

## Construction of decay

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Our relationship to the revolutionary, utopian and avant-garde projects of the previous century strongly resembles our relationship to ghosts who, damned to spook around for eternity, wander about unredeemed and pop up again suddenly to scare people, but not without at the same time imparting a certain yearning to them. In relation to their status there is a certain undecidability or uncertainty: Are they still among us or have they already long since become shapes from the hereafter (which they perhaps were from the beginning)? Although they have often been declared a failure with regard to their revolutionary pretensions, we nevertheless think that they are around us, in us, above us, behind us, and, not least of all, before us, and even await us in the future – indeed, that with their undead infinitude, with their ghostly vitality, they will outlive our finite existences. Even though it is always emphasized what horrors and havoc they have brought in our world, and how unrealistic and unrealizable they are, we nevertheless view them with a shudderingly pleasurable sympathy. Thus, Derrida found that from communism something resembling a utopian, messianic taste remained on the tongue.<sup>1</sup>

What for the political world the spectre of communism, is for the art world the spectre of modernism. Modernism here subsumes the projects of the artistic avant-gardes of the twentieth century, from cubism, futurism, suprematism, constructivism, De Stijl and Bauhaus via Duchamp and surrealism up to the minimalism of the 1960s. All these manifestations of art have been branded innumerable times with the stamp of the ›merely‹ utopian, superseded, failed, outmoded and dead; the rupture between then and now seems to have been carried out irrevocably. But nevertheless, or perhaps precisely for this reason, we enjoy the manifestations of modernism, not without a certain eerie feeling. And we reach the conclusion that since modernism never lived, but was born already as a ghost, it also cannot die and is thus damned to spook around for eternity. Just as little as communism can it be measured against the question as to the success or failure of its revolutionary program (the New Human Being, the New World). The avant-gardes are dead, but precisely for this reason they are more lively than ever in the sense of an undead, indestructible liveliness.

However, it must be said that the spooky avant-gardes are perhaps eerie, but in no way uninvited guests, for these revolutionary, communist as well as modernist figures, on principle, can only appear when invited. Their supernatural manifestation is not a natural, automatic mechanism. In other words, for them to appear work must be done. Someone must arrange a feast, so to speak. In the works of Katja Strunz, the modernist – futurist, suprematist, constructivist, minimalist – projects appear as such eerie, but definitely invited guests. Malevich, Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Serra, Judd and Smithson are present in Strunz's sculptures, but as damaged, blinded, decayed, toppling, decadent figures; thus, for instance, in a work consisting of a replica of a mirror-object by Robert Smithson which Strunz had ›blinded‹<sup>2</sup> (by simply taking off the inlaid mirror surfaces which reflected each other to infinity).

The metaphor of the repast for the unredeemed departed is chosen here not by accident. It comes from Walter Benjamin who describes the historian's task as that of a herald who calls the departed to the dinner table of history at which today's living are to prepare a meal for the past.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the universal historian who lets the sequence of happenings pass by like the beads of a rosary through

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), 268.

<sup>2</sup> Cited after Suzanne Hudson, ›Katja Strunz. Eine zweite Gegenwart der Vergangenheit,‹ in *Katja Strunz [catalogue]* (London: Koenig Books, 2007), 17.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*<sup>4</sup> Walter Benjamin, (Frankfurt / Main: Suhrkamp 1991), 603.

one's fingers, the historical materialist sees his (or her) task to consist in violently bursting the continuum of time. At the beginning of the historical materialist project, therefore, stands the work of destruction, of the violent separation of fragments blasted out of historical continuity. To write history means to cite history, to violently tear it out of its connection with the past, and to insert what has been torn out into the context of the present which thus is likewise interrupted. Only in this way can something resembling the present be generated in the emphatic sense: »Present which is not a transition, but in which time stands by and has come to a standstill.«<sup>4</sup> »The true image of the past scurries past. The past is to be held onto only as an image which flashes up and vanishes at the moment of its recognizability.«<sup>5</sup> The briefly flashing image is a »dialectic in standstill« – the past pervaded with the present as if with explosive (Ekkrasit).<sup>6</sup> Benjamin calls this image also a »dialectical image« in which »what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation.«<sup>7</sup> (It should not remain unmentioned that for Benjamin the work of the historical materialist – that is, the production of dialectical images by means of explosion, bringing to a halt, shock, leap and rupture – is essentially a messianic task. Benjamin speaks of a »weak messianic power«<sup>8</sup> given to each one of us and to which the past has a claim. In the dialectical image in which one's own age comes together in a flash with an earlier one to form a constellation, the past as well as the present experience a salvation which, however, is just as momentary and transient as the image itself. Messianic splinters are found burst in upon the present and flashing as »now-time«.<sup>9</sup> And yet, the salvation performed in this way is the salvation of something that is already irretrievably lost the next moment.<sup>10</sup>)

