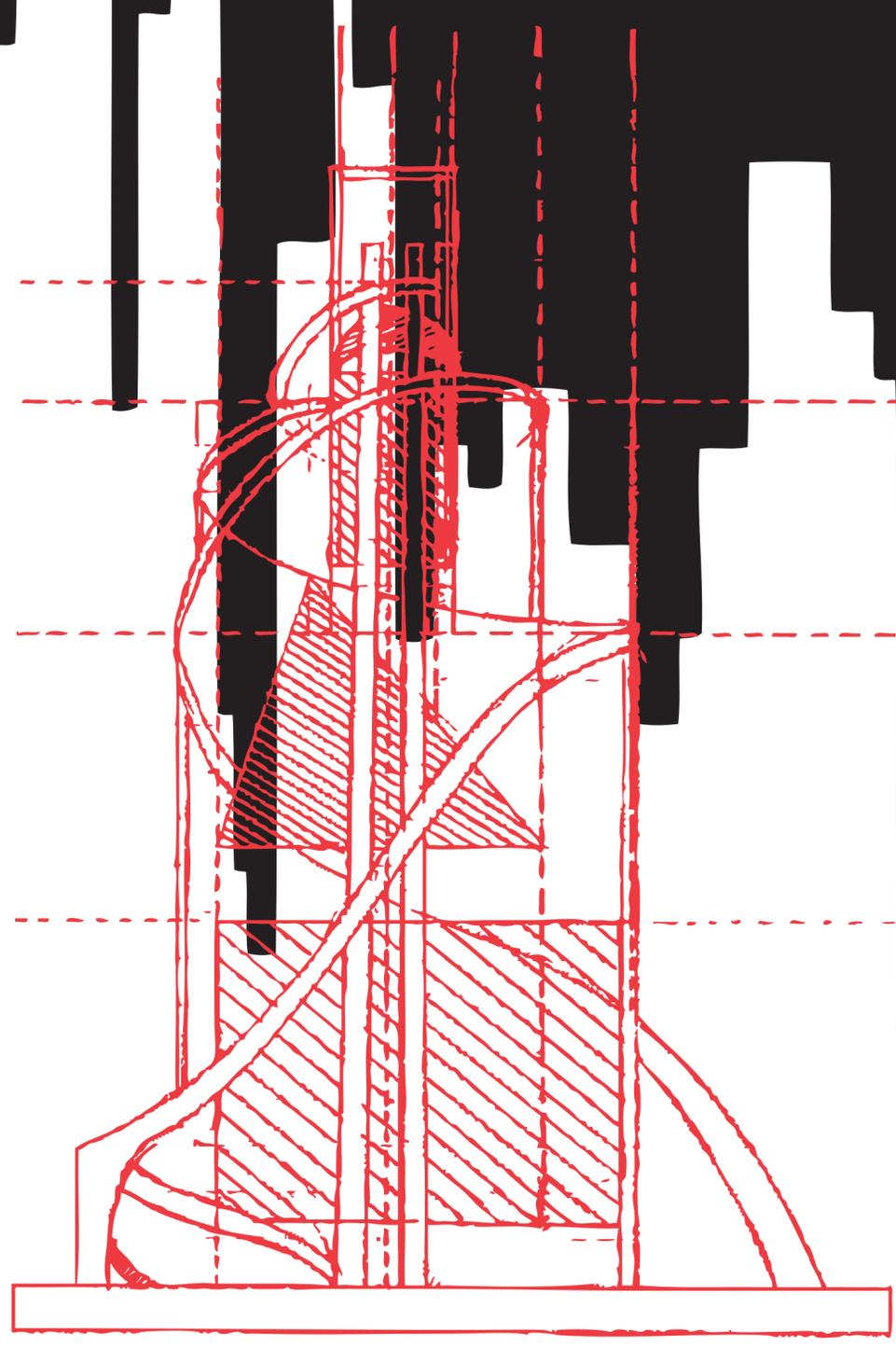


BROKE
N
GLISH



BROKE N GLISH

A city is in a permanent process of self-translation. City life demands that bridges be created for the coexistence of different communities within prescribed urban parameters, aspiring to an idea of "neutrality" that is tacitly agreed upon. This imperfect space of social interaction and communication is a fertile ground. It opens up a field of productive tension where all sorts of personal and collective encounters/misses/near-misses take place.

The expression "broken english"¹ reflects on the elasticity for negotiating public space in a culturally diverse urban setting—the moment of suspension of individual and group ideologies, cultural behaviors, moral attitudes, lifestyles, and beliefs when faced with *other* people on the streets.

Just like urban exchanges, "broken english" may be fragmented, incomplete, and/or marked by faulty syntax and inappropriate diction. English is a language, but "broken english" is a broken tool, in the best possible sense. It is not made-to-measure, instead it has to be constantly repurposed and made-to-function.

Broken English brings together a selection of historical critical writing, newly commissioned essays and other contributions by a group of more than 20 artists and writers that illustrate the complexity of this malleable urban field of possibilities, of encounters and negotiations at a pivotal moment, when there is a generalized climate of protest, and political actions in public space have taken center stage in cities throughout the world.

With contributions by:

Julieta Aranda, Joey Arias/Carlos Motta, Defne Ayas, Michael Baers, Sarnath Banerjee, Andy Bichlbaum, Julio Camba, Asli Çavuşoğlu, Carolina Caycedo, Samuel R. Delany, Jimmie Durham, Liam Gillick, Ashley Hunt, Adam Kleinman, Runo Lagomarsino, Yates McKee, Naeem Mohaiemen/Visible Collective, Carlos Motta, Shirin Neshat/RoseLee Goldberg, OWS Architecture Committee, Raqs Media Collective, Martha Rosler, Kim Turcot DiFruscia/Elizabeth Povinelli, Anton Vidokle/Andrei Monastyrski, Jeff Weintraub, and Carla Zaccagnini.

November, 2011

1. "Broken english" is a term used to denote a limited register of English used by a non-native speaker.

Broken English by Julieta Aranda and Carlos Motta
Available at Performa Hub and Performa11 venues
Downloadable at
<http://11.performa-arts.org/event/broken-english>
A Performa Project—Lead curator: Defne Ayas

About Performa 11

Performa 11 (November 1–21, 2011) is the fourth edition of the internationally acclaimed biennial of new visual art performance presented by Performa, the leading organization dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth-century art and to encouraging new directions in performance for the twenty-first century. www.performa-arts.org

◆ PERFORMA 11

OPEN LETTER

OCTOBER 20, 2011

I couldn't help but notice in the news this last month an interesting but small blip of narration. What had begun to be called "the American Fall," so as to suggest a connection with this year's "Arab Spring," was quickly replaced by "the American Autumn." Sure, lots of people use "fall" and "autumn" interchangeably, but it seemed to me that here, someone was paying attention to the power of naming things.

As the "OCCUPY" movement had begun to spread uncontrollably from lower Manhattan's Zucotti Park to cities throughout the country and much of the world, this seemed to reflect a concern for how the phrase, "the American Fall," might be perceived. I can imagine the members of the Press Club realizing that an "American fall" sounded one word-slip away from the "fall of America," and deciding they should instead choose the more awkward, albeit alliterative, "American Autumn."

Huey P. Newton, a co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in the mid-1960s, described power as "the ability to define phenomena and cause it to act in a desired manner." Newton's understanding of power seems clarifying here, not only in terms of this labeling of the current OCCUPY movements, but also in the political and economic analyses put forth by the movement(s) themselves, where the authority to define things like "class warfare," "the distribution of wealth," "the creation of wealth," "the role of the market," and "the 'we' who is actually served by our current political and economic system," seems to have shifted suddenly, and in some profound way.

If we consider this in relation to the recent statement of Republican strategist, Scott Reed, in the *New York Times*: "And that's the secret to politics: trying to control a segment of people without them recognizing that you're trying to control them," we see that Newton's insight is not only still relevant, but that the "phenomena" to which Newton refers — whose actions might be directed by the ways they're defined — includes people.

I don't know if any of you have been following these stories, if you've found the chance to attend an Occupation near to you, if you're for them or against them, but I see them as something worth thinking about for a few reasons:

(1) We never make our work in a vacuum; we make it in a world that is being actively made and remade by people all around us at all times; and if art is nothing else, it is the exercise of the right, and perhaps the duty, to participate in that remaking;

(2) In terms of what is happening in our world right now, I believe that the OCCUPY movements are one of the most significant conversations going on, one that will undoubtedly affect how our present will give way to our future, including the question of education and who gets to receive it;

(3) There are a number of things taking place within the OCCUPY movement relevant to us as artists, including this shift in the power of naming — the authority to define and describe, as I mentioned above. As artists, we exercise this power in what we make, contesting (explicitly or implicitly) how that power is used elsewhere.

Another thing we see in the OCCUPY movements, and which is closely related to this, is the idea of hegemony. I've found the rallying chant and slogan, "We are the 99%," to be quite powerful. It seems to hold a counter-hegemonic concept, offering a collective identification that contradicts the hegemony that has ruled U.S. political and economic thought for many decades. This hegemonic thought has asked the majority of us to identify with the wealthy and against the poor; it positions Wall Street and multi-national corporations as institutions of democracy and freedom, which directs us to protect the interests of the very wealthy by confusing those interests with our own. Here, as we are taught to identify with the rich, the poor are projected as the enemy against whom we should define ourselves (characterized as tax cheats, welfare cheats, immigration and border cheats, morality cheats, God-cheats, and so forth).

By contrast, the 99% offers a collective identification — a "we" — that spans everyone who is not among the top 1% of wealth-holders — a group that holds a near majority of our collective wealth. This allows us to dis-identify with the wealthiest rather than over-identify with them, and to end our dis-identification with the poor. While there is a lot to think through in what it means to suggest a sameness across so many diverse groups, classes of people and levels of privilege, the reconfigured "we" that it offers seems to be a powerful rhetorical figure, a position from which to speak that holds the possibility to reorganize a number of things in a counter-hegemonic way.

Another thing we often talk about is what art is supposed to do or has the potential to do, which we sometimes refer to as offering the possibility to be "otherwise." Our world is filled with rigid definitions that prepare our sense of what can be spoken, thought or accomplished, and art has the possibility to unsettle this rigidity. One of the main criticisms or questions that has been lodged against the occupation movement is their lack of a platform and specific demands, which has been critiqued from all ends of the political spectrum. But what I feel we lack most in today's political arena is a space outside of programs, platforms, campaigns and demands; outside the language that has already been formulated; a space where we might better define justice and have the chance to ask how it is we know what we think we know and better align what we want with what we need.

If the occupation movement had begun with a list of demands, then it would most likely be over already — the demands would be labeled reasonable or unreasonable, Democrat or Republican, and it would have been defined so as to minimize and vilify it as a "minority" interest. But by refusing to offer a predetermined political program to sign onto, it retains the possibility of a radical openness — open to new thinking and new people, new experience and new activity — much like what we value in art, and which, not so coincidentally, is what social movements require.

Yours sincerely,
Ashley

Ashley Hunt 47

The Picture of Homelessness

By the mid-1980s the dimensions of the problems of "homelessness" as it began to be called, were laid out in newspapers, on television, on talk shows. Americans recognized homelessness as a problem. But in general, attitudes toward homeless people have been changeable, myth-ridden, and not especially benevolent. The problem of homelessness, like all social problems, exists in a stream of representation; it hardly needs underlining that social meaning, particularly in a complex culture, is a matter of conflicting representations. The image of the homeless person has undergone several metamorphoses over the past couple of decades. Indeed, the homeless person was not thought of as a "victim of homelessness" or an instance of the homeless until the crystallization of this idea and the dissemination of the term in the early 1980s.

Homelessness, evictions, displaced populations, the destitute are a familiar feature of life in many different circumstances, from war to rural land grabs to the everyday life of the poor, but in the developed West, the waves of homelessness in earlier eras has different causes, such as enclosures in England and other real-estate maneuvers. In the postwar United States, however, building programs initiated and supported by the federal government, as well as economic booms, kept the number of homeless people small and generally swept under the rubric of "the poor."

In the recent past, people who visibly lived on the streets were labeled tramps, bums, vagrants, and derelicts, and Depression imagery prevailed. Such a person living in reduced circumstances was perceived as an alcoholic male transient of no particular race—though in fact he was overwhelmingly likely to be Caucasian. By the turn of the 1980s, this person was thought of as a deranged hebephrenic bag person, smelly and threatening, a person evicted from a state-run mental institution. Homeless women, primarily white, mentally distressed women above middle age—"bag ladies"—became a popularly recognized stereotype; Lucille Ball played one on television.

Soon, however, the image began metamorphosing to cover a more varied population, including displaced, primarily black, inner-city down-and-outers; then inner-city mothers and children; then refugees from the rust belt and the foreclosed family farm—now including family groups and now perceived as possibly white. When the media discovered the homeless, that latter group is whom they discovered; the single male (urban) homeless person, not to mention black homeless people, is often forgotten or desubjectivized. Similarly, the dimensions of female homelessness are lost in the consideration of single homeless women as either deranged (the black New Yorker in her forties calling herself "Billie Boggs" became celebrity-for-a-day in the late 1980s, addressing a Harvard audience before returning to the street, when she was the cause of a landmark legal decision preventing the forced incarceration of homeless people in shelters or mental facilities), as mothers, or as prostitutes and therefore as either crack-addicted or a source of HIV infection.

Like the HIV-infected person, the homeless person is a specter of the age (the herpes-infected provided an early prototype), a figure manipulable as a concentrated representation of the paranoia no longer justifiable through recourse to the Red Menace or the earlier Yellow Peril. Like the HIV-infected person, the homeless person is sometimes "deserving" of pity and charity, but these tender sentiments are apparently revocable. As a young, white, privileged person remarks about the homeless in a videotape, "Well, maybe they used to be people..."



Polls report majorities agreeing with the suggestion that the State ought to do something about the problem of homelessness, even if it means increased taxes, but polling consensus are notoriously fragile and capricious. In the United States, as in Thatcherite England, although homelessness is perceived as a social threat and even perhaps as a moral evil—a sore on the body politic—the trend toward privatization and the arguably postmodern inability to ascertain or locate a public sphere have made the middle classes, themselves financially squeezed by stagnant wages, reluctant to call on the State for solutions.

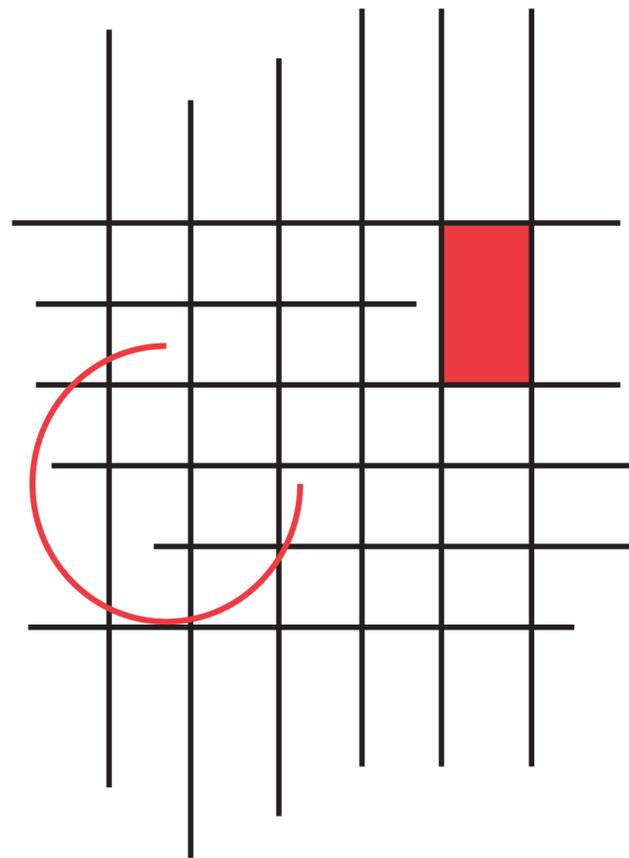
Something on the order of half of those who have been made homeless in the past decade are children—over all, 39.5 percent of the nation's poor are children, and this proportion is increasing steadily—and children seem the least able to cope with the psychic trauma of dislocation and stigmatization, as researchers like Dr. Ellen Bassuk and others have documented. But the fact that these families—most headed by single women—and these children are predominantly black and brown, combined with an officially supported weariness over the apparent intractability of "social problems," has mitigated the responses of mainstream America. In this context, racism is proving to be durable, powerful, and politically useful. It provided a basic subtext of Reaganism, and with the manipulation of the specter of the black rapist in the person of one Willie Horton, it helped elect George Bush.

Racism, again, has helped justify purely fictional solutions to the burgeoning problems of drugs, crime, homelessness, and AIDS, which exacerbate rather than alleviate what they seek to address. Rather than seriously attacking the problem of homelessness—rather than a war on homelessness—the State has chosen to mobilize against drugs, embodying the military metaphor literally. Pulling triggers depends on a military-industrial-academic complex already in place. It allows for ideological mobilization of the total society in a spectacle of participation in keeping with the punitive and bellicose spirit of the age. So far the war on drugs has succeeded in replacing "poverty and homelessness" with "drugs"—perceived as a threat emanating from the darkness of the ghettos and the jungles of the Third World—as the answer to the polling question about America's worst problems.

Mainstream America, especially its city dwellers, after a decade of howls from everyone—whether householder or small-business owner or corporate head or city or state official—about economic slips, slides, and shortfalls, have become inured to the perpetual crisis of those black inner-city residents whose prospects of ascending the economic ladder are so slim that they have been consigned to the specially invented category of "underclass." And in the past decade we have become similarly inured to the presence of people living on the streets, accepting the tirelessly repeated excuse that there is simply not enough money to solve any of their problems or that they have brought them on themselves, through some characterological (or worse, racial) flaws. Even the discreet charity of those who wish to help, such as those who included rooms for homeless people in newly constructed public libraries, means that we have accepted the inevitability of this population. But why should we accept the failure of the State to care for the destitute?

¹ Kevin Phillips, *The Politics of Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath*, (New York, Random House, 1990)

FRAGMENTS



FRAGMENTS

OF A METROPOLITAN

VIEWPOINT

(fragments
of)

Martha Rosler

Walk through any city. These days you are likely to see people living in its streets, no matter how clean, stylish, well swept. And, interestingly, in many sites in the advanced capitalist world, the dramatic increase in homelessness has occurred even without massive State disinvestment. In discovering this inescapable fact, one has to ask how such a thing could be happening—particularly now, as the Western mass media are gloating over the collapse of the Soviet model of communism and the putative victory of “our way of life”? And why are we—at least we, here, in the US—putting up with it (or allowing it to happen, colluding with it)? And what can be done?

During the 1980s, the trend toward population loss by US cities was reversed, and the middle class began to return in what was dubbed an “urban renaissance” by its boosters. But the beneficiaries of this renaissance often did not include those already there. Urban cycles of decline, decay, and abandonment, followed by rebirth through rehabilitation, renovation, and reconstruction, may appear to be natural processes. In fact, however, the fall and rise of cities are consequent not only on financial and productive cycles and State fiscal crises but also on social policy. A great deal of housing stock formerly available for rent in city neighborhoods was sold through the newly popular “condominium conversion”—often supported by tax breaks. Other forms of housing also disappeared, through other processes, such as abandonment by landlords and the cessation of public-housing building programs.

As the cost of city housing soared, central cities became sites of increasing immiseration. The displacement of the poor, supported by a number of other social factors and State policies, resulted in a great number of people having nowhere to live. Some doubled or tripled up with friends and relatives in already cramped apartments, and other simply found themselves out on the streets. As Peter Marcuse has commented, homelessness has three related causes: the profit structure of housing; the distribution of income; and government policy.



The Big Picture: Economics and Policy

Capital concentration masquerading as free-market economics triumphed with the election of Ronald Reagan, who presided over rapid and massive social disinvestment, seemingly made urgent by a gigantic budgetary deficit. This “big picture,” the meaning of Reagan’s election, provides the fuller story of the production of homelessness. Although Reagan had early referred to the shrinking of the social budget in the language of authoritarian paternalism, speaking of shrinking the children’s allowance to prevent them from spending on things Daddy disapproves of, the mainstream press cravenly neglected to explore until Reagan left office (and then only briefly) the ways in which the Reagan administration had engineered the stupendous deficit and pursued many other policies, with the guiding advice of the Heritage Foundation, precisely to destroy what remained of the welfare state.

Greed turns out to be an effective cover. The valorization in the Reagan years of the man in the gray flannel suit, in previous decades regarded as not merely untrustworthy but as hollow and abysmally boring, helped pave the way for the massive transfer of wealth. After the 1986 tax reforms—welcomed by all, rich and poor, Republicans and Democrats—the Congressional Budget Office reported that the poorest tenth of households would pay 20 percent more of their 1988 income in federal taxes than they did a decade earlier, whereas the richest 10 percent would pay almost 20 percent less.

Congress estimated that by the end of the 1980s, 71.7 percent of the nation’s wealth was held by the richest 10 percent of families; the remaining 90 percent held 28.2 percent of the wealth. Homes are the major source of wealth for most Americans. If their value is excluded from these figures, the concentration is even greater, with the richest 10 percent owning 83.2 percent of all private wealth and the remaining 90 percent owning 16.7 percent.

The “feminization of poverty” was a phrase made resonant in the decade. Women are still at the bottom of the economic ladder, women of color are poorer than white women, and woman-headed households fill the rolls below the poverty line. The growing inequality of household income was paralleled by a growing inequality of wage distribution

in a period in which executive compensation began to exhibit unprecedented gigantism. According to Kevin Phillips’, while the average production worker’s pay increased from just under \$13 thousand to \$21.7 thousand between 1978 and 1988, the pay of chief executives jumped from \$373 thousand to \$773 thousand. Over the past 20 years, executive pay jumped from 25 to 36 times that of hourly production workers.

Throughout the Reagan decade, the minimum wage stayed at its 1981 level and real income declined to the level of the mid-1960s—but now requiring two workers per household to generate it. Public assistance rolls were brutally cut (some of these cuts have now been belatedly ruled illegal), and many of those eligible for assistance had their benefits cut and restored; cut and restored, in a cynical process called churning.

Protracted Congressional hearings revealed that during the Reagan decade the federal agency of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) improperly directed billions of dollars toward well-connected, primarily Republican, developers. During the decade as well, the federal government got out of the business of building housing. Federal funds for low-income public-housing construction were cut from 37 billion in 1981 to 16 billion in 1985 to 7 billion in 1988, accompanied by a hot propaganda campaign against public housing and its inhabitants. The burden of housing and other social services was shifted to the states, with funding through “block grants,” but the inevitable result was property-tax revolt and revenue shortfalls.

The savings-and-loan scandal that appears to have no end shares with the HUD scandal a virtual lack of interest from the public, despite the sizable sums that each member of the public will pay to accomplish the bailout. The bailout, now estimated in the trillions, will make the purchase of homes more difficult, because interest rates will be higher and mortgage money scarcer. It has been estimated as well that 10 to 20 billion dollars was wasted in fraudulent real-estate sales related to the S & L scandal. The possible uses to which these monies could have been put include the taboo solution of giving money to the poor, improving their prospects, as well as rebuilding the cities’ crumbling infrastructure, and building or rehabilitating dwellings for the poor and the homeless.

The Production of Homelessness

Gentrification requires, perforce, a process of disinvestment before reinvestment takes place. Under whatever rubric, the process involves not only the withdrawal of monetary support on the part of the private sector, including both landlords and banks (in a policy called red-lining), but also the withdrawal of city services, including but not limited to fire protection, hospital services, and schools, and road maintenance and repair. Numerous observers, including Roderick Wallace, have described these procedures as set in motion by New York City to hasten the decay of the South Bronx, procedures denoted by various euphemisms from “triage” to “planned shrinkage” to “spatial deconcentration.” Although it isn’t apparent what the “final solution” for this devastated area is to be, the reigning metaphor for hopeful city agencies is that of a blank slate or a virgin landscape on which a glorious Enterprise Zone will be inscribed.

In many center cities, these processes of decline, disinvestment, and abandonment took place throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The protracted crisis of capital of the 1970s onward, which occurred primarily in the productive sector, made real-estate investment more attractive over most of this period—at least until fairly recently. In some areas, capital reinvestment began in the late 1970s, and the term “gentrification” was invented to cover the conversion of decaying working-class and in some cases industrial areas to residences—often bought rather than rented—of the professional and managerial class.

As capital has centralized in the hands of fewer and fewer corporate entities, it has spread these processes around the world. Professional-managerial—as opposed to clerical or secretarial—employment has become increasingly centralized in Western cities, creating a cordon of similarly professional support services. Executives, lawyers, consultants, and so on, wind up living and engaging in leisure activities nearby. At the same time, poor workers, typically including undocumented workers from this or that country, are also concentrated in the center city, providing essential services. Increasingly, however, rents take up larger and larger percentages of people’s incomes, which hits low-income people hardest. If nothing else, this renders official definitions of “the poverty line” inadequate because based on a period, about 30 years ago, when rents consumed much less of the average wage.

