

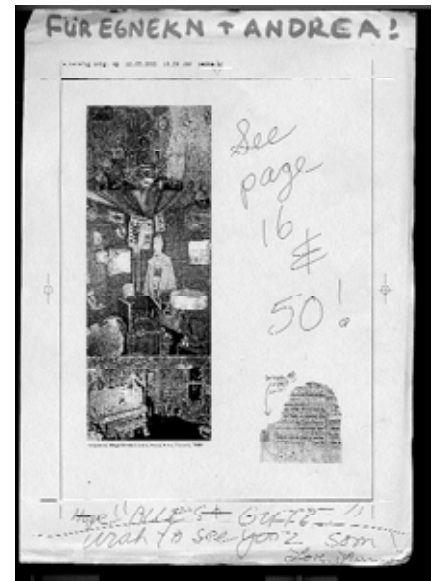
Clipping - Something cut off or out: esp. of a newspaper or magazine

Interview with Egnokn

Let's begin by asking you to define "Clipping?"

I suppose you are referring to the reproduction of my work-in-progress which appeared on page 16 of the catalog for the show M.A.N.I.A.C. at MAK by Laura Kikauka, Vienna 29.05 — 18.08, 2002.

On page 16 there is a reproduction of a scrap of paper presumably torn out of the *The New York Times*. There is little left to presume. The universe is beige. Although we might be smug about these facts; it *is* a scrap of newspaper print, but if you take notice, you'll see a trace of a bar code on the lower left edge on which the word "TIMES" appears. Now of course there might be more than one newspaper in the universe which uses the word TIMES, however the sensible and informed observer who knows I spend most of my time in New York City will infer that this reproduction of a scrap of newsprint is indeed from *The New York Times*. Location is sometimes everything.



When one looks a little deeper other important questions and observations arise; such as - What was the date of the edition of the paper that has been reproduced? What page was this torn from? Was the page torn in a spontaneous moment of passion or was it ripped millimeter by millimeter in order to precisely reveal certain content or to exclude other content? Could the reproduction in the catalog of the torn newsprint be a copy of a reproduction of the original print or was it made from the original newsprint itself? Where is the original newsprint today? If one were to locate another copy of the newspaper from the same day that this reproduction was made from, and if one were to analyze and carefully copy the minute tears marks used to disengage it from the page to recreate the printed scrap of paper in such a way that a reproduction of the news print were perceived to be identical, would this new creation be as important and valid as the "original", if in fact the so called "original" is in fact original"? Does its location on page 16 have anything to do with the address of Plastikville Records in New York City or could it be a reference to the song "Shirley" by the British Psychedelic band ____? Knowing that Ms. Kikauka is a joker, could the clipping have nothing to do with me? And what's with that question mark at the end of the sentence?

And so on. But let's stop for a moment and ask the most obvious question.

And what might that be?

I don't think I should have to answer that. It is not my job to state the obvious. My work delves into the gray areas, the subtle, the mythical and cloudy and mundane wonders of the world. Wouldn't you agree?

Yes, but sometimes people need to have a thread to hold onto before they can realize the obviously larger and sometimes infinitesimally smaller, illusive perplexities inherent in art work such as yours. Sometimes that thread needs to be a wrought iron handrail with a one way conveyor belt that whisks them to your front door.

Ok, well let's back up a moment and make sure your readers know what I do or what I've done.

Well I think most readers are familiar with your work as The Minister of Lamination in the Kingdoms of Elgaland & Vargaland. Your dedication to the preservation of the ephemeral is well established and preserved in the plastic world.

Even though I spend substantially greater portions of my life doing other things, laminating is the thing most people know about me. So wouldn't the obvious question be "Why wasn't the aforementioned scrap of paper laminated, thereby preserving it for eternity?." The careful observer will notice that this clipping from the newspaper is not listed in my laminography, past or present.



Ok, you got me, *that is* a good question. Maybe you should be doing this interview.

So then, *what is* the answer to the most obvious question?

I don't know. Why didn't you laminate it?

Do you think I laminate everything?

Is that a trick question? I've heard you answer that one many times during Lamination Rituals. You always answer "No, it has to be flat, at least as thin or thinner than a coin or a key."

Ok you almost get a star, but even from a reproduction of a reproduction, most people would quickly grasp that a scrap of newsprint would be thin enough to laminate. So the question still stands.

