

STATE GREETINGS - ROBERT JELINEK, MARK PRIER



STATE GREETINGS takes a platform to observe the social, cultural, and political phenomenon of Micronations: small entities that resemble, behave as, and sometimes parody independent nations or states. Impervious to their lack of recognition by world governments or major international organisations, micronational projects present creative, original and often favorable opportunities for consideration of alternative political policy and the conditions and possibilities of unconventional agency. In this exhibition, two micronations - State of Sabotage and Nomadsland, are explored as culturally viable and symbolic representations of grassroots political ideals and artistic self-determination, which also demonstrate clear relationships to contemporary global conditions.

Ceremony and Reception: 15 September 2007 Robert Jelinek (Vienna, Austria), State of Sabotage (SoS) Mark Prier (Corner Brook, Newfoundland & Labrador),

Curated by Gjen Snider (Kingston, Ontario).

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." - W. I. Thomas.

Our times are marked by shifting sociological paradigms; politics of identity, border-blending economies of trade, and transnationalism/migration, all of which contribute impact on our observations and understandings of increasing global connectivity, popularly known as globalization. Caught in the muddy middle, the status of the nation-state - once an epitomized strategic construction of social and political power, is difficult to determine. With the experience of nationalism fast becoming the embodiment of cosmopolitanism - cultural interests, diffusions and overlaps creating multicultural and moral blendings within the individual and within society (Keating, 2001), applying a definition to this new plurinationalism carries with it not only problems associated with the ability to organize and support multi-faceted social interests, but reassignments with regard to culture and its origins, manifestations and possibilities. Throughout these undulations, that fundamental of sociological thought, the state, has remained the basis of functionalism in society. Imperfect but entrenched, the state maintains its citizens, and organizes them according to conventions that achieve stability and order, despite lagging helplessly behind developments in culture, science and technology. With particular credit to technology and its related augmentations, individuals have become

the new threat to this order. Individuals, with proper tooling and propulsion, can now circumvent the state to become players within a globalized socio-economic and political realm (Todorov, 2007). In other words, within the growth of this new global paradigm, individuals can have as much power as a state (Ibid).

“Art as state is a direct form of independent state art.” - Robert Jelinek, SoS

“Nomadsland is an Independent State of Mind, existing as all states do: within the imagination.” - Mark Prier

The work of both Prier and Jelinek define ‘the state’ as a subversive idea with unique value to assess the effects of ideology on modern society. Mark Prier, the delegate of the border-less, land-less NOMADSLAND state, welcomes all new citizens. To become a citizen of Nomadsland, you must take part in the official embrace (a hug), and repeat this Oath: Everything is going to be OK. From the welcoming address on the Nomadsland website we learn that “Nomads must be willing to think globally and act locally.” Enabling a network not bound by immaterial borders or boundaries, Nomadsland is made strong by a group of individuals acting within local towns, cities and villages, the actions of many made possible by the simple actions of one. In Modern Fuel Gallery, Prier will exhibit the Nomadsland charter and videos from “The Nomadsland Citizenship Video Series” housed inside a phone-booth sized state kiosk. Also, Prier will present a Nomadsland commission, “Monument to the Fourth Anniversarial”, by Gareth Lichty (Kitchener, Ontario). A nomadic multi-component structure as a nod to government monuments celebrating government landmarks. For the offsite component to this presentation, Prier will temporarily install the Nomadsland passport office & consulate (in the form of a tent and flagpole with chipboard office sign) in Confederation Basin, downtown Kingston. Here, Nomadsland consul ‘Alex’ will welcome new citizens to the state and issue passports. Central to this project is use of the passport as the key to understanding utopian citizenry and non-conformity.

Robert Jelinek first initiated SoS as a multi-faceted organization to promote covert infiltrations into the art market, music business and unclaimed public spaces. In 2003 SoS was redefined as a new nation; one with constantly expanding citizens and territories, but without the limitations of national borders. Intent on preserving its independence and right to self-rule within the framework of international law and artistic freedom, the main interests of SoS are cultural and economic cooperation with partner states whose societies and cultural facilities operate according to their own state laws. The assets of the SoS state are the creation, protection, mediation, and positioning of art and culture. For his Canadian debut, Robert Jelinek will exhibit a wide range of work from his ongoing project, State of Sabotage (SoS). Installing a SoS embassy in the Modern Fuel Gallery, Jelinek will screen a 50 min. film documenting SoS activities on four continents, and display materials produced by the state: artist publications, flags, passports, currency, CA\$H perfume, stamps and DVDs. As an additional element to the presentation, Jelinek will lead a ceremony to define a new state territory, the first in Canada. This event will transpire on a small plot of land on scenic Carpenter Point Road (North shore of Wolfe Island), dedicated by Kingston artist and educator, Rebecca Soudant, to the State of Sabotage, and documented on film by Kingston artist James Greatrex. The ceremony will culminate in a participatory event called SoS Stoning, involving new state citizens marking a perimeter by throwing prepared stones from the center of the terrain - using the muscle power of the citizenry to define the SoS territory.

