Article

Borderlines:

Surveillance, Identification and Artistic Explorations along European Borders

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Abstract

Borderlines are increasingly hard to grasp, they no longer follow the territorial outlines of nation states and are developing into mobile interlinked structures. The borderlines experience an increasing automation, reach into our cities, along the spaces of transit and, with the help of biometric techniques, zoom in on our bodies. These structures of inclusion and exclusion, of surveillance and control have different impacts on people, according to their status and nationality. The altered state of our borders and its appearance in artistic and academic positions will be discussed. This goes along with an analysis of theories and practices of surveillance and control in relation to the restriction of movement and the construction of spaces. The focus lies on irregular migration in the European arena.

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While “Border Art” in the North American context has been produced and discussed for decades, larger bodies of artistic and academic work on Europe’s borderlands are only beginning to emerge in the new millennium. This is due to the developing supranational structure of the EU and the establishing of supranational regimes of policing the external borders, which go hand in hand with a reconfiguration of national and European identities. Artistic views on the routes of irregular migrants, alternative mappings, the biometrisation of border and body, and spaces of restricted movement will be discussed. The artistic works zoom in on the realities of migration along the shifting borders, question our perception of irregular migration, and comment on the mechanisms of control and confinement.

Most of the works that are presented here were part of the exhibition “grenzlinien” (borderlines) which was shown in Mainz and Frankfurt/Main, Germany in 2010 and which will be completed by a publication

and further shows in 2011/12.¹ In the initial show in Mainz the works were presented in overseas containers, the prototypical vehicles of movement. They were placed at the shore of the river Rhein that forms the border between federal states in Germany. Along with the special venue came associations of potential migratory scenarios in relation to vehicles of transport. This article provides artistic, curatorial, and academic perspectives and focuses on a selection of the works, which were shown in the exhibition and their connections to the current policies of surveillance and migration in Europe.

grenzlinien, documentation of the exhibition, Mainz 2010.

Crossing the border

The territorial borders on the fringes of the European Union have become increasingly militarised. The frontiers in Melilla and Ceuta, the European enclaves on the African continent, have been surrounded by multi-layered fences and are equipped with surveillance equipment such as CCTV and movement detectors.² After the so called “storming of the fences” in Ceuta 2005, when a group of more than 200 migrants tried to cross the border in a concerted action,³ the frontiers were further fortified and have become nearly impossible to cross.

In the past years the monitoring of the Mediterranean Sea has been intensified and high-tech equipment such as drones and satellite screening have found their way into this new fashion of border control. The furthest developed System, “SIVE” (“Integrated System of External Vigilance”), was established by Spain from 1999 onwards to monitor irregular traffic over the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. This system of interlinked, fixed and mobile video, infrared, and radar surveillance is primarily addressed at irregular traffic – migrants and smugglers. SIVE is not only a system of detection, it incorporates a prompt reaction of a special branch of the “Guardia Civil”, which will stop and check on the “travelling object”.⁴

On the European level the border agency “Frontex” was established in 2005 to coordinate the national border agencies. It is not directly involved in border control – this remains in the hands of the national states – but research, control, and operational tasks converge in the headquarters of Frontex in

¹ For more information on the project see: www.grenzlinien.com (accessed 25 August 2011) and Gschrey, Raul and Taxer, Christine (Eds.): *Grenzlinien*. Frankfurt/Main: gutleut verlag, in preparation.

² See: Carling, Jorgen. 2007. Migration control and Migrant Fatalities at the Spanish-African Borders. *International Migration Review* 41(2): 324.

³ In September 2005 about 2,000 people were waiting for their chance to cross the borders to Melilla and Ceuta. They lived under dire circumstances in makeshift camps in the woods and hills close to the European enclaves. Holert and Terkessidis describe the orchestrated attempts to cross the borders as a self-organised action. See: Holert, Tom and Terkessidis, Mark. 2006. *Fliehkraft: Gesellschaft in Bewegung – von Migranten und Touristen*. Köln: Kiwi, 26.

⁴ Carling, Jorgen. 2007. Migration control and Migrant Fatalities at the Spanish-African Borders. *International Migration Review* 41(2): 325.

Warsaw/Poland. This shows the agency's far-reaching influence on the strategic development in the field of European border control:

The agency [Frontex] follows the current research on frontier-defence technologies, as the use of drones or biometrical technologies. In cooperation with universities and the defence industry it initiates research projects and understands itself as 'deal broker' between arms manufacturers and the frontier-defence institutions of the member states. This can be seen as a sneaking development of a security-industrial complex [...]. Direct consequences of these operations are the advancing technical armament of the European frontiers, which lead to increasing risks for migrants and refugees [...].⁵

In this context the "European Border Surveillance System" (EUROSUR) needs to be mentioned. Its main aim is to link national border surveillance technologies, and existing information systems such as the "Schengen Information System" (SIS). Furthermore EUROSUR is supposed to install further control- and operational units to administer the flow of travel and migration to Europe.⁶ The Spanish system SIVE seems to have been a model for this supra-national border surveillance system, which is likely to be placed in the hands of Frontex.

