



X INITIATIVE
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New York, NY 10011



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Foreword

X Initiative was conceived at a moment of unprecedented uncertainty in the art world and beyond, in January 2009, as people were beginning to recognize that the market fluctuations of the preceding year had already changed, and would continue to change, global culture and economics forever. On a more intimate front, X Initiative also coincided with a deepening of my own ongoing reappraisal of the role of the commercial gallerist—of the limitations imposed by a traditional understanding of galleries within the art world, and of how this role, too, was in the process of being re-imagined. X Initiative was the first project to expand my practice as a gallerist outward beyond the gallery. The building at 548 West 22nd Street was the perfect complement to X Initiative's concept and execution: monumental but not monolithic, its function indeterminate and yet its presence historically conscious. Its legacy as the former home of the Dia Center for the Arts framed, but by no means constrained, the creative gestures that took shape within, enacted by the exhibiting artists and the curatorial think tank gathered to steer the project. Contrary to what one might expect of an organization with such vast spatial resources, the team behind X Initiative remained small and nimble.

One year later, the project is over. Its lifespan was strategically short. Only those willing to rally with a dangerous present were able to take part. Fortunately, the community galvanized by X Initiative was large and acutely engaged. For me, it was inspiring to initiate a unique vision and to find the right collaborators to make it their own and contribute to a multiplicity of perspectives and practices that constituted a contemporary picture of the progressive art community. This is what happened with X Initiative. Connections occurred between artists and curators, between audiences and exhibitions, and among the broader network of collectors, writers, architects, and other individuals enlisted to develop projects. In effect, X Initiative existed both as a representation of and response to a year, continuously defining and redefining itself along an undefined trajectory of urgent simultaneity.

When the project began there was much speculation regarding X Initiative's prospects for success or failure and its very assertion of a new model for collaborating with artists to produce programming of the scale and quality of a museum, but also with the elasticity and prescience of a gallery. Artists were always at the heart of this undertaking, and many of the questions that came up again and again regarding my role in the project concerned the nature of my collaboration with artists: if X Initiative proposes a new model for collaboration, how should I function as a commercial representative for artists (in the case of those in my gallery) when organizing exhibitions in a non-profit context? What are the distinct, replicable features of X Initiative that describe this new framework for collaboration?

Answers may be sought in the recent evolution of artistic practice itself. Immediacy on every level maintained X Initiative's forward momentum. The exhibitions were immersive and immediately engaging. They felt more like the actualization of cross-conversations taking place behind the scenes than the linear end results of creative thinking, curatorial conceptualizing, organizational planning and finally execution... it was as if the creative process itself

were intact within the space of X Initiative, and consequently the audience, too, was absorbed.

X Initiative was never compelled to develop an institutional agenda that would undermine the freshness of its programming, because X Initiative's life was too finite to exist in any time or space other than the present. The goals of the exhibitions were to generate open experiences, not measurable outcomes. This is also more in keeping with the artists' approach to making work, reaching closer into the heart of creative practice.

One could argue that in addition to being an administrative practice running a gallery is a creative practice, in dialogue with the artist's creative practice. A way for galleries to reproduce the strengths of X Initiative in the future would be to better merge the work involved in managing artists' careers and presenting exhibitions with various forms of conceptual dialogue, so that these parallel dimensions of creative work will be drawn more closely in line. Operating with minimal staff and time, and maximal commitment on everyone's part, X Initiative functioned as one holistic creative body rather than as a series of separately managed moving parts. One can visualize territories where these synergistic practices expand, pressing on their boundaries to force open new spaces. This organism becomes exponentially more involved when other spaces and sites—internet, film, television, media, print—enter the conversation.

Uncertainty and spontaneity are valuable in any creative practice. It is impossible to say what will happen going forward in terms of the future of X Initiative, if it might reincarnate in a new form or perpetuate as a template for new experiments. Many artists that interest me are eschewing formalized contexts for presenting their work in favor of those that produce dialogues that embrace the expansive dimensions of time, space and collaboration. Their ideas of how to perceive our new world will certainly develop this tendency further, and there will be a continued reorganization of our systems around artistic production. We are obligated to respond in terms of all forms of curating, organizing, representation, collection and overall patronage and support of artists. Independent cultural producers such as gallerists, publishers, non-profits organizations and art advisors are in a unique and unfettered place to bring these conversations about new models of collaboration forward. The great challenge will be in finding ways to make these developments viable in the long term, to sustain the actuality of these transformative ideas.

There are many individuals who were critical to the evolution and intelligent leadership of X Initiative. First, DH who donated this site for one year and who prefers not to be directly named. He established a new level of patronage by providing such an extraordinary and well-located stage for this experiment. Cecilia Alemani, the curatorial director, signed onto this experiment two months into the project when it was at its most uncertain stage. Cecilia took the lead to develop the program and execute it with dynamic energy and spirited conviction, often working around the clock with incredible, and unflappable, dedication. Jayne Drost, both the deputy director of X Initiative and of Elizabeth Dee Gallery, has been with this project from its inception. Jayne, who has essentially worked two full-time jobs, was a behind-the-scenes co-producer of this project; she worked with intelligence, commitment and grace. Matthew Higgs

brought wonderful questions and innovative ideas to the project and remains an inspiration to all of us today. Howie Chen never ceased to question our assumptions and support our overall goals. Massimiliano Gioni and Maurizio Cattelan were unyielding in their support and participation; they helped to make our most challenging projects possible. Last, but certainly not least, special board members and friends were enlightened thinkers in the selection process and debate; they include: Eric Baudelaire, Lauren Cornell, Al Gillio, David Joselit, Barbara Morse, Robert Hobbs, Andrew Roth and Rob Teeters.

On a personal note, I also would like to express my profound gratitude to my gallery's artists for their belief in my ability to represent them and their work while engaging in this unique project outside the gallery. I'd like individually to thank Ryan Trecartin, who, since 2005, has been a major inspiration for the evolution of my gallery practice, which has led to this project and what will come next. Tim Saltarelli and the gallery team are my collaborators and uniquely committed friends and trusted advisors. Equally important is our international art community. Without the incredible individuals who comprise this peerless support system, of which I am honored to be a part, none of this would be possible. Thank you for your support and your participation.

Elizabeth Dee, July 3, 2010, New York

Introduction

X Initiative was born out of the recession that hit the world during the fall of 2008. As the result of one of the most dramatic downturns in recent economic history, many buildings and storefronts remained vacant for several months, especially in New York City's Chelsea district, which relies above all on commercial art galleries for its viability. 548 West 22nd Street, a massive building that for many years had housed the Dia Center for the Arts remained dormant after Dia's departure in 2004. I was working independently when the New York gallerist Elizabeth Dee contacted me in December 2008 and invited me to become Curatorial Director of a yet-to-be-named non-profit art organization that would be opened in the old Dia building. I was very keen to undertake an experimental project, but would never have been able to imagine the adventure on which we were about to embark. Elizabeth and I found ourselves with a wonderful space to manage and fill, and, with a very limited timeframe, we started thinking about what this enterprise could be by considering what was needed in a city like New York at that particular moment in time. The scale of the building was daunting with its four floors and total of 40,000 square feet. At a time when the majority of non-profit institutions, independents spaces and artists-run organizations were struggling to survive, we found ourselves with the incredible gift of being able to use this building for a year, but with very little money to run it.

548 West 22nd Street had been acquired by the Dia in the mid-eighties, at a time when Chelsea was isolated from the art world and galleries were still clustered in Soho. In a short period of time Dia turned a converted warehouse into one of the most important exhibition centers in the world, by hosting groundbreaking, in-depth exhibitions such as solo shows of Robert Gober's and Jenny Holzer's work, by constellating the sidewalk of its street with Joseph Beuys' oak trees, and by illuminating it with Dan Flavin's *Untitled*, a light work installed in the building stairwell and visible from the street. After Dia:Chelsea, as this institution was called, closed in 2004, the building remained in limbo, and it was no longer open to the general public. When we started discussing the possibilities for a new arts organization in this location, we were on one hand intimidated by the history and Dia's legacy, but on the other hand we were excited by the challenge of bringing this building back to life as an innovative type of art space. Knowing that we would have to operate with much more limited resources than Dia:Chelsea, we embraced a sense of informality and enthusiastic collaboration: we demanded a lot with very little, and our work ranged from formulating an overall vision to hammering nails in the walls and from conceiving and conceptualizing the exhibitions to taking out the trash.

We branded our endeavor "X Initiative." "X" was to be something of a mathematical variable, an unknown quantity that had to be continuously redefined. And obviously "X" was also a reference to the former Dia, or the "ex-Dia" as some referred to it. There was also a certain affection associated with the name: everybody likes to fantasize about their ex-es. "X" was also an easy reference point: "X" marks the spot. Our goal was to bring the community back to this landmark building since we were convinced that first and foremost it should be a place where art happens and people congregate.

We conceived X Initiative as a platform for dialogue and exchange, a site where members of the art community could get together informally, present their work and share ideas. X Initiative was all about making things happen spontaneously, by aggregating the energies of diverse people with varied experiences. X





(Previous page) 548 West 22nd Street: façade
(This page) Tris Vonna-Michell, installation view at X Initiative
(Next pages) 548 West 22nd Street: fourth floor, freight elevator

Initiative was open to everybody, with no entrance fee and a much easier accessibility than traditional institutions. We hoped that X Initiative could exemplify a new type of contemporary cultural art space and that it would be able to react to the current economic crisis by creating a participatory environment and instigating collective opportunities. Our models were European Kunsthallen and Kunstverein-like structures that emphasize dialogues and close relationships with artists and highlight exhibitions as ongoing discursive practices. X Initiative was to be a place that was less concerned with the general public and more focused on artistic communities and engaged viewers: less about spectators and more about participants. New York is a city torn between two opposite forces: traditional institutions and powerful commercial art galleries. Paradoxically it is one of the few cities without an Institute of Contemporary Art or temporary exhibition spaces.

Unlike the majority of “alternative spaces” in New York, X Initiative found its home in a highly commercial neighborhood, which presented another challenge: we had to face the competition of commercial galleries and stand on our own by producing a program that would differentiate us. X Initiative functioned as a rupture, a pause in a landscape fueled by money. It was like the “piazza” that Chelsea never had: a place where artists, art lovers and professionals could come together to look at art and discuss issues that are crucial to the art community. We wanted to be underground but to maintain a certain institutional voice, to be poor but not scruffy, to be D.I.Y. but with a certain elegance.

Throughout the recession, X Initiative was one of many temporary exhibition spaces functioning within the art community. In Soho, for roughly six months, *Exhibition* took over an empty storefront and organized a dynamic series of shows and events. *No Longer Empty* converted vacant stores into such temporary exhibition spaces as the old Tower Records building on Broadway and West Fourth Street. And there are many more examples of spontaneous aggregations that sprang up in the moment of crisis. It is often in these critical times the art world invents new models of discourse and gathering places.

When we opened X Initiative, we didn’t quite know what to expect. Having to manage an enormous space with a very limited budget, we divided the year-long program into three distinct phases: exhibitions would run for about three months each and events would take place every Thursday night. Our ready acknowledgment from the outset that X Initiative would exist for only one year provided us with a sense of urgency that informed all of our decisions. We thought of ourselves as a type of countdown operation.

We organized a very diverse group of exhibitions, including historical surveys on Derek Jarman and Hans Haacke. We also focused on young mostly European artists whose work we felt had not yet been introduced to New York. And we also hosted mid-career surveys and group exhibitions organized by guest curators such as *Today and Everyday*, *Ecstatic Resistance* and *In Numbers*. We simply wanted to show what no one else was.

Phase I at X Initiative opened in March 6th, 2009, with an extensive retrospective of Derek Jarman’s rare super 8mm films that the legendary British filmmaker shot throughout his career, from 1970 until his death in 1994. Best known for such feature films as *Sebastiane* (1976), *Caravaggio* (1986), and *Blue* (1993), Jarman also made a series of short films that revealed a more intimate side and comprised a private diary running parallel to his feature films. To accompany Jarman, two American artists, Christian Holstad and Mika Tajima, were invited to create site-specific interventions. For *Light Chamber (Part 2)*, Holstad turned the roof gallery into a bunker/high-end spa, while Tajima transformed the ground floor into a colorful theater of props. While quite distinct from one another, the three



exhibitions shared a preoccupation with desire: Jarman's films—short home movies shot in London and in other cities in Europe—staged a theater of longing, sexual craving, and nostalgia. Holstad's installation engaged with the obsession with beauty and the need to constantly improve one's appearance in an attempt at making oneself more desirable. Tajima's work investigates the futility of modernism and looks at how objects are associated performatively in terms of the modes customarily employed for displaying them.

Phase II ran from July 9th to October 17th and was radically different from the first one: we invited three young artists from Europe, who, while fairly well known in their own countries, had not yet received proper exposure in the United States. We offered them the challenge of exhibiting in an oversized museum-like setting, assigning an entire floor to each artist: this was their first large-scale one-person exhibition in New York. Younger generation artists such as Keren Cytter, Luke Fowler, and Tris Vonna-Michell each share an interest in personal narratives and storytelling. Their work explores the secret intricacies of memory and resuscitates obsolete genres to open up new creative possibilities. Along with these three solo exhibitions, we activated two other areas of the building—the ground floor and the rooftop—by inviting artists and architects Fritz Haeg and Jeffrey Inaba. The former turned the ground floor space into a temporary camping zone, with tents in which different associations and groups carried out special programs and activities open to the public. Inaba transformed the roof of the building into a colorful installation constructed with 5000 pool noodles. Part sun deck and part play area, Inaba's installation hosted film screenings and performances throughout the summer. And within the intimate rooftop gallery, artist and curator Margaret Lee organized an exhibition entitled *Today and Everyday*.

Phase III, our last iteration of exhibitions, opened on November 21st 2009 and ran through February 3rd 2010. It featured a series of shows marked by a more openly political agenda. We approached legendary artist Hans Haacke—who had not had a solo show in a New York nonprofit institution since 1986—to conceive an exhibition that would combine new productions with historical works from the sixties and seventies. Haacke turned the top floor into an ice-cold environment by restaging *Wind Room* (1969), for which all the windows of the exhibition space were left opened for the entire duration of the exhibition. The coldest day of the year happened to be on the last day of Haacke's show: the temperature in the space dropped down to an unbearable 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Polish artist Artur Żmijewski took over the second floor. This was his first mid-career survey in the US, and he premiered his ambitious video installation *Democracies*, a 40-monitor environment exploring human behaviors in public protests. On the third floor, New York-based artist Emily Roysdon curated *Ecstatic Resistance*. Bringing together a cross section of international artists, the exhibition explored the possible combination of political engagement with new aesthetic practices. On the ground floor the exhibition *In Numbers*, curated by collector Phil Aarons and dealer Andrew Roth, displayed examples of rare artists' serial publications from the fifties to the present, and was accompanied by the publication "In Numbers: Serial Publication by Artists since 1955" (PPPEditions).

Alongside the exhibitions, we organized weekly events: panel discussions about the economic downturn (*After the Deluge* and *Recessional Aesthetics*); lectures by curators and philosophers (Carlos Basualdo, Sylvère Lotringer); symposiums (on Jarman, and Dan Graham); performances (New Humans, Sharon Hayes) and screenings (Guy Debord, Charles Atlas). Some of our events lasted over the course of several days since we were interested in experimenting with new formats that

were neither proper exhibitions nor straightforward events. Some writers compared these open platforms to blogging or online community-building. We were concerned in finding new possible ways to keep the building open and the program active: we wanted to take full advantage of the limited time we had in the building.

