

**The cosmos is too large –
The nostalgia of progress in Harald F. Müller's
First Cuts**

First Cuts – the title Harald F. Müller gave to a series of images, refers to two things: on the one hand to the pathos of being first, as in possibly starting a sequence that extends into infinity and sets a meter in motion that will go on ticking forever. On the other, each first thing marks a qualitative break, namely the moment of interruption and intervention that introduces a new, second measure and thus moves beyond the pale of what went before. All Müller's **First Cuts** pinpoint events and things that in one way or another were invented or seen for the first time. They tend to be technical inventions or events that serve also to characterize that epoch in modern life in which technological/scientific progress and cultural innovations went hand in hand. The very method Harald F. Müller uses to produce images indicates that there has always already been something. Müller has since the early 1980s been creating large-format appropriations of (usually printed) photographs, meaning he works with images that already exist, primarily with photographic illustrations that he found in brochures in company archives. Images previously scattered here and there are then presented in the white cubes of galleries and museums as seemingly very carefully composed large-format tableaux, boasting intense colors.

The themes chosen for the **First Cuts** are primarily, seen in retrospect from the sober present, nostalgic/progress-focused history paintings from the age of **Cold War Cultures** 1 and the firm belief that both the East and West had in progress, an epoch that saw itself as heroic (but which today is a **future past**) 2 and thought it would go faster, further and higher than ever before. An increase in reach and speed by pulsing (and thus by fragmentation) is not just a sign of economic and technological/scientific modernization, but also left an impression from an early date on nascent aesthetic Modernism. Paradigmatically, Robert Schumann penned above the first theme of his **piano sonata in G minor (op. 22)** "as fast as possible" and then added the instruction at the end, "even faster".

Progress was a euphoric overall project with tragic sides to it. The special ambition of **First Cuts**, which reflect on their own image process, is driven by a theory of heroic Late Modernism, which was also the epoch when the artist was a child. That heroic Late Modernism was typified by atomism and the race for space: the **First Cuts** place the entropy of an infinite number of mass media images in the context of the attempt to conquer the cosmos and the atomistic decay of the world into the smallest of fundamental particles.

In Harald F. Müller's oeuvre, highbrow and lowbrow interweave, as do the iconographies of conquering space and atomization. His **First Cuts** do not exclusively refer to fragments of highbrow memory, but also dip into the archives of Pop culture. The themes in **First Cuts** are above all not the first, but the decisive images of technological prowess over the last 150 years. They document stages of progress into the infinite unknown territory of secularized promise.

This promise also has to do with the increase in the reach of the profane, with the greater range of science and rationalization, and thus also with materialization and commercialization. From here, Pop culture is just round the corner. It is only logical that the **First Cuts** bring to mind those deep changes that Cat Stevens sang about in 1967, in the midst of the **swinging years** of Pop ("The First Cut is the Deepest"). Actually the **First Cuts** lock into the contradictions that shaped those early vibrant days of Pop music: the celebration of youthful directness and also the intimation that this would be lost, as Stevens sang in the early swansong: "Baby, I'll try to love again, but I know the first cut is the deepest."

If it is true that the first cuts (as moments of initiation, the appropriation of foreign worlds, etc.) are the deepest, then counting them ("the first") is itself retrospective, as what would the first be, if there were not also a

second, third, fourth? Quantification and expansion into open space imply, very much as they do in Schiller's notion of the sentimental, the loss of original intensity that can thereupon only be evoked through aesthetic imagination.

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In the **First Cuts** there is a more down-to-earth quantification and expansion into open space. They are visual reports on the innovative momentum of modern technology. They refer to scientific and aesthetic technologies, to audiovisual media and to transport media. Directly or indirectly, all the themes have to do with conquering space, at least in as far as the images selected (even when not to do with space travel) draw iconographically on old cosmological themes, such as orbiting planets, spheres, and early Modern variants, such as ellipses and ovals. Given their themes and above all the iconography of space, Müller's images refer to the conquest of **outer space** in Western and Soviet modernity.

The main theme in the **First Cuts** is the cosmos itself, the universe in a strongly modern sense, not as the order of finitude, but as the materialization of infinity. The extremely enlarged **First Cuts** images are documents of milestones in space travel (for example **Spaceship One**, **Sputnik** or the first steps on the moon, pages 116, 170). In the **Proun** painting by El Lissitzky that Müller uses (page 19), it seems as if the constructed forms meet freed of gravity's pull and thereupon fall apart – as if we were not viewing a non-figurative

picture, but rather a representation of space stations in orbit. The **Philips Pavilion** at the Brussels Expo 1958 (page 46) contains at least a formal prefiguration of the **Sputnik Monument** in Moscow (of that Soviet monument erected in 1964 that is dedicated to **the conquest of space**). The **CERN** particle accelerator (page 89) is explicitly designed as a cosmos simulator. In Pink Floyd's stage shows (page 134) that already mentioned the **Dark Side of the Moon** (alluding to the title of the album), the lighting systems brings the order of the planets to mind. To a certain degree, 4
spotlight constellations on stage constitute a moving firmament allowing Pink Floyd's ethereal music to circle within itself. The drum appears likewise as a solar system structured in circles (cymbals, drums) that are then set in motion performatively in recurrent rhythmic sequences.

The digitalized faces on the Kraftwerk album cover (page 121) stand before the dark night sky and bring to mind the techno-materialist turn of the dream of transubstantiation – which was immortalized in **Star Trek** as **beaming**. This phantasm of progress has its roots in the Christian-eschatological concept of the corporeal resurrection during the Last Judgment.

Even where space and space travel are not chosen as the explicit themes of the images, there are references to the cosmos in the **First Cuts** – as said, at least indirectly as a formal allusion to modern cosmologies. The ellipti-

cal shape of the Eiffel Tower's steel structure (page 149) points as the intersection of tangents geometrically into the infinity of the heavens. Moreover, the oval alludes to that expansion of the circle that was attempted in early Modern cosmologies. Ovals and rockets (arrows pointing to infinity) are the basic shapes underlying the **First Cuts**. In this regard, the **Silver Arrow** automobile (page 30) is also an oval rocket. The genealogy of racing also refers in the auto represented here back to the hippodrome of Classical Antiquity, in which the hyperbole of the planets was "driven" at top speed, the chariots chasing it as **Luna** and **Sol**.

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Geometry was the instrument of a cosmological science and not only in the philosophy of rationalism, in which an attempt was made to reconstruct the world as a whole **more geometrico**. Surprisingly frequently, cosmology and cultural techniques had the same structure. This is documented by the **First Cuts**: They are documents of a staging of the history of technology as a triumphant march, above all the race for space. However, Müller's **First Cuts** are not seamless narratives in triumphant retrospect, but literally perforated surfaces and rastered dissections of the thrust of progress as it is encased in the themes. Indeed, the images are essentially nothing other than perforated metal. In more than one regard, theme and backing interact here in an exciting way.

