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**FRANCES STARK  
INSERT  
FOR PARKETT**



A conversation with  
my better half

about some of the things  
I was grappling with

ended with the  
exhortation

'you should read Bettina  
Funcke's *Urgency*'.

So I did.

It felt delightfully  
pertinent

to my recent thoughts.

In the end  
(or at the end)

delight turned to anxiety



because of how  
you closed

with that question\*

meaning I'd have to  
continue

the line of questioning

(answering?)

myself.

Post-delight anxiety  
was followed by

procrastination  
in the form

of wanting to keep  
reading your words



so as not to have to  
think or write

of or with my own.

A ray of hope appeared:

“Excerpted  
from the chapter:

The Invention  
of the Public as Enemy”

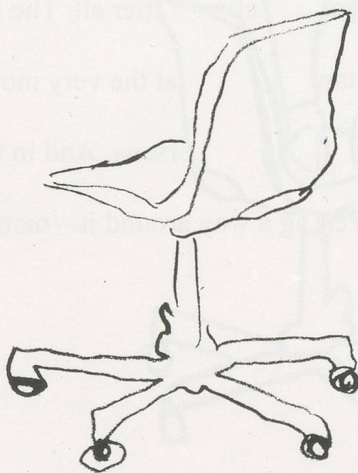
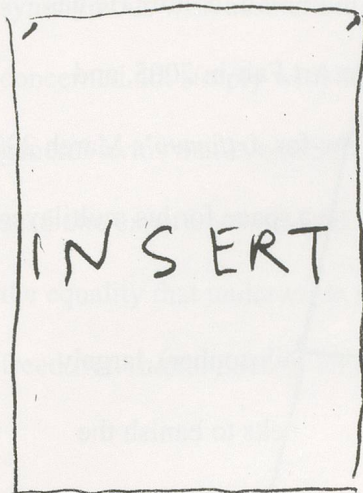
But the implied book  
wasn't cited.

Looking for it led me  
instead to

your  
*Displaced Struggles*

wherein I recognized  
myself as the artist  
contending with





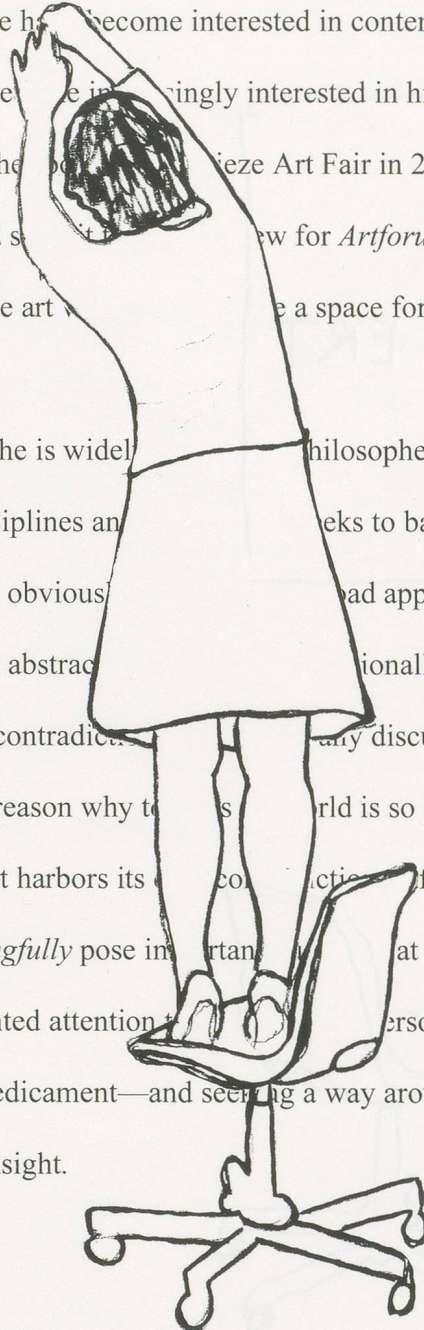


## Displaced Struggles

Bettina Funcke

Why might philosopher Jacques Rancière have become interested in contemporary art, even as the art world, in neat symmetry, has become increasingly interested in him? He has apparently followed art for many years, he booked the Frieze Art Fair in 2005, and recently chose to publish an essay in and send it to the new *Artforum*'s March 2007 issue—all signs of his confidence that the art world would make a space for his multilayered discourse.

