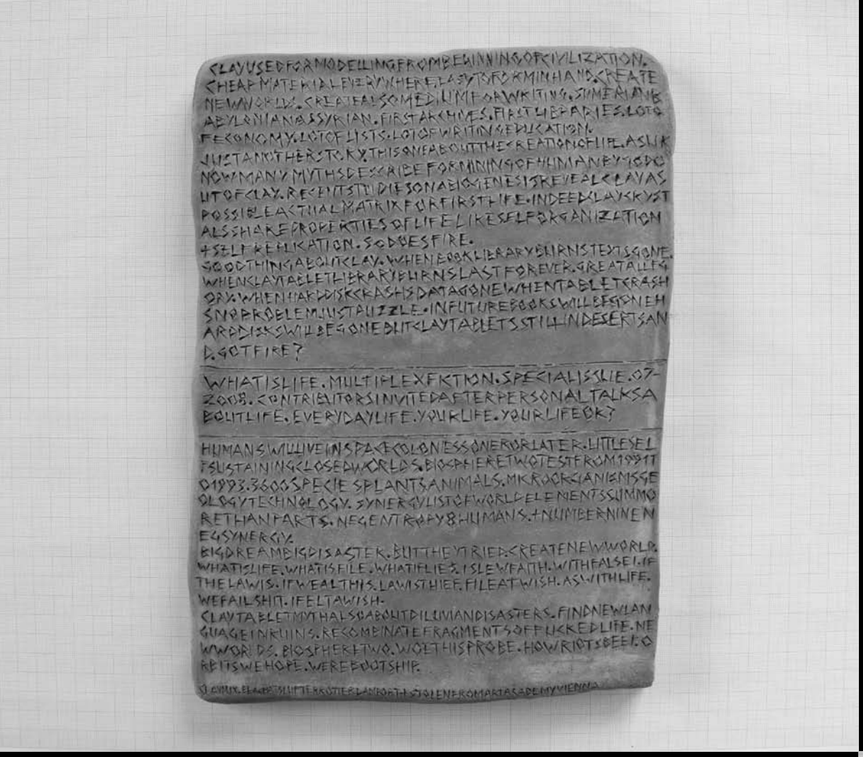

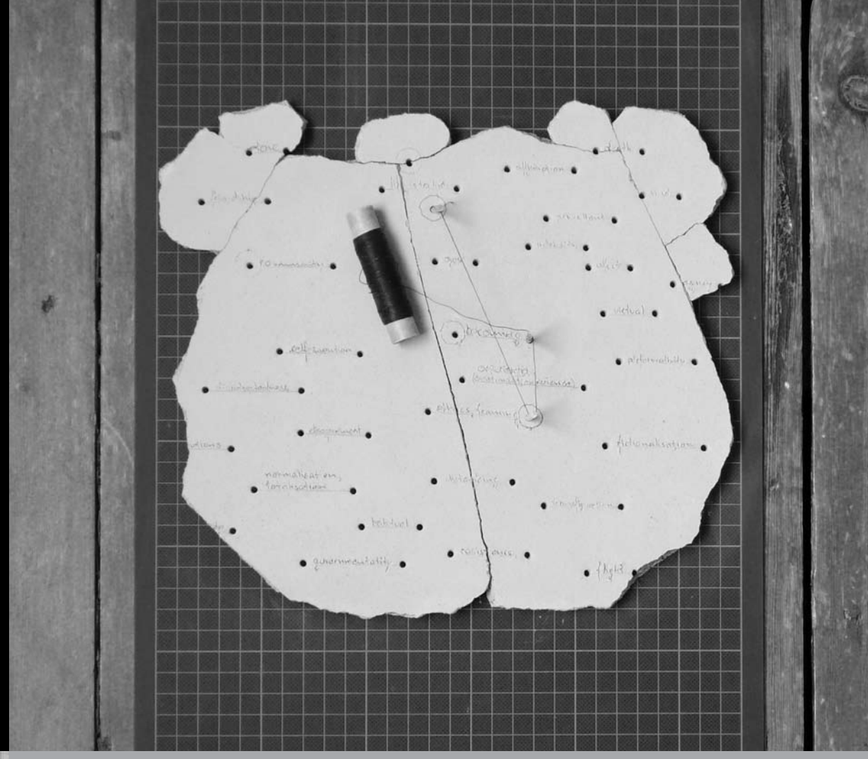

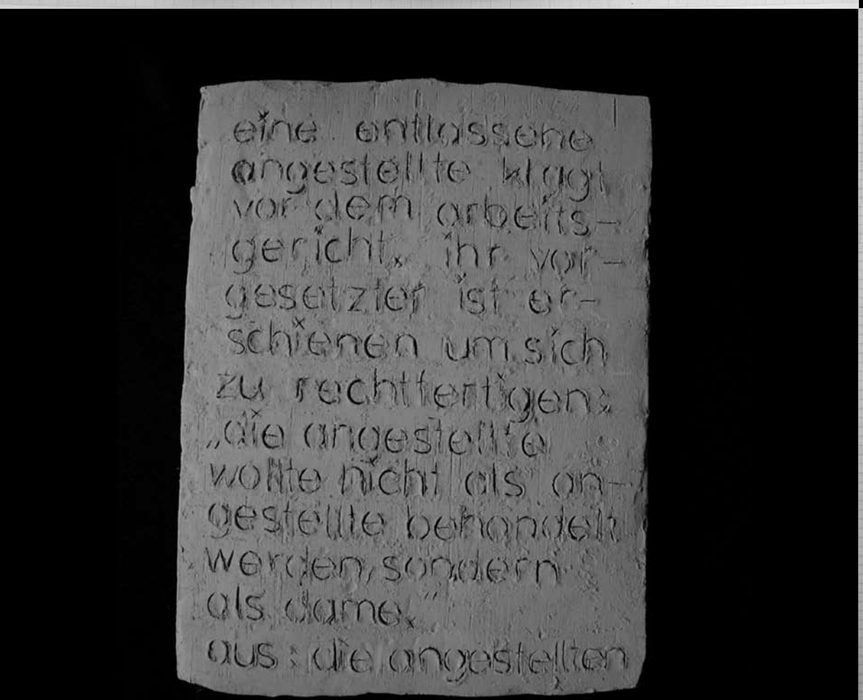

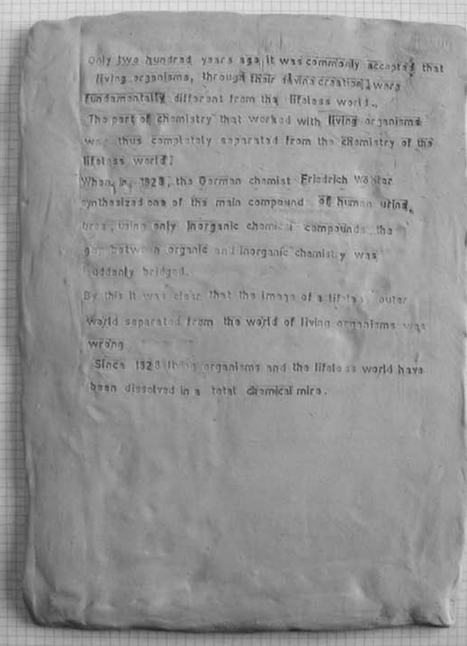

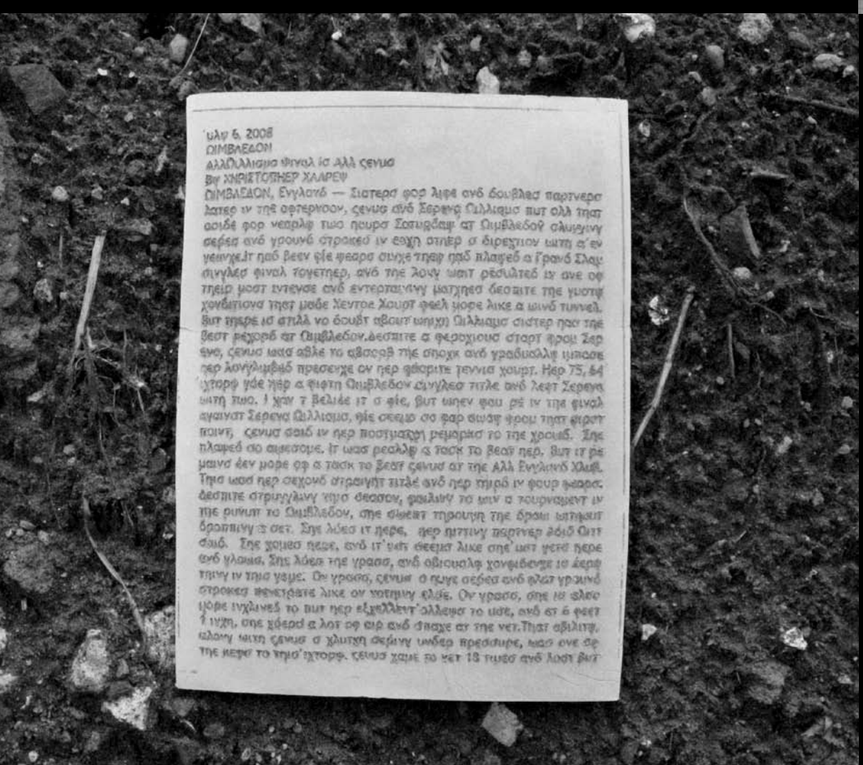

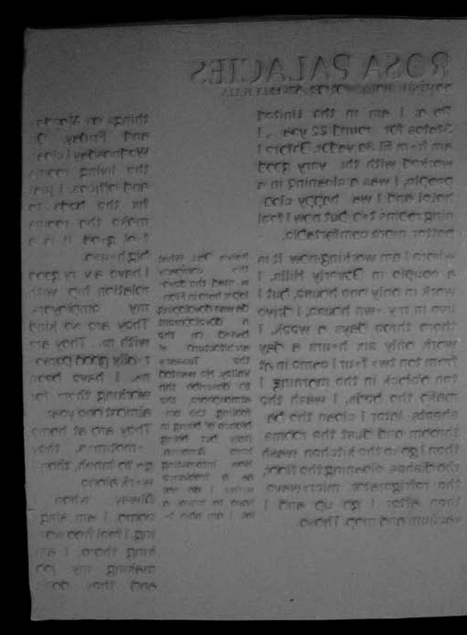

WHAT IS LIFE

multiplex fiction

A special clay tablet issue with contributions by:

Eva Egermann
Oliver Gemballa
Ursula Hansbauer & Wolfgang Konrad
Jakob Jakobsen
Christina Linortner
Christian Töpfner

Clay tablet magazine presented at the exhibition
Ein Blick durch Millionen Tropfen, die sich durch Kondensation an der Innenseite des Glashauses sammeln; Erinnerungen an vergangene Zukünfte; die Liste möglicher Bibliografien zu "Biosphere 2: Projections of N-Dimensional Architecture", S. 152 ff; Inventur der Anagramme von WHAT IS LIFE, z.B. I FELT A WISH.
Kunstpavillon Innsbruck, 17.7. - 23.8.2008

Edited by Ralo Mayer
Layout: Christian Töpfner

Thanks: Tiroler Künstlerschaft, Ursula Hansbauer, Christian Peer, Martin Udovičić

multiplex fiction is a Science Fiction magazine in the literal sense, published or not. "Height, width, breadth, and a couple of other things."

http://was-ist-multiplex.info

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… fragments: deconstruct, reconstruct—

