

# THE CLOSED HAND

Hans Moor



... *The white hand in the middle symbolizes the use of the Internet. The inventors of the project want to break the borders between commerce and art, society and the market, and private and public space* \*9...

(Color-, Art- and Advertising mosaic in the Volkskrant newspaper, December 28, 2006

Place: Amsterdam, the front of the Sandberg institute for art training)

The art expression on the front shows the names of commercial brands. They are known names that represent themselves in the work of artists. The commercial brands have to let their product names be utilized inadvertently, Ikea, xs4all, Randstad, Praxis etc. Free publicity is made by artists. Moreover, in the middle of the cheerful colored information panels is the white hand. It is a hand that consciously seems to be choosing an environment as an economic battlefield of national and international competing companies and multinationals. Space is being made for a white selecting hand. The customer is king, we are here for you.

The 'work of art' manifests itself begin a big way, in which it wants to come forward, just as a lot of other advertising expressions in any other city. It even uses the front of a building, the Sandberg-institute for art education, as a 'proper domain' of the art.

The image on the front calls for two associations. The first association concerns *the white hand*. This makes you think about *the open hand* of Le Corbusier, but as a contrast *the white hand* points upwards, and has only a relation with the huge amount of surrounding billboards. Additionally, *the white hand* of the artists apparently represents the same political gesture of freedom for the individual, as mentioned in the caption. But there is a difference. *The white hand* has nothing to do anymore with heaven, like the open hand of Le Corbusier. Also, *the white hand* is no longer spatially presented, it has now been put in a flat area space. The open hand symbol was realized on the request of Le Corbusier against the background of the Himalaya mountains. But the big difference between the two hands is: *the open hand* versus *the closed and selecting hand*.

The second association concerns the multitude of billboards that represent commercial companies and multinationals, such as a fashion brand also represents itself as a fashion company. This part of the art on the front seems to have a bit of a resemblance to the model of the cathedral of John Hejduk, to which different models of homes are also attached to the front, with a side remark that the hanging houses do not represent themselves as livable, but rather as space.



John Hejduk

Although not identical in form, color, or expression, both express in their imagination a multitude of identities. The identities exist in reality next to each other in a multiplication of images.

With the model of Hejduk there are models of houses hanging in different forms on the wall. Via the big model, you can see that if these houses were to be realized, they really are not houses where one could live in them. They are no longer houses, in which in the traditional sense, people should feel at home. The uninhabitable houses are released from the ground; it looks like they are floating above the ground. The houses have become flexible, without a hierarchy. Even the crucifix, which rises as an old border, is put in between the houses practically without any consideration. Where before the cross was standing free of the habitable world and meant a border between men and god, there remains the question: does there still remain an essential difference between uninhabitable houses and the cross, as they both are hanging from the front of the cathedral Hejduk?

The uninhabitable house at the front of the cathedral of Hejduk are the imaginations of physical as well as virtual places in an increasingly globalized world, in which commercial companies and multinationals appear on any given place, such as shopping malls, airports, in vix districts and as a virtual appearance on your own computer, like the fashion house on the Internet and such.

This publicity wall of the Sandberg institute represents the desire of the artists. Borders must disappear! In contrast to the open hand, here it is a white selecting hand that takes control. Where Le Corbusier still has the hand open for the receiving of created goods. Depending on the lot of receiving of created goods, depending on the lot as a specific characteristic of human neutrality (the symbol turns around in the wind), then in the view of the commercial opening of the artists the question for a border is left behind. However, the expressive artists can also say that it is not art. We as artists want only to show the unlimited borders and freedom that can be found within the economy of producing multinationals.

But then the question becomes: where can you find the border of the expressive artist, or what is the meaning of an artist without borders?

The imagination of the front is no longer spatial, and that, just like with a commercial, is no longer necessary. The message has to be clearly brought forward, not in an ambiguous imagination. The symbolism of the open hand has a double meaning, an open hand and a flying dove. The laws of economy permit no obscurity. *Our time demands concise, clear, and*

*sharply formulated communication.* \*<sup>10</sup> The white selecting hand is the hand of the artist, which is the individual that chooses within the economy of costs and residuals. The names of the colored brands and white selecting hand are equal to each other.

But what is left of the identity of the individual/artist?

If the artists identify themselves with the white selecting hand, they can only be within the multiplication of the products of the economy. These unlimited borders of the artist mean, essentially, the elimination of the individual, as the individual is nothing more than a means of the economy. There is no multiplication when the vehicles, products, and consumers thereof are not connected as much as possible to each other. Uniformity serves for production increases. Besides that, as an artist, you can still do your own thing, but this attempt will have to serve for an increase in production (economy). The meaning of this possible difference stays uniform in meaning, in which an excessive deviation of the average will always be deducted from the cost balance. The artist, with his stipulated unique project, makes himself larger when he embraces multiplication. The call for freedom from the individual is equal to elimination. It is the call for the disappearance of the silent and empty place.

## **LITERATURE**

\*<sup>9</sup> Art. Kleur-, Kunst- en Reclamemozaïek in de Volkskrant, Foto + tekst 28 december 2006

\*<sup>10</sup> Th.W.Oudemans, *Techniek en informatisering. Hfst.Vorm in metafysica en informatisering.* Assen, 1997

Oktober 2007