Condominium conversion includes a postmodern fetish for the ransacking not only of historical styles but also of history—for the conversion of public spaces to private residences. If New York City’s former police headquarters can be made into condos, then surely crumbling old downtown hotels can be converted as well. Such hotels—whether built as SRO’s or single-room occupancy, hotels, to house transient male workers and wanderers and finally alcoholics in downtown “skid rows” or pressed into such service after suffering decay—are now being emptied and returned to the market at the service of another class entirely. (Sometimes, between decay and conversion, such hotels house the homeless, at baroquely extortionate cost to the cities footing the bill.) In New York City alone, over 100,000 such SRO rooms have been lost since the mid-1970s. The city’s effort to halt such conversion was ended by court decision in 1989, in protection of landlords’ right to dispose of property as they choose. There is simply no place for many of SRO tenants—which include a significant number of indigent old women—to go, other than the street.

The great expansion of the number of people living on the streets everywhere, in suburbs as well as center cities, then, is the net result of the runaway shops, of the shift of the economy from productive industry to nonproductive financial and real-estate industries, of the growing income gap between rich and poor, and of the wave upon wave of gentrification.

The numbers of the homeless in America, estimated by advocates at perhaps three million, is a matter of contestation—it is very difficult even to develop criteria for homelessness: is it voluntary or involuntary?; is it long-term or temporary?; if temporary, how long do you have to be addressless before you are counted?—let alone to develop counting schemas. The ideological fight over the number of homeless has been initiated by conservatives, to make them seem fewer in number. Currently their efforts—as represented by the *New York Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* and sometimes even the *New York Times*—center on blaming the victim, attempting to tie homelessness to severe social dysfunction, manifested as alienation (yes! the homeless are stigmatized for having remarkably few close family ties, as though the conditions of adversity that constitute and condition homelessness were not ample cause for the weakening of social bonds) and drug taking, and no doubt low self-esteem, thus classically substituting effects for causes. The *New York Post*, for example—owned by a real-

estate developer—editorialized: “The notion that homelessness is an economic problem—a result of a lack of affordable housing...is plainly false. Families that linger on in shelters generally do so for reasons that have less to do with lack of money than profound social dysfunction—ignorance, drug addiction, apathy” (Oct. 8, 1989). The official view on homelessness was articulated by Ronald Reagan, in a sort of exit interview with David Brinkley in December 1988, in which he opined that people sleep on grates because they like it.

Many agencies and religious groups, relying largely on the work of volunteers, tend to the needs of homeless people. But even the best, most meticulous of these efforts are precarious. Furthermore, they can hardly empower “the homeless” as a group. The homeless are not a constituency, and even though activists and organizers in the United States have actually won for them the right to vote, the homeless population is neither homogeneous nor at this point particularly organizable—though in various places, including New York City, homeless people have formed unions and organized themselves in other, more ad hoc groupings. But this is a population that is constantly changing and constantly the subject of disinformation campaigns as well as brutal pseudo-solutions that drain away personal energy and interrupt efforts at collective self-empowerment. Despite some suggestions, the homeless are not an armed insurgency waiting to be born.

La ciudad automática

Julio Camba,
1932

Chapter XVIII Black Spain

From 110 Street to 116 Street, between Fifth and Eighth Avenues, it could be said that we are in Spain. It's something of a black Spain, for sure, but it's a true Spain, thanks to the language, the character and the general attitude people there have toward life. Look at the store displays and the illuminated signs: *Dr. Roque, cirujano dentista* [surgeon dentist], *Pastelería de Simon* [Simon's Pastry Shop], *Campoamor, Comidas y bebidas* [Campoamor: meals and beverages], *Librería Sanjurjo* [Sanjurjo Bookstore], *Librería Cervantes* [Cervantes Bookstore], *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* [Our Lady of Guadalupe], *La flor asturiana* [The Asturian flower], *El patio* [The backyard], *Teatro de San Jose, Billares Rodriguez*. There can be no doubt that this is Spain, and only a petty, provincial spirit would fail to recognize this. It is the great Spain, the great Spain where the sun still doesn't set, in short, the Hispanic Spain.

ber of paintings, vaguely resembling those of Solano, represent our friars from the inquisitorial age engaged in their favorite activities, like hanging old people upside down in the chimney of the fireplace to cure them by smoke, searing with red-hot iron the breasts of pretty adulteresses, roasting new born babies on a spit, etc. etc.

The Spaniard who arrives to New York and runs into these paintings is likely to grab a quill and send an indignant letter to the newspapers in Madrid, arguing that the US is deliberately slandering us. But there's nothing of the sort. It's just one more of these store fronts in NY devoted to the sale of quick, violent and cheap thrills. Ten cents a thrill. When prohibition started, these places more or less substituted bars, and people went to the to get the same kind of stimulus they used to get from a glass of gin or a shot of whisky, and even though nowadays everybody drinks, it doesn't really matter. New York needs more emotions every day. The ads for gangster films promise "a thrill a minute". Unfortunately, gangster films don't excite anyone here any more, since everyone is so accustomed not just to the artistic fiction, but to the reality of industrialized crime. So if some businessman has found a way to make some money off the Spanish Inquisition, are we going to assume that the US hates us?

The idea that the US hates us is about just as accurate as the also popular notion that the US adores us. If instead of encountering those pictures of the Inquisition, the Spaniard who has just arrived to the New York, runs into one of those restaurants called Granada, Valencia, Chateau Sevilla, Alcazar, etc, he might adopt the second hypothesis, that Americans adore Spain. Some terra cotta roof tiles at the entrance, inspired by the California missions; some wrought iron; a calf's head, not on the menu (where, a la vinagreta, it would be most appealing), but rather on the

wall, pretending to be a bull's head. Castanets. Waitresses, supposed to be morenas, are mulatas, just to be sure. Combs. Mantillas. Spanish yellow rice; chile con carne, frijoles negros, gallegan broth or caldo gallego, etc, etc. All with background music from Carmen, performed by a band of blacks dressed up like bullfighters.

The owner of one of these places is an American woman of Irish descent, Miss MacDougal, who owns a chain of exotic restaurants in New York, which excuses some of her equivocations, like, for example, having people eat an Asturian fabada while listening to the strains of the Bulgarian national anthem. In general, though, these places are run by Greeks who are in control of the food business. So, just because a compatriot from Venielos gives you a Nicaraguan dish in a more or less Californian place in New York, are you going to think that Spain is in fashion in the US?

The truth in all this, the sad and painful truth, is that the US neither adores us nor hates us; that the museum of the Inquisition is meaningless; as is the Chateau Sevilla. The truth is that for America, Spain will always be a confusing mix of the Inquisition, arroz con pollo, the Catholic Kings, General Sandino, Seville, Antofogasta, Salvador de Madariaga, la Pastora Imperio, bullfights, rumba, Christopher Columbus, and Sir Nice to Alcala Zamora.



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FIRE

WE BELIEVE in the necessity of the democratic process. Records are open to scrutiny, elections are open to members, and ideas are open to criticism—so that people might govern themselves.



THE WEIRD RED

THING:

#OccupyWallStreet, Site-Specificity, and di Suvero's Joie de Vivre

"As much as we must insist on there being material conditions for public assembly and public speech, we have also to ask how it is that assembly and speech reconfigure the materiality of public space, and produce, or reproduce, the public character of that material environment."

—Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street"

#OccupyWallStreet cannot be reduced to a finite or fixed location; it is a relational geography of political conflict at local, national, and planetary scales. For this reason, #OccupyWallStreet (#OWS, for short) should in principle always be supplemented with a Twitter hashtag to indicate the fact that it circulates as an open-ended injunction—"occupy!"—threaded through a shifting mediatic assemblage of technologies, words, images, sites, and bodies throughout the city, the nation, and beyond.¹ On the other hand, in its first month #OWS has clearly been inseparable from its precarious spatial anchoring at what is variously called Zuccotti Park, Liberty Plaza, or Liberty Square, situated a few blocks north of the Wall Street stock exchange (which is itself merely one node—albeit a highly symbolic one—in the broader geography of global capitalism). The very instability of the name ("Liberty Square" is the nomenclature officially used on the website of www.occupywallstreet.org) indicates that a kind of symbolic political articulation is at work that aims to inscribe the site into an expanded series of other histories and locations throughout the world proactively responding to the crises of neoliberalism including the UC system, Tahrir Square in Egypt, Plaza del Sol in Spain, Syntagma Square in Greece, the Wisconsin State House, and Oscar Grant Park in Oakland. Thus, one could say that *the physical site of Liberty Square has been a necessary but insufficient condition for #OWS*. By extension, the human bodies that have encamped themselves in alliance at the physical site are necessary but insufficient in their corporeality relative to the cameras, computers, screens, structures, and other media through which the occupation has entered into the realm of what Judith Butler has recently called, following Hannah Arendt, "the space of public appearance."²

Among the media practices helping to sustain both the public visibility and the corporeal occupation of Liberty Square has been *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*, a *detournement* of the infamous newspaper of record for the corporate elite available in both digital and printed form.³ The first issue of *OWSJ* featured a helpful map of the emerging spatial configuration of the occupied park, laying out the rudiments of what by the end of October had become a micro-urban settlement replete with functional infrastructures at once biopolitical (tents, kitchen, sanitation, medical care) and communicative (the general assembly, the people's library, various projection screens, the PR center). Featured on the lower right-hand corner of this rudimentary map from early October, there was a red site-marker annotated simply with the words "weird red thing." For anyone visiting or indeed living in Liberty Square, this otherwise obscure cartographic marker would of course be keyed to the soaring 70-foot tall abstract steel sculpture dominating the horizon line of the eastern edge of the park on Broadway. As media coverage by both new outlets as well as citizen journalists increased, bits and pieces of the red thing began to show up on the background of on-site photographs, videos, and newscasts.

The weird red thing is otherwise known as Mark di Suvero's *Joie de Vivre* (*The Joy of Life*). In art historical terms, it exemplifies a tradition of highly conservative modernist public sculpture designed primarily as a decorative aesthetic amenity for nominally public, or often "private-public" spaces such as Zuccotti Park. *Joie de Vivre* is in many ways the antithesis of what we now understand as "site-specific" artwork. Think, for instance of Richard Serra's famous *Tilted Arc*, designed specifically as a sculptural incision into the space of 26 Federal Plaza; after it was attacked by right-wing media outlets for destroying the supposed integrity and harmony of the plaza, it was proposed that the sculpture simply be relocated to another site. Serra's famous response was to say that "to remove the work is to destroy it," given that the work was not an object, but rather a relation set up between object, the site, and the viewer.⁴ By contrast, *The Joy of Life* was created in 1998 and originally installed at the entrance of the Holland Tunnel; it was relocated to its current site in 2006 after the latter was reconstructed in the wake of the September 11th attacks and renamed Zuccotti Park (after a member of the board of Brookfield Properties, the private owner of the nominally public space).⁵ The sculpture was placed in this context as a generic visual icon of monumental strength or endurance, on the one hand, and grace, vitality, and redemption on the other—with little formal relation to the actual geography of the park. The sculpture is comprised of two interlocking tripods, one of which anchors the work to the ground while the other is inverted and extends into the sky. From a distance, the sculpture draws out a diagonal "x" formation that evokes at once a construction-site as well as a vaguely anthropomorphic figure that seems to signal to the viewer. As one gets closer to it however, the anthropomorphism mutates into a more general biomorphism as one notes that the work has three "legs" which form a kind of an open proscenium area directly underneath the interlocking compositional core of the sculpture.

Many discussions were had among artists and others in the early days of the occupation about what, if anything, could be done with this inadvertent sculptural resident of the occupied park. Despite his formal conservatism as a sculptor, di Suvero in the past had professed sympathies with social movements, even installing a second iteration of his "Peace Tower" at the Whitney Biennial in 2006. Perhaps he could be called upon to reclaim his sculpture as a kind of artistic autonomous zone relative to the regulations of the park; perhaps the structure could be retrofitted with shelter technologies, amplification devices, or banners otherwise unpermitted by the Zuccotti park regulations? Calls to his studio went unanswered, and an inconvenient fact was noted: his wife is Kate Levin, the Bloomberg Administration's Commissioner of Cultural Affairs. As an exemplary member of the "1%" targeted by #OWS, Bloomberg has barely been able to contain his hostility to the occupation, with only the endurance of bodies, sympathetic media coverage, and local political pressure having prevented the mayor's eviction of the park in mid-October under the biopolitical auspices of "sanitation." In other words, #OWS has thus far proven a bit too close for comfort in biographical and professional terms to di Suvero himself as an artist.

The sculpture itself, however, is a different matter. Few people had ever taken notice of the *Joie de Vivre* as anything other than an aesthetic bauble prior to the occupation and the rechristening of Zuccotti Park as Liberty Square. Yet with this recoding of the site, the monumental object has indeed begun to take on a kind of surreal quality, appearing less as a piece of modernist sculpture than as a kind of alien creature bearing witness to—and perhaps even helping to sustain—the world-historical events taking place all around it.

THE WEIRD RED THING

Indeed, the re-designation of *Joie de Vivre* as the "weird red thing" is analogous to the overall detouring of the space of the park itself; the sculpture has been exposed to new unofficial uses: signs have been posted on it; occupiers and journalists have climbed up the legs to get a better vantage on the General Assembly; marches have used it as a departure point, speeches and performances have been undertaken in the minimal proscenium created by the legs (including a ceremonial dance by Native American activists on Columbus day, who recalled that "Wall Street" originally referred to a wall constructed by European colonists to protect their settlements from the original inhabitants of the island). In other words, the generic modernist vitalism implied by the sculpture's sentimental title and *biomorphic* composition have been transcoded into the *biopolitical* networks of the occupied park. This is perhaps most poetically demonstrated in the way in which the sculpture—soaring, monumental, vertical, permanent, unified—has been democratically dismembered, fragmented and dispersed across the internet by its inadvertent inclusion in thousands upon thousands of photographs that have been taken at the park over the past month. Few if any photographs have been taken of the sculpture for its own sake over the past month; and even were one to attempt such a thing, traces of the occupation would inevitably intrude. Even looking skyward through the cantilevered crux of the sculpture, one is likely to see a police helicopter idling above as it surveils the occupation. Ironically, then, a work of sculpture that in formal terms resists the principle of site-specificity has become in a single month one of the most photographed pieces of modern art in all of history—not for its own sake, but for precisely the mediagenic site it has found itself to inhabit. Aleatory fragments, these photographs deconstruct the vertical monumentality of the sculpture, releasing it into the horizontal networks of the "99%" like an authorless, anonymous montage.⁶ The sculpture, in other words, becomes a kind of commons. While often appearing in an incidental and unintentional manner, the disjointed lines and shapes of the networked photo-sculpture are not just background scenery; an "optical unconscious" of the occupation, they will forever mark in an utterly singular manner the transformation of Zuccotti Park into Liberty Square in the Fall of 2011, as New York City was inscribed into a planetary cycle of global democratization. If and when the site of the park is forcibly restored to its "proper" use as a zone of leisure and recreation, *Joie de Vivre*—or rather *Joie de Vivre*—will remain a kind of historical counter-memorial threaded throughout the global archives of the internet, evoking piece by piece, fragment by fragment, the memory of a movement for which Liberty Square may have been only the first of many biopolitical laboratories in New York and beyond.

As this essay goes to print in late October, the proscenium of *Joie de Vivre* has just been enclosed by police barricades, and officers have been stationed around it. The barricades are marked with signs from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the apparent justification is to "protect" the sculpture from being defaced or damaged by occupiers. The #OWS Arts and Culture Committee is already at work on a campaign to challenge this small but significant act of spatial enclosure. The enclosure of the sculpture is a potentially ominous sign. Indeed, the rubric of "protection" is one that could still at any minute be invoked by Bloomberg regarding Liberty Square itself if the fragile balance of political forces in the neighborhood and the city overall were to shift. Recognizing the precariousness of the site-specific encampment requires that we think about what forms "occupation" might take in the future, with or without a symbolic nerve center such as Liberty Square.

¹ See Nathan Schneider's discussion of the early development of #occupywallstreet. "On July 13 *Adbusters* magazine sent out a call to its 90,000-strong list proclaiming a Twitter hashtag (#OccupyWallStreet) and a date, September 17. It quickly spread among the mostly young, tech-savvy radical set, along with an especially alluring poster the magazine put together of a ballerina atop the Charging Bull statue, the financial district's totem to testosterone." Schneider is in fact very careful to point out that *Adbusters* did not originate the movement, which in local terms emerged most proximately out of the Bloombergville anti-austerity encampments organized earlier in the summer by the People's General Assembly on the Budget Cuts. "From Occupy Wall Street to Occupy Everywhere," *The Nation* (October 11, 2011) <http://www.thenation.com/article/163924/occupy-wall-street-occupy-everywhere>

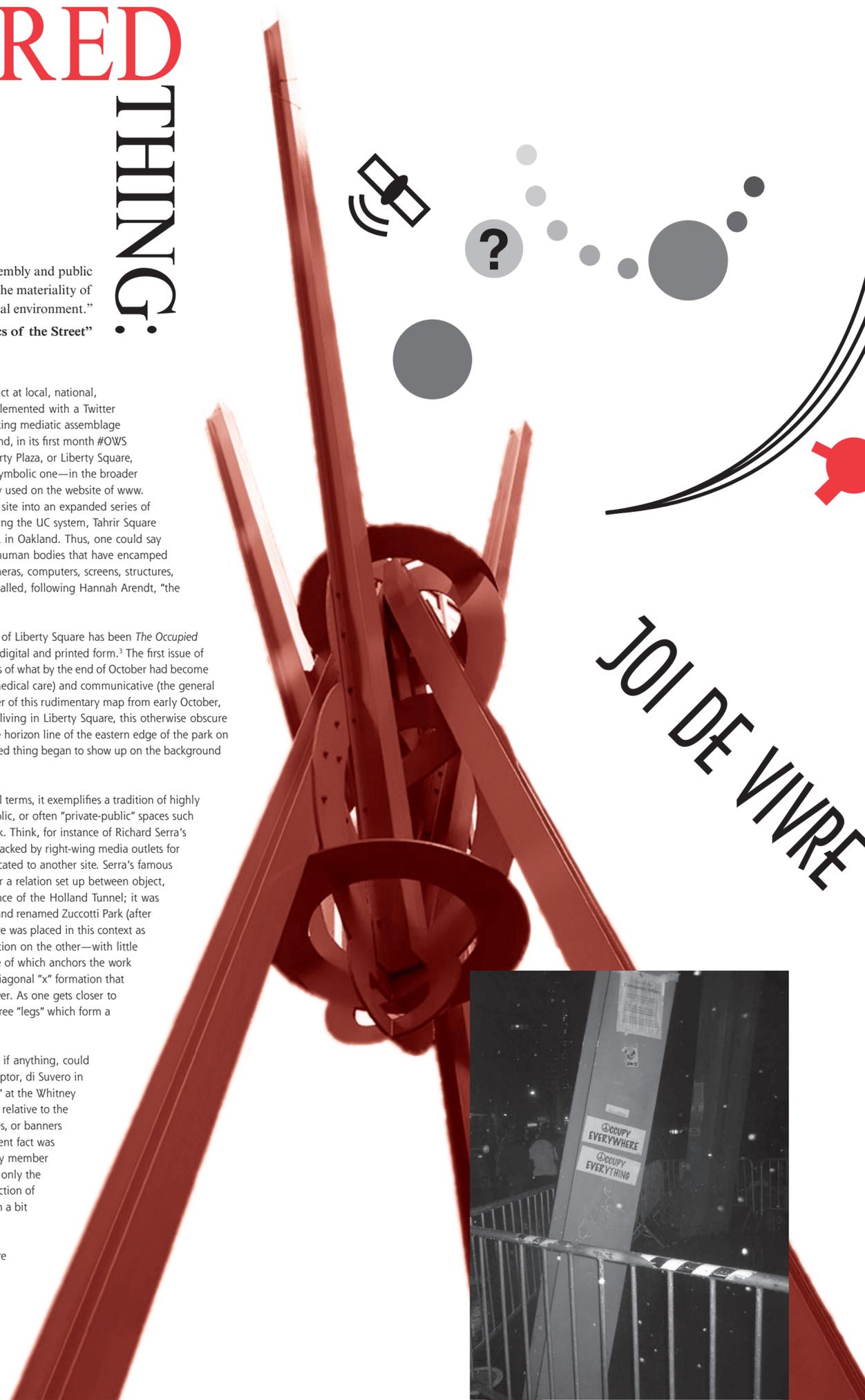
² See Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," September 7, 2011 available at <http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en>

³ Available at <http://occupiedmedia.org>

⁴ See Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT, 2002), 5. For a text that is key to understanding the spatial and aesthetic politics of #occupywallstreet, see Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, MIT, 1996).

⁵ For a helpful explication of the historical background and vexed legal status of "privately owned public spaces," in light of #ows, see Jerold S. Kayden, "Meet Me at the Plaza," *New York Times* (October 19th) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/20/opinion/zuccotti-park-and-the-private-plaza-problem.html>.

⁶ On the relationship between photography and sculpture, see Roxana Marcoci, ed. *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839-Today* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010).



FORECASTS

Defne Ayas

On February 18, 1879, the French sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi (1834-1904) earned US Patent #11,023 for a “Design for a Statue.” This statue, “Liberty Enlightening the World,” would become one of the most famous monuments of world history. His work was greatly influenced by the ancient sculptor Phidias who made gigantic statues of ancient goddesses, particularly Athena, the goddess of wisdom and war strategy, and Nemesis, a goddess of indignation against, and retribution for, evil deeds and undeserved good fortune, who held a cup in her right hand for divine retribution against those who succumb to hubris.

Prior to building the Statue of Liberty —another goddess representation with her sun-ray spikes— Bartholdi was seeking a commission to construct a giant statue of winged Egyptian goddess supreme Isis holding a torch overlooking the Suez Canal.

The Statue was inaugurated in 1886. Emma Lazarus’ verses were inscribed on it in 1903.

The reading below entails six cards, three dedicated to goddesses, and three to their friends with wings. The first in homage to Isis and Statue of Liberty, the latter as a nod to economist Milton Friedman, who once famously concluded: “Is it really true that political self-interest is nobler somehow than economic self-interest? I think you’re taking a lot of things for granted. Just tell me where in the world you find these angels who are going to organize society for us?”

I.

First card: *Goddess Diana - Focused Intention*

Keep your unwavering thoughts, feelings and actions focused on your target, and you will make your mark for this condition. Take some time to think thoroughly about what you truly want and then ask for help in staying the course along the path. Tenacity means sticking to a decision and not allowing outside forces to sway you. Imagine yourself to be like a mighty oak tree, with your roots deeply planted into the ground. Feel your solid strength and steady upward growth. Know that, no matter what happens, you will succeed! Your branches may twist and turn as you flex toward the light, yet your unwavering intentions will ensure that nothing will sway you from your mission.

II.

Second card: *Past-Life Issue - recent past...*

...is clearly pointing out that you’ve been thinking a lot lately about this situation. As all situations do, this too presents opportunities for growth. However one must remember the recent histories, traumas, experiences or vows that have caused the current condition. It is important to resolve these past experiences because they are usually charged with strong emotions and are often healed by forgiveness. As in truth, only the present moment exists (containing the energy imprints of everything that happened in the past and all potential events of the future), it is possible to apply forgiveness to past events now and experience positive changes in the present. It is equally important to sever any ties to vows of suffering as such vows can extend and have powerful effects in this and future lifetimes. So, ask guidance to someone like the Divine wizard, Razel, who is believed to know all of the secrets of the Universe and how it operates.

IV.

Fourth card: *Base Chakra*

Affirm your desires as already being a reality, and avoid worry – or any discussion that casts you in a “victim” role. Since every worry is a prayer, drawing to you that which you’re worrying about, notice and replace worries with prayers and affirmations. For instance, picture the situation being completely resolved. Boost your faith and confidence, which are two magical ingredients in conscious manifestation.

The base chakra (sometimes called the “root chakra”), located at the bottom of your spinal column, is the centre that governs your feelings about your material needs.

*The messages contained on this page are not to be substituted for professional, medical or psychiatric advice, treatment or counseling. All textual content are of informative nature only and should be used at the reader’s discretion. The writer assumes no responsibility for the actions of the readers. Special thanks to Mrs. Virtue, PhD.

QUESTION: Is there a pre-revolutionary condition present in the world?



“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door”

III.