Rancière is not an easy read, yet he is widely read (as a philosopher), largely because he situates himself between disciplines and seeks to banish the division between specialist and amateur, obvious and hidden appeal. At the same time his philosophical work can be quite abstract and occasionally lodged at its core. Although this embrace of internal contradiction in any discussion of his thoughts on art, might it not also be the reason why the art world is so interested in his voice? The hothouse of contemporary art harbors its contradictions after all. The artist today finds it harder than ever to *meaningfully* pose important questions at the very moment that the culture has accorded unprecedented attention to the artist's persona. And in the difficult task of thinking through this predicament—and seeking a way around it—many have turned to Rancière's writings for insight.





One of the more intriguing ideas that Rancière has contributed to art discourse is an insistence that art and politics are simply two forms of what he calls “the distribution of the sensible”. The sensible is a sphere on which both art and politics act through processes of structuring, framing, identifying, and contextualising (that is, distribution). It is a kind of unstructured matter that precedes all else. The distribution of the sensible, then, is synonymous with aesthetics, a term Rancière employs in the sense of *aisthesis*: a science concerned not simply with beauty and art but also with appearance and perception, all general terms that evoke Schiller’s aesthetic education of man or Kant’s description of aesthetic experience. Indeed, Rancière’s own notion of aesthetic experience presupposes the equality that underwrote Kant’s formulation of the judgment of taste as a judgment freed from hierarchies of knowledge and social status.



plus-one as well as a division: a paradox at his very heart.

Such strategies were perhaps a response to an increasingly mediatized society. The artist needs new tools in order to be heard. Beuys and Warhol are in this respect outstanding in post-World War II Western art. Like Warhol, whom Beuys called "brother," Beuys operated under the assumption that the most affirmative artist enjoys the greatest success with the broadest audience because they affirm the public's latent suspicions of art as well as the public's hopes for it, thus meeting all expectations, which artists may then use to their own ends. A crucial difference separates them, however, and perhaps leaves Beuys as the last of a line: he made demands, while Warhol did not. In this sense, as an artist who both garners widespread influence and uses that influence to make concrete demands, was his the last urgent artistic position? Certainly one can point to other art with a sense of political urgency, for example, Act-Up, the Guerilla Girls, and other positions associated

with the "ident  
1990s. That  
it put an end  
otherwise. The  
tivism was no  
cal dimension,  
the realm of c  
had become—  
ic, and such st  
to capture the

**"I prefer being  
—Maurizio Cattelan**

Maurizio Cattelan's successful reception or trickster artist: clichés, but he last several years work that embrace culture and media to Beuys appears (*We Are the R* spacious exhibition was left last corner did representing the suspended from flaunting a lonely and hel manding space

Cattelan's role be the felled Po



entity politics" of the 1980s and  
tera, however, is different, in that  
ed to mystical naïveté, sincere or  
The worldness of their political ac-  
no longer countered by any mysti-  
on, which might bring it back into  
of art or imagination. Urgent art  
e – or had to become – pragmat-  
n strategies, in hindsight, may fail  
ne public's imagination.

**"being attacked to being ignored."**

**Cattelan**

Cattelan counts as one of the more  
recent examples of the charlatan  
artist. He might play with mystical  
he makes no demands. Over the  
years he has managed to create  
nobody's a tension between lasting  
mass marketing. His personal debt  
appears in *La rivoluzione siamo Noi*  
(*The Revolution*), 2000, in which the  
hibition hall of Zürich's Migros Mu-  
seum is virtually empty and only in the  
did the viewer encounter a puppet  
the artist, clothed in a felt suit,  
from a hanger on a clothing rack,  
with a mischievous smile yet ultimately  
helpless in the merciless and de-  
face of art.

most successful work to date might  
be the *Pope of La Nona Ora* (*The Ninth*

*Hour*), 1999, a work that directly addresses the  
meaning behind the image. Tellingly, the life-  
size replica of Pope John Paul II was modeled  
after a Hiroshi Sugimoto photograph of a wax-  
work figure of the pope, that is, a representation  
of a representation of the spiritual leader. This  
absurd scenario, in which a meteorite had ap-  
parently hurtled through the Kunsthalle's skylight  
and struck down this puppet pope, caused such  
a sensation that it later led to the dismissal of  
a museum director who refused to remove the  
work after protests by parliamentary members  
of the Catholic national party. *La Nona Ora*  
wrenched Cattelan's oeuvre to another level  
within the art world: the market confirmed, or in-  
stigated, his success when one of the two pope  
editions was in 2001 auctioned for a record  
amount of \$886,000, which three years later  
was tripled.