The five-day convention *No Soul For Sale – A Festival of Independents* took place in June between two phases of exhibitions. It was a celebration, a gathering, an "un-fair" as some have dubbed it. Non-profit spaces, alternative organizations, artist-run collectives, and independent forces that animate the contemporary art landscape were invited to take over X Initiative and present their own work, their agendas and the artists they believed in. It was important for us to balance the one-person exhibitions, where artists were in control of every detail, with more unruly, spontaneous events in which the relationship between producer and participant was blurred. For *No Soul For Sale*, we left the space open, with no walls or separations between the different spaces and organizations: it was a choice based on economic necessity, but it was also a declaration of intent.

In November 2009 we joined the Performa 09 consortium, and curated a rich program of performances, giving space to emerging artists and dancers, such as The Bruce High Quality Foundation, Shana Lutker, and Guillaume Désanges among others. Since we had received the building for free, we always felt the need to reciprocate and extend our invitation to other associations, artists or groups, giving them the challenge of working in the space, with no strings attached.

Our final, closing event was *Bring Your Own Art*, a 24-hour marathon during which time we opened the doors to anyone who wanted to come and hang his or her own artwork on the walls of X Initiative. *Bring Your Own Art* was the culmination of the spirit we wanted X Initiative to embody: a space free for the community, open to the diverse energies and the many Xs that animate the art world.

Cecilia Alemani

First of all I would like to thank Elizabeth Dee, whose inspiring vision and effervescent enthusiasm made her believe in seemingly impossible projects. Thank to Jayne Drost, whose care and attention to details made the project actually possible. And my gratitude also goes to Jenny Moore, who was there in the very beginning of this adventure with passion and energy. Thanks to all board members for their constant input and support. I would like to express my deep appreciation to Maurizio Cattelan, not only for his persistent contribution in our programming, but also for generously offering us a brilliant multiple art edition that helped supporting our programming and allowed us to get to the end of X Initiative. Special thanks to other board members: Massimiliano Gioni, Matthew Higgs, Robert Hobbs and Andrew Roth and for their loyal help.

My deepest thank goes to Josh Altman, with whom I shared the joys and pains of organizing more than 10 exhibitions and more than 50 events, but also the around-the-clock intense life in our new adopted home. I am also grateful to the rest of the staff, Christina Tam, Cecilia Torchiana, Anna Clifford and all our incredible interns who generously collaborated in this project and believed in it until the very last day. I would also like to thank the people who really made the exhibitions possible: David Shull and his team of installers and Ian Sullivan, whose knowledge of the space and vision made each show look so professional.

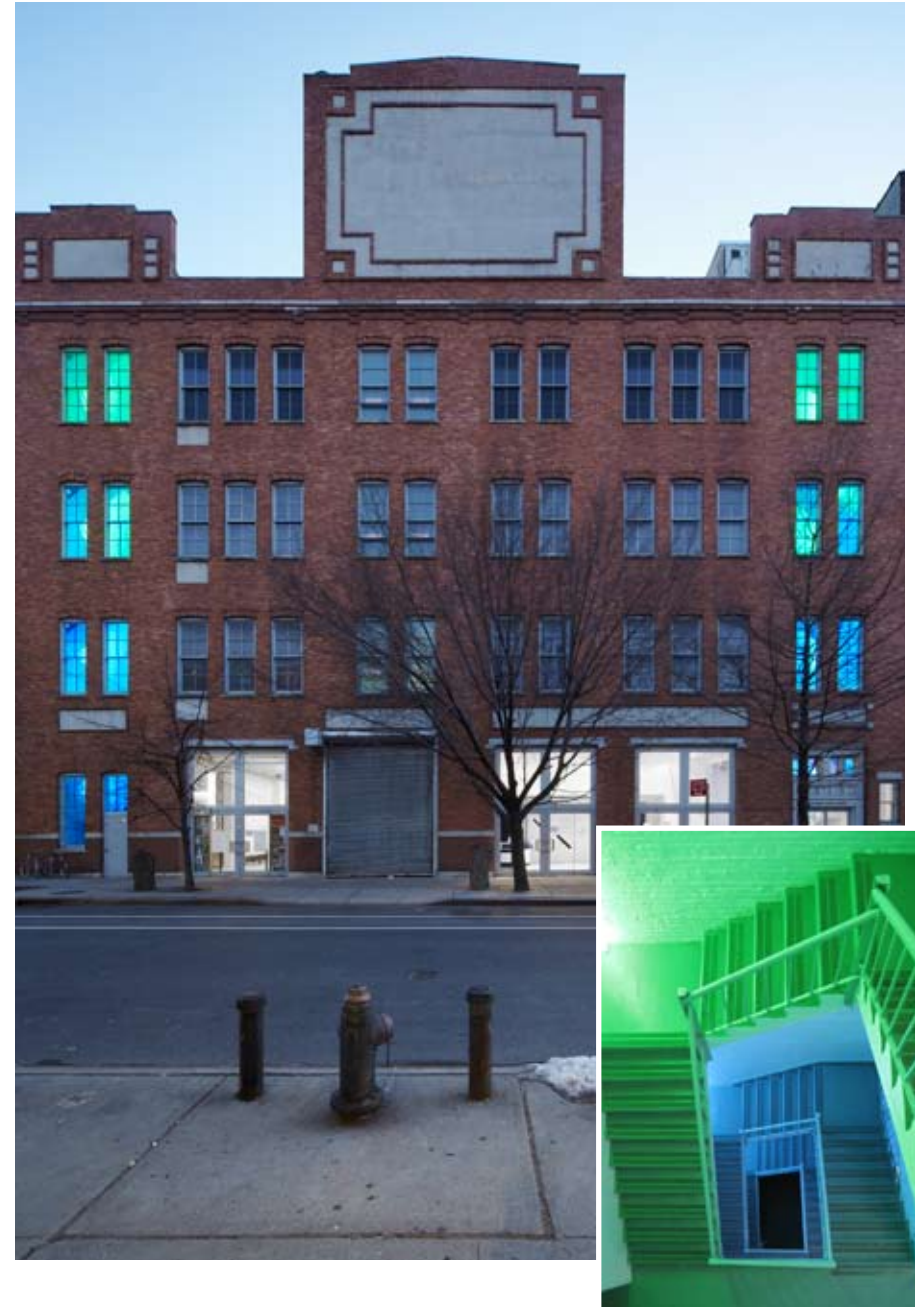
I would like to thank all artists involved, for believing in this project. And finally thank to Mousse for designing this book and for being so patient and supportive.

AT 548 WEST 22ND STREET A SOUNDLESS DIALOGUE TAKES PLACE. FROM THE TWO STAIRWELLS IN THE VERY RIGHT AND LEFT OUTER PARTS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL CORPUS OF THE BUILDING VIBRANTLY GLOWING BLUE AND GREEN COLORS EMANATE - AS CAN BE OBSERVED THROUGH THE WINDOWS FROM OUTSIDE. THEY EMBRACE THE INTERIOR OF THE EXHIBITION SPACE LIKE THE ARMS OF A HUMAN BODY THAT ARE GESTURING SIMULTANEOUSLY.

Their placement is in perfect symmetry and their message is coordinated. Visitors seeking a confrontation with them can only perceive one stairwell at a time being aware of the remote stairway on the opposite side of the building. A permanent resident of this well-known exhibition site on 22nd Street since 1996 and on view during the year-long activities of X Initiative, this is the renowned untitled piece of a true New Yorker, the artist Dan Flavin. On each landing of both stairwells two-foot fluorescent lamps are mounted on custom made fixtures into the corner of the stairwell reaching up vertically, end to end, emitting blue light on the passage from the ground floor to the third floor and bathing visitors in green light on their way from the third floor to the fifth and top floor of the building. *Untitled* is the constant witness of an ever changing experiment. An electrical wire runs through the stairwells of the building, lighting

commercially available fluorescent lamps that seem to initiate a whisper from bottom to top spanning the overall dimension of the building. Here in the stairwell the voluminous, and immersive qualities of fluorescent light change their impact from the softer blue to the stronger green playing with the visitor's gradual physical adaptation to Flavin's intense light installations. Their vision is altered for some time upon leaving the installation as if looking through a color gel in the complimentary color to blue respectively green—a natural effect produced by the human eye. Within Flavin's intentionally restricted color palette, green has the longest wavelength and thus the strongest impact on human eyes. The artist's choice of green light for the upper part of his installation therefore causes a stronger stimulus to the end as one makes his way up the stairs. Dan Flavin takes the visitors on a journey altering their state of mind. While the intellectual message of the exhibition spaces on each floor changed from one installation to the next, Flavin's work remains activating the bodily experience of every visitor and making him conscious of the architecture he moves through. Commissioned in 1996 by the Dia Art Foundation, *Untitled* is the last piece Flavin executed before his death in the same year. It belongs to a group of additional 1996 commissions, as for example by the contemporary art museum Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, a bank building in Munich and the Chiesa Rossa church in Milan, that show Flavin's mastery in handling a given site and his intentions of articulating architectural spaces.

Johannes Vogt



Dan Flavin, *Untitled*, 1996. Installation view, 548 West 22nd Street, New York City, long-term installation. Collection Dia Art Foundation. Photo: Oren Slorr. © 2010 Stephen Flavin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Phase 1. Derek Jarman

Derek Jarman (1942–94) is best known as an iconoclastic filmmaker and polemical gay activist. In fact, it is impossible to contain him in any one tidy category given the unparalleled energy he channeled into painting, writing, gardening and all manner of cultural activity. He was one of the primary catalysts for a generation of artists and filmmakers in Britain whose work is only now being recognized fully for its dark, subversive imagination and fluidity across media. Amongst his films, Jarman is particularly recognized for *Jubilee* (1977), arguably the first punk movie, *Caravaggio* (1986), and *Blue* (1993), a moving memoir about his degeneration from AIDS.

Jarman mused that film was “the wedding of light and matter—an alchemical conjunction,” and it was through his prolific early Super-8 filmmaking that he most energetically explored this formula. Jarman considered his Super-8 practice a close parallel to his work as a painter. He enthusiastically trained his camera on mystical landscapes, dancing figures, fashion shows, stony ruins, mirrors and pearls, and above all the gleaming, flashing qualities of fire and light. The films leave an indelible impression of the vibrant life that formed them. The friends that appear and those for whom Jarman frequently screened the material are an integral part of the work.

The Super-8s originally were shown in Jarman’s studios in Bankside and Butler’s Wharf, art galleries such as the ICA, and independent film festivals in the UK and abroad. Jarman’s

usual method of presentation was to have a large selection of his films beside him as he loaded the projectors. He would play the films in an order that would suit his mood and that of the audience. He played music from a cassette tape player and introduced the work, often speaking over the first minute or so of the projection, and swapping tapes spontaneously to produce a live, cut-up soundtrack.

When Jarman presented *In the Shadow of the Sun* at the Berlin Film Festival in 1981, he was thrilled to see what he called his ‘cinema of small gestures’ transformed in the public arena. According to his biographer Tony Peake, “the experience was electrifying, Damascan even; he found the impact of his footage and it’s ‘blaze of impressionistic color’ truly awe-inspiring when played before a ‘large audience on an enormous screen’”.

The presentation of Jarman’s Super-8s at X Initiative swapped the enormous screen of the Berlinale for a more expanded forest of screens in an old industrial space not unlike the ones in which he first showed the films to friends in the ‘70s. Seeing the Super-8 archive transformed into such a flickering dreamscape would have no doubt pleased Jarman, not least for the sense of wonder and discovery it generated. A group of friends and fans came together on the occasion of the exhibition to discuss Jarman’s intimate cinematic alchemy. Excerpts of this conversation from Chrissie Iles, James Mackay and Ed Halter are presented below.

Stuart Comer



- Chrissie Iles Derek of course we know is primarily a filmmaker, and he questions the compulsive heterosexuality of modernity and really overturned the normative values of cinema. And I really can't stress enough that AIDS was, in London as well as New York, the real backdrop for all of what we are talking about for the feature films.

In 1991 Derek wrote, during the filming of Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II*, "It's difficult enough to be queer, but to be queer in the cinema is almost impossible. Heterosexuals have fucked up the screen so much that there is hardly room for us to kiss there. Marlowe outs the past, why not out the present?"

But to read Derek solely in terms of filmmaking is to fundamentally misunderstand the radicality of his approach. From his first moments as a painter in art school at the Slade, he found himself drawn to the department of theater design where unconventional ideas of painting's relationship to three-dimensional space, as well as to sexual orientation, were more tolerated. Derek produced a set design for a piece called 'Jazz Calendar' in 1968, which was choreographed by Frederick Ashton for the Royal Ballet for the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Derek received a lot of praise for this opera set, and Ashton was the major choreographer at the time. It's very interesting to see how early he developed a relationship between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional, which you can see very clearly in his films.

Explicit paintings of young men by Derek's older fellow Slade student, David Hockney, had received high praise

when they came out, eliminating the possibility, Derek felt, of following suit. He had a solo exhibition in 1967 which included semi-abstract paintings, flat geometric floor sculptures, and a neon wall sculpture of the word 'light'.

The relationships between different disciplines in Derek's work in painting, in set design, in film, theatre, ballet and literature were very important. The British film director Michael Powell's deeply felt statement "all arts are one"—which always ran through Derek's work—was, for him, an act of resistance. To choose one art form above the others would indicate an acceptance of hierarchy after all, the basis of authority in all social structures, rather than equality. So instead, Derek allied the border between his texts and his films - making unclear where one begins and the other ends. And the Super-8 films on display here demonstrate that very clearly. They are a very important body of work, and he made them throughout his career and he felt them never less important than his feature films, within which elements of them re-appear. An idea that occurs in a film can resurface in a painting, while also having found itself articulated within the pages of a book. And Derek said about Super-8, by the way, as a medium, that he saw it as having subversive potential, partly because of its delicacy. He saw that potential in Super-8 as a way to question "each advance in technology that reinforces central control, and emasculates opposition". So you can see how political Derek was from the very beginning.

Jack Smith, Jean Genet, Kenneth Anger, all these experimental filmmakers, European and American, had a strong

influence on Derek. So Derek's imagistic non-linear-narrative way of working disrupts both the hierarchy of media and narrative. And in his feature films it's very striking that Derek replaces the authoritarian 'father', i.e. 'the state', by two young gay men who reject paternal authority. The valance that appears in Derek's films so often occurs as a reaction to these statements of equality and resistance which threaten the hierarchy of the social system. Derek's rejection of the paternal system reflects his very troubled relationship with his very autocratic father, a professional soldier, who doubtless hoped he would follow in his footsteps, and was appalled that he wanted to study painting at the Slade. As Michael O'Pray pointed out, the theme of soldiery occurs through his films from characters like Sebastian in *Imagining October* to *War Requiem* in the form of military figures and the police, whose actions represent the violence of the state toward its citizens. The deliberate absence of the paternal figure in Derek's films makes evident the connections between his work—within this broadly Thatcherite context—and the 18th Century in England and France, an age which saw the rise of Romanticism, the Gothic novel, a fragmented idea of masculinity and eventually the French Revolution.

Sebastiane, which is arguably the first British queer film, and one of the most controversial, was made in 1976, when the budget crisis in British politics—sound familiar?—signaled the beginning of the collapse of the post-war welfare state and the emergence of a new, hard, Thatcherite ideology that was to frame the rest of Derek's life. Unlike the idealized effeminate paintings of the male

body's of 18th century French painting, whose diminutive gentiles obeys the Greek form of conveying platonic beauty rather than blatant erotic power, Sebastiane is portrayed with a visible erection. Jarman's Sebastiane is willing to die, rather than submit his erotic life to an authority established by the state.

The frustration Derek felt as Thatcher's Britain rumbled on, echoed the position of the English romantic poet, who in the 18th century reacted to the dramatic social and political changes that were occurring in England, as Napoleon rose to power. And the potency of a pre-Enlightenment period for Derek is very strong, and you can see it very clearly in *The Tempest*, where he uses elements of the mask.