Third card: *Aeraecura -points out to the present moment*

You are just getting started, so have patience with yourself and don’t give up. In many ways, you are like a flower bud who is ripe and ready to open and grow. Don’t try to rush this process, as it’s part of your path. Enjoy learning new skills. Take your time to gather ideas. Keep Faith. Aeraecura is a goddess who loves to multitask, and she was worshipped in ancient times as a life-death-rebirth deity. She is devoted to blossoming, and helps us put our goals and challenges into perspective so that we don’t needlessly stress ourselves. Call upon her for manifesting supply. She’s especially fond of assisting artists and inventors. Though the goddess herself may be Celtic, it is open to question whether the name is of Celtic origin or even Indo-European. You can find her in a statue at Oberseebach, Switzerland and in several magical texts from Austria, her Representations are most commonly found in the Danubian area of Southern Germany and Slovenia, but they also occur in Italy, Great Britain, and France. The theonym is also of unclear origin. It has been connected with Latin aes, aeris “copper, bronze, money, wealth”, era “mistress”.

V.

Fifth card: *Mother Mary - Expect a Miracle (Immediate Future)*

Without trust and faith, the future looks very frightening. Please don’t give up hope on yourself or other people. Be the light that eliminates someone else’s gloomily hopelessness as well. For as you make others stronger, you are strengthening the entire world.

Various meanings of this card: Let go of worrisome thoughts * Keep your thoughts positive * Notice and follow any guidance you may receive * Continue engaging with life and your immediate surroundings.

VI.

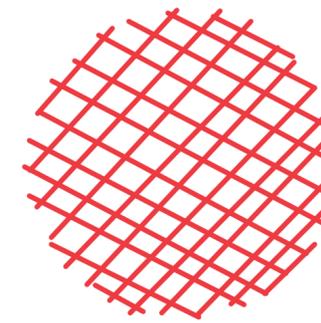
Sixth card: *Crown Chakra*

This card is a message to clear your energy centre, which governs your ability to tap into the Universe’s collective wisdom. This card is asking you to trust and follow your recent ideas, as they are the answers you’ve been seeking for. You already know the truth and the best course of action to take. Trust this knowingness, and take appropriate action. When you honour your ideas, the Universe reciprocates by sending you additional support while you make healthy life changes. Your crown chakra can become blocked if you dismiss your inner thoughts as wishful thinking or common knowledge. Remember that all ingenious ideas begin as daydreams that turn into wonderful inventions.

Archangel Uriel is the angel of Divine wisdom and knowledge, providing assistance in boosting your belief and faith in the ideas that come to you. Uriel warned Noah of the impending flood, and he helped the prophet Ezra to interpret mystical predictions about the coming Messiah. He also brought the knowledge and practice of alchemy and the ability to manifest from thin air. All this considered, Uriel’s area of expertise is divine magic, problem solving, spiritual understanding, studies, alchemy, weather, earth changes and writing. You can ask Uriel to help you with responsibly following through with your Divinely guided ideas. But beware that he is very subtle. You may not even realize he has answered you until you’ve suddenly come up with a brilliant new idea.



Sound weather today, completely coherent. There, due to an uptick in wind thickness, doldrums. Elsewhere, shouting on matters of the highest importance. Can they? Will we? A cloud. Yes! Just in the nick of time the sun shows its delicious little face-don’t miss it or you might lose forward momentum. Stay tuned with as many fibers as possible; these are crazy times.



THE WEATHER

Andy Bichlbaum

**Learn to speak English
by psychological methods**

coordinates <28°28'n/77°15'e>

**Power!! Money-back guarantee
if we can't make a man of you**

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**Join the new economy.
Learn transcription now**

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**May I help you
communicate?**

coordinates <28°28'n/77°15'e>

**Call Centre calling...
Jobs, Jobs, Jobs**

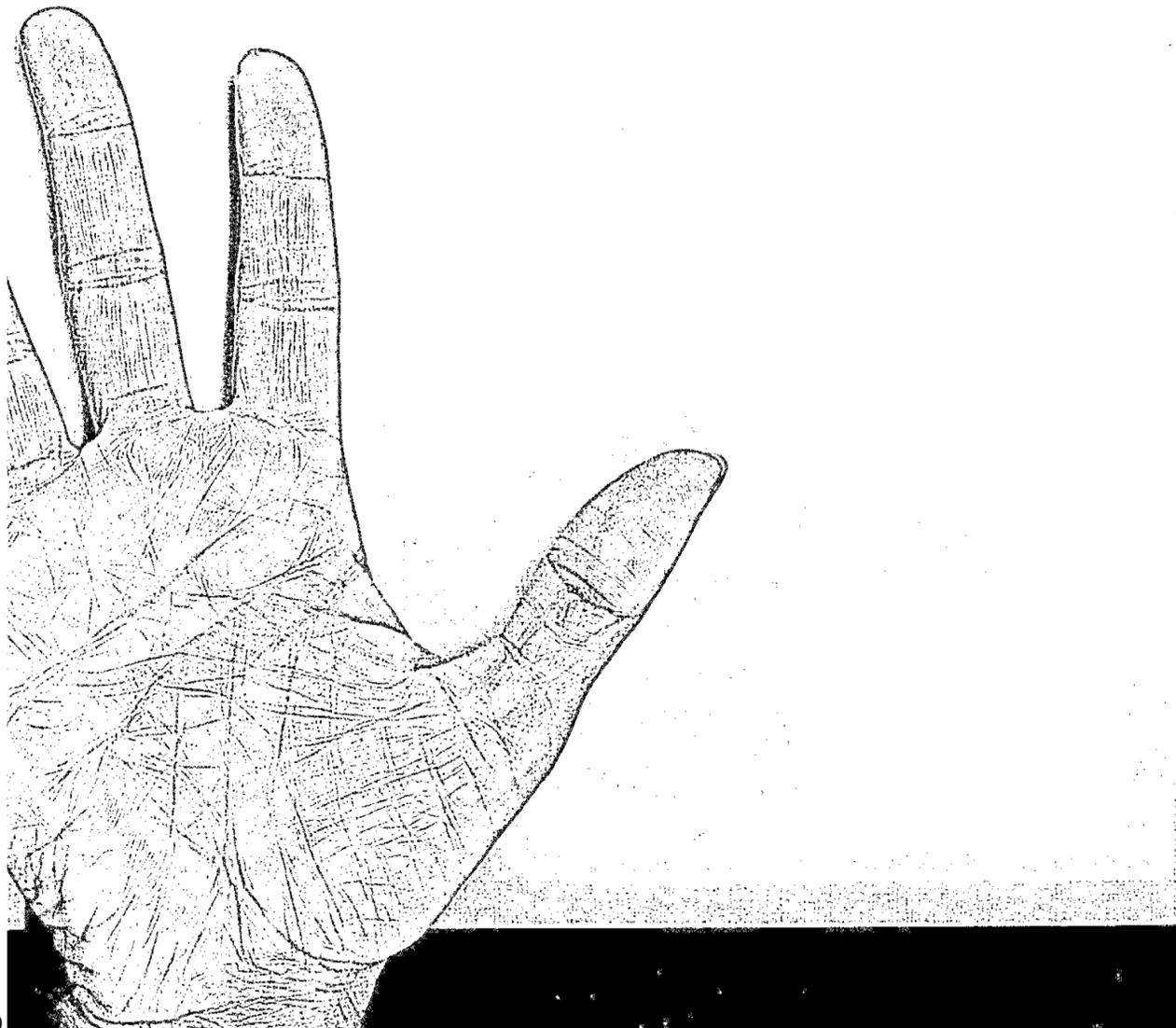
coordinates <28°28'n/77°15'e>

**Don't lose hope at the discharge of dream.
Help is at hand**

coordinates <28°28'n/77°15'e>

“The fact that I
am writing to you
in English
already falsifies what I
wanted to tell you.
My subject:
How to explain to you that I
don’t belong to English
though I belong nowhere else”

— Gustavo Pérez Firmat
(*Bilingual Blues: Poems*, 1981-1994)



/Text, text

Consider the following pairs of words in Spanish and Portuguese. The Portuguese *Xícara* (coffee cup) is *taza* in Spanish, while the Portuguese *Taça* (wine glass) in Spanish is *copa* – which means cupboard in Portuguese. *Copo* (drinking glass) in Portuguese is *vaso* in Spanish; conversely, the Portuguese *vaso* (vase) in Spanish is *florero* when it contains flowers in water or *maceta* when they are rooted in soil. The Portuguese *sacola* (bag) is the Spanish *bolsa*, which in Portuguese means purse, while purse in Spanish is *cartera*, whereas the Portuguese *carteira* (billfold) translates to Spanish as *billetera*, since it is for keeping banknotes – in Spanish *billetes*, although in Portuguese a *bilhete* is a message-note. Compounding matters, in Spanish, *nota* is a message-note, while *nota* in Portuguese is a banknote. In Spanish *apellido* is a surname, while in Portuguese an *apelido* is a nickname; conversely, *sobrenome* is a surname in Portuguese while *sobrenombre* is a nickname in Spanish. The situation is such that in certain cases the differences may actually go unnoticed: “*Você encontrou a nota que deixei com o bilhete?*” [Did you find the banknote I left with the message-note?] “*Si claro, la nota que me dejaste con el billete. Gracias.*” [Yes, of course, the message-note you left me with the banknote. Thank you.]



These two languages, which arose from the same source and were for many years the same, gradually diverged to result in the differences that separate them today. Other foods, other habits, other landscapes requiring other names led to new words and new sounds. And there are uses that shape the words and transform the meanings according to the practical means to which they are put. A classical example is the pair *esquisito/exquisito* in Portuguese and Spanish, respectively. To simplify the historic process, we can imagine two people at the same banquet at which they both taste the same dish that neither has tasted before. *Exquisito* [delicious] says the Spanish speaker. “*Esquisito?*” [Strange?] asks the Portuguese speaker. *Sí, exquisito!* [Yes, delicious!] “*Hum, sim, esquisito.*” [Hmm, yes, strange.] And they both agree on the same word to describe the flavor that has brought them such widely different sensations.

It is difficult to imagine how these divergences first arose. By some reiterated process, by some twist of meaning repeated daily, it would seem that an entire row of objects gets displaced from the relation they once held to the words that represent them. Like when we start buttoning our shirt by putting the first button in the wrong hole, and then all the other buttons go into different holes as a coincidence, though with a certain delay.

It is as if there were a dictionary in which all the words were ordered according to their uses or the places in the house where the object corresponding to them are to be kept. And in this dictionary, instead of definitions, there were images: The image of a vase for the word vase, the image of a cup for the word cup, etc. And a copyist who was either absentminded or tired – or perhaps with a sense of humor – had skipped an illustration and went on with his work.

And then the human power of deduction came into play: *Se é a isto que chamam Taça, deve ser em Xícaras que se toma vinho, aqui.* [If this is called a wine glass, then it must be in coffee cups that one drinks wine here.] *Si a esto le dicen taza, aquí deben tomar el café en copas.* [If this is called a coffee cup, they must drink coffee here in wine glasses.] It makes me wonder if people may have once drunk wine in coffee cups or coffee in wine glasses because they believed more in the similarity of words than in the similarity of customs.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a mix of English and another language, with some words underlined.

Handwritten text consisting of several lines of cursive script, including some symbols and arrows.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, appearing to be a list or a series of notes.

Savage Attacks on White Women, As Usual

Yotito tlen melahuac:

Wasicus, huinas! Goliga, gatle ya ale gelia. Tsi osda igunh hne hi. Kingefuy sapa tla aca quiquixtiliz, ahalena i. Ag'sihwa sgo, Do he? Tla doyaquanta i tsi sunh sidgwu, nitsa tanunh na. Yigiusta tinadunh ganunth nunh. Nitsa l'stahne tictemohuizque inin xenola nain fey, ka. Al stisg'wasicus, to dagedoli, atילו stoht. Di dasquallunh ni! Cuache tla namechpanoz!

Fr. Tomas to the Council of the Indies:

On the mainland they eat human flesh. They are more given to sodomy than any other nation. There is no justice among them. They go naked. They are stupid and silly. They have no respect for truth, save when it is to their advantage. They are unstable. They have no knowledge of what foresight means. They are ungrateful... They are brutal. There is no deference among them on the part of the young for the old. They are incapable of learning. Punishments have no effect on them. They eat fleas, spiders, and worms raw, whenever they find them. They exercise none of the human arts or industries. The older they get the worse they become. I may therefore affirm that God has never created a race more full of vice and composed without the least mixture of kindness or culture. The Indians are more stupid than asses, and refuse to improve anything.

David de Vries, (a Dutch colonist in Manhattan, 1643) in his diary:

I heard a great shrieking, and I ran to the ramparts of the fort. Saw nothing but firing, and heard the shrieks of the savages murdered in their sleep. When it was day the soldiers returned to the fort, having massacred eighty Indians, and considering that they had done a deed of Roman valour. Infants were torn from their mothers' breasts and hacked to pieces in the presence of the parents, and the pieces were thrown into the fire and in the water, and other sucklings, being bound to small boards, were cut, stuck, pierced, and miserably massacred in a manner to move a heart of stone. Some were thrown into the river, and when the fathers and mothers endeavoured to save them, the soldiers would not let them come on land, but made both parties and children drown.

Street Voices:

"Those fuckin' Indians sold this place for 21 bucks." "Yeah, we should give it back to them." "Even the Indians wouldn't take it now. Maybe they weren't so dumb after all." "They didn't really live here; it was just a hunting ground." "You're really an Indian? Jesus, what are you doing here? How come you're not out West somewhere? You ever do any that high steel work?" "Man, you guys really got fucked over, huh?"

Inner Voices:

Most Indians drink too much, and there's too much violence, but at least there's always a removal or something; some poor Indian families being evicted from their sacred land. Suffering Indians are good. High entertainment value that never goes stale. Fighting Indians are good only if you know they are going to lose out at the end of the movie. And then, they shouldn't fight too much. They should make a deal with Jimmy Stewart and declare peace, and then get betrayed by General Richard Widmark.

Confession:

It is true, and now I can admit it openly, that when I was younger I was a cowboy for awhile. But I don't believe I really had, or have now, cowboy tendencies. I did not really enjoy it, and I only did it for the money. This other cowboy I knew said: "You're an Indian and a cowboy? Be careful you don't kill yourself".

Preachments:

You think cowboys and Indians go together. When you hear the word 'cowboy' you think 'Indian'. You probably think we are married, or something. The cowboy is the husband and the Indian is the exasperatingly dumb but lovable wife.

I know you think we are part of your rich cultural heritage. Every time some Indian does tricks for the public you bring your kids along. You say, "We know so little about you, I want my kids to know more. They're fascinated, anyway. Kevin here did a project for school last year about what Indians ate. Did you grow up on a reservation? Do you speak an Indian language?"

You think children and Indians go together, don't you?

Pensées:

Who is the best Indian princess? Debra Paget was pretty sexy, but a little too solemn. Audrey Hepburn? Yuck. Too skinny and too hyper. Indians are more stoic. Donna Reed. That's it. She was so pretty on that buffalo robe, with her feet tucked under her and her deerskin blouse opened just enough, and her little headband.

Your grandmother was a Cherokee princess? Amazing. Mine too!

For my money Burt Lancaster was the best Indian chief. Somebody told me that Jeff Chandler really was Indian, but that can't be true because he got to be an Indian chief, and he got to win a little bit. Charles Bronson: now there was an Apache renegade if I ever saw one. Did you know that Jay Silverheels' real name was Tony Curtis? Jake Highwater's real name was Jay Marks, and when he was a kid he couldn't decide if he wanted to be a pirate or an Indian. Which reminds me, the Pittsburgh Pirates defeated the Cleveland Indians 80-11, and the Washington Redskins beat the Atlanta Braves 2-0.

You probably think we like having cars named after us. You probably think I am part of your rich cultural heritage.

Your Response:

Real Indians are not at all belligerent. They are very kind and gentle.

A Serious Question:

What is the difference between a pioneer and a Voortrekker? What is the difference between you and a white South African?

I Answer for You:

Oh, you try to understand! You think it's a shame! And you have a turquoise ring and you just bought a magic Cherokee crystal from that guy - roo in Soho and you loved all thosetsuffering Indians in *Broken Rainbow!*

Let's See, What Else?

Let's see, what else? You are stupid and silly and you eat spiders raw. At least I am absolutely certain that you would eat spiders barbecued if they were a proper marketing scheme for your peer group.

In August 1987 a bunch of white folks went to Central Park (to the stylish part of the park, of course) to celebrate some sort of harmonic convergence supposedly foretold in Mayan prophecies. They just assumed somehow it was going to centre on them, like everything else does. They never once thought that if there were such a world re-alignment it would be all over for their little situations.

Whenever you folks think about the world, you assume yourselves to be not only the centre but the standard also, which makes it a little difficult to carry on a conversation with you.

But if an attempt is made, the other party must pretend a goodwill that could not possibly exist. I am not about to enter into that pretence.

First we must consider the language barrier; from the initial encounters between American Indians and Europeans a vocabulary developed that is specific to speaking about Indians, especially in the English language. That vocabulary has no correspondence to words or concepts in our languages and, more importantly, it has no base in our reality. It was developed through racism and pre-conceived notions. More, it is by now so thoroughly the cartography of our thought about Indians that it is almost impossible not to use it, or not to consider that those words are, even though English, 'Indian' words. Words such as 'chief', 'tribe', and 'band' had etymological histories within European contexts.

People ask, Which do you prefer, 'Indian' or 'Native American'? Neither is acceptable, nor is any version of the word 'Cherokee'. Which would you rather be called, 'Wasicu', 'European', or 'Limey'? If you are English you might prefer to be called some version of the word 'English'. The Cherokee word for Cherokee is Ani Yunh Wiya. If translated literally it might mean 'The People', as so many other Indian nations call themselves. None of the words by which you call us are words by which we call ourselves. Consider the import of such a phenomenon upon your knowledge of what you call your country.

By now, of course, some New Age folks have learned to say Dene or Lakota instead of Navajo or Sioux, but usually that bit of knowledge is used in a game of one-upmanship against someone else. Like you say, 'knowledge is power'.

Now then, have we reached a further point? If so, I want to assume the attitude of Vittorio, the cruel Apache who showed no mercy. I am afraid, however, that you will not suffer; that you will instead be entertained by Indian tricks more novel than you expected. If you have been all of your life entertained by our sorrows on TV, you may well be entertained by my anger.

There is an obscenity particularly acute now because it has been so exposed and because of who, for the most part, is committing it. White women seem to be the majority of the perpetrators. The obscenity involves taking bits of Indian culture (or some marketeers's version of Indian culture) into a nouvelle grab-bag 'life style' that is kind of hippie/yuppie. You get turquoise, crystals, maybe some peyote and some mystical wisdom rehashed from Carlos Castañeda, without having to give up restaurant row on Columbus Avenue. A case of liberated parasites.

Frantz Fanon proposed a hypothetical situation concerning a group of German youths during the Nazi regime who become fascinated with Jewish culture and retreat to the Black Forest to study Jewish books and wisdom, without ever lifting a finger to fight the Holocaust. He asked if we would not think of those youths as monstrous. But the parasites have a ready answer now. They say that they are fighting in a 'spiritual' way.

I cannot analyse why so many women are involved in that set-up, but I know it is mean and ugly. It means that they have bought their second class niche in the white man's system, while pretending to move in a completely different system. Instead of what should be a natural solidarity with us they offer an up-dated version of 'the man's' thievery. It is unpleasant to see oppressed people get over by oppressing other people on the boss's behalf.

Finally, I Address Matters at Hand

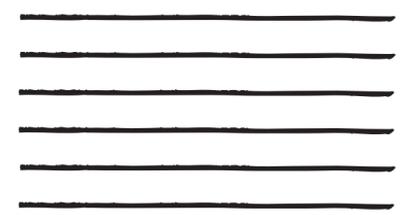
This is supposed to be an essay for an exhibition of American Indian art. But we began planning the exhibition with the idea that we would not be tourist attractions, and we also wanted the catalogue to be more than a tourists' guidebook. We want to figure out how not to entertain you, yet still engage you in discussions about what is really the centre of your reality, although an always invisible centre.

One artist is not in the show because he wanted it to centre on an exposé of the situations in Oklahoma. Others of us objected not because those issues do not urgently need challenging, but because we thought New Yorkers would not feel them a challenge. We thought you would be perfectly willing self-righteously to hate Oklahoma, without seeing any connection to your own lives.

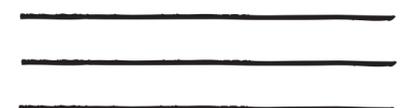
It is a constant problem: how to challenge arrogant people who feel themselves to be the least arrogant of peoples, and who intend to remain unchallengeable. As Indian artists we work on that problem because we are Indians in the present situation, but also because we are artists. In our cultures things are not so compartmentalized as in yours, so that it seems perversely unnatural that art should deal only with art.



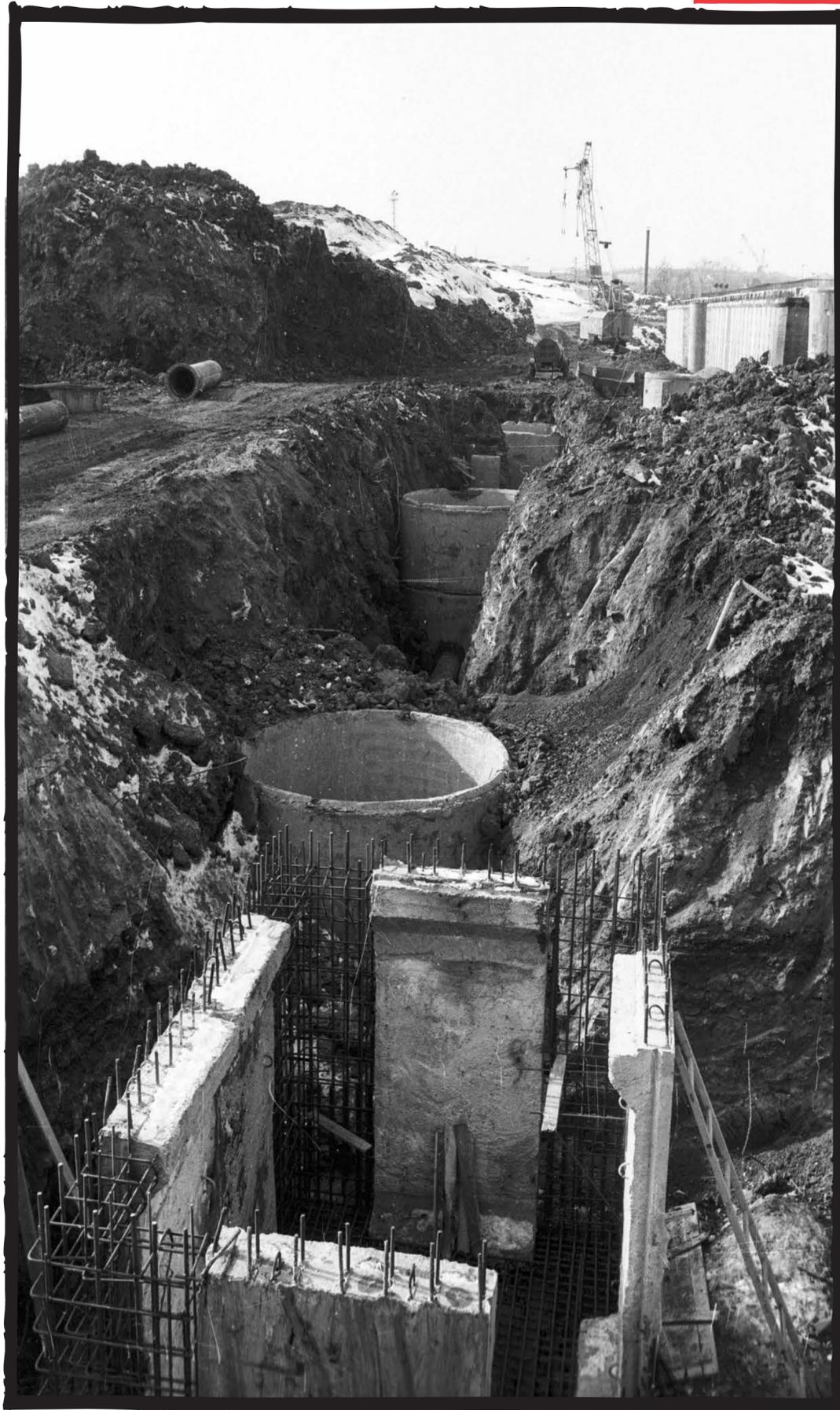
1987



From the book "A certain lack of coherence" Kala Press, 1993 ISBN 0v-947753-03-6 h/b



The Foundation Pit



earth_works_01 — Andrei Monastyrski, from the "Earth Works" series. 1970s

Once upon a time there was a place called The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In its early days, it produced a rather remarkable culture that is frequently invoked, but rarely understood by Western leftists and art historians. Thinking about my contribution to *Broken English*, I felt that the most productive offering would be to publish a short summary of *The Foundation Pit*—a remarkable novel by Andrei Platonov, written in the late 1920s—the time when social and artistic constructivism reached a certain apex of zeal. I illustrated this summary with photographs by Andrei Monastyrski, taken in and around Moscow at a later period in Soviet history, the so-called stagnation, during which I grew up.