However, the fortification of the frontier regions and borderlines alone is insufficient to prevent irregular migration. This shows itself in the indirect presence of Frontex in many African states and in the so-called "European Neighbourhood Policy" which incorporates the neighbouring countries in border-security politics.⁷ In bi-national agreements African neighbours of the EU are pressured to restrain migrants and to accept irregular residents, when they are deported from Europe. This lead to frightening and dubious alliances with regimes such as Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. While the so called "Arabian Spring" in many North-African states seems to have far reaching influences on the lives of their citizens and on the countries' relationship to Europe, the policies concerning the restriction of migratory movements to the North do not seem to be questioned.

Due to this pressure, the routes of irregular migration move around the highly surveilled areas and become longer and more arduous. The activities to prevent irregular migratory movement make it increasingly dangerous for migrants to cross the transit countries in Northern Africa and the Mediterranean. In attempts to reduce potential risk to the European Community the hazards for irregular migrants increase. Mechanisms of control and processes of social sorting influence the velocities and cost of travel. While it is safe and cheap for European citizens to travel to Northern Africa it often costs immigrants more than 20 times as much for a risky one-way ticket to Europe.⁸ However this does not prevent people from fleeing from political persecution and poverty and to board an unseaworthy vessel to follow the promise of a better future.

⁵ Kasperek, Bernd. (in preparation) Die europäische Grenzschutzagentur Frontex. In: Gschrey, Raul and Taxer, Christine (Eds.) *Grenzlinien*. Frankfurt/Main: gutleut verlag. [my translation]

⁶ See: Kasperek, Bernd. 2008. Perfektion des Grenzregimes: Das Border Package der EU-Kommission. *ak - analyse und kritik - zeitung für linke Debatte und Praxis* 527. http://www.akweb.de/ak_s/ak527/06.htm (25 August 2011)

⁷ Müller, Andreas. 2009. Das Projekt einer soziologischen Betrachtung der EU-Außengrenze. *European Journal of Transnational Studies (EJOTS)*, 1(1): 5-28.

⁸ See: Del Grande, Gabriel. 2008. *Mamadous Fahrt in den Tod. Die Tragödie der irregulären Migration im Mittelmeer*. Karlsruhe: von Loeper.

Schäfer, Heiko: *Maritime Incidents*. Photography, map, texts, 2008. Installation view "grenzlinien", 2010.

The work *Maritime Incidents* by the Berlin-based photographer Heiko Schäfer focuses on the relics of these journeys over the Mediterranean Sea. Many people from Central Asia and Africa anticipate a better future for themselves and their families in Europe. Aided by smugglers, who charge large sums, they embark on the dangerous journey over the Mediterranean Sea. Quite a few of the often unseaworthy, wooden boats sink, or do not reach their destinations and many refugees die on this journey. Heiko Schäfer has travelled to Lampedusa to document the relics of these journeys. The detailed photographs of boats are accompanied by a map, which shows the places where the boats were discovered by the border agencies, as well as a chart listing the sparse information he received on the incidents. The photographer works in a narrative-documentary way: His still lives show places and objects that have a history and tell a story. Through his sensitive, and at first glance reserved, observations his photographs evoke emotions and open imaginative spaces. Tiny details reveal the former presence of people on the now empty vessels. Precisely the lack of "victims" opens a space for the spectator to connect to the incidents and imagine individual stories of flight.

Schäfer, Heiko: *Maritime Incidents*. Photography, map, texts, 2008.

The serious game⁹ *Frontiers* uses a different approach. Here precisely the identification with the subject of migration forms a core element. The Austrian artist group “gold extra”¹⁰ has used the technical basis of a well-known online first-person role-playing game to design a new computer game. The “social mod” leads the player to the Moroccan-Spanish frontier in Ceuta and to the border region in the Algerian dessert. The players can choose to take the role of refugee or border patrol. Through the eyes of refugees they can perceive Europe from the outside – the fences, the walls – and gain an insight into the excluding structures.

The secure position of the player in his living-room is certainly not comparable to the realities of migrants. And the computer game cannot appropriately represent the difficulty and danger of irregular border crossings. However, to playfully take sides with a character in this contested terrain can raise awareness of a young audience. The interactive attraction of (computer) games can be used to bring in socially and politically relevant topics. This is the central concern of activist and artistic contributions in the arena of serious games.