So if the newsprint is so obviously laminatable, and since you bothered to tear it out of the paper, *why didn't* you laminate it?

An important part of the mission of the Ministry of Lamination is to raise questions and to explore new horizons for thinking and experiencing. Not stating the obvious is often commingled with the obvious. Or they share a space as near to each other as the finite and the eternal. Remember the trip through the rollers may seem to take light years but the distance is measurable with a ruler. I am very proud of the fact that most people are not aware that at the core of the mission of The Ministry of Lamination is the dedication to *awareness of sound* and the *experience of listening*. People are so dazzled by the warmth and look of laminating that they forget that they are having an immersive sound experience as they hold onto to their precious plastic souvenir. The sound experience is thought by some to be a by-product of laminating, but it has been at the core of the lamination Ritual for almost as long as I can remember. I am amused at how Lamination Ritual has become an unintentional covert-operation within the mission of the Ministry of Lamination. I am equally amused by questions that arise during Lamination Rituals and as well as the questions that don't arise. Of course one of those has now crossed over. The question being - Why wasn't the scrap of paper reproduced in Laura Kikauka's catalog for the M.A.N.I.A.C. at MAK show laminated? This crossing over is another concept at the crux of Lamination Rituals. The passage between the rollers, the transformation from the mundane to the *Official*, and the trip from finite to permanence are all deeply embedded concepts inherent in Lamination Ritual.

Another aspect of crossing over is the examination of what *has been* laminated and its relationship to what *has not* been laminated. Once again I prefer to ignore the obvious: the practical limitations of lamination technology. A car can't be laminated, neither a swimming pool nor a refrigerator.

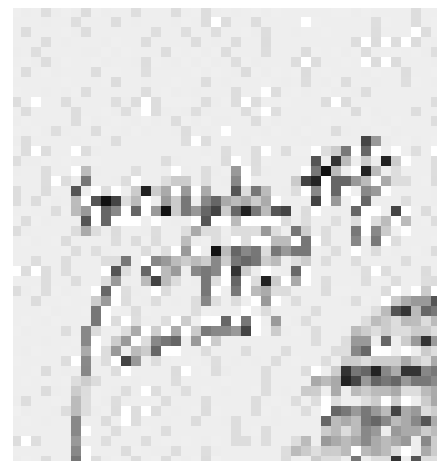
Maybe it's time to tell us about your "To Be Laminated Bin"

I don't have a "To Be Laminated Bin, but I get the feeling you do. So why don't you talk about yours?

I'll talk about mine if you talk about yours.

But I don't have one to talk about!

Another misconception. During more than 10 years of performing Lamination Rituals in public spaces and inviting unknown strangers to laminate, I have yet to find a human being on this planet who hasn't had a least one thing, readily available that they want to laminate. If that isn't a "To Be Laminated Bin", than *I'm not the Minister of Lamination!*



You re' trying to tell me that if you set up your laminator tomorrow in the park, everyone who passes by will have something on them that they want to laminate?

Absolutely. And if they don't come up with it right away they'll come up with soon enough.

Of course there are those overly rational types who will pull out their drivers license or library card but of course I won't let those items into the machine. There is no room for that kind of practicality in the Ministry of Lamination. But *everyone*, and no one has proven me wrong so far, *everyone* who walks up to the laminator has something they want to laminate. And everyone is thrilled when they laminate. In Rotterdam at KlangPark in 1994, there was a woman who insisted she had nothing to laminate but yet she hung around the laminating station perplexed for hours. Finally she walked up to me and asked if I could laminate her spit!

So did you laminate her spit?

I oversaw the lamination of her spit. She spit into the plastic, and I instructed her how to do it. She was a virgin. Amazing how many people, in all stages of life have never laminated. She got behind the laminator, put the speakers against her ears and yes, she laminated her own spit. She walked away clutching her lamination, smiling — a happy satisfied woman who had preserving an inner part of herself. Very creative.

That's incredible. Was she a freak?

There's a freaky part in all of us don't you think? But, she didn't appear to be a freak. She was a young, attractive, Dutch – her appearance didn't stand out as much as her "To Be Laminated Bin".

Let's get back to that "To Be Laminated Bin". How big is yours.

I have a small drawer that I store items that I suspect I will want to laminate in the future. But new objects arise every moment and if the laminator is off I let them slide..

When and how do objects travel from the “To Be Laminate Bin”— to the other “Official” side of existence?

