



THE STREET, March 11th, 2016, Cinecittà Studios, Rome. Photo: OKNO

THE MAKING OF THE STREET

by Tobi Maier

March 7, 2016

My first visit to Cinecittà starts in the cold rain. Leaving the subway, I arrive thirty minutes early to our appointment. I start reading the promotional superlatives at the visitor entrance: Inaugurated by Benito Mussolini on April 28, 1937, “Cinecittà is the largest film studio in Europe, spread over an area of forty hectares with its twenty-two stages, two permanent tents, three hundred dressing rooms and offices, twenty-one makeup areas and a seven-thousand-square-meter outdoor tank. All dreams can come true in Cinecittà.”

Looking for shelter from the hostile climate, I enter the nearby shopping mall, Cinecittà Due, a postmodern structure that occupies the site of a former second Cinecittà, previously used for the filming of spaghetti westerns. With a labyrinthine circulation design, the shopping mall hosts a number of local and global chains. I get lost and marvel at the mini glass elevators and suspended staircases with brass handrails. I am reminded of Dan Graham’s writing on architecture and his film *Death by Chocolate*:

West Edmonton Shopping Mall (1986–2005). It is Monday morning and, although situated on the outskirts of Rome, there is a steady flow of consumers here.

I came to Rome to accompany and write about the installation of Tobias Kaspar’s *THE STREET*, a one-day event to take place a few days later, on the afternoon of March 11. Together with [redacted], artist [redacted], fashion designer [redacted] and *THE STREET* producer [redacted], we make our way to the vehicle entrance of Cinecittà. We drive by a series of production studios and offices constructed in a rationalist architectural style, then stop at the canteen/café. Shortly before midday, it is quiet here. Film posters from a glorious past are displayed on the wood-paneled walls. From there [redacted] leads us to the site for *THE STREET*. Once used for the shooting of *Gangs of New York*, a 2002 feature directed by Martin Scorsese that starred Cameron Diaz, Leonardo DiCaprio and Daniel Day-Lewis, this large-scale outdoor set will function as backdrop to his latest work. The set has been modified since 2002 for several other film productions and commercials and is essentially deteriorating in the open air.

I look down *THE STREET* and immediately get chills, remembering my time on New York’s Lower East Side, where I codirected *Ludlow 38* from 2008 through 2011. Brownstone buildings and facades with curtains flapping in the wind,

air conditioning units hanging outside, landmark New York stoops that lead up to various entrances. [redacted] points out some locations for the March 11 shoot: a café; a bookshop (called *The Shop Around the Corner*); a fashion display; a car parked in front of “the hotel,” filled with artworks from the exhibitions we organized together at SOLO SHOWS, São Paulo, and at the fashion boutique Frey Kalioubi in Rio de Janeiro during September 2015; another exhibition with recent works by [redacted] inside Studio 9; a 1980s speakeasy bar... All organized for one day only. To my right, the gates open onto a Los Angeles City Jail.

The overall sense of Cinecittà is one of decay. I cannot imagine that this studio, once called “Hollywood on the Tiber,” is still actively producing films. Rather, the place conveys the sense of an amusement park for corporate events. Perhaps reality shows are being produced, hidden away in the studios. Unlike São Paulo, where I live, it seems that everything is reused; nothing is destroyed or discarded, but is instead employed as a basis for something new to be built. We pass by Teatro 5 — Fellini’s studio; a bunch of adolescent staff and security guards smoke cigarettes together. *THE STREET* leads to open-air sets that hosted productions at Cinecittà: a Roman city, an ancient Egyptian fortress, all made from fiberglass, plastic, and a lot of scaffolding. Nostalgia unbound.

March 10, 2016

I visit *Cinecittà* for the second time this week. Back to the set of *Gangs of New York*, the decaying streets of Mott and Mulberry evoke a New York of the 1970s, now on the verge of becoming an open-air museum.

Preparations for a photo shoot are under way, intended to provide imagery to document Tobias’s project and for an upcoming editorial to be published by the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* the following day.

