

Six approaches & notes on sharing

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³ Introduction

Share the moment

Share a coke with...

Shared pain is half the pain

Food sharing

File sharing

Sharing is caring

Sharing is fun!

Sharing figures is an artistic research project on the terminology of sharing broached through photography, writings, publications and presentations. Currently, the term appears in different socio-cultural contexts: Virtual social networks, alternative economic systems and urban cohabitation. Following these abstracted applications of sharing leads to the origins of this social action; sharing with one another is an essential behavior in modern society that both supports and restricts our individual spheres of action. On the one hand, the individual benefits from the united and shared knowledge, recourse and stability a community provides. Especially in times of crowing individualism, people increasingly depend on alternative communal structures.

[1] Daily still lifes-
shared objects and
interior spaces, p.7

[2] Commonalities-shared
urban space, p.9

[3] Beds and breakfasts-
on sharing economies, p.11

[4] Bitte teilen! Share
and like, my friend!, p.4

[5] On social networks and
sharing platforms, p.6

[6] Daily still lifes-
shared objects and
interior spaces, p.7

[7] Commonalities: shared
urban space, p.9

[8] Beds and breakfasts-
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[9] Sharing figures, p.12

[10] Epilogue: knowledge
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On the other hand, these communities enter and occupy the private sphere. The high-density spaces of cities as well as social networks generate constant, obtrusive contact between the virtual and physical public.

This complex area of conflicts is the basis for a multilayered artistic work. With photographs, writings, publications and events, the topic is explored from different perspectives. The observation aims to render visual a nondescript but essential role in daily life and guides the viewer through different socio-cultural occurrences. The structure of the whole work can be seen as a network of ideas and figures. The assembly and linking of the different sharing figures creates impulses to continue the train of thought on this topic.

Apart from the artistic research, this essay summarizes the theoretical process of research. The writings are not meant to explain or illustrate the photographic work, but rather function as an autonomous source of impulses and background knowledge. This also refers to the sharing figures magazines, in which three contributions in specific contexts are contrasted with the photographic works. The illustrations of physical chat-rooms by Carmen José [1]; the essay on shared web-space, written by Milena Albiez and Jörn Röder [2]; as well as the essay on sharing economies by Charlotte Sandoval [3] should all be read in line with chapter 2.5, 2.6 and 2.8.

The following chapters will lead readers through six theoretical approaches coming from a conceptual search on the definitions and applications of the term sharing. There is the sharing of images as a central action of communication and self-expression. [4] There is the phenomenon of collective creation and open accessibility of data through file-sharing and creative commons. [5] There are the rooms for gathering and accumulation of everyday items, which unveil sharing behaviors like evidence from a crime scene. [6] There is the observation of urban space and multistory apartment buildings where people share private, communal and public realms. [7] There is the economy of sharing, with its solidly united cooperation, as well as the commercialization of this social behavior. [8] Finally, there is the human body as a transmitter for the emotional impact of sharing, balancing between support and restriction of the private sphere. [9]

Regarding the working process of the project in line with the act of sharing, the epilogue deals with the practice of researching, photographing, publishing and public presentation. In this sense, the idea of sharing is also applied to the realization of the project. Collaborations with experts and the publishing and accessibility of results are significant for the work. [10] Between these chapters, some reflections describe everyday observations and personal conflicts with sharing during the working process. [11]

The essay is mainly written in English, with some German translations. As I dealt with international research material and contributors, I aim for the work to be accessible to a wider audience and with little linguistic limitation. Besides, the ambiguity of the translated term sharing creates a conflict in communication that represents today's internationally connected society and the initial point of departure for this investigation.

⁵ Six approaches and notes on sharing

Notes on Google-searching [\[12\]](#)

to share
verb

teilen
share, divide, part, split, partition

teilhaben
have a part, take part, participate, partake, share

gemeinsam haben
share, have something in common

teilnehmen
participate, take part, attend, join, enter, share

gemeinsam tragen
share

mitempfinden
share; feel, too

sich etw. teilen
share, split

sich an etw. beteiligen
share

an etw. beteiligt werden
share

an etw. Anteil nehmen
share

Bitte teilen – Share and like, my friend!

In reference to:

Guy Debord: Die Gesellschaft des Spektakels, 1967, Edition Tiamat, Aus dem Französischen von Jean-Jaques Rospaud/ The society of the Spectacle, Retrieved on February 13th, 2009 from www.bopsecrets.org, theanarchistlibrary.org

Limor Shifman: Meme - Kunst, Kultur und Politik im digitalen Zeitalter, edition surkamp, 2014/ Memes in digital culture, MIT Press (Cambridge/Massachusetts), 2014

See:

sharing figures #1 chatroom, photographs, edited by Kathi Seemann

[12] Google dictionary (2017): to share-teilen, [online] <https://www.google.de/> [01.09.2017]

[13] Image file: Zwei Kinder teilen sich ein Getränk (1922) [online] <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teilen> [01.09.2017]

[14] Shifman 2014, p.23, translated from German by Kathi Seemann

Google images, Google dictionary, Wictionary, Wikipedia and social networks like Facebook, Instagram and other services all unveil multiple definitions and overlapping applications for the English and German terms. To share or sharing is interpreted differently in several translations. The German word for sharing, teilen, also means to split, to divide, to partition. It describes the division of something material into smaller pieces. An iconic image is the subdivision of food between two people. On the other hand, sharing in German can also be extended and adapted to form new words and expressions; ver-teilen, mit-teilen, Anteil nehmen become to spread, to tell and to be interested in. People also share the same opinions, knowledge and moods. In communicating these to others, they find condolence and company. In the case of these immaterial subjects, knowledge or opinions are not reduced but increase in sharing amongst participants. The division of material goods often accompanies the sharing of immaterial goods because of the feeling of having accomplished something good.

Abb. 1: zwei Kinder teilen sich ein Getränk [13]

This idyllic representation of a social activity, sharing material goods but also the cooperative feeling, is also used in more distant contexts: The term sharing is often applied to virtual activities of self-expression, as well as to advertising and other profit-oriented actions like collective consumption, trading or renting of property. While researching definitions in encyclopedias and libraries, images and text-messages constantly appear on my Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp accounts, competing for attention.