This is especially evident from the image of the **Brussel music pavilion** that is known as the **Philips Pavilion** (page 147). The theme's architectural dynamism arises from the intimation of maximum tension, similar to a rocket just held back from shooting skywards. It is as if that rocket is restrained from further flight solely by the structure of the fabric of the building's outer skin. In this image of the pavilion, as in all the **First Cuts**, the phallic theme of progress and the penetration of the cosmic matrix is present, albeit to a restrained extent.

In the **Philips Pavilion** there are at least two levels to reading this tension: The symbolism of rocket and net is an allegory not only of the battles of the sexes but also the rivalry science and art. Both the conservative compensation theories of the school around Joachim Ritter and the Marxist-inspired theories of the project of Modernity of Jürgen Habermas and Marshall Berman emphasized precisely this side to Modernity's self-healing powers: the propensity of technological-scientific Modernity to resort to violence needs to be pushed back and constrained by cultural effort.

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Technologically speaking, the **First Cuts** are simply sheet metal, given a raster by the different sizes of circular holes made by digitalized punching – only from a greater distance can you discern the themes. The metal sheets are glued to noise-absorbent, black foam. The themes arise from the changing configu-

rations of the series of dots. Only the diameter and the distance of the perforations and their density create the dark values from whose contrasts the mimetic image arises. The themes are therefore only visible from a certain distance. Seen up close, the figurative representation dissolves into dots, meaning the images are formally speaking always already deconstructed.

A total of five functions to these round perforations bear mentioning. The sum of the five aspects also describes the implications the **First Cuts** have for a theory of Modernity:

a) The black dots that result from the holes punched in the metal by laser are not only elements of the image, but the image itself: they are the theme's medium and basis.

b) The dots (the holes in the sheet metal that factually constitute the images) are also visible close-up as a raster grid and thus a medium of abstraction, comparable to the Modernist raster, a common entropic principle of modern image generation since Pointillism. 10
This atomistic abstraction also borders on figuration – you can just discern the subject and object.

c) The circular dots can be read as the symbolic shape of a general logic of atomization, in which through **microcosmic introspection** the face of the old, metaphysical cosmos has collapsed. The smallest, externally very similar particles are image-atoms, as it were,

the smallest indivisible particles of the technologically presented world view.

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d) Paradoxically, the dot raster stages the emptiness of the interstices. There are too many, latently an infinite number of dots, so they seem not to render Archimedean points in a stable order visible but the punctuations of an interstice if not of a nothingness.

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e) Moreover, and this simple fact is key to understanding how the **First Cuts** comment on the themes that Müller compiles in the series, the black dots punctuate the image's surface and thus those icons of progress that are celebrated in the themes.

2. The decay of the holistic world view and the atomism of early Modernity

“The smallest bodies would have infinites,
 Since then a half-of-half could still be halved,
 With limitless division less and less. Then
 what the difference ‘twixt the sum and least?”
Lucretius, The Nature of Things, Book 1,
Verse 615 – 617

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The emergence of formations from atoms, their repulsion and attraction, is noisy. A strident battle, inimical tension forms the world’s workshops and smithies. On the inside, the world is torn apart, for in its innermost heart things are so tumultuous. Karl Marx, Hefte zur skeptischen, stoischen und epikureischen Philosophie, no. IV

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Cosmos and atom are the twin poles of the **First Cuts** narrative, along which the **First Cuts** were developed and run. Like all efforts in technological/scientific Enlightenment, the heuristic model of the atom also served as an antidote to the fear of mythical forces. In this regard, Lucretius praises the atomists, Democritus and the Epicureans: It was they who first allayed people’s fears of the gods and their willful behavior. For in particular Epicurus, he said, had shown that all structures and beginnings, all events and upheaval in everyday life and the course of the world could be explained solely in terms of the laws of atoms and their movement.

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Overcoming myth and disenchanting the world have always been associated with atoms. The atomists of Classical Antiquity were their first protagonists. Their re-interpretation, made possible as of 1417 by humanist and book collector Poggio Bracciolini, who discovered the long-lost manuscript of an instructive poem by Lucretius (whom the Church fathers had so vilified), strongly shaped the secular side to early Humanism and the Renaissance. Greek and Roman atomism also remained a key reference point of modern physics from Pierre Gassendi and Robert Boyle onwards. In the 19th century, for the first time atomism emerged as the predominantly recognized basis of the natural sciences and thus of modern cosmology and astronomy.

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Given their radically enlightening agenda, Medieval and early Modern mainstream theology charged the atomists with dismantling the world view that they felt guaranteed the world's unity – and now they had won out.

Aristotelian scholasticism regarded the universe as finite, as a perfectly organized clockwork. Constructed by God's infinite wisdom and creative powers, the finite cosmos appeared in the theocentric and geocentric world view as a limited and yet perfectly structured **machina del mondo**. Not the uni-

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verse, but only God was considered infinite. For the Church superiors, Lucretius, who had summarized the atomist philosophy of nature in appealing hexameters, was therefore quite mad, and a man whom Lactantius claimed had quit a vacuous life by committing suicide.

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The battles between atomism and holism is one of the central debates of early Modern times. On the one hand, the classical holist philosophy of nature assumed the world was a meaningful, hermetically sealed entity ordained and planned by divine Providence.

Boethius compared the divine world plan to the artist's composition of a drawing. The Creator's plan of the world was in line with the artist's **disegno** – this concept in Italian art theory signifies both **design** and **drawing**, i.e., the planning by the mind and drawing by the hand.

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In its classic 16th-century definitions, the **disegno** also contains an analogy to the world plan of the **deus artifex**. The drawing by the **divino artista** related to the

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world plan of the **deus artifex**. **Disegno** 22 57
includes the idea of the abstraction of a world
that is essentially structured by Providence
and certainly no constitution of meaning
from contingency, i.e., from an atomist matrix. 23

On the other hand, atomism was the major threat to both the predominant Classical philosophy of nature and, and above all, to Christian cosmology. To the extent that it explained everything in terms of the forces, impulses, relations and structures innate in the smallest components of matter, namely atoms, it undermined all attempts to justify the world as a meaningful entity – and yet itself did not presume there to be a single heuristic model, namely the atoms' self-momentum.

In the atomist view, the world consists of spontaneous atomic bonds, deflections and arrangements. Reality thus disintegrates into the fascinating simplicity of an infinite number of new atomic configurations. Seen through his Epicurean eyes, Lucretius already described a vortex of the thinnest atomic simulacra. Stephen Greenblatt recently described the Renaissance' Copernican turn less in terms of the static image of a **turn**, and more as a **swerve**, highlighting the sudden deviation from the orbit of the customary. 24

If there is no guarantee that the world is a hermetic meaningful whole, the universe becomes infinitely large and infinitely small. 25
The battles for the structure of the cosmos

were passionate. And the object debated was always everything, and the issue of whether one would have a meaningful place in an orderly world (ideally in its center) or merely a chance atomic bond somewhere in the midst of infinity. From the 17th century onwards the affirmation of the atom therefore had severe consequences for cosmology, too.