Artist [REDACTED], a current resident at the Swiss Institute in Rome, is setting up camera equipment in front of a swiftly installed 1980s cocktail bar, where Manhattans shall be served tomorrow evening. On the counter are bottles of *Angels Formula Est 1863* placed next to

Kaspar’s white HOME vaporizers. A red rose in a plastic water bottle is reflected in a mirror leaned against the wall. The bar is decked out with black-and-white photocopies of 1980s Armani fashion advertisements from Berlin, Milan and Copenhagen. Depicted are seductively dressed models posing on the streets of those cities wearing fur coats and checkered blazers. New York pizza cartons and Mexican beer cases — among other litter — are scattered on the sidewalk of the set. [REDACTED] performs as an elegantly dressed bar lady who wears a headscarf and leans against the façade of the tenement building, leisurely blowing cigarette smoke in the air. The lull before the storm.

I stroll around *THE STREET* and drop in on some of the eerie structures remaining from the *Gangs of New York* set and its subsequent reus-

es. Nowadays fifty or more cats are living on this street alone, certainly more in the whole of Cinecittà. The farther I venture into the ruins of abandoned saloons, shops, the hotel and museum, the stronger the smell of cat feces. When passing the Cinecittà sculpture storage I notice cats residing on top of a horse statue, a Buddha and a marble statue of a perfectly chiseled Venus — as if stretched out on a daybed. The proud cats are the secret guardians of the plastic remnants from *Ben Hur* (1959), *Cleopatra* (1963), *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1988), and so on.

Returning to *THE STREET*, the second photo shoot of the day takes place: an *Est 1863* jeans edition, designed by Tobias in collaboration with Fabio Quaranta, is being draped upon a farm cart. A perfectly styled model — wearing not only the jeans but also mustard-yellow socks and sweater that match the mustard-yellow shack façade backdrop — tries to find the right Old-West-style body language to satisfy the imagination of the artist-cum-director and his photographer. From the earlier 1980s bar scene I am propelled into the midst of an early twentieth-century American West.

The previous week I had visited Silberkuppe gallery in Berlin. The canvasses with stretched “space cloth” from Tobias’s exhibition there are now being carried inside Studio 9 for exhibition. Artist editions, including a box set with the 2015 *Heart-Bite Valentines Day Teddy* that was on view downstairs at the Berlin gallery, are being prepared for a window display, akin to what once could have been a Lower East Side bookshop. Dizzy from the continuous shift between geographical sites and time eras, I go around the corner to the safe haven of the Cinecittà café/canteen that is governed by three Roman baristas, where time seems to stand still.

March 11, 2016

GEARED UP IN BLACK BOOTS, GOLD PANTS AND A SIMPLE BUT ELEGANT WHITE SWEATER, SHE STEPS OUT OF THE SHOP. THE TINKLE FROM AN OLD-FASHIONED DOORBELL BLENDS WITH THE SOUND OF HOWLING WIND FROM A FAST-APPROACHING STORM. SHE LOOKS DOWN THE BLOCK AND EXAMINES THE SKY WITH CLOUD, WHITE, GRAY AND BLACK TURNING ALMOST VIOLET HERE AND THERE, ALL APPEARING DARK AND LIGHT AT THE SAME TIME.

HAVING ALSO CAREFULLY EXAMINED THE WINDOW DISPLAY FROM THE SIDEWALK, SHE STEPS BACK INSIDE JUST SECONDS BEFORE POURING RAIN BEGINS. DROPS BEAT AGAINST THE LARGE BUT THIN PANE OF GLASS AS SHE GOES ABOUT REDESIGNING THE DISPLAY.

ON FINISHING HER CHOREOGRAPHY, SHE GRABS HER RAIN JACKET, TURNS OFF THE LIGHTS, STEPS OUTSIDE, PULLS HER HOODY OVER HER HEAD, OPENS A



Photo: OKNO

SMALL BLACK UMBRELLA, LOCKS THE SHOP AND RUNS ACROSS *THE STREET* TO JOIN THE OPENING AT THE GALLERY.