Bitte teilen! Wunderschönes Zimmer frei, 24 qm, nur 1 min. Fußweg zum Hauptcampus

I lost my I-phone:((Anybody saw it? Please share!

“The simple activity of spreading became something desirable and valued because it is associated with something [...] called the essential activity of the web 2.0: sharing.”[14] The natural need for self-expression and communication has now increased and intensified as a result of social media and smartphones. However, the physicality of this sharing behavior has turned into a virtual action of sharing images and statements with distant people connected through social networks. On the World Wide Web,

spatial and temporal limits are resolved, which makes the virtual encounter similar to a direct face-to-face conversation. A moment recently seen or experienced is not just shared with the people around an individual, but also with a community far away from the proceedings.

Here, smartphone photography and its connection to the Internet plays an important role as a medium of documentation and communication. Every personal or appropriated photograph can immediately be published online, shared, seen and liked by a public or private community. The sharing of personal contents with a virtual community generates a collective voyeurism and need for attention. Most images are produced and shared with the sole function of being seen and admired by others. This communication through images generates a sort of spectatorial behavior. [15] Guy Debord describes the importance of the image as a representation in everyday life in his book *The Society of the Spectacle*: “In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation. [...] The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images.” [16]

[15] Guy Debord: *The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967, Ger. Ed. Tiamat

[16] Debord 1967, Art.1, Art.4, p.9

[17] Debord 1967, Art.12, p.12

On Holyday!

gefällt mir, kommentieren, teilen

> *Ooooooh how sweet!!!*

> *Beauty queens*<3

The visual language, which represents the activity of image sharing, is mostly created by the wide-angle camera and extraordinary format of a smartphone. Filter applications give the contents an attractive or nostalgic appearance. Besides the style, the photographed contents have a strong recognition value: Meals, gatherings, new clothes, cute pets, selfies and group-selfies, things to be shown and information to be spread. The images are carefully staged and selected, with awareness as to how the content is presented to the public, either by catching the subject with its most aesthetic and impressive aspects or just showing the maximum of information, regardless of photographic compositions. “What appears is good; what is good appears.” [17]

I like <3

Most contents are not necessarily informative or contributive to a collective production of knowledge, but they are important for creating a profile of an individual taste. Especially in a time of increasing individualism and spatial independence, the sharing of images is necessary to visually express individuality, but also community. The contents represent an image of that with which the author identifies and with whom he or she wants to be associated. Real life occurrences are merging with visual representation.

[18] Debord 1967, Art.8, p.10

“The spectacle that falsifies reality is nevertheless a real product of that reality.” [18]

[19] Exhibition title by Miriam Carranza, Kassel 2017

Share the fantasy [19]

Apart from their ambivalent character of reality and fiction, posted and reposted images can be seen as units of cultural information. These shared images document a worldwide, closely-connected and interactive society from inside out. That means that individuals uploading and sharing their mobile phone photographs are creating a greater archive of authentic contemporary documents than documentary photographers ever could have produced. In this relationship, the Internet offers an immense database of socio-cultural information that is accessible to a global digital society.

On social networks and sharing platforms

In reference to:

Shinichi Furuya: Masse, Macht und Medium - Elias Canetti gelesen mit Marshall McLuhan, Transkript Verlag, 2017

Read in line with:

sharing figures #2 commonality, text by Milena Albiez and Jörn Röder

[20] Furuya 2017, p.122, p.110, transl. from German by Kathi Seemann.

Where the medium of photography makes virtual sharing visible through images, another phenomenon of sharing in social networks is indeed less visible. In contrast to self-expression and the search for acknowledgement, platforms like Wikipedia, Creative commons or Peer-to-peer sharing applications are created in the common public interest. Shared abilities, knowledge or information come to fruition in the architecture of non-profit social networks. The open structure of the networked environment animates worldwide users to self-organize and produce collectively, decentralized and without propriety. Different platforms offer participatory and open access use to create and consume cultural goods and general knowledge. This phenomenon generates a group dynamic of sharing, regardless of the individual location and social background. The networks of publicly shared contents have become an essential source of free information and cultural goods in daily life.

While interacting behind a virtual surface, these networks are also affecting common behavior in real life. In his book *Crowds, Power and Media – Elias Canetti read with Marshall McLuhan*, Shinichi Furuya writes, “Media touches people and changes them. The use of media exerts a tactile effect on people, how they feel in dense human crowds and how they pass over their own limits of body.” [20] In contrast to the passive consumption of radio or television, the Internet generates much more interactive behavior by way of its participatory and connecting character:

*Playing or uploading songs or videos on YouTube,
uploading photographs to photo-sharing platforms,
sending photographs directly via WeTransfer,*

*using or uploading free typefaces,
looking up unfamiliar words or information in Google or Wikipedia
during a debate, chatting or posting on Facebook to update people
about recent occurrences.*

While these sharing activities stay hidden behind computer screens or smartphone displays, physical space always leaves concrete traces of collective social interaction.

Notes on Chatroom

Sharing figures #1, publication, launch & exhibition
Kassel, 21.04.17

It is 7pm, official opening time of my magazine launch at the Stellwerk exhibition space and the first visitors have already entered the space. Some snacks on the big table and the bar are not set up yet. I feel like the host of a house party, nervous because the music still doesn't work and some plates with green olives still have to be prepared, and what about the cocktails? I give instructions to the assisting gallery team members because the visitors want to talk to me. I welcome them, start small-talking and introduce them to the magazine and this evening's program. I would like to fix the music player to have some ambient sound: Events without music are as if they haven't started yet. Two new guests arrive who also immediately want to talk to me, asking questions, going into details of the artistic context, the event and publication. Clara hands me a gin and tonic and proposes a toast. As more people arrive, it gets easier for me to leave them in conversation with each other. I tell Fiona to open a bottle of sparkling wine. People gather around the bar and the table with finger food. I lose the overview of who has arrived and who is already leaving. My second plastic cup of wine; I'm getting relaxed and enjoy the many familiar faces and congratulations. I indicate to everybody that there is a stack of chairs in front of the door. During the evening, people take one and sit down around the table. It's getting louder. More people arrive; some bring food and something to drink. People are getting drunk, me included. I notice that an older man, one of the drunks who hangs around the train station, is sitting next to my friends, chatting with them. He is getting a bit touchy toward my friend, encroaching, but we handle the situation by telling him that he is welcome to chat, eat and drink with us, but that he should not bother anyone. He wants to listen to his favorite song, so I put it on the Spotify playlist. Actually, I'm happy about this situation because it's all about that: Sharing the space and time with all who want to. I couldn't throw him out, just because he's not part of the art audience. Other guests take over the playlist, plugging in their own smartphones. Chairs are moved