Johannes Kepler insisted expressly on the cosmos' finitude. And after Giordano Bruno, inspired by Epicurus and Lucretius, had declared the universe infinite, to great consequence, Tycho Brahe retorted that it was finite, while Galilei sat on the fence. Bruno was well aware of the polemical and subversive character of his cosmology, when he appealed to his readers, saying:

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"We do not fear that by the violence of some erring spirit or by the wrath of a thundering Jove, that which is accumulated in our world could become dispersed beyond this hollow sepulchre or cupola of the heavens, be shaken or scattered as dust beyond this starry mantle. In no other way could the nature of things be brought to naught as to its substance save in appearance, as when the air which was compressed within the concavity of a bubble seemeth to one's own eyes to go forth into the void. For in the world as known to us, object succeedeth ever to object, nor is there an ultimate depth from which as from the artificer's hand things flow to an inevitable nullity. There are no ends, boundaries, limits or walls which can defraud or deprive us of

the infinite multitude of things. Therefore the earth and the ocean thereof are fecund; therefore the sun's blaze is everlasting, so that eternally fuel is provided for the voracious fires, and moisture replenisheth the attenuated seas."

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Bruno resorts at the end of the passage to Lucretius' trope of the closed door not opened (from the Prooemium of **De natura deorum**) and also opens the cosmos in its old guise out to the infinity of the spaces of worlds, and thus became a hero of the euphoria of infinity and research into the same. In Bruno's early cosmological opening of the world space we find a precursor of the heroics and emphatic thrust of the adventurers and discoverers who centuries later wrestled with the pathos of infinity.

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The infinite was and still is encoded with fear. Not only owing to the fact that it formed the front against the confining Ptolemaic world view, according to which man had a fixed place in the fabric of the world. For fundamentally when faced by the infinite all human endeavor seemed insignificantly small, not to say absurd in the final instance. In this regard we could term atomism the dark side of cosmology: **The Dark Side of the Moon**, as it is termed by Harald F. Müller with reference to Pink Floyd (page 142). In Müller's work, the infinity adventure is quite literally covered in dark flecks.

In the Modern project of defining space and matter, atoms may be the components of humanity's self-determined projects. However, they are also nihilistic holes of infinite divisibility that immediately point to the innate limits of said projects.

The atom serves to disintegrate things in two directions: While on the one hand the cosmos itself becomes ever greater, because it no longer constitutes a whole that could set limits, on the other hand the smallest becomes infinitely small owing to core or particle fission and itself disintegrates into even smaller parts. The Euclidean fixed point, the Archimedean fixed point, and Alberti's central point, later termed the vanishing point, become phantoms, shifted to an ever more remote point. The unity of the world and the promise that man has a secure place in it thus was increasingly shifted to an extreme, unclear horizon.

Alongside the double opening of infinity in the infinitely small and the infinitely large, the early Modern cosmological and physical debates prompted two developments that were to characterize Modern thought on at least four further levels:

a) In the history of philosophical epistemology, the world's disintegration into its atomic elements became one of the key issues discussed by the nominalists and positivists. Closing ranks with the atomist cosmology, **nominalist** (and later **positivist**) epistemology

described the world's coherence, or at any rate any reference to a supraordinated ordering agency, as a pre-Modern myth. General concepts (the so-called universals), or so the nominalists and specifically William of Ockham argued against High Scholasticism, were purely ingredients of the human mind, whereas each thing was in truth only an individual thing, or, as we could add, existed as an atom among atoms.

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Positing the unity of the world remained a fundamental problem of philosophy, in particular where the world seemed empirically to be a cluster of sensory data. In the history of epistemology, the disintegration of the world into individual elements went hand in hand with secularization. The nominalist movement was one of the main trends in modern epistemology and later held sway in positivism. There, the key idea was that the world consists of given ("positive") individual elements that can be experienced and described by the natural sciences. Epistemologically, positivism also counteracted the holist conception of the world's unity. This disintegrative thrust is to be found expressly in one of the key texts of Viennese Positivism, in Ludwig Wittgenstein's **Tractatus Logico Philosophicus**, where he writes: "The world divides into facts," and is merely a conglomerate of "everything that is the case".

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b) In social theory, atomism was used as a metaphor for the sociology of the masses, which was indeed the theoretical foil to the logic of the advancing division of labor. Here, people were grouped **ex post** and as the market agents of society, while society as a coherent unity became ever less clear. Theodor W. Adorno construed late capitalist society as of the 1930s as the epitome of such atomism. "With the dissolution of liberalism," Adorno writes in *Minima Moralia*, "the truly bourgeois principle, that of competition, far from being overcome, has passed from the objectivity of the social process into the composition of its colliding and jostling atoms and therewith as if into anthropology." Adorno felt that atomism was the overall trend in a society in which individualistic market action coupled with rigid forms of social administration (in which individuals were again treated as cases) formed the main types of social cohesion.

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The infinite cosmos and the immeasurable masses rest, both as a model of the natural sciences and as a sociological metaphor, on the image of the atomistically parceled continuum.

c) The world's subdivision into individual fragments whose unity was dubious did not stop at the aggregate forms of individuals in society. What if the individual is itself merely an aggregation of stimuli, affects and body parts?

Since the 17th century, generations of philosophers have concerned themselves with the unity of the individual, first and foremost among them John Locke and David Hume: **32**
 How do I know that tomorrow I will be the same person I was yesterday? And: How do all my impressions, mental images and associations cohere?

Corresponding to the dark side of cosmology and atomism, there is a dark theory of the individual. In the course of analytic dissection, not even the **fundamentum inconcussum** of bourgeois philosophy, the transcendental subject (the basis of Immanuel Kant's philosophy and the foundations for a new epoch in the discipline), was protected from disintegration. According to Hegel, Kant himself already commenced the process by strictly distinguishing between the individual's different basic capacities. Hegel criticized Kant's analytical efforts and thus spoke of Kant's "soul's sack", into which a bunch of individual parts had simply been stuffed. **33**
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Michel Foucault was to describe the age of subjectivity (i.e., that which rested on an assumed pure cognitive subject) as a mere **episteme**, as a historically contingent figure

of thought of the bourgeois age. For this reason, Foucault imagined the disappearance of subject philosophy, or of "Man", but couched this curiously in a romantic/sublime and yet atomistically undermined image, "like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea". Less remarked upon: the grains of sand into which according to Foucault the historical formation of the uniform individual was to disintegrate were themselves already reflections of the atomist discourse.

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The history of psychology also contributed to uncertainty as to the unity of man and the human soul. How could the ego be "master in its own house" if the cellar, the id, was overflowing with instincts that it had any manner of difficulties controlling? In his **Magic Mountain** Thomas Mann ironically termed psychoanalysis "the dissection of the soul". And in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical theory, the ego in its entirety is constituted only in the imaginary as an image of the self: in the mirror. In this way, all unity is also a fiction, albeit an inevitable one.