The practice of the historical materialist thus consists essentially in making time stand still, in triggering a shock, in a rupture of the movement of thought, in an interruption of the flow of life. (Benjamin cites reports of fighters who at the moment of revolution shot at the clocks on towers.) His aim is something revolutionary, his activity is supposed to lead the past to bring the present into a critical situation. Another metaphor inspired by Marcel Proust, which likewise refers to making time stand still, to a sudden tearing of the temporal continuum, to an inescapable interruption of the flow of life, is that of waking from a dream: the moment of waking is identical with the briefly flashing »dialectical image«, the »now of recognizability«. It is the synthesis of dream-consciousness and waking consciousness; it is the »dialectical rupture of living«.

As a confessed materialist, Katja Strunz works quite consciously in the tradition of Benjamin's historical materialist with the effects of tearing, bursting, of sudden interruption, of fragmentation and bringing to a standstill. »A wall is there to be torn down and to look behind it.« This statement by Katja Strunz stands in the context of her folded works (Time Dream, 2002 and 2004), whose motif is to fold in the wall surrounding the art space and to allow it to collapse into splinters. The works comprise large compositions of huge wooden splinters (some of which are lacquered, some wallpapered) and also folded objects with extremely acute angles. The motif of the splinter occurs in Strunz's work in the form of various wall-high, folded fragments made of sheet metal with many acute angles (such as *Whose Garden Was This* and *Meadow Saffron*, both from 2005). As results of a violent removal or interruption – demolition, bursting, splintering – and with their consistently reduced, formalist, modernist form, the constructed fragments of splintered and folded walls refer without doubt to the project of the

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Benjamin, »Über den Begriff der Geschichte,« in id., *Abhandlungen* (Frankfurt / Main: Suhrkamp 1991), 702.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Benjamin, »Über den Begriff der Geschichte,« op.cit., 695.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk* (Frankfurt / Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 593.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, op.cit., 576/577.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Benjamin, »Über den Begriff der Geschichte,« op.cit., 694.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Benjamin, »Über den Begriff der Geschichte,« op.cit., 704.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk* (Frankfurt / Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 592.

radical avant-gardes. Several works by Katja Strunz, *Black Angry Wall* (a composition from 2006 consisting of black sheet-metal cubes and paper works with fragments of a black square) as well as *Echo* from 2005 and *Black Wind, Fire & Steel* from 2006 (both compositions made of black and uncoloured sheet-metal cubes) cite Malevich's *Black Square*. Various small collages of paper, all of which are *Untitled*, recall suprematist, constructivist or even minimalist compositions.

And yet, all of Strunz's compositions, which deal with avant-garde art in an appropriative way, diverge strikingly from the classic avant-garde forms. In Strunz's works, these forms are damaged, segmented, fragmented or even serially multiplied in diverse ways; they are dented or mutilated (like the abovementioned ›blinded‹ replica of Smithson's object from Strunz's country exhibition in 1997); they have gathered patina and show traces of ageing. And while the futurist, suprematist and constructivist constructions of classical avant-gardes always appear starkly dynamic and oriented toward growth and the future – their vectors consistently point from bottom left to top right, which is perceived by the human eye as an optimistic, forward-oriented dynamic –, Strunz's constructions are all immersed in the process of decay, of falling, of decadence.

The direction points downward; the forms topple into the depths or gather like ruins scattered on the ground such as in the exhibition *Break-in Points* (Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin 2008), where the sheet-metal cubes return and are arranged in such a way that they suggest their thundering collapse over two storeys.