Yesterday [REDACTED] walked across the scene of *THE STREET*. Wearing a blue jacket and khaki pants, she crossed her arms and closed her eyes when stopping in front of the bookstore window display. The invitation card, which had been distributed on the occasion of a recent exhibition by Tobias — and which is reproduced in capital letters above — served as the score for this first act during the afternoon. Uncannily, the Rome climate played along with the script.

On the stoop of a tenement building, two New York kids, Nikki and Justin, hang out, listening to music blaring from a ghetto blaster. Placed behind a fence near a basement entrance next door, *Core HL 13* (2013) — a flower bouquet that previously had been presented at the Berlin gallery — sits between two transparent Plexiglas holders. Nelly Hoffmann, a fashion designer who just arrived from Milan, greets me on her way to prepare the wardrobe. Inside Studio 9 at Cinecittà more artworks are leaning against the walls, covered in bubble wrap. A stack of *Two Cities – Two lives* publications, originally produced for the São Paulo exhibition, has arrived from the printers and sits atop a *THE STREET* carton. In time for the event, [REDACTED] mailed the *THE STREET* sign we produced in São Paulo for the exhibition in Rio de Janeiro. People are rushing from one corner of the set to another. Stepping outside, I carry a lighting umbrella to protect myself from the rain, while another photo shoot takes place in the bar. Tobias tucks away some resulting Polaroids in the inner pockets of his coat. He tears open a new pack of film stock. The mood is upbeat.

March 12, 2016

Corriere della Sera published the images that had been taken earlier in the week under the title: “Cinecittà? Come un’opera d’arte (ma soltanto per un giorno)” [Cinecittà? Like a work of art (but only for one day)]. There is no such

thing as bad publicity; approximately six hundred people will visit *THE STREET* in one day.

The morning of March 11 greets us with a blue sky. My WhatsApp keeps vibrating: *Komst du an 12h als minute taker?* and *Where are uuuu?* I leave the Swiss Institute and get on the subway at Piazza Barberini. Arriving on the scene of *THE STREET* at 2:30 pm, ninety minutes before the official start, the last preparations are under way while the first visitors are already arriving.

[REDACTED] is giving a guided tour to [REDACTED], the director of the Zaha Hadid-designed MAXXI museum in Rome. [REDACTED] of HIT Studio from Berlin spans a cord across *THE STREET* with her three-year-old daughter [REDACTED].

[REDACTED], the same age as [REDACTED], arrives on her wooden balance bike. Possibly recognizing several faces around, she stays cool and makes her way toward the bookshop — on the sidewalk of *THE STREET*, of course. Moments later [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] discuss the display in the bookshop next to the café while other guests from Rome and elsewhere stroll around the various displays of Tobias’s works and marvel at the New York rappers Justin and Nikki. The performers hang out on a brownstone stoop amid trash brought to Rome from New York. At times they switch tapes on the ghetto blaster. The unsung heroes of *THE STREET*, they keep an eye on the proceedings from their six-step stoop.

Opposite them, Berlin-based artists [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] prepare for a busy night at the speakeasy serving Manhattans. Music from the 1980s plays from a laptop. Visitors gather around them. Around 6 or 7 pm, “the exhibition” inside Studio 9 opens to the general public. A plasterboard wall set at an oblique angle, built by Cinecittà technicians, supports the shiny reflective *Untitled* (2016) works. Produced from laser-engraved silver reflective fabric, the patterns of the stretched material vary depending on the viewer’s vantage. The space-age aesthetic sets the exhibition apart from the other installation elements of *THE STREET* and propels us back to “the future.”

Around 10:00 pm, inside Studio 9, pizza and lasagna is served. Followed by a nighttime drive to a couple of bars with a group of artists and writers, the night ends for [REDACTED] and myself in front of Detroit DJ Kenny Larkin playing tunes at the Ex Dogana club. He fades down at a quarter past five am sharp. The bouncers kick everyone out immediately. We wander home. The sun rises. *THE STREET* is empty. The sky is clear. Rome is ours. ■

LA NEGOZIANTE



Ilde Mauri as the shop owner. Photo: Stefan Burger

MANHATTAN



Nadja Abi & Edgars Gliuhovs serving Manhattan's at The Odeon. Photo: Stefan Burger



