

RainOnOff: A Farewell to Nordic Gloom  
Urban intervention & text



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## Copenhagen Brands

- featuring the artist groups AVPD, rasmus knud, and Luxus

Branding, advertising, marketing, presentation, service, slogan, logo design, corporate identity. These are words and concepts associated with the world of commercial business. They also apply, however, to the art works by the three Copenhagen artist collaborations AVPD, Luxus and rasmus knud presented at Sparwasser HQ. The project is the product, and the objects on display at the exhibition, as well as the individual artists, are subsumed into the projects operating under the labels AVPD, Luxus and rasmus knud. Thus, the esthetic object is the project, and it is the performance and the action, not the presentation, that is crucial.

AVPD uses marketing and economic strategies in their staging of events, for example in The Stockholm Project, which consisted in a helicopter flight over Stockholm at Artgenda 1998. In addition to the show at Sparwasser HQ, Rainonoff, an artificial rain shower, will be turned on at 4 p.m. and off at 5 p.m. in Bergstrasse during the first three days of the exhibition. In line with former projects, AVPD draws on common myths and symbols, e.g. rain, which is often exploited in popular culture and film as a strong metaphor and fascinating phenomena. By displaying the uncovered technical gear, AVPD reveals rain as a simple construction created by film rain equipment, hence deflating its otherwise poetic statement.

Luxus operates within the field of service and social capacity. At Luxus' internet site ([www.luxusevents.net](http://www.luxusevents.net)), subscribers to the Home Hospitality Project can enter their addresses, thus becoming partakers in a global network of people, who provide other members with places to stay overnight while travelling. The project Opgang, meaning staircase, was a fictional staircase in Copenhagen, where people could design and build their own living spaces themselves. Luxus constructs, although not always literally, a framework within which meetings and actions defined by the participants can take place. For example, the floor in one of the gallery rooms is covered with fresh grass, an invitation to play croquet: Luxury and leisure in the gallery.

The complete launching of The Soccergette Firm, the fan club of the fictitious female football team Seven Sisters, is the frame within which rasmus knud deals with individual and collective identity. The football world is imitated through pennants, slogans and a CD with marches, combined with the history of the turn of the century feminists, the suffragettes. Taking as their point of departure the popular football culture and its marginalized fraction of female football, rasmus knud describes the different human relations that make up a community. Since 1992, rasmus knud, a loosely structured and partly fictional group of artists, has dealt with such topics, and took part in Manifesta 2000, Ljubljana as well as Monumentum, 2000, Nordic Festival of Art in Moss, Norway.

AVPD, Luxus and rasmus knud unveil already existing, but partly hidden social and mental formations of contemporary society. Thus, they make us reflect on manners and customs and recognize a range of possibilities in relation to other people and situations. Rather than being passive voyeurs or artists performing in the (hermetically sealed off) ivory tower of the art scene, AVPD, Luxus and rasmus knud intervene directly in the social structure under the premises laid out by that reality. The goal is not to protest against a hegemonic order, but rather to establish spaces of possible actions.

Sparwasser HQ

In the Saga of Burnt Niall, which is part of the first written traditions from the making of the Nordic societies, a man named Darrad looks in through a peephole of a cabin where a group of women is chanting: "...it rains blood..." Despite the fact that the word or the concept 'rain' in the present case is used as an ominous metaphor of slaying and suffering, one could venture to think that we here, in the language of the saga, are dealing with something that is at the root of the later notorious Nordic gloom, in which the rain in an endless stream has been pouring down from heavy clouds through more than thousand years, carrying melancholy as its shadow. Similar observations are made in connection with the birth of the German romantic movement at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that also tracks into Scandinavia: Caspar David Friedrich and Otto Runge both choose the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen as their place of study which will show in their monumental, dramatic nature scenarios of the Nordic landscape that in melancholically saturated colours surround the small, fragile human being.

Phenomenologically the rain appears in all shades of the artistic spectrum. The rain is a striking motif and a pronounced mood-creating figure: a natural romanticist (nature-romantic) notion of the rain as the face of despondency and melancholy. In Nordic literature, poetry, rock and pop texts, photography, film and, not least in visual art, the rain has through this last century had its prominent place. The presence of the rain in the Nordic gloom talks about the yearning for the genuine, for the true nature, but in our view the belief in the naked genuine is an illusion. That the Nordic man should carry a sadness gene is a thing of the past. The project RainOnOff marks AVPD's termination of this chapter of the gloom.

The natural nature. Weeping figs and waterfall in the hall. Water World with realistic waves and palm groves. Hothouses. The mall's roofed city. Indoor ski runs. River systems that are brought back to their original winding. Put & Take lakes. Systematized woods. Nature reserves.