Anton Vidokle

The Foundation Pit (by Andrei Platonov, 1929/30)

In a dusty provincial town, a worker named Voshchev is fired from his job at a small machine factory. The management says he just stands around thinking while everyone else is working. Voshchev tries to defend himself, saying that he is trying to work out a plan for life, a way of achieving happiness and spiritual meaning which would raise productivity. The trade union committee is unimpressed, saying that "Happiness will come from materialism, not from meaning." Further, they ask, "What if we all suddenly get carried away thinking—who will be left to act?"

Having nowhere to go, Voshchev sets off wandering down the road. He feels his body going weak without the truth. He needs to know the exact structure of the entire world and what it is he should aim for.

Voshchev finds a grassy field and lies down to sleep in it. Around midnight, he is awakened by a man with a scythe, who is mowing down the thick grass. The man tells Voshchev that this empty space has now become a building site and stone buildings will soon be erected.

On the advice of the man with the scythe, Voshchev finds a workers barracks, full of exhausted, sleeping men. Voshchev lies down among them to sleep.

After breakfast, a trade union representative arrives to give the men a tour of the town, so they can see the significance of the work they are to undertake. They will be building the All-Proletarian Home, a single edifice large enough to house the whole of the local proletariat. The representative has brought a brass band for the occasion. Comrade Safronov, the most politically active of the workers, however, angrily tells the trade union representative that they don't need a band or a tour to raise their consciousness. They know about the squalor on their own.

The men go out to the new-mown field and begin to dig a foundation pit, which had been marked out by an engineer, to whose resourceful, attentive mind the world had always yielded.

That night, while the workers are sleeping, Prushevsky, the work supervisor for the All-Proletarian Home, comes to examine the foundation pit. In a year's time, the entire local proletariat will leave the old town and take up residence in the monumental new home. Despite his knowledge, Prushevsky feels that something is preventing him from understanding anything further about life, about the soul. There is no one who really needs him. He is useful to people, but doesn't make anyone happy. In place of hope, all he has now is endurance. So he decides to kill himself.

One of the workers, Chiklin sees that nearby there is a gully, which is pretty much the right size for them to use as the foundation pit. He makes this suggestion. After all, it would save them some work. Safronov wants to know where Chiklin gets off thinking up things the educated people haven't thought of. All Chiklin can say in defense is, "When you've nothing to live for, you get to thinking inside your head."

Voshchev complains that all they do is dig and sleep.

He thinks he would be better off begging around the collective farms. He says, "Without truth I feel ashamed to be alive."

Safronov tries to sympathize with Voshchev, but, he ponders, "Was it not the case that the truth was simply a class enemy? Nowadays, after all, the class enemy was quite capable of sidling its way into your imagination and even your dreams."

In talking with Chiklin, Prushevsky recalls a girl he saw many years ago in the pre-Revolutionary days. He can't recall what she looked like, but remembers taking a liking to her as she passed him by, never stopping. Prushevsky wishes he could see this girl again. Chiklin says the girl was probably the daughter of the Dutch-tile factory boss. Chiklin had had his own run-in with this girl when he was working at the factory. One day, she came up to him and kissed him. Thinking her brazen, Chiklin did not respond and just kept walking past her. Prushevsky and Chiklin suppose that by now this girl has grown old and blotchy.

Work on the foundation pit continues. Worn out by the heavy labor, Voshchev is more resigned to his situation. "He contented himself with going out on his days off and collecting all kinds of unfortunate little scraps of nature as documentary proof that the world had been created without a plan, as evidence of the melancholia in every living breath." He tells Safronov that he wants truth so as to increase the productivity of labor. Safronov admonishes him that what the proletariat really lives for is enthusiasm for labor. Chiklin goes to the old Dutch-tile factory, which is abandoned and falling apart. In a remote part of the factory he finds the boss's daughter, who had kissed him so many years ago. She is now a toothless old hag on the brink of death. She is being tended to by her young daughter, named Nastya. The woman (Julia) tells Nastya never to reveal her bourgeois origins. Nastya falls asleep. Chiklin creeps up and kisses Julia, who dies.

Chiklin brings Nastya to live in the barracks. He then brings Prushevsky to the Dutch-tile factory and shows him the dead Julia. Prushevsky is unmoved. In fact, he doesn't even recognize the woman as the young girl he saw long ago. But, he notes, "I never recognized people I loved once I'd got intimate with them—I just yearned for them from a distance."

Safronov questions Nastya about her parents. But Nastya, remembering her mother's warning, says only that when there were bourgeoisie she wasn't born because she didn't want to be; but as soon as Lenin came along, she was happy to be born. Safronov happily concludes, "If kids can forget their own mothers but still have a sense of comrade Lenin, then Soviet power really is here to stay!"

While digging in the gully, the workers unearth 100 empty coffins. Chiklin gives two to Nastya—one for a bed and the other to keep her toys and whatnot in. The next day, a peasant named Yelisey shows up demanding that the coffins be returned to his village. They were all properly measured and premade for the people in his village, including the children. "It's our coffins that keep us alive—they're all we've got left", he says.

The 98 remaining coffins are tied together in one long line and Yelisey hauls them off by himself. Some time later, Voshchev sets off down the road, following the trail left by the coffins.

At the foundation pit, Pashkin informs the workers that the peasants in the nearby village are longing for a collective farm.



palatka — Collective Actions, *The Tent*. October 2, 1976



The foundation pit is complete...

...All that remains is to fill it in with rubble. Pashkin, however, decides that it's not big enough, since socialist women will soon be brimming with freshness and the entire surface of the earth will soon be swarming with infant persons. The town boss authorizes making the pit four times bigger. On his own initiative, Pashkin decides to make it six times bigger.

Voshchev and a sub-kulak return from the village with the news that Safronov and Kozlov died in a hut. They take Nastya's two coffins to bury them in. Nastya is angry and doesn't understand why the dead get to have the coffins. Chiklin explains, "Once people die, they get to be special."

Chiklin and Voshchev take the coffins to the village, where the local activist (a bungling and incompetent but nonetheless enthusiastic organizer) tells Chiklin to go to and stand guard over Kozlov and Safronov's corpses, to prevent them from being defiled by a kulak.

When he gets to the village, Chiklin sees that his comrades died of ghastly wounds.

In the morning, Yelisey and a yellow-eyed peasant come to wash the bodies. Chiklin asks who killed his comrades. The peasants say they don't know. Not satisfied with this answer, Chiklin punches the yellow-eyed peasant. The peasant willingly takes the beating, hoping to receive some serious injury and so win entitlement to a poor peasant's right to life.

Chiklin winds up killing the peasant.

The next morning, the activist gathers together the fifty or so rag-tag members of the collective farm. He plans to march them, in star formation, through neighboring villages, where people are still clinging to their private holdings. The weather is dank and windy, and the activist grumbles, "So much for the organization of nature."

The activist had received no directives the previous evening, so he is terrified both of overlooking something and of being overzealous. He had so far collectivized only the village horses, although he agonized over the solitary cows, sheep, etc., since in the hands of a rampant kulak, even a goat could be a level of capitalism.

After the collective farmers set off on their parade, the collectivized horses—on their own initiative and with no human involvement—set off to a ravine to drink and wash themselves. Then they march back into the village and gather up mouthfuls of food. Together they march back into the collective farm

losung_77-293 — Collective Actions. Slogan-1977

yard, drop all the food into a common pile, and only then begin to eat.

Voshchev and Chiklin enter a hut and find a feeble old man lying motionless on a bench. He claims that his soul has left him ever since his horse was collectivized.

The activist has Chiklin and Voshchev start making a raft. As they work, the activist gathers all the organized and unorganized peasants together. He announces that the kulaks are about to be liquidated as a class, to wit, they are to be put on the raft and sent off down the river.

Expecting the collectivization, many peasants stopped feeding their horses long ago. One such horse stands in her stall, almost—but not quite—dead on her feet. Some dogs come in and start gnawing on her feet. Pain keeps her alive, as does hunger when someone waves hay in front of her nostrils.

The activist calls the kulaks together and gives them a last chance to say their farewells. The peasants emotionally hug and kiss everyone—most of them total strangers—as if they were dearest friends and closest relatives. One of them remarks, "We lived like swine, but we're dying in good conscience."

Everyone falls asleep.

When Chiklin awakens, he sees that Prushevsky has arrived, sent by Pashkin as a cadre of the cultural revolution. Along with him has come Nastya.

Yelisey takes Chiklin and Nastya to see the collective farm's only hired farm laborer (proletarian)—a blacksmith's hammerer, who, it turns out, is in fact a bear. The bear is apparently adept at sniffing out kulaks. Chiklin, Nastya, and the bear set out in a snowstorm to find kulaks. The bear finds a family of them in a hut—a man, a woman, and little boy, who is sitting on a potty. The bear growls and Chiklin orders the kulaks out. Curious, the bear sits down on the potty to try it out, but feels uncomfortable.

Chiklin, Nastya, and the bear continue on and find another kulak. They toss him out of his hut, liquidating him. The kulak shouts back, "It's me today, but it'll be you tomorrow. And that's how it'll be—the only person who'll ever reach Socialism is that leader of yours!"



poyavlenie — Collective Actions. *The Appearance*, Moscow, March 13, 1976

Chiklin and the bear liquidate various other kulaks then return to the collective farm. Prushevsky has completed the raft. The kulaks are loaded onto the raft and sent floating down the river.

The activist sets up a loudspeaker in the yard and plays music. The peasants from the collective farm—as well as peasants from nearby villages who were ordered to attend—begin dancing. Even the collectivized horses kick up their heels in the fun.

Voshchev walks around the village gathering up all sorts of wretched little cast-off objects. He brings them to the activist so he can catalog them—all the forgotten bits and pieces that had no name or identity, so Socialism could avenge them. Making lists of these items, Voshchev hoped, would avenge those lost, dead people through the organization of eternal human meaning.

Chiklin feels sorry for these nameless dead and asks Prushevsky if the success of higher science will be able to resurrect people back after they've decomposed. Prushevsky says, "No," but he is immediately called a liar by someone saying that "Marxism can do everything" and noting that Lenin, entombed in Red Square, is merely waiting for science to come and resurrect him.

For some reason, the bear wakes up in the middle of the night begins hammering away and roaring as if in song. Because of this, no one can get any sleep.

In the morning, the bear is still hammering away. Everyone gathers to watch him work. Working in a frenzy, he is pounding way too hard. The peasants tell him to ease up, otherwise the metal will be too brittle and break easily. The bear merely roars angrily, and the peasants back off fearfully. Chiklin is helping the bear, but he doesn't know what he's doing either.

Worried about the great waste of iron, Yelisey and the other peasants finally overcome their hesitation and take over the work, doing it the right way. Even Voshchev joins in, forgetting himself in the patience of labor.

The members of the collective farm burn up all the coal and use all the iron in making useful objects. The bear collapses and falls asleep. Voshchev, now that he has stopped working, begins thinking again. Chiklin angrily tosses Voshchev down on the ground next to the bear, telling him to lie down and shut up. He says, "The bear just lies there and breathes, so why can't you? The proletariat gets on with life, but you're too scared. You bastard!"

The activist receives a dispatch from Provincial Headquarters, warning that the middle peasants' eagerness to join the collective might be an indication of some secret plot being hatched by sub-kulak forces to wash away the leadership.

Nastya wakes up, feeling cold and damp and asking for her mother. The world around her would have to become immeasurably kinder and gentler for her to have any chance of staying alive. Chiklin puts his coat and the activist's coat over Nastya to keep her warm. The activist feels upset, lonely, and abandoned by the masses, so he snatches his coat away from Nastya.

Reading the directive from Provincial Headquarters, someone suggests they get an iron bar and deal with the activist. Chiklin objects, saying he doesn't hit people with lumps of metal—that way he wouldn't get to feel justice. Instead, he wallops the activist in the chest with his sledgehammer fist. The activist crumbles to the floor.

A whining sound is heard. It is the bear. As Voshchev explains, all the bear is fit for is work. The moment he takes a rest he starts thinking and then he gets all down in the mouth.

Voshchev examines the activist and determines that he is dead. Voshchev realizes that the activist had functioned in a predatory manner, monopolizing the whole of universal truth in himself. Voshchev announces that from now on he will take care of the collective farmers, and they are agreeable to the idea.

The Foundation Pit

Nastya, who has fallen ill, keeps asking for her mother. Chiklin says it's time to go back to the town.

They arrive in town. The foundation pit is fully covered with snow, and the barracks is dark and empty. Chiklin tries to make a fire to keep Nastya warm. Nastya keeps saying, "Bring me my mommy's bones." She also asks why she always feels her mind. Chiklin suggests that it is because she's never seen anything good.

Suddenly, Nastya kisses Chiklin, just as her mother had done so many years ago. The girl then falls asleep.

The next morning, it is freezing cold. Nastya is dead. Chiklin is overcome with an urge to dig. He goes to the foundation pit and digs feverishly in the ground, which is frozen solid. He digs and digs because he wants to forget his mind and to forget the fact that Nastya is dead.

Voshchev unexpectedly shows up with the whole collective farm, including the collectivized horses.

Chiklin wants to know why Voshchev brought along the whole collective farm. Voshchev says the peasants want to enroll as proletariat. Chiklin agrees to the idea. Now, he says, they will have to dig the foundation pit wider and deeper because they'll have to build a house big enough for anyone who comes along, workers or peasants. Chiklin resumes digging in the foundation pit, and the peasants all join in. Even the horses joined in.

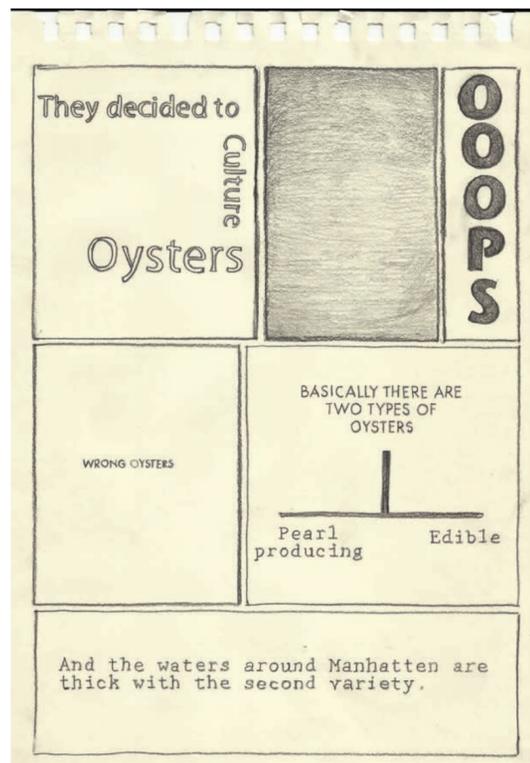
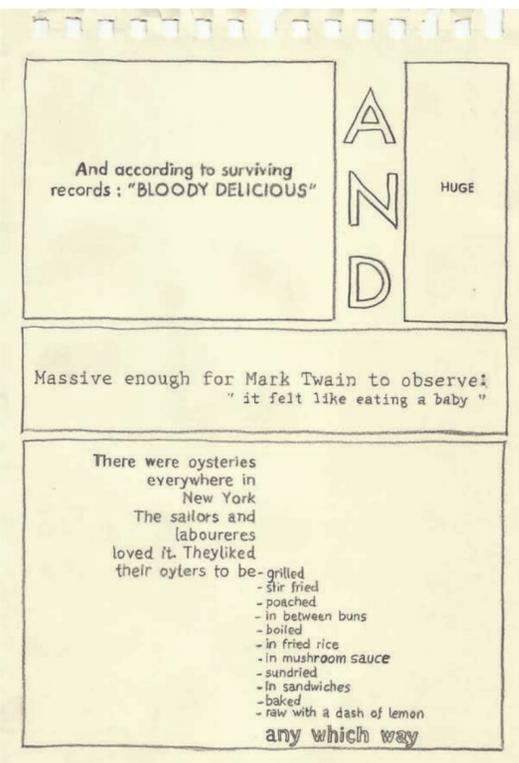
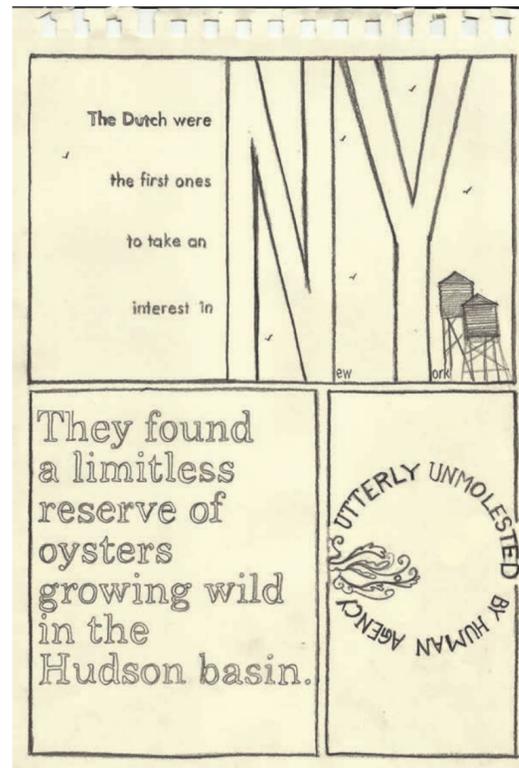
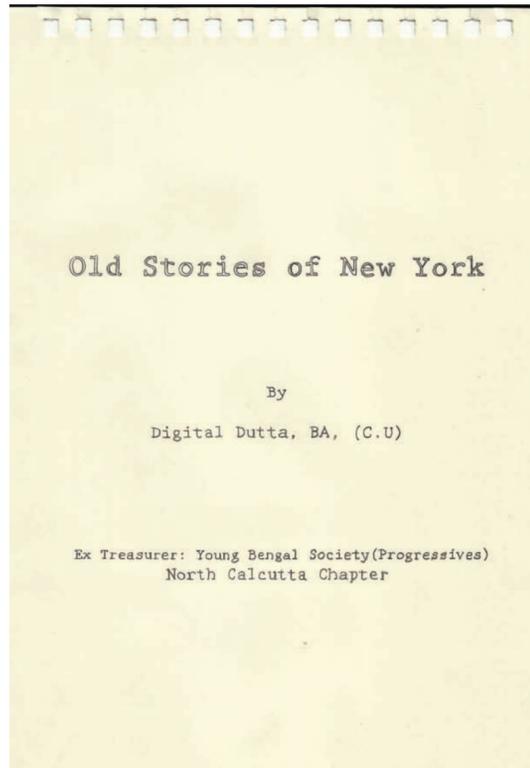
Chiklin spends 15 hours digging a grave deep enough for Nastya so that neither worms nor roots nor the noise of life from earth's surface would ever disturb her. It is night as he lays her in her grave. Everyone is asleep except for the bear. Chiklin allows the bear to touch Nastya for one last time.



vystrel — Collective Actions. *The Shoot*, Moscow region, June 2, 1984

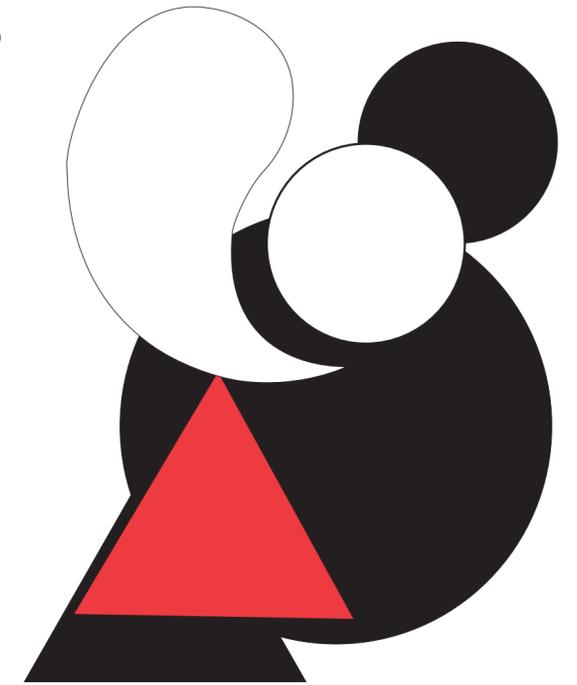
The End.

Old Stories of New York



Jewish Christmas

The Chinese Connection



My friend Andy Markovits passed along to me a very funny YouTube video that has been making the rounds. It touches on an intriguing aspect of American social history—the curious affinity of Jews for Chinese food. Ever since Eastern European Jewish immigrants began arriving in large numbers about a century ago, they showed a special inclination to go to Chinese restaurants whenever they went out to eat non-Jewish food.

There was always something a little odd about this, since many of them normally avoided non-kosher food, and Chinese food is anything but kosher—certainly no more kosher than, say, Italian or Irish or generic-American food. (In recent years some Chinese restaurants have adapted by going kosher, but such cases used to be vanishingly rare.) Perhaps the sauces that smothered and disguised the food, which also tended to be finely chopped up, made a certain degree of denial easier? (Through most of the 20th century, the kind of Chinese food that American Jews were eating was usually some version of gloppy American-Cantonese.) And perhaps the special attractiveness of Chinese restaurants had something to do with the fact that Chinese—unlike a number of other ethnic groups in the US—had no history of, or reputation for, anti-semitism? One can only speculate.

Here are some informed socio-historical speculations by two Jewish sociologists, Gaye Tuchman & Harry Levine, in "Safe Treyf": New York Jews and Chinese Food." (For those of you who come from the dominant culture, "treyf" or "treif" means non-kosher):

Three themes predominate. First, Chinese food is unkosher and therefore non-Jewish. But because of the specific ways that Chinese food is prepared and served, immigrant Jews and their children found Chinese food to be more attractive and less threatening than other non-Jewish or treyf food. Chinese food was what we term "safe treyf." Chinese restaurant food used some ingredients that were familiar to Eastern European Jews. Chinese cuisine also does not mix milk and meat; indeed it doesn't use dairy products at all. In addition, anti-Semitism, anti-Chinese racism, and the low position of the Chinese in American society also (perhaps paradoxically) made Jews feel safe and comfortable in Chinese restaurants.

Second, Jews construed Chinese restaurant food as cosmopolitan. For Jews in New York, eating in Chinese restaurants signified that one was not a provincial or parochial Eastern European Jew, not a "greenhorn" or hick. In New York City, immigrant Jews, and especially their children and grand-children, regarded Chinese food as sophisticated and urbane.

Third, by the second and third generation, Jews identified eating this kind of non-Jewish food—Chinese restaurant food—as something that modern American Jews, and especially New York Jews, did together. "Eating Chinese" became a New York Jewish custom, a part of daily life and self-identity for millions of New York Jews.

As they sum it up: Chinese food was attractive to Jews in part because its ingredients were somewhat familiar, and because it did not instinctively repel. [...] Jews were also attached to Chinese food because they perceived it as sophisticated, non-Christian, and a bargain. In subsequent generations, these associations then became overlaid with memories of family meals in Chinese restaurants—where, after 1950, New York Jewish families ate far more often than they did in Jewish restaurants. In different ways, for different reasons, for four generations of New York Jews, Chinese restaurant food has continued to be part of what Federico Fellini called "the soft and gentle flavors of the past."

P.S.: Of course, childhood memories that evoke warm nostalgia in some people can provoke a sense of claustrophobic discomfort in others—and in some cases, no doubt, both feelings at the same time. Tuchman & Levine note that "A few Jews now in their forties told us that eating Chinese food actually had such strong associations with Jewishness that they avoided Chinese restaurants." And another Jewish sociologist wrote to tell me: "My wife is the only Jew I know who will not eat Chinese food. She claims that it comes from having to spend too many nights out with her family at Chinese restaurants."

Whatever the reasons, this connection between American Jews and Chinese food has long been a solidly established social fact. (I don't know whether this has also been true for Jews in Montreal and Toronto, or whether there are any parallels

outside North America.) And I am told by people who know about such things (not just professionally, but from relevant sociological research), that this connection has long been a self-conscious part of Chinese-restaurant lore as well. If someone wanted to start a Chinese restaurant, the best bet was to have a Chinese community nearby—but, failin planation is no doubt complex. Since most Chinese didn't celebrate Christmas as a religious or family holiday, Chinese restaurants were likely to be open when other restaurants were closed. I would also guess that it's easy to get a reservation at your favorite Chinese restaurant when the goyim are mostly having Christmas dinner at home. And the movie theaters are often emptier, too—so why not go to the movies while you're at it?

Happy Holidays (& eat well),



A GODDESS FROM THE FUTURE LANDED IN NEW YORK

— AN INTERVIEW WITH JOEY ARIAS BY CARLOS MOTTA

NEW YORK CITY — September 3, 2011 — Hello, my name is Joey Arias. I'm a singer, I'm a performer, I'm an artist, I'm a real fun person and we're here in my apartment in New York City, downtown in Greenwich Village. I would say I'm a real New-Yorker and I guess some people would call me an icon, but I call myself a goddess because when you've been doing it long enough and you're older, you don't say "older" you say "goddess"...