Photo: OKNO



FASHION? CHECK. COMMERCE? CHECK. AMBIVALENT EXIT STRATEGIES? CHECK.

by Alexander Scrimgeour

Tobias Kaspar’s recent show brought back memories of my puzzlement, years ago, over a pink canvas by Willem de Rooij that appeared to change color depending on where you were standing. In some respects, Kaspar one-upped him with the three pieces on view here, all *Untitled* (2016). Their hi-tech, silvery iridescent fabric contains particles of glass that appear to reflect light differently depending on one’s viewing position. In the triptych in the gallery’s first room, for example, a shifting surface of shiny silver rectangles emerged from the uniform gray you saw as you entered from the street. In the rear gallery two similarly made works hung on opposite walls, each mirroring the other’s negative space in a grid pattern. That was it. My first question was: is making the monochrome shimmer really of sufficient interest to support an exhibition?

The answer — though I say it reluctantly — is maybe. Kaspar is one of quite a few artists today who seem to be having their cake and eating it, too. On one hand, this work isn’t pretending

to be more than a gimmick; on the other, and for that very reason, it represents a serious (if not exactly critical) engagement with the mechanisms that underlie the art world elsewhere. There’s a magic to the fabric that’s so fashion-forward it can’t be confused with the sober pursuit of modernist purity; these works really would look great over the proverbial couch. Their visual appeal is overblown and not in any way sublime: this is commerce. Hotline bling.

In lieu of a press release, visitors received an all-caps narrative, printed on heavy card stock, to aid them in viewing the works. (I’ll spare you the capitalisation, though it’s worth noting that was in a stylish sans-serif font.) It begins: “Geared up in black boots, gold pants and a simple but elegant white sweater, she steps out of the shop.” Fashion? Check. Commerce? Check. Ambivalent exit strategies? Check. The woman “examines the sky full with cloud” — a storm is brewing — before going back into the shop to install a window display. Then she goes, in the rain, to an opening in a gallery that happens to be across the street. The end. Gen-trification heaven.

This fits with everything I know about Kaspar. He started a jeans line in 2012, and by the time this issue goes to press he will have presented the culmination of his project *THE STREET* (2016) — a hybrid work including a newspaper, a store, various exhibits. performances, and no small dose of theory — in the

set built for Martin Scorsese’s 2002 film *Gangs of New York* at Cinecittà Studios in Rome. He likes commerce, artifice, and play. Last year he turned the bookshop/project space Udolpho in Berlin into Toby’s Tristram Shandy Shop, selling only first editions of Laurence Sterne’s eponymous novel. Given the book’s own *espièglerie* with medium as material, that’s a pretty clever meta-move. Through that project I learned that Sterne was something of an It Boy in eighteenth-century London, just as Kaspar is an art-world insider today, judging by the invitation box the artist designed to commemorate a Valentine’s Day party hosted at the private home of (Artists Space director) Stefan Kalmár. This box, which was in the Silberkuppe office, is an homage to FOMO, replete with a poem of a teddy bear’s butt.

Where does this leave us? As the Cinecittà project suggests, we live in a world of spectacle; it’s not only the art world that’s a Potemkin village. And, of course, not everyone fits into Kalmár’s apartment, or wants to. So, do you join the parade, buy the jeans if you can’t afford the paintings or a first edition of Tristram Shandy? That would be going too far, but the works in this show left you no choice but to move around the space to make the “paintings” catch the light — not in the best way, but in all the ways it could. ■



Above:
Untitled, 2016 Laser
engraved reflective fabric
(34 % Ek, 34 % Po, 32
% Gl), 175×135×3 cm,
photographed in regular
gallery lights, dimmed
lights and with flash.
Photo: Silberkuppe

Left:
Installation view at
Silberkuppe, Berlin with
regular gallery lights and
flash. Photo: Silberkuppe

KALE (CAVOLO NERO), SMITHS & FROZEN



Not living in that perpetual state of anxiety and stress meant that we could focus on what we wanted to do, whereas before we were really scattered.



She looks distracted, running her fingers tiredly through her hair. “Everything is shifting,” she says, quietly, about balancing her work with family.