But what is the point with the constructed decay, with the destructive appropriation of the artistic avant-gardes as Katja Strunz practises them? Since the beginning of modernity, aesthetics and violence are interconnected on a fundamental level. Thus, it is also not merely coincidental that the work of destruction and illumination of the historical materialist, as described by Benjamin, resembles the technical media procedures of the artistic avant-gardes in a startlingly similar way, for both practise the production of a vision, the communication of a sudden glimpse by means of destruction, of violent production. This procedure has been described by Boris Groys in his book *Under Suspicion*<sup>11</sup>. In it he expressly refers to the deep connection between aesthetics and violence and their meaning for artistic modernity. How is this connection to be imagined? Artistic modernity can be characterized by its tenacious adherence to the suspicion that the world and the things in the world look quite different on the inside than on their surfaces, that is, that the signs or figures which cover the surface cover up more than they reveal. This suspicion is surely as old as humanity itself, only that for a long time it has been cultivated in a mythical, metaphysical or religious way: God and the soul are nothing other than names for the interior, the hidden dimension of the human being, of things and the entire world. The enlightenment conceives itself with its attempt to ultimately refute this suspicion as the great counter-project to religion. The whole, including the human being, is ›nothing but‹ nature (*physis*), and as such it is in principle open to investigation by the natural sciences as well as being open to technical control and mobilization. Hence, there is nothing behind; there is no God; the soul is an illusion; metaphysics is seeing ghosts, a symptom of sick brains.

The artists of enlightened modernity, who can no longer bring the messages of God or the soul, must seek out another mission. They do not revolt against the project of enlightenment and also do not mourn for God or the soul. What they protest against, however, is the enlightenment doctrine that ›there is nothing behind it all. Modern art is the garden in which the suspicion can continue to bloom; it is the place where insights into the interior of the world, of things and human beings are created which are neither religiously nor scientifically motivated. (Is it a coincidence when all the objects in an exhibition by Katja Strunz with the title *Whose Garden Was This* (Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York

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<sup>11</sup> Boris Groys, *Unter Verdacht. Eine Phänomenologie der Medien* (Munich / Vienna: Hanser, 2000).

2006) refer to a garden, obviously imaginary?) The desire to penetrate into the interior of things has nothing at all to do with esoteric knowledge or with making secrets of things, but exclusively with the mundanely experienceable phenomenon of seeing itself. Daily we go through the experience that, when we see something, we do not see a lot of other things, which suddenly becomes apparent when, for instance, we turn an object around or remove it. The suspicion that the visible surface deludes us and that behind it something completely different is hidden becomes compelling in every act of seeing. It is no coincidence that since antiquity truth is imagined as a sudden unhiddenness, as a flash of evidence. In this sense, Katja Strunz understands the gesture of abstraction quite literally as an act of drawing off, of removing layers, such as in the walk-through sculpture *The Tired Dream* from the exhibition *Break-in Points* from 2008, the construction of a removed piece of ceiling or wall which lies, folded in, on the floor. On the whole, in many of her works, Strunz works with the gesture of folding in or folding out materials (like curtains) and plays with precisely that figure of suspicion, with the dialectic of surface and penetrating gaze, of hiddenness and overtness.

In general, as Boris Groys says in *Under Suspicion*, every sign, every figure can be viewed as an object which shows something (referring to a meaning, a referent, representing something). At the same time, however, the same sign can be viewed as an object which hides something like a dirty patch on a surface, namely the medium which bears it. From this it follows that, apart from the referential truth of an image or a text which can be tested empirically or scientifically, there is yet another, second, completely different kind of truth: the truth of the medium. This truth can only come about as an effect of a sudden transparency, of an unmediated tearing-off of the sign-layer and the concomitant revelation of its bearing medium, as the effect of the ›medium's candour‹. But how can the impression arise at all that the signs are reduced to such an extent, thinned out to transparency and seemingly wholly removed so that they appear to open up the view of the medium itself? This effect of the medium's candour is generated when, suddenly and directly, signs of something base, vulgar or evil, signs of meanness, of naiveté, of sickness or reduction crop up in a familiar, usual, traditional, canonical, repetitive context.