Carlos Motta: **Joey, where were you born?**

Joey Arias: I was born in Fayetteville, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. My parents were army people. My father told me that I was conceived in Georgia and that my mother "popped me out" in North Carolina. When I was six years old they took me to Los Angeles and I remember not liking it. I became a rebel because I just didn't want to be there, I didn't like the temperature, I didn't like the people; it was too tropical for me. So I kind of fought the system my whole life. As a child I wouldn't even go to school, I'd hide in old buildings and read monster magazines.

CM: **Why did you want to come to New York?**

JA: didn't leave L.A. to come to New York until I was nineteen years old in 1976. I've always had a fascination for Manhattan, I was a big Warhol fan, and it seems like everything happened in New York. I felt that your dreams would always come true here.

When I first arrived I kind of just wanted to be born again and see what the city was going to dictate to me. I wound up working at Fiorucci, this super-hip boutique that had just opened up. And that's when my life changed, because the store was in the spotlights, and people from all over the world came there, and I became a star sales person.

CM: **What kind of city did you encounter?**

JA: New York City was exciting and dangerous, people were doing things, and where there was a whole new culture. Within a week I met this guy named Klaus Sperber also known as Klaus Nomi. Shortly after I was taken to CBGBs where there was a group performing and all these people were giving me shade, so this girl from the group said, "Don't worry about these people they're assholes, but you'll get to be friends with them."



John Sex, Ann Magnuson and Joey Arias in the 1980s.



I asked her name and she said, "My name is Debbie Harry, this is the group called Blondie and we're trying to get a record deal..." I met them right before they became famous. That's what New York was all about. It was a wild fun scene and it was also so innocent. People got dressed up, took acid and would go out and have fun. We'd go downtown—it was taboo to go past Houston. If you went past Houston, you had your life in your hands. We went to this club called the Mudd Club, which was full of artists and hippies. Then there was a place called Club 57 that Ann Magnuson, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Julian Schnabel would also go to, it was our clubhouse. Everyone's careers took off right around then. Klaus Nomi and I worked on Saturday Night Live with David Bowie... All this success was coming at me like crazy.

CM: **Can you talk about the way that you started to think of yourself as an artist and how you shaped a career?**

JA: Working at Fiorucci was like a performance house for me. I was selling clothes but I was making it a performance because I was doing things with my body and singing to people at the store. I was dressing up everyday and being kind of outrageous: I was walking around with gold jeans, gold boots and pink hair. Nobody had pink hair then, it was wild. I was using myself as an art piece; I was shaping myself and I kept thinking I was going to be a super-stylist. But I ended up backing up Klaus Nomi in "New Wave Vaudeville" and I found myself getting back into the world of performance.

CM: **Were physical transformations common in the performance world?**

JA: I was experimenting with myself and I was very unique! In '77 these people from England from a hair salon called Jingles came to New York and told me "We'd like to dye your hair pink." I said, "Are you shitting me?" But they bleached my hair out and dyed it day glow pink, I tweezed my eyebrows a little bit, and they cut my hair. When I walked out of that salon people in the streets were freaking out. People were throwing rocks and spitting at me, cars were stopping and yelling, "What the hell are you? Are you some kind of alien? You freak!" I was taking my life in my hands walking around like that.

One day I remember I was here in this apartment and I put the gas stove on because I was trying to cook something. I came in with a match, and it blew me up with a fireball. I was naked, and I remember it burnt all the hair off my body—my eyebrows, my eyelashes, my hair... That was the beginning of the no-eyebrows, no-hair period. Klaus said, "Now you look like me." So this whole alien thing started, we kept going back and looking at ourselves as something from another world, from another planet, from the future, as if we had a higher calling. We were aliens assuming the physicality of terra-firma walkers: We became the "Nomi Family."

CM: **Did New York respect that kind eccentric physical expression? Also, was it a homophobic city?**

JA: A friend of mine told me, "When you go to New York, you blend in so easy—you could probably shit on the street and nobody would give a damn." Well...not! I stuck out like a fucking sore thumb big time. When I was walking around the city with capes and high heel shoes, with crazy looks, people were freaking out. I got called faggot, fucking weirdo, alien, etc. but then you'd go to a club and everything was OK. I had that kind of



Klaus Nomi and Joey Arias

reputation already, because I was, "Joey from Fiorucci," "Joey the trend setter," "Joey the weirdo," "Joey's different."

CM: **Were you thinking in terms of gender transgression?**

JA: The drag thing happened by mistake: There was a drag Halloween party thrown by artists Keith Haring, Kenny Scharf, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Ann Magnuson, Andy Warhol, and Truman Capote at someone's loft in SoHo. A guy named Barry Hendrickson dressed me up. He said, "Here's a wig, lets put some balloons in those tits, here's a dress..." I did this very heavy cat eyes make up, a big red wig and huge tits. Everybody was like, "Oh my god, you look incredible, what's your name?" I said, "My name is Justine de Sade." They went, "Oh, Justine." Andy came up to me and said, "You should never wear boy clothes again, and you have to be in drag, because you look incredible." This other guy told me, "I want to take you for a motorcycle ride cause you look like a motorcycle bitch." Then there was Wigstock and I went as Justine again. A guy approached me and said, "We're doing a drag calendar for the East Village and we want you to be the cover." I was like "Nope, I'm not doing that." "How does 5000 dollars sound?" In 1990-something that was a lot of money, so I said yes and I became the cover girl.

CM: **I'm curious about why you felt strange doing drag?**

JA: I hadn't gotten to that point I guess. I was already Joey without the drag stuff. I had no problem being with men, no problem having my lover. Drag was just something I didn't need in my life. I had already defined who I was but suddenly this door opened up and people started booking "Justine and the Pussy Cats from Outer Space" for shows. I was singing my ass off and people were like "OMG, this chick, she sings!" I felt the power of that.

CM: **Can you speak about the NYC "underground" scene? There's a myth about the underground as a space where anything could take place. What was the underground like? And do you think there's an underground today?**

JA: The underground was a continuation of a party basically. People wanted to party, people wanted to go out. Clubs would close at 4, 5, or 6 am and you'd want to go out somewhere else. You weren't done. So these clubhouses would open up. People went there to party, to mingle, to socialize, to get laid, to be seen, to see what you were wearing, or just to talk. There was no networking with computers or phones because you'd do that in person. That was how people got to know each other. Its different now, now you go on your laptop or on your Grindr and you've got people masturbating in front of a computer; it's cybersex, which of course it's very 21st century. After AIDS came and destroyed the underground scene, it isn't really one they way it used to be. It's all a little more pretentious and manufactured: It's like, "We're underground!" They have to say it. In those days, you didn't say it, it simply was.

CM: **Can you speak about the relationship of these underground clubs to performance? Today artists seem very concerned with branding their work, whereas I have a sense that back then there was a lot of performance simply for the fun of it.**

JA: Exactly! People did it because that's what they did. People do it these days because they think they are going to become famous. I wasn't going for famous; I was going for an acceptance of my creativity... I sing and perform because I love it. I do it because it's installed in me and it's all I can do.

CM: **Let's talk about sexual politics. Have you ever thought of yourself as an advocate or activist, as somebody that is concerned with the politics of gender and sexuality?**

JA: I am political just by being. I don't have to go to a protest and hold a sign over my head because I illuminate that naturally. People will see me and know that that's a very sexual, interesting, political person...

CM: **You've been a witness to great political changes when it comes to LGBT politics having come to New York in 1976. How do you relate to the AIDS crisis for example?**

JA: In the 1970s and into the 1980s everybody was going wild with sex. Literally you'd walk the streets of Manhattan and if I looked at you and you looked at me we would probably be fucking in 2 minutes, sucking dick, or making out in a doorway. All of

a sudden this mysterious disease appeared and people began dropping like flies. It made you stand back for a second and think, what's happening? What's happening politically? Why can't they stop this disease? Is this a gay disease? Is this to get rid of the people who didn't fit the norm? Was this disease made to eliminate people? Of course it was politics. Who knows what the hell the government was doing? Who knows what kinds of things they were experimenting with?

CM: **Is that something that was speculated upon at the time that HIV could have been manufactured by the government?**

JA: Everybody said that, definitely. It wasn't just some weird disease that a monkey and that people who were fucking too much had. We thought scientists had created it and it had just gone out of control. It's not a gay disease, but it was aimed at gay people, definitely.

CM: **Did you talk about it in your shows?**

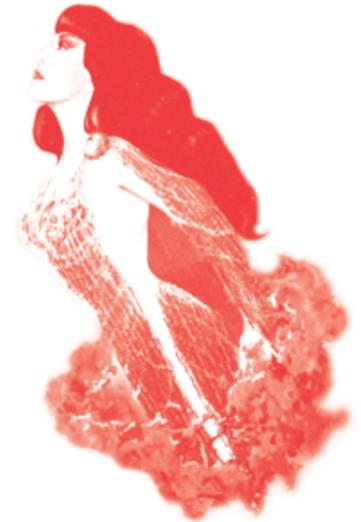
JA: I don't like to be political that way with shows because when you come to see a show you come to be taken away and to dream. I'm already political doing what I'm doing in drag, and looking visually really outrageous with the 19" waist and the heels... I personally don't go see shows about "real life." I like to see something that is going to make me forget the way this world is. I want people to walk out of my shows feeling great, knowing that they can do something with themselves and that they have the power to change anything they want.

CM: **Even if you're not outspoken about things that happen in the real world, the way you present yourself and shape your body transcends anything we see out in the street, it is definitely against the norm.**

JA: In *Arias with a Twist*, my collaborative show with Basil Twist and Thierry Mugler, I'm pretty much naked on stage and it takes a lot of balls to do that. This particular performance is meant for you to interpret and read it the way you see it: (quoting from the show) "I've been gone for 6 minutes, 6 years, 600 years, where am I? Why does it all look the same? Not really. But what did George Bush do? What did Washington, D.C. do to us? Did they fucking destroy the world? Oh well, well at least I'm still here. Well, it still looks beautiful. At the end of the day, nature just ate it all up and I'm back with nature. You must respect nature, that's political. Politics is hurting Mother Nature, and Mother Nature is saying, 'Oh really? You people think you can do this to me? I'm gonna shake this world up, I'm gonna make cracks and you're gonna fall through the holes and they'll get rid of everybody and we're gonna start fresh again... with the right people.'"

CM: **Do you think you were able to become the artist and the person you are because of New York in a way?**

JA: When I came to New York in 1976, Joey Arias became Joey Arias. Everything I'd learned as a child and all the experiences I had had came together. That could have only happened in New York and at that time. I was creative and I met creative



Detail of add for *Arias with a Twist*, 2011

people. There's just something about New York that has that power. It's true what they say, if you wanna make it, come to this fucking town because it will kick your ass! Because there are a million people that wanna do what you're doing and you gotta get out and prove yourself. And you gotta do a lot of hard work!

I hate when people say, "Oh, New York is dead." If you think the city is dead, that means you're dead. Get out! Because that's what New York doesn't need. New York is completely creative. I could take you out for the rest of the afternoon around town and you're gonna be, "OMG, I can't believe what I just saw right now."

CM: **I love the way New York is a city where so many different types of people and communities have to negotiate public space and be tolerant of each other.**

JA: That is what New York is all about. It is about tolerance, it is about push and pull. It is about darkness and light, it is about rich and poor... That is what makes the city what it is. That's why you see a person in the corner who's got a hundred million dollars next to a bum who hasn't got a penny in his pocket. New York City can't be utopia or euphoria...that pressure and that anxiety is what make us who we are.

CM: **Thank you Joey!**

JA: Oh my God, thank you so much.

New York, a city where I was unhappy most of the time but still, in the end, reluctant to leave, never took on the contours of a real place while I lived there, remaining for me a fever dream, a congerie of literary and filmic references accompanied by Bernard Hermann's score to *Taxi Driver*. Most of the time I felt outside the city, experiencing it like a moviegoer. While alienated, however, I was still aware of somehow having fashioned my life in this manner on purpose; a documentarian observing post-Giuliani New York, studying the ambiances and psychological shifts as one neighborhood moved into the next, observing the habits and routines of Manhattan residents without really making them my own.

New York, in short, was a place more imagined than real. I was at once seduced by the city and acutely aware that I was not a New Yorker, and in all likelihood, would never be one. My mainly peripatetic experience scarcely qualifies me to comment on its social fabric, whereas other cities in which I have lived—San Francisco, Los Angeles, Berlin—while experienced perhaps as equally unreal, were still places in which I had actually lived rather than passed through very, very slowly.

But while re-reading my recently returned books, I began to identify what it was I had missed, or rather, was no longer apparent, in contemporary New York. It was something—a sentiment, a worldview, a style of expression—that had emerged during World War II, when New York was no longer the center of the western world, but had been temporarily demoted to being just another very large periphery.

In *Literary Outlaw* I read about a wartime Manhattan of cheap rooming houses, residential hotels and tenement apartments housing a miscellaneous population of students, merchant seamen, V-12s (naval cadets studying to get their commission), and men not draft-worthy on account of any number of defects. One could rent an apartment for less than 80 dollars a month, buy a pot of baked beans with a strip of bacon on top for a nickel at Horn and Hardarts, or, if one was feeling flush, dine at Au Bon Pinard in the Village, where the prix fixe dinner cost \$1.50. Here was a New York of “free-form discussion groups, and watching the dawn come up after a night of listening to jazz, and evenings drinking in the West End, with the heavy oak booths that could seat six comfortably, or eight squeezing, and the sawdust on the floor, and Johnny the bartender in his white apron. Life had an almost stately pace. There were streetcars in the middle of Broadway then.”

To what can we account the flourishing of the Beat movement at this particular time and place? Apart from any socio-cultural determination, there was the fortuitous meeting of three very different individuals—William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac—and through this meeting, the conjunction of a Columbia University milieu with elements of the hip Times Square underworld with which Burroughs was acquainted. Perhaps the exodus of men possessing a certain type of normative masculinity also allowed for this nascent cultural formation to develop; more speculative than the standard American pragmatism, more inquisitive, less concerned with notions of propriety and bourgeois rectitude than that evinced by mainstream American society. I imagine the scene as if captured in grainy black-and-white, scenes and characters still vague, undefined and elusive, like the anonymous bars and diners painted by Edward Hopper; a period before a name had been coined for a style and way of looking at the world—a name which in becoming indelibly associated with certain traits of comportment and dress soon hardened into a cliché.

This namelessness corresponds as well to the period's liminality—a time before America crossed the threshold of empire. Naming the Beats as Beats rendered harmless, comic even, their not-so-veiled opposition to the transformations in American society swiftly becoming apparent in the postwar years without coming to terms with what it was they were against; namely, America's fervent preoccupation with materialism, which Walt Whitman had once warned would place America among the “fabled damned.” But while cultural commentators might sneer, they could not, outside of reliance on an undemocratic censorship apparatus, keep the possibility of literature from pursuing its secret function, which, as Jacques Derrida has phrased it, is to exercise “the unlimited right to ask any question, to suspect all dogmatism, to analyze every presupposition, even those of the ethics or the politics of responsibility.”

But all this is, in a sense, *avant la lettre*. What is germane to the present discussion is the inchoate response of a few people, possessing neither prominence nor position, to vaguely perceived seismic changes at work in society—an instance of poets acting, in the words of Ezra Pound, as “antennae of the race.” Paradoxically, they were able to do so because of the peculiar conditions extant in New York during this time, when, it should be noted that the city was a cheap place to live. Affordability often facilitates Bohemian formations, engendering the kind of environment where Lefebvre's “right to the city” can flourish. I am not concerned here with exploring Lefebvre's notion in detail, except to note that while he claimed the right to the city includes the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space, shifting control away from capital and the state towards a city's own inhabitants, he also suggests it is a right not only to legislate but to appropriate the city.

This can be understood in any number of ways. The right to appropriate urban space exercised here, like that articulated a few years later by the Situationists, was motivated in large part by the desire to get outside the constraints of the dominant ideology, re-functioning the city as a philosophical or literary construct, a set of hallucinated social relations refracting the actual matrix of control.

For part of the generation coming of age during WWII possessing a deficit in patriotic fervor (because disenfranchised, alienated, skeptical) and acutely aware of something lost with America's triumphal militarist turn, junk was an inoculating poison, a bad choice necessary to the task of absenting oneself from a certain class position and an ubiquitous, jingoistic ideology.

A conception of the city as myth and the city as product of technocratic administration rarely intersect. The irony of the Beats' dalliance with precarity and petty criminality

is that, even as they commenced articulating a mythos of ecstatic disenfranchisement, the messy urban polity which they celebrated endured because City Planning Commissioner Robert B. Moses' dreams of radically refashioning Manhattan were temporarily frustrated by the war, putting many of his large-scale construction projects on hold. It's interesting to contemplate the incipient Beats relaxing in sybaritic disorder in Joan Vollmer's (Burrough's future common-law wife) 118th Street apartment while Moses schemed on his Randall's Island headquarters about how best to pervert the mechanisms of civic governance in order to accrue more power, money and autonomy, and thus be rid of the constraints to his vision presented by elected officialdom.

Moses viewed the city as a chessboard, each move motivated by the desire to accumulate political capital, and—not entirely an ancillary concern—make the city less hospitable to the working class and urban poor. Today, when the international modernism that was the stylistic corollary of this game has been discredited, it is still continued on the level of social orientation. Nowhere is being poor more suspect than in Manhattan. And even if Moses never accomplished his stated wish to ram an expressway through Manhattan, by decade's end, pre-war New York had receded into an ill-defined memory, haunting certain intersections and city blocks, a disoriented ghost amidst unfamiliar surroundings.

I never encountered the junk space of New York in the year I lived there. Probably because it no longer exists. At least not in the same way. A recent viewing of an HBO television documentary on homeless drug addicts in New York (*Dope Sick Love*) only underscored this belief. It was plain to see in the New York I inhabited in 2005 that there was little place for marginalized groups such as junkies, partially because the cost of living drove more and more people onto the streets, and partially because crack cocaine will devastate anyone who develops more than a passing familiarity with it. And it is sensible, when considering the de facto social Darwinism to which even liberal New Yorkers are subject, to cite Marshall McLuhan, who once wrote that “If the criminal appears as a nonconformist who is unable to meet the demand of technology that we behave in uniform and continuous patterns, literate man is quite inclined to see others who cannot conform as somewhat pathetic.”

Henri Lefebvre said the quickest way to disorient a people is to deprive them of their monuments, and Walter Benjamin, that “every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.” While it is difficult in the present political climate to argue for junkies and small-time hoodlums as a necessary component of civic life, if one thinks the Beats' lionization of a criminal underclass was to some purpose, then the answer to how a certain type of inhabitant disappeared from Manhattan opens up the question of what else disappeared with them.

To conclude this brief reminiscence, I want to relate a story from my years in Los Angeles. I moved there in 1996, renting a small Spanish-colonial bungalow for four hundred dollars a month in a neighborhood where implausible businesses pursued their trade amidst the liquor stores, mini-malls and gas stations ranged along Sunset Boulevard. What I loved about the Los Angeles I lived in—the downtown adjacent neighborhoods strung along Sunset as it meandered northwest towards Hollywood—was an appearance of benign neglect. The indifference of developers nurtured an urban lassitude where the obsolescent might be granted temporary reprieve from redevelopment.

Much of Los Angeles appeared like this—a playground of the outmoded, flotsam awaiting only market fluctuation for the bulldozer and wrecking ball to arrive. But sometimes a vague unease interfered with the pleasure of these discoveries. During the time of which I am writing, my friend Sharon and I often reflected on the phenomenon of disembodied nostalgia. More spectral than the genuine article (since nostalgia proper is tied to a real experience of time and place), this type of nostalgia-once-removed so deeply inflecting the postmodern sense of time and space results from the circulation of free-floating historical signifiers, creating a profound sense of amnesia. A synthetic confection concocted from books, records and films then projected onto the living city, disembodied nostalgia creates static and interference in space-time, conjuring up a kind of culturally-specific screen memory behind which hides the melancholic sense of history as something gustatory, consumable.

To live in Eastside Los Angeles in the late 90s was to be immersed in both extremes—history as graveyard and history as commodity. No doubt, often the one was mistaken for the other.

“A ghost is that part of your feelings you don't see, locked inside a memory of which you're unaware,” wrote the literary scholar Hugh Kenner. To lend a mediumistic gloss to Jameson's notion of pastiche, perhaps I've dwelt in this essay on my meetings with urban ghosts—both literary and real—due to the conviction they constitute, although admittedly not subject to strict objective proof, a kind of encounter with the city. They are witnesses of a sort, rendering judgment on the nature of urban transformation—like the ghost encountered by Spencer Brydon, protagonist of Henry James' 1908 story, *The Jolly Corner*. Brydon, returning after thirty years abroad, marvels at the city's transformation (“the ‘swagger’ things, the modern, the monstrous, the famous things...so many set traps for displeasure”), discovering in his family house—the one he has consented to develop into an apartment block—the ghost of the self who had stayed in New York, who hadn't gone abroad, a weathered figure missing two fingers. Commentators usually describe Brydon's encounter with this ghost as a way of figuring an encounter between the self we are and the self we might have been had different circumstances prevailed. I always thought of it as a parable for urban renewal's bad conscience, a veiled critique of the transformative nature of capitalism which renders the outmoded history's most enigmatic trace, more visible—and disconcerting—in its afterlife than its flourishing. As Susan Buck-Morss writes, “The past haunts the present; but the latter denies it with good reason.”



Michael Baers

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Perhaps one can feel haunted by the city in which one lives. Lately, I've been thinking about New York, being that recently some of my books had been transported to Berlin by my long-suffering parents (suffering under the burden of their son's chronic book-collecting). Among the random assortment of titles nestled in the cardboard box they delivered were several emblematic to me of a certain idea of New York, even if they concerned the city itself only intermittently. There was a copy of William S. Burroughs' first novel *Junky* from the 1970s (a close-up photograph of a bloodshot eye on the cover), his biography, *Literary Outlaw*, the same Black Sparrow edition of Paul Bowles' *Collected Stories* I had bought twenty years before in San Francisco, a tattered copy of Alexander Trocchi's *Cain's Book*, miscellaneous copies of *Evergreen Review* from the late 50s and early 60s, and Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*.

These books were a reminder that, coming from the West Coast, my conception of New York was in the main a literary construction: the New York of casual betrayals portrayed in Paul Bowles' short story, “How Many Midnights”; of provincials living in New York on an indefinite sojourn in Joan Didion's “Goodbye to All That” (whom I could relate to having been one myself), inhabiting indifferently furnished Manhattan apartments, seduced by a conception of New York as “an infinitely romantic notion, the mysterious nexus of all love and money and power, the shining and perishable dream itself,” or the perpetual derivé of *Cain's Book*—New York as a constantly shifting cityscape glimpsed from the deck of a barge, “the skyscrapers of Manhattan suddenly and impressively and irrelevantly there in a heat of haze.”

But what of my actual experience with New York City itself? In August of 2004 I arrived in New York from Berlin, where I had moved only the previous year, to attend the Whitney ISP, living rent-free on the twentieth floor of a red brick high rise on Grand Street, a legacy of Robert Moses' slum clearance initiatives of the 1950s. In exchange for free lodging, I served as a part-time companion to a 91-year-old retired high school art teacher. He had been pals with Barnett Newman in the fifties, but could relate nothing of this friendship, so battered was his memory by Alzheimer Disease. When I wasn't working in my studio or minding my senile charge, I walked—up Clinton Street to Avenue B and then over to Greenwich Village, down through the Meat Packing District and back through Soho. In a reductivist approach to psycho-geography, I explored the different possible routes between my apartment to the ISP's office on Lafayette Street—Essex Street to Hester (pausing, perhaps, to watch the handball players in Sarah Roosevelt Park), up to Broome Street before turning south on Lafayette—returning to different spots that interested me, like the Chinese cobbler who worked on the patch of pavement before his street-level workshop no wider than a closet door.

Goodbye to All That Redux

SHAPES OF FREEDOM

—An Interview with Elizabeth A. Povinelli
by Kim Turcot DiFruscia, Université de Montréal

To negotiate in theoretical terms the social world's unequal distribution of freedoms with the thick, dense and intense reality of people's lives, framed by gendered, racializing, and classist constraints, and to further trace how this uneven distribution of freedoms is perpetually rearranged by historical forms of power that shape ever-changing conditions of humanness, is perhaps the deepest and most audacious project to which anthropology can dedicate itself.

In this interview, Professor Elizabeth A. Povinelli explains how intimacy and the body can become pivotal sites from which to theorize adaptive liberal normativities and logics. She dislocates the conventional discursive divisions for analyzing inequalities—agency/oppression, self-sovereignty/determination—and in so doing diverges from traditional feminist approaches showing how the distinction between self-authorizing freedom and the imagining of social constraint is in itself the core, as well as an effect, of liberal segmentations of the world.