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d) Of course, the aesthetic forms that arise in these social processes of atomization should not be seen independently of it and this is without doubt one of the areas where Müller's **First Cuts** are so original. In her influential essay **Grids** Rosalind Krauss described the raster as Modernism's paradigmatic shape and obsession with order. However, thanks to the grid, with its additive identity of surfaces that no longer form an organic and dynamic

unity, the world also falls apart again. In this regard, Rilke's poem on the panther in its cage from the turn of the 20th century addresses a basic dilemma modernity faced: "It seems to him there are/a thousand bars; and behind the bars, no world." This theme of cosmic decomposition remains paradigmatic in Modern art and literature. In Witold Gombrowicz' last novel, which bears the telling name **Cosmos**, the narrator, torn by associations and instinctual obsessions enquires into the text's narrative unity, at the same time questioning the narrative unity of the ego: "It is difficult to call this a story, this constant ... clustering and falling apart ... of elements ... " And he confirms, "I am like a stray dog in my own home."

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From the fragmented world back to the perforated metal sheets of **First Cuts**, whose microstructure alludes to the atomic matrix. The themes, motifs and subject matter all point to space, the cosmos, the universe. Müller's **First Cuts** trace a general tendency in European modernization, in which progress and fragmentation, enlightenment and the loss of meaning couple. The dark side to progress is subcutaneous in the images' black perforated mats and raster dots, running beneath the medium's outer skin and emphasized by blurring and exaggerated chiaroscuro contrasts. The inner courtyard of Zurich University, designed by ETH-trained architect Karl Moser has architectural openings reminiscent of the round vaulted Romanesque windows, which, in the image Müller

takes, also prove to be blind, empty holes in a kind of **pittura metafisica**. **Pittura metafisica** was itself a questioning of whether humans can be emphatically 'at home' in an empty abstract space full of shadows of the past. Moreover, in the **pittura metafisica** paintings, with all their dark windows, it is always unclear who (or what) is looking at whom.

“One thing seemed certain to him, no one knew how to live anymore.”

Michel Houellebecq, The Elementary Particles 40

New challenges arose with the disintegration of the holist world view. The double, Janus-headed infinity (of the atom and the universe) is a monstrous idea that eats away at all the proportions of the orderly whole.

In the mid-19th century, in his caricatures, Grandville poured scorn over high capitalism’s belief in progress, which seemed to promise that with the expansion of limitless progress one could traipse from planet to planet (on bridges very similar to those in Haussmann’s Paris) or juggle with the planets and satellites. Yet his scorn also contained a streak of nostalgia given the loss of the ordered fabric of the world. This loss defines all of Modernity – as a task: How to cope with it?

In his **Theory of the Novel**, the young Georg Lukács coined the term **transcendental homelessness** to pinpoint the **condition moderne** and gave narrative the function of evoking the utopian fiction of a meaningful totality. This model was paradigmatic for modern, aesthetic utopias in more than one way in so far as it reports on the loss of context, regaining which Lukács said could initially only be achieved in the imaginary (the aesthetic, the utopian). The wound of infinity had to be closed in the imaginary.

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This metaphysical challenge of closing space that now opened out to infinity emphasized the claims made by the major systems of political ideas, above all communism: "To know how to grasp the stars that fall from the never dreamt-of firmament of humanity,"

or so Giorgio Agamben puts it in his **Idea of Prose**, "is the task of communism."

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This involved nothing less than realizing the cosmic dreams no one had ever dreamed of dreaming. Put differently, this imaginary closure of an enclosure that had been broken open to merge with an infinite cosmos was the ideological function of all modern ideologies that sought to counter the cosmos.

For the early socialists in the 19th century, the cosmos was still an image of reconciled history, the (ostensibly) unmoving cosmic world fabric was the counter-image to the model of historical time; the image of a **harmonie universelle** held up to contemporary history as the promise of the future self-

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redemption of Man. Interestingly, the idea of

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cosmic redemption not only included notions of the transmigration of the soul and immortality, for which extra-terrestrial spaces were conjured up. The idea also involves a certain return to a geocentric world view. With the restoration of a cosmic balance on Planet Earth, the foundations were to be laid for a re-organization of the entire cosmos. And this reorganization sought nothing less than to give us a clear notion of the infinity of the cosmic desert.

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Not rarely, the artistic avant-gardes focused on this problem. The avant-gardes attempted, as Boris Groys says, to “compensate for the destructive effect of the technological invasion” by the realization that the universe was disintegrating and the Modern world was itself torn open. Johannes Baader, self-appointed Upper Dada, called himself the President of Earth and Space. In the Russian avant-garde, the so-called Biocosmists and Immortalists put conquering space on the agenda and in 1922 called in Iswestija for the human right to “movement in space”:

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“We also put ‘victory over space’ on the agenda. We don’t say: flight, as that is not enough, we say space travel. [...] Time to stop being spectators and become active participants in cosmic life.”

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Logically, the battle against infinity was also a battle against the narcissistic injury caused by the loss of personal significance and thus against death: The smaller the self in the face

of the cosmos, the more emphasis needed to be placed on immortality. In this context, the Russian avant-garde developed the clearest formal idiom and rhetoric.

Constructivism meant (with great emphasis in the planetary intimations of an El Lissitzky) erecting a meaningful and inhabitable world in the fragmented cosmos. It is no coincidence that the Russian avant-garde has a special status in the **First Cuts**. Their works and projects are already classical positions in the direct confrontation with outer space.

While Malevich continued to believe in the invisible, the immaterial nature of infinity, and sought to visualize it through the iconic indifference of figure and ground, Tatlin's and El Lissitzky's huge structures were actually meant to reach the cosmos – and conquer it. The **Tatlin Tower**, meant to be 400 meters high, was to bring together numerous social functions: radio station, conference rooms, etc. – while it spiraled up into the cosmos as it were. Thus, the general social development was projected as a movement into space.

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El Lissitzky's **cloud irons** were never built: These office buildings, with pillars geared to bear a horizontal block in order to convey the sense of a building floating in the air, were meant at least to make one believe gravity could be overcome and thus take up the idea Lissitzky formulated with his **Prouns** as models of completely weightless architecture.

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The aesthetic charm was the clear simultaneity of compositional coherency and counter-

compositional disintegration: heroic liberation from Earth and tragic **Lost in Space**.

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In **Principle of Hope** Ernst Bloch used a similar cosmological metaphor of **built hollow spaces** to describe the principle of architectural construction. He suggested that not only the (architectural) avant-garde was typified by this effort to fill the emptied cosmic space. What Bloch terms the "oscillation into the cosmos", which he felt still informed the human purpose of architecture and its shape in the work of Taut and indeed Corbusier, was a "secularized astral myth" that demonstrated "its effectiveness in the utopias of the entire modern era".

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Not only in extreme, eccentric and obscurantist forms did the Marxist historical narrative persist: of the hope of a renewed eschatological closure of the horizon, the return of an intrinsic meaning to life, and a self-confident Modernist appropriation of infinity in imagined progress. This progress was sometimes construed as quantitative and linear (and thus itself as stretching into infinity); sometimes it was seen as a radical break introducing a qualitatively new world. In both cases, the disintegration of the holistic world view emphasized the need to re-equip the fragmented world edifice in a meaningful fashion.

