

Aernout Mik
SPEAKING IN TONGUES
Videoinstallation
Nov 15, 2013 – Jan 12, 2014
Opening Nov 14, 2013

SPEAKING IN TONGUES
Multichannel-Videoinstallation
by Aernout Mik
Nov 15, 2013 – Jan 12, 2014

HKW

Haus der Kulturen der Welt
John-Foster-Dulles Allee 10
10557 Berlin
hkw.de

HKW

Haus der Kulturen der Welt

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

quick changes, lasting forever

“Get your whole office to pray that neither the structure nor we will collapse.”

Werner Düttmann and Franz Mocken, contact architects in Berlin, in a letter to the architect of the Kongresshalle Berlin, Hugh Stubbins, from July 1956. In 1980 the building collapsed due to construction defects and was reopened in 1987. Since 1989 it is the “Haus der Kulturen der Welt”.

Within the framework of the art and research project “Global Prayers” the international video artist Aernout Mik (NL) developed the new, extensive work “Speaking in Tongues” which will be shown for the first time at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW). In addition to the building itself and over three hundred performers, the renowned actors Lars Eidinger and Burghart Klaußner also play a decisive role.

The multi-part installation at the HKW forms one of the central starting points of “The Global Prayers Congress”. An essential component of the work is the parallel exploration and comparison of new religious communities with large secular gatherings from the business world which have themselves incorporated hidden religious rites and qualities.

Aernout Mik’s undertaking combines aesthetic, fictional, and documentary approaches. This method results, not least, in the creation of an autonomous artistic performance which both reflects on the individual phases of the exploratory work and brings them to life.

LANDSCAPE OF THE TRANSITION BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS AND THE SECULAR

“Speaking in Tongues” explores the manifestations of new transnational religious movements, presenting the results in a multi-part, accessible video installation. A characteristic feature of the newly emerging religious movements worldwide is the promise of salvation and redemption, but also the promise of material wealth and freedom for the individual. In the process, contemporary religious movements often follow the models of international corporations, influencing the structures of social and urban life. At a variety of levels—partly material, partly spiritual—they operate as hybrid companies, producing “staged wonders” (Aernout Mik).

The work “Speaking in Tongues” combines documentary footage from numerous sites in Lagos, Belo Horizonte, and Rio de Janeiro with specially staged and eccentric scenes filmed in Berlin with 300 performers. In addition, edited excerpts from the media self-presentation of religious companies will also be shown. The work embraces sites from three continents, thus highlighting the global dimension of the growing “religion industry” (Asonzeh Ukah).

A landscape of transitions between the religious and the secular is created from a range of source material – a threshold region bringing to light chance and structural similarities, demonstrating how one form passes into the other or generates it.