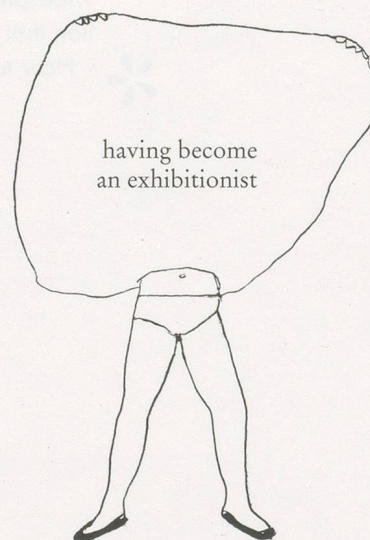
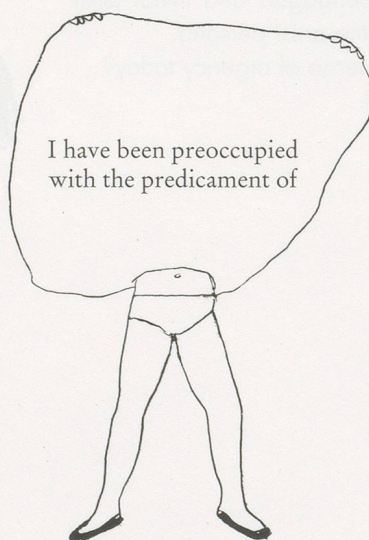
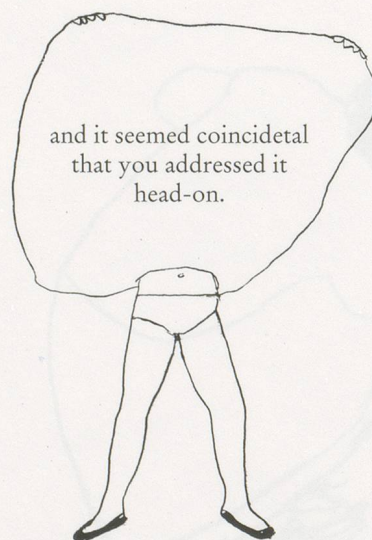
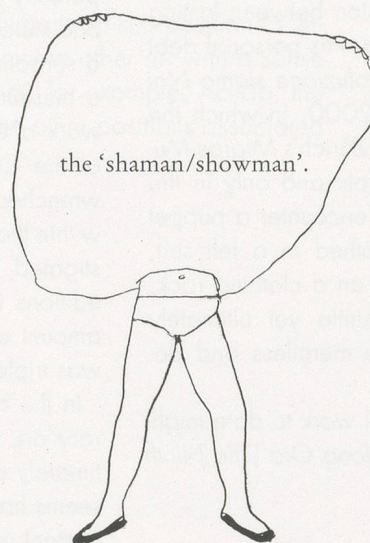
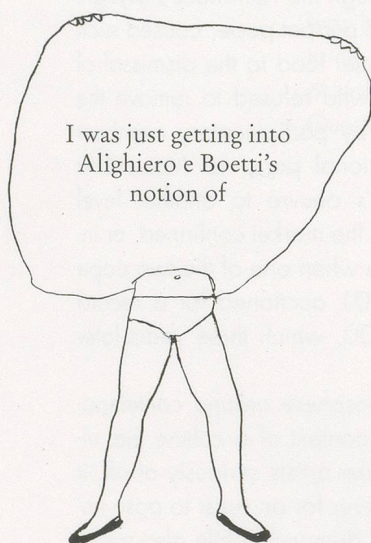
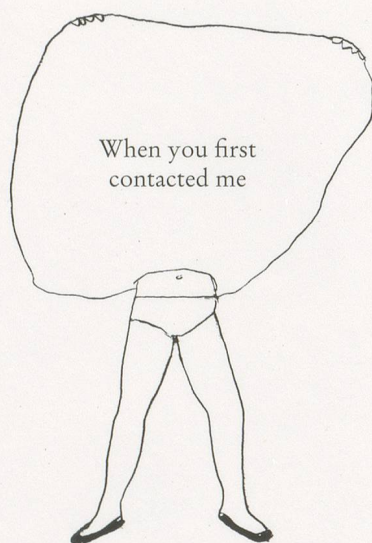
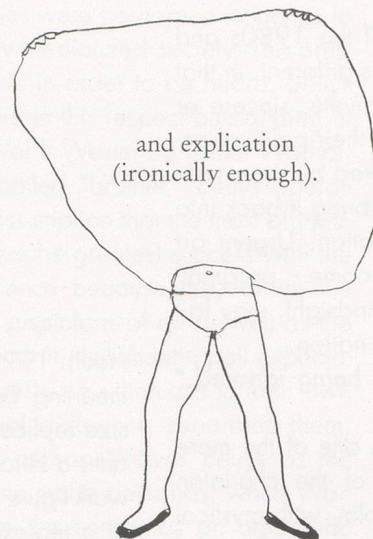
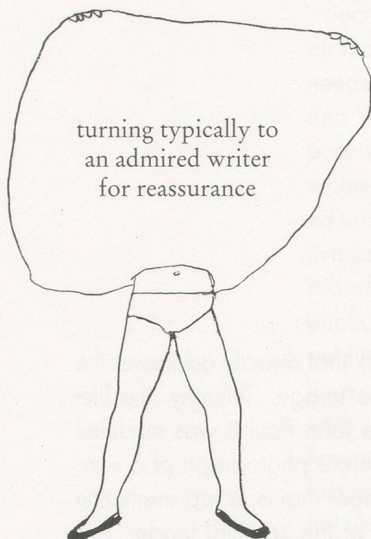
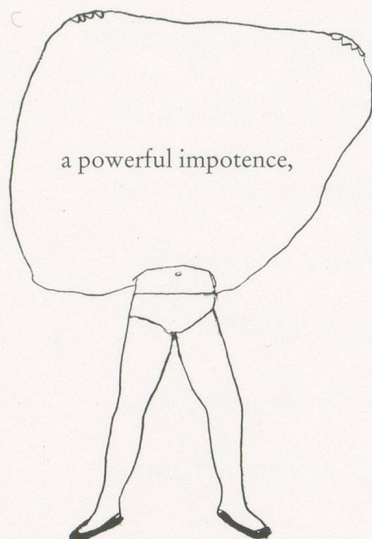
In the heated atmosphere around contempo-  
rary art, within the context of a culture that ul-  
timately does not take artists seriously at all, it  
seems harder than ever for an artist to pose im-  
portant questions or demands while also some-  
how making use of the unprecedented level of  
widespread yet disengaged and trivial atten-  
tion that is paid to the artist persona.