In his last years—he died in 1994—Derek continued to rail against the homophobic bigotry of the state and the tabloid media and became a much admired figure for addressing the subject of AIDS in public. *Blue*, which was initially conceived in '74 as *Blue Film for Yves Klein*, ended up a very pure blue screen. It was influenced by *Rose Hobart*, which was made in 1936 by Joseph Cornell, made from splicing together sections from the 1934 B-movie *East of Borneo*, projected through a blue filter, which flattened the image and emphasized its form as collage. The final version of *Blue*, completed in 1993, presents a single abstract field of International Yves Klein Blue, accompanied by a soundtrack of extracts from Derek's diary describing his declining health and his descriptions of the color blue. Our role in relation to the screen is turned inside out. The stable relationship of the assumed male audi-

ence to the fetishized body if you like, is turned inside out and it becomes a more shared perceptual experience. Derek says at one point, “blue flashes in my eyes” as a doctor examines his retina for lesions in the hospital. By forcing us to watch the persistent blue screen, Derek places us in his position. We listen to the soundtrack as though being read to with our eyes closed; hearing the sounds of the street, but unable to see them; the screen becomes the inner surface of the eyelid. The last part of the soundtrack in *Blue* is from Derek’s *Chroma*. Derek says, “In time, no one will remember our work. Our lives will pass like the traces of a cloud, which is scattered like mist by the rays of the sun. For our time is the passing of a shadow and our lives will run like sparks through the stubble. I place the delphinium blue upon your grave.”

- James Mackay I was involved in the production of *Blue*, and the later films, those from 1980 onwards. Derek’s grandfather, and certainly Derek’s father, were both avid filmmakers. Derek’s father made many films, of his family life and of journeys; he was an air commodore and traveled widely with his family. So, it’s very strange to me that Derek never made a film himself, until the early ‘70s. You’d have thought that somebody with that sort of obvious interest in cinema and access to the tools would have made films earlier on. What kick-started the process, so far as I can see, was the invitation by Ken Russell to work on the design of his film *The Devils*. I think that Derek was emboldened by that. Whilst he never really liked the industrial filmmaking model—he thought it was too big and cumbersome—I think it emboldened him to

actually go out and make a film.

In the early ‘70s, with a couple of his friends, he made a small 16mm film, called *Electric Fairy*, which has been thought to be lost. After that, as a present, he was given a Super-8 film camera. And that allowed Derek to make films entirely for his own satisfaction. They were films which did not require the collaboration of lots of people on a technical basis. Super-8 was a very flexible medium, it was brilliantly designed to make home-movies, you could basically pick up a camera and shoot.

Having said that, I think Derek was very skillful technically. The splices he made in the early ‘70s are still holding, which is not that common. What is startling about his work is the speed and complexity of the evolution from the point when he started making films. Let’s assume that Derek started making the films around 1971—by 1975 he had completed a substantial body of films, several examples of which are in this exhibition.

The earliest films were edited entirely in camera, films like *Studio Bankside*, and *Journey to Avebury*. There are no physical splices, they were made by just filming something and then filming something else. What a remarkable visual memory Derek had, that he could hold one image and find another image and match them up. He used the same technique to make films beside his studio on the Thames, with friends, in costume, designing and building fire mazes.

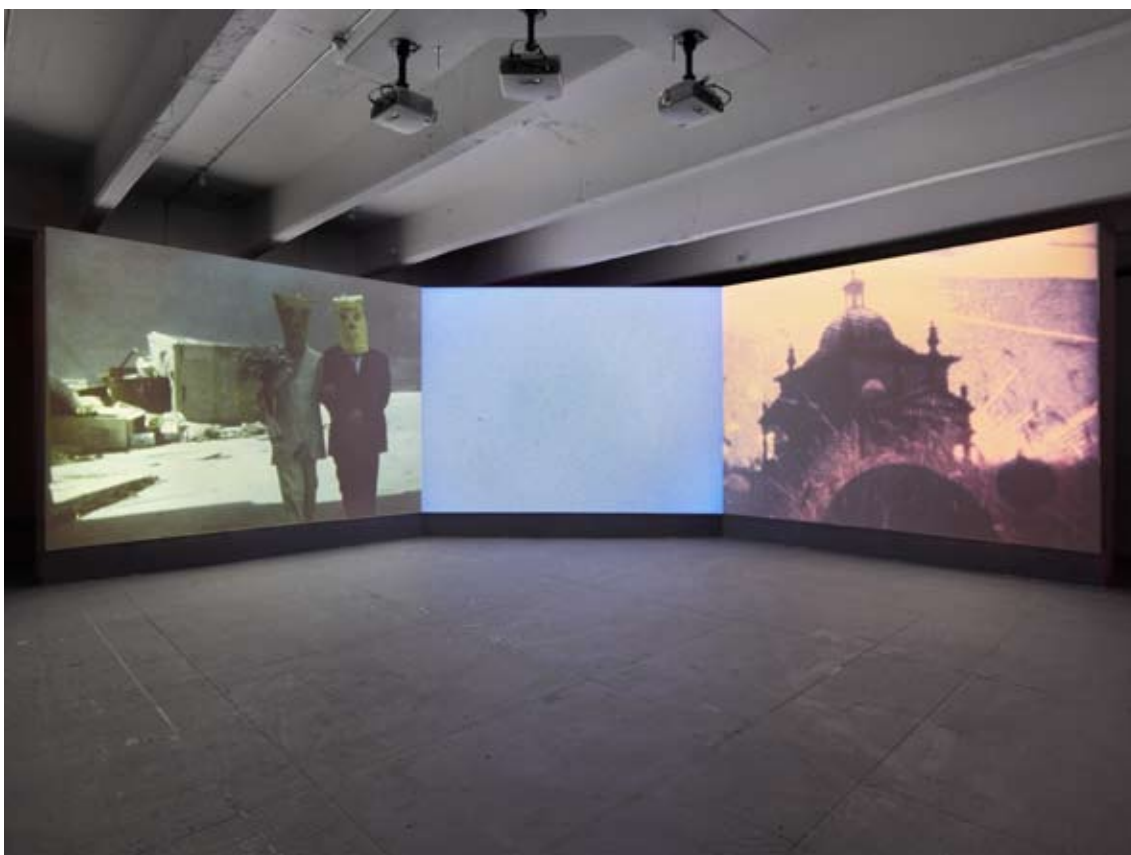
At some point in those two years, he started to superimpose images, and that marks the second phase of his

Super-8 filmmaking. I think this was really within twenty-four months of him starting to make films on Super-8, maybe less. By the time he made *In the Shadow of the Sun*—which is the magnum opus of this first period of Derek’s filmmaking—he used up to eight layers of superimposition, which really means sitting down with two projectors, projecting one film on top of another and then re-filming it. It’s quite a cumbersome process, every time you made a layer you had to wait for the Kodak lab to send back the film. These films are very precise pieces of work.

When *The Tempest* was released in the late ‘70s—I met Derek in the late ‘70s—we had persuaded the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek in Berlin, to pay for a 16mm blowup of *In the Shadow of the Sun*, which was playing in the ICA cinema in London. *The Tempest* was playing at Screen on the Green, a commercial art house cinema in London. There was a lot of press attention for *The Tempest*, but very little for *In the Shadow of the Sun*, and we were recording some stuff for a show at the ICA and he said, “I really don’t understand why people write about one thing more than the other, because I put as much time and effort into each film.” Although the critical view in the early ‘80s and ‘90s was that the more abstract later films weren’t serious, I think that they remain serious from the beginning, and there are lots of layers in each film, as well as layers of image. At some point in the mid ‘70s, Derek got involved with *Sebastiane*, which actually features some sequences that I shot in Super-8. At that point he started to experiment with single-take films, of which there are several examples in the

X Initiative exhibition. I think one of the most important films in his oeuvre is *Gerald’s Film*, which is a single cassette of Super-8 filmed without interruption at a slow speed. By filming it at six frames per second and then projecting it at three frames per second, he creates an almost suspended movement. He applied at the time ... he actually wrote to the Arts Council of Great Britain and put this forward as his project, to make films using this technique and in this way. He was really serious about these little films—they were as much a part of his artistic production as any of the bigger films, and already at the same time he was writing poems and painting, and all of these elements were always intercrossing. In the early period of his Super-8s, up to *Sebastiane*, it’s really impossible to tell what came first, the paintings or the films, because the images are so interchangeable.

When we were making the final compilation film at the end of 1993, Derek was already fairly blind. We had copied about half of his output of Super-8 onto Avid, and we sat there, and Derek knew exactly what image was coming up next. His brain was like an encyclopedia of all the images, there were no mistakes. We’re talking about 30 hours of film we’d transferred. Overall he must have had about 60 hours worth. He really had fantastic visual recall. If you examine the films—the Super-8s and the features—you’ll see that certain people, certain objects and certain places recur in different combinations in different films, all the way through, certainly up until the mid-80s, and then in a different form later. By the time that he had finished *Sebastiane*, he met and filmed a young woman who



worked in the King's Road for a shop called *Sex*, run by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood. She wanted to be a ballet dancer, so Derek took her out into some deserted bit of London and built a bonfire, and filmed her dancing. The result is a beautiful and remarkable film called *Jordan's Dance*, the genesis of Derek's statement about punk and about Britain. In fact, all his films were statements about Britain. Ultimately *Jubilee* became a narrative film, but it still started off as a Super-8 film. Super-8 was central still to his work, and he always went back to it, because I think it gave him complete control over the process. *B2 Movie*, which was shot for a special show at the B2 Gallery in London, was the last film that Derek shot and edited himself on Super-8. After that, all the material was processed through video.

I was an art student in London in the mid-70s and one of the first things I saw was a show of expanded cinema at the ICA. The one thing I remember from that show is Derek's projection of *The Art of Mirrors*. I didn't meet Derek until the late 70s, at the London Filmmakers' Co-op. By that time I'd seen *Sebastiane*, which I thought was a brilliant film, and *Jubilee*, which I loved. I met him just as he was completing *The Tempest*, but the images of *The Art of Mirrors*, on three screens, were so haunting that they stayed with me all that time. When my colleague at the Co-op suggested that maybe we should invite Derek to show these films. He arrived one evening with two little Bolex projectors and all of these little gems, and I said, "These are great films". Before that he had mainly shown them at warehouses and at the occasional

festival and gallery. He said, "The problem with Super-8 film is that they are so fragile, you can't keep showing the films, because they get damaged and the copies that are made Super-8 to Super-8 are not very satisfactory; they always look grey and they always look sort of diffused".

For me, Derek was always an artist filmmaker rather than a film director. He wasn't very good at directing films. He made great films, but he was not somebody who was a trained film director, he didn't understand and didn't want to understand the rules about narrative cinema. He opens up the possibility that there is another way of looking at film and how it's used, and he made that very public. Whereas I think before it was very much an underground situation, Derek took the underground and brought it into public cinemas and spaces. I think that's one of his great achievements.

- Ed Halter After seeing Jarman's Super-8 films, what struck me was how he really explored ideas of the occult and used them as a kind of vocabulary of forms. There is a very interesting quote buried in a footnote in Tony Peake's biography of Jarman: "Super-8 is a contraction to the point, the 20th century hieroglyphic monad". I want to talk a little bit about the hieroglyphic monad. John Dee, the court astrologer to Elizabeth I, published his book, *Monas Hieroglyphica* in the 1560s. Dee has been remembered within the circles of people who are interested in the occult. He authored several books, but he was also a figure who today we would consider a scientist and a mathematician. He worked at a time when what we call

science and magic simply weren't separated in the same way. He was an expert on navigation, and perhaps coined the term 'British Empire', or was the first person at least to use it in print. He also had the largest library in England. Dee wrote *Monas Hieroglyphica* to explain this symbol that he created. This symbol contained, for him, all other important symbols of knowledge: all the astrological symbols, all the symbols for the different planets, many important alchemical symbols and so forth.

Dee thought that occult knowledge could be gained through mathematical knowledge, so the *Monas Hieroglyphica* is written as a series of theorems, explaining the significance of this symbol through what we today would call a scientific process. It is sort of an occult precursor to Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* or the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Wittgenstein, but from an era in which science and magic simply were not separated yet.

Dee is a figure who returns over and over again in Jarman's work. He appears in *Jubilee* as the magician who casts Elizabeth forward into the future, to post-apocalyptic London. He also is widely considered the model for Prospero in *The Tempest*, which of course Jarman also filmed, and apparently Prospero's wand in *The Tempest* is topped with the hieroglyphic monad. What's interesting is Jarman's idea of contraction, and the monad contains all things within one tiny symbol. And I think Chrissie's point is interesting, this notion that Jarman believed that all arts are one. So you can in one sense think of filmmaking for Jarman as the

art that can contract all of the arts into a single point. This also resonates with the notion of superimposition that is one of the major formal factors in the Super-8 work: layers and layers of images would be compressed into one another, creating a new kind of image and a new kind of texture.

Super-8 is an incredibly small medium. The nickname for it in filmmaking circles in the 60s and 70s was "spaghetti". George Kuchar in 1964 wrote that "8mm is a tool of defense in this society of mechanized destruction, because through 8mm and its puny size we come closer to the dimensions of the atom." The atom is another concept for the monad.

During the period when Jarman worked on *The Devils*, he started researching alchemical and hermetic symbolism for his set design. Even earlier he had been reading Jung's *Alchemical Studies*, one of the works in which Jung tries to use alchemy to talk about the human psyche. Jarman has said that *Alchemical Studies* was the work that "allowed him to think about his images as colliding and drifting at will".

In *Studio Bankside* and other films shot at Jarman's flat, you can see that the flat is decorated with Egyptiana, and there are several images of pyramids and so forth in *In the Shadow of the Sun*. In *Journey to Avebury* there's a circle of stones, a megalithic structure that is actually more ancient than Stonehenge, but less well known. *Tarot* features a magician who casts some tarot cards in front of a three-part mirror, and through these cards seems to be influencing a male-female couple into

this kind of erotic love-death ritual.

The title of the *The Angelic Conversation* is a reference to Dee as well. As Chrissie mentioned, the film references the work that John Dee did consulting with angels through divination, actually learning the language of heaven, which



he called Enochian. Jarman claimed he could speak this language. He also had a feature film around John Dee's life called *The Angelic Conversation of John Dee*, which was never made. In *Ashden's Walk on Møn* he superimposes an image of a galaxy onto an image of friends walking through a wooded area. This to me seems an expression

of a very common concept in alchemy and other forms of hermetic knowledge, that of the macrocosm equaling the microcosm; "as above, so below".

Another interesting theme that happens throughout Jarman's work is shooting into mirrors. Often there is a character holding hand-held mirrors about the size of a palm, and Jarman shoots directly into the mirror causing a flash of light. John Dee had a famous mirror, a hand-held size mirror, called his "speculum," which is actually at the British Museum and is something that Jarman might have known. People imagine that Dee used the mirror for divination, and would look into the mirror for what is called 'scrying', looking into a reflective surface like a crystal ball, or pool of water, or a mirror in order to contact the other world, and in this case the angelic world. Jarman might have imagined that filmmaking is itself a kind of mirror, in which we can glimpse another world; that the lens and the projection of a camera can be thought of as crystal spheres that bring us visions of another world.

Jarman wrote that "part of my fascination with the alchemists was their involvement in secrecy and closed structures. Why are so many gay filmmakers involved in closed structures? Surely because they reproduce their isolation in our society." So the occult became for Jarman a repository or private language of images and processes on which he could draw.

(Above) *Tarot*, 1972-73.

(Page 19) Detail of *Andrew Logan Kisses the Glitterati*, 1973.

(Page 24) *Art of Mirrors*, 1976.