Fichtner, Elena Fichtner, Karin Fiedler, Helen-Sophie Fitzner, Linda Flagel Williams, Hartmut Fleischmann, Sabine Fortmann, Harald Freissmann, Marita Fried, Peter Froebel, Lenz Fuhrmann, Gerhard Gdowiok, Brigitte Geier, Jürgen Gerspach, Annika Geyer, Alisa Gilmutdinova, Irene Gomez Franco, Maya Gomez, Christa Göschel, Ciara Goss, Janne Gregor, Manuel Gröger, Christiana Gröning, Maike Groth, Patricia Grove, Rachel Hamm, Andrea Hartmann, Jennifer Heck, Dietmar Heddrum, Susanne Held, Alexandra Henn, Richard Henschel, Oliver Herbst, Andrea Heumer, Hartmut Hille, Judith Hillig, Ingrid Hinrichs, Sebastian Hirsch, Udo Hoffmann, Horst Hofmeister, Patricia Holtzmann, Wolfgang Holz, Emma-Waltraud Hones, Annette Höpfner, Angela Höppner, Emma Waltraud Howes, Rainer Jablinski, Marie-Ann Jacob, Elena Jansen, Gabriele Jarzabek, Carsten Kaltner, Julia Kapelle, Aurora Kellermann, Oscar Khan, Tino Kieschnik, Eun-sook Kim, James-Roger Kirk, Seiya Kitano, Petra Klabunde, Nikola Kleiber, Ramona Klenk, Stefan Kohl, Bo Kyung Köhn, Maria Köhne, Eve Barbara Kolb, Sebastian Kommerell, Dirk König, Gisela Köpke, Susann Kopperschmidt, Włodzimierz Kostrzewa, Reinhard Kreis, Laura Kremser, Sandra Kupfer, Vitali Kwilitzsch, Nadia Lafi, Michael Landau, Ronald Lange, Thomas Lebbe, Rüdiger Lehmann, Constantin Lehmann-Bärenklau, Aron Leiste, Anne Leithäuser, Mathias Lenz, Simone Lenz, Carolin Leue, Sabine Listmann, Wolfram Löbsack, Kilian Löttker, Heike Ludwig, Andreas Luge, Andreas Lüth, John Maibohm, Petra-Maria Maibohm, Aude Marty, Tomasz Matyjanka, Simon Mayer, Maxwell McCarthy, Rüdiger Meixner, Harry Mentzel, Kai Meyer, Sandra Michaelis, Sara Morante, Caprice Mrwa, Peter Mundus, Kyriaki Nasioula, Thomas Neuhaus, Mandy Neukirchner, Kelly Nicholas, Heiner Niedung, Stella Nikisch, Ingolf Nowack, Manuela Oforiatta, Aykut Okcu, Anna-Maria Olizeg, Günter Opitz-Ohlsen, Anna Ortmann, Ernest Osei, Linda Pählich, Ruben Panaranda Bravo, Nadine Pape, Lorenzo Pennacchietti, Silvia Pennacchietti, Thorsten Penski, Elmar Persons, Richard Pettifer, Michael Pfänder, Marc Philipps, Caterina Pogorzelski, Silvia Pohl, Anna Politzer, Gerardus Pouls, Rüdiger Pracht, Antje Prinz, Larissa Pushkutse, Lara Raabe, Benjamin Ramsay, Monika Reineck, Ruben Reniers, Jörg-Manuel Retzmann, Valerie Richards, Isabelle Rivera, Ursula Rogg, Steffen Marcel Roll, Carmen Romero, Johannes Rößler, Anna Rozkosny, Claudia Rumler, Sonja Sophia Ruska, Miriam Salih, Dorota Samborski, Francesca Sari, Rolf Schelling, Sabine Schilling, Konstanze Schirmer, Christopher Schleiff, Mathias Schlicht, Ramona Schmid, Hans-Jürgen Schmidt, Nadezhda Schmidt, Sina Schmiester, Klaus Scholze, Kerstin Schröder, Ralf Michael Schröder, Marianne Schurig, Paul Schwingenschlögl, Annette

Sichler, Boboy Simanjuntak, Sara Simeoni, Florian Simon, Michael Skupin, Malik Smith, Katrin Stephan, Susanne Stern, Carmen Stieda, Belinde Ruth Stieve, Natascha Szabo, Paolo Tacchini, Martina Tagliamento, Mathieu Tascher, Maurice Taszarek, Ralf Tempel, Olaf Tilgner, Le Trung Tin, Julia Toaspern, Regina Törn, Paulina Tovo, Ayako Toyama, Margrit Traupe, Anita Twarowska, Galit Tzur, David Varadi, Francesco Vellei, Geerten Verhens, Kristel Vimberg, Sonja Vogel, Arne Vogelgesang, Sebastian Vogt, Harald Voigt, Mandy Voigt, Barbara Wacker, Jan-Hendrik Wagner, Sylvia Warnken, Frank Wasewitz, Cindy Wegner, Rainer Wehrle, Heinz Weingärtner, Charlotte Welling, Volker Werner, Maeshelle West-Davies, Udo Wiegand, Wolfgang Wiemer, Marco Winzer, Jan Wirdeier, Stefan Wirth, Ingo Wisch, Annette Wizisla, Anna Isabel Wolf, Jörg Wolschina, Thomas Wucherer, Alois Zeindl, Belen Zevallos, Ralf Zillmann, Birgit Zimmermann.

Courtesy the artist and carlier | gebauer (Berlin).

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Welt in cooperation with metroZones—Center for Urban Affairs.



