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Confronting The Museum: The Function Of Parody In The Work Of Illya Kabakov and Marcel Broodthaers.

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Confronting The Museum:
The Function Of Parody In The Work Of Illya Kabakov and Marcel Broodthaers.

ALISON KEARNEY

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts by Dissertation.

Johannesburg, 2005.

Abstract

This study investigates the ways in which museums are understood as texts, and how artists challenge those assumptions within their work. The extent to which parody, a central tenet of post- modern art, can be used as an effective means to challenge the hegemony of the art museum, is investigated through an analyses of artworks by Illya Kabakov and Marcel Broodthaers. The first part of the study interrogates the hegemonic function of museums, through a discussion of the central tenets of museological discourse, in order to contextualise the discussion of the artworks in question. The second part of this study includes an analysis of specific artworks by Illya Kabakov and Marcel Broodthaers, detailing the ways in which these artists parody aspects of museum practice. The concluding chapter interrogates my own artistic production in relation to this research.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Fine Arts by dissertation in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

_____ day of _____ 2005.

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(Detail of installation at the Städtische Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf, from the 16 May to 9 July 1972.) [Reproduced in Thill, 1996: 98]

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Incident at The Museum or Water Music, with sound composition by Vladimir Tarasov.

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Illya Kabakov, 1991.

Incident at The Museum or Water Music, with sound composition by Vladimir Tarasov.

(Detail view, Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt, Germany.)

[Reproduced in Blazwick, *et.al.* 1998: 74]

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Alison Kearney, 2000

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[Installation at Wits University, Johannesburg.]

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The Portable Hawkers Museum: Rosebank I

[Photographic documentation of a public performance at The Rosebank Mall, Johannesburg.]

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Alison Kearney, June 2003

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[Photographic documentation of a public performance at The Rosebank Mall, Johannesburg.]

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Excerpt from *The Portable Hawkers Museum* Visitors book. [10.10.2003]

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Alison Kearney, July 2003

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[Photographic documentation, from a film still, of a public performance at The Newtown Cultural Precinct, Johannesburg.] (This image was used on the invitations to the Retrospective exhibition).

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The Taxonomy of The Portable Hawkers Museum

[Installation view, from The MTN New Contemporaries Exhibition, MuseumAfrica, Newtown, Johannesburg.]

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[Detail, from The MTN New Contemporaries Exhibition, MuseumAfrica, Newtown, Johannesburg.]

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The Taxonomy of The Portable Hawkers Museum

[Detail, from The MTN New Contemporaries Exhibition, MuseumAfrica, Newtown, Johannesburg.]

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Alison Kearney, March 2005

Souvenir, or I love The Portable Hawkers Museum

[Installation view from The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective Exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

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Alison Kearney, March 2005

Souvenir, or I love The Portable Hawkers Museum

[Detail from The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective Exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

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Alison Kearney, March 2005

Souvenir, or I love The Portable Hawkers Museum

[Detail from The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective Exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

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Alison Kearney, March 2005

Souvenir, or I love The Portable Hawkers Museum

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Alison Kearney, October 2004

Authentic Reproductions: An installation at The Skulpturenhalle Basel.

[Installation view of Installation at The Skulpturenhalle Basel, Switzerland.]

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Alison Kearney, October 2004

Authentic Reproductions: An installation at The Skulpturenhalle Basel.

[Detail of Installation at The Skulpturenhalle Basel, Switzerland.]

Figure 30 **91**

Alison Kearney, February 2005

The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective

[Installation view 1, of the exhibition *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

Figure 31 **92**

Alison Kearney, February 2005

The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective

[Installation view of the exhibition *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery]. This Photograph was taken at the exhibition opening on 5 February 2005.

Figure 32 **92**

Alison Kearney, February 2005

The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective

[Detail, of the exhibition *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery.] This Photograph was taken at the exhibition opening on 5 February 2005.

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Alison Kearney, February 2005

The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective

[Detail, of the exhibition *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

Figure 34 **93**

Alison Kearney, February 2005

The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective

[Left: Detail of Television One. Right: Detail of Television Two. As installed at the exhibition *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

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Alison Kearney, February 2005

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[Detail of installation of the exhibition *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

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Alison Kearney, October 2004.

The Poisons Section of The Portable Hawkers Museum: Basel.

Photographic documentation of performances at Barfűsserplatz and at Claraplatz in Basel.

[First exhibited at *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

Figure 37 **95**

Alison Kearney, October 2004.

The Poisons Section of The Portable Hawkers Museum: Basel.

[Detail of photographic documentation of performances at Barfűsserplatz and at Claraplatz in Basel.]

Figure 38 **95**

Alison Kearney, February 2005.

The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective.

[Detail of installation of the exhibition *The Portable Hawkers Museum: A Retrospective*, at The Johannesburg Art Gallery.]

The discourse of the museum is a politically loaded discourse and the exhibition is an utterance within that discourse [Bal, 1996: 214].