(Pages 28-29) From left to right: *TG Psychic Rally in Heaven*, 1981; *Pontormo and Punks at Santa Croce*, 1982; *It Happened by Chance*, 1972/1983.

All images courtesy X Initiative and James Mackay, Basilisk Communication Ltd., London.



Phase 1. Mika Tajima

Due to the recent recession, our economy is undergoing a dramatic shift, and predictions for the art world and beyond range from bad to catastrophic. The collapse of the housing bubble has brought to the fore the synthetic veneer and heedlessness of late capitalism, yielding a general sense of unease and instability. These volatile sentiments correspond well to artist Mika Tajima's multimedia installation *The Extras* at X Initiative. A visual artist

and musician, Tajima's practice often navigates between installation, video, sculpture, performance, and sound. Her work attempts to assess the repressive echoes of modernism within the present through destruction and disassembly. In this sense, Tajima's work puts forth an interesting counterpoint to the financial crisis, by illuminating the increasingly rapid, and unsustainable, cycles of production and consumption.

MIKA TAJIMA in conversation with CECI MOSS

CM
MT

Explain the project at X Initiative.

For this installation, I was thinking about a structure that can be a film set, stage, greenroom, and prop house all at once, creating a site for production instead of a set arrangement for people to look at. The scene uses the sculptures like "actors," consisting of an ensemble of new and past work, some waiting in the wings, on set, put to task, and others stowed in racks on the side. This setup allows for the running themes from each work to play out in various scenarios.

I like using sculptures as support structures for something else, to delineate action and positions of inclusion and exclusion. In this show, the work itself seems almost overtaken by the support and the scaffolding. As much as the elements can be reconfigured, there is also a focus on the direct surface of the objects such as treating them as scenery flats or repurposing them as projection surfaces or bulletin boards. It allows me to redirect formal devices found in painting and sculpture and interior design and architecture, like trying to recast a typecast somehow.

As with many of the previous wall-type sculptures, the three new works specifically produced for this project



(Above and pages 34-35) The Extras, 2009, Installation views at X Initiative.

will be layered with printed, abstract architectural patterns—this time of “condemned” building symbols, unfinished luxury condo buildings, and scaffolding patterns.

These sculptures will be constructed like tromp l’oeil scenery flats similar to the ones Jacques Tati used in “Playtime”. A newly edited video from our Fiat destruction performance in Turin called *Dead by Third Act* will be projected onto set-paper backgrounds. These backdrops will also be the site of a performance by New Humans (my collaborative group) as well as lecture by philosopher Sylvère Lotringer, who will speak about his recent book “Autonomia” on the Italian leftist movement in the late 60s -70s. The title for the project is *The Extras*.

CM Your work contends with the legacy of Modernism and its imprint on post-industrial production, as evidenced in your consideration of Herman Miller’s office furniture designs and the cubicle in *The Double* and modernist architecture and the factory assemble line in the performance at the original Fiat factory during *Artissima*. In both projects, one could argue that you counter the idealism of these moments through a sort of destruction, whether that’s the distillation of Herman Miller’s designs to their barest elements (*The Double*) or through the demolition of the commodity produced (the Fiat car) by the assembly line (*Artissima*). I’m wondering if you could talk a little bit about why Modernism is such an enduring topic in your work, and how this might reemerge again in your upcoming project at X Initiative.

MT For me it’s really about the history of failures and breakdowns embodied by these constructions couched in glass buildings, designer furniture, shiny European cars, condo lofts, “art”, etc. Its own contradictions are bursting at the seams and I give it that extra shove. Obviously other breakdowns are happening right in front of us—the banking system, abandoned construction sites, shoddy buildings, efficiency turned to alienation—a car wreck. Yet things keep going.

I find it weird that even after a hundred years there is still this celebratory atmosphere around Futurism. The legacy of convulsive modernism is really dicey and our Fiat destruction project was thinking about that context: like Marinetti driving his car into a ditch, Fiat factory inspiring Le Corbusier, noise manifesto, and nationalism, but then turning it on itself. Breaking things to make things.

CM You mentioned that Sylvère Lotringer would give a lecture on the Italian workerists movements in the late 60s-70s during the run of the exhibition. What is the continuing relevance of this movement today, given the backdrop of the current economic crisis?

MT The designer of Herman Miller’s *Action Office* (1968) system described the new workplace as a space to “transact abstractions”. We can think about the condition we are facing as part of this continuing abstraction of information, labor, capital, etc. The *Autonomia* movement was important in identifying this postindustrial transition and linking the legacy of industrial worker struggle to new decentralized strategies to deal with this. How to adapt actions such as no-show, strike, sabotage, etc. and thinking of what position to work from. In my work I think about the possible proxies for this, things operating in ways they’re not supposed to. When my group New Humans does these performance type things inserted into the space, maybe the performance is not what people expect or wanted or can even see (maybe we’re hidden behind some wall or not even there). And of course, there are the sculptures that are constantly shape-shifting themselves, wall to sound barrier to bulletin board to stand-in, etc. Also for my project at X Initiative, it will be mostly comprised of previous works that are being repurposed and reconfigured. It’s kind of funny that now some of these works will literally be read as stuff that has to be stored (there will be a storage rack as part of the installation), things that didn’t make it in another show or an actor that didn’t get the part or the shipping containers piling up in New Jersey.



Phase 1. Christian Holstad

This interview was conducted January 16, 2010, in Miami, in the home of [TINA TYRELL](#) who was also present at the interview. [LORCA COHEN](#) was filming and—thankfully—giving direction. [ESTHER COHEN](#), who is the Aunt of Lorca, is a resident of Miami and New York City. She is the elder sister of Leonard Cohen. I was fortunate enough to have been invited to her 80th birthday dinner, a few days prior to this conversation. I was floored by her presence and sprit and was very grateful when she agreed to do this interview with me. The interview took place over a dinner of hard shell tacos.

CHRISTIAN HOLSTAD

- EC It's so...nicely seasoned. Wow, this is so good.
- TT Christian the meat came out really well, for awhile it had no flavor.
- CH You know what it was, I forgot cumin and that's what the key is to real midwestern style tacos.
- TT What, cumin? It is? What do you mean?
- CH Did you ever eat Hamburger Helper?
- TT No, because we don't eat that in California.
- CH Yeah, that's what we do in the Midwest, out of a package.
- TT But I certainly know what it is, it's that hand that chases people, and it's terrifying. Chris, will you grab the Cholula?
- CH What is Cholula?
- TT Cholula, c'mon.
- CH It is not the way of the Midwest.
- EC Mmmm, this is so good. This is really labor intensive, as opposed to throwing a steak on the burner.
- EC Are you a spiritual person?
- CH My work has some of that aspect to it. I was raised a Catholic. My mom converted because I'm gay. Her argument was if they say 'you're not a spiritual person because you're gay and you're not going to go to heaven', then that's not the right religion for me.



EC That's lovely.
CH She's a good one. Even though I was raised catholic I saw that there were much more expansive ways to see a lot of different kinds of things, for example we just had a communal experience by eating.

EC Like Jesus in the last supper.

(Laughter)

CH Sitting down and eating food is a sacred thing almost, even if its tacos. It's how you enter into something.

EC You feel it is fellowship.

CH I think that that's all art is, you spend a lot of time doing something and try to infuse it with who you are and what you are, and that's how you serve. I would have loved to have been born and had the voice inside my head say 'be a doctor, you can be rich, and everyone will think you're doing something good and you're being helpful', but what I heard was 'make these things', not a literal voice, but that's what I'm doing here. I feel like if I don't do that then I'm being disrespectful by going against what I'm supposed to be doing.

EC I've always thought about a true artist, they're going to do it no matter what. The people who say I could write a book or whatever, that's not it, it's that they can't do anything else. They have to do it.

CH Its a handicap in a lot of ways.

EC It's a burden?

CH It's only a burden in that I don't feel right doing anything else. I've tried other jobs, and it's like walking around empty.

EC Well you're lucky that you're able to live and do it.

CH I'm very fortunate.

EC Zooming in specifically on the padding room piece, did a lot of people come in, you got a lot of positive reactions?

CH I got a lot of reactions.

EC Did they understand what you were trying to say?

CH Everyone understood something. Whatever they understood was right. I always think about it like this: I



(Above and page 37) Light Chamber (Part 2) 2009, Installation views at X Initiative.

go into a store and I see some shoes and I love them, maybe even conceptually. It's not just about a look, it's a feeling and the way it makes you think and all of these things. You go into a store and see a different pair of shoes and you like those. You like my shoes, but they're not really for you. I don't think when people view art there should be any more pressure on them than that. You could go in 4 weeks later and something has happened in your life and you could respond differently. It depends on your mood, what you ate that day.

EC It's what you bring to anything.

LC If you had to sum up your entire work, not the specific pieces, but the ideas behind it and what you're trying to say communally.

EC Your position.

LC In a few sentences.

CH That's kind of hard.

TT In like two words. One letter.

EC It's like saying the Talmud with one foot.

TT Wait, what does that mean?

EC A sage was asked to explain all the aspects of Judaism, and there was an idea of saying it on one foot. It's something like "do not do to others what is hateful to you". It's on one foot. When you're asked to explain a big topic, which is kind of impossible to do in a few sentences, people say "on one foot". It can't be covered in a short time or in a few sentences. It's just such a broad topic that its ridiculous to expect an explanation of any sort in such a short period of time, so you asking him to explain his whole philosophy, on one foot.

LC Why not? Lets get it done. Come on.

CH The underlying thing that I understand about my work is that it's made by hand, you can see a hand all over it. I feel like the best thing I can do is promote looking at all the flaws of being a human as the thing, because as humans we want to control everything and you cant control being human.

EC We're not perfect.

CH Our imperfections are the things that are the most

beautiful. Nothing of mine is polished. I'd never want to make anyone feel like they couldn't do something, I want to make someone feel like...

EC ...' I could do this'

CH I spend most of my time trying to really embrace the fact that I'm a person and a lot of the work that I'm doing is coming from that place. When I make mistakes, I know that it's the best thing that I've done. Sometimes I have 2 weeks to get a show together, so it's not going to be this polished thing. You can see the mechanics of everything I'm doing. The magic isn't in creating an illusion that's bigger than you. For me that's not interesting. The magic is that someone actually did this. I'm a huge fan of what humans are capable of. Sometimes its terrifying, but people can do really amazing things.

EC I think the wonderful thing is they try, they have aspirations. Some. Some people are blessed or cursed with a creativity that has to come out in their way. And some polish it and some don't. If you get too hung up on having it perfect, then you never release it and you don't create anything. and often let it go, I think the bane of a lot of creative people is that they keep toying with it, they don't think its good enough and they don't let it go.

CH I think that artists should be making mistakes all the time; they should do terrible things all the time. I really do.

EC You're lucky that you're not cursed with that perfectionist idea.

CH The brain is really terrible when you're over thinking, and there's never a right answer so you may as well just give an answer. The right answer is the answer you have in your mouth at that moment.

EC When does this have to be given or whatever? Or are they going to come and interview you too? The catalogue people?

CH No, this is it. They asked me to choose someone to interview me.

EC And you chose me?

CH Yes, absolutely.



AFTER THE DELUGE?
PERSPECTIVES
ON CHALLENGING TIMES
IN THE ART WORLD

A TOWN HALL MEETING AND PANEL
DISCUSSION MODERATED BY:

- LINDSAY POLLOCK JOURNALIST AND
WRITER, BLOOMBERG NEWS

WITH:

- JEFFREY DEITCH DEITCH
PROJECTS, NEW YORK
- BRETT LITTMAN EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, THE DRAWING CENTER
- MICHAEL RUSH HENRY AND LOIS
FOSTER DIRECTOR, ROSE ART
MUSEUM AT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
- ANYA KIELAR ARTIST AND
CO-FOUNDER, GUILD & GREYSHKUL

BRETT LITTMAN

We came together today basically to take stock of what the impact of this downturn will be for the for-profit/nonprofit parts of the art world, and also to provide a little bit of historical context. We have to understand that this is an ecosystem. First, there's the artist making work. Then the patron commissions work. Then the artist makes work for distribution and exhibition outside of the patron's commission for outdoor markets and salons. We are talking about an interlocking structure that in some ways goes back not exactly 300 years, but surely today the network is much more complex. Just to get a sense of how early the commercial side of the art market comes into play, it's important to think of these outdoor markets and salons.

In the Twentieth Century, we now have art publishers, art magazines, art fairs, alternative spaces, critics and the Internet, and they all start to play important roles in the distribution system. There are several different types of distribution, for the sake of commercial and profit and the sake of learning and knowledge. I think both are equal in this network.

MICHAEL RUSH

Essentially, what happened on January 26, 2009, which was the day it was announced that the Rose Art Museum was closing and the collection was going to be sold, that remains the truth. There has been some backsliding in terms of language, in terms of "maybe it will just be a partial sale of the collection," or if the economy gets better, there will be no sales, although that was only said once and I haven't heard that again. The simple story here, and really the only story here—as far as I can say, the university decided that they needed a fix for a dire financial situation. They looked at the asset of the collection, and decided, "This is a way out of our fix." I asked the president "Your plan to solve the financial difficulties of Brandeis University is to sell the collection of the art museum?" He said, "Yes." That's the story. The collection is for sale to help with the financial difficulty, end of story.

LINDSAY POLLOCK

Do you think there's a chance it can be stopped?

MR

Likelihood, no. I live ever hopeful that this decision can be reversed, but I must say that in order for the historically

significant Rose Art Museum to remain viable, the decision must be reversed, and we must be given a legally-binding consent that this cannot happen again. We've already lost all of our donors, obviously, memberships and so forth. There's no way that this institution can survive without a complete reversal and a legal band that this can't happen again, otherwise, who would support it, who would contribute to it?

[...]

What does the situation mean for other nonprofits, museums, universities? What have you been hearing from your colleagues?

MR

I think that situation rang a lot of alarm bells for the nonprofit world. The message that it's sent is that there are no rules. It's a shocking thing to hear that a university is going to sell a collection. Obviously, the economy is taking its toll on the nonprofit world. We've had to cut our budgets significantly, I've had to lay off staff. I think my sense of all of this is that we are now looking at a two-year horizon in which we're going to have to manage our budgets very carefully.

When you would walk to galleries and fairs, there was a sense that we were having a return to the old school art world and that it was maybe a good thing, and speculators would vanish and real collectors would remain.

JEFFREY DEITCH

I think most of us agree that the art market and the art world became quite distorted during this period, and

it was confusion between the market value works of art and their aesthetic importance. There's now a famous quote from Tobias Meyer, the chief auctioneer at Sotheby's, that we don't know that the most expensive art is the best art, and so a lot of the constituency the art world brought into this with the rankings of the most expensive art, and the price rankings becoming the equivalent of the artistic importance ratings. Of course, there is some convergence between the two, but the situation got very distorted, and from the point of view of a gallery owner, there was so much focus on auctions and art fairs that, in fact, collectors stopped coming to galleries as often as they used to, and museum curators, instead of doing their usual October tour with their trustees to the New York galleries, switched it to Miami Beach, because it was more fun. So many of the major American curators didn't go to galleries anymore.

How was it done in the past?

JD

The traditional way, of course, is a curator slowly looks at work in the gallery over time, visits the artist's studio, says, "I think we're interested in this artist, let me know when there are some good pieces," and the museum would be directed toward the best work that the artist has made, not the medium-sized, very commercial, easily transportable piece that you bring to an art fair. I hope that some of that distortion is going to be corrected, that collectors will find it more pleasant to go to galleries again, and will find it less intimidating. They won't come to a gallery like mine and find that ev-

erything has been sold in advance to these six billionaires who, the past two years, the art market basically became the market.

What were the main reasons you and your fellow artists and cofounders decided to close the gallery?