Gold Extra: *Frontiers*. Video game, 2008 and ongoing. Installation view “grenzlinien”, 2010.

⁹ For a description of the genre of the serious game and its importance in the field of migration see: Zehle, Söhnke. 2011. Spiel ohne Grenzen: Serious Games zwischen dokumentarischer Übersetzung und Kartografien des Politischen. In: Gutberlet, M.H. and Helff, S. (Eds.): *Die Kunst der Migration. Aktuelle Positionen zum europäisch-afrikanischen Diskurs*. Bielefeld: transcript, 113-135.

¹⁰ “gold extra” is an artist group based in Salzburg/Austria who initiate, curate, and produce artworks in the intermediary field of visual arts, performance, music and activism. For *Frontiers* Georg Hobmeier, Sonja Prlic, Karl Zechenter collaborated with the Australian media artist Adam Donovan.

Frontiers was designed after extensive phases of research at the respective borders. Interviews with migrants and experts can be accessed on the website of the project.¹¹ Using these descriptions and their first-hand experience the artists have produced gaming-atmospheres that mirror the routes and situation of irregular migrants. This documentary approach can also be traced in other serious games, which often try to incorporate documentary material or authentic experiences.

Gold Extra: *Frontiers*. Video game, 2008 and ongoing. Details, installation view "grenzlinien", 2010.

In *Frontiers* not only the visual content of a computer game is modified, but as well the gaming-strategies and the context is adapted to the realities of irregular border-crossing. It is not all about "shooting the enemy": virtual border guards are expected not to use their weapons and one of the few possibilities for the virtual migrants to successfully cross the border is blackmail. When the player walks around aimlessly in the desert for minutes, the fictionalisation at times gets frustratingly "real" and the potential of the "social mod" to make the frontier tangible becomes apparent.

Migration cannot be depicted without making visible the (discursive, legal) border regimes, which turn people into migrants. It calls for the development of new cartographies of the political to deal with the expansion of border regimes. [...] Games offer new cartographies of the political terrain.¹²

Fluid borders, petrified movement and new cartographies

While the internal European borders have been opened and travelling has become easier, the external frontier of the Community has been reinforced. Within the national states borders have become mobile, invisible structures and are now increasingly situated at the hubs of international traffic and in transit zones. These new frontiers show a network-structure and rely on computerised surveillance mechanisms to administer the flow of groups and individuals. These mobile mechanisms of control become possible through an increasing computerisation and interconnection which allow for the collection and distribution of data. As many scholars have pointed out, these controls can become sorting-devices, which assign dissimilar statuses and treatments to different groups of people.¹³ In Europe one of these networks of control is the "Schengen Information System" (SIS). The system collects data of people moving inside the

¹¹ <http://www.frontiers-game.com> (accessed 24 August 2011)

¹² Zehle, Sönke. 2011. Spiel ohne Grenzen: Serious Games zwischen dokumentarischer Übersetzung und Kartografien des Politischen. In: Gutberlet, M.H. and Helff, S. (Eds.) *Die Kunst der Migration. Aktuelle Positionen zum europäisch-afrikanischen Diskurs*. Bielefeld: transcript, 127-28. (my translation)

¹³ Gandy speaks about the "panoptic sort": Gandy, O.H. 1993. *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information*. Westview; Boulder. David Lyon establishes the term "surveillant sorting": Lyon, David. 2002 *Surveillance as Social Sorting: Privacy, Risk and Digital Discrimination*. London; New York: Routledge. Peter Adey describes "surveillant sorting" in the specific context of the airport: Adey, Peter. 2004. Secured and Sorted Mobilities: Examples from the Airport. *Surveillance & Society* 1(4).

EU legally and illegally and can be accessed online by police officers or border guards from every participating country.¹⁴

The inequalities that are produced by these regimes of control influence the possibility, danger, and speed of movement. Researchers speak of “deceleration”¹⁵ or “petrified movement”¹⁶ of certain underprivileged groups of political and economic refugees. Large numbers of migrants are stranded outside the EU borders or in camps, the so-called “Welcome-Centres”, on EU territory:

The European policy of immigration is a regime of waiting. It produces a new order of mobility and standstill [...] Centres for interim stay – a telling terminology. The number of those centres, self-organised or state-run, increases in and around Europe. While people arrange themselves in these makeshifts of ‘petrified movement’, the provisional solutions slightly develop into ‘permanent interim solutions’.¹⁷

The regulation of movement, which allows privileged groups to stroll the world freely and swiftly, while it keeps others in a state of immobility, calls for a re-evaluation of individual experiences of space and time. New socio-spatial cartographies have to be developed which describe these inequalities and question the traditional nation-centred depiction of our world.