Kim DiFruscia: **In your last book, *The Empire of Love* (2006) you make a conceptual distinction between “carnality” and “corporeality”. How do you pose the sexual body through that distinction?**

Elizabeth A. Povinelli: *Empire of Love* makes a distinction between “carnality” and “corporeality” for a set of analytical reasons: to try to understand materiality in late liberal forms of power and to try to make the body matter in post-essentialist thought. If we think with Foucault then we understand that objects are object-effects, that authors are author-effects, that subjects are subject-effects, and that states are state-effects. And if we think after the critique of metaphysics of substance, say with Judith Butler, then we no longer think that the quest is to find substances in their pre-discursive authenticity. Instead we try to think how substances are produced. I believe we are now accustomed to thinking like this. But something paradoxical happened on the way to learning about object-effects and learning how to critique the metaphysics of substance: the world became rather plastic and the different, I would say, “modalities of materiality” were evacuated from our analysis. It left some of us with questions like: How can we grasp some of the qualities of a material object that is nevertheless a discursive object? How can we talk about subject-effects and object-effects without making materiality disappear or making its different manifestations irrelevant to the unequal organization of social life? How can we simultaneously recognize that discourse makes objects appear, that it does so under different material conditions, and that the matter that matters from discourse is not identical to discourse? Of course, this is a slippery path; the peril is that we will fall back into metaphysics of substance.

So this is some of the thinking on which *The Empire of Love* distinguishes between “carnality” and “corporeality”. “Corporeality” would be the way in which dominant forms of power shape and reshape materiality, how discourses produce categories and divisions between categories—human, non-human, person, non-person, body, sex, etc.—and “carnality” would be the material manifestations of that discourse, which are neither discursive nor pre-discursive. When we talk about sexuality, but also about race and

the body, I think this analytic distinction matters. In *The Empire of Love*, I first try to show how it matters and second how difficult it is to speak about those material matters without falling back into a metaphysics of substance. For instance, in the first chapter of *The Empire of Love*, “Rotten Worlds,” I track how a sore on my body is not only discursively produced, but multiply discursively produced. And how the multiple discursive productions of this sore are simultaneously a production of socialities and social obligations. Sores are endemic in the indigenous communities in which I have been working for the last twenty-five years or so in north Australia. If I put my trust in the people whom I have known better than almost anybody else in my life, I would say that my sore came from contact with a particular Dreaming, from a

particular ancestral site (which is not ancestral because it is alive). But this belief—or perhaps I should say—stating this belief as a truth isn't supported by the world as it is currently organized; or, it is supported only if they and I agree that this truth is “merely” a cultural belief. But if the sore is thought of as staphylococcus or as anthrax or as the effect of the filthiness of Aboriginal communities, as it has been claimed by physicians in Montreal or Chicago or Darwin, then this thought meets a world, which treats it as truth, as fact. These ways of examining the sore would fall under the concept of corporeality: how is the body and its illnesses being shaped by multiple, often incommensurate discourses; how are these discourses of inclusion and exclusion always already shaping and differentiating bodies, socialities and social obligations: mine and my indigenous colleagues?

And yet the concept of corporeality is not sufficient. Whether the sore is an eruption of a Dreaming or the effect of poor health care and housing and structures of racism, it still sickens the body and depending how one's body has been cared for, or is being cared for, it sickens it in different ways and to different degrees. Over time, sores such as the one I had on my shoulder and discussed in *The Empire of Love* often lead to heart valve problems, respiratory problems, etc. for my Indigenous friends. In other words, no matter what the sore is from a discursive point of view, no matter what causes it to appear as “thing,” the sore also slowly sickens a body and a material corrodes a form of life. And this slow corrosion of the life is part of the reason why, if you are Indigenous in Australia, your life runs out much sooner than non-Indigenous Australians. And if the state provides you rights based on longevity—think here of the stereotype of the old traditional person—but you are dying on average ten to twenty years sooner than non-Indigenous people, then the carnal condition of your body is out of sync with the apparatus of cultural recognition. But this body-out-of-sync is a more complex matter than merely the discourse that has produced it, nor is it going merely where discourse directs it. Carnality therefore becomes vital to understanding the dynamics of power.

SHAPES OF FREEDOM

I would say that Brian Massumi (2002) and Rosi Braidotti (2002) are engaged in similar projects. But my theoretical, conceptual interlocutors are a more motley crew: American pragmatism, Chicago meta-pragmatics, Foucault, Deleuze, late Wittgenstein, Heidegger and his concept of precognitive interpretation, what Bourdieu borrowed and turned into doxa. All of these folks are in a conversation in two important ways: First, they assume the immanent nature of social life and, second, they are interested in the organization and disorganization, the channeling and blockage of immanent social life. I take for granted that there is otherwise everywhere in the world, the question for me is: what are the institutions that make certain forms of otherwise invisible and impractical? And one answer takes me to the corporeal and the other to the carnal.

So when I think about sexuality and race I think about them through this dual materiality. I think about sexuality and race primarily as corporeal regimes. And when I think of them as corporeal regimes then the question for me is what are the discourses that shape and reshape the flesh and its affects. This is where the civilizational division between the autological subject and the genealogical subject comes into the picture. Your body and mine might be female, but this discursive fold is apprehended differently than my female friends in Australia because striated through gender, sexual and racial difference is another discursive division of late liberalism: the divide between the autological subject and the genealogical subject.

KdF: To say that the autological/genealogical divide is the configuration of institutional power prior to the sexual divide seems confrontational to feminism?

EP: Certainly in *The Empire of Love*, but also across my writings, I have kind of stubbornly refused to say how my work relates to feminism. In fact, *The Empire of Love* begins in a somewhat confrontational way, not exactly with feminism, but with sexuality, sexual theory and queer theory. I say that I am not interested in sexuality or the women question or for that matter the race question in the abstract, I am interested in them only in so far as they are what organizes, disorganizes and distributes power and difference. Of course, I think this makes me a feminist—and certainly queer! But when I think about what organizes, disorganizes and distributes power and difference then I am led to a set of more intractable issues, below a certain field of visibility as defined by identity categories. And these issues cut across liberal forms of intimacies, the market and politics. These concrete formations of liberal power took me to the division of the autological subject and genealogical society rather than to the sexual division.

KdF: Is it because you feel that the sex/gender question is a liberal question?

EP: What I find a liberal question is not the sex/gender question but the organization of “identity” (whether sex, sexuality, gender or race) on the basis of a fantasy of self-authorizing freedom. By self-authorizing freedom I mean the bootstrap relationship between the “I” of enunciation and the “I” enunciating—what do I think, what do I desire, I am what I am, I am what I want. And the trouble with this form of bootstrap performativity is not merely that it is a phantasmagorical figure of liberalism but that it continually projects its opposite into the worlds of others. What is projected is the equally phantasmagorical figure of the genealogical society—society as a thing that threatens to control and determine my relation to myself. Thus “freedom” and its “threat” are co-constituted. The freedom of the autological subject, on which demands for same-sex marriage or self-elaborated gender identity are based, is always pivoted against fantasies of communities lacking this performative form of freedom. And just to be clear, I do not believe that there are actually genealogical societies and autological societies. Instead there is a demand that one give an account of what she is doing in terms of this discursive division. In other words, the division of the autological subject and genealogical society is not about differences in the world. It is about a differential spacing of the world. Thus sex/gender, sexuality and other forms of difference aren't liberal per se. They become liberal when they are organized through this late liberal division and become legitimate vis-à-vis this division.

KdF: Why did you choose love and intimacy as the place from which to discern these liberal processes of legitimation?

EP: I will answer by referring to something I tried to show in *The Cunning of Recognition* (2002), which I think of as the prequel to *The Empire of Love*. The first

step to understanding about the relationship between love, intimacy and liberal legitimation is understanding what is being legitimated. *The Cunning of Recognition* argues that what is being legitimated is liberal exceptionalism. Liberals state that liberal forms of power are world historical in so far as they adjudicate difference on the basis of a public reason. But in actual instances of adjudication liberal ways of governing difference do not proceed purely through the rhythms of public reason and deliberate rationality. When liberals experience themselves as facing an instance of a so-called morally repugnant form of life then they insist that not all forms of life should be allowed to exist—and to be given the dignity of public reason. Too much difference is said to lie outside reasonable disagreement. (The political theorist, Michael Walzer's (2004) work is exemplary of these approaches.) This is an irresolvable limit internal to liberalism's account of itself. So in *The Cunning of Recognition* I was interested in how recognition projects this internal liberal tension between public reason and moral sense onto the subject of recognition and says to her, “you figure out how to be different enough so we can feel you are not me, but not so different that I am forced to annihilate you and thereby fracture the foundation of my exceptionalism.”

In *The Empire of Love* I became more interested in the discursive content of the liberal governance of difference, rather than merely its interactional dynamic, and in the dispersed sites of liberal governance. This is why I ask, How do we practice our deep, thick everyday lives so that we continually perpetuate the way that liberalism governs difference, even when we seem to be doing nothing more than kissing our lover goodbye? The small routines of intimacy are for me an anchor point to thinking late liberalism because every time we kiss our lover goodbye within liberal worlds, we project into the world the difference between the autological subject (the recursive ideology of the subject of freedom, the subject that chooses her life), and the genealogical society (the supra-individual agency threatening to condition our choice). The intimate event is an anchor point because it seems to me to be the densest, smallest knot where the irrevocable unity of this division is expressed. What do I mean by an irrevocable unity? In the intimate event the subject says two things simultaneously. On the one hand, the subject says “this is my love, nobody can choose it for me, I am the author of my intimacy.” Love is thereby treated as uniquely and unequivocally autological. Forget Marx, the only thing that we have that is really ours is love! But at the same time, the subject also thinks, feels, evaluates love in terms of its radical unchosen quality: “love happens, I fall in love, I hope it happens to me,” like I were struck by lightning. And the intimate event is an unavoidable anchor point. Even those people who might say that they will not love, that they hate love, that they do not want to love, must have to have a relationship to love.

KdF: In *What's Love Got to Do with It?* (2006b), you wrote about how “violence against women” is used as an excuse for genealogizing indigenous communities. Can you explain how you understand this resort to violence and sexual violence in liberal arguments?

EP: Let me answer that question by first providing a certain intellectual history to how I think about violence. At the University of Chicago there was a group called the Late Liberalism Group. The members were Michael Warner, Saba Mahmood, Lauren Berlant, Candace Vogler, Elaine Hadley, Rolph Trouillot, Patchen Markell and myself. One of the things we were puzzling about was how to think violence diagonally to liberal accounts of violence. How do we refuse the way liberalism divides violence and non-violence? How do we penetrate violence, acknowledge it outside of definitions of violence engendered by liberal arts of governance? That was the framework within which I began to think about violence, which is such a sticky matter. Violence is not—any more than the queer—an ontological category that we can define and then correlate to objects in the world according to how well they fit the definition. Violence is organized by liberal discourses, such as the autological/genealogical divide. And one of the ways I try to angle into violence is by moving away from violence and thinking about care, how forms of what constitutes care have shifted in the movement from liberalism to neoliberalism. For one thing there is a shift in the location of care—from the Keynesian state which provided a minimal level of care, minimal level of vitality, to those most in need, to the current neoliberal state that removes this cellar of care and shifts the responsibilities of care from the state to the individual. Foucault began teasing out this shift in *Naissance de la biopolitique* (2004 [1979]). He argued that neoliberalism is not laissez-faire anymore. It is not about leaving the market alone. It is about aggressively expanding the logic of the market to all aspects of life so that the market principles actually become human principles that organize life, government, intimacy, etc. Thus, in neoliberalism “caring for others” becomes removing the social resources of care and inserting market evaluations and values. The arts of governance use the same word across the shift, “care,” but the social organization of care has changed dramatically.

This shift makes certain statements impractical and infelicitous. Certain statements do not have practical traction in the world. Why don't we think that removing social welfare is a form of state killing? Especially when the neoliberal state says that its way of “caring” will make life unviable for many. “Life is going to get much worse,” we are told, “but just wait and then things will get better.” Why do we think of this as care and not as state abuse? How long are we willing to give neoliberal forms of care-as-enervation before we are willing to call them a form of killing? But even if we did name this form of care as a form of abuse, our statement cannot do anything practical in the world if all the social fields of that world—intimacy, market, child rearing, etc.—are organized around the same neoliberal model of care.

ARCHITECTURE SUB-COMMITTEE OF ARTS + CULTURE AT OCCUPY WALL STREET



1



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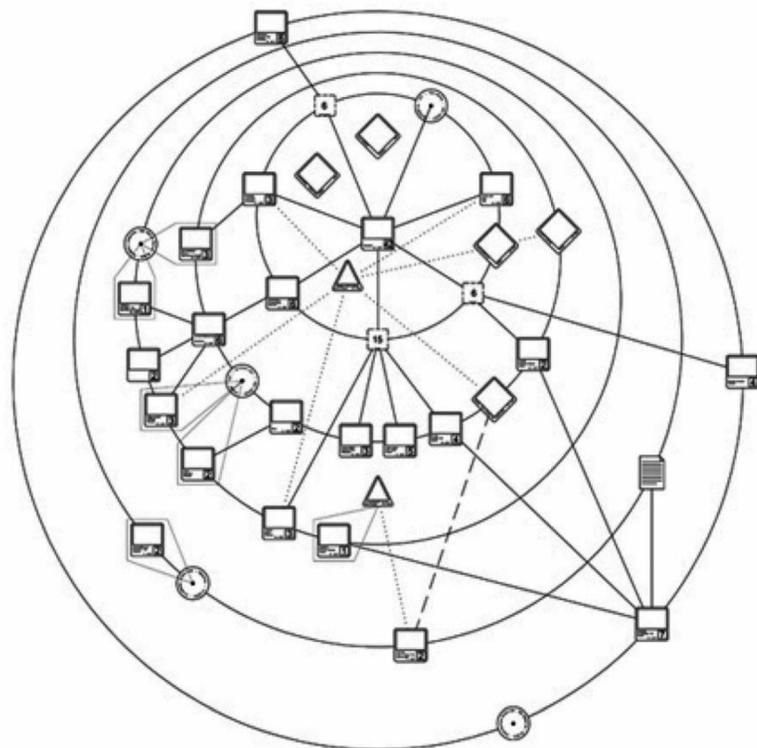
2



4

- 1-Nader Khalili (2008), *Sandbags*, California
- 2-Gaia (2010), *Veasyble*, Toronto
- 3-Yona Friedman (1960 + 1994), *Continent-City Europe*
- 4-A. Conglomerate (2011), *Streetwearable*, New York

Subject: **ARCHITECTURE SUB-COMMITTEE**
OF ARTS + CULTURE AT
OCCUPY WALL STREET



5

Subject: Architecture sub-committee of Arts + Culture at Occupy Wall Street
From: M@*****
Date: Fri., October 7, 2011 9:46 PM
To: occupy@*****

The Arts + Culture coordinators at Occupy Wall Street (OWS) have given me the go-ahead to form an Architecture sub-committee of the Arts + Culture Committee. This is a bit of a formality, since presence at Zuccotti Park is public and open source, but it means there are at least 1 or 2 people deeply involved with day-to-day Occupation and with the Arts + Culture aspect, who are aware of what we may be doing.

What I have ascertained this week is that our efforts as architects will have the most impact if we are, in a way, solving our own problems. This means going to the park, spending time there, and becoming our own client body. We will have the most impact, the most design freedom, and the most legitimacy in what we are doing if we approach the project this way. If we start designing for "them" we will waste half our time trying to figure out who "they" really are, who really speaks for "them," and what "they" want. That said, I would like to propose we plan to meet regularly at the park (Zuccotti Park). I propose FRIDAY AT 3PM on an ongoing basis. Please let me know if you make this.

There will be design work, but also legal/code research, project management, materials research, outreach (fundraising + friendraising), graphic design, construction supervision and other roles. I am hoping we can start parsing this out Friday, as well.

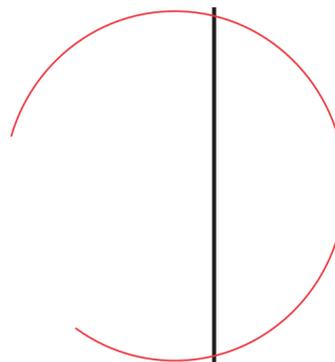
Below is some useful text from the website about existing strategies for storage, preparation for cold weather, and a bit about legal issues with tents.

Upwards,
M.

"As the Occupation moves into autumn we need to prepare for the onset of chilly weather.

- Most Needed:
- Sleeping bags, blankets, tarps and large, clear plastic storage bins to keep it all dry.
 - Polar fleece sweaters, pants, socks and gloves are also appreciated as everybody has some buried in a box somewhere.
 - We are not allowed to set up tents in Liberty Plaza as they are considered both a structure and an obstruction. We have implemented the use of a few bivouac/bivy sacks and are under the impression that they are not considered a "structure," so long as they do not have a pole holding them up. There are cheap disposable Emergency Bivys ranging from \$5-15 and more durable ones starting at about \$50."

5-Santiago Cirugeda (2010), *Herramienta Arquitecturas Colectivas*
 6-Haus Rucker Co. (1968), *Transformen*, Vienna



from: M@*****
to: occupy@*****
date: Sat., Oct. 22, 2011 at 2:59 PM
subject: OWS architecture committee update - next meeting Tue 4pm
OWS architecture:

Update from yesterday's meeting:
 There were 20 minutes or so of brainstorming design possibilities, from communal living concepts to camouflage habitats, wayfinding and circulation, garbage collection and more. We focused on potential working methodologies that would produce a project within 3 weeks (the timeline supported by OWS Town Planning).

We decided to select a client for whom to build a prototype overnight space, with a secondary focus on the publication of a catalogue or taxonomy of problems and design solutions. We called this the "laundry list." These are comparable to streetscape designs for a fluid public space.

As our client, we made contact with a young activist named S. She was recommended by one of the lead OWS facilitators (J.). She has been on site for 2-3 weeks, but not staying overnight. She has a backpack and a guitar. She works and attends school. Her boyfriend also plays guitar and spends time at Zuccotti Park.

If enough of us start participating actively in this sub-committee it would be possible to take on a second client for this 3-week prototype phase. If so, it would be good to include someone who has already been sleeping overnight.

Thanks. See you Tuesday or Friday.
 Upwards,
 M.

From: C@*****
To: M@*****
CC: occupy@*****
Date: Sat., Oct. 8, 2011, 10:38 AM

Anything that can be constructed as something worn is probably not a structure, and therefore is less likely to be challenged by the NYPD, etc.

I know that if I were there, I would want warmth and dryness in addition to the emotional comfort of other bodies, the intellectual sustenance of participating in the occupation movement, and the physical comfort and routine of regular meals. But if people can't keep their bodies functioning comfortably, everything will fall apart pretty quickly in terms of a reasonable intellectual and political build-up of clarity.

ALSO IMPORTANT: material considerations MUST take into account fabrics that really, really, really start to smell when a lot of people use them/sweat in them/otherwise get them wet/and don't wash (their bodies or the materials) vs. fabrics that don't. Seriously, this is the biggest problem of vintage clothing: wool stinks. And so does rayon. And polyester. Etc.

I think that it's great that over the course of the past few months you've moved from thoughts of flash mobs (Improv Everywhere) to revolution (Occupy Everywhere).

Love,
 C.



6



3 ...Three, Two, One, Contact: Times Square Red

December 1997-April 1998

As long as there is something like experience, it is not entirely mine.
—Avital Ronell, *Finitude's Score*

(...) §7.33. There is a conservative, stabilizing discourse already in place that sees interclass contact as the source of pretty much everything dangerous, unsafe, or undesirable in the life of the country right now—from AIDS and “perversion” in all its forms, to the failures of education and neighborhood decay, to homelessness and urban violence. This discourse stabilizes the rhetoric in its particular anti-AIDS, anti-sex and anti-crime (and even pro-theater) form that the infrastructural changes are generating, even though anyone familiar with the Times Square area can see that what is going on has nothing to do with this rhetoric and often contradicts it so flagrantly as to produce some Kafkaesque, if not Orwellian, nightmares.

Because of this discourse, any social form (or, indeed, architectural form) that shies us away from contact and contact-like situations and favors networking or relatively more network-like situations is likely to be approved. (...) And more and more of the middle classes flock to networking situations, looking for the break, the chance, the pleasure, the lucky encounter, the hand up that will allow them to move through social, class, and/or economic strata—breaks, chances, pleasures, and lucky encounters that networking is not set up to provide, and often specifically retards.

§7.41. I hope—and hope very much—that the New Times Square works. Because cities function the way they do, however, if it works, parts of it will work by accident. Mr. Stern says that his employers want to promote more economic diversity. Well, I have to ask: More diversity relative to what? Certainly not to the old Times Square. Take the now completed section of the north face of the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues: In the old Times Square, there was a cigar store on the corner, followed by a tie store, followed by a working entrance to a theater whose main body was around on Seventh Avenue, followed by another small clothing store, then the Brandt Theater, followed by the Victory Theater: that is to say, there were six commercial spaces, three of which were theaters and three of which were small sales outlets.

Along that same stretch of the New Times Square, there is Ferrara's on the corner (selling pastry and coffee). Last October, the next commercial space was occupied by a shop called Shade (which sold sun hats and sunglasses), but already it's out of business. Its papered-over store window currently announces, *Coming Soon! The Brooklyn Pastrami Company*. But the fact that one business has already folded in the New Times Square on what is supposed to be one of the world's busiest corners is not a good sign. This site is followed by Dapy (which sells a variety of tourist junk), followed by Magic Max, a magic store (there has traditionally been a magic store in the area; for years it was at the Eighth Avenue end of the block, down in the subway entrance); after that is the New Victory Theater, on the site of the old Victory: that's five commercial spaces—one theater and four stores. The drop from six to five is a drop of almost 17 percent. Certainly prices, goods, and other factors will contribute to economic diversity. But the architectural separation of the space represents a fairly firm “bottom line” beyond which diversity cannot go, unless those spaces are further broken up.

Nostalgia for the earlier six spaces over the current five is no more in question here than some fancied nostalgia for a half dozen years of rampant underage crack prostitution in the mid-eighties. Rather, what we are speaking of is the public presentation of the square by its developers, who say the builders are trying to promote economic diversity (when they are designing for relative economic homogeneity), or that they are opposed to drugs or violence against women, in order to make us feel that the project has some benefits for us. I am only pointing out that they have already—ruthlessly and vigorously—promoted all three (drugs, violence, and underage prostitution) in the pursuit of what they are after. The idea that they will suddenly turn around and actually oppose them for any reason other than profit is, once more, naïve. (...)

Desire is just inseparable from public contact. Desire and knowledge (body and mind) are not a fundamental opposition; rather, they are intricately imbricated and mutually constitutive aspects of political and social life. Situations of desire (as Freud noted in *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* [1910]) are the first objects and impellers of intellectual inquiry. Our society has responded to this in many ways, from putting the novel and poetry at the center of our study of the humanities to developing the old Times Square area at the center of the city that has been called the Capital of the Twentieth Century in much the way Paris is called the Capital of the Nineteenth Century.

of pervasive and homogenized safety.

Those images are, of course, simpler to hold on to than the politically more useful ones, which tell us that in general the city is a pretty safe place, though the violence that occurs there is largely random. There are certainly specific types of big-city smarts (walking next to the curb on dark streets; listening, on sparsely populated streets, to make sure the group of people coming up behind you are engaged in conversation; a sense of what streets to avoid at which hours). Those areas where violence may be reasonably expected with some frequency (often the first place the tourist sees: The bus station, the train station, the streets around Times Square) tend to operate on a largely small-town model and thus can usually be negotiated with ordinary (dare I say it) small-town common sense. But the comparative urban paucity of violence is among the most powerful factors constituting the freedom of action and thought—so often called opportunity—that small town simply cannot proffer.

§8.3. City dwellers need to be educated as well. City dwellers need to be educated to the necessity of contact and contact venues. As well, they need to have a clear notion of why contact cannot be replaced with networking institutions in some ill-conceived attempt to sidestep urban violence.

In the name of family values, safety, and profits, developers are designing the new mall of New York to suppress as much street contact as they possibly can, however vital it is to city life. In no way is this just Times Square's problem. It is the multi-urban problem of the country, and it arises anywhere that American designers have stepped in to model various civic centers. The reason we allow and even encourage it is that people do not understand the workings of urban mechanisms. Believing that networking institutions can supply the same or even better benefits than contact, we have been convinced that we *should* fear contact.

People educated in the realities of city functioning must make their demands—and their fears—articulate. Because we have a system where the public's perception is, indeed, as powerful as it is (it can put off a greedy, money-grabbing set of construction deals by a decade), it can also promote the planning and construction of civic spaces designed to encourage contact rather than discourage it, and make it appear a profit-making process. (A park surrounded only by residences, especially towering apartments, soon becomes a locked fortress like Gramercy Park and/or a criminal inferno like the central parks in so many low-cost housing projects. A park sided by a variety of human services, including coffee shops and inexpensive restaurants liberally intermixed with residences and other commercial establishments soon becomes a self-policing venue that promotes relaxed anxiety-free use—and urban contact.) We have to educate people to look not so much at social objects and social monuments but to observe, analyze, and value a whole range of social relationships.