How to create a sense of urgency today?





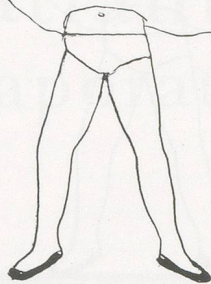




but am perhaps too  
full of doubt



– more punk than hippy,  
more fan than star –



to ever call  
the counterpart to my



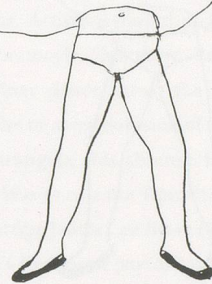
exhibitionist a shaman.



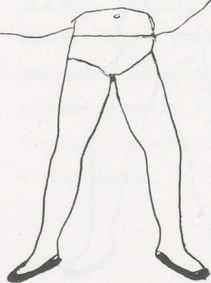
Tiring of my  
two-faced attitude,



I imagine  
a clear articulation



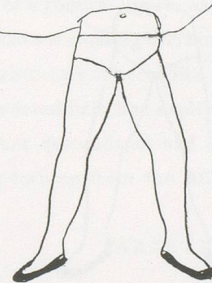
of that second  
opposite-of-showman  
face



might allow me to  
seamlessly embody both



or give me an edge  
to sever the ugly one.

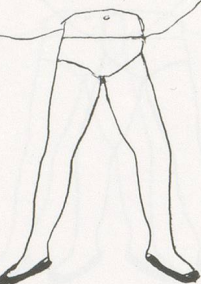




In my last letter I  
suggested I might attempt

'dismantling my tendency  
toward insularism'

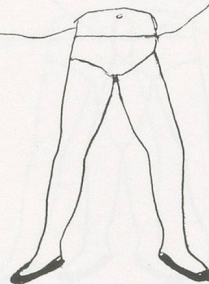
meaning I'd try to  
tackle my own sense  
of fraudulence



in this very insert,

this potentially very insular  
exhibitionistic-y,  
showman-y  
insert.

So this as yet un-named  
complementary character



had the audacity to put  
you and what you do

into my thing  
you asked me to put  
in that other thing  
that you do.

sincerely,  
Frances Stark

