

editorial

Christopher Balme

The cover image on the current issue of *static* derives from a zine created during last year's summer school at gd:c devoted to the topic of cultural infrastructure. Zines are self-made, DIY, non-commercial publications often associated with oppositional groups but also with fan groups, hence fanzines. The word derives from maga-zine, but zines have little in common with the glossy, often expensive publications displayed in bookstores and supermarkets. According to Google's AI they serve as 'a democratic medium for expression' on account of their low cost and distribution outside government control or commercial-capitalist distribution.

In some ways we could define *static* itself as a kind of zine, existing as it does in the less frequented byways of the digital distribution networks. The zine reproduced in this issue of *static* was edited by a participant from Russia, who led a workshop within the summer school devoted to 'zine-making', and was entitled *Exploring the Uncanny*. In the context of today's Russia, zines are examples of dissident expression, existing outside state control. Within the huge spectrum of possibilities subsumed under the term 'cultural infrastructure', which can range from spectacular iconic architecture – the Sydney Opera House and the Guggenheim Bilbao to small bookshops and galleries – zines occupy an almost imperceptible niche on the borderline of the infrastructural, in fact a challenge to the definitional limits of the term.

All the articles in this issue relate in some way to cultural infrastructure, which may be as much testimony to the generous



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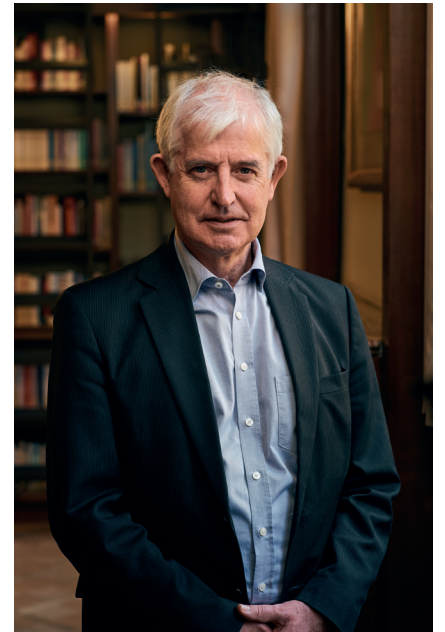


elasticity of the term itself as to the equally flexible editorial selection criteria.

The zine showcases a medium that actual dissidents in Russia use to give each other hope and keep themselves sane. In Fabienne Liptay's discussion of Senegalese film-maker's Mati Diop's two Atlantique films, we learn that the first iteration of the material, Atlantiques, was a 15-minute short, shot by Diop herself on low-grain video (mini-DV) and thus the filmic equivalent of a zine. Claudia Cendales Paredes's introduction to the German art historian and gallerist Godula Buchholz informs us that she promoted South American art through her Galerie Buchholz in Munich by following her father's model of a bookstore-gallery. Such establishments, no matter how small, still belong on any map of cultural infrastructure. The latter plays a central role in a double or even triple sense in Peter Seeland's report on a workshop held at gd:c and the Architekturmuseum of the Technical University of Munich, examining African schools of architecture in the 1950s to 1980s. The workshop took place in the Pavillon 333 – an exhibition space in the centre of Munich built by students to showcase art and design. Schools of architecture themselves provide cultural infrastructure training for the next generation of builders of infrastructure. Finally, the gd:c artist fellow, Işıl Eğrikavuk, provides a relaxing coda in her celebration of 'dormancy'. In an academic culture 'that celebrates speed, output and accumulation, choosing to slow down is a quiet act of rebellion. Dormancy is resistance to timelines that don't fit our bodies, to institutional rhythms that forget we are made of cycles, not straight lines'. Perhaps this is the artist's prerogative.

These articles show that gd:c is itself an experiment in connecting scholars from around the globe, creators from diverse media, and very different but consonant biographies. We disconnect people from their routines and familiar environments to connect them with each other.

Christopher Balme,
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Correction

In the previous issue of static, #3.2, the front matter neglected to indicate that Hanni Geiger and Tom Menger were the guest editors of the special section on 'Mediterranean absences'. Sorry Hanni & Tom!

Fig. 01
Christopher Balme (Photo: Lambert Strehlike)