§8.5. (...) Our society wants to condense, distill, centralize, and giantize. But when this becomes a form—the form—of social engineering, whether in the form of upper-class residential neighborhoods with no stores and no working-class residences, whether in the form of business neighborhoods with no residences at all, or in the

form of industrial neighborhoods with no white-collar businesses and no stores, the result is a social space than can do well only as long as money is poured constantly into it. Such locations have no way of producing the economic cushioning that holds things stable at the infrastructural level. While such neighborhoods may be, at their outset, provisionally convenient, or uncrowded, or even beautiful, they can never remain pleasant to move around in over any extended period. Without a web of social pleasantries, uncrowded soon becomes lonely; beautiful becomes artificial; and even the convenience of propinquity transforms into the oppressing necessity to be where one would rather not. Under such valuative shifts, all too quickly follow those material transformations wrought by time alone, where neat and well cared for become abandoned, dirty, filled with trash, and rundown, while another neighborhood, three times or five times or ten times as old, which has nevertheless been able to maintain that stabilizing web of lived social pleasantries and diversity, is perceived—however shabby it may be—as quaint and full of historical interest.

What I and many other small voices are proposing is that we utilize consciously the same principles of socioeconomic diversity through which those pleasant, various, and stable neighborhoods that were never planned grew up naturally. Purposely we must reproduce those multiform and variegated social levels to achieve like neighborhoods as ends.

If our ideal is to promote movement among the classes and the opportunity for such movement, we can do it only if we create greater propinquity among the different elements that make up the different classes.

That is diversity.

Today, however, diversity has to claw its way into our neighborhoods as an afterthought—often as much as a decade after the places have been built and thought out. (It is not just that there were once trees and public ashtrays on Forty-second Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. There were also an apartment house and grocery stores, an automat, a sporting goods store, clothing stores, bookstores, electronics stores, a cigar store and several newsstands, and half a dozen restaurants at various levels, all within a handful of meters of the Candler office tower— as well as the dozen movie theaters and amusement halls [Fascination, Herbert's Flea Circus], massage parlors and sex shows for which the area was famous, for almost fifty years— fifty years that encompassed the heyday and height of the strip as the film and entertainment capital of the city, of the world.) Why not begin by designing for such variety?

Excerpts from *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*
(NYU Press, 1999)



But we might give more thought to the necessary and productive aspect of this imbrication of knowledge and desire as it expresses itself so positively in so many forms of contact, before—with a wrecking ball and even more sweeping legislation—we render that central structure asexual and “safe” in the name of family values and corporate gigantism.

§7.43. The nature of the social practices I am interrogating is such that specific benefits and losses cannot be systematized, operationalized, standardized, or predicted. What I am saying, however, is that most people—especially those who live in cities—if they look over the important occurrences in their lives over a substantial period of time, will likely notice that a substantial number of the important or dramatic ones, material or psychological, first arrived through strangers encountered in public spaces. This tendency is not an accident. It is a factor of the relative concentration of specific needs and suppliers in various social venues.

Networking situations start by gathering a population all with the same or relatively similar needs. While this concentration creates a social field that promotes the rapid spread of information among the members about those needs, the relatively high concentration of need itself militates against those needs being materially met within the networking situation—indeed, militates against their being met until the members physically abandon the network group and disperse into other venues.

Without in any way disparaging the excellences, pleasures, and rewards of small-town life, one must still acknowledge: The greater population and subsequently greater variety of needs and beneficial excesses to be found in cities make public contact venues, from the social to the sexual, a particularly important factor for social movement, change, and a generally pleasant life in a positive and pleasant democratic urban atmosphere.

(...) §8.2. What has happened to Times Square has already made my life, personally, somewhat more lonely and isolated. I have talked with a dozen men whose sexual outlets, like many of mine, were centered on that neighborhood. It is the same for them.

We need contact.

In these notes I have tried to go over some of the material and economic forces that work—on Forty-second Street and in general—to suppress contact in the name of “giving people what they want.” I hope I've made it clear: The erosion of contact on Forty-second Street is only an instance of a larger trend, in which sex is involved in some places and in others not—though desire and/or the fear of desire works through them all.

How can we promote more contact—and possibly even reverse this trend?

Education is certainly one factor—particularly education about the way complex social units, such as cities and city neighborhoods, function. People about to come to the city need a more realistic view of what they will find when they get here. Most important, they must be disabused of the notion of the city as a unified and pervasive place of homogenized evil—as well as the equally false image that the Forty-second Street Development Project would replace it with: the image of a space

breadcrumb trails...

“The uniqueness—and also the precariousness—of the relation between concepts and the things we presume they stand for in the process of research is derived precisely from the fact that these things are in a state or condition such that we simply *cannot* yet point to them. If we could point to them, they would already have lost their urgency and their essential epistemic value to us. Thus, epistemically interesting relations between concepts and objects cannot take the simple form of ostension; epistemic objects cannot (yet) be pointed to. They have no reference in the everyday sense of the word. If there is reference, it is always only suppositional; its precise meaning remains elusive.

There are two possible solutions to this essential tension. The first, is that the epistemic object is transformed into a technical object, that is, into a state in which the relation between concept and object is no longer problematic. This means that within the confines of the accepted standards, the object has become transparent with respect to the concept that refers to it.

Epistemic things, are *invested* with meaning, they are not just “named.”
—Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, “Epistemic Objects/Technical Objects”

Negotiating a city implies a level of alertness and stress: the kind that comes with the constant calculations so as not to bump into people, cars, cyclists, etc; and the more complex actions like performing specific tasks orienting oneself or “finding the way.” In my case this is more stressful than usual—I have what could be called “spatial dyslexia”—meaning that I get constantly lost and cannot find my way to get from one place to another. This “condition” is so severe, that even though I spent almost 15 years in NY, I still get lost in Manhattan—which is a city laid out as an orderly grid, with the streets and avenues numbered sequentially.

Not long ago I was given a GPS as a birthday present by a friend that got tired of waiting for me to find my way to appointments. At first I was quite happy with the present, but after the novelty wore out, I quickly came to hate it. The restoration of my sense of orientation came at a heavy cost: the GPS started to determine my relationship to space in terms of speed and maximum efficiency, which are not the cardinal notions that I want to use to measure life. In essence, the GPS took away my chances to get lost, which is something that I then realized I enjoy. It didn’t seem worth it, so gave it up quickly.

What I noticed is that when I am mapping a trajectory from point A to point B, I choose non-stationary landmarks. The instructions that I give to myself are “ok, make a left there where the 3 pigeons are resting on the tree, and then walk until you reach those 5 men gathered on a street corner. Then make a right at the yellow car that is idling on the red light.” This creates effectively a “one-way only” map, a trajectory that cannot be retraced and therefore cannot be repeated. Like the breadcrumb map made by Hansel and Gretel, one-way maps disappear as fast as they are being written, and they convey an idea of the un-mappable: “indirect” or “errant” trajectories that develop according to their own logic, and that cannot be captured as data, or as readable paths on a simulation of space, or on a Cartesian plane.

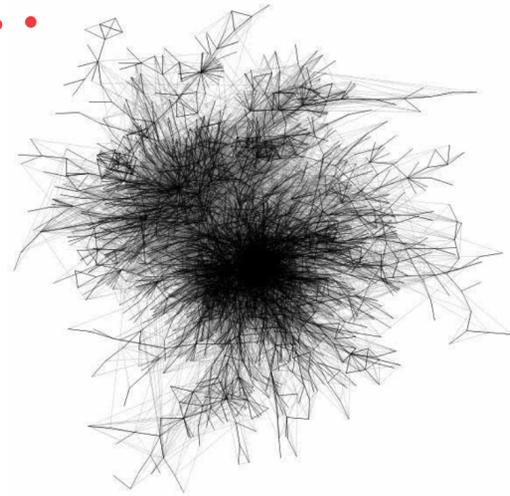
There is a productive aspect to getting lost: the moment when the question “Where am I?” breaks into my assigned set of tasks and trajectories, and impregnates my world for a second. A disruption is made and I have to establish myself in relationship to the objects that surround me: where I am? Who am I? Who am I while here?

The maps that we use and make are a constant territorialization of space, a definition of reality in terms of the known. They generate sets of “productive” relationships—and I say this using the worst possible connotation of the word “productive.” The problem is that, once those “productive” relationships become categorically defined as real, the tension and urgency to find another possibility for reality becomes slackened. Out of their very essence, maps are devices that outline power relationships and a kind of obligatory language. They lay out a disciplinary grid, describing and accounting for all of the complex rules that could be involved on any given operation, and the use of the map then becomes indexical to power structures.

There are maps that give us the content of things, accumulations of data, how many hamburgers have been eaten in Kentucky on the past year, how many people used their cell phones at midnight during New Year’s eve, what is the median age of the average listener of 93.4 fm. Those are frightening maps that try to tell us what the world is made of, what kind of relationships exist, formally packaged into a sense that defines things not in terms of their ontological qualities, but in terms of their use value, as if that was what constitutes the thing-ness of a thing.

How much, how many, how fast.
The world as a set of “productive” relationships, so I am tricked and start believing that what things are is what things do.

An ideal map should only determine the perimeter of things, rather than the space within those things. Maps should tell us that certain things exist, an even that they have a given shape, but without telling us what these things are —A map that acts only as a marker in space.



Map of the blogosphere, 2010



Looking at the density of certain maps—not in terms of what is being mapped, but in terms of representation—it is evident that there is very little elbow room on their propositions of space. I don’t quite know what are these maps of, but they feel very “productive”—productive, in a capitalist sense, in the sense that they produce a predictable “engagement.”

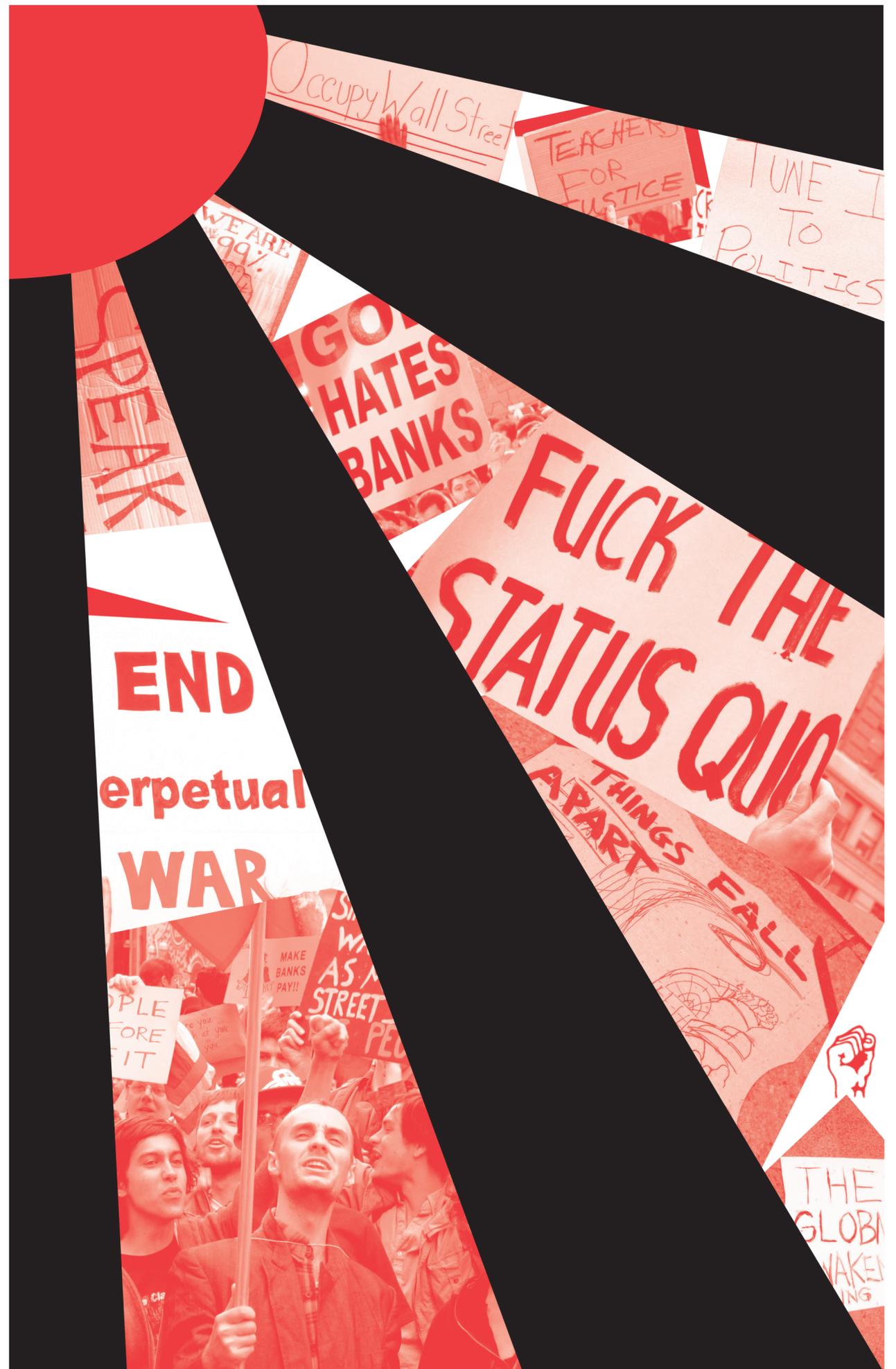
So if I have to think about a map, then what appears to me as truly urgent is to figure out how can a social body resist being reduced and inserted into this disciplinary grid, and to somehow redistribute the situation enough so that all the dispersed activities and engagements that take place in the space of tension of the every day, can continue happening without being classified and entered into a system of checks and balances.

We produce maps because we want to know where everything is because we think that we are lost or because we think that we have lost something; the connection to what we understand to be the immanent core of the world. But is this core actually available to us, or is it being determined precisely in terms of its absence? While an alleged disconnection from tradition is commonly considered to result from a modern break, could it be that not only this break, but the very remoteness of tradition itself is one of modernity’s primary myths?

Whether or not and in what sense this immanent core exists and can be mapped, is one question. And the question of whether, as a global metaphysical fact, absence or negativity is ontologically prior to positivity is a different question. This is a case of negative dialectics, in which a positive is potentially thought in terms of the relevant negative(s). The difference is that usually negatives are not construed as “thing-like” and, in this case the effort is to give priority to the absence-of-the-object, itself co-constructed as object-like.

The relevant thing here is that, this connection to the essential qualities of the world has never been directly available to us, it has always been there but it has always been something that we have to find. There is no shortcut, no way to get there fast. We can find things quickly, but we cannot find the meaning of things all that quick, and a world made of things without meaning is a world made of relationships of production that have no productive use.

The meaning of things is never going to be located in a fixed place —you can know that a given thing exists, and you can know that this given thing has a meaning. But as to what the meaning of the thing is—its alethic truth— it is never revealed outright, the meaning has to be produced simultaneously in the object and in the subject, a single use map that binds the thing to its contextual ontological qualities. The thing will never be the same thing twice, the map that leads you there cannot be used by anyone else because it charts a trajectory that describes the relationship between the thing and he who perceives it; subject and object fused in a moment.





live performance



Rebellious Silence, 1994. ©Shirin Neshat. Courtesy: Gladstone Gallery, New York.

Generally, with *Rapture*, I learned the strength of choreography and body language as a way to tell a story. Up to then my photographs were still images, devoid of background landscape, or a narrative.

With *OverRuled*, my current performance, I want to create a new experience for the audience, where for the first time they might feel that they are actually entering into one of my videos or a film set. So there would be no longer a separation between the art and the viewer. I see performance art is an opportunity to have a collective event, where the artists and the audience have a shared experience. I suppose what interests me, as it was with filmmaking; is notion of community and redefining ways in which artists can engage and communicate with the various audiences.

(Question from the audience) **I found your piece *Turbulent* to be very nostalgic. I have been reading many critical reviews on the relation between analog and digital and the old versus the new, and I wonder if that is what inspired you to make that piece?**

SN: *Turbulent* was a piece that focused on the subject of how women are deprived from the experience of music and public performance in Iran. The video installation presented two projections on two opposite walls and the audience was seated in between them. On the one side, a male singer sang to a full theatre, and on the other side, a female singer sang to an empty theatre. If the male singer's passionate song was traditional, the female singer's powerful voice broke all rules of traditional music and pioneered its own expression. So at last, the piece became a form of confrontation between the masculine and the feminine and between the conformist and the rebellious. I've felt that from most of my past work, *Turbulent* is the piece that has been unanimously understood, possibly due to the use music that struck an emotional chord with the audience and offered a truly universal resonance.

(Question from the audience) **Your work is formed and influenced by cultural issues. Does your community in your country of origin have access to your work? How do you think your work empowers those communities, especially women?**

SN: As most of you are aware, Iran is a dictatorship and artists such as me pose a problem for the government. I haven't actually been able to go back since 1996, but thanks to technology, the Internet and the power of piracy, my work has been widely seen there. I was really shocked to discover how many people had seen *Women Without Men* even in small towns all throughout Iran. Culture has a great place in Iranian society and artists are central to the social and political discourse. Since the 2009 election, artists have been very vocal through their work, through their participation in protests and through speaking in the media against the regime. Oddly enough, for a country that censors, arrests and imprisons its artists, artists have become the government's greatest threat and art has become a form of resistance.

One of Iran's most important living filmmakers, Jafar Panahi has been given six years in prison and banned from making films for twenty years in punishment for his recent films, but also for being active in the green movement. I think my work and movsaddy all such artists' lives are at risk whether living inside or outside of Iran.

(Question from the audience) **What do you think of the revival of performance art? Performance is more accepted now than it was 10 years ago. Why do you think this is happening?**

SN: I am not as knowledgeable about the history of performance in the West as I should be. My inspiration for live performances is rooted in my Middle Eastern background. I see what I am doing less as a piece of theatre than as an "event," which relates to my interest in activism and in bringing together politics and art to the general public.

Excerpts from a conversation between RoseLee Goldberg, Shirin Neshat and members of the audience, hosted at the New York Public Library on October 5, 2011, in celebration of the publication Performa 09: Back to Futurism.

SHIRIN NESHAT

—on live performance

An Interview with RoseLee Goldberg



Production still for *The Last Word*, 2003. ©Shirin Neshat. Courtesy: Gladstone Gallery, New York.

Shirin Neshat has taken a multi-ranged path across mediums over the course of her long career, moving from photography and video to film and live performance. Each shift into a new medium, Shirin once told me, allowed her to add layers of content and information to her work. With each new medium, she said, she felt she could speak more boldly about the complex issues—social, political, gender related—that concern her.

RoseLee Goldberg: **Shirin, it would be really interesting if we could begin with a comment from you about moving across mediums, and what it felt like for you to create your first live piece in 2001.**

Shirin Neshat: Let me begin by saying that ever since I've become active as an artist, I've taken a very nomadic approach to art forms. I have moved rather quickly from photography to video, to performance art, and then toward cinema. At times, I've wondered, why so much change? Why am I so restless? And I've come to the conclusion that ultimately an artist's work is a reflection of the artist's life and personality. I've learned to live as a nomad. I'm constantly on the move. I've never seemed to stay at the same place for very long. I've embraced the idea of new beginnings and I've felt the need to reinvent myself. In fact, I am terrified of stagnation and repetition. When I made the transition to filmmaking, as ambitious and difficult as that process was, I enjoyed the challenge and the elements of the unknown very much. In many ways, all these transitions have kept me on my edge, and have made me feel vital and relevant, not in respect to the art world, but to myself as an artist, feeling that I'm still learning, growing and experimenting.

Going back to photography, I remember my first series called *Women of Allah* had a performative quality in the way that I posed for the images and played various roles. Later, with the videos, the physical design of the installations created a situation where the audience was seated in between the two screens, witnessing the story in two parts, never quite able to watch both sides at the same time. Therefore, the audience literally became a participant in the piece, as they were physically divided and engaged with the narrative. Later, cinema taught me about reconsidering the audience, as I moved out of the gallery and museum walls, away from a purely commodity-driven enterprise and toward a general public.

When I first did live performance, I was terrified. Unlike film and photography where you can take time and edit, there is something un-nerving about live performance where you loose a certain amount of control; and you find yourself at the mercy of chance, accidents, and the chemistry of the audience and of the performers.

RLG: **Can you talk further about being terrified by live performance and also about of the difference between working in live mode and in film? I also think that they are very different worlds. In live performance you can rehearse for weeks. I remember you asking me once, "Why do we need a whole week for rehearsal?" I said, "You will be grateful for that week later on." Later on you told me, "Thank goodness we had that week, it has taken so long to figure it out." You do need time to build the work during rehears-**

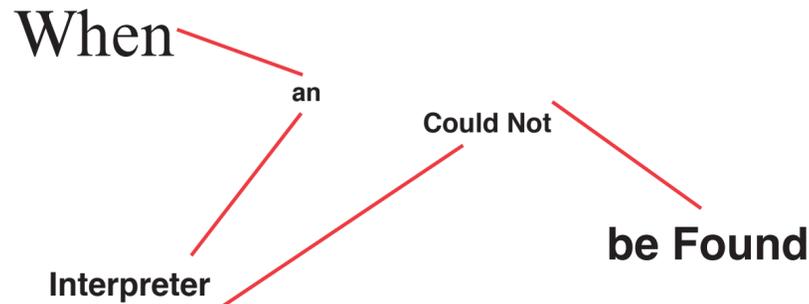
al. Another thing you said that was fascinating to me was, "Eye contact, you said that there was something incredible about being with the audience..." Could you talk about this more?

SN: The first live performance I did was *Logic of the Birds*. I was coming from making photographs and 10-minute long video pieces, so the idea of making a piece that lasted around 60 minutes, and that had a form of development (a beginning, middle and end), became a challenge. I realized that coming from still images and short videos, one rarely thought about the audience's attention span, as they could simply walk away. But in both film and live performance, you have the audience's full attention for much longer, therefore one has to carefully calculate the narrative comprehension as well as the pacing and dramatic arc to keep the audience interested. I struggled with all of this at the beginning as I realized that I was far more experienced in creating provocative images than in telling stories. The most helpful in that regard was to surround myself with people who have the skills and necessary experience, such as my long time collaborator and partner in life, artist and filmmaker, Shoja Azari.

Throughout the past many years, I have learnt that as artists we must not overestimate ourselves. For example, just because we have made short videos, we are not qualified to make a feature length movie, or if you have done photography you are not necessarily fit to direct a performance piece. While we must take risks and experiment, we must respect and learn that every art form has its own language and set of rules. So blurring the boundaries between forms comes with a certain amount of education, responsibility, of course of excitement, and anxiety!

RLG: **How did your first live piece *Logic of the Birds* affect your subsequent work? Now that you are doing another performance, are ready to go through that anxiety again?**

SN: The first time I even allowed myself to think about a live performance was when we were shooting *Rapture*, a video I made in Morocco back in year 2000. There were several highly choreographed moments, as one hundred women in black veils moved about in a natural landscape and one hundred men in white shirts in a fortress. As the men's and women's bodies moved in lines, circles and triangles in juxtaposition together, an odd visual and aesthetic experience was created not unlike a dance performance. The live experience of watching these bodies move in various landscapes was so incredible that I suddenly thought about how powerful it would have been if my audience had been physically present to watch the actual scene unravel live, as opposed to encountering only its representation in the form of a video.



After 2001, rightwing anti-immigrant groups were able to rebrand themselves as super-patriots. The rise of the Minutemen militia came about in this context. At the same time, nativism was also barricaded at times by a pro-immigrant politics that seemingly (perhaps temporarily) had sturdier roots in America than it does in Europe. Consider for a moment the Reagan era, when a 1986 law¹ gave amnesty and a path to legalization for undocumented migrants who had been in America since 1982, or had worked on a farm as seasonal labour. The political process, in this instance, included a desire to reward those immigrants who had no criminal record, and who were willing to give labor, especially on the farm—landscape of labor deficit and symbolism. But in more recent times, such laws seem less likely (although the DREAM Act is an exception), because undocumented migrants are now permanently twinned with the idea of “security threat.”

In Europe, anti-immigrant groups had great trajectory and resonance as far back as the 1980s. In Germany, church asylum and anti-racist groups had tried to popularize the slogan “Kein Mensch ist illegal” with mixed success. They also joined forces with other European coalitions pressing for the rights of “sans papiers.” But these concepts became harder to argue in the last decade. After the 2005 London bombings, anti-migrant sentiment intensified as Tony Blair reminded the British people that immigration was no longer a right, but rather a privilege.

