

Goshka Macuga  
Kabinett der abstrakten  
**October – 29 November 2003**



Bloomberg  
**SPACE**

**Opening times**  
Mon - Sat, 11:00 - 18:00

**Bloomberg SPACE**  
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### **A conversation between Graham Gussin, Sacha Craddock and Goshka Macuga**

**Graham Gussin:** How do you start to work on projects, making a decision about what to bring together?

**Goshka Macuga:** Most of the time I see things around that I like and you have this kind of information in your head anyhow, the things that you get attracted to, and the things that you ideally want to have. I also reuse the stuff that I quite like or very particular stuff. It would be the same if you were building sculptures, taking a bit of this and a bit of that, to assemble everything into one piece. It's a kind of a process, looking for elements to something that you can kind of visualise, setting objects within an installation or a structure that I've designed. When I was doing the John Soane piece for Gasworks I needed very particular work. I went to see fifty people to decide if something was what I want or not. Obviously it would be great to get the things that you really desire to have.

**GG:** The things we seek may only exist in our imagination which spurs us to go out and find them. Sometimes it is possible to find the specific object, but often we have to make do with something that only approximates...

**GM:** Or something that is even better than what you imagined. That you think: this is even better than what I thought I would ever find. But it is not purely just ideals, it is more personal things that you have seen and you know exist. It is about remembering and sourcing where they come from, be it Russia or Poland.

**GG:** Are you interested in the idea of the imaginary, especially when it is related to the museum that normally labels and classifies everything? It suggests a place where we can perhaps disregard time and place, the objects released from that system momentarily. So there is a more open context: the museum, without a centre, without a history, a kind of utopian viewing station.



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**GM:** I think that by doing that you instantly give them their own sort of setting in time and a different history, so you orchestrate a similar reality. For example, I am hoping that the show at Bloomberg SPACE will refer to certain period because of the work I am using, and because of the structures and because materials used. So in a way even when I take them out of their own time or their own context I have a certain control over that work. Just because you take something away from its original context and then set it up in a really designed new context, I find it difficult to believe that you give this work the freedom to exist without its previous history. I think there is a certain nostalgia within my work, a personal familiarity with the things I use, even with the Inuit artists works I used in *Iceberg*, 2001, at Nylon. It perhaps has something to do with my past or where I come from, how I entered this scene and what I bring of my own personal history. If I use work of my contemporary artist friends, you would think that, this is some kind of collection of what people are doing at this time. The kind of relationships we have or what kind of dialogue(s) we are involved within. Obviously when I borrow stuff from a collection, like the Andy Warhol prints, then maybe it is a different sort of situation.

**Sacha Craddock:** The mirrors you are having made, have something of the diagram or the diagrammatic about them. What is your relationship to that and your interest in the diagrams of the Russian artist Kasimir Malevich?

**GM:** Many artists think of themselves as sort of artist/scientists. They believe that there is something educational, or something that sums something up, or there is some kind of essence of something. And I think that what Malevich was trying to do was this attempt to create some kind of system, an ideology...

**GG:** A manifesto?

**GM:** I am fascinated by individuals who made that attempt. Soane had this great ambition to create a museum or call his house a museum, which is quite unusual for that period. I do not think that there was any other individual living in that time who would refer to his house as a museum and wishing to secure it as such. Malevich I think had this kind of completely self-centered attempt to justify that his practice or his beliefs or his philosophy were really significant, really important and therefore he was trying to kind of create some kind of visual order to explain that system.

**GG:** The relationship between different streams of understanding is perhaps emphasised by the installation of the library in the show.



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**GM:** Yes, and with different forms and different media. But it is also about research and about knowledge.

**GG:** The way things are put together suggests a strong concern with authorship and hierarchy, but also a sense of community.

**GM:** I think there is a great significance for me to work in a group or have this kind of ability to be involved with some kind of exchange with other artists. But I also find it quite problematic, so within my practice it very much reflects this tension between the authorship and the influences that people have on each other or the kind of difficulties of how artists relate to each other in terms of the protection of their individuality.

**SC:** How did you visualise the journey through the exhibition itself?

**GM:** I wanted to change certain dynamics of the space, not the gallery as such, because the gallery has its own function, but how the gallery fits as a level within the whole building. What is happening in the whole building and how that relates to the gallery. So in a way I am interested in that. It is important how the first piece is orchestrated, that you have a host that takes you along and shows you the stuff, yet you feel you discover it yourself. You do not go into the gallery space and are left to look at things, instead there will be someone that welcomes you. From there you go on to deal with the rest of the show, but then you have the ability to look through the stuff as in the library.

**SC:** It is about exploration in that sense, it's quite romantic.

**GM:** You are taken on a little journey through the gallery. It starts from that box perhaps and then we go off and we explore and we find different things, but also if you do not want to leave instantly you can hang around and look at the books. It is not purely about what you initially see, it is not about understanding in that way. It is about discovery, the notion of possibility. I think that the whole process of actually making work is that thing of making it happen, of bringing all these things together. And then sort of letting it go again and moving on to something else. I think that if I had an existing piece permanently somewhere that I could go and see all the time it would be very hard for me to do another project because I would just be, you know - quite happy.

**GG:** So these pieces come together momentarily and then they do not happen again?

**GM:** No, they never will, even if they do, it is never really the same situation, because it very much depends on the space as well. So even the times when I did the same project in a different country, for example, it was already a different place, it was a different set of artists. Even if the structure is kind of similar it never is exactly the same. It is an event, a performance. You either see something or you do not.



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