Labor k3000: MigMap: “Discourses”, interactive mapping, screenshot, 2005.

¹⁴ See: Walters, William. 2005. William Walters in Conversation with Marion von Osten: Genealogies of Control. In: Kunstverein, Kölnischer (ed.) *Projekt Migration*. Köln: DuMont.

¹⁵ Panagiotidis, Efthimia and Tsianos, Vassilis. 2007. Denaturalizing Camps: Überwachen und Entschleunigen in der Schengener Ägäis-Zone. In: TRANSIT MIGRATION (Eds.) *Turbulente Ränder: Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Rändern Europas*. Bielefeld: transcript, 57-85.

¹⁶ Holert, Tom and Terkessidis, Mark. 2006. *Fliehkraft. Gesellschaft in Bewegung – von Migranten und Touristen*. Köln: Kiwi, 46.

¹⁷ Ibid.: 47-48. (My translation)

In collaboration with the interdisciplinary “Projekt Migration”¹⁸, the Austrian artist collective “Labor k3000” has produced alternative cartographies of Europe. A set of interactive maps visualise migratory movements and involved institutions. The project “MigMap – Governing Migration”¹⁹ is connecting sociology, political science, activism, and artistic practice:

In the project MigMap cartography is used as an artistically motivated strategy. It does not (re-) produce territorial borders but visualises the social space of border regimes. The transformation of national sovereignty is translated into a visual narration, that also appeals to a non-scientifically trained, broad public.²⁰

Labor k3000: MigMap: *Places and Practices* and *Actors*, interactive mappings, screenshots, 2005.

The map *Places and Practices* visualises the places and institutions in which migration plays a central role as well as the importance of “control”, “subversion”, “registration”, “care” and “representation” in the individual spheres. It shows the interconnection of the spheres of mobility, public, and private spaces as well as the pressure that is imposed on migrants in their everyday life. The map *Actors* on the other hand is centred the protagonists in the discourse on migration. It provides information on media, NGO’s, aid organisations, and political institutions in Europe. This map finds its counterpoint in *Discourses*, which visualises spheres of discourse circling around migration.

MigMap draws its potential from the thorough research on the actors, places, and discourses of migration²¹ and a critical distance to established conventions of cartography. The maps are not following the geographical outlines of national states or the European supra-national delimitations. The visualisations contrast with the iconography of illustrations common media and schoolbooks, which describe migratory movement. In these maps we can often find massive arrows symbolising the influx of people – arrows that seem to threaten the geographical integrity of countries. Charts symbolising the growth of certain “foreign groups” sprout in the heart of Europe.²² These representations do not only

¹⁸ “Projekt Migration“ was initialised in 2002 by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, focusing on societal developments initiated by migratory movements. The project took an interdisciplinary approach connecting historical perspectives, social sciences, and visual arts.

¹⁹ <http://www.transitmigration.org/migmap> (accessed 24 August 2011)

²⁰ Spillmann, Peter: 2007. Strategien des Mappings. In: Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe (ed.): *Turbulente Ränder: Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas*. Bielefeld: transcript, 156. (My translation)

²¹ Ibid.: 165.

²² See: Ibid.: 165. Spillmann also refers to the visual repertoire in traditional mappings on migration.

follow a questionable visual repertoire, which promotes xenophobia and equates movement with potential risk. The visualisations are no longer consistent with contemporary views on globalised, heterogeneous societies, in which the movement of people has become one of the central driving forces of our economy and cultural production.

Just as deviating from the norms of conventional maps are the collages of Michael Wagener. In his irritating cartographies he reassembles the world. His collages show exceptional topographies: circular shaped islands, lakes formed like a square – imaginary landscapes. The maps open fantastic spaces, for which new means of navigation have to be developed. For his often large-scale collages Wagener uses printed maps and in a time intensive process restructures bits and pieces to create new compositions. His approach is not one of an immediate visualisation of socio-political realities. However, there are indirect comments on social and political implications, especially when he includes landmarks – motorways, rivers, or mountains forming words – which directly address the viewer.

Wagener, Michael: Collage, 2010. away, collage, 2002. Installation view "grenzlinien", 2010.

In particular these collages can be read as an ironic commentary on the ambivalent nature of maps as a combination of image and text.²³ Maps cannot be identified as image or read as text alone. They have to be interpreted and are hugely dependent on additional information: on knowledge about the depicted area, the scale, and the legend.