RainOnOff manifests itself as a constructed, temporary shower in a street. This constructedness is a result of our passion and attraction to the film's artificial set-up, asserting through the use of scenographical effects its own reality. Specifically for RainOnOff we adopt one of the illusory devices of the film and bring it into an urban space. The set-up that in the space of the film is hidden or cut away, is laid open in our project, and the rain as ambassador for a natural romanticist (nature-romantic) notion is deconstructed into a synthesis of artificiality and authenticity. The uncontrollable primitive force and the emotional states of mind attributed to the rain are deromanticized and dismantled through RainOnOff and are left behind as a man-made construction which can be turned on and off.

RainOnOff installation in Bergstrasse 1-5

Icon description

- Standpipe ●
- [converter] A-fitting > 2 x B-fitting
- [converter] B-fitting > 2 x D-fitting
- A-firehose —
- B-fire hose —
- D-fire hose —
- Rain nozzles ➤
- Fire hose bridge ■

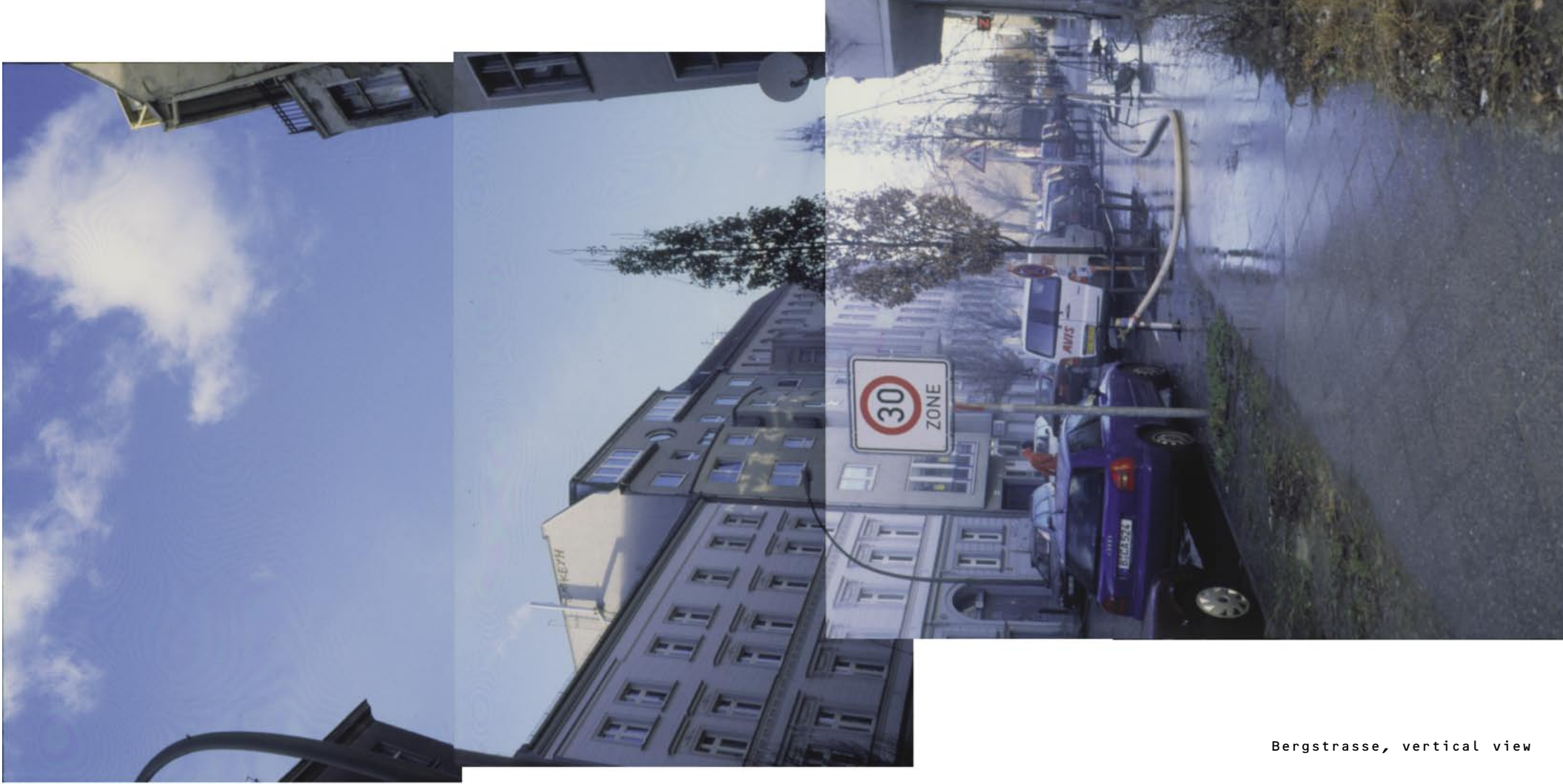


Scematic installation key map for Bergstrasse-Mitte-Berlin



The entrance to Bergstrasse from Torstrasse, left side





Bergstrasse, vertical view





The entrance to Bergstrasse from Torstrasse, right side



Panorama from the corner of Bergstrasse/Torstrasse



The entrance to Bergstrasse from Torstrasse, left side



The entrance to Bergstrasse from Torstrasse, right side



B-FITTING CONNECTOR TO FIRE HOSE

WATER NOZZLE

Dismounted Rain nozzle





Reading the text RainOnOff-A Farewell To Nordic Gloom version 2.0 TBF



Mercedes breaking the rain



Running through the rain



AVPD produces pictures of the fiction and within the fiction

AVPD takes as its starting point a field of visual art defined as a space unlimited in content and form. Our work is based on the assumption that there is basically no boundary between visual art and other types of artistic production (i.e. architecture, literature, design, film), nor between visual art and other fields of knowledge (i.e. comparative religion, theology, physics, media science, sociology), which in a traditional sense are separate domains.

The field of visual art, within our culture, is a special device in which there are great potential resources, whether philosophical, practical, or economical. If these components are put together, they can be regarded as a power plant making new, radical and innovative works possible (in which the potentiality of radical and innovative works is present). Broadness and surplus are the reasons why we have placed our production in this field. Visual art is a meta-cultural phenomenon which has a clear function in relation to our culture, because it can discuss, question and dislocate conditions and create changes. Therefore society needs the visual art.

We are working in a completely demystified and disenchanted space whose content is defined prior to its form and whose form is defined by its content. The project or product or work does not have any eternal or trans-historical significance in itself (any intrinsic eternal or trans-historical significance). It is in the interference between project and citizen that the significance-carrying layers are established and appear. In a time perspective the value of the individual project is gradually diminished and transformed into a culture-historical figure. On the shelves of the cultural history it is contained as documents of time.

The motives and reasons for our productions can best be described from the consideration that we view ourselves as citizens who take part in the construction of society, which we at the same time are the products of and cannot free ourselves from, but want to relate to and, not least influence. Our discourse is based on reflections, interpretations and renderings of this condition. The projects are only carried out in the case where the production of significance exceeds ourselves.

