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FREDERICO GELLER / JÜRGEN STOLLHANS  
developmental noise - pay attention to Ham

17. Oktober - 30. November 2008

Vortrag:  
Zwischen Genen und Umwelt  
*Interview mit einem Affen*

Vortrag von Federico Geller / Jürgen Stollhans  
Samstag, 18. Oktober 2008

**Federico Geller** und **Jürgen Stollhans**[1] stellen in ihrer gemeinsamen Ausstellung **Developmental Noise**[2] ein wissenschaftlich-künstlerisches Projekt vor, in dem sie sich mit Evolutionsgeschichte und Genetik im kulturellen und politischen Kontext auseinandersetzen. Installation und Vortrag dokumentieren ein Interview mit einem Affen namens **Ham**[3], der rückblickend aus seinem Leben erzählt, von seinen Erfahrungen und Erlebnissen im All, in der Wissenschaft und in der Kunst. Die Menschen erkennt er als verwandte Wesen, die in ihrem Eroberungs-, Ordnungs- und Kausalitätsbestreben mit Hilfe von Idealen, Ideologien und Imaginationen ihrer eigentlichen „Affen“-Natur zu begegnen und gleichzeitig zu entkommen versuchen.

*“Ham speaks for us and he does it better than we two together. When we found him in Pindoí Island he told us about his life, almost always been abused as an object for political adventures in the Cold War. He learnt a lot both in scientific as in artistic institutions but instead of feeling resentful of our species, he chose to love us, not only because he realised that we are also apes, like him, but because he knows that the future of chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and many other animals is in our hands.*

*It is a pity that we lost the tape. However, we decided to reconstruct the interview we made with drawings and different documents for preserving his unique testimony and statements. Both science and art are battle fields where ideological consensus is built on the basis of representations. We need to understand: how are they made and what do they mean? Because we want to understand our human ape nature in order to change it and make it more happy.” (Federico Geller / Jürgen Stollhans)*

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[1] **Federico Geller**, Biologe und Künstler, lebt in Argentinien und nahm 2003 mit der Grupo Arte Callejero an der 50. Biennale in Venedig und 2004 an der Ausstellung „ExArgentina“ im Museum Ludwig in Köln teil, an der auch der in Köln lebende Künstler **Jürgen Stollhans** beteiligt war. Jürgen Stollhans, Teilnehmer der documenta 12, reiste nach Argentinien und begann dort zusammen mit Geller das Projekt auszuarbeiten. Unter dem Titel: „Sorry Ham!“ zeigten sie bereits einen Teil ihrer Arbeit im Kunstverein Hildesheim.

[2] **Developmental Noise** ist ein Konzept, das Richard Lewontin entliehen ist. Er versucht damit, Gründe für Variationen von Lebewesen zu finden, die sich nicht durch genetische oder umweltbedingte Unterschiede erklären lassen.

[3] **Ham** war der Schimpanse, der kurz vor Yuri Gagarin von der NASA ins All geschickt wurde. Sein Name leitet sich vom Holloman Aerospace Medical Center ab, der Ort, an dem der Schimpanse für seinen Weltraumtrip trainiert wurde. *“Ham war der erste Affe im All, Yuri der zweite.“*

FREDERICO GELLER / JÜRGEN STOLLHANS

developmental noise - pay attention to Ham

17. October - 30. November 2008

Lecture:

Frederico Geller / Jürgen Stollhans

Between genes and environment

*Interview with an ape*

Saturday, 18. October 2008

**Federico Geller and Jürgen Stollhans**<sup>[4]</sup> present a science-based artistic project in their exhibition **Developmental Noise**<sup>[5]</sup>. It is about cultural and political contexts of genetics and the history of evolution. The installation and lecture document an interview with an ape called **Ham**<sup>[6]</sup>. Looking back he talks about his life, about his experiences in outer space and especially in science and art. He realises that humans are related beings tending to conquest, order and causality. But at the same time, by means of ideals, ideologies and imaginations, they try to meet as well as to escape from their “ape” nature.

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<sup>[4]</sup> Federico Geller, biologist and artist, lives in Argentina. With the Grupo Arte Callejero he took part in the 50th International Art Exhibition in Venice in 2003. In 2004 he was invited to the exhibition “ExArgentina” at Museum Ludwig in Cologne in which also Cologne based artist Jürgen Stollhans was involved. Jürgen Stollhans, participant of documenta12, travelled to Argentina and together with Federico Geller he began to develop the project. Entitled „Sorry Ham!” they already showed a part of their work at Kunstverein Hildesheim.

<sup>[5]</sup> Developmental Noise is a concept borrowed from Richard Lewontin. It tries to explain the source of variations of creatures not caused by genetic or environmental differences.

<sup>[6]</sup> Ham was the Chimpanzee sent by NASA to outer space shortly before Yuri Gagarin made a trip to cosmos. His name comes from Holloman Aerospace Medical Centre, the place where he was coached. *“Ham was the 1st ape in space. Yuri was the 2nd”.*