ANYA KIELAR

It was definitely financially-driven, but it also came to a point where we were in danger of falling way behind in paying artists, basically. It's kind of irresponsible to run a business where you're not able to pay for your goods, basically, and to use money that comes in monthly, there's a struggle to pay the rent, to pay people you have working for you, and you start dipping into the money you know needs to go to the artists. We never had financial backing or savings or even credit cards, for that matter. We just got to the point where there was no foreseeable way to keep it going.

Should artists run galleries or should it be people who are devoted to that?

AK

I think it could be. I remember in the beginning, we would have people who had been artists who moved on to being full time gallerists, saying, "You guys can't do this, this is unadvisable," and friends of ours who were artists would get very confused by it. The fact there was three of us...I think it's possible. Our example is great, it was a five-year thing, and maybe other things will come of it, but having a stable space, it's definitely hard. Whenever anyone had shows, it was very tense, because everyone else had

to pick up the slack. If it's something of interest, it's definitely worth it. Now it's going to be a lot more renegade, and people opening up their studios and doing these other projects, I think it could be interesting.

[...]

Do you feel dealers have too much sway in organizing shows?

BL

Well, I think that obviously the galleries have had a pretty major impact in the sense of what we're working on with certain gallerists to put on exhibitions. There's been a little bit more of a push from the gallery side recently, and definitely over the past couple of years. As there's been more money in the art world, my sense is that in some ways there's definitely been a sense of a kind of skepticism of institutions and even the work curators do, and I felt a couple of times in exhibitions that we've done recently where certain gallerists stepped over a line.

Do you have a business model for how you run Deitch Projects and can that model sustain this downturn?

JD

We try to run the gallery as much as a private ICA as possible without having to really think about business. During the past few years, we were able to make all our programming decisions on a non-commercial basis, a wonderful luxury.

What if one of your artist comes and says, "I want a million dollars to build this gigantic thing."

JD

That's the one specific thing, no more super-expensive applications. Last year, British artists Tim Noble and Sue Webster who are friends of mine wanted to create their dream project, the electric fountain, which was presented in Rockefeller Center. It was very, very successful with the public. It cost a million and a half dollars, and there was no one else to pay for it except me.

[...]

What lessons do you think other museum directors can take away from your experience?

MR

I think it's interesting that we're focusing on the money. When there were good times, we were saying, "It's all about the money," and now that it's bad times, "It's all about the money." Maybe it's all about the money. I think maybe whatever is happening can move us beyond the money in a certain way. Maybe that's the upside of all this, I'm not sure. I do think that times of stress, like this, do produce creativity, yes, that's true. But I've learned some lessons on leadership, humanity, talking to people. I learned, also, how not to behave in panic situations. I really believe the administration at Brandeis, and others are doing this, too, were acting out of panic, feeling panic, feeling backed up against the wall, and many of us can sympathize with the extreme difficulties that the institution is having. Now when you see how one day to the next an institution can radically be altered by a higher authority, donors are going to be much more rigid in their gifts, and

frankly, I think they should be. I think in the future that donors are going to be very, very suspicious of the good faith aspect of charitable giving, and a lot happens among us in good faith. I think those days are over.

[...]

On the museum side—we're heading into what could be a depression, long term financial problems. Under any circumstances, should artworks deaccession be permitted other than for acquisition?

MR

This is a favorite topic of mine, actually. The phrase is a very museum world phrase. The hideous thing that Brandeis did was to close the art museum so they wouldn't have to deal with all those ethics surrounding it. If you ask the common person on the street what that term means, I don't think most people would know what it means. We're talking about selling artwork for money, that's the story. This is not a story of that. I've done it before, engaged in very painstaking systems and processes, dealing with donors, dealing with all the legalities, all the ethical issues they place before us for good reasons. This is not about that in this case. The question is can money be used for things other than art?

Is there any time when it's OK?

MR

I object to the very thought, the very premise, the very starting point of artwork in a public museum being looked at as collateral that can be used during a difficult time. I think that philo-

sophical starting point is wrong, and that's what I would want to eliminate.

[...]

Will curators have to change the way they do things to make it less expensive?

BL

At the Drawing Center, we usually have done about eight shows a year. Next year, we'll do six. That's not substantial in the end—doing six very good shows is just as good as doing eight very good shows. Obviously, getting loans from Europe and more complex exhibitions are going to be challenging. It seems to me that bigger museums are definitely going to do more collection-based shows. If galleries are not going to support the production, I don't think the museum's going to support the production either, so you're going to have many fewer shows of newly commissioned work. Maybe in some ways, this is a good moment, also, for museums to really use those collections in new ways. I believe that the public could be...it could be a boon.

[...]

How is art going to be impacted, how is art-making going to change to reflect the times?

JD

Something that we have in the art community, even with the downturn, is our community. It's an absolutely remarkable community. There's nothing like it, it's international, it's increasingly diverse, and I think that

we're going to look more and more at our community as an amazing asset. Something that does happen during economic downturns is that the community becomes stronger. Reading about what happened in the 1930s, it was not a great time for art innovation, but the 1930s, because of the WPA projects, that's how a lot of the artists met each other in New York. The whole New York school would have never really come together without these connections made with the WPA. In the Seventies and early Eighties, when I got my start in the field, there were wonderful models, like the Times Square show of 1980 where the uptown community from the South Bronx and the downtown community came together at a massage parlor a block south of 42nd Street and did the greatest show of that time, and a lot of artists met each other, they connected through that show. What I think is going to happen is the opportunity for shows in this model, where artists who otherwise don't have the structure to connect are going to meet, and be the foundation for a whole new community, the same way the Times Square show was a foundation for the dynamic New York art community of the 1980s. The community becomes stronger.

After the Deluge invitation designed by Josh Smith.

Phase 1. Events

RECESSIONAL AESTHETICS: NEW PUBLIC OR BUSINESS AS USUAL HAL FOSTER AND DAVID JOSELIT

Recessional Aesthetics

- 1) What will the effects of the recession be on the social role of the artist?
- 2) Is the art museum of the neoliberal era sustainable?
- 3) Might art biennials (and related exhibitions) wither away?
- 4) How will art schools adapt?
- 5) How might art criticism become relevant again?
- 6) Does the art world bear any responsibility for the economic downturn?
- 7) Whether the Obama stimulus package represents a break in the neoliberal regime, or simply a neo-Keynesian moment of public spending, might it reawaken a sense of common stake that might be extended, indeed insisted on, in other spheres like the artistic and the cultural?

- 1) What will the effects of the recession be on the social role of the artist?

The recent crash has done some damage to the prestige of the commodity and the spectacle alike, not to mention the virtuality of the data-sphere. Will this reduce the influence of these forms on art practice, and thereby open up other models, other spaces? At the very least, might it relieve some of the pressure to conform to expectations associated with entertainment?

- 2) Is the art museum of the neoliberal era sustainable?

In the 1980s Tom Krens and colleagues developed the model of the museum that treats its collection primarily as a financial asset or instrument; since that time this has become accepted practice for many institutions. Is there now a break in this logic, and will the failure or near failure of several museums, ranging from the Rose Art Museum to LA MoCA, lead to different modes of organization? Might the current crisis present a new opportunity for the under-capitalized, or, on the contrary, will figures like Eli Broad consolidate further art-world power? What can be done to keep the production as well as the presentation of art sustainable in New York and other centers?

3) Might art biennials (and related exhibitions) wither away?

The globalized art world sometimes seems synonymous with the institution of the biennial. Is the economic model of local development and international commerce that sustained biennials still tenable? Will emphasis be placed on other features of globalization, or will there be a withdrawal to the local--a sort of art-world protectionism?

4) How will art schools adapt?

One of the most significant changes in postwar art was the shift to academic education for artists; in recent times the MFA has seemed almost a prerequisite for commercial success, and many artists have pursued their practices like professional careers. Will the decay of the art market cause a change in this system and encourage different modes of training and practicing alike?

5) How might art criticism become relevant again?

Since the early 1980s, the impact of art criticism on the institutions of art has diminished drastically: in a period of powerful dealers and collectors the role of the critic as mediator has been all but eliminated. But now that the art market is melting down, can critical discourse, irrelevant as it has been for that market, regain some currency?

6) Does the art world bear any responsibility for the economic downturn?

Since contemporary art appeared to flourish alongside hedge funds and mega-banks, often by creating products with some of the same derivative strategies for dissemination as those that created the virtual wealth of those financial entities, do we need to think about our collective complicity in this system and do anything about it? Or is this to project an agency on to the art world that does not exist?



**AUTONOMIA:
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
IN THE PRESENT.
A TALK WITH
SYLVÈRE LOTRINGER**

The Autonomia Issue, published in New York in 1980, was meant to connect cultural and political issues from the other side of the Atlantic to the specific situation of the “downtown New York” cultural environment in which Semiotext(e) magazine was involved with at the time. A new crop of young artists loosely connected with “Colab” and estranged from the small exclusive art world in Soho was instrumental in creating at the time a new and vibrant cultural scene that happened to radiate worldwide, involving rock clubs and media, art world and academy, Soho and the budding East Village, politics and fashion, theory and aesthetics. It was punk time both in New York and in London and the imagery of violence

and the glamour of European terrorism (the Red Army Faction in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy) fueled by media coverage were starting to circulate among art and club circles. The pressing issues that this kind of terrorism raised in Europe—from the end of production to the “end of ideologies” and the opening of a new social era—were for the most part dissociated from their own context and subjected to the laws of fashion.

I had been introduced to the situation in Italy three years before through my friendship with Félix Guattari. In the Spring of 1977, I participated with him to a meeting of the international network of psychiatry at Franco Basaglia’s mental hospital in Trieste, Italy. The country was in turmoil, unemployment very high, the youth radicalized and everyone realized that something was going to happen. A major meeting of the growing Autonomia movement, close to Félix’s rhizomatic ideas,

7) Whether the Obama stimulus package represents a break in the neoliberal regime, or simply a neo-Keynesian moment of public spending, might it reawaken a sense of common stake that might be extended, indeed insisted on, in other spheres like the artistic and the cultural?

In short, might we reclaim some aspect of the heuristic value of “the public sphere”?
And how might this affect the production as well as the reception of art?

had been planned for the Fall, but the murder by the fascists of an autonomist student in Rome gave it a very different direction. In September 1977, the entire Autonomia movement met in Bologna in a show of strength and demonstrations multiplied in many Italian cities. Suddenly it seemed as if the autonomists were about to peacefully take over the entire country. Contrary to Red Brigades, Autonomia wasn't an underground group, but a mass, grass-root, ideologically diverse extra-parliamentary far-left movement, the only one in Europe to have extended 60s' struggles well into 70s. It was made of students, unemployed youth and young workers from the South who refused to work on the Fiat assembly-lines. Although they didn't fully realize it at the time, they were heralding the post-Fordist era in which general intelligence would replace factory labor and turn knowledge into an instrument of social change.

Autonomists weren't interested in seizing power, but they didn't have the chance to develop all their cultural and political potential. The CD¹ President, Aldo Moro, was kidnapped and murdered symbolically by the Red Brigades in 1978, and it gave the governing coalition an opportunity to discredit the Autonomia movement and for the Italian PC² to establish its own political legitimacy at its expense. It was all the easier since both autonomists and terrorist had shared beginnings in the Italian "workerist" tradition initiated in the 60s by a group of intellectuals bent on revisiting the tenets of Marxism in light of a direct factory experi-

ence. After the Italian secret services staged terrorist attacks, which they attributed to the "anarchists," the workerist group split into two: opposed to the "historical compromise" signed between the Italian PC and the Christian-Democratic (conservative) the Red Brigades, a hard-core Marxist-Leninist group of Fiat workers, chose to go underground and start a guerrilla warfare in response to the government provocations; the other workerists expanded publicly through a series of fluid extra-parliamentary organizations.

Following the execution of Aldo Moro, the autonomist leaders were arrested in the spring of 1979 under the accusation of "masterminding" the Red Brigades. Two thousand autonomists were imprisoned, including the staff of four autonomous journals, to which most of the leading autonomist intellectuals, Toni Negri, Franco Piperno, Oreste Scalzone, Paolo Virno, etc., collaborated. Fifteen years of inventive workerist experiment on the margin of Marxist orthodoxy were violently eradicated. The special Autonomia dossier I gathered together that summer in Italy was meant to drive a wedge between ideological terrorism and Autonomia's inventive social experiments. As it turned out, the Autonomia remained the only document assembled live on this futuristic communal movement. Twenty-five years later, in the wake of the world financial crisis and attempts from all sides to conceive of more communal forms of socialization, the history of the autonomist movement has become an important contribution to the "post-political politics" of the present.

(1) Christian Democracy

(2) Communist Party



NEW HUMANS
WITH JAMES PLOTKIN

GUY DEBORD,
HIS ART AND HIS TIMES



GUY DEBORD
AND
BRIGITTE CORNAND (1994)

The last audio-visual work by Guy Debord is this often overlooked collaboration with Brigitte Cornand, made for the Canal+ television channel. It was screened shortly after his suicide, and is something of a last testament. Debord swiftly catalogues what he considers his major 'works', before lingering more lovingly on his friends. So much for art; the bulk of the program documents his times. Where his earlier masterpiece *Society of the Spectacle* (1973) cuts spectacular images together at a rapid clip, here the slowing down of the image that starts with *In Girum Imus Nocte Et Consumimur Igni* (1978) has reached a glacial pace. Long excerpts from television news shows the disintegrating spectacle in all its car-crash glory, from ecological disaster to political scandal. Daniel Buren emerges as the art world equivalent of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and a spate of mysterious suicides in the French political world. For Debord the 90s is a period in which the spectacle relishes the chance to expose the symptoms of its own operations, like a cockroach eating its own shit. And yet it lacks the capacity to relate the particular consequence to the totalizing cause—the spectacular organization of the world, a world in which the whole is the false. Debord gestures toward the absence of totality with a few deft intertitles, in a work in which for the first time his voice is not heard.