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Opening hours:

Wed–Mon 11–19h
Fri 15.11., Sat 16.11.2013 11–22h
24.–26.12.2013 and 31.12.2012–1.1.2014 closed
Free entrance

globalprayers.info
metroZones.info

Curated by: Jochen Becker/metroZones
with Katrin Klingan (HKW)

Executive Production: Kelder Productions
(Rotterdam) & Port-au-Prince (Berlin)

Installation: Pro Av ART Oy, Jorma Saarikko

Production HKW: Quirin Wildgen, Evi Chantzi,
Bettina Knaup, Janek Müller, Gernot Ernst, Gabriel
Kujawa & Team, Philip Sünderhauf, Benjamin
Pohl, Adrian Pilling, Benjamin Brandt, Bastian
Heide, André Schulz, Andreas Durchgraf, Simon
Franzkowiak

Kommunikation HKW:

Silvia Fehrmann (Head of department)
Martin Hager, Franziska Wegener, Natália
Weicsekova (Editorial office)
Anne Maier, Anna Bairaktaris (Press office)
Eva Stein, Jan Köhler, Stephan Ritscher, Patrick
Kleinschmidt (Internet)
Christiane Sonntag, Sabine Westemeier
(Marketing/Distribution)

Haus der Kulturen der Welt is a business division of
Kulturveranstaltungen des Bundes in Berlin GmbH.
Director: Bernd M. Scherer
General Manager: Charlotte Sieben

Filmshoot Lagos

Production: Ade Bantu
Production Assistant: Aderemi 'Remi' Adegbite
Camera: Marjoleine Boonstra & Istvan Imreh
Postproduction: Loods, Lux & Lumen
Color Correction: Petro van Leeuwen
Thanks to: Jens Wenkel, Jochen Becker, Marc-André
Schmachtel (Goethe Institut Lagos), Victor Okai

Filmshoot Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte

Research and Production: Yasmim Hulme,
Florian Pfeiffer
Camera: Marjoleine Boonstra & Istvan Imreh
Postproduction: Loods, Lux & Lumen
Color Correction: Petro van Leeuwen
Thanks to Stephan Lanz, Miriam Gerber

Filmshoot Berlin

Executive Producer: Lisette Kelder
Co-Director: Marjoleine Boonstra
Production Designer: Elsje de Bruijn
Director of Photography: Benito Strangio
Costume Designer: Elisabetta Pian
Projections: BeamSystems, Jozef Hey
Casting Advisor: Hans Kemna
Casting Director: Nico Dietrich

Production Company: Port-au-Prince, Jan Kruger
Production Manager: Judith Barthell
Location Manager: Quirin Wildgen
Runners: Ingmar Schrader, Julian Peter, Chan Lu
1st Assistant Director: Jana Bolze
2nd Assistant Directors: Christian Pasquariell,
Matthias Bauer, Polly Tielebein
Casting Assistants: Simon Muller, Anca Munteanu
Catering: SchmackoFatz'ZZ

Art Director: Anette Kuhn
Design Visuals: Mannschaft
Set Dresser: Vera Carstens
Set Construction: The Set Company,
Frank Tauchmann
Art Runner: Joost Karelse, Marco Boehn
Costume Assistant: Natascha Loch
Wardrobe on set: Kerstin Feldmann, Veronika
Weinhold, Viola Schwartz
Make-up & Hair: Jessica Krause
Assistant Make-up & Hair: Irina Tubbecke

Camera Operators: Istvan Imreh, Morris Vianden
Stills Photographer: Florian Braun
Focus Pullers: Annika Eysel, Attila Kiss
Material Assistant: Sezgin Devran
Data Handler: Sven Heussner, Christian Kuss
Key Grip: Jorg Langeluttich
Grip: Jens Uwe Schmidt
Projection Technicians: Maarten van Slooten,
Niels Otten
HKW Facilities: André Schulz, Benjamin Pohl
Postproduction: Loods Digital, Ruud de Bruyn
Color Correction: Petro van Leeuwen

