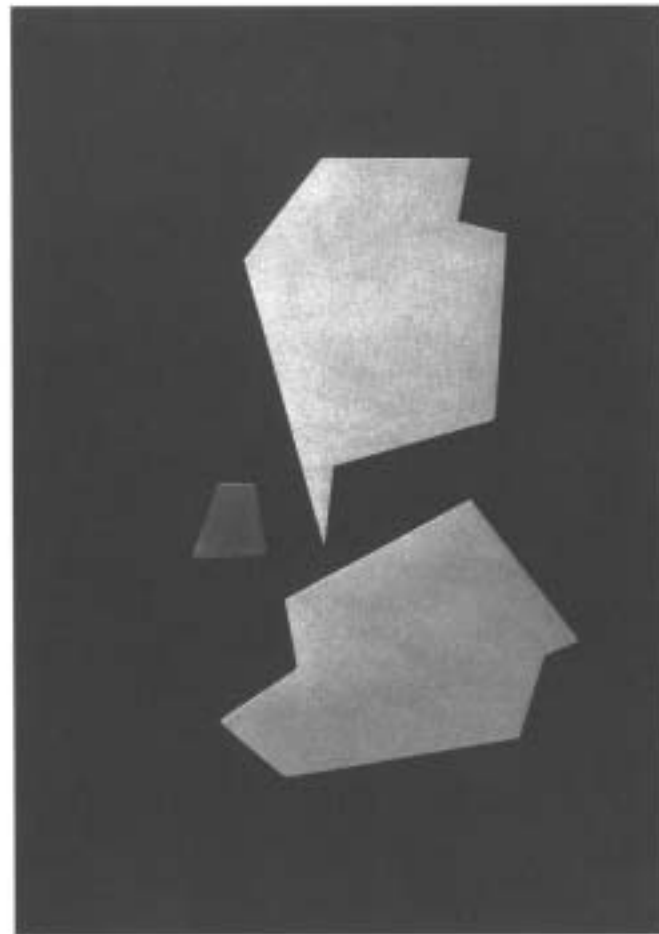
Julian Henryk Raczko

To realize these ideas in concrete terms, the foundation proposes to construct exhibition rooms in which works by artists, separated by thousands of miles but spiritually very close, can be seen.

An illustration: Raul Lozza has donated to Batuz an important collection of his work and a comprehensive documentation on the pioneering period from the 1930s and 1940s from Buenos Aires and Montevideo.

Julian Henryk Raczko is having at this moment a mayor exhibition of his work at Altzella.

Raul Lozza





## **The Cooperation of the Technical University of Dresden with the Batuz Foundation**

At a time characterized by an increasing fragmentation of the world of science and personal experience, the Batuz Foundation concretizes the utopia of a world-encompassing community of creative individuals. The foundation provides a context for the dialogue; it places the personal meeting, as it were the "nucleus" of the discourse, within a network of interconnections targeted towards the same goal, thus securing continued future meetings. In this way it attempts to overcome the isolation of the individual caused by the increasingly abstract organization of modern societies, thereby at the same time making a new cultural experience possible as it is—due to the 'challenges' of the future—certainly appropriate and perhaps even necessary. For if the orientation crisis of our time is to be overcome, the possibility must be created for the complex and abstract systemic interrelations that are, as it were, 'technologically' shaped, to be experienced again within a more human framework.

With the Batuz Foundation assigns itself an eminently pedagogical task which has been addressed in the reform discussions of the cultural sciences so far only to an insufficient degree. The interrelation of creativity and reflexion, of dialogue and group activity, the transformation of cultural action into socio-political action do identify training objectives which are recognized world-wide as obligations in the reform movement of the cultural sciences.

In numerous discussions during the past months, the faculty of Languages and Literatures of the Technical University of Dresden and the Batuz Foundation have therefore explored the possibilities for a cooperation. The Batuz Foundation envisions the cultural center in Altszella as a meeting place for students of the TU who could expand and complement their course of studies in a way that is without precedent in Germany. Participation in the Batuz Foundation's correspondence and translation projects introduces our students to contemporary world culture.

Writers and artists from different cultures of our world are meeting and interacting in the "Société Imaginaire". In working within that structure, the TU Dresden attempts to offer an equal forum to students and scientists representing numerous cultures. Therefore, we have planned a cooperation among these universities.