The effect of the medium's candour, however, only becomes really strong when the revelation of the bearing medium seems to be forced, that is, when signs of the subtly or ecstatically violent, raw, brutal, catastrophic, dangerous, revolutionary or mad crop up on the medium's surface and cause it to literally explode. Citing such signs in the midst of familiar, ›harmless‹ contexts virtually blasts open a perspective onto the bearing medium. This effect of candour as a consequence of the use of force which Groys calls a »medial state of emergency« is corresponding to the impression of a sudden tearing of the medium's otherwise intransparent surface, covered with signs, and of a lightning revelation of the medium itself. The effect of the medium's candour is in essence of limited duration since the impression of newness and strangeness of the signs diminishes with time and gives way to routine and familiarity. With increasing habituation and repetition, the ›tear‹ in the medium's surface virtually closes over again, and what is familiar and repetitive has the effect of a protective shield that covers the medium up once again. The medium's truth, one could say, is a ghostly truth, a truth of transient appearance; it is the sudden, fleeting, illusory presence of something structurally hidden. Bursting, tearing, sudden insight, lightning revelation – here once again we come across the Benjaminian figure of generating flashes of disclosure through sudden, shock-like interruption of a continuum (or of a familiar, repetitive context), gaining an insight for the duration of a moment, in short, of producing truth by reduction, of bringing about insight through destruction. And just as any flash of lightning is followed by thunder as its acoustic echo, so also, like the echo of the medium's revelation, the viewer is left with a certain reverberating state of unsureness, of undecidedness or undecidedability with regard to the vision experienced. (This unsureness may be represented by the elfish metal shapes [*Yesterday's Echoes*, 2005] which at first sight seem not to belong to the framework of objects, cropping up in many of Strunz's exhibitions and, indeed, seemingly pursuing no other objective than to mirror the viewer's unsureness.)

The art of modernity – and Katja Strunz's Break-in Points exhibition refers to it quite directly – is the locus at which holes and cracks, insights and perspectives, disclosures and revelations are produced. The artists of modernity are involved in a competition to lay bare the material, or also institutional, medium of art, which is carried on as a contest in the disciplines of reduction, demolition, removal, renunciation, loss, sacrifice and asceticism. Viewed historically, this competition began with the movement of decadence. Accompanied by scandal, Charles Baudelaire published in the mid-nineteenth century his *Les Fleurs du Mal*, an anthology of poems mostly in classical verse form in which, however, there is a profusion of signs of evil, of the amoral, the sick, the artificial, the perverse, the transsexual, fetishism, the blending of the human being and machine, of human and animal, human and metal, of human and stone.<sup>12</sup> All these signs – the flowers of evil – are nothing other than holes which the poet has drilled in the otherwise intransparent surface covered with the protective shield of the traditional, classic and canonical. These holes, these wounds which Baudelaire has beaten into the intact surface of the classic (›healthy‹) poem draw the gaze, so to speak, into the depths where it strikes upon the perspective of an infinitely decaying material in endless decomposition.

Somewhat later Baudelaire is followed by a further great figure of Paris decadence, Stéphane Mallarmé, who seriously takes on the identification of the artist's body with the art work's body: the sickness of his body and the sickness of the poem merge smoothly into one another. (Mallarmé expressly agreed with the diagnosis of ›degeneration‹ pronounced on him by the conservative cultural critic, Max Nordau, and called the artist the »chosen sick one«<sup>13</sup>.) With Mallarmé the poem's body disintegrates on the level of the printed image, the syntax, punctuation and choice of words. The words are too sick to signify; they can only communicate vague hints. Can there be a ›sicker‹ poem than Mallarmé's *A Cast of the Dice*...? And which medium is laid bare by Mallarmé's sickness? The view is revealed of an infinitely dispersed material that continually brings forth forms in senseless and aimless repetition and again destroys them.