The process of mapping can be understood as a form of taking control over a certain territory. The bird's eye view provides a feeling of predictability and security. Maps are legitimating power relations and are a means in the demarcation and establishing of new borders. Artistic mappings question these qualities – at the same time they critically use the repertoire of cartography and its role in the production of evidence:

Mapping as an artistic practice is based on a more or less reflected reinterpretation of traditional methods of cartography. The starting point is the knowledge about the limitations and fragmentary nature of maps as well as the critique of the power of knowledge which is represented through them.²⁴

²³ See: Harley, John B. 2001. The New Nature of Maps. In: *Essays in the History of Cartography*. Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins UP.

²⁴ Spillmann, Peter. 2007. Strategien des Mappings. In: Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe (ed.), *Turbulente Ränder: Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas*. Bielefeld: transcript, 159. (My translation)

Wagener, Michael: *horizonte*, collage, 2010. Installation view "grenzlinien", 2010.

Artistic mappings question the cultural and visual representation of ideological and political occupation. They show that maps are a human product and – just like borders – artificial constructions. Their approaches are far-reaching and varied. The interdisciplinary mappings of political and social realities in *MigMap* can be seen in the tradition of artistic activism and directly address the alternative production of knowledge.²⁵ Michael Wagener's on first glance primarily decorative collages open new imaginative horizons, but they also offer a productive impulse for the re-evaluation of traditional methods of cartography and their inherent power structures.

Borders and bodies

At the militarised frontiers between Europe and Africa, migrants are portrayed as a de-personalised, obscure mass that has to be kept at bay by all means.²⁶ This attitude shows itself in descriptions of what has become known as the "storming of the fences" in Ceuta and Melilla in 2005. The press used terms such as "massive invasion" and "plague"²⁷ to describe the attempts of sub-Saharan transmigrants to enter the territory of the European Union.²⁸

²⁵ There are other mappings in the tradition of critical geography such as "migeurop", "indymedia estrecho" or "precarias a la deriva". See: Spillmann, Peter. 2007. Strategien des Mappings. In: Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe (ed.) *Turbulente Ränder: Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas*. Bielefeld: transcript, 160.

²⁶ Holert, Tom and Terkessidis, Mark. 2006. *Fliehkraft. Gesellschaft in Bewegung – von Migranten und Touristen*. Köln: Kiwi, 45.

²⁷ See: Goldschmidt, Eli. 2006. Storming the Fences: Morocco and Europe's Anti-Migration Policy. *Middle East Report*, 239. <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer239/goldschmidt.html> (accessed 15 March 10)

²⁸ Schneider describes the media coverage of the event in which material from surveillance cameras was intensively used. He describes how, through the animation of the freeze images, the velocity is accelerated and which increased the perception of the

The imagery of the EU as an organism, which is attacked by a mass of microscopic invaders, follows a long tradition of analogies between the human body and circumscribed space. In anthropomorphic descriptions of landscape this dates back to pre-modern times. In the 17th and 18th centuries metaphoric descriptions of the (nation) state as a healthy organism surface and urban structures are compared to the human body.²⁹ The sociologist Markus Schoer detects similarities in the history of the representation of the body to the construction of nation states:

The development from open to enclosed perceptions of body and space evolves parallel to the formation of nation states as political spaces [...] However, in current debates the seemingly obvious borders of the body as well as the borders of the nation state are increasingly challenged [...] Spaces as well as bodies are currently described as scattered and fragmented.³⁰

Schroer notes a development, from a pre-modern space without borders, via the construction of borders in modern times, to their deconstruction in post-modern times. However this deconstruction of national and territorial borders goes hand in hand with a renewed construction of borders, albeit of a new nature. The political scientist William Walters uses the imagery of the virus to describe the altered state of borders and border control:

If there is a political dream of the border today, it is like anti-virus software: constantly scanning traffic, identifying threats, quarantining, disinfecting and silently isolating risks so that all those flows which we are told to value can continue to circulate and proliferate. A technology that, because the 'threat' is constantly morphing, must archive a condition of permanent updating.³¹

The development of technologies of surveillance and identification connects the human body with the border in yet another way. Biometric recognition systems allow for the identification of individuals through their physical characteristics. Here the border moves even closer – along the skin, over the iris, even inside the body, to the vocal chords and their specific sound. At an increasing pace, automated systems will be able to administer border controls and the flow of people in transit zones. Not only at Frankfurt/Main airport, systems have been installed which already bypass the normal face-to-face interaction at the border and rely on biometric characteristics to facilitate border crossing.

events as invasion and threat. See: Schneider, Florian. 2011. Enklaven, Ausnahmezustände und die Camps als Gegen-Labore. In: Gutberlet, M.H. and Helff, S. (Eds.) *Die Kunst der Migration. Aktuelle Positionen zum europäisch-afrikanischen Diskurs*. Bielefeld: transcript, 137-167.