The problem of regaining the cosmos was not, however, a privilege enjoyed only by the philosophical and artistic Left. Heidegger viewed man as the "dwelling being" that encounters

the “sweep of space” which confronts man with a constantly reopening infinity. His so-called “sweep of space”, the space of infinite emptiness that Heidegger juxtaposes to determinate locations that each have meaning, is nothing other than cosmic emptiness. The latter, Heidegger suggests, is a marginal phenomenon in the constant movement of **Dwelling**. On the edges of meaningful activity a dimension of spatiality repeatedly surfaces that is so overwhelming that it cannot be enclosed meaningfully. According to Heidegger, the “sweep of space” reflects the finitude of existence with all its forms of living, in which man is never truly at home.

Here, spatial transgression comes up against an existential limit, namely the dimension of mortality. For Heidegger, the constructing of space and dwelling in it are expressions of a movement in which an infinite tragedy aggregates. In the cracks of the **τόποι**, those meaningfully shaped locations, the “sweep of space” flickers, thus continually inscribing mortality as the **conditio humana** and the intrinsic limit of built space. Thus, even in space we can grasp with our senses, there is always an element of infinity visible – an element of homelessness in infinity.

The secular/eschatological effort to tackle the cosmos, the attempt to find a meaningful closure for the opened space – this is but one side of the Modernist project of countering infinity. The other was the battle on infinite terrain itself. Here the temporality of pro-

gress itself becomes an ideology intended to bond the breach between the built world and unbuilt infinity. While progress always reopened the wound (namely that the world is only temporary, resting on merely contingent basic assumptions) it also promised to itself heal the problem it constantly created.

The construct of linear temporality and its promise of progress and growth (into infinity) is a key Modernist ideology. Closing the wound of infinity was expected within the medium of a concept of time grasped as progress. Here, time itself became the ideology, because against its backdrop it was apparently possible to agree to a draw – with atomism: infinity of space = infinity of time. If growth could continue infinitely, then infinity would not be infinitely greater than the capacity of humans. In the imaginary, humanity is indefatigable and immortal.

This competitive logic of progress, the logic of the first and the transgression into the new clearly has a phallic character, as can be seen from its own geometry, visualized metaphorically and with a sure feel for form in several of Müller's **First Cuts**: linear and pointing upwards, and omnipotent at least in the imagined upwards movement. The speed of projectiles has always contained its own eschatology: the promise that infinite speed in time will catch up with the infinity of the new space.

Eschatology itself was likewise (by the closure of the infinite or the race with time) always only one side of the coin minted by the atomist world view. The other side: the manic laughter of entropy, the irreversible decay into micro-states that constitutes another source of Modernist art discourses, one fed by scientific narratives.

This narrative is almost as old as the history of atomism itself. Lucretius construed the world as aging and thought it would one day implode. A thought Leonardo da Vinci took up in order to imagine the as it were para-modernist disintegration of the world into atoms. Entropy, the tendency of atoms to diffuse, will lead to the universe's dissolution. Leonardo da Vinci summarized this atomist view of the world in his drawings on the end of the world (now in Windsor Castle): with polycentric scenarios of doom.

The **Second Law of Thermodynamics** became a basic dogma for the Russian (aesthetic and political) avant-garde: the world's disintegration and the lethal loss of energy can only be prevented by constantly inputting new energy. Aesthetically and politically (Trotsky was the driver here) the permanent revolution was the response to the physical logic of thermodynamics. For the less a system has energy of its own, so says the second law, the more it becomes prone to irreversible decay: entropy. Therefore the energy level needed to constantly be replenished.

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The photographic themes in the **First Cuts** are paradigmatic icons of the narrative on progress of **faster, further, higher** that runs from Modern to Late Modern times, from the heroic age of engineering and space travel from the World Expos and the Cold War: racing cars and jet turbines, spaceships, computer and particle accelerators – but also the Modernist-geometric compositions, decisive moments in the history of architecture and Pop music. These are images referring to contexts in which progress and the future seem to contain a perfect promise of happiness.

Robert Smithson read the Minimal Art of the 1960s as an entropic art, that offers a heroic insight into the irreversible fragmentation of the world and the constant loss of unity:

“Many of these artists have created a kind of visual analogy to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which extrapolates the reach of entropy.” Artists like Smithson himself found his own aesthetic stance in the recognition of the entropic principle of Modernism: the irreversible decay of organized spaces in splinters and so-called de-architecturing (construed as the deconstruction of the overall spatial context).

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Although the **Second Law of Thermodynamics** suggests that inputting energy can mean avoiding entropy, the relationship between entropy and acceleration is ambivalent, as acceleration itself, the addition of external energy, can promote fragmentation. The beats per minute of electronic music (bpm) threatens to force the musical fabric to disintegrate into a sum of individual **sounds**. The rhythm dominates, whereby additive sound units deliver musical atomization that corresponds to the basic movement of Modernist fragmentation.

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In particular in art of the 1960s and 1970s, and that is the context in which Harald F. Müller’s work arose, this movement was expressed in an atomistic formal idiom: While the key formula of High Modernism was the grid, that rectangular raster of quadratic modules, themes in Late Modernism were subjected to

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artistic atomization. Dots and pixels are the symbolic forms of that ironic art since **Pop Art**, which pointed to the splintering of the photo-realist image into its color pigments. Sigmar Polke's **Original und Fälschung**, Gerhard Richter's raster images that dissolve the Minimalist grid into the shimmer of the RAL color chart, the photo-realist paintings of Chuck Close and the appropriations of a Richard Prince and those of Harald F. Müller in the 1980s all relied on presenting the dot and pixel structure of technically structured images. Roy Lichtenstein's paintings of the 1960s paved the way, with his use of the image structure of mass culture and its adaptation to the grid method through the use of regular dots of color.

These three strategies define the modern approach to the world's disintegration into an infinity of atoms and their dissolution in an unrestricted space: the renewed closure of the infinite, its progressive exploration and conquest as hope for the infinity of progress or recognition of disintegration. Harald F. Müller adopts a fourth position: He observes the visual expression of these discourses on infinity and their "impression" in the historical print media of Late Modernism. By excitingly dovetailing subjects relating to the conquest of space and a creative matrix of intrinsically insignificant micro-elements (those round black holes that refer to Modern atomism), he traces the implicitly ideological structure of using visual meaning to close the disintegrating world. He thus repeats a reflex

typical of Late Impressionism and Pointil-
lism. What is interesting in this context is that
one of the inventors of the dissolution of
painting – namely through a matrix of aseman-
tic elements (“tâches”) – was Paul Cézanne,
who liked reading Lucretius. Only the latter
emphasized the fruitful aspect of the genesis
of the theme from an atomistic ground and
not its dissolution into a prefigurative ground-
lessness.