She looks good in everything but she won’t just wear anything.



We pause momentarily as they collect their daughter’s birthday cake, delivered by a friend. It’s a *Lion King* head in sponge and icing. “Thank God we are past that *Frozen* moment — it’s crack for kids,” he smiles, revealing perfect white teeth.



He answers the door in pants and a striped shirt having just dropped his daughter off at nursery, but his eyes are red and he struggles to keep his features in order.



None of this was major. But it was certain to happen.



“I don’t remember the last time I went shopping. I wear jeans and trainers and a T-shirt most days.” She is indeed wearing pristine Stan Smiths and faded blue jeans but not many people can look so revoltingly good in such casual attire.



He has gathered the kind of speed and velocity this year that cause blinks and fissures on social media. A change of career, however, is unlikely to happen right now.



Sleep simply didn’t happen.

AUSTERE AT FIRST SIGHT

by wefind-wildness.com

Tobias Kaspar is currently presenting at Silberkuppe a series of new works that look rather austere at first sight. Nevertheless the pieces in his exhibition reveal an enigmatic intensity. The show features a couple of wall works made of shimmering gray reflective fabric stretched like monochrome canvas. According to the viewpoint of the visitor, the intensity of the light, as well as the use of a camera flash, these

DEATH BY VALENTINE

The *Heart-Bite Valentine*’s box contains a teddy bear and an LP featuring the recording of a poem read by Karl Holmqvist from the bears butt-care-label on the occasion of Tobias Kaspar’s 2015 Valentine’s reception in New York. Additionally a unique photograph and an invitation to the reception are included in the box. Edition of 10 + AP + 2 HC, numbered, dated and signed. For further info contact the Centre d’édition contemporaine, Geneva. ■

BIOGRAPHY COLLECTION

In 2013 Tobias Kaspar introduced the “Biography Collection”, in which he works with garments from friends and colleagues. Each collection is dedicated for a specific reason to a specific person. Kaspar selects the garments from the person’s wardrobe and replaces the existing brand labels with his eponymous label, a way of knitting himself into and extending the provenance of each garment. After the presentation each collection is being split; half goes back to whom they belonged while the other half remains within the archive of the “Biography Collection”.

Mikael and I have a long, intricate and wonderful story. We first met in art school, shared an apartment, travelled together, shared another apartment, found ourselves in FFM, NY and then back again in Berlin to spend some “normal days in the city.” Not only do I love his clothing, but also the art he produces while he wears them.
— Tobias Kaspar, 2016



“Mikael”, Tobias Kaspar’s new “Biography Collection” will be on view from June 14th to 19th at the Swiss Design Awards, Messe Basel, Halle 3. ■

light-sensitive surfaces simultaneously conceal and reveal the presence of engraved motifs.

By using light as a way to compose a space, to create depth and to render tangible a visual experience offered by a picture, Kaspar plays with the history of representation and the codes of Western painting even though he does not actually use this medium. Additionally these works are all called *Untitled* (2016), an attitude that reminds post-minimalist or post-conceptual position. This work is also for me entirely linked to photography. I noticed that, when I take installation views, I try to have various



Photo: Sandra Pointet

Mirco Mukuna as Nicky hanging out on the steps of THE STREET’s brownstone building. Photo: Stefan Burger



light-situations of the space, showing the different effects light gives to the exhibition in the space. The light-reflecting fabrics also work in relation to the amount of light falling in and according to the angle at which it is falling in.

Finally the classical tradition can be read in the presentation of the work’s materials and in its relation to the viewer. Kaspar invites the latter to challenge the conditions in which an image appears, to reflect on his/her own assumptions on temporality, and to question the construction of perception within a materiality. ■

HOROSCOPE FOR JUNE



Aries

You should not grab everything that comes your way, otherwise you will accomplish nothing. Your strength is large, but not unending, which is why you will have to evaluate the situation calmly. Your relationship will come to harmony and you will be able to realize any idea together.



Taurus

Right now circumstances will provide you with a lot of opportunities, but the barriers in front of you are going to be tough. This is an amazing time that may very well realize all of your dreams and wishes, if only they will not follow exclusively greedy goals.