and some people start dancing. In front of the door, another group has found their place, sitting in a circle on the floor. The table fills up with empty bottles, plastic cups and finger food sculptures next to empty plates. I sit down next to a friend with whom I haven't talked the whole evening. Conversations are getting deeper, philosophical and political. I remain seated on my chair until the crowd takes leave. It's about 12am when the last four of us shut off the music and the light and then take a cab to the local bar.

Daily still lifes – shared objects and interior spaces

In reference to:

Joe Kelleher: *Putting out the chairs - performing the missing public*, published for Stedelijk studies, Amsterdam, 2016

Daniel Spoerri, *Tableaux piège*, www.danielspoerri.org

Interview with Johanna Schaffer and Roger Buerge: Bruno Latour - Dinge handeln - Menschen geschehen, Springer - Hefte für Gegenwartskunst Band 1 Heft 4, 1995, pp.12-15

See:

sharing figures #1 Chatroom, illustrations by Carmen José

sharing figures #3 Beds and breakfasts, photographs by Kathi Seemann

[21] Kelleher 2016, p.1

[22] *ibid.*: p.5

[23] *ibid.*: p.2

The way in which a physical space is shared is visible through the interaction and gesticulation of sharing itself. It can be seen as a sort of “live performance [that] produces knowledge, ideas, concepts and resources of imagination.” [21] On the other hand, there is the space left behind and traces of the encounter that unveils the sharing behavior like evidence at a crime scene. It's not necessary to see actual human interaction to imagine what happened during an encounter.

In observing a deserted room and the arrangement of remaining objects, one can draw conclusions about previous social activities. The abstraction of a scene by its very graphic representation facilitates a way to visualize unconscious social behavior like sharing. Artistic practices, like the visual arts or performances, can play an important role, transferring the image of a scene from its everyday environment into an artistic context.

In this case, everyday objects and their environments offer a projection screen for social interaction. A symbolic object that turns into the main actor in Vlatka Horvat's performance *This here and that* there are seating devices: Chairs upon which people sit down and rest, wait, attend, chat, debate, eat, drink or work together. In her performance, which Joe Keller describes in the essay *Putting out the chairs* as a sort of “abstracted, slowed down action sculpture” [22], the artist arranges chairs in different formations for a still-absent audience: “A little offset from each other to make a large communal circle [...] or a number of smaller rings of chairs: sub-groups, break-outs.” [23] These chair formations not only generate images of preparation, they also can be seen as the results of gatherings and different social encounters.

*A concert, play or speech directed to an audience,
a group of children in front of a computer game,
a political debate or a roundtable discussion,*

a collective dinner or party where the chairs have been pushed aside.

The artistic work of Daniel Spoerri also reflects how everyday objects and their arrangement can turn into evidence of social interaction. [24] Based on scenes of daily life, he forms ready-mades that manifest the artistic value of social occurrences. In his tableaux piége “the leftovers of a meal are mounted on the table and the table is then hung on a wall.” [25] The initiation of Banquettes in Spoerri’s own restaurant, particular for fixing tables, unveils how inseparable the creation of an image is to the previous involvement of interacting people. The objects are being moved, rearranged and accumulated into daily still lifes. Rooms and surfaces are appropriated and personalized with used objects.

[24] Daniel Spoerri, born in 1930, Galati (Romania), dancer, director and assemblage artist

[25] Spoerri Daniel (1960): Tableau Piège/ Fallenbild [online] http://www.danielspoerri.org/web_daniel/englisch_ds/werk_einzel/05_fallenbild.html

[26] Schaffer, Buerger, Latour 1995, p.12-15

Shoes and jackets occupy the wardrobe, plates and bottles cover the table, chairs gather in circles, toothbrushes and towels accumulate on the bathroom shelves.

According to Bruno Latour’s sociological theory, “the objects, as non-human actors [...] are involved in the organization and creation of social interaction, just as human actors.” [26] This means that not only people interact with objects in space, but also that objects and spaces interact with people. The size and setting of a room; open or closed doors; and the number and arrangement of objects all influence people’s sharing behavior and their arrangement amongst each other. Limited space and a limited number of used objects especially lead to an even closer connection and improvisation between people. Interior spaces and everyday objects as well as the architecture and infrastructure of urban space largely influence collective acting in society.

Commonalities – shared urban space

In reference to:

Richard Sennet: Thomas Struth’s city, in Thomas Struth: Unconscious Places, Schirmer/Mosel Verlag, 2012
Richard Sennet: Together - The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation, Penguin Books Ltd, 2012
Kooperatives Labor Studierender + Atelier Bow-Wow: Urban Forest, Spector Books, 2015

See:

sharing figures #2 commonality, photographs by Kathi Seemann

A vivid city in which people live in the tightest of spaces unveils the benefits as well as the conflicts of communal living. On the one hand, cities are the basis for cultural and economic diversity. On the other hand, narrow housing conditions, gentrification, public construction projects and overcrowded streets are part of the cityscape. In any case, sharing living space is the basic requirement for a working city. Urban space generates a constant “transition from public to communal to private realms.” [27] Each person relates differently to those factors and therefore displays a particular behavior amongst others: One might feel and behave as a citizen or a visitor, a host

[27] Kooperatives Labor Studierender + Atelier Bow-Wow 2015, p.3

[28] Sennet, Struth 2012

or a guest. This changing from one realm to another affects the relationship among people and generates a certain group dynamic. Especially in public space – the street, squares, public facilities and transportation – people share their daily routines with largely unfamiliar others without actually being aware of it: While waiting at a bus stop or moving purposefully from point A to B, some people might stay in their private spheres. Nevertheless, the space is used collectively and respectfully as people live side by side. Other people are more attentive to their environments, gathering in smaller or bigger groups, socializing, playing and gazing about.