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So what position do the **First Cuts** take on Modernity and artistic Modernism? In our opinion, the **First Cuts** are a retrospective analysis of the euphoria on progress typical of heroic High Modernism and a commentary on its emphatic efforts to counter the opened space. One of these efforts was the narrative on progress, with its metaphysical, cosmological and atomistic logic as 'exposed' by Müller. The commentary innate in the **First Cuts** also points to the repressed layers of that narrative: underlining them and then disguising them is the paradoxical logic of Harald F. Müller's method. For grasping the opening of the world out into infinity and its disintegration into the smallest of particles are both painful, which is why this is repeatedly hidden in the imaginary. For this reason, there is a permanent search for ideological ways out of man's absurd absence of a position in the opened cosmos.

With its sometimes cynical, sometimes eschatological narratives on progress Modernity tried to offer various ways out. These evoked their own disasters, which in the final instance undermined the narrative as a whole. In this sense, the black dots in the **First Cuts** correspond to that Modernist self-critique that we have elsewhere termed **Modernisme Noir**. **Noir** refers here to the uncanny presence of a doppelgänger in the appropriation mode, **double mimesis** as a process of such retro-

Modernist strategies that cite formal abstraction and infuse it with images and memories of social disasters from the **century of extremes**. Yet **Modernisme Noir** is only structurally analogous to the **First Cuts**: Where the latter weaves bottomless content into precise coolness and clarity, the pure emptiness and doctrine of the formal vocabulary of aesthetic Modernism, Müller weaves bottomless form into the ideological narrative of modernization. The black dots are the blind spots in the imaginary of the narrative on progress and the eschatological attempts to close the cosmos again. Müller's **appropriations** and the retro-Modernism of **Modernisme Noir** share the perspective of an ideological critique of modern (and modernist) doctrines of salvation.

In its metaphysical regard, Müller's process takes a **deeper approach** than the main champions of **Modernisme Noir**: **Santiago Sierra** and **Wilhelm Sasnal**, **Monika Sosnowska** and **Gregor Schneider**. The ideological repression he focuses on does not really entail the actual social dimensions of invisible torture, precarious employment, economic crisis or ecological disasters. Müller is interested in nothing less than the Modernist project of dwelling in the cosmos and the metaphysically charged hope, atomistic and built, that infinity can be closed by spatial compositions. To this extent, progress alone is not the subject of Müller's reflections on images. In his eye, technological progress enters into ideological alliances with the opposing poles of an

eschatological closure and an entropic opening of space, namely with religion and totalitarianism.

In this regard, Müller's work is deconstructive, he reconstructs the logics of dwelling in the cosmos and defrocks the atomistic base on which it is erected. The aesthetic logic of his specific method of appropriation involves both the selection and grouping of image themes and the way of presenting them. Müller selects from an infinite number of potential photographic images the formally perfect "compositions": (usually printed) photographs that seem consciously composed, almost in the vein of the Old Masters. They thus appear rooted in that old and essentially pre-Modern rhetoric of composition as representation, reflection and analogous of the world order in the style of the Old Masters. In a second step, using his dot grids Müller dissects these seemingly classical compositions.

The motifs are an unconscious expression of the desire to put a cosmos that has become too large in the right perspective, place it against the backdrop of progress and the day's stage or, in an extreme case, couch it in the terms of apocalyptic or entropic hopes. The deliberate perforation of this imaginary, which also contains an allusion to atomism, ensures that we can see the self-destructive logic of the cosmic thirst for conquest: dots remain where once was an image. This evokes and pulverizes the imago of progress (the

ideological structure of a closure of the cosmic abyss in the imaginary). It is thus no coincidence that Harald F. Müller's method is reminiscent of the rhetoric of ideology critique. The focus is on things repressed. And here the element of repression within the ideology of progress is finitude. The emphatic reliance on progress finds the finite as uncanny as infinity was to cosmologists of the old school.

What cannot be endured, or so psychoanalytical tradition teaches us, must be covered over in the imaginary. According to psychoanalytical theory, one of the main achievements of the human psyche is its ability to repress and thus recode affects associated with pain. This ability can be decidedly creative. It is able to create imagined significations that render decisive injuries invisible while enabling navigation in the factual world. In coping with the injury signified by the insight into cosmic infinity (the absurdity of existence in a fragmented atomistic space) massive imaginary achievements were made. If Müller's **First Cuts** now play through the issue of finitude and the question as to the reach of such concrete ideologies that promise to enable us to cope with it, then they sound the depths – and the imaginary's real achievement is to have persuaded us to repress those depths. The **First Cuts** thus focus on an atomistically fragmented cosmos and the methods for dealing with it.

The finitude of human capacities within an infinity of infinities entails a series of decidedly not abstract but rather compelling dimensions. The classic existential description of this (personal mortality) is historically supplemented by a second level, the limitation of natural resources.

The simple fact that natural resources are limited and that the emphasis on the very new produces surfeit are also to be seen in Harald F. Müller's method: Working with appropriations is also an expression of a specific image-ecological stance, of image recycling and of work with limited and already extant image resources.

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However, even more strongly typical of the gesture of ideology critique in the **First Cuts** is the fundamental media tension innate in it. The pieces oscillate between the imaginary (the image character of the **First Cuts**) and crude materialism (the physical presence of perforated sheet metal), both an expression and the epitome of the oscillation between the imaginary and the real.

To summarize: the **First Cuts** discuss above all three strategies for overcoming infinity. Firstly there is the phantasm of progress, secondly the eschatological hope of renewed closure, and thirdly the cynical recognition of entropy. All three positions are attempts to fathom the insight into the world's hollowness and the cosmos' infinite emptiness, which no longer guarantees man a safe place.

Or at least they are efforts to find firm ground within this infinite cosmos. As shown, all three mechanisms of repression are visualized and put up for debate in the **First Cuts**.

The real kick in the **First Cuts** is how they confront and fade out the icons of constant repression by juxtaposing them to the reality of an atomic matrix. Here, the infinite is juxtaposed to the finite human capacity to deny that finitude – the themes in the images highlight all the various attempts. The black perforation dots are reminiscent in this regard of the **punctum**, which Roland Barthes discerned was the opposite of the legible image and thus that element of death that he felt was innate in all photographs.

The **First Cuts** do not opt for a new form of imaginary closure of what can hardly be endured. Instead, they present the tension between both poles, that of modern atomism and that of the atavistic world of the icons of progress. They are neither a heroic insight into the abyss of entropy nor the imaginary projection of an alternative to the abyss of existence. Rather, the **First Cuts** are nostalgic images of the heroic project of Modernity and a masculine yearning for the progress they present, albeit mediated by black dots.

1
Stephanie Barron (ed.): *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*, exhib. cat. Los Angeles County Museum of Art: January 25 – April 19, 2009, Los Angeles 2009.

2
Reinhart Koselleck: *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

3
In Schiller's work, this figure of the loss of naturalness is primarily meant in an evolutionary sense. At the same time, this involves the objectification of what was construed to have once been in direct unity with the individual but can now only be recreated in aesthetic terms. Take, for example, Schiller's famous statement on the *poets*: "They will either be nature, or they will *seek* the lost nature," [translation JG] see Friedrich Schiller: *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, Gerhard Fricke & Herbert G. Göpfert (eds), vol. 5, Munich: Hanser 1959, pp. 694–780, p. 712.