The artistic manifestations of decadence, symbolism and the fin de siècle are followed at the beginning of the twentieth century by the artistic and literary avant-gardes of cubism, futurism, suprematism, constructivism, Bauhaus, De Stijl, surrealism. It cannot be overlooked that the avant-gardes are wandering in the tracks of decadence; they, too, enter the contest of renunciation and destruction, and drive on the violent reduction of the art work's body already begun by the decadents in a far more radical way until nothing than a Black Square (according to Malevich the »ash of all burned paintings«), or even a mere everyday object torn from its everyday context like Duchamp's *pissoir* (Fontaine), remains, to name only two milestones in avant-garde art. (On early Malevich paintings on which fragmented and sawn-up human bodies are to be seen, the reductionist violence is still quite figuratively visible.) With the Black Square, the primal form of every painted picture is laid bare, the picture's support cleansed of all images. The Black Square is the revelation of the medium of canvas which manifests itself suddenly with overwhelming obviousness in the midst of the usual, superficial world of images as a result of the artist's application of force. The project of the radical artistic avant-gardes is that of a reduction to essentials by means of removing everything accidental, mimetic, everything temporally and spatially specific. It is a matter of an attempt to reach the zero plane, the zero point of art and thus to withdraw art from historical change, from the flow of time, to climb out of historical time, to burst the continuum of time. With this the avant-garde project shows itself to be a revolutionary project whose function, in Benjamin's words, consists precisely in interrupting the temporal flow, in bringing happenings to a standstill and establishing a present which is not simply the transition from yesterday to tomorrow, but a flash-point moment of revelation, a leap, an awakening and shock. Thus a present which can be perceived and experienced as such. There it seems to be

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Baudelaire, ›Die Blumen des Bösen,‹ in id., *Sämtliche Werke / Briefe* (Munich / Vienna: Hanser, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, ›Die Musik und die Literae,‹ in id., *Kritische Schriften* (Gerlingen: Lambert Schneider Verlag, 1998), 113.

paradoxical to today encounter avant-garde art works in the museum as relics and witnesses of past times, exposed to the historicist gaze as a conserved historic material. Only the artistic appropriation of the avant-gardes, as performed by Katja Strunz, is able to free the project, including the works of the avant-gardes, from their eye-witness role in museums and to call to presence their revolutionary power, at least for brief moments.

To be sure, for the radical avant-gardes, their practice of reduction – the removal of the art work's mimetic layer, the refusal to mimetically portray the world – was in no way an end in itself. Rather, this practice was supposed to serve to create a foundation for reshaping the entire world. Through the forced disintegration, by shattering the old world right through the zero point and beyond, the avant-gardes wanted to stride forward to create a new world, a new way of living and a new human being according to an artistic total plan.<sup>14</sup> Precisely because they diagnosed the state of the modern world and the modern human being as a state of sickness and decadence, in their programs and manifestos they formulated a comprehensive anti-decadent project of healing and improvement, and conceived themselves as artists, engineers and therapists all in one. The effect of the medium's state of emergency which Katja Strunz produces with her reductionist, badgering, toppling treatment of the constructions of the radical avant-gardes, by contrast, brings something to light which could be called the decadent roots or the decadent subtext of these radical avant-gardes. Indeed, on closer inspection, it becomes obvious that the avant-gardes were deeply split with regard to the question concerning making art functional for purposes of healing or recreating the human being and the world.

It is the famous problem of the usefulness and functionality of art for practical, technical, political and social living over which Malevich and the Bauhaus artists disputed and which provoked excoriating criticism of the constructivist Tatlin (who intentionally designed his flying machine Letatlin (1930 – 1932) as unflyable and his famous Memorial to the Third International from 1920 as problematic from an engineering standpoint) on the part of ›productivist‹ colleagues who were committed to applications.<sup>15</sup> Whereas the Bauhaus artists, most constructivists and the productivists really wanted to place their art at the service of shaping a new world, Malevich insisted on the absolute purposelessness (he calls it »nonobjectiveness«) of suprematist art.<sup>16</sup> Was the new art which had just emancipated itself from the institutions of state and religion supposed to now enter into the service of progress, technology and industry and subject itself to the construction of useful objects? There is no promised land of absolute purposefulness, Malevich says, since purposefulness is always only relative and, besides that, quickly superseded. Only that which has no purpose, is useless, dysfunctional, unutilizable and in this sense nonobjective is of absolute artistic value. »Like a homeless vagabond, ›practical life‹ penetrates into every artistic form and believes itself to be the cause and purpose of the making of this form. But the vagabond does not tarry long in one place, and when he has moved on (when the utilization of the art work for ›practical purposes‹ no longer seems to the purpose), the art work regains its full value.«<sup>17</sup> Now this argument of Malevich's is preceded by a passage in which he compares the introduction of the Suprematist element (the Suprematist straight lines) into art with the