²⁹ Schroer, Markus. 2006. *Räume, Orte, Grenzen*. Frankfurt/Main: suhrkamp.

³⁰ Ibid.: 290-291. (My translation)

³¹ Walters, William. 2005. William Walters in Conversation with Marion von Osten. Genealogies of Control. In: Kölnischer Kunstverein (ed.): *Projekt Migration*. Köln: DuMont, 164.

Raul Gschrey: *The typical Frankfurter/ Münchner/ Offenbacher* or *Automated recognition relies on individual characteristics – be average*. Composite mask, 2008 and ongoing.

The series of *Typical Inhabitants* are part of the project *Contemporary Closed Circuits*³² on visual surveillance, on which I was working in the past years. The series of composite photographs are composed from portraits of people – half male, half female – that move regularly in the respective cities. The mask that was manufactured from the composite can be worn in public space to prevent successful biometric recognition. Face recognition systems use characteristics that differ from the norm to match individuals with their biometric image. The composite technique in contrast emphasises similarities, average characteristics predominate in the superimpositions. Masks for other cities of Europe are in preparation.³³

The composite masks try to raise awareness of the possibilities and increasing diffusion of biometric identification systems. These instruments are not only used at national borders or their proxies, situated at airports and harbours, but can also be linked to CCTV systems. Biometric passports are increasingly replacing the ID-cards of an older generation and the body itself and its “eigenface”³⁴ gradually becomes the basic means of identification and the immediate site of the border:

[T]he management of the border cannot be understood simply as a matter of the geopolitical policing and disciplining of the movement of bodies across mapped space. Rather, it is more appropriately understood as a matter of biopolitics, as a mobile regulatory site through which people’s everyday lives can be made amenable to intervention and management.³⁵

This biometrisation and automation of border controls might eventually have far reaching influences on the life of irregular migrants in Europe. It aims at the majority of irregular migrants who do not travel into the community illegally but remain within the EU after their visas have expired. The so-called “Visa Information System” (VIS) is intended to close this loophole:

³² More information on the project “Contemporary Closed Circuits – Subversive Dialogues” and related works on: <http://www.pro-these.com/cctv> (accessed 25 August 2011). See also: Gschrey, Raul (Ed.) 2008. *Contemporary Closed Circuits – Subversive Dialogues – Künstlerische Arbeiten zum Thema Überwachung. Katalog zur Ausstellung*. Frankfurt/Main: Selbstverlag.

³³ Masks for Berlin, Bremen, Frankfurt/Main, Mainz, Munich, Offenbach/Main, Gießen, and Marburg are already available at: <http://www.pro-these.com/cctv/komposit.htm> (accessed 25 August 2011)

³⁴ The vector which describes the biometric data of an individual face is called “eigenface”.

³⁵ Amoore, Louise. 2006. Biometric borders: Governing mobilities in the war on terror. *Political Geography* 25: 337.

For this purpose a system of biometric control is to be established at all border crossings. EU-citizens will be able to authenticate themselves with their biometric passports; all other persons will have to provide biometric data at the border [...] Frontex admits that most irregular migrants do not cross the border illegally, but remain, as so called 'Visa Overstayers', in the EU after their residence permits have expired. This possibility could be restricted by VIS, which could automatically initiate a search warrant to be issued by the member states for all visa-holders in the EU whose visa have expired.³⁶

Revealing and concealing identities

Migrants outside the European Union are generally de-individualised by the authorities of the Community. Subsequent to a successful crossing of the border, this attitude is reversed. The identity of illegal migrants moves into the focus of attention, they are re-individualised, and put under a tight regime of observation. To prevent identification, migrants hide themselves and conceal their identity – they destroy their passports and even try to wipe out biometric characteristics such as their fingerprints.

Alex Wolf: *Ramadan in Calais*. Photography, 2009. Installation view "grenzlinien", 2010.

The situation of irregular migrants becomes visible at different routes of transit in Europe that can easily be used by its citizens, but form a sometimes insurmountable barrier for migrants. One of these places is the French harbour city Calais, where the ferries to Dover/England leave. The run-down city with many vacant buildings and the surrounding countryside has turned into a temporary home for large numbers of migrants. They are stranded at the shores of the Channel – waiting for their chance to smuggle themselves into Great Britain. Here one of the biggest illegal camps in Europe, the so-called "Jungle", existed until 2009 when in attempts to identify and deport the migrants, the camp was cleared.