With: Lars Eidinger, Burghart Klaußner and
Xavier Agudo Jacome, Abdurazeez Ahmed, Paul
Alexander, Elisabeth Altenpohl, Polyxeni Angelidou,
Desiree Angersbach, Arantxa Arenas, Ana Maria
Arias Valdivia, Tanja Arthur, Margitta Azadian,
Mohammad Azadian, Yvonne Bahn, Saskia Bauske,
Sylvia Beck, Klaus Berchner, Achim Biedermann,
Elisabeth Biegai, Cuyen Biraben, Arthur Birich,
Manuela Blödorn, Peter Borchert, Michal Adam
Borkowicz, Rudi Borrmann, Africa Brau Garcia,
Norbert Braunschweig, Richard Anthony Bray, Beate
Brieske-Voigt, Kirsten Burger, Petra Burnett, Doreen
Caetano, Mab Cardoso Sousa, Elia Cittadini, Timur
Cutkov, Bodo Czarnowski, Hellmut Dähne, Thomas
Davies, Jose De Paiva Filho, Santana Diego, Antje
Diering, Jörg Dittberner, Monika Gabriela Dorniak,
Michaela Duhme, Rike Eckermann, Jarno Eerola,
Jürgen Eickholz, Bettina El Sayed, Lars Elsner, Katrin
Emmer, Thomas Emmer, Guillermo Espichicoque,
Christian Eulitz, Johannes Fähmel, Adalbert
Fahrenhorst, Johanna Fassbender, Lothar Fechtner,
Alexander Fend, Jimenez Fernando, Christian

One aspect highlighted in this context
relates to articulation. Thus the extent to
which the corporate self-presentation of
globally active companies has entered
the communication structure of Pente-
costal communities (logos, marketing
and organisation, new media, access
to material wealth, etc.) is explored - or
how western corporate gatherings have
integrated implicit religious rituals (mass
celebrations, cultic veneration of the
market, collective ecstatic states, psy-
cho-training for personnel, etc.) into their
corporate culture.

Documentary footage of Pentecostal
communities in Brazil and Nigeria are
shown alongside staged events at the
Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. The
building, which was erected as a con-
gress hall, and which, with its quality of a
church-like tourist attraction and history
of two rebirths as manifestations of re-
demption/resurrection (its construction
in the post-war period and, following its
collapse in 1980, its faithful reconstruc-
tion), can serve as a uniting metaphor for
these actions.

The staged events were produced
and filmed over two days as improvised
performances, i. e. actions, in the audi-
torium and the HKW's conference room
K1. What begins as the re-enactment
of a large shareholder meeting with
its big video screens, is subsequently
transformed into a series of novel, even
speculative events. The gathering, ini-
tially recognisable as a business event,
mutates into an ambivalent form with
a multitude of parallel actions, where-
by secular and religious motifs and
collective rituals exist side-by-side or
merge into one another. Trance-like
states suddenly spread throughout the

crowd of business people, moments of
passionate celebration of unity or si-
lent prayer erupt into the conventional
sequence of a business meeting, while
assistants or security staff regulate the
process. Admissions of sin or reports of
the awakening of faith mutate into emo-
tionally charged presentations of busi-
ness prospects and profit forecasts. The
invisible hand of the market rules, while
the iPhone-like product is praised by a
messianic marketing guru.

"I consider it highly questionable that
methods appealing to employees on a
religious and spiritual level are employed
to bind them more tightly to the corpo-
rate exploitation process. These meth-
ods aim to make the most intransigent of
people compliant, and thus completely
'domesticate' the employees."

*Personnel Manager Viktor Lau in
interview with Spiegel Online, October
26th, 2013.*

Both worlds—the Prosperity Gospel with
its worldly appeal as much as the eso-
teric-like business practices – provide
glimpses of a new type of self-govern-
ment. The power of self discipline in the
spirit of an orientation to higher things
pervades the entrepreneurial and spiritual
worlds in equal measure. Individuals be-
come the architects of their own fortune,
while state and society are absent.

Belief and reason manifest themselves
at the same instant. The secular and the
holy both presume and generate one
another. From the very start they elude
a strict demarcation, forming a "blurry
area" (Aernout Mik). Suddenly people
stand up in the audience, joining in an
endless "speaking in tongues", while

others offer assistance. In such ambivalent situations one can no longer be certain as to the nature of the event one is witnessing.