University of Athens

Comenius-University of Bratislava

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Budapest

Technische Universität Dresden  
Jagielloński Uniwersytet Krakau  
University of Maryland  
Hartwick-College New York  
Georgetown University Washington D.C.  
Karl-Universität Prag  
Universidad Nacional de Tucuman

We are hopeful that the Batuz Foundation will succeed to implement its great project in Altszella in the very near future.

## **The Publications of the Société Imaginaire and the Technical University Dresden**

The cooperation of the TU Dresden and the Société Imaginaire began with the meeting in Budmerice in the fall of 1993. Just at that time the Technical University, with its long and honored tradition in engineering and the natural sciences, had been expanded by the addition of the humanities, the so-called „book sciences". Besides mathematical formulas the precision of poetic language was to be included in the university's font of knowledge. We gladly accepted the challenge implicit in our meeting and soon also in the cooperation with the Société Imaginaire. Indeed, the volume in which the texts and pictures of the meeting of Budmerice were collected appeared in 1994 under the impress of the TU Dresden, produced by the common efforts of members of the University and Batuz. This cooperation proved itself further in the catalog of Inge Morath's exhibition in Dresden.

We shall continue this series of publications, at first in single volumes dedicated to the meetings of the Société Imaginaire or special themes derived from the cooperative work in the future, after its redesign, the journal published by the TU Dresden will also be able to provide a section for carrying these reports. The Société Imaginaire in the scholarly journal of the Technical University Dresden - in this constellation the outlines of a new culture appear whose growth we shall support to the extent of our abilities.

W. M. Schmitz

Walter Schmitz

## On the Need for Vision

Everyday life in the "new" Länder and in Berlin is shaken, shaken, and moved by the consequences of reunification. The main concern is the restructuring of the economy and administration, the overhauling of schools and universities, the stabilizing or closing down of plants, the retention or abandonment of workplaces - and work was (and is) for the people in the former GDR more than a workplace. For these people, social recognition, rent subsidy, and training centers are at stake.

Along comes a *Société Imaginaire*, and the Batuz Foundation, which intends to create a core center in Altzella. Is it not luxuriating, even dreaming, to develop an intellectually oriented society from such public assemblies? Is it not illusory to attempt to rescue intellectual encounters out of the sphere of the fleeting, the accidental? Illusory - no. Visionary - yes.

To set up graphic art and sculpture workshops and a meeting center hardly sounds unusual. But this is not supposed to be a center where one congress, one symposium is followed by another. Magnus Enzensberger has directed some sharp, not quite justified sarcasm at the touring circus of culture as practiced in our society, in which "roving singers ... wandering preachers and vagabonding rhetoricians ... (are) on the road year in and year out to peddle their message", and where it is impossible to deal with a particular topic seriously. Every topic is dealt with in three-quarters of an hour or is banded around on talk shows. This irony is taken seriously by the *Société Imaginaire*. It aims to bring together artists, scholars, and politicians continents apart in such a way that a relationship, a network of relationships, yes, an imaginary polis is created. This is the vision that the *Société Imaginaire* wants to convey: participating in the creative processes - the correspondence project - sends a signal to the world of secondary literature, where one reads and experiences something "on" but not something "of". It is precisely this aspect of the core center that I believe is most important for our universities. Their main deficiencies - this is also true of our secondary schools - are overspecialization and the lack of exposure to original ways of thinking, searching, and creating. Secondary in-

tellectual literature prevails; positions taken by others are noted, but no one takes a firm position. In the correspondence project, one knows the work of others, one can discuss the processes by which it came into existence, and one can engage in conversation about it. In countries where scholarly and artistic relationships have been identified as either socialist or non-socialist, such meetings give rise to impulses promoting change. Encountering peripheral cultures - and this is part of the concept - opens new dimensions for understanding what is foreign, what is different. Under the heading What Is Foreign, I discover both what I lack and what unites us. The constancy of personal relationships at the center - the possibility of rooming together - works against superficiality and show. Science and art, which in public announcements are constantly pitted against bread, have to make it clear in years of scarce resources that they, too, provide workplaces, but - permit me to say this quite pointedly - I am much happier sitting on a wooden chair with a book, speaking with friends over a frugal meal, or listening with an open mind to a concert in a hall that only seats 30, than I am in a comfortable chair, bored stiff, engaging in small talk at a gala dinner, impatient for the business at hand to be over.