4
See a similar cosmological metaphor in the title of a show on retro-Modernist art in 2004 at Kunstmuseum Bonn: Dieter Ronte & Christoph Schreier (eds.): *Still Mapping the Moon. Perspektiven zeitgenössischer Malerei*, Bonn: Kunstmuseum Bonn Sept. 16 – Nov. 14, 2004.

5
In this context, Aby Warburg chose the oval as the symbolic shape for the groundplan of the domed hall of his Hamburg library.

6
Donat de Chapeaurouge: *Eine Circus-Rekonstruktion des Pierro Ligorio*, in *Antike und Abendland*, vol. 18 (1973), pp. 89–96.

7
See Joachim Ritter: *Landschaft. Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft*, Münster: Aschendorff, 1963. For a critical discussion of Ritter's theory of compensation and specifically his landscape essay, see: Jürgen Habermas: *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity, 1987, pp. 71–4 ff.; see Ruth Groh & Dieter Groh: *Weltbild und Naturaneignung: Zur Kulturgeschichte der Natur*, vol. 1, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1991.

8
Jürgen Habermas: *Theory of Communicative Action*, (2 vols), Boston: Beacon, 1987; Marshall Berman: *All That is Solid Melts Into Air. The Experience of Modernity*, London/New York: Verso, 1983; Odo Marquard: *Philosophie des Städtischen*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000.

9
Not rarely, the social logics of modernization and ecology as well as the aesthetic ability of imagination and reason were couched in gender-coded terms, to the detriment of aesthetic, ecological and feminist discourses. A series of significant examples are listed by Christoph Türcke in his *Sexus und Geist. Philosophie im Geschlechterkampf*, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1991.

10
Rosalind Krauss: *Grids*, in: *October*, Vol. 9 (Summer, 1979), pp. 50–64.

11
In this way, they invert the Democritic/Epicurean principle of the atom: for Democritus and Epicurus, there was only emptiness and the atom that fills emptiness and thus expunges it.

12
Titus Lucretius Carus: *De rerum natura*, http://classics.mit.edu/Carus/nature_things.1.i.html.

13
Karl Marx: *Hefte zur skeptischen, stoischen und epikureischen Philosophie*, no. IV, in: *Marx/Engels: Werke*, ed. ZK der SED, Supplementary vol., Part 1, Berlin (Ost): Dietz, 1968, pp. 140–183, p. 163. [translation JG]

14
Atomism was Enlightenment par excellence – along with its dark side: "In the most general sense of progressive thought," or so we can read at the beginning of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty." Theodor W. Adorno & Max Horkheimer: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London: Verso, 1973, p. 3.

15
Valentina Prospero: *Lucretius in the Italian Renaissance*, in: Stuart Gillespie & Philipp Hardie (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 214–226; Passannante, Gerard: *The Lucretian Renaissance: Philology and the Afterlife of Tradition*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Allison Brown: *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence*, Cambridge and London 2010; Gerd Blum: *Epikureische Aufmerksamkeit und euklidische Abstraktion. Alberti, Lukrez und das Fenster als bildgebendes Dispositiv der Neuzeit*, in: Horst Bredekamp, Christiane Kruse & Pablo Schneider (eds.): *Imagination und Repräsentation. Zwei Bildsphären der Frühen Neuzeit*, Munich: Fink, 2010, pp. 79–118; Stephen Greenblatt: *The Swerve. How the World Became Modern*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.

16

Antonio Clericuzio: *Elements, Principles and Corpuscles: A Study of Atomism and Chemistry in the Seventeenth Century*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000; William R. Newman: *Atoms and Alchemy, Chemistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

17

In summary: Alan Chalmers: *Atomism from the 17th to the 20th Century*, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/atomism-modern/> [25 Jul 2013].

18

This formulation is to be encountered more frequently in Italy in the 16th century, for example in architect Andrea Palladio's *Four Books on Architecture*. See Andrea Palladio: *I quattro libri dell'Architettura*, Venice 1570 (reprint, Milan: Hoepli, 1990), Lib. IV, Proemio, p. 3.

19

Michael von Albrecht: *Lukrez in der europäischen Tradition*, in: *Gymnasium*, 110 (2003), No. 4, pp. 333–361; Michael D. Reeve: *Lucretius in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance: transmission and scholarship*, in: Stuart Gillespie & Philipp Hardie (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, op. cit., pp. 205–13.

20

Steffen Bogen: *Träumen und Erzählen. Selbstreflexion der Bildkunst vor 1300*, Munich: Fink, 2001, p. 143–149.

21

See Michael W. Cole: *Ambitious Form: Giambologna, Ammanati, and Danti in Florence*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010, S. 13.

22

Steffen Bogen, entry on "Gott/Künstler," in: Ulrich Pfisterer (ed.), *Lexikon der Kunstwissenschaft*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2003, pp. 129–132.

23

Gerd Blum: *Giorgio Vasari. Der Erfinder der Renaissance. Eine Biographie*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2011, S. 50 f. and Wolfgang Kemp: "Disegno. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Begriffs zwischen 1547 und 1607," in: *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 19 (1974), pp. 219–240.

24

Stephen Greenblatt, op. cit.

25

Alexandre Koyré describes this process in his classic. See Alexandre Koyré: *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957, pp. 58–876 ("Johannes Kepler's Rejection of Infinity").

26

See Gerd Blum: *Berge als Bauten und Begrenzung*. Giovanni Battista Agucchi, Giordano Bruno, Galilei Galileo and die Villa Aldobrandini bei Frascati, in: *Stiftung Bibliothek Werner Oechslin* (ed.), *Heilige Berge/Heilige Landschaft* (Beiträge des Achten Internationalen Sommerkurses der Bibliothek Werner Oechslin, Einsiedeln, July 8–12, 2007), Zürich 2012 (forthcoming).

27

<http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/brunoiuw0.htm>; also his: *De l'infinito universo et mundi*, hg. von Gentile, Florenz: Sansoni, 1985, p. 365.

28

"Aprine la porta per la qual veggiamo l'indifferenza di questo astro da gli altri." See Giordano Bruno, *De l'infinito universo et mundi*, Giovanni Aquilecchia and Giovanni Gentile (eds.) op. cit., p. 365.

29

See William of Ockham: *Philosophical Writings*, ed. by Philotheus Boehner, Indianapolis/New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1964, p. 35 ff. See also: Paul Vincent Spade: *Ockham's Nominalist Metaphysics. Some Main Themes*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. by Paul Vincent Spade, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 100–117.

30

Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, London: Routledge, 1981, p. 31 (Sentences 1.2 and 1.1 respectively).

31

Theodor W. Adorno: *Minima Moralia. Reflections from Damaged Life*, London: Verso, 1978, p. 27. See also his remarks in: *Einleitung zu Emile Durkheim, Soziologie und Philosophie*, in his: *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 8, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 245–279, p. 278.