In Mik's production for "Global Prayers" documentary material and staged work are combined in a video installation projected on a number of synchronised screens. By serving as the central location for the fictional events, the HKW functions for its visitors as both an anchorage and as a hypothetical ritual space for their own experiences and reflections.

The point of departure for Aernout Mik's new work was the preceding research work of "Global Prayers", and in particular, the reservoir of images and detailed stories accumulated in the process, but also a network of potential locations and local collaborators. Following the viewing of visual material on the occasion of numerous discussions with the Global Prayers team, extensive research was carried out on the Internet as well as repeated filming trips to Lagos, Brazil, and Berlin. An initial casting as well as a first public rehearsal were carried out at the HKW on a test basis within the framework of the conference "Former West". Two days of shooting were scheduled for the later filming situations in the HKW with up to four camera teams simultaneously and a feature-film quality. Here the performer's theatrical improvisations, developed according to a general script, were of great importance, especially emotionally. Debates on respect for the religious practice of "speaking in tongues" were as much a part of the process as the idea of suddenly working towards a sect-like event.

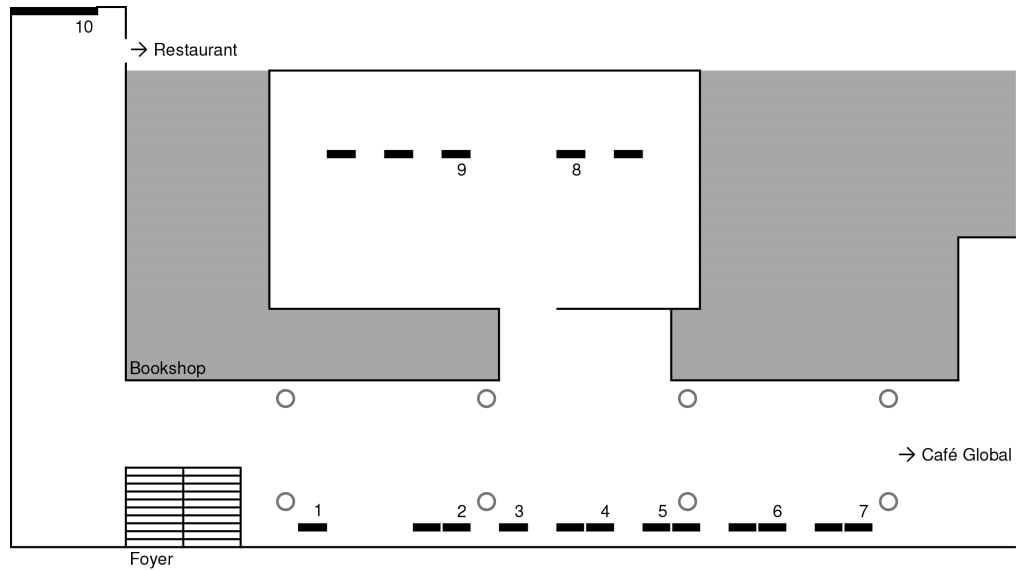
*Jochen Becker/Aernout Mik,
November 2013*