Following his series of family portraits, the photographer Thomas Struth “decided to turn [his] attention to the space itself, in which we users of the city move daily, as soon as we leave our private space, and encounter each other.” [28] Indeed, his photographs of unconscious places focus on the architecture of buildings and public space without showing streets and squares crowded by citizens or traffic. The absence of people in these images evokes an imagined image of social interactions. The spectator’s eye can project familiar occurrences of everyday life onto the surface of a deserted city. Observing a multistoried building from public space, its shape seems similar to a living sculpture, buzzing with many individuals. The geometric accumulation of windows and balconies connect private spaces with the public sphere; an arrangement of different households, hotel rooms or businesses co-exist next to each other. In between, there are areas of joint use, such as hallways, stairs and elevators. On the ground level, the entrance areas and various businesses are connected to the street.

Sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, shop windows, café terraces, parking lots.

The open areas created at the foot of multistory buildings are collectively inhabited and appropriated by different people: Residents enter and leave their residential buildings, shop owners display their products, customers and pedestrians pass by. Their daily activities create the audio-visual character of the urban space. In observing public places, some of them are especially designed or generated by the community for the common public interest. On the other hand, there are privatized or commercialized places created specifically for the satisfaction of people, who become customers by using these spaces.

Shopping malls, institutional buildings, parking lots, entrance areas, cafés with free wifi

In contrast to municipal spaces, privatized areas offer a platform for certain shared activities normally performed intuitively and autonomously by the public. Group activities like gathering, playing and relaxing have been transferred into the so-called service industry. Nevertheless, many of these

public and privatized places are appropriated or inhabited for individual needs. "A city is composed of different kinds of men, similar people cannot bring a city into existence." [29] The individuality and necessity of every citizen is brought into public space and with those personal traces creates the image of a city.

[29] Sennet, 2012

Personalized types of shops and signage, parked cars, locked bikes, improvised constructions or seating furniture, plants or flowerbeds in front of the doors, graffiti tags, collections of abandoned bottles resulting from gatherings in public places, parks or backyards.

Notes on car sharing

From Kassel to Berlin, 12.05.2017

Meditating the whole morning about sharing behavior and social interactions in communal places, I now find myself sitting in the backseat of a tiny car between two strangers on the motorway to Berlin. It was a long time ago now that I got tired of the unexpected adventures of car sharing and switched to spaces of more privacy and relaxation by buying last-minute train tickets. The simple fact of dealing with non-institutional human beings always confronts me with the limits of my comfort zone. The driver spontaneously took a friend with her who will occupy the front seat, and a third passenger is still awaited. We are five in total but it's ok, I don't mind. They are all really lovely people and I admire their anticipation of visiting their friends in Berlin. I'm happy when I notice that the other passenger is a girl I know from art school. I like her, she's nice but we've never talked much. Now we are sitting next to each other, updating one another on what each of us is doing, our classes and opinions on documenta14. The two girls in the front seats have a private conversation and chat in Brazilian Portuguese-German, accompanied by Brazilian music. The other passenger has isolated himself since the beginning, first chatting via FaceTime, then listening to electro music on headphones. We stop once for a short toilet break. The two friends buy chips and offer them to the group. We have a good chat and I find out that they are actually sisters. Back on the road, the atmosphere in this tiny car is becoming more familiar as we all get to know each other a little bit better. So here we are, driving at 150km/h on the motorway in our micro communal space. It's pretty cramped and shaky in the car. My classmate is sleeping now, her head falling constantly to the side. I want to read, but I cannot concentrate. The sound of the motor mixes with the Brazilian music and the girls' voices in the front seats. I put my headphones on and enter my private zone.

Beds and breakfasts – on sharing economies

In reference to:

Shinichi Furuya: Masse, Macht und Medium - Elias Canetti gelesen mit Marshall McLuhan, Transkript Verlag, 2017

Read in line with:

sharing figures #3 Beds and breakfasts, text by Charlotte Sandoval

[30] Furuya 2017, p.187

[31] *ibid.*: p.187

Due to growing cities and global networking, new forms of communal living and working are developing. Non-proprietary, self-organized initiatives such as urban gardening, food sharing or neighborly help represent an alternative concept to mass consumption and anonymous urban life. Especially in fast-moving cities, there is a need to encourage social communities and solidarity amongst individuals.

Logically, many of these solidarity concepts are commercialized and used as a business plan. In Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power*, the act of sharing is related to the "gesture of taking and giving as the archetype of trading."

[30] This simple and oldest course of movement of the hand leads to an activity that is deeply rooted in society: commercial trading. "It consists of the fact that, for getting something, one gives away something specific." [31]

The economy of sharing as a new economic phenomenon has increased during the last decades: Alternative business ideas aim to benefit commercially from the collective consumption of limited space and resources. Digital platforms for sharing property and services with worldwide "users" are becoming more popular and professionalized, transforming sharing into swapping, lending, renting or re-selling. There is rarely a form of private property or an ability that cannot be turned into a service: Hitchhiking is replaced by paid car sharing and hosting a guest is turned into renting a room on Airbnb. Clothes and tools can be rented or sold instead of borrowed or donated to those who need them. The obvious commercial character of these businesses leads to the misuse of the term sharing by profiting off an image of hospitality and togetherness. Either way, commercial or non-profit sharing is always about dealing; it's an arrangement between an individual and their counterpart.

