
A brief outline for a group of works which is about to become materialized.

During the simultaneous crisis of historical thought and historical reality, the event frequently appears to be the outcome of chance and circumstances. We expect it to evaporate and disappear without a trace. However, if it is historical, it will leave traces. And we're going to become attached to this henceforth privileged phenomenon: the trace. And we shall try to understand the historical event in terms of a series of things, revealed by traces. (Lefebvre, 1970)

I

The term victim originates in 1497 denoting the killing of a living creature as a sacrifice to a god. It took over one and a half centuries, till 1660, until the extended sense of 'a person who is hurt, tortured, or killed by another' (Banhart, 1988:2010) was first recorded in English. The significantly 'weakened sense of a person badly treated or taken advantage of' is first recorded in 1781 (ibid.). The term victimize is rooted and derived from victim + ize which has its origin in 1830 denoting: to make a victim of, cause to suffer. Regarding this line of interpretation, the contemporary use of the word victimize (Am. English) / victimise (Brit. English) is solely related to the living being. Victimized, participle perfect of victimize, indicates that the process of victimization (originates in 1840) was already taken place.

The word material is reported to have appeared first in the English language around 1380 describing 'things made of matter, substance, in Chaucer's translation of Boethiu's *De Consololatione Philosophiae*' (Banhart, 1988:2010). It is the doublet and predecessor of materiel. The term materiel which originates in about 1340, means of matter, physical, concrete, earthy, from Latin *materialis*; of or belonging to matter (ibid.), out of which in 1814 the denotation: 'the mechanical part of an art, such as style, technique, etc.' (ibid.) developed. According to a common dictionary (Oxford's, 2011) the contemporary use of the

term materiel is connoted with military materials or equipment. Victimized Material is used in reference to the connotation of the term materiel as technique/style, dated 1814 and now left behind, and its reference to the realm of art.

OH!LOGO [O!L] is utilizing the material not only in its common sense meaning 'matter' or 'substance' but further with the undertone: technique/style. The Victimized Material itself as style is in most cases freed from the relation to a personal gesture executed by O!L. It generally came into being synchronically and by chance.¹ After being generated or discovered by O!L the material is forced back into its new form and appearance as a common design product.²

II

Some central points & questions:

(i) In an attempt to locate appropriate materials, O!L is discussing a catalogue of criteria under which a damage of material can be regarded as victimization and thus qualify for Victimized Material. Framing condition here is that the damage of the actual material can be referred back to the influence and/or involvement of man.

(ii) A Victimized Material might, to a certain extent, be regarded as an anthropological repository of information. Through their

individual, specific materiality and the damage caused to their physical matter, they are revealing information about their time of origin, production process and further related sociohistorical circumstances, of both material and damage.

(iii) What is the relation between damaged material and human violence?

(iv) How was and is this related to the human condition?

(v) How is the archive as a conglomeration of assumed facts creating acceptance regarding relayed story lines in historical thought? To what extent can these be identified as constructions? The occurring posterior difficulty of verifying between fact and construct, as well as the resulting process of becoming a module in generating expertise and notion is used in a conceptual way.³ For O!L the salvages of material are the points of departure. Undertaking a process of critical revisitation and recontextualisation O!L reopens and expands the subject of the singular Victimized Material towards the here and now. Inherent in its individual context the Victimized Material becomes – being repositioned in time and place – a potential model which enables discursive structures to develop anew and overcome the ‘dead spot’ of the salvaged material and its history. Insights of contemporary significance might, through a critical discursive approach, be developed.

III

Each project is based on a detailed research regarding its individual properties and its relation to history, precisely it is looked closer at its constituting moment of victimization and its broader sociohistorical circumstances & consequences. The Victimized Material itself is regarded as a trace in history and thus of

forensic value for O!L. A comprehensive understanding of the facticities and narratives which developed through and from the moment of its victimization is essential. This process will enable to determine precisely the indispensable necessity of its recuperation as a Victimized Material here and now, unless it is fiction. The exception confirms the rule in cases not excepted.⁴

IV

Victimized Materials certainly did not make history in terms of generating or creating it, but they do carry the traces of a time which might be regarded as history by now. It will be necessary to discuss this in more detail. If these damages or traces can be regarded as traces of historical events Victimized Material has the prospective to develop as a critical design, approaching issues of contemporary significance from a sociohistorical perspective. With asking if we could’t ‘argue that almost every design is, in a certain way, the design of an archiving machine’ Mark Wigley (2005) is developing his point of bringing design and the archival process in position to each other. For him this is a vice versa relationship ‘inasmuch as design involves gathering together diverse and evolving materials and giving them a singular fixed shape, historic preservation’s archiving gesture is always an act of design. To save something is to redesign.’ (ibid.) The manifestation of the final object of design archives materials ‘by projecting them rather than concealing them.’ (ibid.) The result is a ‘new kind of archive that preserves documents by circulating them in a new way.’ (ibid.)

V

Focusing on very specific cases this project explores the potential of material to be regarded as victimized in the metaphorical sense, cross-referring to man. Acknowledging that the material itself inhabits the specific

narration of its case and the surrounding sociohistorical circumstances they might generate their capability to unravel the underlying structures of today's human condition. It is the objective of this practice oriented research to reconnect from the present to a historical reality and bring viewpoints into focus which have been less regarded so far.

With Victimized Material O!L explores the feasibility of a speculative social forensic modus operandi in design with a strong interest in a sociohistorical aspect. Going away from a customer and consumer led approach and beyond the product/commodity barrier, O!L's tendency in Victimized Material is rather regarded as speculative fieldwork than traditionalized design practice. From within it aims to explore the boundaries of design and its implementations – how design is positioned as a critical contemporary practice within the broader field of creative disciplines today.

KEYWORDS | design | critical practice | discourse | victimized material | social forensics | reconstruction | direct / indirect human violence | damage | human condition | archive | collective / individual memory | becoming history | fictitiousness | reality

¹Even though the events leading up to it may not have developed by chance at all.

² Further, this process is questioning the necessity of gesture and creation in general. Up to date, similar to the realm of fine art, this is by a majority of designers still regarded as a symbol of individualism in its very moldy sense. Tying their interest and attention to the mere realm of supplying a commodity oriented framework through the creation of their personal masterpieces or top products, this leaves aside the more critical and subversive strategies which design is able to inhabit.

³ Certainly always in a coherent manner within the singular project.

⁴ Exceptio probat regulam in casibus non exceptis. (Cicero in his defense of Lucius Cornelius Balbus)

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