GLOBAL PRAYERS. Redemption and Liberation in the City

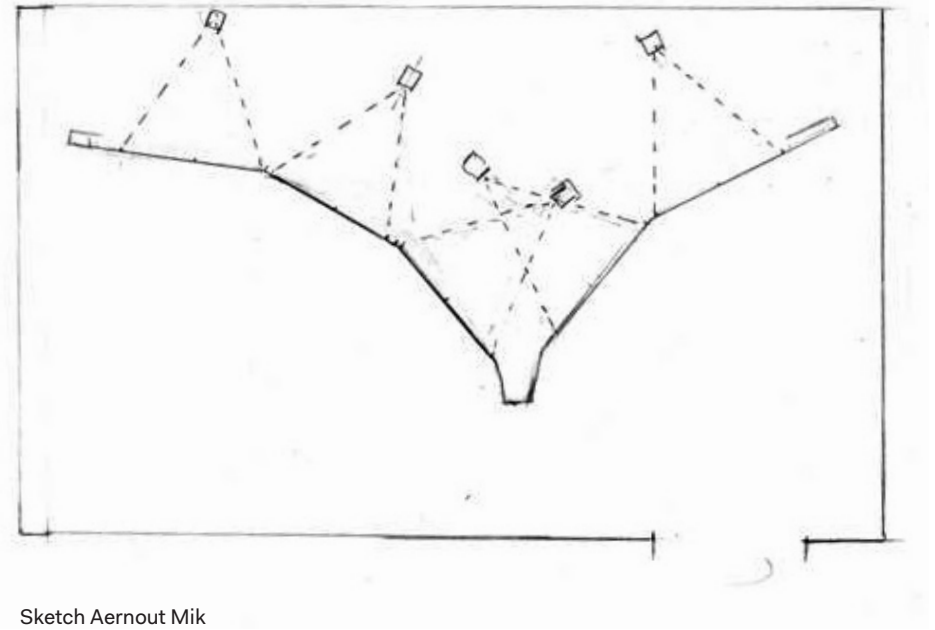
The installation of the artist Aernout Mik represents an initial conclusion to the series of public presentations and interventions which have accompanied the research process of the GLOBAL PRAYERS project over the course of more than five years: Symposia and workshops in the local metropolises, public saloons in which the politics and practices of knowledge were discussed, the exhibition series "the Urban Cultures of Global Prayers" (NGBK Berlin, Camera Austria Graz), the theme days at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, as well as the concluding "The Global Prayers Congress" at the end of 2013 at the same location.

The exhibition and research project "GLOBAL PRAYERS. Redemption and Liberation in the City" explores new expressions of religiosity in the urban space employing art and science, while simultaneously examining the influence of urban cultures on the religious. Through the cooperation of artistic and academic researchers, GLOBAL PRAYERS explores the images and sounds, spaces and practices which the religious, in the age of globalisation, assumes in the cities.

Initiated by metroZones in 2009, GLOBAL PRAYERS is carried out in cooperation with Haus der Kulturen der Welt and the European University Viadrina. "GLOBAL PRAYERS—redemption and liberation in the city" is a research project at the Forum Transregionale Studien. In the framework of the Forum, GLOBAL PRAYERS receives essential funding from the State of Berlin.



1. Assembleia de Deus dos Ultimos Dia, Rio de Janeiro
2. Igreja Mundial do Poder de Deus, Rio de Janeiro
3. Templo dos Anjos, Belo Horizonte
4. Redeemed Christian Church of God, Lagos
5. Ministério Apascentar, Rio de Janeiro
6. Redeemed Christian Church of God, Lagos
7. Missionarinha Alani/Assembleia de Deus, Rio de Janeiro
8. Speaking in Tongues—Conference Room
9. Speaking in Tongues—Auditorium
10. Speaking in Tongues, Media/research (Aernout Mik/Daya Cahen)



Sketch Aernout Mik

Aernout Mik on “Speaking in Tongues”

“I (...) took a more distanced approach; where do these places, happenings, and spaces open up to? What kind of things do they share with completely different spaces, geographically, but also as a whole conceptual structure?”

“The whole event, even the service itself, of course, is a mixture between something that has to do more with entertainment and with television up to a kind of a corporate motivational training—there is this crossover between a mediatized event and a corporate organization, a management-like structure and a corporate motivational event. It is an event where there is a sense or suggestion of collectivity but, in the end, it's actually mostly based on individual futures, individual prospects, and individual prosperity. And there you have this very one-to-one fusion of the material and the spiritual worlds, which in my opinion, you can also see in the corporate world itself as the leading thread.”

“I start in my staged part of the project from the other side, approaching the situation from the viewpoint of a strictly corporate kind of event, and then try to transform this situation more towards the spiritual and religious happening. This is completely speculative but working from two sides towards each other and maybe, partly, in parallel to each other. They probably can't meet really, but I wanted to see what happens; if they operate in relation to each other.”

