

the collage “staging a room 100m away”



Vierte Welt, Berlin: this room (already a stage-design re-imagining the British House of Commons) will be our film-set for “staging a room 100m away

The lines in this collage (page 3–5) predominantly are from these texts: “Jane Eyre” by *Charlotte Brontë* (1847), “Wuthering Heights” by *Emily Brontë* (1847), “To a stranger” by *Walt Whitman* (1876), “Arcade Projects” by *Walter Benjamin* (1927–1940) as well as a quote from *Karl Heinrich Ulrichs* (the “first out” homosexual in Germany, who coined the terms *Urning* for gay men and *Dioning* for lesbians.)

I added thoughts on a grindr date I once had and the collage will later have lines from my performers as well, telling awkward stories of intimate encounters.

My collages are fragmented constellations of narrative traits of historical times, depictions and descriptions of affects, behaviour, and imaginary (re)actions. In connecting these traits I try to open their affective qualities, read them as part of the Western performative archive, the archive of Western ideas of identifications and interiorities.

In improvising with colleagues on base of these collages of *interiority*-material in “architectural spaces” staging reality, we attempt to create a space of embodiment, that is always in dialog with a camera (the idea of representation), as well as its

disparate dynamics of narration.

Notions of these affects connect, stand next to each other, and create narrative tensions: a space in which to stay with these dynamics.

The idea of privacy, interiority, homosexuality as an identity, clear demarcated gender categories, nationalism, colonialism, race-theory in tandem with one another were the main dynamics in 19th century Europe and the USA.

My performers and I test something I come to term "gay romanticism," a dynamic of traumatic reaction and interiority, that queer people perform in a straight reality. In comparison to historical Romanticism, this romanticism doesn't know of any homecoming or origin, as well as no progress or future (reproduction as default). But this romanticism has the same dangers: neoliberal ideas of possession of self, of identity, of space, of other people, of property. How can staging these dynamics as a conscious flirtatious and collective act of reading soften our idea of strict roles?

“staging a room 100m away”

“appearance should not be mistaken for truth”

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day.

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‘I want you to come here;’ and seating himself in an armchair, he intimated by a gesture that I was to approach and stand before him.

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once there was this guy - I was still living in Hamburg - and he wanted me to come over to have sex in the total darkness. he would wait for me, ready – on all fours.

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I came up to his chair: he spent some three minutes in thrusting out his tongue at me as far as he could without damaging the roots: I knew he would soon strike, and while dreading the blow, I mused on the disgusting and ugly appearance of him who would presently deal it.

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‘Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!’

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Four hand were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs.

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This reproach of my dependence had become a vague sing-song in my ear; very painful and crushing, but only half intelligible.

I was told to wash it, and give it clean things, and let it sleep with the children.

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‘To be as dirty as one pleases, and liking to be dirty, and continuing to be dirty.’

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the nearly comical situation of trying to find the object of desire in the dark of a devastating messed-up room, with no orientation points, like a dance of male impossibility to appear in front of each other, uncloseted: kink as a performance and ritual

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‘Do you never dream queer dreams?’

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‘I won’t hear it!’ (I repeated, hastily.)

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I was superstitious about dreams then, and am still;

*Passing stranger! you do not know how longingly I
look upon you,
You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking,
(it comes to me, as of a dream,)
I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you,¹*

...something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated; I uttered a wild, involuntary cry; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort.

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'Take me out!'

'What for? Are you hurt? Have you seen something?'

'Oh! I thought a ghost would come.'

'She has screamed out on purpose.'

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...unconsciousness closed the scene.

A ray fell on his features; the cheeks were sallow, and half covered with black whiskers; the brows lowering, the eyes deep set and singular. I remembered the eyes.

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His visits were a continual nightmare to me.

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There she lay dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth, so that you might fancy she would crash them to splinters!

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The two, to a cool spectator, made a strange and fearful picture.

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The scene was over in two minutes;

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it is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation.²

How often did my dear mother complain, 'You are not like other boys!' How often did she warn me, 'You will be an odd one.' Coaxed or by force, nothing could bring me up to the standard of boys. It was not in me. I was already an odd one, namely by nature. Because of my feminine nature even as a boy I was unjustly mistreated and set apart.³

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Children can feel, but they cannot analyse their feelings; and if the analysis is partially effected in thought, they know not how to express the result of the process in words.

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He – for it was a man – turned his head slowly towards where I stood, and having examined me:

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‘...Do you know where the wicked go after death?’

‘They go to hell,’ was my ready and orthodox answer.

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‘What must you do to avoid it?’

I deliberated a moment: my answer, when it did come, was objectionable: ‘I must keep in good health, and not die.’

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A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play; and when I draw up the curtain this time, reader, you must fancy you see a room ...

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‘...and, now you are here, I shall be quite gay.’

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Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth.

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I love the moment one enters a strangers home on a date. finding oneself part of a boot-camp for satisfaction and contact, with a possibility of charming each other into recognition.

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‘Where did you get your copies?’

‘Out of my head.’

‘That head I see now on your shoulders?’

‘Yes, sir.’

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‘Has it other furniture of the same kind within?’

‘I should think it may have: I should hope — better.’

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‘Now I have performed the part of a good host...’

1. Passing stranger! you do not know how longingly I look upon you,
You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking,
(it comes to me as of a dream,)
I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you,
All is recall'd as we flit by each other, fluid, affectionate, chaste, matured,
You grew up with me, were a boy with me or a girl with me,
I ate with you and slept with you, your body has become not yours only
nor left my body mine only,
You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as we pass,
you take of my beard, breast, hands, in return,
I am not to speak to you, I am to think of you
when I sit alone or wake at night alone,
I am to wait, I do not doubt I am to meet you again,
I am to see to it that I do not lose you.
2. It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on the past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. – Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic; and the place where one encounters them is language. – “Awakening”(Arcades, 462; n2a, 3)
3. karl heinrich ulrichs