Bücher / Books

Krystian Woznicki: Undeclared Movements

by Peter Kunitzky

The terror attacks of 9/11 (2001) hit the USA totally off guard, despite all the conspiracy theories about an *inside job*. George W. Bush himself probably provided the emblematic image for the situation at the very same moment he was informed of what had just happened: consternation unlike almost any seen before. And because this condition could not be shown to the wider world for long, a few doctrines were quickly adopted in Washington. The first of these is generally well known: the doctrine of prevention, with consequences including the third Gulf War and all the serious political-humanitarian upheavals that continue even today. One of those consequences, of course, has been a constantly high terrorist threat level since 9/11. A convenient but probably less well-known secondary consequence was the adoption of a doctrine of preemption, a security strategy no longer concerned with the prevention of damage (now considered impossible) but strictly with the calculation of its relative magnitude. In calculating the danger, however, they never wait for something to manifest as threat. Rather, they start by conjuring the threat scenario themselves, allowing them to assign it game-type rules and thereby to retain control of the whole thing. Preemption as used by political-military powers in this way is a technique founded on guesswork, fed by "big data," run through algorithms and guided by cybernetic control phantasies, whereby a hypothetical future threat is modeled in the here and now in order to somehow depotentialize it within a designated framing of the scope of possible action. It is also a technique originally developed by those powers for use against terrorism, but more recently — as Krystian Woznicki has observed — extended both inside and outside the US to other kinds of "crowd management."

That the military doctrine of preemption has expanded to a domestic policing level may not be a proposition subject to classical syllogistic proof, but Woznicki has assembled indications in support of his argument with reference to two particular cases, which converge around the centrality to both of "corridors." This relatively recent usage refers to an infrastructural element of the scope or framing of action (as mentioned above) for the imposition of a state of exception

in Giorgio Agamben's sense. First, after Angela Merkel ordered the opening of Germany's borders in summer 2015, the so-called "Balkan route" for inward migration — until then mostly informal and barely noticed — was transformed by interstate co-operation into a "Balkan corridor": a highly efficient system in which migrants who might previously have found their own haphaz-
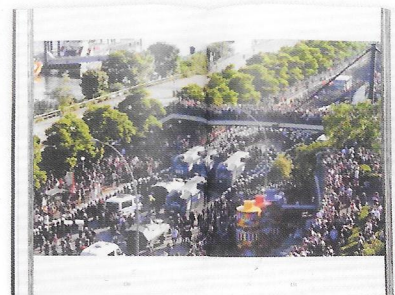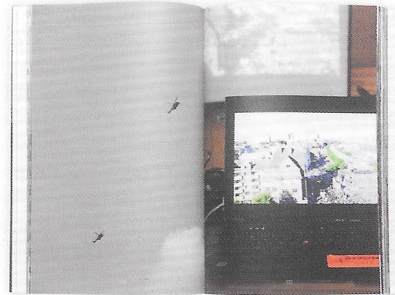
Spreads from: Krystian Woznicki. Undeclared Movements, 2020, pp. 125–26, 130–31, 160–61.

ard ways through were now officially instructed to wait or move and go where directed. Legal protections such as some of those under the Dublin Convention were effectively cancelled, while (at best) semi-legal methods including the deployment of anti-terror police were suddenly introduced to control the channeling. Additionally, those who finally arrived in Germany were provided with free mobiles and SIM cards so as to send their "dirty data" as quickly as possible to the Cloud. In the second case, a so-called Transfer-corridor was set up during the G20 summit in Hamburg 2017. This was intended to allow secure movement of diplomatically important visitors, but it soon became an outright conflict zone. What might be called a controlled loss of control had origins long before the summit began, when the legal framework was temporarily altered to

suspend the right to demonstrate, implicitly placing the entire city under provisional suspicion. Multiple subtle forms of intervention designed to criminalize opposition then prepared the ground for the coming escalation, where entire protest marches were broken up military-style on the pretext that some demonstrators — who turned out later to be undercover police — breached a ban on face coverings. Woznicki adds that helicopters played a crucial role in this preemption exercise, hovering nonstop over the city emitting rotor noise that generated specific cognitive processes, supposedly steering human behavior in relatively predictable directions. The eventually numbing effect of this same noise was also intended to drive people out of the area in fear of losing their minds.

However, we need not be helpless victims of such preemptive manipulations, deprived by them legally or even ontopolitically of the fundamental capacity for action, according to Woznicki. In support of this optimism he cites the "black bloc" group tactics that originated in Italy and are capable of expressing collective longing. In struggle this may entail direct violence, but in everyday life it means upholding values of solidarity and mutual care. This, perhaps, may be the real antidote to the neoliberal governmentality that seeks to isolate us, to tear the bonds between us apart and to throw everyone back into separated personal existence. All this is worth imagining however it turns out.

Believing movie-making to be inherent in prefigurative movement-making, Woznicki attempts to set up an additional illusion by structuring the book as experimental documentary film. This arrangement — blank leader, voice-only prologue, actual film et cetera — raises the reader to the condition of co-director who in the end makes an emancipatory motion picture from the static film. So, happy ending guaranteed?

Translation from German: Matthew Hyland

Peter Kunitzky, born in Vienna (AT), studied art history and philosophy. He lives in Berlin (DE) as author, translator, and proofreader/editor (German).

Susanne Huth: Analog Algorithm – Landscapes of Machine Learning

von Christina Natlacen

Die erste Fotografie in Susanne Huths Künstlerbuch *Analog Algorithm – Landscapes of Machine Learning,* die sich ebenfalls auf dem Cover befindet, lenkt den Blick durch die Windschutzscheibe eines fahrenden Autos auf eine auf Grün geschaltete Ampel, deren Mast auf die Einfahrt zum Firmenareal von Google weist. Es sind nicht die scheinbar grenzenlosen Naturlandschaften des amerikanischen Westens, die auf den folgenden Seiten in der Tradition des Roadmovies durchkreuzt werden, sondern jene in Kalifornien angesiedelten Arbeitsstätten digitaler Weltkonzerne, die unter der Bezeichnung des Silicon Valley zusammengefasst werden. Anhand von 65 Abbildungen gibt die Fotografin Einblick in Büros und Werkshallen, zeigt auto-