Notes on empty beer bottle air guitars

Berlin, 12.05.17

It's late when we arrive to meet my sister's best friend in front of the club. We lost track of time, dressing up and drinking beer at home. Although David waited for us an extra hour, it is a loose meeting. After entering the club together, he disappears to chat with other friends. From time to time he comes back to us. My sister also starts greeting people around us and introduces them to me. I recognize a lot of faces, but neither can I claim to know any of them, nor can I find a link to their conversation, so I go to get some beer. Dancing people crowd the dance floor. Most of them are dressed up in beautiful suits and dresses from the 1960s. It's a soul party and I feel the vibe of a familiar community. People stroll between the bar

and the dance floor with a casual air, greeting almost everyone with a gesture of friendship or a cool nod. My sister takes on this behavior, peering around to check if there might be someone she hasn't say hello to. We chat a little, sipping at our beer bottles and then decide to step onto the dance floor. Everybody is dancing on their own, in rhythmical moves, their gazes lowered to the floor. With the passing of time, people get more expressive in dancing, but nobody keeps an eye on the other dancers. The dressed-up frequenters, who almost seem to be part of the club's inventory, are whipping their bodies forth and back, shaking their empty beer bottles like air guitars.

Sharing figures – the performing body

In reference to:

Barbican Art Gallery: Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark – Pioneers of the Downtown Scene New York 1970s, Prestel, 2011
Stephanie Hoch on Resonanzgefächte: Head over heels
Giorgio Agamben: Notes on gesture, 1992

See:

sharing figures, photographs by Kathi Seemann

The activity of sharing can be seen as a constant balance between giving and taking. Individual free space is restricted as well as supported by the community. Communal living, consuming and working influences the daily routine.

These kinds of daily occurrences of shared living were broached and expressed by a group of visual artists, performers and architects in Downtown New York in the 1970s. Artists like Gordon Matta-Clark, Laurie Anderson and Trisha Brown worked collectively and in interdisciplinary practice on art pieces and exhibitions. They created an artistic practice that emerged from and reflected on the given structures of their urban surrounding of New York City, such as construction interventions in empty buildings and site-specific happenings on the street, in the park or on rooftops [32]. Dance that developed from classical ballet to free contemporary dance was turned into a “medium to socialize [...] and production of subjectivity” [33], expressing emotions bodily, in close connection to the daily environment.

Choreographers and dancers like Anna Halprin, Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer or Simone Forti mostly performed in public space, including members of the public itself. Happenings were based on the gathering of people and accumulations and interactions between dancers, non-dancers and the audience. This concept of relating dance to the structure of society is also transmitted through the working titles: Dance constructions, Accumulation pieces, the huddle or the Leaning duet, which was based on the balance of power between two performers leaning backwards while holding each other's arms. The body language of shared living is translated and exaggerated into abstract body sculptures. These were either performed in the urban environment or even more decontextualized in exhibition spaces. “One could look at the Dance Constructions as problematizing everyday or, as you

[32] Gordon Matta-Clark, Cuttings, 1974, Trisha Brown, roof piece, 1971

[33] Barbican Art Gallery 2011

[34] Curator Sabine
Breitwieser on
Simone Forti's dance
constructions

[35] Hoch, transl. into
German by Kathi Seemann

[36] Agamben, 1992

call them, pedestrian movements. If you take something out of an everyday context and isolate it, then it becomes something else.” [34]

Apart from the visual language of a performance, photography is an important medium to compose and capture gestures of shared living. The photographic work *Resonanzgeflechte* by Ute Klein deals with the physicality of “complex relations between single persons and their emotional condition” [35], showing couples knotted and enlaced in their private spaces. “Hands and faces as the main elements of incorporation (and expression)” [36] almost dissolve in the sculpture, creating an abstract form of skin and fabric. The translation or abstraction through performance or remaining images gives a differentiated view on interpersonal occurrences.

17 Epilogue – sharing knowledge

In reference to:

Isabelle Makay: Mapping the social landscape, capturing the senses, in: *Public Places for Private Experience*, APE, 2013

Robert Longo: *Men in the Cities*, schirmer/mosel Verlag, 2009

Philip Ursprung: *Stillgestanden! Vanessa Beecrofts Bilder der Arbeit*, in Christian Janecke: *Performance und Bilder, Performance als Bild*, Philo Fine Arts, 2004

Giorgio Agamben: *Notes on gesture*, 1992

Annette Gilbert: *Publishing as artistic practice*, Sternberg Press, 2016

A common thread throughout artistic approach is the image of accumulated subjects forming a social sculpture: Multistory buildings, in which residents utilize private, communal and public space; the arrangement of everyday objects in shared flats or huddled bodies, which support and restrict each other. The social issue of sharing creates a complex network of relationships that impacts people physically as well as emotionally. In the sense of sharing knowledge, the project sharing figures has been realized with an artistic practice, including different media of research and communication, including photography, writing, print and online publishing as well as the space for public presentations.

Photography as medium for artistic research

Photographs play an important role in visual anthropology as documents for socio-cultural occurrences. Photography can produce knowledge through visual field recordings. “Investigating phenomena using visual methods, images have a predominant meaning by evoking strong emotional reactions. We learn to inhabit what we see By filming or photographing, one is able to visualize this kind of valuable information” [37]. No less important for its research character, photography takes an influential position in digital society as it is used as the principal medium for self-expression and announcements. Dealing with the issue of sharing, photography is significant as both a medium of research and an object of research: On the one hand, photography serves to make visible shared living in an everyday environment of a cityscape. On the other hand, the collection of virtually shared images unveils social behavior that is generated through photography itself. The projects’ visual language differentiates between the shared and appropriated smartphone photographs and the analytical and frontal view of everyday objects, architecture and sculptural body studies. “By applying visual anthropological methods to focus on what people do in spaces and how they can enter into a relationship with their material environment, designers and artists are better able to connect their work with existing actual ‘lived’ spaces.” [38] Observing and capturing the daily environment and bringing it into an artistic context facilitates a way to behold the researched phenomena of sharing from a differentiated perspective. A series of architectural and domestic objects were photographed in their daily environments. The sculptural character of the multistory buildings and daily still lifes is also transferred to the images of performing bodies. The performers translate the impact of sharing into a number of corporal figures, searching for different arrangements. The

[37] Makay 2013, p.31

[38] *ibid.*

[39] Barbican Art Gallery
2011, p.23

[40] Longo, 2009

[41] Ursprung, 2004, p.187

[42] Agamben 1992

photographed bodies bring out a series of exemplary positions, captured and composed like frames of movement.