Gemini

You are given opportunities and energy, the rest you have to do yourself! The more active your actions will be, the more response you will get. You should be attentive and try to remember everything that those close to you say, even if at first that seems trivial.



Cancer

You should show everyone what you are capable for. Dive into work, raise the bar. Value your partner’s presence, be tender with them, and no matter what — do not ignore their requests.



Leo

You should pause and think about what is ahead of you. Perhaps, if you evaluate the situation, you will come to the conclusion that your road right now is heading towards a dead end. Be attentive and careful in your conversations with close ones.



Virgo

Stop and think what you are doing wrong. In many ways, the events that occur on the love front will be fully connected with the current situation on the work front.



Libra

The work direction will grant you some unique capabilities. Overall, everything will go the way it should. If you do decide to be proactive, then those around you will be shocked by the results!



Scorpio

You will attain new capabilities subject to your vision, a calm, objective, calculating, and harmonic one. You should not despair, no matter what don’t let your hands down, and consider all events to be a necessity and something that is a logical result of your past mistakes.



Sagittarius

Be attentive and do not let your opponent take over, you cannot show weakness even in the smallest battle of this war. You will see success in everything without special effort, especially if you are doing the right thing.



Capricorn

You will currently have enough strength and time to overcome any task. There will be no outstanding situations, so you can relax and just go with the flow.



Aquarius

You will have a plethora of very different opportunities. The only thing that you should pay attention to is your health.



Pisces

Pay attention to those around you, to those with whom you have to work with. However, the circumstances will change — and they will change in your favour.

Photo: OKNO



REALNESS

“Shoot at Cinecitta — the first jeans ever!”

Concept is everything, but don’t let it compromise with your style. Simply grab the best of both. *Est 1863* — with its innovative design approach — is both a conversation piece and a fashion statement. The synergy between it’s reference to a history of jeans and bold design choices will without a doubt bring this pair to the annals of denim. Style it like the museum piece it truly is, and match with classic boots, denim jacket and a neat white shirt to tie it all together. *Est 1863 Tobias Kaspar XX Fabio Quaranta* in store now!



Ladina Steinegger in Est 1863 jeans. Photo: Gina Folly

THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER

by Cassandra Munoz

“Do you know what? We are going to seduce them. We’re going to seduce them with our square footage, and our discounts, and our deep armchairs, and...our cappuccinos!”
— Joe Fox (Tom Hanks) in *You’ve Got Mail*

This was Fox’s animated strategy for attracting customers to his big bookstore, modeled after the Barnes & Noble’s on 66th Street and Broadway, in Nora Ephron’s 1998 film *You’ve Got Mail*, a version of the play *Parfumerie* by Miklos Laszlo. By the end of the film Kathleen Kelly (Meg Ryan’s character) shuts down her small bookstore, The Shop Around the Corner, because she cannot compete with Fox and Son’s. The influx of big businesses into the Upper West Side is an important string of narrative in *You’ve Got Mail*, secondary only to the love/hate relationship between Kathleen Kelly and Joe Fox. The battle between small shops and corporate businesses on the Upper West Side (and around the city) is one that continues to this day. ■

COLOPHON

THE STREET

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Design NERO

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Tobi Maier’s text has been conceived as blog entries on thestreet.st and appears in this insert as an adjusted and extended version. Alexander Scrimgeour’s text originally appeared in *Artforum*, May 2016. The text “Austere at First Sight” was posted on 15/02/16 at <http://www.wefind-wildness.com/2016/02/tobias-kaspar/>. “The Shop Around the Corner” by Cassandra Munoz is an except from her text “Film Locations: You’ve Got Mail on the Upper West Side” published on 18/10/2013 at <http://untappedcities.com/2013/10/18/filmlocations-youve-got-mail-upper-west-side/>.

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All photographs taken at Cinecittà Studios are courtesy of Tobias Kaspar and the Istituto Svizzero di Roma. All reproduced artworks are courtesy of Tobias Kaspar, Galerie Peter Kilchmann and Silberkuppe Berlin.

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Mikael Brkic photographed in 2009 by Egija Inzule