Our artistic production is chameleonic as it, being a construction, can take any form and appear in any given context and from this point discuss cultural and other social aspects in all possible nuances. In the individual project's collision with the citizen a social criticism is being raised. The project does not pretend any eternal definition, on the contrary, the citizen is allowed to evaluate her own reality-construction.

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The production of significance is subordinate to social, political, economical, psychological, perceptual, artistic and other contextual conditions. In principle it is unlimited and its aim is always to get into a dialogue with the surroundings. The production of significance stems from the fundamental existential conditions we personally are subject to, and it is with this guideline we operate. We are bombarded and confronted with a never-ending flow of images, stories, information and knowledge in one gigantic confusion. The world is hanged in a floating structure, a floating space that constantly ramifies, doubles, duplicates and reproduces. In the exchange and the following discussion and argument in AVPD of the accumulated fascinator focuses, themes, problems, conflicts, etc. are filtrated, specified and crystallized into a substantial content.

Since we live, reside, and manoeuvre in an urban environment and find our material here, our projects relate and refer to this milieu and it is here, in this context, our projects are located, realized, and passed on. We conceptualize our process or project as urbanetic. The urbanetic has brought about a series of investigations spread over and specified in various projects. The investigations include among other things: 1) the mutual interference and overlapping of the concepts of reality and fiction; 2) the relationship between religious and scientific conviction considered from a relativistic point of view; 3) the influence on and the manipulation of the citizen by the mass media; 4) investigations of phenomena moving in the marginal zones of our society; 5) fascination as a phenomenological figure.

Because we are engaged in themes and problematics which have a scientific, political as well as a social character, we thus touch or overlap other fields of knowledge and their specific expertise, knowledge accumulation and working methods. We are not in possession of the experience that flows in these fields. It is therefore, within our framework, a rewarding and logical action to break down sharply drawn borderlines between knowledge positions and subsequently draw together these fields. Across fields of knowledge a dialectic relationship is established, where the involved parts can influence each other's methodical procedures and thinking processes. The effect of this redefinition causes the presence of a different, empirically bigger substance which becomes the generator of a more varied and far-reaching creation of significance in the projects.

For the construction AVPD to continuously possess the best possible working conditions, we use marketing and concrete economic strategies. For one thing it has resulted in a practical economic framework: the Deutschland partnership, for another we appear with a visual profile in terms of group name and logo, which can be regarded as a consequence and a metaphor of the fact that any visual art practice includes self-promotion and positioning in relation to other artists as a deliberate marketing strategy.

With a field of visual art as our foundation, we are to be regarded as a unity that constructs and reproduces.

AVPD produces pictures of the reality and within the reality.

www.sparwasserhq.de

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