



A House On Jungmannova

A documentary by Dan Senn

A House On Jungmannova

4+4+4 Days In Motion

Prague, 2006

This is a documentary about a house on Jungmannova street, near the center of Prague in the Czech Republic; about the "4+4+4 Days in Motion" festival held in May of 2006, its organizers, artists and patrons; about the location and Jewish origin of this structure, its establishment as a standing work of art and how this impacted the festival participants; about the patrons, as they entered a building replete with "code violations," small children in tow struggling up the steep and dangerous staircases, pressed to question whether one thing was art or, perhaps, just some refuse left behind; about an organized confusion which encouraged artists to continue preparing and developing installations after the day of the opening; and, about the delicate interconnections which existed between the festival participants and the mutual benefits which exceeded the sum of its parts.

Throughout the festival, as I maintained my own installation, I talked with many Czech artists while documenting their work and the house, and as I moved through the mysterious, Kafkaesque warren of rooms and hallways, I learned the necessity of retracing my steps over and over to discover and rediscover new and changed installations. For this was part of a larger concept, one which encouraged patrons to return to the house, to remount the stairs, stepping carefully around the clutter, and to observe a festival-in-progress, in A House On Jungmannova. DS 10/06

Biography: Dan Senn is an interdisciplinary artist working in kinetic sound sculpture, experimental music and video, documentary film, and other media. In the tradition of a composer, he works alone, as director, videographer, photographer, interviewer, editor, etc. His installation work often combines video, sound and moving sculpture and his 2001 documentary, "The Exquisite Risk of Civil War Brass," won at the Da Vinci film festival. Dan lives in Prague and Oregon.

More can be learned about his work at: www.newsense-intermedium.com.

Director's Statement

"A House On Jungmannova" was a spontaneous effort. I was in Europe for installations of my art in Poland and the Czech Republic and had with me my video camera and lapel mic. The "4+4+4 Days in Motion" festival, for which I had constructed "The Odradek Complex," a kinetic sound sculpture installation, would be in place for 12 days, and except for maintaining my own work and socializing, I had little more to do. But I was also rapt by the 4plus festival concept, one supported by the mayor and city council of Prague. A concept which consciously and smartly used an abandoned structure in the center of an very old city as a kind of anthropomorphic artifact. A concept which, for all sorts of legal reasons, could no longer be realized in western Europe or the United States. So, just like that, I decided to document the building, the festival, its artists and to make a piece. And from this simple impulse was born "A House On Jungmannova" with a crew of one.

As an interdisciplinary artist, I have interdisciplinary expertise, and this has both its advantages and its disadvantages. As a composer, a sound technician and editor, I know where to put the mic and how to engineer the best sound. As a videographer and photographer, my films are as much about what is seen as the subject at hand. As a video editor with access to my own editing studio, I am able to work long hours, to start and restart the piece until I get it right. Best of all, there is little stress in the process of making a "film," except for the pressure I put on myself. I need not worry about whether I can meet production costs.

These are just some of the advantages of working alone and that so few people work this way is the crux of the disadvantages. It is rare that one sees in the credits a single name for a piece, as in "A House On Jungmannova," a piece which normally would take many others to realize, and it has often crossed my mind to fake all sorts of assistants just to get over the hump of being labeled "unprofessional." The connection between working alone and the weekend hobbyist is insurmountable in some.

Before I started to make experimental and documentary film, I was, and continue to be, a composer of classical experimental music and a sculptor of kinetic-sound sculpture. Today, my moving picture pieces are often integrated with this work, and sometimes a piece comes out that stands alone, like "A House On Jungmannova." Because I have worked with photography for many years, the step from music composition and kinetic sculpture, to experimental and documentary film is a short and easy one, especially given that my Mac computer doesn't seem to mind which software I run. Working alone is only natural for me.

Another view

Looking up
Palackeho Street
to Jungmannova
28.

Jungmannova 28

This area was
recently in dispute
because of the
existence of an
old Jewish
cemetery. The
house was likely
owned by a
Jewish landlord
who disappeared
during the Nazi
occupation.

4+4+4 DNY V POHYBU

Translates to
4+4+4 DAYS IN
MOTION.

Street sign

JUNGMANNOVA
NEW CITY -
PRAGUE 1. The
new city is still
very old and
centrally located.



Two trams

Trams pass near the Narodni Trida stop along Spalena street.

Lucerna

An old "shopping center" and "passage," the Lucerna contains one of Prague's earliest cinemas. This is Vodickova Street just around the corner from the Jungmannova house.



Vladislavova Steet

Looking west from the Jungmannova house, a woman argues her way out of a parking ticket.

Street scene

Looking east from the Jungmannova house on Palackeho Street.



Looking west

A view from the second floor roof of the Jungmannova house toward the Narodni Trida tram and metro stop.

Looking east

A view from a fourth floor window to Palackeho Street.