Fig.1.1, fig.1.2, fig. 1.3

Referring to the sculptural dance pieces of the Downtown New York scene, “photography and film were the media for documenting a performance or other temporal works.” [39] The pieces were performed for an audience but not particularly for the remaining photographic image. The documentary black and white photographs, mostly by the artists Barbara Moore, Peter Moore or Babette Mangold, appear in books and websites about the dance pieces. They were never seen as the photographers’ independent art works. The documentary character of the dance photographs conveys something inconstant, like a study or a sketch.

Such use of photography is similar to the photographs by the painter Robert Longo. To capture gestures and exaggerated movements for his large-sized drawings *Men in the Cities*, he took photographs of his performing friends. The images are photographic studies of Longo’s daily environment. The models were captured isolated on rooftops in front of the sky or in studios in front of a white wall. Longo describes: “The ‘psychotic impulses’ like the gestures of *Men in the Cities* are very much about the time we live in, that jerking into now [...] The mission then in the photo session was to find the pose that related to the prior one as an abstraction, forming something like a fugue.” [40] The series of photographs served as models for the drawings that translated the scenes to iconic black and white figures of jumping bodies.

While in the case of the New York dance scene and Longo, photography is used to sketch performativity for other artistic media, in Vanessa Beecroft’s performances, photography is part of the concept. The artist uses film and photography to capture room installations with still-standing groups of performers. She herself does not perform, but she directs the scenes from behind the camera. Her installations “describe spatially the moment when the performance crystallizes into an image.” [41] However, one feels formally the fragility of the image through the trembling of the enduring bodies. These small movements to keep one’s body or the construct of linked bodies in balance create a sequence of images. These images “can be seen not as timeless static forms but as fragments of a gesture or as frames of a lost film...” [42]

Writing and researching

In line with the artistic research of a social issue like sharing, it is also helpful to research and write on social-scientific realms that appear in the daily environment. Regarding the term sharing from the perspectives of sociology, economics, architecture, media culture and performance creates a broad overview of its different meanings and the relations between realms. The

aim of this project is to generate general knowledge, to collect and contrast the different points of view on the issue. Similar to the photographs, the notes describe everyday scenarios, generating images of different sharing behaviors. Both the photographic work and the writings are autonomous media of research and representation. In the publications they aim to complement each other without being illustrative or explanatory.

(Self) Publishing as artistic practice

“Performing a form of artistic research [...] can be highly beneficial for science and society as well as for the publishing, literary and the art world.”

[43] This means that artistic practice is not contrary to scientific research but can be one and the same. In this project, publishing is an important part of the concept of knowledge sharing. Print as well as online publishing enables a wider distribution of a work in a certain edition. In contrast to an exhibition space, a publication or a website, this is a more democratic medium to distributing a work amongst a wide audience in that it is almost without temporal or spatial limits. In regard to the three issues of the sharing figures magazine, different authors or producers contribute a work on sharing from a specific field of knowledge. The collection and editing of different contents, either self-generated, appropriated or contributed, can be compared with a curatorial process. “The process of selection, organizing, arranging, putting into relationship, and presentation of materials represent the core of curating as well as publishing, i.e. editing.” [44] The sharing figures magazines are published in a first edition of 100 printed editions and are accessible online as a reproducible PDF file. The uploaded contents are all licensed as creative commons and their appropriation and reproduction for personal use is free. “People involved should then assume responsibility in scanning and sharing, on a personal and independent level, to build their own cultural history, preserving (physically) and sharing (digitally) all knowledge that they think is valuable” [45]. This sharing of usage rights supports the distributions of contents and the creation of new works. The website and magazine issues are platforms to display intermediate steps of the artistic and theoretical research. They can be seen as an open archive of knowledge production that is continued by uploads or new magazine issues. The artistic research as an ongoing process is prioritized.

[43] Gilbert 2016, p.23

[44] *ibid.*

[45] Gilbert 2016, p.34, quote: Alessando Ludovico

Notes on a round table discussion

Sharing figures #2, publication, launch & open discussion
Kassel, 14.07.2017

The publication launch starts at 1pm but only a few friends have arrived by then. I say hello to everybody while checking the time and waiting for more people to come. Somebody said it's stupid to hold public presentations on a Friday at 1pm because the public won't come. Maybe they were right. I arrange my texts, the

projector and my chair. People gather around the big table and the book displays in the middle of the space, chatting and looking at the publications. Actually, I want to sit with them and have a multidirectional round table discussion. But I have to keep my chair next to the projector and computer to switch the images of the slideshow. I have failed to resolve the distance between these two tables. When I announce the start of the presentation, everybody turns their chairs toward the projector and me, thus creating a spontaneous half-circle audience. I feel kind of exhibited myself when I begin to talk. Everybody is listening and watching me while I flip through the pages of the publication, talking about my project, the photographs I took and the website. To open up the discussion, I introduce some of the guests who came and pose a general question about shared spaces. A friend sitting beside me directly enters the conversation from her perspective as an architect. After a while, I realize that the situation looks more like a panel discussion between the two of us while the rest of the audience listens. To involve another point of view, I direct a question to another invited guest about his planned neighborhood initiative, but the conversation stops soon after his comment. A girl enters the conversation with the architect next to me. I find their interaction is quite interesting and follow their dialog for some minutes. Then I see a raised hand of a guy in the back of the room asking if this is an open discussion and if he could say something, too. I'm so glad for this comment and the discussion starts to spread between the four of us. For this type of discussion we are oddly far away from each other, having some silent participators, tables and empty chairs between us.

