

## FLAG METAMORPHOSES

a project by Myriam Thyes, since 2005

[www.flag-metamorphoses.net](http://www.flag-metamorphoses.net)

### A participatory art project - a continuously growing series of animations:

The flags of all nations will transform into each other through flash animation. Between each two flags, scenes appear that show a relation, a connection, an interaction between the two countries. FLAG METAMORPHOSES lays stress on the relations between nations and identities as changing ones: Only in the permanent re-creation of values, symbols and ways of life, in mixing with others and differing from others, cultures stay alive. Each artist who creates a flag animation expresses such a relation in his/her own way.



**The series is still growing:** It contains 38 animations by 30 international artists and teams so far. All animations together last 55 minutes and include about 100 different nations.

### Since 2006, FLAG METAMORPHOSES has been shown more than 50 times, all over the world:

Exhibitions, for example: 7+Fig Art Space Los Angeles; Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen; Kunsthalle Exnergasse Vienna; Shedhalle Zurich. Festivals, f.e.: Video Vortex 8 Zagreb; FILE Festivals Rio / Sao Paulo / Porto Alegre; In The Palace Balchik / Sofia; Traverse Video Toulouse. Public space, f.e.: Manchester (with Cornerhouse); Victory Plaza Dallas (TX); Main Stations Zurich / Bern / Geneva / Basel, Switzerland.

### FLAG METAMORPHOSES is an experiment, a research project:

How do people from different countries and cultures interpret and work with symbols and signs? How do they think in images?

The participants are international artists, designers, filmmakers, and students.

The collected animations may not all show the same artistic maturity - but their concurrence in a multi screen installation reveals a high visual energy which involves the spectators in an almost physical way.

### Irene Müller, Zurich 2007: 'Identity and Transformation. Myriam Thyes, work with flags and world maps'

"(...) The whole conceptual set of the project betrays Thyes's eye for the unsaid voids, the meanings and tales hidden between the emblems and geometric forms, the colours and arrangements - hidden, or rather, distilled out of them visibly by the animations which are derived from them. (...)

Using simple artistic devices (and technical precision) [in her animations], Thyes creates a pattern of relationship between attraction and rejection by means of the choreography of the image elements, the distortions and transformation of the individual forms into new images, all corresponding to the political history and cultural development of the two nations. Historical and economic aspects, as well as topological and cultural issues, form the broad framework within which the artist relates two flags, i.e., two states to each other. (...)

In her animations, Myriam Thyes develops a graphic language which while it clearly displays its derivation from the symbols and elements, also contains intrinsically artistic references. As such, her palette of distinct primary-based colours and the geometric composition of the image elements can be interpreted as an ironic cross-reference to concrete art, here as an ambiguous, critically questioning continuation of an artistic language based almost exclusively on geometric construction and the interplay of forms and clearly defined colouring.

By means of the moving image sequences, the vector graphics of Flash (TM) animations activated in certain rhythms of motion and time, the artist also poses questions concerning the interchangeability of these symbols. By developing new images from the existing, symbolic vocabulary of the flags, she distorts the meaning of these elements and at the same time generates new contents from them. In doing so, Myriam Thyes implicitly links on to the century-old handling of symbols of dominion and commemoration; she transfers the practice of cancellation and reshaping into a contemporary medium, but at the same time shifts focus within this action: flags are not replaced or exchanged, they are subjected to a transformation lasting a few minutes, during which the various facets and associations of these (formerly) identity-endowing symbols become visible in the form of intermediate images. (...)"