

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Lia Gangitano, Liagang@aol.com

2 January 2008

PARTICIPANT INC
NEW ADDRESS
253 East Houston Street
New York NY 10002
TEL 212 254 4334
www.participantinc.org

Technically Sweet

Curated by Yvette Brackman and Maria Finn

January 20 - March 2, 2008

Opening Reception: Sunday, January 20, 7-9pm

Michel Auder & Michael Stickrod
Yvette Brackman
John Brattin
Johannes Christoffersen
Maria Finn
Ulrik Heltoft
Frans Jacobi & Frederik Jacobi
Elsebeth Jørgensen
Lars Mathisen
Mark Orange
Laura Parnes
Pia Rönicke
Elisabeth Subrin

A screenplay has no import on its own. It is a blueprint for something else. A blueprint which tells us nothing about what is or what is not intended to be in a film. A screenplay can never resolve any ambiguity in a film. But in this case, Technically Sweet, there is no film. Only the screenplay. A blueprint, for what is not. (Henrik Uth Jensen)

From January 20 - March 2, 2008, PARTICIPANT INC presents, *Technically Sweet*, an international group exhibition curated by Copenhagen-based artists Yvette Brackman and Maria Finn. Based on an unrealized manuscript by filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni, the curators have invited artists to "finish" the film with works in all mediums, based on their interpretation of the manuscript. A screening series will accompany *Technically Sweet* at Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, NYC (Saturday, January 19, 8pm; Friday, February 29, 8pm; Wednesday, March 5, 8pm; Sunday, March 9, 4pm).
www.anthologyfilmarchives.org

Technically Sweet (Tecnicamente Dolce) is the title of the unrealized screenplay by Antonioni, published in Italian in 1976. If made, the film would have been shot in Rome, Sardinia, and The Amazon, and would have featured Jack Nicholson and Maria Schneider in the leading roles. When all the preparations for the film were ready, the producer cut funding for the film. Antonioni was instead offered to direct a screenplay by Mark Peploe, *The Passenger*, with the same actors. Both the screenplay *Technically Sweet* and the film *The Passenger* (1975) involve characters who disappear. Antonioni's films often portray people alienated from their surroundings who have come to question themselves. Antonioni describes this process by letting his characters explore the landscape and buildings around them. Cinematically, this is often done without many close-ups of the characters, rather following

them from a distance. Instead of narrative based on psychology and relationships, he focuses on characters' interaction with their immediate surroundings, telling stories through landscape and architecture. In Antonioni's films, landscape and architecture are not just surroundings; they are products of political decisions that influence our lives. His filmmaking reveals how we construct society, and how our decisions affect us.

The *Technically Sweet* screenplay is a parallel story in which characters are followed from Rome and Sardinia to The Amazon. The screenplay's main theme involves coping with technological invention in an industrial age, and the potentially destructive nature of progress. The title *Technically Sweet* is a quote from physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the person responsible for the construction of the atom bomb. He became known for using this term during the Atomic Energy Hearings in 1954. He used the term "technically sweet" to explain what is called the "technological imperative," an assumption that if something is technologically possible, it is so tempting to realize that one considers the consequences only afterwards: "When you see something that is technically sweet, you go ahead and do it and you argue about what to do about it only after you have had your technical success. That is the way it was with the atomic bomb."

The relevance of Antonioni's vision, as well as the challenge of inviting artists to work from the same source, instigated the use of this screenplay as the point of departure for the exhibition. This framework also raises questions about authorship and originality. Today, it is common for artists to use existing artworks as a source for new work. Using the screenplay as their common tool, the artists take this notion of post-production one step further, using a screenplay for a film that was never made. The artists cannot refer to an existing artwork, but instead refer to the screenplay's many potentials. Drawing whatever they choose from the manuscript, which was translated into English for the first time for the exhibition, the artists share a field of ideas originating from the screenplay, and explore questions reception and intentionality.

An illustrated catalogue accompanies the presentations at PARTICIPANT INC and Anthology Film Archives, and functions as a third space, with visual material providing a further angle to the projects in *Technically Sweet*. The publication contains two visual components: images from each artists' contribution to the exhibition, and a series of images presenting "locations" utilized or imagined by each artist, based on locations intended by Antonioni for use in his film, published as production stills in the original manuscript, *Technically Sweet*.



This project is sponsored by the Danish Arts Council, the Danish Arts Council Committee for Visual Art, DaNY Arts.

PARTICIPANT INC's exhibitions are made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

This program is supported, in part, by funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

PARTICIPANT INC receives generous support from the Harriett Ames Charitable Trust, Bloomberg, Brown Foundation, Foundation 20 21, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and numerous individuals.

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the Lower East Side. Subway: F/V to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit. Gallery Hours: Wednesday-Sunday, noon-7pm.

PARTICIPANT INC