McKenzie Wark

WILLIAM
KUNSTLER



DISTURBING
THE UNIVERSE
(2009)

On May 14, 2009, my sister Sarah and I screened our film, *William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe* at X Initiative. The film is about the life and work of our father, a famous civil rights attorney whom The New York Times dubbed “The most hated and most loved lawyer in America.” In the 1960s and 70s, our dad was on the front lines of many important civil rights struggles. He worked with Martin Luther King Jr., represented



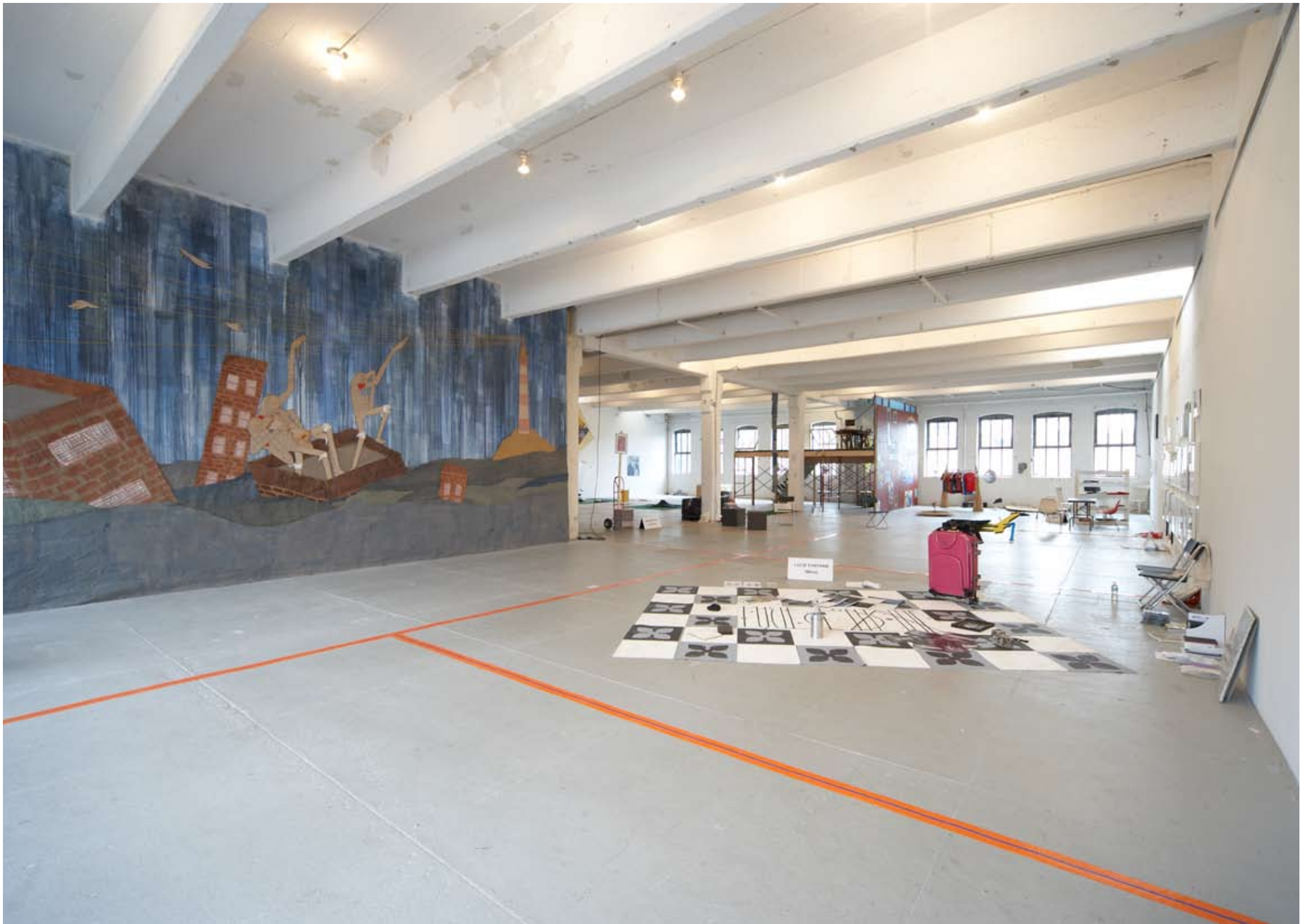
anti-war protesters, inmates during the 1971 Attica prison uprising, and American Indian Movement activists. When Sarah and I were growing

up, he defended some of the most reviled defendants in America—accused rapists, terrorists and members of organized crime. The film was an effort to reconcile the heroic cases of our dad's past with the man we knew.



Sarah and I grew up in New York City and the X Initiative screening was a real homecoming for us and for the film. The setup at the X Initiative was far from a traditional screening environment. We projected on one of the space's massive walls and the open gallery feel lent itself to casual discussion both before and after the screening. The X Initiative audience was spirited and lively and asked questions about the artistic process and creative vision of the film - questions that we are not commonly asked, and that helped us to think about our work in a new way.

Emily and Sarah Kunstler



No Soul For Sale

The first edition of No Soul For Sale was held at X Initiative in June 2009, before the opening of the summer exhibitions. For five days, three floors at X Initiative were filled with artworks, installations and performances presented by some of the most exciting, creative and respected non-profit centers, alternative institutions, artists' collectives and independent enterprises from all over the world.

The idea behind the festival was fairly simple: we came up with a format that could provide a symmetrical alternative to the art fair. Instead of commercial galleries, we invited non-profit organizations; instead of financial exchanges we tried to initiate dialogues and forums; and instead of booths or walls we constructed the whole architecture of the event as an open space. The goal was to bring together



non-commercial realities in an informal and spontaneous way: we thought of No Soul For Sale as a festival or a reunion—the model was actually that of fans' conventions, in which it is public participation that really sets the agenda. What was most important was that nothing should be for sale. No Soul For Sale was meant to be a celebration of the spirit of independence that animates the initiatives and programs of institutions and groups existing outside the market. We wanted to recognize the activities of the artist-

run spaces and curatorial initiatives that contribute to the international art scene by inventing new strategies for the distribution of information, as well as by supporting an alternative cultural program.

Neither a fair nor an exhibition, No Soul For Sale was a gathering of individuals and groups who devote their energies to keeping art alive. More than 40 spaces from New York, the United States and the rest of the world took part in the project: they occupied the X Initiative spaces and presented themselves, their activities and the artists they

support. The participants were allowed to show whatever they chose, be it art, performance, publications, videos, or simply themselves. The Festival was an exercise in coexistence: organizations exhibited alongside each other without partitions or walls. As

on the set of the legendary Lars von Trier's movie *Dogville*, participants were assigned spaces that were only marked on the floor with tape, creating a map of an imaginary city or a pop-up village of the arts, in which distances and hierarchies were abolished. The public was invited to explore the space without following any specific directions: there were no corridors or lounges, no neutral zones—the whole experience was both cacophonous and joyful, participatory and conflictual: it was a form of accidental collaboration.

The choice of not having walls or partitions came about for different reasons, first and foremost, a financial one. Like all the other organizations invited, X Initiative was operating on a very limited budget, and we had to make a virtue out of necessity: walls meant money, so we decided to do without them. But keeping the space open was also a way to emphasize the forced coexistence between participants and the radical form of hospitality that guided the whole project. The festival was open everyday from noon to 9 pm. Film screenings took place every night on the roof. The Trinidad Studio Film Club, run by Peter Doig and Che Lovelace, organized nightly screenings of Caribbean movies. On the ground floor, in addition to the exhibition spaces, we made a special performance area available to all participants, in which they could organize performances, presentations, discussions and music programs for up to one hour at a time. With associations and groups from Berlin, Milan, Dublin, Barcelona, Paris, Reykjavík, Hong Kong, Rabat, Trinidad, New York, Los Angeles, and many other locations, No Soul For Sale provided a unique occasion to foster creative exchange and to connect with international organizations that aren't usually accessible in New York City. The opening was attended by 2,500 people, and over the five days we calculated about 10,000 visitors. The New York Times has defined No Soul For Sale as the "Olympics of non-profit groups". The festival brought together those who share a passion for art and who have devoted their time and energy to the art they believe in, beyond the limits of the market and other logistical constraints.

Participants included: Artis Contemporary Israeli Art Fund (New York and Tel Aviv), Ballroom (Marfa), BizArt/Arthub (Shanghai/Hong Kong), Dispatch (New York), Empty Purse Publications (New York), Filipa Oliveira + Miguel Amado (Lisbon), FLUXspace (Philadelphia), Galerie im Regierungsviertel/Forgotten Bar Project (Berlin), Hermes und der Pfau (Stuttgart), K 48 (New York), Kadist Art Foundation (Paris), Kling&Bang (Reykjavík), L'Appartement 22 (Rabat), Latitudes (Barcelona), LAXART (Los Angeles), Light Industry (Brooklyn), Lucie Fontaine (Milan), Migrating Forms (New York), Mousse Magazine (Milan), Next Visit (Berlin), Not An Alternative (Brooklyn), Office for Contemporary Art Norway (Oslo), Participant Inc. (New York), Rhizome (New York), STARSHIP (Berlin), Storefront for Art and Architecture (New York), Studio Film Club (Trinidad), Supportico Lopez (Berlin), Surasi Kusolwong (Thailand), Swiss Institute (New York), The Mountain School of Arts (Los Angeles), Thisisnotashop (Dublin), Transformer (Washington, D.C.), Via Farini (Milan), Vox Populi (Philadelphia), WAGE Artists (New York), and White Columns (New York).

The second edition of No Soul For Sale took over the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in London in May 2010, to celebrate Tate Modern's 10th anniversary. 70 participants from all over the world were present.

Cecilia Alemani

(Pages 58-59 and 64-65) *No Soul For Sale*. Installation Views at X Initiative.

(Pages 62-63) Posters designed by No Soul For Sale participants.

Thursday, June 25, 8 p.m.
SCREENING
No Soul For Sale / Stage
X Initiative, New York

VARIOUS SKETCHES FOR LEAVING THE ROOM
with contributions by:
Jung & Q Takaki Maeda,
Hans Christian Danz, Martin Essner / Kaja Sydel / Klara Weber,
Dimitris Galanis, Susan Gilsh, Judith Hopt / Hanneli Osherson,
Dennis Mayer / MATHIAS, Ariana Müller, Sean Snyder, Farah Zeyfang

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Lotte Lindner & Til Steinbrener
Mads Lynnerup
Carlos Motta
Miguel Palma



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WITH A PROJECT BY
PETER SAVILLE

W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) works to draw attention to economic inequalities that exist in the arts and to resolve them. W.A.G.E. has been formed because we as visual + performance artists and independent curators provide a work force. W.A.G.E. recognizes the grassroots responsibility of the art world to its artists. Its mission is to provide a consultation, exhibition, and reproduction fee for the work we request to provide, prepare, install, and present. W.A.G.E. believes that the promise of exposure and calls for the remuneration of cultural value to artists is a system that betrays the value of our labor. As an independent force within a capitalist market, from which others profit grossly, W.A.G.E. advocates for the fair and equitable exploitation and compensation of W.A.G.E. members in an address of the economic inequalities that are prevalent and pervasive in the art world. We demand payment for making the world more interesting.

we are
FLUXspace.
so are
YOU.

KLING & BANG gallery
through a contest

KLING & BANG gallery is pleased to announce the winners of the 2009 contest. The contest was held in collaboration with the artists and curators of the gallery. The winners are as follows:

1st Place: [Name]
2nd Place: [Name]
3rd Place: [Name]

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548 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011
Opening: Tuesday, June 23, 7-9 pm | Opening: Sun: June 27, 12, 2009, 2-7 pm
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KLING & BANG gallery
"through a contest"

The contest was held in collaboration with the artists and curators of the gallery. The winners are as follows:

1st Place: [Name]
2nd Place: [Name]
3rd Place: [Name]

"The World is Flat" (Cheba)

Artist: [Name]
Medium: [Medium]
Year: [Year]

Latitudes is a Barcelona-based [41°23'N, 2°11'E] curatorial office founded in April 2005 by Max Andrews & Mariana Canepa Luna. Latitudes collaborates with artists and institutions in the conception, organisation and production of exhibitions, public commissions, conferences, editorial and research initiatives across local, pan-European and international situations.
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[QUESTIONS] | [ANSWERS]

Migrating Forms



arthub
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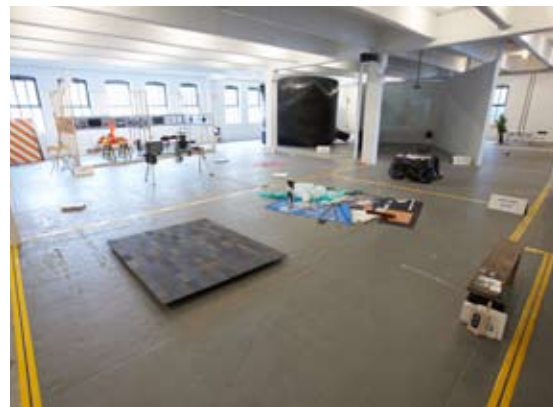
ART IS THE HEART OF A CITY'S SOUL

Reformed Remade Rehabilitated

1
2
3

IVIARINI featuring
ALBERTO TADIELLO
&
NICO VASCCELLARI

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THE MYSTERIOUS SERIOUS

Keren Cytter is a prolific artist and writer: at the age of 33, she has made more than 60 films, written four novels, and even founded a dance company called D.I.E. Now. The body of work for which she is best known consists of videos infused with cinematic references, which span from the admiration for filmmakers such as John Cassavetes and Jean-Luc Godard to quotes from melodrama and soap opera. Suspended in a film noir atmosphere, her videos are contemporary psychodramas in which characters are often on the verge of psychological collapse. The first time I met her in person, after months of email exchanges and phone calls, I was not surprised to see in her so many analogies and resonances with the characters that populate her videos: distant, imperturbable, and sarcastic, Keren Cytter seemed to walk straight out of one of the large projections we hosted at X Initiative during the summer of 2009, for her first large-scale survey in the United States.

Keren Cytter conceived her show as a kind of choreography: installed on the second floor of the X Initiative building, in a space of about 10,000 square feet, the exhibition was titled *The Mysterious Serious*, which with characteristic irony, exemplifies the two main poles between which her narratives (or unnarratives) unfold. The artist treated her installation like a theatre scenario: instead of building a number of separate environments to show the six videos in the exhibition, she handled the space like a vast, dynamic open stage. The six videos on view were synchro-

nized so that only one was visible at a time, while the others would simply be paused on a black screen shot with the film title. Alongside the projections, six drawings were also on view. Punctuating the exhibition space, they were illuminated by spotlights that would also follow the same musical synchronization that orchestrated the videos. Being turned on at different times, the spotlights and the videos animated the space, transforming the exhibition into a mechanical ballet. The installation thus invited the viewer to move around the space and explore every corner of the gallery, while engaging directly with the projected images. One literally had to follow the narrative.

Often set in cheap domestic interiors, Cytter's films depict dysfunctional families and alienated friends agitated by some kind of nervous breakdown. The artist explores interpersonal relationships as they unravel both in real life and in memory, often producing a disturbing sense of disorientation. Through her favorite cinematic tools—repetition, voice-over, cuts, and a pulsating montage—narratives become fragmented, non-linear, open-ended digressions marked by sudden ruptures and impulsive accelerations. Narratives often intertwine with meta-narratives, actors shift between different characters and even genders. The natural mixes with the artificial: everything in Cytter's films is about demolishing the prefabricated roles and clichés in favor of a fluid hybridisation of the self.

The videos on view at X Initiative exemplified some of Cytter's best known topics: social structures such as fami-





(Page 66) The Mysterious Serious,
Installation view at X Initiative.
(Above) Something Happened, 2007
(Opposite, top) The Mysterious Serious,
Installation view at X Initiative.
(Opposite, bottom) Skull, 2009.
(Page 70) Pentagram and Vinyl, 2009.

All videos courtesy the artist,
Pilar Corrias Gallery, London,
Elisabeth Kaufmann Gallery, Zurich.

All drawings courtesy of the artist
and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London.



lies and groups of close friends are the main setting of *Family* (2002), which portrays a puzzling collection of characters in an empty apartment in which a man plays the role of the mother, a woman acts as a stand-in for the fa-



ther, while the child is interpreted by a young adult. The compelling dialogues run out of sync so as to suggest the break up of conventional family roles



and other traditional hierarchies. In *Atmosphere* (2005) two young roommates confront their memories and dreams, blurring the boundaries between the real and the imaginary. The frantic dialogues that mark their day are about sex and desire, accompanied by music that shifts from classical to heavy metal. In *The Victim* (2006) Cytter portrays five people sitting around a table: the characters appear trapped

in an endless loop, repeating their actions over and over again.

Often, an eerie sense of violence animates Cytter's video work. In the three-channel installation *Repulsion* (2006), one of her most complex works, the artist restages Roman Polanski's 1965 psychological thriller of the same name. In Cytter's remake, three short videos share the same plot, while the three actors exchange roles: The killer turns into the witness, who subsequently plays the victim. A similar atmosphere of suspended anxiety is discernible in *Something Happened* (2007), in which the domestic fight between two lovers culminates in a gunshot.