„ …found that diagram for a time machine and got it working on clay. 'Is as simple as this: create it in the present and it immediately alters some past – and then it rips through them scientists' spacetime like butter, oh *boy*!
Gotta split…
(rumble, sudden cut)"

… *life is to live*…

„Jeepers! It has never really been about the future, some different future. Always sought a new, a different present. Like – transfiguration: here, now! "

—time slices of past worlds that are about to deny their fictions (ours, really, aren't *we* looking at them, after all?), or rather: make our own present some sort of fiction…

Christian Töpfner tries as theorist of sorts and lives in Hackney, London.

Life on the 6th floor.

The floor is a dark and damp carpet of rotten leaves.
Plants grow on the floor, which do not get much light.
– mushroom – cress – forget-me-not – grasses – strawberry –
– lemon balm – peppermint – parsley – pumpkin – sage –
Understory Layer, little sunshine reaches this area so the plants have to grow larger leaves to reach the Canopy Layer.
pepper – tomato – lavender – carnation – clover – marigold –
– lettuce – fuchsia – thyme – oregano – chive – turnip – dandelion – dill –
Canopy Layer is the primary layer and forms a roof over the two remaining layers.
It's a maze of leaves and branches.
– hollyhock – aster – cornflower – lily – pelargonium –
Emergent Layer. The tallest plants are the emergents. Sunlight is plentiful up here.
– lilac – raspberry – grapevine – bay tree – willow tree – birch sunflower

Ursula Hansbauer and Wolfgang Konrad studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Since 2005 they work on the project series *Living Archives*. http://hansbauer-konrad.net

Chemistry, the primal soup of meaning, consciousness and matter as one interwoven paste of letters, an impossible text from afar, a testimony from the living archive of material history, chemistry, mud slide of random particles into a shape of temporary stability, out of time out of space, distant futures meet distant pasts, meaninglessness, emptiness, creation, projection, nothing, chemistry, the subjectivity of wet clay, drying into a solid body of fluid aspirations, recreated libraries of pulverized pasts, slaves and experts working endlessly, changing the present by mimicking the past, changing the past by mimicking the present, the missing intercom of future pasts, chemistry, two plates: a reality plate moving underneath a dream plate, a neurotic shiver and an earthquake, chemistry, fluid text, inverse chemistry.