Photos of State Greetings can be found here

Ceremony and Reception: 15 September 2007 ORDER OF EVENTS 10am – 12:30pm Mark Prier opens Nomadsland Official Passport Office: Confederation Basin (Ontario Street), downtown Kingston. All visitors welcome! Become a citizen of NOMADSLAND with the assistance of delegate ‘Alex’ in the official consulate tent on Friday, Sept 14th, from 10 – 12:30, and 3 – 5:30pm. 12:30pm – 2:00pm Reception, curatorial talk and Q&A with artists: Modern Fuel Embassy. Refreshments served, including the Soup of Sabotage - an ancillary project on social metaphor by artist Anabelle Hulaut (Coutances, France), as created by members of Kingston’s Sleepless Goat Cafe Workers Co-op. Visitors also have the opportunity to become citizens of the State of Sabotage and NOMADSLAND, complete with official passports. 2:00pm Boarding the Wolfe Island Ferry as foot passengers. The terminal is 200 yards from Modern Fuel, at the base of Queen St. All are welcome. 20 minute ferry trip, followed by a 5 minute trip by bus to the site of the ceremony. The ferry departs hourly, on the hour. 2:30pm – 3:30pm Non-President of SoS, Robert Jelinek,

will lead new state citizens in the ceremonial SoS STONING, to mark the official dedication and state demarcation of the first Canadian SoS territory. All are welcome to participate or witness the events transpire on a small plot of land on scenic Carpenter Point Road (North shore of Wolfe Island), dedicated by Kingston artist and educator, Rebecca Soudant, to the State of Sabotage. 3:30pm Travel back to the island ferry terminal to board the Wolfe Island Ferry as foot passengers. Expected arrival in Kingston 4:00pm. The ferry departs hourly from Wolfe Island, on the half-hour.

ARTIST BIOS

Robert Jelinek has been realizing projects in the guise of various internationally active labels since 1992. Jelinek's first personal retrospective recently took place this July 2007 in the Linz Landesgalerie, a presentation which provided an overview of his multifaceted actions, performances and projects in the fields of art, actionism, olfaction and electronic music from 1992 to 2007. The complexity of Jelinek's strategic activities in various political, societal, artistic and institutional contexts is apparent in his ongoing project, The State of Sabotage (SoS), which guides the creation of all artistic projects, collaborations and actions by Jelinek and those who work with him. Born in Pilsen (Czech Republic), Jelinek lives and works in Vienna (Austria) and Balrockistan (SoS). The formation of "Sabotage" was founded by Jelinek in the area of the Documenta IX in Kassel in June 1992. Sabotage" began operating in 1992 as a small project and collective, later in 1994 becoming Sabotage Communications- an art organisation and music label facilitating a union of various sublabels brought together by their shared way of thinking and similar style of expression through different media. Since 1992 more than 100 international "public sabotages" have taken place in form of performances, actions, events and exhibitions. On August 30, 2003, Jelinek declared the State of Sabotage a Micronation in a ritual ceremony on the uninhabited island of Haraka off the coast of Helsinki, Finland (as part of the Summit of Micronations conference). Development of the SoS state has progressed since that time, gaining embassies and territories around the world, as well as a permanent state zone called Balrockistan, in Queensland, Australia.

Mark Prier's eclectic practice ranges from installation and performance to audio art and electronic music, often exploring themes of mapping, wilderness, and survival. He has presented exhibitions and performances across the country and internationally, most recently participating in 'Lost O', a festival of urban interventions and performative works curated by Michael Pinsky, and presented in Ashford, U.K. this past July. As a curator, Prier runs 312, putting together video art screenings and exhibitions both offline in alternative spaces and online at www.312.ca. And as half of the electronica duo hellothisisalex, Prier has played the MUTEK Festival in Montreal, done commissions for CBC Radio's Brave New Waves, and taken part in the National Film Board of Canada's Minus 40 project. Along with Melissa Creasey, Prier curates audio art in mp3 format for alectric:audio. He is also a member of the COMMONS, an art collective based in Toronto, Ontario and Corner Brook, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada. Prier is based in Corner Brook, and has established his base there to continue to create work. Nomadsland was founded on May 11, 2003 by 'Alex', who wrote the necessary founding documents to present a basic Charter, acknowledging that this Charter did not simply drop from the sky. Alex recognized the charter as a work in the making, part of an intellectual continuum of ideas. Nomadsland was seen by Alex as an Independent State of Mind, ever-changing within the contemporary context and striving to be an accurate reflection of its citizenship. It has no enclosed land to call its own, and, in order to reflect its form as a network, never will.

CURATOR'S BIO

Gjen Snider is the former Director of Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre, and a founding collective member of The Artel: Arts Accommodation and Venue (Kingston, Ontario). As an artist and producer, Snider has developed projects since 2001 that challenge conventional systems of social and artistic recourse, including the health care system, food sourcing and distribution, and the effects of artistic and cultural policy development on choices available for emerging artists. She was raised in Verona (Ontario), and after living in communities throughout the country, now lives and works in Kingston.