

THE STATUS OF THE POLITICAL IN CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

KLARTEXT!

A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS, ACTIVISTS, CURATORS AND THEORETICIANS
KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIE AND VOLKSBÜHNE AM ROSA-LUXEMBURG-PLATZ, BERLIN
14-16 JANUARY 2005 — WWW.KLARTEXT-KONFERENZ.DE

B+B (Sarah Carrington Sophie Hope)

Statement

B+B is a curatorial partnership between Sarah Carrington and Sophie Hope. B+B operate in the current UK context of centre-left cultural policies that promote the notion of an artist as agent for social change. This policy has had the effect of dampening the radical potential of 'political' or socially engaged practices as it implies that artists make the world 'better' and that 'better' is defined by the government rather than by individuals involved. B+B document and support practices that are operating within this context and who are negotiating the multiple agendas placed upon artists that operate in the public sphere.

B+B are based in London, a city increasingly relying on the creative industries and cultural producers as players in a large and lucrative regeneration game. Artists and art projects are commissioned to 'improve' deprived communities and change urban landscapes. Engaging in an art project can be confused with becoming involved in a process of change. 'Voice-giving' becomes useful and 'collaboration' is compromised by the needs of local councils and developers. At the core of our practice is an interest in how artists can simultaneously be useful and useless in these contexts.

During Klartext we would like to address the following questions:

Can socially motivated projects ask questions without providing solutions?

Is there an assumed alliance within the cultural field that when we say 'political' we mean left-wing or anti-capitalist? How can we move forward or generate dialogue?

What are the spaces for sharing and considering conditions for practices within the wider European neo-liberal cultural context?

What are our manifestos for production and strategies of survival?

What are we fighting for?