Looking west

The roof top from which Pash* and Mash64 were interviewed for their Ombea installation.

Looking east

Another view to Palackeho Street.



"A warren of rooms"

Before being refreshed by festival installations, clear rooms opened into room after room on the upper floor of the Jungmannova house.

Court yard view

The court yard of the Jungmannova house was used as a gathering place for the festival. This photo was taken from the festival cafe.



Stairwells

Two sets of strikingly narrow stairwells penetrated upward through the house.

Broken window

An broken window just outside of the Odraky installation area.



Artist at work.

An artist prepares to intervene prior to the opening.

An patron descends one of two steep stairwells in the Jungmannova house.

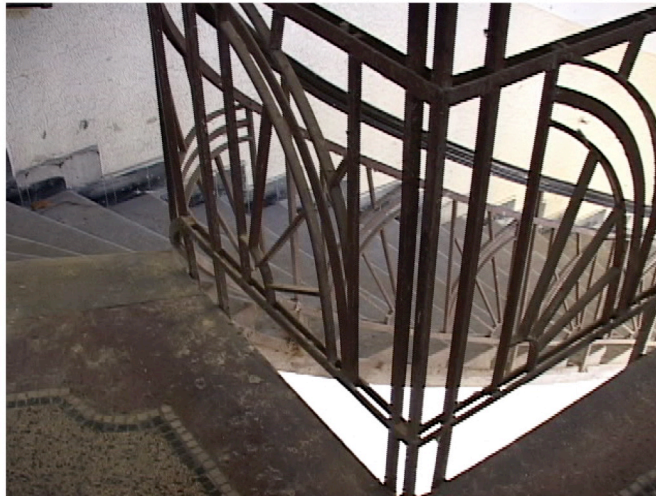


Stairwells

Beautiful ironwork encased the stairwells in this house.

A query

A workman, framed by a painted doorway, questions the videographer.



Is it art?

A service window from the clinic days.

An old double sink which functioned as a work of art within the context of the festival.



An array of unworking electrical recepticals and switches on a white tiled wall.

A video installation from the other side of the service window.



...or some refuse left behind?

A room lined with old and dysfunctional electrical switches decorated with pigeon scat and feathers.

Green toilets

A naturally lit installation of green covered toilets could have been easily mistaken for an art installation.



Homeless room?

An old medical room once inhabited by a homeless person.

Context matters

Patrons were forced to critically assess whether a condition or scene or sound was the result of a festival intervention, or, perhaps, just something left behind by the previous inhabitants.



Scavenging

An artist finds a door for use in his installation.

Michaela Petru

Misha paints unweathered patches of white where she conjectures that framed art and furniture were once positioned—this at the end of a large waiting room,



Pavel Sterec

Pavel explains his installation of FM transmitters and radios imbedded inside kitchen pots.



Katerina Drzkova

Katerina experienced the upper limits of the house for the first time with a digital camera embedded in a helmet.

Veronika Neumanova

Veronika describes the evolution of her piece from a terrifying childhood experience.



Katerina Drzkova

Katerina poses with her digital helmet.

Erika Kohoutova

Erika stands in her coffin-like padded cell where she was interviewed for this documentary.



Ombea

Pash*, the originator of the Ombea concept, interacts with MAX software which reacts to the movement of patrons in the adjacent room.

Tim Nohe

Tim makes adjustment to his installation constructed from bits found within the house.



Orange men

Positioned on top of the festival bar, two artists prepare a meal for themselves in an informal performance art piece.

Theatre

The festival featured theatrical performances nightly.



Loosened tiles

An artist loosened stone tiles (left top and bottom) in the floor before a hallway to many other installations.

Fake clinic

Local artists collected old medical supplies to create false medical environments within new contexts. Due to the history of the Jungmannova house, this was especially effective.



manually comfortable

This sign was posted on top of an existing sign.



White powder

Here an artist covered the floor with a white substance, planted little sheeplike figures here and there, and placed bunches of "hair" in nooks and crannies.

...and peat cakes

Adjact to the white powder room, the same artist included square "cakes" of a organic-like substance.



Connections to God

Detail from Veronika Neumanova's installation.

Obscured window

An artist covered a west looking window with sticky tape and plastic and then highlighted the tape with black dashes.