Universities have to develop a profile in the years to come, and they must have the courage to make a difference. A university endorsement of the correspondence project would break down the isolation of specialization, generate creative impulses, and develop, especially in young countries, intellectual, cultural, and human centers of attraction. In our economy this has long since become commonplace; it is not the super specialist who is in demand, but rather the expert capable of teamwork. Altzella can "transmit", and universities can "receive" and then transmit in their turn: radars of the intellect, of encounters, of the power of the future.

Hanna-Renate Laurien

Dr. Hanna-Renate Laurien is President of the parliament of the city of Barchin. At the time of the conference, she was a member of the parliament of the city of Barchin.



## Altzella

"The picturesque ruins of the monastery, still isolated in its forest valley as recently as the 18th and 19th centuries, have continually attracted painters ... Caspar David Friedrich let the ruin of the summer refectory loom up as a dark wall of historicity in front of a spruce forest. ... Thus many generations of artists in Altzella have not only found motifs for their artistic creations, but have let themselves be inspired by the genius loci. Today as well Altzella should be not merely a place of historical and art-historical instruction; rather, it should again cast its light on works created here in our own time."

Prof. Dr. Heinrich Magirius

Realizing an idea always involves many difficulties. It would not have been possible to establish the Société Imaginaire in Altzella without the help of many people.

As always, the realization of a project depends on financial needs. It was clear from the beginning that such a completely new form of cultural work the traditional methods of support by governmental and private institutions would hardly be suitable. On the one hand this circumstance is a disadvantage, because a fixed budget, regardless of its source, would frequently permit easier solutions for the daily work on the project. On the other hand this situation also has its positive sides; indeed, it perfectly fits the spirit of the Société Imaginaire. Because the work of the Société Imaginaire is not formed by preconditioned structures, necessity forces the active cooperation of many people from the most different levels of society.

Much enthusiasm and support came to the project from the highest levels of the Free State of Saxony. From it the Batuz Foundation received free use of several buildings and open spaces. Minister President Kurt Biedenkopf and Minister Günter Meyer, as well as Professor Hans-Joachim Meyer, State Minister for Science and Art, who made the concept his own from the beginning, supported it with all his power and became a member of the Advisory Board of the Batuz Foundation, deserve the highest gratitude.

The Ministry of Labor of Saxony provides further essential support. Its president, Dr. Alois Streich, took a personal interest and provided ten workers for the maintenance of Altzella. More important than the fact that people who otherwise would be unemployed here do useful work is that these people feel themselves to be

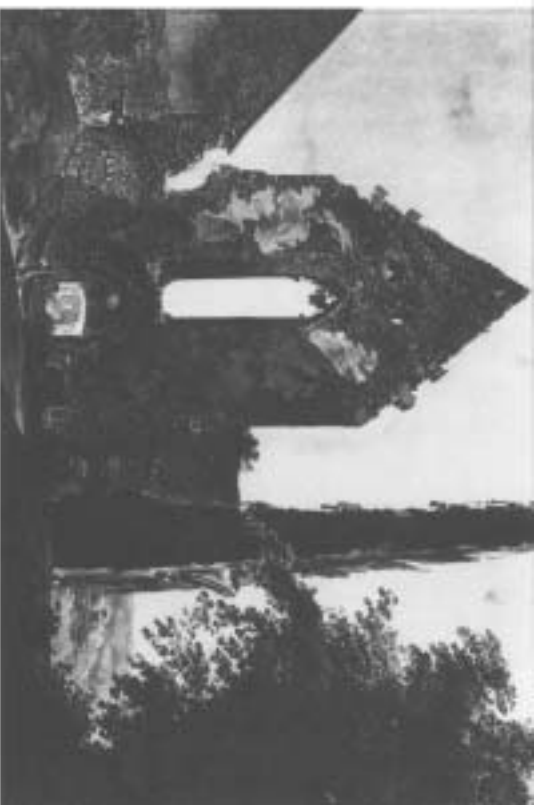
useful. That too is entirely in the spirit of the Société Imaginaire.

The mayors neighbouring of Nossen and Rosswein, Hans Haubner and Wolfgang Pieschke, did not hesitate to participate, dressed in overalls and at the conclusion of their regular work, in the construction of the meeting place in Altzella in cooperation with equally selfless craftsmen of the region. The people of the region did not only make available their labor, however. Often materials, transport, etc. were supplied free of charge.