As in many other Cytter's works, a variety of references may be traced to the history of cinema, and in particular to the work of legendary directors such as John Cassavetes, Jean-Luc Godard, and Michelangelo Antonioni. In *Les Ruissellements du Diable* (2008), for example, Cytter juxtaposes the stories of a man and a woman, creating a collage of identities that immediately evokes atmospheres of a new Nouvelle Vague. One of her more recent videos, *Four Seasons* (2009), resonates with a soundtrack that might recall the scores composer Leonard Bernstein wrote for Alfred Hitchcock. All together, the exhibition was a way of exploring the artist's mind: this immersive experience not only helped the viewer to engage more actively with more than one hour of video footage. It also added a new dimension to the encounter with Keren's work: navigating through the show was like playing an actor in one of her convoluted, dysfunctional settings.

Cecilia Alemani

SOUND CINEMA

LUKE FOWLER in conversation with CHRISTOPH COX

- CC Your most recent film, *A Grammar for Listening*, is deeply concerned with sound and its apprehension. What can film contribute to a consideration of the sonic?
- LF That's really one of the central questions that *A Grammar for Listening* is concerned with. I was being exposed to a lot of amazing and fascinating sonic art, concerts by people like Lee Patterson and Eric La Casa. And festivals such as "Kill Your Timid Notion" were also trying to reconcile these two poles, the visual and the sonic, to unite them and to prevent them from being two isolated strands in culture. Being exposed to these concerns made me think: well, how could I reflect that in film in a way that wasn't just illustrating these processes, that wasn't didactic. I wasn't interested in just explaining why these phenomena occur. How could I make a synergy between filming and field recording? One way of doing that is thinking through the problem of the acousmatic, which [in Pierre Schaeffer's formulation] was to remove references to the sound's source. And so I was confronted with this dilemma: do you reduce the impact of a sound event when you start to show the landscape that it's taken from?
- CC It seems to me that you avoid two solutions to this problem that have influenced a lot of sound art today. One of these goes back to Ernst Chladni's experiments in the 18th century that try to show a direct physical relationship between sound and image. The other stems from the Schaefferian idea that the visual ought to be completely eliminated. You don't take either of these routes. You're a filmmaker, after all; and you make films that are *about* sound in crucial ways, but that aren't simply illustrative and don't exploit the directly physical relationship between the image track and sound track in the way that, say, Guy Sherwin's films often do. For me, your position becomes clear in the quotations from Toshiya Tsunoda that



appear in the third part of *Grammar*, where you connect the *procedures* of audio field recording and filmmaking, the capture of sound via tape recorder and the capture of image or landscape by the camera. These are similar processes, even though they don't have to do with the same sensory modality or technology.

LF I'm very reluctant to ever say that this work is *about* this or *about* that. I think sound is important in several of my films. But there's also so much more to it. One essential thing is the relationship between me and my collaborators, the social and artistic relationship with a person, and building up this relationship into a collaboration. So, in a way, the three parts of *Grammar* could also be seen as meta-portraits of these people both as individuals and artists. In that way, they are not really so different from my earlier portraits of Cornelius Cardew [*Pilgrimage from Scattered Points* (2006)] and Xentos Jones [*The Way Out* (2003)], for example. It just so happened that, at this point, I was becoming disillusioned with always having to rely on the interview to provide the meat and bones, the meaning, and the dialectic within the work. It really came to a head with this film [*Grammar*], because I started out doing interviews with Lee and Toshiya, and it just became very apparent that it wasn't turning into the kind of film I wanted to make.

I also came to this critique through conversations with other filmmakers, in particular Robert Beavers, who has never used the voice as a central tenant in his films. A lot of earlier experimental filmmakers avoided the voice because it becomes so enmeshed in conveying a certain reading. And so, for that pre-video generation, it's really about the image, and creating a new language for film. Hollis Frampton talks a lot about this, re-making film over again, that the film project has basically been polluted over the years by mediocre Hollywood and television genres, and that what we need to do is strip things back to the basics, to make film over again afresh. As I was making the *Grammar*, I was conscious of those struggles and those arguments, thinking: how would I do that with this piece? In what way am I relying on

the voice to convey an argument?

I also wondered what gets lost when you remove the voice from the equation? Is it the social content that's lost? the political dimensions? Because I see the three parts of *Grammar* really as political. I think that, apart from sound, they're also concerned with the politics of listening and what's at stake when we as a society neglect listening, one of our essential senses.

CC One of the key sources for thinking about the politics—or maybe it's more of an ethics—of listening is R. Murray Schafer, whose work was really groundbreaking, but also very didactic and prescriptive in its distinction between good and bad sounds, good and bad soundscapes.

LF It's impossible not to connect the field recordist's interest in the sonic world to the natural world and to noise pollution. But I'd be a fool if I were to propose a kind of sonic purity, a kind of cleansing of the man-made world and a return to nature, to the bucolic landscape and a kind of pre-industrial world. I think that's nonsense.

I'm not making the value judgments of Schafer and the acoustic ecologists. But I also think that their approach, the World Soundscape approach, is incredibly important. And it's a shame that it hasn't had more of a policy influence. Chris Watson did an excellent program on noise pollution for Radio 4 in which he talked about the effects of noise not only on people but also on wildlife. For example, birds can't reproduce if they can't sing. Their voices have been steadily drowned out by what's going on around them. Watson also discussed how noise can have profound effects on human psychology—living next to mass communication receivers and aerials, in close proximity to transport systems, planes going overhead, trains, cars, and things like that. It ends up having real psychological and physiological effects that haven't been clearly studied yet.

CC I think of your work as a form of "sound art," a label that, for me, groups together forms of artistic practice—installations, audio recordings, videos, films,

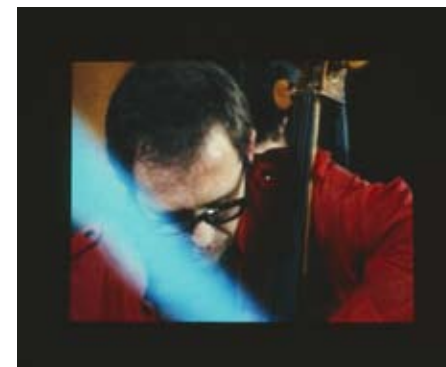
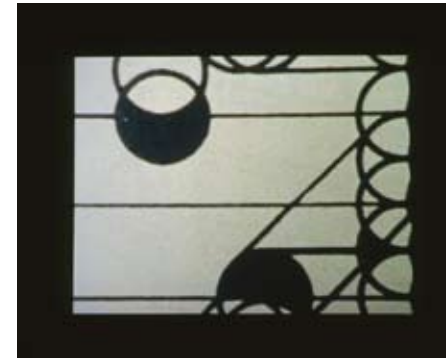
etc.—that pay special attention to sound and interrogate the sonic. It seems to me that you really seriously ask the question: “As a filmmaker, what do I do with sound? How do I think about it and use it?” And this makes us consider the whole history of cinema, experimental cinema in particular, and its relationship to sound. Those questions really enrich both film as a medium and sound art as a practice, broadening it beyond the narrow confines of a drone-filled room or something like that.

LF For me, that’s what was so important about having a sustained dialogue with Lee, Toshiya and Eric. Just getting out of this functional and hierarchical relationship that film classically has to sound, where the filmmaker is the creator, the sole director, and sound or music is just the icing on the cake, a sort of afterthought. It became really fundamental for me not to force the structure of the work, not to force the hand of the people I was working with to provide something in particular. The structure was very much developed organically and collaboratively. And that’s the way you learn, not by just commissioning a piece to serve the visual material.

CC I’m intrigued by the notion of a “grammar” for listening.

LF The title is a nod to a few things. One is a book by the radical psychiatrist David Cooper called *A Grammar for Living*. We needed a title for this project and I thought: what is it doing? what am I proposing? I think, in a way, it’s a treatise—or three treatises—on listening. At the heart of the work and of the experience was a different way of listening, a more engaged way of listening to the world and to our surroundings. I felt that the three people I collaborated with for the *Grammar* have an engagement with the world through sound that I’d never come across

(Page 72-73) *Warriors. Four Films by Luke Fowler, 2003-2008*, Installation view at X Initiative.
Detail of *The Way Out*, 2003 (with Kosten Koper)
(Opposite) Stills from *Pilgrimage from Scattered Points*, 2006.
Courtesy the artist and the Modern Institute, Glasgow.



before and that I find absolutely astonishing and fascinating. They enrich your experience of the everyday. It’s like walking around with an encyclopedia or with someone who’s a great storyteller. This experience suddenly opens up a whole new way of looking at the world and of experiencing the world. That’s what I wanted to convey in the films, though I’m sure that if you asked my collaborators they would have their own opinion on the works. The problem with film is that it can’t convey that continual nature of these recorded events. We just went in and filmed or recorded for an hour or so; but, after we left, those sonic events, for the most part, remained and were continually changing. It’s not as if we were waiting patiently for some incredible acoustic phenomena to happen. A lot of wildlife recording is, as Toshiya says, like a hunter stalking his prey. It’s about patience, sitting there at 4 o’clock in the morning in some garden in rural England waiting to discover when some rare species of frogs will call. I’m not disparaging that

approach; but we were after something different, to convey that the sonic events we were capturing are happening all the time. They're not special. I mean of course they are special to us. They're exciting and sonically interesting; but they're also very quotidian experiences.

CC When you are out in the field with Lee or Eric, how are you thinking about what to do with your camera?

LF [laughs] Exactly! This is why Lee really wanted to call it *A Grammar for Looking and Listening*. I thought: that's a little too long-winded; but I took his point, because the title does seem to privilege the sonic aspect of the film and doesn't make reference to the fact that it's trying to find a visual language that's an "objective correlative" for some of the acoustic phenomena or the sound phenomena that are being recorded. And so I'd say that the visual aspect of the film is, at once, attending to the sound and to the approaches and the methodologies of recording the sound, while also trying to be as open as possible to reacting to the environment and its own unraveling events. I suppose that may sound quite whimsical; but I was really just trying to respond to the landscape and to the possibilities of how to frame that with the Bolex. I do a lot of in-camera editing and try to do as much as possible within the camera. So the fades, double exposures, speed changes and things like that are all done manually. When I'm doing that, I'm thinking about the length of the shot and, in a way, trying to compose little stanzas, little statements that are observations and states of mind. I'm doing that directly at that time, rather than shooting for half an hour and just letting what will be be, letting the events unfold. There's a lot of consideration given to montage within the camera, within the brevity of the 100-foot film roll.

To me, that's what's so irreplaceable about film and one of its charms: that you have to become incredibly thoughtful and disciplined about what you're committing to film—so, in effect, two and a half minutes suddenly feels like a very long time.



(Above) *Photography is my Punishment*, 2009 and *hahn / huhn*, 2003 – 2009, installation view at X Initiative.

(Page 80-81) Text composition based on *Wasteful Illuminations*, shown at X Initiative.

(Page 82-83) *Prelude*, 2009 from the work <<>, 2008 – ongoing, installation view at X Initiative.

My left hand holding a folded serviette, the first item selected from a red shoe box. Returning to memories of being lost in Japan during the rainy season. A week before returning to London my back was burnt, even the occasional friction of a cotton shirt caused pain. Around midday I climbed over a thin fence and unpacked an old towel. Overgrown by weeds. Perhaps it was an overpass, but not for public use. I had fallen asleep on a narrow flyover, with my face to the ground and back bare. The whole day was spent laying above the passing trains, the humid afternoon cooled into a calm evening. As the sun began to fall I stirred from my sleep, waking slowly to the acceptance that another sleepless night was awaiting me. Regardless, I was pleased to have had a few uninterrupted hours of sleep, which had become a rarity over the past month or so. For the remainder of the evening I strolled the streets with both my hands at the base of my backpack, raising it slightly off my back.

The following morning a sun blister appeared, water-tight, spanning from my shoulders to my lower back. A gelatinous vertebrae. Later in the early evening, while rambling through a park it suddenly burst – immediately I could move with ease. Release, although in under a day the ruptured blister had become a septic mass of skin tears. I searched for another hideout. At around three in the morning I crossed a dual carriageway, but hesitated on a traffic island. A stretch of concrete, softened by cobwebbed weeds; there was a vanishing point, I knew this slender slab continued well beyond sight, yet fog and drowsiness convinced me to stay. I fell asleep amongst the gentle swaying of shrubbery and loud bursts of traffic. I felt safe there, besides, few would expect to find someone taking refuge on such a place. At five in the morning I was awoken by motorcycle engines. Rising from the flattened shrubs I saw a rally of masked bikers revved against a racing line. Due to my stupefied state I couldn't work out whether they were waiting for me, or for a signal above my head. It appeared they were all focused on a particular patch of land, precisely where I happened to lay. I looked up at my bag, which hung from a crooked sign post. The information meant nothing to me, I was more interested in the slab of concrete, my island elevated off the tarmac tracks. I was safe there, invisible, I believed.

No deviation possible. Dressed in black, each biker was masked by a piece of white fabric – folded in a triangular fashion. Cleanliness, I held that image – a fitting image of domestic and urban form. Alloys or culinary folds, both gleaning for my attention. I reached for my bag and dragged it into my enclosure, where I was invisible; camera to my face, I started shooting in the dark.

Another slide box opened, Roll#17: Transformation of an endnote. A shudder or a camera shutter to welcome an arrival. I blow a piece of dirt off a slide, I now have two images of the concrete circular stairwell that I ascended to photograph the toilet from above. Two images of truckware fabric and cardboard wedged in between the gap of a silver railing, such material pairings and placements became my navigational markers for home and company. A mobile utility kit for the homeless. Memories of material dependency and urban configurations. Both slides acquire blue circular markings. Also worth selecting is an image of the tiled steps leading towards the location of the cardboard and truckware manifestation. Shadow. Depicting small circular markings indented in the concrete walls. Large, elongated spherical light patches above the silver railing. Sequence now at 01:08, an ending. Tree trunk in Yokohama park, wrapped by a twisted string of plastic. Split and uncouth. Further displacement and finally moving away from the park location to an image of clothes drying from a window in Yokohama's Chinatown. Slanted greyscale wall, bare. It's just past 01:15, another box opened, Roll#3: elevator, followed by verbal announcements. Repetition. Empty corridor. Busy streets. Singular figure of a man on a telephone, far right end of frame. Fluorescent tubes, and green moss balls, both dormant. Skyscraper depicted. Satisfaction. Moving onwards and upwards. 01:43: Tourist views of Yokohama by night. More passageways. Steps. Pillars. Marbled floor. Buffet, and a child's fork. Western beverage. Aloof, impersonal. Confessional. Transitory, cooling western beverage. Curtains and lampshades seen from beneath. Geometric conditions. More marble floor and alignments. Foot pairing. Canvas shoes, laceless. Selection conclusion deferred to another day, impossible to complete tonight. End of today's selection.



Phase 2. Today and Everyday

A project in three parts, *Today and Everyday* is a curated still life photograph, a group exhibition and a zine. The Today is and was a portrait of a (or my) today of then and the Everyday is what followed. The photograph, a singularly authored artwork, features art objects extracted from their original context. Arranged with no input from the artists, color and form determined placement and position. In this staging, the values of the works are neutralized but are by no means vacant. In expanding the photograph into group exhibition, a larger picture emerges that reveals intricate and interconnected art-making practices; approaches that transcend the obvious artist/curator relationship laid out in the first stage of the project. The exhibition highlights relationships, often private or unsuspected, between artists, their personal practices and professional lives. In placing sculptures made by Sam Wilson (Founder/Director of Klaus Von Nichtssagend) alongside a wall installation by Donna Chung (an artist he represents) both artists are freed from the financial relationship that connects them and are able to stand as autonomous artists. Similarly, Carissa Rodriguez and Josh Kline, both of which have very public professional lives as respectively –art dealer at Reena Spaulings Fine Arts and curator at Electronic Arts Intermix– exhibit work that exists not so much in contrast to their professional lives but in conjunction with them. The perfume that emerges from the collaboration between artist Anicka Yi and architect Maggie Peng straddles the line between artwork and consumer product. For the exhibition, though, they choose not to display the product,

exhibiting instead a sculptural video installation that addresses bankrupt consumption and appropriation. The large black plate designed by industrial designer Piet Houtenbos should be a clear-cut consumer product but its prohibitively high production costs move it closer to minimalist sculpture. In contrast, Olaf Breuning's candles, which were never intended to live out their conventional function, are required to stand on their own as such. With this move from art to function, and without the original installation, they have no art market value. More than a poignant reminder of impermanence and an ironic statement on markets, their literal illumination evokes a simple sense of affirmation. And the ...and Everyday, is just that—familiar, common, ordinary. In an act of letting go of curatorial determinations, specific identities and extraordinary individuality, *Today*



and Everyday closes with a zine produced by Basel based publishing house Used Future. With full editorial control and minimal participation, the resulting memento is essentially an outside interpretation of a very inside project. But this is ok, everything is ok.

