

# KIEZ AVANTGARDE KUNSTSCHULE

## Part 1:

### "Airplane Dripping"

#### **KIEZ AVANTGARDE KUNSTSCHULE, PART I: "Airplane Dripping"**

Kiez Avantgarde Kunstschule is a contemporary art project involving pre-teen children from Soldiner Kiez in Berlin, Germany. During a summer workshop, the artists Ondrej Brody (CZ), Ivars Gravleis (LAT), Kristofer Paetau (FIN) and Avdey Ter-Oganian (RUS) planned to introduce a group of children into the practice of contemporary art, thereby referring to the longtime project "School of Contemporary Art" initiated by Avdey Ter-Oganian with teenagers in Moscow in the 90s. Our project didn't turn out as expected: We didn't manage to find a steady group of children to work with, so we decided to go to the nearest playground in order to try to attract children to participate in this project. Moreover, we had continuous disagreements concerning the (pedagogical) content of our project, which at the end resulted in the fact that only two exercises, conceived by Kristofer Paetau ("Airplane Dripping" and "The Punishment"), were executed, since he was the only artist capable to communicate with the children in German...

A Quicktime Videodocumentation is to be viewed at:

<http://www.paetau.com/downloads/KiezAvantgarde/AirplaneDripping.mov>

„Chance is always powerful. Let your hook be always cast;  
in the pool where you least expect it, there will be a fish.”

Ovid



**We are looking forward to the creation of an art work, aren't we? Some adults and a child seems to be involved, and it happens outdoor at a playground?**

Yes, we came there with a pretty large canvas in order to produce a painting together with the children who are usually playing there.

„For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,  
and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”  
Genesis 3:4-6



**Preparation for work, continuing. What kind of suits are you wearing?**

Avdey and me wore these suits to protect us from the paint and to attract the children's attention. It worked out quite well.

„When you make your peace with authority, you become authority.“  
James Douglas Morrison



**A first candidate, presumably. He doesn't look so pleased. How did you convince the children? What are you talking about?**

I told them that we were going to play airplane with them, and that they would get paint bottles to squirt colour on the canvas from the air. They really fancied the prospect of painting but they were afraid of the airplane-thing at first. We managed to convince this boy who was brave enough to give it a try. After him a lot of children wanted to try it out.

„I don't have any solution, but I certainly admire the problem.“  
Ashleigh Brilliant



**Now that the action starts everybody seems to be more relaxed...**

Only on the outside. I was very nervous, and we didn't really know how to handle the bodies. First we both tried to swing the boy in the air together, but we soon had to give it up because it was not so easy to coordinate our movements.

„Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it whether it exists or not, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedy.”

Ernest Benn



**How was it to work with the kids, and what a feeling did they have, about being a flying brush?**

They really enjoyed painting! The swinging-around in the air made it even more attractive for them, because they had to overcome some fear to accept this challenge. Yet, a couple of children were too afraid of this and participated as public or assistants, like the tall boy with the cap.

„All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be detestable to you.”  
Leviticus 11:19-21



**Did they understand what you explained and what was done with them?**

I think so, at least they were watching the action, and they wanted to participate in it until all the paint bottles were empty. I guess they didn't understand the conceptual side of this action, yet one mother told us that it reminded her of Jackson Pollock. She was a drawing teacher though.

„Painting: The art of protecting flat surfaces from the weather and exposing them to the critic.”  
Ambrose Bierce



**Why didn't you show them pictures of Jackson Pollock's paintings to explain the artistic idea behind your action?**

That was the initial plan for our workshop, but then we didn't get hold of a steady group of children, so the conditions for communication and collaboration were not at all assured. Therefore we just went straight to the action and ignored the pedagogical background.



„The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents, and the second half by our children.”  
Clarence Darrow



**This picture shows the dynamic of the scene, how the brush works...**

Yes, it was strange (and heavy) for me to manipulate these “living brushes“, but while I did it I wasn't thinking so much in those terms, it was about playing and having fun while producing a painting.

„To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk.”  
Thomas Edison



**I suppose the result will be also made of fun, activity, and the total quietness of a body shifted around?**

The result for me is the video, documenting the action, as well as the painting that we produced. When you deal with human beings, there are always many things leaking in that you would not have expected.