The space of exhibition and exchange

[46] Stellwerk, im Kulturbahnhof Kassel, <http://www.stellwerkprogramm.de>

[47] Papiercafé, Kunsthochschule Kassel, <http://www.sharingfigures.de/events.html>

[48] Kasseler Kunstverein, im Sternhochhaus, <http://www.kasselerkunstverein.de>

This participative character of the work is also transferred to other forms of publishing, including a happening, an open discussion and the exhibition space. In line with the three magazine releases, public presentations were organized in local off-spaces. The first magazine launch that took place in the exhibition space Stellwerk [46] was set up as a sort of happening. The exhibition space turned into a chat room; a public gathering with free drinks, finger food, small talk and music. After the opening launch, the remaining space was exhibited as a social sculpture of a shared event. The second issue was released with an open discussion in the self-publishing and event space Papiercafé [47]. People from different disciplines were invited. In line with the photographic and theoretical issues, the relations of commonalities and accessibility of the digital and urban space was discussed collectively. As I write this, the third magazine will be presented in a matter of weeks with the exhibition of the photographic work. It will be shown in the local Kunstverein [48], temporarily based in a vacant shop on the ground floor of a multistory apartment building. This space represents a link between an

exhibition space and architectural setting for shared urban living.

In summary, the different formats of presentations enable the direct examination and interaction with the artistic work. They create a space for exchange and critical observation. With the aim of establishing a closer connection between artistic research and the working processes of social occurrences, the public is invited to participate actively in the events and in reproducing and distributing the magazines. Likewise, the announcement through social media and printed advertisements are important to get the public's attention.

To do: Share the event on Facebook

A collaborative working process

The concept of sharing figures, with its photographs, writings, publications and events is based on the involvement of several contributors. In the sense of sharing knowledge, specific information from media theory, architecture, economics and performance contributed to the project: In the magazines, texts on digital sharing culture, the sharing-economy and graphic studies on shared spaces are placed in the same context as the photographic works. The studies on body sculptures are developed together with seven performers who shaped the photographs with their personal body language. Opening the artistic working process to contributions, publishing and public presentations evokes constant reflection of and new implications for the work. This openness and teamwork is both constructive and a challenge. Similar to the difficulties of distinguishing sharing from renting and self-expression, there is a conflict between the notions of working collectively, collaboration and contribution. It requires determining the structure, positions and tasks as well as much communication, organization and responsibility for the individual and the group.

Notes on correspondence

>>>
sharing studies #1

From:
Kathi Seemann

Sent:
Sun, Feb 19, 2017 at 7:28 am
To:
Carmen José

Dear Carmen

I would like to invite you to collaborate in my graduation publication-project, dealing with the term "sharing" from different points of view.

I investigate about the different meanings of the term "sharing" in its social, cultural and economic context. I want to examine this daily interaction of sharing spaces, things and contents and visualize it with a series of photographs, events and publications.

><

The publication functions as a platform to co-work on the topic with theorists and producers from different disciplines. Each of the three issues contrasts two contexts of sharing.

You, as a co-author would work on one context of the #1 issue.

><

The #1 issue broaches:

SHARING CONTENTS IN VIRTUAL SPACE

><

SHARING CONTENTS IN PHYSICAL SPACE

I would like to invite you to deal with:

SHARING CONTENTS IN PHYSICAL SPACE

During the period of 01. - 31. March 2017,

I will guide our conversation and exchange of images and texts.

Our way of communication will be both via e-mail and personal meetings.

><

After the period of exchange I will edit and self-publish a zine as print version in a small edition. The publication will be released in an event or exhibition and will be available for the material prize.

><

In addition, an online version of the publication will be developed. There will be open access and the possibility to print the publication as a Pdf.

><

For the graduation all three issues will form part of the final publication and the exhibition.

><

Further publishing and exhibiting of the project is possible. All co-authors will always be named and linked in context of the work.

><

Please confirm, if you accept to collaborate.

I would be very pleased about a creative exchange with you!

best regards,

Kathi Seemann

>>>

Re: sharing studies #1

From:

Carmen José

Sent:

Mon, Feb 20, 2017 at 2:03 am

To:

Kathi Seemann

Dear Kathi,

I would love to participate on your project. My pleasure!

Looking forward to start!

Best,

Carmen

>>>

Re: sharing studies #2

From:

Kathi Seemann

Sent:

Mon, Feb 20, 2017 at 6:16 am

To:

Milena Albiez

Cc:

Jörn Röder

Dear Milena, dear Jörn

Thanks for your quick reply and acceptance!

If there are any questions, do not doubt to ask. Otherwise,

I will contact you again at the beginning of May, to start your exchange with more details.

Very best regards till then,

Kathi

-----Original Message-----

From: Milena Albiez

Sent: Sunday, February 19, 2017 8:10am

To: Kathi Seemann

Cc: Jörn Röder

Subject: Re: sharing studies #2

I am on board!

XOXO

Milsi

-----Original Message-----

From:
Jörn Röder

Sent:
Sun, Feb 19, 2017 at 8:08 am
To:
Kathi Seemann
Cc:
Milena Albiez

Collaboration accepted :) see ya in ks
greetings from london airport!
j

>>>
Re: sharing studies #1: to like, to share, two chairs, two chatrooms

From:
Kathi Seemann
Sent:
Sun, Mar 5, 2017 at 8:21 am
To:
Carmen José
Bildschirmfoto2016-12-17um15.38.03-2.jpg (170.7 KB)chairs_Wiels Bruxellas.jpg (443.9 KB)- Download all

Dear Carmen,

I'm happy to begin with our sharing studies!

><
To start with the surface of free, common encyclopedias, Wikipedia describes Teilen with:

Abb.1: Zwei Kinder teilen sich ein Getränk
Teilen ist das gemeinsame Nutzen einer Ressource. Im Falle materieller Güter muss das Gut oder die Nutzungszeit zwischen den Nutzern aufgeteilt werden, wobei Kulturgüter wie Wissen (oder auch Ansichten und Meinungen) mitgeteilt und somit auch zeitgleich in vollem Umfang gemeinsam genutzt werden können.
Das Teilen einer Ressource ermöglicht potenziell eine bessere Ausnutzung ihres Potenzials als der exklusive Zugriff durch nur einen Nutzer. Extrem deutlich ist dies bei immateriellen Gütern wie Wissen, das durch die Mitteilung überhaupt erst lebt und das Teilen quasi unbeschränkt möglich ist.
><

The boundary of sharing in physical space and virtual space, material goods and cultural goods is blurred in daily routine. While in a physical chatroom, the shared cultural goods are not visible, in a virtual chatroom, the cultural goods are shared by images and text messages, becoming material goods. The shape of seating furniture in a physical chatroom is what remains visible after a conversation or spare-time, people share in community.