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<sup>14</sup> In the children's book designed in 1920 by El Lissitzky *Suprematist Story about Two Squares. In Six Constructions*, a black square and a red square fly from outer space to Earth to set up a new order. The struggle over the best solution ends with the destruction of the Earth and the disappearance of the black square. The red square remains as a basis for building up a new world. The building instructions for the new construction consist of the simple message »Keep going« as the expression of the utopia of uninterrupted movement. Cf. Peter Noever (ed.) *Schili-Byli. Russische Kinderbücher / Russian Children's Books 1920–1940* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Boris Groys, »Das Kunstwerk als nichtfunktionelle Maschine: Wladimir Tatlin,« in id., *Die Erfindung Russlands* (Munich / Vienna: Hanser, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Kasimir Malewitsch, *Die gegenstandslose Welt* (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1980).

<sup>17</sup> Kasimir Malewitsch, *Die gegenstandslose Welt* (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1980), 74–76.

intentional infection of an organism with a microbial germ.<sup>18</sup> He describes in detail experiments done with art students whom he intentionally infected with the suprematist ›germ‹ (that is, the suprematist straight lines) and who, depending on their individual constitution, manifested differing reactions. Some were sensitive enough to allow themselves to be infected by the new sickness, and thus sick enough for modern living in the city which Malevich describes as a formation composed of suprematist straight lines. Others manifested strong antibody reactions and proved themselves to be unreceptive for the sickness of su- prematism – and thus also as unsuitable for modern urban living. Malevich recommended to them pre-modern,

healthy living in the countryside and the practice of naturalist, ›healthy‹ art. For Malevich the New Human Being is, pro- perly speaking, the human being who is able to integrate the sickness of suprematism, the sickness of ›radical moder- nity‹ into his or her organism without perishing.

Of course, in the image that we make today of the avant-garde projects, the decadent layer of these projects hinted at here, the deep split in the avant-gardes is largely covered up by their dynamic, optimistic, progressive, con- structive, utopian facade. In Katja Strunz's works this hidden, decadent side of the avant-gardes attains manifes- tation. Their damaged, dented, forcibly aged, artificially patinated, mutilated, toppled, modernist constructions torn out of their context reveal an artistic modernity which, asa collection of useless, purposeless, nonobjective and, in this sense, sick constructs resists every instrumentalization for the purposes of practical living, not to mention the erection of a new World. Once again it becomes apparent that artistic value in modernity is created only by the radical loss of practical value, of useful function, through sacrifice and renunciation, through entering a contest whose motto is, lose and you win. The suprematist, minimalist, moder- nist forms can be regarded as the residue remaining when the handcraft and industrial constructions and productions of human beings lose their function, when they decayand thus set free forms they have used or, as Malevich says, onto which they have parasitically latched.

Katja Strunz's worn black sheet-metal cubes toppling down the white wall, damaged echo-figures of the Black Square, bring together Malevich and Mallarmé, avant- garde and decadence in a sophisticated way (Echo from 2005 and Black Angry Wall from 2006). Supplemented with Strunz's commentary, The dice have been cast, this staging of the falling and decaying Black Square im- mediately recalls Mallarmé's famous decaying, decadent poetic body from the poem *Un coup de dés ... (A Cast of the Dice...)*<sup>19</sup>. By subjecting the avant-garde, modernist and minimalist projects to such a, if you like, decadent treatment, Katja Strunz indeed does even more than merely reveal the decadent roots and the fundamental dividedness of these projects; she allows the forms of modernism also a certain degree of salvation. Paradoxically, this salvation happens precisely in the moment of citing, of violently tearing or bursting these projects out of the continuum of art history, that is, precisely in the moment of their damaging, their mutilation, fragmentation and toppling. Strunz's works can be viewed as dialectical images or dialectical points of fracture in Benjamin's sense, as loci where what has been, suddenly comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation and where both what has been and what is now experience a salvation, when the spectre of modernism can show itself and critically descend upon the present, if only for the duration of a lightning flash.

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<sup>18</sup> Kasimir Malewitsch, *Die gegenstandslose Welt* (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1980).

<sup>19</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *›Un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hasard,‹ / ›Ein Würfelwurf bringt nie zu Fall Zufall,‹ in id., *Gedichte* (Gerlingen: Lambert Schneider, 1993).*