„A child of five would understand this. Send someone to fetch a child of five.”  
Groucho Marx



**Here it is, still in process. Tell me more about your artistic ambition, please!**

I guess my artistic ambition has something of a post-pubertarian semi-pedagogical confrontation with the artworld...

„Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.”  
Abraham Lincoln



**What was here to discuss?**

This girl was very shy and quite afraid to participate. I also met her father who was totally the opposite character. It almost made me cry. It sounds stupid, I know. During the two hours we were working with the children, I could feel so many strange personal things in some of them. In this picture I'm just giving her an encouraging applause, I think.

„There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”  
Francis Bacon



**Do you see a relationship between the action, the contingent result and a shift in your idea? I mean, how far were you involved in or scattered by your own concept, how far were you exposed to the situation as an uncontrolled process? But you had a lot of control over the bodies...**

I don't know. I had this idea and I realised it. But then the realisation turned out to be much more than the bare idea. To experience this thing "in action" was a kind of reality-shock for me.

„All art is quite useless.“  
Oscar Wilde



**Apparently, the children chose the colours. Did you talk about the colours on the canvas and how to handle the bottles?**

No, we just let them choose the colours and do their thing in the air. It would have been difficult for me to tell them how to do it, because I never experienced that myself.

„I'm tired of all this nonsense about beauty being only skin-deep.  
That's deep enough. What do you want, an adorable pancreas?”  
Jean Kerr



**Up... Do you think the kids will remember it for the rest of their lives?**

I hope so, that would be the most beautiful thing. But I doubt that. I would like to make something like a booklet to give them as a souvenir.

„A person reveals his character by nothing so clearly as the joke he resents.”  
Georg Christoph Lichtenberg



**Bringing it home. – I would like to know if the Kolonie Wedding (the local artist organisation) participated in this project, who supported it, and which kind of problems appeared in the controversial discussions - you told me about - between Avdey, Ivars, Ondrej and you.**

We ended up doing this totally independently, without any support or funding. I had contacted two kindergartens in order to get a stable group of children, but one was closed in this period of time, and the other had enough programmes already planned. I had also made two applications for the funding of the original project that was supposed to take place regularly during almost two months, but both applications were turned down. So our internal controversial discussions were much about how to deal with this new situation, and also about the “artistic leadership“ and the “copyright“ on this project that Avdey sort of wanted to control.



„Art is making something out of nothing and selling it.”  
Frank Zappa



**This picture reminds me of the sunday morning film series 'Die kleinen Strolche' which was on TV when I was a child. That were silent movies about a group of kids. The leisure time of childhood, its intense interest in the world, jokes, and a certain strong purpose to organize the individual interest. Do you see any connection in this with art?**

It sounds very idyllic. I wish I could see art in such a way too, and sometimes I do...

„I'm afraid that if I look at a thing long enough, it loses all of its meaning.“  
Andy Warhol



**What do you think about it?**

I think it's great. It's a painting I am very proud of. When we showed it at the Projektraum Deutscher Künstlerbund in Berlin, someone said that it looked as if it came straight from the MOMA. That's a compliment, isn't it?

**Concept & Realisation: Kristofer Paetau**

**Inspired by Avdey Ter-Oganians "School of Contemporary Art"**

**Assistance: Avdey Ter-Oganian**

**Camerawork: Ondrej Brody & Ivars Gravleis**

**Video Editing: Ondrej Brody**

**Soldiner Kietz, Berlin, July 18, 2005**

**KIEZ AVANTGARDE KUNSTSCHULE, PART I: "Airplane Dripping"**

Concept & Realisation: Kristofer Paetau

Inspired by Avdey Ter-Oganian's "School of Contemporary Art"

Assistance: Avdey Ter-Oganian

Camerawork: Ondrej Brody & Ivars Gravleis

Video Editing: Ondrej Brody

Soldiner Kiez, Berlin, July 18, 2005

Interview: Heike Wetzig & Kristofer Paetau

Selected quotations by Rüdiger Heinze

August, 2005.

A Quicktime Videodocumentation is to be viewed at:

<http://www.paetau.com/downloads/KiezAvantgarde/AirplaneDripping.mov>