“Although the space is not very big, it has live, sweeping cameras which make the space look much bigger than it actually is. Screens around the place broadcast what is taking place. It's very well edited on the spot. So people are in this service but they have a media awareness of their own presence simultaneously, which is extremely fascinating.”

“The most powerful thing about the church is that it embraces contemporary society, it embraces the desire for money and the desire to be present in and through the media and to the whole world of celebrity. The whole structure of our new liberal society is affirmed in it and it's connected with this intense religious experience. It is not a separate world that is created.”

“But that is a growth model and so, in a sense, it is also a corporate model. You start as the small entrepreneur and end up as the big global company.”

“Is it not that the nature of the church has changed simultaneously with changes in society? If you think about the speed of growth of the new churches and the way the Catholic Church has been declining in parallel. That does have to do with the way society is developing economically, the current precariousness of the labor market, and the importance of a media society. The new churches fit much better into the conditions of the current society than any other church.”

“This is, for instance, the reason why I'm making this fictional move: not to make a study of religion as something outside of us; as something we observe from outside, because we are not outside of it. I want to get towards this intrinsic combination between the two.”

“I don't think the feeling is a fake; it's staged but not a fake.”

“Especially these floods of speaking in tongues that suddenly rise up; they pick it up and they'll drop it down, just like that. I sense it's a different consciousness, not a fully different consciousness either, but you see that there is a border crossed. It's so collectively done, a very physical experience; they cross it, but a moment later everything is just normal and ordinary and they just write things or chat. If there was a line in the room somewhere where you can just easily be on top of the line, and it's not, like, now I'm crossing this gigantic border; it's only very thin and diffuse.”

“What interests me is the relation of real experience and stagedness: how this is intertwined and how one meets the other. What happens within these moments of crossing the border, where you still have some kind of doubt; not in the sense that I have to solve it, decide if it's true or not, because that is not the case, but there is a doubt about how much the whole thing is in itself a performative gesture, and how much that triggers a desire and sensation, and creates experience.”

“I think part of the distancing comes from the fact that I very often don't use sound. Your eyes start to follow a completely different kind of technique in order to read what you see. (...) What is important is that I try to also de-localize things, especially if I'm working in a documentary vein. Even if I stage something, there's a moment of de-localization going on.

“When I started working on this project I was interested in how these churches look from the outside, how they are embedded in the environment, but when I kept on working I started to lose some of the specificity of the place and that, in turn, enabled some categories to come to the fore. So that's the non-sociological approach that I have, and also, when I stage there are often situations that are close to something, but they are not really that something. So there is a certain non-specificity or unlocalizable moment in there. And that, I think, is also where this analytical moment is appearing. You have to have a very active approach to, let's say, the activity of reading a situation instead of simply representing something. And that is a means of distancing I use to evoke that approach from the viewer/ participant with the work. And that's also why I try to create environments where you are in relation with the images that are there, there's an overly sensorial moment where too many sensations are going on, where you continuously have to choose. So again, it's a mixture of being immersed and being outside of it.”

“Speculative staging, I would say, instead of re-enacting.”

“Staging, in the end, is also a real thing—it's artificial, but in the moment we practice it we go into it, like what happened in the performance (...), but partly it is acted. And in that sense, I don't see the structure of this service as any different.”

“I have the feeling to go more in the direction of accumulation than in solving it to an articulated point.”

“it's the relation, of course, between organization and excess”

„there's the role of the pastor as a performer, as an executive trainer. I probably won't use the sound and, therefore, sometimes you will not know where you are. He becomes a figure who is floating between different associations of different spaces and functions. And these, of course, are things that I push forward. It's in the editing always, a result also of a certain flow that's dependent on the physical flow of the event, which is the non-analytical side of it, because there's a certain emerging in it and a moving between different energy levels. This has to happen in the edit itself.”

Quoted from: Aernout Mik and Martijn Oosterbaan in conversation with Jochen Becker: On “Speaking in Tongues”: Experiences of Researching Religious Practices, in: Jochen Becker, Katrin Klingan, Stephan Lanz, Kathrin Wildner (eds), Global Prayers—Contemporary Manifestations of the Religious in the City, Lars Müller Publishers/ metroZones 13, Zürich, 2014.