³⁶ Kasperek, Bernd. 2008. Perfektion des Grenzregimes. Das Border Package der EU-Kommission. *ak - analyse und kritik - zeitung für linke Debatte und Praxis*, 527. (my translation) http://www.akweb.de/ak_s/ak527/06.htm (accessed 25 August 2011)

Alex Wolf: *Ramadan in Calais*. Photography, 2009. Installation view "grenzlinien", 2010.

The series of black and white photographs *Ramadan in Calais*, by the Dutch journalist and photographer Alex Wolf, provides an insight into the "Jungle". The photographs show the poor living conditions and the meagre celebrations at the end of Ramadan. The series ends with pictures of a police raid on the next morning in which the makeshift houses and tents were destroyed and the inhabitants temporarily arrested. In Calais police raids on the illegal camps are often conducted to determine the identity of individual migrants. According to European law they can be sent back to their country of origin. If this is not possible, they can be transferred to the country where they first entered Europe, or rather, where they were first registered. These regulations make it important for the migrants to conceal their identity, not to attract attention and not to raise their voices, in order not to be caught.

The division of spaces: Transit zones and zones of confinement

Paul Virilio (1997) [...] writes that the border is now at the centre of our cities. Airports act as border zones to the vertical vectors of mobility that cross national and state boundaries. For this, airports must function in a similar way to the borders that police the boundaries of our countries, regulation the movement of people that enter and leave. For

Virilio, ‘the doors to the city are tollbooths and its custom posts are dams, filtering the fluidity of the masses, the penetrating power of the migrant hordes (1986).³⁷

The architecture of airports divides space into different zones. On the one hand the “landside”, the public parts of the terminal, on the other the “airside”, the transit spaces, which can only be reached with a flight ticket and after extensive security checks. This part of the airport is sub-divided into a local or European part, as well as an international part, defined as exterritorial space. In Frankfurt/Main, this space on the national territory of Germany is used to restrict the movement of illegal migrants. They are kept in transit and are denied rights they would be entitled to on German territory. The airport, which is like no other place connected to the mobility of people, possesses a hidden reverse side, a place of confinement and “petrified movement”.

Monika Codourey has conducted extensive research in the arena of international transit areas and on the architectures of movement and confinement at Frankfurt/Main airport. In her documentary work she describes the camp for illegal migrants as another “terminal”. She compares the situation of asylum seekers in exterritorial space with the comfortable waiting areas and facilities for “premium travellers”:

Lufthansa offers for “preferred customers” a luxuriously styled separate HON/First Class terminal. To ensure the most comfortable and smooth travel possible for their top clients, Lufthansa offers its services already on the ground in sophisticated architectural surrounding. The new dimension of travels with exclusive services and privileges includes parking a car to check-in, eased security control and customs, an exclusive ambience with gourmet catering, private rooms for work and refreshment, personal attention, direct limousine transfer to the plane and even concierge services.³⁸

Codourey, Monika; Boknecht, Bettina: *Luxurious design of Lufthansa First Class Terminal: Terminal Building, Check-In Area, Waiting Area, Served Snacks*, 2005.³⁹

[T]he new special purpose terminal building was built at the airport area physically detached from main terminal. This “detention camp” gives temporary accommodation to the refugees arriving by plane and prevents them from entering the territory of the nation. For enforced cosmopolitans with restricted legal rights, the comfort and airport services are reduced to the absolute minimum. Asylum seekers are not allowed to leave the building during their stay at the privately secured detention camp. During their stay they are entitled to medical and social assistance. Social workers try to animate their stay at the camp offering various indoor and outdoor activities. Asylum seekers are carefully placed in the rooms according to their cultural similarities or place of origins. Refugees

³⁷ Virilio quoted after: Adey, Peter. 2004. Secured and Sorted Mobilities: Examples from the Airport. *Surveillance & Society* 1(4): 504.

³⁸ Codourey, Monika. 2008. Mobile Identities and the Socio-spatial Relations of Air Travel. *Surveillance & Society* 5(2): 290.

³⁹ Ibid.: Figure 2, 290.

are not allowed to cook in the building because cultural differences could cause problems.⁴⁰

Codourey, Monika; Boknecht, Bettina: *Realities of Detention Camp: Outside, Inside, Secured Courtyard, Living Conditions*, 2005.⁴¹

The “special terminal” on Frankfurt/Main airport is kept from public view: there are only few photographs or descriptions of the life within the highly surveilled detention centre. However, not only in Frankfurt/Main, everywhere in the heart of Europe we can find places where migrants and asylum seekers are placed. Often they are kept waiting for long periods, they are not allowed to move freely and remain under a tight regime of control.⁴²

Youth as Refugees: Youth as Refugees. Installation view “grenzlinien” Frankfurt/Main, 2010.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 291.