Here I send you an image of sharing in virtual space, as well as a first impulse of sharing in physical space, which will be your field of investigation.
I invite you to studie and visualize this phenomena with your personal practice.
Meanwhile I focus on the shared content in virtual space.

><
TO LIKE
TO SHARE
TWO CHAIRS
TWO CHATROOMS
><
Fig.1

fig.2

Links:
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=593025265&fref=ts>
<http://www.wiels.org/fr/115/La-Terrasse-Panoramique->
<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teilen>

very best, Kathi

>>>
Re: sharing studies #1: to like, to share, two chairs, two chatrooms

From:
Carmen José
Sent:
Thu, Mar 16, 2017 at 12:13 pm
To:
Kathi Seemann

UNADJUSTEDNONRAW_thumb_3c2b.jpg (321.2 KB) UNADJUSTEDNONRAW_thumb_3c2c.jpg (273.9 KB)sharingstudies.jpg (1.4 MB)sharingstudies2.jpg (1.1 MB)sharingstudies3.jpg (1.3 MB)sharingstudies4.jpg (1.3 MB)- Download all

My dear,

I am setting some chairs in order, what a mess.
I tell you about the choreography later at the ice-dealer, but first the visuals.

All love,
Carmen

>>>
Re: sharing studies #1: to like, to share, two chairs, two chatrooms

From:
Kathi Seemann

Sent:
Sat, Mar 18, 2017 at 4:51 am
To:
Carmen José

Quinn Latimer.pdf

Buenos días, Guten Morgen,
For breakfast I send you a beautiful text about books and chairs by Quinn Latimer and students of Werkplaats Typografie.
I hope you enjoy!

>>>
Re: sharing studies #1: to like, to share, two chairs, two chatrooms

From:
Carmen José

Sent:
Mon, Mar 20, 2017 at 6:54 am
To:
Kathi Seemann

Thank you my dear! I will read it, draw it and enjoy it.

>>>
Re: sharing studies #2

From:
Kathi Seemann

Sent:
Thu, Apr 27, 2017 at 5:40 am
To:
Kathi Seemann
Cc:
Milena Albiez, Jörn Röder

_Z2A5436_web.jpg (351.5 KB)

Dear Milena and Jörn,
The first step of sharing studies ended on sunday with the publications' first issue launch and exhibition called Chatroom.
To continue with the second issue I would like to invite you to meet on tuesday 02.05. (for example at 10 am) in Papiercafé.
I would like to discuss the structure and shedule of working on the magazine, as well as the contexts of sharing I would like us to deal with.
If you suggest another time, let me know!
best regards, Kathi

>>>
Re: sharing studies #2

From:
Jörn Röder

Sent:
Tue, May 2, 2017 at 4:39 am
To:
Kathi Seemann
Cc:
Milena Albiez

signature.asc (< 1 KB)

Perfekt! Bis morgen früh! Jörn

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

On 2. May 2017, at 10:39, Kathi Seemann wrote:

Mittwoch um neun passt bei mir auch!
im Papiercafé dann...

-----Original Message-----

From: Jörn Röder
Sent: Tuesday, May 2, 2017 3:29am
To: Milena Albiez
Cc: Kathi Seemann
Subject: Re: sharing studies #2

Würde bei mir passen...
Sent from my NES Power Glove

On 1. May 2017, at 23:54, Milena wrote:
Wie wärs am Mittwoch um 9 Uhr?

Am 30.04.2017 um 16:24 schrieb Jörn Röder:

Hey,
Ich geb Donnerstag und Freitag je 10-16 Uhr Workshop. Davor ist wahrscheinlich knapp. Bleibt uns noch Mittwoch, da bin ich flexibel :-)

Sent from my NES Power Glove

On 30. Apr 2017, at 16:15, Kathi Seemann wrote:
Am Donnerstag um 9:30Uhr wäre super. Kathi

>>>
Re: sharing studies #2

From:
Jörn Röder

Sent:
Sat, May 20, 2017 at 3:38 pm
To:
Kati Seemann
Cc:
Milena Albiez

signature.asc (< 1 KB)

Hey Gangsters,
hier der link zum talk:
<http://test.joernroeder.de/talk.m4a.zip>

You might like a lot of things, but not everything can be your favorite.

Tuesday, November 3, 2015 | By Akarshan Kumar (@AkiK), Product Manager
<https://blog.twitter.com/2015/hearts-on-twitter>

<https://openai.com/>

Liebste Grüße
Jörn

...

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- Horva, Vlatka: This here and that there, performance
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- Van Doorn, Annegien: In passing, photography
- Wenzel, Isabell: field studies, photography
- Wurm, Erwin: one minute sculptures, photography

Image credits

Six approaches and notes on sharing:
photographs by Kathi Seemann

Sharing figures #1 Chatroom:

cover: jpg, shared on facebook by Mella Bella
p.16: screenshot, shared on Instagram by larrysouy
p.16: screenshot, shared on facebook by mickey.jardinier
p.17: jpg, shared on WhatsApp by Elisabeth Seemann
p.17: screenshot, shared on Instagram by kitti_arnaldo
p.18: jpg, shared on WhatsApp by Lina Seemann
p.19: screenshot, shared in Instagram by richkidsoninstagram
p.19: screenshot, shared on facebook by Diane Hillebrand
p.20: screenshot, shared on facebook by Ines Christine Geisser
p.21: jpg, shared on WhatsApp by Florian Bode
p.22: jpg, shared on WhatsApp by Kathi Seemann
p.23: screenshot, shared on instagram by officialriri1
p.24: jpg, shared on wikimedia commons by Bernd Laber
p.24: jpg, shared on WhatsApp by Maya
p.25: screenshot, shared on facebook by mickey.jardinier
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p.30: screenshot, shared on instagram by bogerrr

Sharing figures #2 Commonality:
photographs by Kathi Seemann

Sharing figures #3 Beds and breakfast:
photographs by Kathi Seemann

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 (Magazine contributions)

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