After all these years of laminating I haven't quite figured it out. All I can say is that it has something to do with intuition or haphazardness and of course electricity and plastic. If I am engaged in a Lamination Ritual and if there is a moment when I'm not being asked to laminate, I will often find things I want to laminate. Sometimes they are in my pocket, collected during the day. Other days when I'm not making a public appearance I just instinctively open up the official case, plug the laminator in and begin laminating. Like on a whim. Once laminated my Official objects might find themselves in an envelope headed for the post office, tacked to the wall or they might go into the archive. Lamination is an interesting topic but I think the underlying concepts and non-concepts that relate to clippings, tearing, cutting, shredding etc. are fascinating too.

Maybe you could tell us what you've been working on recently.

Bird clippings for Rod Summers, lighthouse images for Uschi Huber and I've been tearing and sometimes roughly cutting out product shots from ridiculous mail order catalogs that bombard my mail box everyday. At first I didn't know what to do with them. I might have used a couple for making postcards. Sometimes I would pick up the clippings and even though they were totally familiar I would start laughing about them. So I decided to assemble them into my own catalog and write my own copy to go with them. In the beginning I pasted the papers onto another paper and stacked them up, folded them over and made a rough little book that re-arranged and modified every day. Then one day I decided to scan everything so I could work with them in the computer. I was very careful to outline the exact edges of the papers which had been sloppily torn or cut out of their original catalogs. every time I thought I was finished I would re-read and re-look at it and I always end up changing something. And laughing. This is a good sign. Just today I changed the cover. I call it The DUST FREE Happy Guest Party catalog 2003. If I keep working on it into 2004. I don't know if I will change the year on the cover or not. As I was assembling the first pro types I decided I would make 2 versions of the catalog. One version will be specifically with Laura Kikauka in mind, the other will be for the general public. I thought it would be good to make only one copy for the general public and then offer an electronic version for those who want to see it but who can't visit me to see my copy. I don't know.

Sounds kind of whacky.

It is. Its kind of stupid too. But I like it.

I like that it wasn't planned. It just happened and then got more involved. I liked that it didn't have a sound element and that I could chip away at it over time. Anything that makes me laugh out loud when I'm alone is fine by me. It really doesn't happen very often for me so when it does I latch on.

I've also recently found a Failure Artifact, a questionnaire that I typed up on an IBM typewriter in the 70's, you know the big heavy noisy ones that had the silver ball that flipped up and pounded the paper with ink? I had appropriated my dad's business stationery and to type out questions about Failure. I have the original paper. I haven't laminated it. I made a few copies to send to Direct Art Productions who are authorities on Failure. I think they'll be amused.

I'm also working on a year long project that is really ridiculous. I'm writing the same sentence in a school book, over and over and over until the book is filled with the same sentence. Just whenever I think about it and I have a minute I write the sentence until my hand gets tired.

What is the sentence?

Oh, it doesn't matter. It's very simple. It's just a thought that was going on in my head. I had bought these traditional school notebooks because they were red instead of black, which I guess makes

them not as traditional. They were cheap so I bought a few and I didn't really know what to do with them. So one day I just started writing whatever was in my head and it came out as one simple sentence. When the book is filled I'm going to give it away as gift. I'll decorate the cover a bit with some rubber stamps to make it a little more appealing. I wonder how long it will exist.

Is it conceptual art?

I don't think so. I guess in a way everything is conceptual art. I think it's closer to non-conceptual art. Don't give it too much thought.

Have you always been interested in tearing scraps of paper?

My earliest laminations were collages of torn photographs that I took out of the trash in the photo lab I worked in. I ripped and tore very quickly, because I didn't want the boss to ask me questions about what I was laminating. My method was spontaneous and depended on chance — what would be in the trash can that day, how long will it take for the laminator to warm up, when will he be back from his coffee break etc. I used selective tearing to take the part of the image I wanted or to get rid of the part of the image I didn't want. I liked the rough edges. Very punk. Especially after a paper jam when the photo paper had to be torn out of the machine saturated with photo chemicals. A real mess. In 1995 I borrowed a shredding machine and set it up next my laminator at the Bauhutte Klangzeit 2000 extravaganza at Marstalle theater in Munich.

ripping verses tearing, scissors cutting clipping and blades.

The paper shredder.

Non Concept art?

Lamination as a phenomenological event.

The list goes on.