Jakob Jakobsen, visual artist, organiser and political activist living and working in Copenhagen.
Info: http://copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk, http://infopool.org.uk, http://tv-tv.dk

"To live means to leave traces", said Walter Benjamin.
On the backsides of two fragments of an article published in a renowned interior design magazine an eerily muted impression of its front side appears.
Published in the September 2007 special issue of haunted houses, the article features Rod Stewart's mansion located in the hillsides of Los Angeles. Looking for traces in the featured homes that usually remain invisible – prominent images of over-staged interiors are haunted by an uncanny emptiness, by the presence of the absence of their actual social relationships of the everyday.
The way private residences are haunted are manifold. The immaterial sphere of media, publicity and modes of communication have essentially changed the everyday and consequently the domestic sphere. The traditional sphere of intimacy is not only disrupted through its publishing, the empty images – filled with objects – show also traces of how the inhabitants who slipped out of the frame earlier operate in the represented homes. Housekeepers and Domestic Workers transform and inhabit the space that is not theirs and leave behind new forms of reading the social space. The imaginary of a safe private space is disrupted by flows of images and bodies and how the past and the future recur and inhabit the very same spaces.

Christina Linortner studied Architecture in Vienna and Research Architecture in London. She works transdisciplinary about migration and housing culture.

Summary of editorial tablet

Clay has been used for modelling from the beginning of civilization. It has also been one of the first writing mediums, conserving early myths about the creation of life and the ark into the present. As archaelogical findings prove, in everyday life clay tablets were used mostly for economic lists and writing education. Besides its mythological implications, recent studies have revealed that clay may have indeed played a part in abiogenesis: clay crystals share some features of life, like self-organization and self-replication. So does fire. (It needs oxygen.) The good thing about clay tablets is that in case the library burns, the fire makes them last even longer. A invaluable advantage to books and newer digital storage media. Speaking of using computers, the invitation to create clay tablets was also meant to get people away from the screen, to get some clay and form it with their own hands. Contributors were invited on the basis of personal talks about aspects of life, their everyday life and its relation to their professional field of research and work. Such a collection of people, knowledge and experience stood also in the beginning of Biosphere 2, a giant greenhouse built as an experiment for a self-sustaining closed ecosystem. From 1991-1993 eight people and over 3600 species of plants and animals lived in it, materially closed from the outside world. In his book *The Ninth Biospherian* Roni Layerson approaches the project through the compound lense of a historical Science Fiction novel.
A list of elements is more then the sum of its parts.

Ralo Mayer recently lived in Vienna, Rotterdam and Drippsdrü. He is currently translating *The Ninth Biospherian* for *multiplex fiction*.
http://daegseingcny.net, http://manoafreeuniversity.org/howtodothingswithworlds

"I.
Before a Labour Court, a dismissed female employee is suing for either restoration of her job or compensation. Her former boss, a male department manager, is there to present the defending firm. Justifying the dismissal, he explains inter alia: 'She didn't want to be treated like an employee, but like a lady.' In private life, the department manager is six years younger than the employee."

Siegfried Kracauer: *Die Angestellten. Aus dem neuesten Deutschland* (1930) / *The Salaried Masses. Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany.*

Eva Egermann is an artist based in Vienna. Apart from working fulltime at the art academy, she works in different media and various collectives, e.g. recently as part of the group *GirlsOnHorses*.

Uncovering a digital library – on all sides is desert.

"Later it developed that he hired a goldsmith to manufacture some artifacts in Mycenaean style and planted them at the site, a practice known as salting. Others were collected from other places on the site. Though she was visiting her family at the time, it is possible she colluded with him on the secret, as he claimed she helped him and she didn't deny it."
– quote from unknown witness

Lives and Archives

Why do I collect things? Why do I memorise data ? What should be remembered, if…?
The archive is built against the potentiality of loss, it cannot be banned and it's written inside itself. An archive can be a house, why has it to be regulated, organised? Isn't each individual life an archive and the body the enrolled script? What has a value? I spend almost every day three quarters of an hour collecting and recording. At this moment I could spend 328 days watching all my collected video material. Why should I compose a comprehensive inventory of items that I use as well as cherish – from my favourite films to my grandmother's birth certificate.
I transferred an article from the New York Times for my claytablet, it's about a sisters' rivalry taking place on a tennis court. Is there anything more to be remembered? Yes, it is, but encoding an English news article, scratched into a piece of clay, will tell a lot about today's life and so Final Is All Venus.

From the New York Times:
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/06/sports/tennis/06tennis.html?_r=1&oref=slogin
Types were translated into Galilee Greek Fonts.

Oliver Gemballa works on the correlations between medial and public spaces. Lives in Hamburg, Germany.