

UNNI GJERTSEN AND LIV STRAND TALES OF FRATERNITY, POWER AND TIME - THE ARMENIA PROJECT

August 26 - September 25, 2011

In 2009, artists **Unni Gjertsen** and **Liv Strand** embarked on a journey to Armenia - a land with idiosyncratic connections to ancient times and early Christianity, ambiguously situated somewhere in the southern region of the Caucasus. In the origins of the journey were questions on nationalisms and their relation to memory and the mediatory body between them.

The exhibition ***Tales of Fraternity, Power and Time - The Armenia Project*** delves into the relationship between imagination and territory. By positioning the visitor concurrently as the viewer and the constructor of a forever-changing landscape, the exhibition aims to reflect on the strategies at work in the early construction of nation-states which are still at play within Europe's current political situation.

Through video and text-based works, Gjertsen addresses the function of memory and challenges understanding of geography. For instance, in *The Road to Oxiana, Station III: Armenia* the artist explores - by deconstruction and new juxtapositions - how conceptions of places come to pass and become fixed collective bodies. Strand's kinetic-installations elaborate on physical forces, stories and abstractions. Her work *Quicksand frontier under-standing* brings the mechanisms of nationalism to an abstract form mediated by the visitor's physical presence. *Tales of Fraternity, Power and Time* is accompanied by a publication which documents the artists' journey to Armenia.

About the Artists

Unni Gjertsen is a Norwegian artist based in Oslo. She attended the Trondheim Academy of Art and the University of Oslo. Her work has been presented in centers such as the Nordische Botschaften, Berlin; Henie-Onstad ArtCentre, Bærum; Kasteel van Gaasbeek, Belgium; MUHKA, Antwerp; UKS, Oslo; Göteborgs Konsthall; Liljevalchs Konsthall; IASPIS, Stockholm; Baltic Sea Cultural Centre, Gdansk and Konsthall C in Stockholm.

Liv Strand is a Swedish artist based in Stockholm. She studied at the Södertörn University College, University College of Stockholm, Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm and at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art. Her works have been exhibited at ROM for kunstog arkitektur, Oslo; Färgfabriken, Stockholm; UKS, Oslo; Konsthall C, Hökarängen; GalerieLeonard & Bina Ellen, Montreal; Gallery F 15 in Moss and Centro Cívico San Francisco, Bilbao among others.

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- 1) **Liv Strand and Unni Gjertsen**
The Armenia Project, 2011
 Self-Published
- 2) **Unni Gjertsen**
The Road to Oxiana Station III: Armenia, 2010
 floor text on vinyl film
- 3) **Liv Strand**
Quicksand frontier under-standing (after Osip Mandelstam quote: The tall steppe grasses on the lee hump of the island of Sevan were so strong, juicy, and self- confident that one felt like coiffing them with an iron comb), 2010
 wood, metal, piezo element, loudspeaker, motor, horsehair and cardboard
- 4) **Liv Strand**
Quicksand frontier under-standing (floor piece), 2010
 wood, motors, sensors, silicone strips, micro processors and LED strip
- 5) **Unni Gjertsen**
The Road to Oxiana Station III: Armenia, 2010
 mini dv three channel video
- 6) **Liv Strand**
Quicksand frontier under-standing (Census), 2010
 wood, motor, plastic, metal and foam