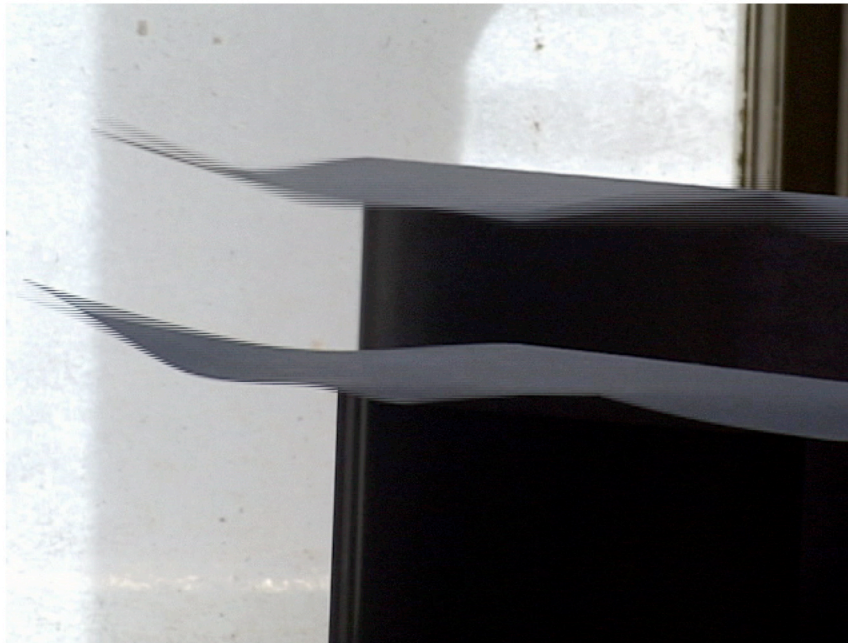
Optical illusion

An artist painted shadows on top of existing shadows for pre-existing articles.



"The Odradek Complex"

Dan Senn created an installation of flapping paper mallets atop 4 resonant tubes (left and right). These were moved using sub-audio frequencies, the sound of which was mixed with operatic bursts and other vocal utterances also emanating from the tubes.



Holes, floor-to-floor

An artist drilled a hole from the top to the bottom floor of the Jungmannova house with such perfection that a small coin could be dropped without touching the sides.

Adam Stanku

Adam created an installation of repositioned doors behind which speakers were hidden playing the sounds of everyday life from a Prague apartment complex.



Helmet shots

In this installation, photos taken by Katerina Drzkova, as she walked helmeted through the Jungmannova house, were flashed along with pre-recorded sounds of the Jungmannova house.

Woman with gun

Graphics of this sort were painted throughout the house.



Erika's room

A patron looks into Erika's Kohoutova's padded cell.

The beach

Jakub Precechtel created a beach-like installation which gradually shifted from a smooth to a stepped upon surface as the festival preceeded.



Kaoro Tsunoda

Expertly integrated with the house, Kaoro's installation (left-right) was presented in the documentary as a work easily transported to a white box venue.



Hypokritic

This artist painted texts throughout the building.

Two guys on a ledge

Pash* and Mash64 sit on the window ledge outside their installation room.



**Radio
Jungmann**

An extension of the internet radio station Radio Lumurie, Radio Jungmann broadcast throughout the festival to an area in and around the Jungmannova house. This is the station's festival control room.

**Veronika
Neumanova**

Veronika asks the interviewer how to pronounce the word "plague."



Pavel Sterec

Pavel Sterec explains the importance of Jungmann's linguistic work in the Czech Republic.

**Jakub
Precechtel**

Jakub describes his sand installation.



Jan Bartos

Jan projected photos of homeless structures to emphasize aspects of their architecture.

Dasa Subrtova

Dasa coordinated the participation of a group of her art students while producing a installation of her own.



Milos Vojtechovsky

An influential Prague artist, teacher and producer, Milos curated the Odraky portion of the festival.

Two directors

Denisa Vaclavova and Market Cerna produced and directed the innovative **4+4+4 Days In Motion** festival.



Dan Senn

The director in
Poznan, Poland,
at the opening of
his kinetic sound
installation,
"Uncovered
States."



**Jungmannova
28**

Another view.



Michaela Petru

Micha takes a
break in the
festival cafe.



Credits

Other Festival Artists

Tomáš Svoboda, Tomáš Vaněk, Dominik Lang, Zbyněk Baladrán, Milena Dopitová, Ládví (Jiří Týn, Adéla Svobodová, Jan Haubelt, Tomáš Severa), Jesper Alvaer, Jan Kotík, Barbora Klímová, Richard Wiesner, Petra Pětiletá, Eva Koťátková, Vasil Artamonov, Marek Meduna, Václav Magid, Jitka Mikulicová, Petra Herotová, Alexej Klyuykov, Sláva Sobotovičová, Silvina Arismendi, Daniela Baráčková, Jiří David, Jitka Mikulcová, Milan Salák, Tim Nohe, Lisa Moren, Kaoru Tsunoda, and others.

Interview Subjects

Adam Stanku, Dagmar Šubrtová, Denisa Vaclavova, Erika Kohoutova, Jakub Precechtel, Jan Bartos, Katerina Drzkova, Marketa Cerna, Martin Kohout, Michaela Petru, Miloš Vojtechovsky, Pavel Sterec, Veronika Neumanova.

Organizations and Websites

The Four Days Association

Radio Lemurie

Školská 28 Communication Space

Festival Website: www.ctyridny.cz

Dan Senn's website: www.newsense-intermedium.com

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