“Loyalty” and “belonging” now started to be framed through instruments such as a proposed “Britishness” test and a specialized German citizenship test in the province of Baden-Württemberg². Back in 1990, British politician Norman Tebbit had said that the true test of the “Britishness” of British Asians was whether they cheered for India/Pakistan or England in a cricket match. Tebbit’s views became popular again after the London bombing. But there was also resistance to these ideas, such as BBC viewers’ responses to the “Britishness” test in the form of suggested questions: “If the plural of ‘mouse’ is ‘mice’, what is the plural of ‘house’?”; “If someone bumped into you in the corridor and it was not your fault, would you still say sorry?”; “Is binge drinking a good idea?”; “What side should the port be passed on?”; “Which breed of dog does the Queen favour?” and, of course, “Shepherd’s Pie with ale or Lamb Bhuna with Cobra?”

Museum audiences sometimes wanted to consider *Visible Collective* as “representing” the post-2001 vulnerable groups. But *Visible Collective*’s members individual experiences were mediated by class privilege, citizenship and access. To underscore this, we frequently displayed a “Privilege Matrix” slide, which showed, through color-coded bars, the birth place and US citizenship status of each member. Birth places ranged from Kolkata to Los Angeles, but every member was either a “Birthright” Citizen, a “Naturalized” Citizen or a “Green Card”/Legal Permanent Resident. This contrasted with vulnerable groups of immigrants, in varying liminal states (“processing papers,” “out of status” or undocumented), with no access to public platforms.

Elsewhere, in the news, members of a new South Asian elite were being highlighted, drawing a distinction between “good” and “bad” immigrants. *Newsweek International* editor Fareed Zakaria, when asked by Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show*, replied “I am 100% legal.”⁴ In the finance industry, Fareed’s brother Arshad Zakaria was the youngest co-president at Merrill Lynch before being ousted during palace intrigues against Stanley O’Neal (coincidentally the first African-American CEO of a major Wall Street bank)⁵. It was possible for the Zakarias to be in exceptional careers in seeming contra-stream to a time of intensified scapegoating. Fareed Zakaria’s cachet rose with his ability to explain “what do **they** think?” His successor at *Newsweek*, Tunku Varadarajan, went a step further when he wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* that he was willing to go through racial profiling for the sake of collective safety⁶.

But working class migrants, lacking this smooth class privilege, experienced racial profiling differently. When border security inspects a “Muslim” identity, it is of course a problematic and semi-faux category (defined usually, and often incorrectly, by surname, place of origin and passport). But to the extent such measures were deployed, those most likely to be effected were blue collar labor migrants, not high-skill financiers, journalists and technocrats.

A throughline in this time was the idea of hyper-visibility (as suspects) twinned with continued invisibility (as working class population). In cities such as New York, working class South Asian migrants drive taxis, sell newspapers and coffee, clean restaurant tables and work in the kitchens. In the Middle East and elsewhere with similar in-between spaces, they work in cleaning, childcare, construction, and everything in between. Migrants are therefore intimately present in our physical space (the “our” also includes the city’s South Asian middle class and elite), but absent from the broader consciousness. Only when migrants become suspects do they acquire hyper-visibility as “your mysterious neighbors.” From this impulse comes the *New Yorker*

Visible Collective was a coalition of artists, educators, and legal activists exploring contested migrant identities (including religion as an externally-imposed, imperfect proxy for ethnicity) within the context of US post-2001 security panic. The Collective’s members included Naeem Mohaiemen, Anandaroop Roy, Jee-Yun Ha, Donna Golden, Aimara Lin, Vivek Bald, Kristofer Dan-Bergman, JT Nimoy, Sehban Zaidi, Anjali Malhotra, Aziz Huq, Sarah Olson, and Ibrahim Quraishi.

Visible Collective’s projects are archived at disappearedinamerica.org

cover with a Bin Laden lookalike studying the subway map over the heads of sleeping passengers⁷, and the *Village Voice* cover with (another) Laden clone looking back from the taxi driver’s seat⁸.

These processes of hypervisibility and “othering” are not unique to South Asian, Arab or other (presumed “Muslim”) migrant groups, nor a new development. Think back to the tumultuous history of racial epithets (“wop,” “dago,” “spic”), signage (“No Niggers, No Irish, No Dogs”), physiognomy (magazine feature during WWII that identified “differences” between a “Jap” (enemy) and “Chink” (ally)), popular culture (antisemitism especially up to WWII), whispering campaigns (targeting German Americans during both World Wars), incarceration (Japanese-American internment), public hearings (the Second Red Scare and HUAC), and profiling (“driving while black”).

While there has been a continued evolution of “suspect” groups within the body politic, it is noticeable that as one minority group becomes the target population, members of other minority groups can be deployed as labor for this new policing. Taking popcorn cinema as a weathervane, we can look at scenes from the stoner-humor *Harold & Kumar* franchise for a glimpse into shifting positions of South Asian self-perception.

In 2004’s *Harold & Kumar go to White Castle*, Kumar taunts the white racists who torment Asian 7-11 clerks (“Thank you come again!”) But by 2008 in *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*, he clashes with a black security guard, accusing him of racial profiling (“**Security Guard**: Racist? Dude, I’m black! / **Kumar**: Please, dude. You’re barely even brown.”) Finally, by 2011 in *A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas*, there are miscegenation quips (“Sorry... I don’t date black guys”), underlining a simplistic rendering of “Muslim(Brown) is the new Black.”

Visible Collective was interested in subverting media spaces, especially advertising forms that burrow their way into public consciousness. For example, *Really Stephen?* riffed on Stephen Meisel’s Vogue Italia tableaux of waifish white models being patted down, strip searched, pinned to the floor and arrested by security guards at airports and riot police on the street. The text speculated how we would have fared going through those same checkpoints. Who is that “We”? Again, a position in flux—reminiscent of our satire of the Sarah Jessica Parker GAP campaign: “Casual, Fresh American Style.”

Within *Visible Collective*, there were debates about what we should work on and where to focus limited energies. These questions became channels for concerns about the impact of museum projects. What was the ripple effect? What were we accomplishing? A frictional concern about use-value came up repeatedly among collective members. By 2011, some members work in spaces distinct from the cultural context. AiMara Lin, *Visible Collective*’s member and antiwar organizer, is now in law school. Aziz Huq is a law professor at University of Chicago. Others have also shifted energy and efforts.

Conversations in visual spaces were valued by *Visible Collective* for the butterfly wing effect. The possibility of shifting public thought in more liminal ways. But we are also mindful that in the decade after 2001, many of the positive changes in migrant lives came because of legal cases and legislative victories. Therefore, a more results-based path (law, teaching, electoral politics) has become a focus for some of our energy-taking priority, at least for now, over more ephemeral museum projects.

1 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), Pub. L. No. 99-603, 100 Stat. 3359, enacted November 6, 1986, also known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Act.

2 David Sells, “German citizenship test causes uproar,” BBC, February 17, 2006.

3 “Q&A: The road to UK citizenship,” BBC, February 25, 2004. Viewer comments at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/3078690.stm

4 *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, March 28, 2006.

5 “Arshad Zakaria appointed Merrill Lynch co-president”, Rediff, October 8, 2001; Fran Hawthorne, “40 under Forty,” *Crain’s New York*, 2002; his firing is detailed in Bethany McLean and Joe Nocera, *All the Devils are here*, Portfolio/Penguin, 2010.

6 Tunku Varadarajan, “That feeling of being under suspicion,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 29, 2005.

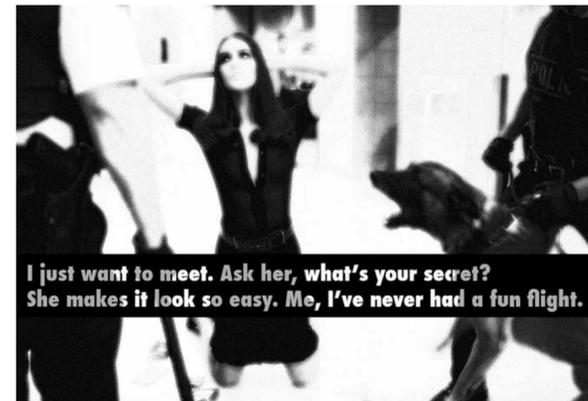
7 Edward Sorel, cover illustration for *New Yorker*, March 3, 2002.

8 Sarah Goodyear, “I thought my cabbie was a terrorist... so I called the FBI,” *Village Voice*, September 24, 2002.

Really Stephen?



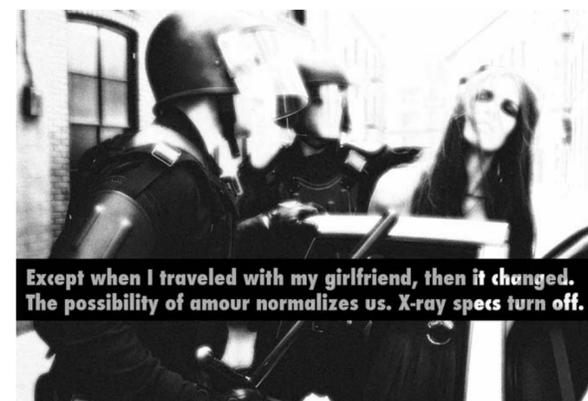
I.
So we called Steven Meisel’s office and asked for it. Iselin Steiro’s phone number. Just like that.



II.
I just want to meet. Ask her, what’s your secret? She makes it look so easy. Me, I’ve never had a fun flight.

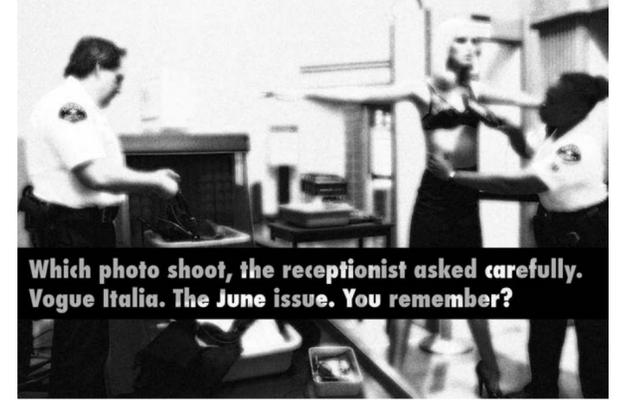


III.
Still something good came of it. I became disciplined. Now I arrive at the airport early. Like an old man.

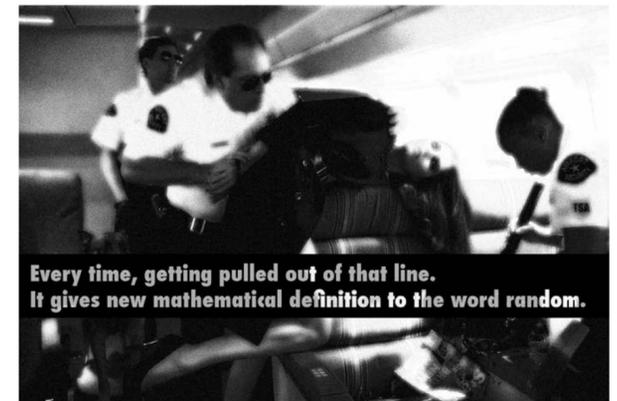


IV.
Except when I traveled with my girlfriend, then it changed. The possibility of amour normalizes us. X-ray specs turn off.

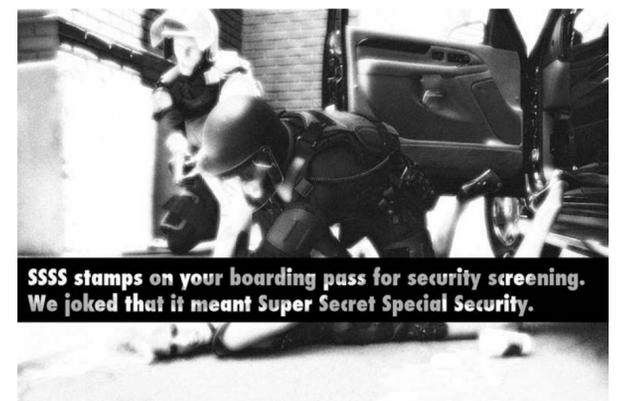
V.



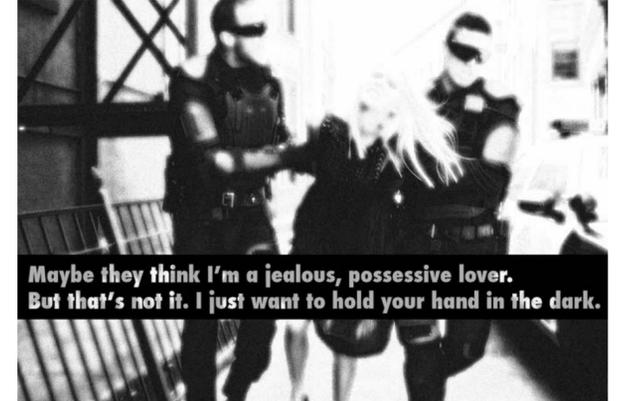
VI.
Which photo shoot, the receptionist asked carefully. Vogue Italia. The June issue. You remember?



VII.
Every time, getting pulled out of that line. It gives new mathematical definition to the word random.



VIII.
SSSS stamps on your boarding pass for security screening. We joked that it meant Super Secret Special Security.



IX.
Maybe they think I’m a jealous, possessive lover. But that’s not it. I just want to hold your hand in the dark.

X.

And so they say—19 Shibboleths¹

1 In an episode chronicled in Judges 12:5-6 the pronunciation of the Hebrew word “shibboleth” (שבבולת), the part of a plant that contains the grains, or in other contexts, a stream, was used to distinguish Ephraimites, whose dialect lacked the /ʃ/ phoneme (as in *shoe*) from Gileadites, whose dialect did include such a phoneme. Depending on how this word was pronounced, the Gileadites, who were defending a river ford after a military victory over their rival Ephraimites could test the identity of approaching refugees; those who could pronounce the word properly were allowed to pass, those who could not were slain instantly.

2 Swedish phrase from Värmland, containing only vowels: “On the island is a river, and in the river an island.” In standard Swedish it would be “På ön finns det en å, och i ån finns det en ö.” (Literally, it would be “On an island, there is a river and in a river an island.”)

4 *Rugbrød*: Danish for “Rye bread,” is almost impossible for non-Scandinavians to pronounce due to the “soft” g and d and the Scandinavian letter ø.

3 *Kraut kai kai gat or Kai kai kai*: This phrase is used to teach Thai children the subtleties of their tonal language. When each word is pronounced with the proper tone, the phrase means, “Who sells chicken eggs?”

5 *Rødgrød med fløde*: The definitive test of one’s mastery of the Danish language. Non-native speakers are unlikely to pronounce the sentence (which means “red pudding with cream” in English) correctly due to the overwhelming amount of Danish phonemes.

6 *Chuchichachitc*: Swiss German for “little kitchen cupboard” is nearly unpronounceable for outsiders because of the frequent /tʃ/ (note that the middle one is geminated) however, unlike German, the /tʃ/ sound does exist in Standard English as well. Most Swiss would pronounce it /kʰʉkʰitʃʉ/ with velar fricatives.

7 A e u ä ø i ä å: a well-known Danish vowels-only way of judging someone’s ability to speak Jysk, the general dialect of Jutland. Often/usually practiced on visitors from Copenhagen. In standard Danish, the sentence would be Jeg er ude på øen i åen (“I’m on the island in the stream”).

8 The sentence *a o’agnehm grean agstrichs Garatihrlc* (a garden door painted in an awful shade of green) serves as a Swabian shibboleth. The consecutive nasal sounds are almost unpronounceable for other German speakers.

9 On October 1937, Dominican President Rafael Trujillo ordered the execution of the Haitian population living in the borderlands with Haiti. The violence resulted in the killing of 20,000 Haitian civilians during approximately five days. This event later became known as the “Parsley Massacre” from the shibboleth that Trujillo had his soldiers apply to determine whether or not those living on the border were native Dominicans who spoke Spanish fluently. Soldiers would hold up a sprig of parsley, ask “What is this?” and assume that those who could not pronounce the Spanish word *perejil* were Haitian; both French and Haitian Creole pronounce the r as an uvular approximant and their speakers can have great difficulties with the alveolar tap or trill of Spanish. In the Dominican Republic, the massacre is known as El Corte (“the cutting”).

10 Czech or Slovak shibboleth is *Strž přez křk křk*, meaning to stick the finger through the throat. This is usually used to verify whether someone is drunk or not.

12 In Quebec French, the phrase *Je m’en câlisse* (loosely: I don’t give a fuck) is sometimes used as a shibboleth, distinguishing natives of France from Québécois.

13 nuclear/nucular: The word “nuclear,” /ˈnuːkliər/ in General American, is sometimes pronounced “nucular” /ˈnuːkjələr/ in parts of the United States. This is considered incorrect or a metathesis by many authorities, although the alternative pronunciation is common, having been used by U.S. President Jimmy Carter (himself a former Naval nuclear engineer) and U.S. President George W. Bush and other politicians. This is common in some Mid-western states, particularly those in the southern part of the region.

15 Houston Street, New York City; Houston, Delaware; Houston and Houston County, Georgia: Locals pronounce the first syllable identically with “house” (/ˈhaʊstən/), while most visitors will employ the same pronunciation as in Houston, Texas (/ˈhjuːstən/). Houston Street is actually a corruption of the original name of Houston Street, named after Continental Congress Delegate William Houston, who pronounced his name in this way.

On the island is a river, and in the river is an island² on which a man who sells chicken eggs³ and rye bread⁴ suggested to mix both items with the red pudding and cream⁵ I left in the little kitchen cupboard⁶. I’m on the island in the stream⁷ at a garden door painted in an awful shade of green⁸, parsley⁹-like, which reminds one of the feeling when you stick the finger through the throat¹⁰. The judge and the prosecutor went to drink coffee on Thursday with Don Federico in San Juan after the trial¹¹, but I don’t give a fuck¹² as the nuclear¹³ reactor is about to Flash & Thunder & Welcome¹⁴ us to the here after. There, just across Houston¹⁵ Street, sixteen judges from a court, eat the liver of a hanged man¹⁶ with a tomato¹⁷... such is life in the lollapalooza¹⁸ that is the free market¹⁹.

18 In the Pacific Theatre of Operations during World War II, a password shibboleth was “lollapalooza,” whose pronunciation produces severe difficulties for native speakers of the Japanese language (another was Lucille Ball).

14 During the Battle of Normandy in the Second World War, the American forces used the challenge-response codes “Flash” – “Thunder” – “Welcome.” The last response was used to identify the challenger as a native English speaker (and therefore not an enemy), whereas the German enemy would pronounce it as “Welcome.”

16 During the Spanish Succession War, the phrase “*Striz Judges d’un julit morgan fage d’un panjar*” (sixteen judges from a court, eat the liver of a hanged man) was used to tell apart Spaniards from Catalans, as the phrase contains voiced affricate consonants and “neutral” vowels non-existent in Spanish. The phrase is still used as a tongue twister, with different endings.

17 Tomato: UK pronunciation is usually /təˈmɑːtoʊ/, while US pronunciation is usually /təˈmɑːtəʊ/. Ira Gershwin famously used this difference in the verse “You say to-may-to, I say to-mah-to,” from the song “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off.”

19 Many years ago Paul Samuelson, who is widely regarded as the father of modern economics, memorably cautioned against basing economic policy on “shibboleths” — by which he meant slogans that take the place of hard thinking. Strictly speaking his was an incorrect use of the word: the Oxford English Dictionary defines a shibboleth as “a catchword or formula adopted by a party or sect by which their adherents or followers may be discerned or those not their followers may be excluded.” But in a deeper sense Mr. Samuelson probably had it right: simplistic ideas in economics often become badges of identity for groups of like-minded people, who repeat certain phrases to each other and eventually mistake repetition for truth. —Paul Krugman, “More on Shibboleths,” New York Times, November 6, 2010, 4:47 pm. Following Mr. Krugman’s analysis, maybe now is the time to question, yet again, if the term “Free Market” is a “simplistic idea” that is a “mistake of repetition for truth?”

Exploded Egypt has escaped to my Bosphorus*

Identifying “Modernization” with “Westernization” as a total project aiming at embracing and internalizing all the cultural dimensions that made Europe “modern,” Turkish modernizers have made many reforms starting from the 1920s. Run toward changing the Ottoman institutions and reshaping the physical environment in order to make it more similar to that of their European counterparts the reforms has been applied as a top-down process. Followed by the dismissal of Oriental Music Department in 1926, the ban of oriental Turkish music from the radio in the 1930s could be counted as one of these attempts to exclude the oriental influence on the Turkish society.

After the ban became applicable, people who wouldn’t enjoy Western music played in radio would simply tune their radios to Radio Egypt. It coincides with the same period when the Egyptian films gaining popularity in Turkey. The Egyptian film shot in 1936, *Damūa l-Hubb* [The Tears of Love], was first screened in Istanbul in 1938. The viewers mesmerized by its histrionic songs performed by the actor Abdūlvahab were finally able to identify themselves with the protagonists’ culture, especially because of the language they were not allowed to speak and the clothes they were not able to wear anymore. Making a big hit at the box office, the film paved the way for more Egyptian films played at the Turkish movie theaters.

Between 1936 and 1948, 1,130 films were screened in Turkey. Accompanied by the abundant release of Egyptian music records, the popularity of Egyptian films increased rapidly. Disturbed by the interest in Egyptian music and films, a modernist Turkish journalist wrote in 1941 in his column: “I do not want to hear that old Turkish music is being considered as the brother of Arab music. They might be brothers but surely not twins; two brothers who doesn’t resemble each other.” Shortly after, the single party in the parliament imposed a ban in the early 40s about Egyptian films. In the statement made by the Turkish Ministry of Interior Affairs there was a condition required: the films could be only screened in Turkish language, including the songs that are part of the scenes.

However, the censorship wasn’t enough to make the fans of Egyptian film give up and start enjoying Western films and music. Dubbing the dialogues could be a solution, but how about the songs that occupied more than half of the films? Shortly after, the answer was found: adaptation. Turkish musicians started to re-compose the music by slightly reducing the oriental rhythms and writing Turkish lyrics to substitute Arabic songs. In the scenes where famous Egyptian actresses like Leila Mourad or Umm Kulthum appeared to sing, Müzeyyen Senar or Safiye Ayla would start singing the adapted version in Turkish.

Turkish composers had to produce large quantities of arrangement to feed the massive demand. Due to the speed of this process, a new Turkish national music blossomed unselfconsciously.

Even though Turkified versions of the films have succeed to pass the “nationality” exam by the authorities, in 1946, the government found another excuse to ban Egyptian films: the harm/recession they made on Turkish national film industry. Along with the new ban, Turkish filmmakers were encouraged to produce films highly influenced by their Egyptian ancestors: Turkish musical melodramas. After the 1950s, Egyptian films were swept from the movie theatres by their Turkish imitations.

The brothers didn’t see each other for 50 years and when they reunited in 2000s they realized that they’ve slightly grown apart.

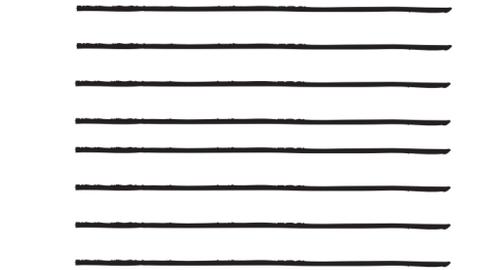
After the boom of Turkish soap operas in the 2000s, the series started to be exported all over the world including the Middle East, creating a quiet revolution. In Damascus, Cairo and Riyadh, 80 million people tune in for a single episode of *Gümüş* (Noor in Arabic). The series depict an idealized Muslim and secular country, an imaginary version of modern Turkey. *Gümüş* has been daring and candid when it comes to gender equality, alcohol, premarital sex, infidelity, passionate love, and even children born out of wedlock. Despite the reorganization and the censorship of the series, several remaining aspects were seen as contrary to Islamic principles. In June 2008, Saudi sheikh Salman al A’awada, host of a religious program on MBC, advised the “owner of MBC to revise and censor Noor episodes.” Syrian sheikh Hamdi Kanjo Al Makzoumi declared that praying in T-shirts featuring any of the Turkish actresses was haram, calling them “non-veiled and decadent, promoting vice and decadence in places of worship.”



Ash Çavuşoğlu

11 minutes, Historical Drama !!!
Two brothers separated and grown apart... Only to be reunited years later as strangers... Strangers who only recognize each other from films they’ve watched...

This synopsis may contain spoiler!



One of the most notorious controversy regarding Turkish series was the virulent objections of an Imam in a wealthy district of Cairo in 2008. A group of women wearing t-shirts with the picture of the leading actor of Noor led a protest against the fatwas of Imam. To discontinue broadcastings was thus prevented.

Turkey and Egypt might not be twins as the Turkish journalist wrote in 1941, but brothers indeed: brothers who believe that their parents don’t treat them equally.

*

The sentence is the literal translation of “Pop-corn got stuck in my throat” [Boğazıma mısır kaçtı.] into English. “Corn” and “Egypt” are the same words in Turkish like “Throat” and “Bosphorus.”

At the edge of town the capsaicin is no less degrading than it was in the center...



In the center of town the capsaicin is no less degrading than it was at the edge...

