

## How William Blake Saved The Documenta

"For futurologists all times are the present" (Darius Mikšys)

One of my friends told me that she had a dream last night in which she dreamt that she went to the opening of Documenta and somehow managed to brake down the most precious paintings and sculptures and everything else. She didn't know how she did it. Me neither—she looks so tiny. All the pieces fell down in such a terrible way that no one could reconstruct them ever after. In the dream, she nearly burst into tears at the thought that, somehow, she managed to destroy all the best pieces by the best artists in the whole world (she nearly said the *best* world). Naturally, she was scared in her dream. Not for herself, of course (or so she told me), but because she felt that her actions were not unlike those of the Nazis – she destroyed the priceless pieces of art. And in this way she added the new value to the phrase 'Mission Accomplished', which was also the title of Bush's scandalous speech on the deck of USS Abraham Lincoln.

As the first Documenta was organised as a direct and obvious comment on the infamous Nazi propaganda exhibition *Degenerate Art (Entartete Kunst)* held in 1937, my friend thought that she destroyed all Documenta's efforts. Although we could have the obvious discussion about the differences of her and Nazi's actions, I asked her, which Documenta it was?

When it appeared in reality she never went to Documenta.

So what happened next in you dream? - I asked her to finish her nightmare out of pure curiosity.

"I went to the past," she said, "To change the present."

"And the future," she added.

But to go to the past you have to go to the future first (but who wants to go to the future, again?), as time machines exist in the future only. Unless you use the inter-personal mythology or fiction as the time machine. For example, Victor Vasarely, who, beside everything else, also participated in Documenta 1, was always saying that he was born in 1705<sup>1</sup> instead of 1906. This slight difference of 201 years might look tiny and trivial if you take it as a joke. But what his mom was saying about it?

In the same bizarre way she smashed all the art pieces, she went to future and when, of cause, by using the time machine, to the past. There she realised she went too far as she appeared on the radio adaptation of H. G. Wells' classic novel *The War of the Worlds* by Orson Welles in 1938 at the episode where Welles played recordings of Herbert Morrison's radio reports of the Hindenburg disaster in 1937. But all she could remember was the next radio advertising she said she could repeat by heart. She did so and here it is what she heard:

*"I would like to invite you to participate in the speculative-imaginary project that will take form of a special supplement of Aprior magazine (Brussels). What I would like to ask from you is very simple - please send me a brief proposal for Documenta exhibition in Kassel. Together with 19 other proposals your idea will comprise an individual*

---

*publication of 32 pages, b/w, 5000 copies, to be distributed for free at Art Brussels and Documenta 12 scheduled to be released in mid April this year.*

*The deadline for your proposal is very close - it has to be received by March 15, yet there's a certain advantage to compensate the shortage of days to think: the time span that your proposal should address is rather indefinite. Any Documenta - whether it's the first one in 1955 or the last one in 2002 or the 19th one in 2042 [...] is at your disposal. In a classic Sci-Fi tradition of time-travelling manipulation of past may change future (like the narratology of *La Jetee* or *Terminator*) as well as traveling in future may affect the past. Please feel free to navigate past or future extensively while changing the course of events passed and those to come.*

*However we don't have to stick to the linear notion of time, maybe we can multiply Documenta in parallel dimensions of time and alter it irreversibly (the content of this project is not going to be in any way negotiated or authorised by Documenta authorities.) Please don't forget to acknowledge (or construct) the position of time your proposal is coming from. Maybe you can shoot your idea from the XIX century straight to the 50s or come from future to Okwui's hands via today. To make things easier (and to save your time) together with Dexter Sinister who will design the publication we devised a special template for your proposal: it indicates both the temporal or historic position of the addressee as well as the sender. It's attached as a pdf file to my message. Please fill it and send it back to us - we will be very happy to receive it (on time.) Thanks a lot. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.*

*Very much looking forward to hear from you soon.*

*easy,  
rai*

*ps. although we all know that Documenta is an exhibition of art, I assume your proposal does not have to be only an art-work - it could develop as a curatorial, strategic, political or administrative idea. However given that art is rapidly converging with other human spheres and services I would like not to specify whether it artistic or par-artistic project. Enjoy your trip!"*

Suddenly after this she realised it was her time to talk now. 'Hello to all the fans of sci-fi, this is me'- she introduced herself to the invisible and mute audience and suddenly the past perfect tense of *real* and *fictitious* reality and history shifted to the past, present, spatial, past future tenses in non obligatory order.

The presenter was William Blake and the audience call was by Laurence Weiner.

Was this *all times are present tense* active everywhere the radio was switched on? If yes, what happened when the listeners switched it on or off (she was sure many of them did so as the show was more than weird)? If phones could teleport you in *Matrix* why can't radios or magazines or exhibitons do it?

Then she thought about listeners and became one of them. Then she has chosen not to think about anything as she was afraid to think about something unpleasant and to become it. She became it. Then she thought about pleasant and she became something

pleasant. Then she thought that she finally had a power. And she realised that the time machine and possibility to legitimize the history and present by re-enactments, impersonations and time travelling could help her to shift the power relations we have. Also it could help to re-position the fictional or historical figures, events of the past, but also to add more figures to the game. To the present. To the reality.

Then she went back to the first scene of her dream. No art pieces felt down this time. My friend couldn't wait for her next dream now. She said she missed William Blake a lot.

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor\\_Vasarely](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Vasarely). last accessed April 2, 2007