32

See Harold Noonan: *Locke on Personal Identity*, in: *Philosophy*, vol. 53, no. 205 (Jul., 1978), pp. 343–351; Abraham Sesshu Roth: *What was Hume's Problem with Personal Identity?*, in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 61, no. 1 (July 2000), pp. 91–114.

33

This dark tradition in subject theory starts to a certain extent as early as the 15th century, as Eugenio Garin and others have shown; see Gerd Blum, *Epikureische Aufmerksamkeit und euklidische Abstraktion*, op. cit., pp. 79–118.

34

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Section 3, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1955, p. 443.

- 35**
Michel Foucault: *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London: Routledge, 1971, p. 422.
- 36**
Sigmund Freud: *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, in: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by James Strachey et al., vol. XVI, London: The Hogart Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis 1955, p. 284-85.
- 37**
Jacques Lacan: *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience*, in his: *Écrits*, New York: Norton, 2002, pp. 75-81.
- 38**
Rainer Maria Rilke: *The Panther*, in: *Rainer Maria Rilke: The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, New York: Random House, 1989, p. 25.
- 39**
Witold Gombrowicz: *Cosmos*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005, p. 173, p. 166, p. 88. The theme of hanging (a sparrow, a little rod, a cat, Ludwik) as a metaphor for a loss of ground in an abstract cosmic space runs through the whole novel.
- 40**
Michel Houellebecq, *Elementary Particles*, New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2000, p. 100.
- 41**
Georg Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971, p. 41.
- 42**
See Giorgio Agamben: *Idea of Prose*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995. P. 75.
- 43**
See Charles Fourier: *Harmonie universelle*, in his: *Oeuvres*, vol. X, Paris: Anthropos, 1967, pp. 52-53.
- 44**
See on this Guy Debord: *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, Verso: London, 1990, (Aph. 83).
- 45**
See Nicholas V. Rjasanovsky: *The Teachings of Charles Fourier*, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969, pages 86, 89, 93.
- 46**
Boris Groys: *The Total Work of Stalinism. Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship and Beyond*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 14.
- 47**
See, for example, Magdalena Szymńska: *Dada und die Wiener Gruppe*, Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag 2009, p. 21.
- 48**
Kreatorij Rossijskich i Moskovskich anarhistov-biokosmistov, *Deklarativnaja rezolucija*, in: *Izvestija, VCIK*, Jan. 4, 1922, quoted here from Michael Hagemester: *Unser Körper muss unser Werk sein. Beherrschung der Natur und Überwindung des Todes in russischen Projekten des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: Boris Groys & Michael Hagemester (eds.): *Die Neue Menschheit. Biopolitische Utopien in Russland zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2005, pp. 19-67, here p. 26 [translation JG].
- 49**
Selim O. Chan-Magomedov: *Bedingungen und Besonderheiten in der Entstehung der Avantgarde in der sowjetischen Architektur*, in: *Avantgarde, Scusev-Architekturmuseum, Moscow & Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart* (eds.), *Kunsthalle Tübingen, Stuttgart*: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1991, pp. 10-33, p. 17.
- 50**
The word Proun was an acronym of *proyekty utverzhdeniya novogo* – projects to establish the new – and was itself an expression of the Modernist logic of innovation.
- 51**
Ernst Bloch: *The Principle of Hope*, vol. 2. chapters 33-42, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996, p. 752.
- 52**
Martin Heidegger: *Bemerkungen zu Kunst – Plastik – Raum*, St. Gallen: Erker, 1996, S. 13 [translation JG]. See on this Johan F. Hartle: *Der geöffnete Raum. Zur Politik der ästhetischen Form*, Munich: Fink, 2006, above all pp. 152-157.
- 53**
Frank Fehrenbach: *Licht und Wasser, Zur Dynamik naturphilosophischer Leitbilder im Werk Leonardo da Vincis* (being: *Tübinger Studien zur Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, no. 16) Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1997.
- 54**
See Rainer Goldt: *Thermodynamik als Textem. Der Entropiesatz als poetologische Chiffre bei E.I. Samjatin*, Mainz: Liber, 1995, p. 47. For the philosophical and culture-theoretical interpretation of the Second Law Of Thermodynamics in the first third of the 20th century (e.g., by Oswald Spengler and Henri Bergson), pp. 50-87.
- 55**
Robert Smithson: *Entropy and New Monuments*, see: http://www.robertsmithson.com/essays/entropy_and.htm.
- 56**
See Yves-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *A User's Guide to Entropy*, in: *October*, vol. 78 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 38-88.

57

Beats per Minute (bpm) enables electronic music, which also wanted to be a self-confident expression of greater technologization, to express the principle of progressive acceleration quantitatively. It rationalized acceleration by rendering it directly comparable and identifiable. Ideally, the playback device determines the genre by setting the rhythm.

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See Rosalind Krauss, "Grids," op. cit.

59

In her *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977, p. 140), Susan Sontag suggests that images belong to the elementary ideological elements of capitalist societies: "A capitalist society requires a culture based on images. It needs to furnish vast amounts of entertainment in order to stimulate buying and anesthetize the injuries of class, race, and sex. And it needs to gather unlimited amounts of information, the better to exploit natural resources, increase productivity, keep order, make war, give jobs to bureaucrats." We believe that here Susan Sontag identifies the ideological character of the image (the imaginary) in covering over and anaesthetizing us to fundamental contradictions. However, these ideological functions are not restricted to the basic contradictions of capitalist society but also relate to the human condition in a world that has broken apart.

60

Kathryn A. Tuma: "Cézanne and Lucretius at the Red Rock," in: *Representations*, Spring 2002, no. 78, pp. 56-85. On Cézanne's "tâches" see Kurt Badt: *Die Kunst Cézannes*, Munich, 1956 and Gottfried Boehm, *Paul Cézanne. Montagne Sainte-Victoire*, Frankfurt/M.: Insel, 1988.

61

On an exemplary position in contemporary art that tackles the cosmos virtually see Johan F. Hartle: *Cosmos and Hut. Paradoxes of the Home* in Michael Sailstorfer's *Work*, in: Nikolaus Schafhausen (ed.): *Michael Sailstorfer. Für Immer war gestern*, Nuremberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2005, pp. 84-97.

62

See on this our two essays (*Modernisme Noir* and *Zelle, Raster, Würfel*) in: Christoph Bertsch & Silvia Höller (eds.): *Cella. Strukturen der Ausgrenzung und Disziplinierung*, Innsbruck: Skarabäus Universitätsverlag, 2010, pp. 225-234 and pp. 207-215.

63

Felix Thürlemann first used the concept of "double mimesis". See Felix Thürlemann: *Im Schlepptau des großen Glücks: Die doppelte Mimesis bei Albrecht Dürer*, in: Erika Greber and Bettine Menke (eds.): *Manier - Manieren - Manierismus*, Tübingen: Narr, 2003.

64

The idea of an image ecology can also be traced back to Susan Sontag (see her *On Photography*, op. cit.), who used it to designate a responsible approach to the rampant material properties of images and the (ostensibly) thus created infinite consumerist desire.