The result is now visible in Altzella. Functional exhibit halls, apartments with a common kitchen and common lounges, as well as workshops and offices have been provided. All these have been created by "nameless" people who never counted on being named in this catalog. But since I will name names anyway, I will surely be forgiven if a name escapes me: Günther Thiele, master plumber, Klaus Böhme, master electrician; Henning Methner, construction materials executive; Axel Beyrich, engineer; Hermann Richter, carpenter; Michael Krüger, photographer; Bernd Kaufmann, teacher; Karl-Heinz Nehrkorn, house manager; Ulrich Prüger, project director.

As I already mentioned above, the Société Imaginaire not only connects extraordinary and prominent individuals of the various cultures with each other, but also the regions from which they come. For that reason it is essential that the people of Saxony cooperate actively in this undertaking and participate in its realization.

Batz





P. Wink donates polish portfolios to W. Holler,  
the Director Kupferstichkabinett Dresden

v.l.n.r.

E. Iltgen, President Parliament, Saxony

P. Wink, Director Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung  
Batuz

H.-J. Meyer, Minister, Saxony

H.-R. Laurien, President Parliament, Berlin

A. Streich, President AA Saxony

Choir of Roßwein

H. Methner, G. Thiele, K. Böhme

Trustees of Batuz Foundation Sachsen





At the inauguration in Altzella

Slovak folk-musicians at Slovakian Exposition  
at Altzella

The kitchen in Altzella

Dinner in Altzella

Drawing of Altzella by Julio M. Sanguinetti



*Inauguración  
en Altzella*

*la inauguración de Batas llegó a Altzella, en su  
belleza imaginaria, y en la altura del pueblo y el  
bosque se creó un mundo del arte y la fe.*



*Delante del granito, pueblo de piedra, se agitan al viento, graneros,  
graneros, graneros... Un mundo de fe, un mundo de fe...  
Un mundo de fe, un mundo de fe... (Verde 2013)*



## The Friedrich E. Heyer Handmade-Paper Workshop

The paper workshop in Altzella makes it possible for us to print the graphic portfolios in the future on our own paper. Moreover, the workshop enriches the activities of the Société Imaginaire to a great extent because we will be able to invite artists and writers of the Société who can create joint original works here. Paper will not only be painted and written on but will be worked as a moist paper mass. Thus the work will originate simultaneously with its material. The resulting works are contemporary witnesses of a continuous dialogue and thereby illustrate the principal concept of the Société Imaginaire. Mark Strand describes this under the title "Scrapbook", which we publish here.

But the workshop in Altzella also serves didactic purposes. Several professors from colleges of art already work in our workshop with their students. It is our plan that this facility will in the future be available to many interested persons, as well as the schools and universities of the region.



## The scrapbook

It occurs to me that the ideal way to document the activities of the Société Imaginaire is to create a series of scrapbooks. A scrapbook has the virtue of giving those who create it a great deal of leeway - it can be whatever its authors wish it to be. It can include photographs, drawings, pieces of conversation, plays, poems, stories, observations of a profound or frivolous nature, menus, dreams, etc. But, I suppose, it could also be a series of voids. It is up to its creators. What I propose is that a group of six individuals - writers, poets, printmakers, etc. - get together for a week at Altzella with the sole purpose of creating a scrapbook. It would represent the combined energies of the six people and imaginatively document their time together. I believe that the group of six should share the same language (this will make collaboration a great deal easier). Thus, there might be a North American contingent, a Polish contingent, a German contingent, etc. The work of one group will be translated by each of the other groups. Perhaps two visits to Altzella per year will be sufficient - that is, there will have to be enough time between scrapbooks to allow for the completion of the translations. If the first group of six is a Polish speaking, then the next group of Poles will come only after a number of other groups will have had their week of making a scrapbook. It is hoped that the scrapbooks will differ vastly from each other, that a friendly competition might develop between the groups. No group of the same individuals should get a second chance at a scrapbook. Each attempt will be unique and have about it a ragged finality, an air of terminal improvisation. The original scrapbook stays at Altzella. The making of these scrapbooks should be a great deal of serious fun. And inasmuch as they are collaborative efforts, they will reflect, provisionally of course, the provisional ideals of the Société Imaginaire.

*Mark Strand*

Mark Strand

## Batuz-Foundation

Batuz, President

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Prof. Dr. Walter Schmitz, Technische Universität Dresden

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