⁴¹ Ibid.: Figure 4, 291.

⁴² The Exhibition “Residenzpflicht – Invisible Borders” deals with refugee centres and residency permits issued to asylum seekers and in Germany. <http://www.invisibleborders.de> (accessed 25 August 2011) Also see: Kuebart, Philipp. 2009. *Residenzpflicht – Invisible Borders*. Potsdam: Selbstverlag.

Rare views into refugee centres in Kotka and Lammi/Finland are offered in the web-project *Youth as Refugees*⁴³ by the Finnish artists Anna Knappe, Pekka Niskanen, Timo Piikilä, and Jana Ristola. The videos for the website were produced in cooperation with young people from Afghanistan, the Congo and Somalia, who seek asylum in Finland. The videos tell the stories of young refugees, show their life in refugee reception centres and their attempts to integrate into an unfamiliar society.

Youth as Refugees: *Youth as Refugees* Videos. Screenshots, 2010.

The videos that are shown on the website provide an insight into the daily lives of the young asylum seekers, who are secluded in facilities that are usually located in the countryside. The project is an opportunity for the young refugees to get their voices heard outside the “reception centres”. They express their fears, their hopes, and their anger about the unreasonably long time it takes for the asylum decisions to be made by the Finnish authorities. This expression of feelings and narration of individual stories can have therapeutic value. It also empowers the youths to actively participate in discussions on refugee issues and asylum policies. Their stories are broadcast internationally and might influence public discourse.

Perspectives on contemporary borderlines

It becomes increasingly hard to trace the borderlines of Europe. They criss-cross the heartland of Europe, they converge at places of transit and reach far beyond the geographic “delineation” of Europe. The line can only be thought in relation to the surrounding space. These border-spaces are established through the interaction of the different actors of the border regime. Currently we can witness the strengthening of excluding strategies and an increasing automation and militarisation of border management. This tendency raises central ethical issues: How does this go along with the European ideals of freedom, plurality, and democracy? – When migrants die under the watchful eyes of Frontex in the Mediterranean and in the heart of Europe a network of refugee centres persist in which people are kept from participating in social life. How do we want to live in our “Europe without borders”? – When the borders tighten around our neighbours and irregular fellow Europeans.

Borders have become interlinked, mobile, and hard to grasp, but nevertheless they surface as concrete structures: As the fortified frontiers enclosing the European enclaves on the African continent, or the radius of costal surveillance of the Frontex-directed Spanish border guards. They appear as the extraterritorial detention camps on Germany’s main airport, the official refugee-centres spread all over Europe, or the self-organised camps of migrants in Calais/France. They also reach into the streets and transit spaces of our cities and move closer to our bodies – to skin, iris and “eigenface”. Especially these new biometric sites of the border will revolutionise the management of international movement. Biometric techniques will soon become the prime source for the identification and classification of people on the move.

The organisation of movement across these border structures shows unequal treatments of different groups of people. Privileged passengers can move easily and swiftly across the globe and may, even in developing countries, remain in secure and familiar environments. The journeys of migrants, who are

⁴³ More information and videos on the website of the project: <http://www.youthasrefugees.com> (25 August 2011)

travelling under dissimilar pretences, are usually exhausting and dangerous. They frequently strand in different places at various stages of their journey – their movement is slowed down or “petrified”.

The artistic works presented here mirror the uncertainties and shifting geographies, which go along with the newly developing border structures. They use photographic, filmic, and cartographic means in dealing with the topic of borders and border crossings. Some of the artistic works take a documentary approach. Apart from that, the works open imaginative spaces and zoom in on the topic in an emotional way. This strategy of telling stories can raise awareness of the altering nature of frontiers and border regimes and the rapidly changing mechanisms of control and confinement of movement.

The artistic positions provide new perspectives and foster the imagination. In Heiko Schäfer's photographs of the confiscated boats, this is achieved through the reduction of information, which helps to question media-based, predetermined views and interpretations. The cartographies of Michael Wagener also address themselves at the imagination, by the means of irritation and by challenging truth claims attributed to maps. The serious game *Frontiers* addresses the topic directly – it draws the player into the action along the borderlines and achieves identification with the subjects of the discourse. The more documentary pieces about self-organised and state-run refugee camps cast light on the daily life of migrants in Europe. They can raise awareness and lend the subjects a voice. In this sense, the artistic works can be seen as an alternative production of knowledge, which can help to explore the shifting contemporary borderlines.

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