Margaret Lee



(Opposite) *Today and Everyday*, Used Future 45, 2009.

(Top) Margaret Lee, *Today and Everyday*, 2009, color photograph 30x40.

(Bottom) *Today and Everyday*, installation view at X Initiative.

Phase 2. Fritz Haeg

DOMES COLONY X IN THE SAN GABRIELS

Dome Colony X in the San Gabriels was a temporary intentional community, a simulated mountain settlement, a shifting encampment, a colony of four geodesic dome tents around a center stage, surrounded by walls painted with a continuous silhouette of Los Angeles' San Gabriel Mountains, echoed by a continuous perimeter seating platform. An open call invited anyone to colonize, to make a clubhouse, a headquarters, a home away from home, a temporary studio, a living room, a lounge, a place to host regular meetings, intimate organized

activities, stage events, make work, rehearse, and perform.

DRUMS & SKINS DOME

Headquarters for Tom Tom: A Magazine About Female Drummers became an exposed workplace where we ran daily operations like editing copy for the magazine, or teaching drums to passerby - sometimes ending with a jamm session involving other dome colonists.

- Mindy Seegal Abovitz

Hogan Community was our part of the curatorial jumblebeast which included making light reactive photo pants, painting nail art, and life coaching,



all within the loosely defined Colony spaces which enabled a surreal and fleeting utopia, like we were all roommates at a really bizarre college.

- Travis Boyer

Feral Childe & Friends reunited old co-conspirators, including Dome-mate Mindy; opening night guests Jade Gordon (My Barbarian), Stebbie (Pick and Roll 2000), and Emily Roysdon (2004 L.A. Schindler House show); culminating with a Company Picnic, imbibing some Jebediah's, making braids, and trying on our latest collection.

- Alice & Moriah, Feral Childe

ECOLOGY DOME

The Biodome of Curiosities was a manifestation of my desire to collect and display, expressing my vision of the universe and more specifically of New York City, but I often felt like I was on display too.

- Noel Rose

Cyborg Nation had over fifty conversations with visitors and saw the Cyborg evolve, augmenting movement, perception and consciousness.

Somebody asked "isn't all human consciousness Cyborg in origin?" and someone else became part of the Cyborg.

- Culture Push, Inc.

GASTRONOMY DOME

N.S.A. Think Tent: Mildly matching + dressed for takeover. We are internal colonists. We sample your DNA. You sample our candy. Share your secrets. We sell them. Sit down and study tomes of random research. Real adventure starts at teatime. - N.S.A. (No Standing Anytime)

Bean Agency: Make a big pot of beans, and in exchange for peoples' stories about beans, I give them a bowl of beans and try to convince them to cook a pot of beans from scratch.

- N. Dash

LITERARY DOME

Artbook@X hosted fifteen projects in six weeks at our Literary Dome, including installations, performances, book releases, poetry readings, while discovering dynamic new ways to engage and expand our community.

- Allie Pizarro-Grant

CENTER STAGE

Coyote Dome: The Five Toe Spirits Stand Up for Themselves was about a coyote who pioneered New York. Though nature wasn't actually present in the colony, there was at times an air of western pioneer community.

- Dillon de Give

Solorio Studio Presents... was like the Dome Colony itself, an organic laboratory that offered anyone a platform with the freedom to both succeed and fail - inspiring and refreshing in a city more devoted to dead rather than living artists.

- Niko Solorio

Sound for the Soundless

Breathe in / Breathe out

Occupying space through sound

A Home with

- no walls
- no ceilings
- no floors
- no windows
- no doors

- Kol Solthon

TRIPPING ON POOL NOODLES



Dome Colony X in the San Gabriels, installation views at X Initiative.



Our office has an ongoing fascination with psychedelia. For us, it's not so much an obsession with the look and feel of psychedelia, but rather a sympathy for the open-minded sentiment of psychedelic culture to take a leap of faith even when the outcome is not entirely certain.

Admittedly, every time we look at images of the era, we are seduced by its elaborate environments: the saturated colored surfaces, intricate patterning, undulating furniture and evocative lighting. (Our favorite projects include those by Aleksandra Kasuba, Roberto Matta and Roger Dean). We love the fact that the furniture seemed designed so that it was impossible to sit erect or lie flat and by deduction that everyone who was part of counterculture reclined in a sprawling, expectant way. Judging from the photos, the environments were intimate, as if all psychedelic spaces were located in a space-time bubble—a protective womb where only the present activity mattered and the surrounding world was

conceptually far away. Living in the 'here and now' apparently meant enjoying one's environment with inward focus, tuning in to the inner universe for spiritual enrichment. Though the spaces conjure an atmosphere of solitary awakening, at the same time they seem communal. Many have seating extending over a vast majority of their horizontal surfaces providing ample space for groups to join in cosmological togetherness.

What we continually enjoy when looking at psychedelic culture is what appears to be a willingness to embrace an idea while aware of the fact that the reasoning behind that idea may be flawed. That's because as architects we have to accept contradictions in order to design. We admire the countercultural belief that all things are spiritually interconnected—that a journey into one's consciousness would somehow lead alchemically to a connection with others and a sense of harmonious community. The logic that exploring the inner 'me' would transcendently enable a supernatural chain reaction resulting in a stronger communal 'we' is about as tenuous as those that a designer willingly submits to when creating architecture. For example, our Pool Noodle Rooftop for X Initiative was predicated on assumptions that are believable only when under the influence of a fairly powerful hallucinogenic.

When designing a space for an individual to experience, the architect has to believe that he/she can make a space that will expand the mind and comfort the body of the individual, confident that no other events will affect the



Pool Noodle Rooftop, installation views at X Initiative.

individual's disposition to appreciate the space. Similarly, when designing a place to encourage interaction among many people, the architect has to trust that the space will indeed prompt people to come alive and connect as a group and that no other extenuating circumstances can or will detrimentally affect the social dynamic.

For those of you who believe that drugs can have mind-altering effects, we propose that architecture is a lot like LSD. Back in the 60s and again recently, many have become interested in acid's influence on the human psyche. Partly this is because it still remains something of a mystery. Theories have ranged from it being a 'truth serum,' a 'cure' for homosexuality, an anti-depressant, a problem solving aid, a facilitator of evil worship, a means of reprogramming memory, a medication for post-traumatic stress disorder and a vehicle for achieving profound empathy for others. Today, there is general agreement it is extremely powerful and that although one's mental state under its influence is unpredictable, it is possible to design a set of circumstances to establish a favorable experience. Like psychotropic drugs, architecture has powerful effects and although the events that take place in it are unpredictable, it is conceivable that designers can facilitate pleasant experiences. In designing the Pool Noodle Rooftop we tried to make it a good place for people to take an exclusion, enjoying it in a personal introspective way as well as when mingling with others, enriched by the experience whether medicated or not.

Jeffrey Inaba





565685981 → 565615566
DRAW A STRAIGHT LINE
AND FOLLOW IT



LUKE FOWLER
AND LEE PATTERSON

Commissioned by Dirk Deblauwe for the Courtisane Festival 2009 in Gent, Belgium, 565685981 → 565615566 is the third and final instalment in a series of works that took initial inspiration from La Monte Young's Score #10 (For Bob Morris), which states 'Draw a straight line and follow it'.

The simple instructions were used to create a line on a map of the city of Gent, running west to east, which in turn formed the basis of a walk that adhered where possible to that line.

The title is taken from the co-ordinates at the beginning and end of the walk, which started in a country park to the west of the city and ended at the Damvalleimeer, a lake in the countryside to the east. Using digital sound recording and 16mm filming, as well as collecting various objects along the way, materials were gathered with which the work could be realised. Fowler made compositional and editorial decisions during the act of filming itself, whereas after the walk, Patterson composed a soundtrack from the recordings according to the order in which the sounds were encountered and used certain of the

found objects as sounding devices in a similar fashion.

In part, an exercise in chance and improvisation, other than during the walk itself, sound and image were dealt with as separate entities, so during the live presentations at the Courtisane Festival and as part of the exhibition of Fowler's work at X Initiative, synchronisation or slippage occurred between the two elements according to the individual editorial and compositional responses of each artist to the walks' linear narrative. The series began following an invitation from Alice Koegel (temporary curator at Tate Modern, London) to respond to Young's score, for The Long Weekend event in Spring 2008. This initial response was titled *B8016* after



the route on the Isle of Islay in the Scottish Inner Hebrides where the walk, filming and recording took place. The second work in the series, *North West from Chester Hill*, was commissioned by Barry Esson of Arika and filmed and recorded on a walk between Fife and Dundee. It was premiered in the Arika produced festival, Kill Your Timid Notion, Dundee, Scotland 2008.

Luke Fowler and Lee Patterson,
565685981 → 565615566, courtesy the artists.

Phase 2. Events

NEXT YEAR'S MODELS ORGANIZED BY BRIAN GEMPP AND MEREDYTH SPARKS

Until the economic boom of the 1990s, the New York artworld and the downtown music scene(s) maintained a loose but vital connection. The 1981 Noise Fest at White Columns, a nine-day run of music that engaged bohemianism, urbanism, as well as Conceptual art and Fluxus, epitomized the symbiotic relationship that has existed between music and art. This was a period prior to the dominance of the M.F.A., when art practices had yet to be cordoned-off or professionalized. In the wake of the economic recession and New York's near bankruptcy in the 1970s, musicians and artists responded collaboratively, seeking links between media and finding new aesthetic possibilities in response to a changing cultural landscape.

By the late 1990s, however, these inter-relations had become less immediate. With the rising cost of real estate and the migration of galleries from mixed residential, industrial, and commercial neighborhoods to a single epicenter, the divide between the artworld and downtown music widened. Though today one might encounter music in New York's commercial gallery system, these instances often owe more to performance art or the historicizing of recent innovators than to a thorough consideration of contemporary practices. Moreover, musicians who incorporate theories and methods from the visual arts into their projects frequently find their performances relegated to peri-

patetic venues and constantly shifting economies outside gallery culture. Next Year's Models aims to consider the inter-relations and networks of influence between music and art in the hope that new connections might again emerge. In three nights of music and film grouped into four divergent models, Next Year's Models explores a range of themes, including boredom as provocation, urban decline and its attendant artistic response, and the counter-cultural/ alternative communities that rise up against hegemony.

MODEL ONE

JULY 23RD, 2009 • MICHAEL SNOW'S *Wavelength*, 1967, 16mm, color, sound, 45 min. HOLLIS FRAMPTON'S *Snowblind*, 1968, 16mm, b/w, silent, 5:30 min TOM CARTER with WALLACE BERMAN'S *Aleph*, 1976, 16mm, b/w, silent, 10 min loop SAMARA LUBELSKI w/ MARCIA BASSETT with HOLLIS FRAMPTON'S *Artificial Light*, 1969, 16mm, b/w, silent, 25 min

SAMARA LUBELSKI AND MARCIA BASSETT each incorporate elements of free improvisation and noise in their work, while maintaining the delicate experimental sensibilities characteristic of Minimalism, Psychedelia and Folk. Lubelski is best known as a solo artist with four full-length releases, but she has also been involved in various art-music provocations, most notably with Salmon Skin (who performed an anti-art intervention at the 1995 Whitney Biennial inside Rikrit Tiravanija's installation), Hall of Fame, Tower Recordings, as a member of Thurston Moore's band, and in her associations with the

German collective Metabolismus. Bassett has performed in assorted and acclaimed experimental music projects over the last fifteen-years, including Un, GHQ, Hototogisu, Double Leopards and Zaimph. Lubelski and Bassett's performance is preceded by MICHAEL SNOW'S *WAVELENGTH* (1967), which takes place inside an urban loft and features the artist's friends and colleagues performing scenes through the course of several days and nights. Recorded using a slow-moving zoom



shot, *Wavelength's* backdrop—including glimpses of the street outside of the loft's windows—offers a socio-economic frame through which to read this primarily formal meditation on cinematic practice and visuality. Culminating in the camera's focus on an image of waves pinned to the wall of the room, *Wavelength* complements Lubelski and Bassett's interest in the limits and expressivity of their instruments, and the aleatory techniques and open structures that guide their practice. The film's use of a community of peers in an urban environment also engage the network of relationships among this evening's performers.

TOM CARTER'S solo-guitar compositions are typically associated with modal folk, drone and the legacy of Psychedelia, but his playing also en-

gages the highly hermetic West coast iconographies of artists like Kenneth Anger and Bruce Conner. Best known for his involvement in Charlamides (with Christina Carter) and Badgerlore, in recent years Carter has increasingly concentrated on solo work. Carter's performance accompanies WALLACE BERMAN'S *ALEPH* (1976), a short film loop focusing on an array of themes including death, mysticism, pop culture and art in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Aleph offers a glimpse into Berman's artistic practice and social circle through an assemblage of flickering snapshots and momentary flashes of imagery that underlines Carter's own lyrical guitar lines. HOLLIS FRAMPTON'S *ARTIFICIAL LIGHT* (1969) and *SNOWBLIND* (1968) accompany tonight's performances. A close friend of Snow, Frampton appears in Snow's *Wavelength*, and collaborated with him on *Snowblind*, a film that documents, through changing light and evolving time, Snow's sculpture, *Blind* (1968). *Artificial Light* is a work that rigorously adheres to structural and formal logic through the application of various abstract interventions on top of a domestic scene that provides a counterpoint to Berman's exoticism.

MODELS TWO AND THREE

JULY 30TH, 2009 • CHRIS MARKER'S *Bestiary*, 1985-90, color, sound

Cat Listening to Music (2:47 min), *An Owl is an Owl is an Owl* (3:18 min), *Zoo Piece* (2:42 min) *Bullfight in Okinawa* (4:10 min), *Slon Tango* (4:09 min)

COMMON EIDER, KING EIDER
KEN JACOBS' *Disorient Express*, 1996, b/w, silent, 30 min CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN'S *Carl Ruggles Christmas Break-*

fast 1963, 2007, color, sound, 9:04 BIRD SHOW w/ Koen Holtkamp COMMON EIDER, KING EIDER work within the traditions of outsider art and musical primitivism, but musicians Rob Fisk, George Chen and Vicky Fong are also well-versed in the vocabularies of long duration, which in this project draws attention to the constitutive elements of sound. Fisk's delicate and linear viola, alongside pre-recorded noise and falsetto singing, allude to the natural and the manmade, a quality that carries over into his visual art and lifestyle, which moves between urban environments and remote Alaska. Fisk was a founding member of *Deerhoof* and, more recently, *7 Year Rabbit Cycle*—two projects that similarly aimed to deconstruct music, exploring a pure tonal materiality as a means to a more emotional and subjective end. Chen has been an actipolitical scenes for twenty years and Fong is an artist and designer. Common Eider, King Eider's performance follows CHRIS MARKER'S, *BESTIARY* (1985-90), which brings together five short films that feature scenes involving human relationships with animals, figures from "nature" that appear to resist being subsumed or anthropomorphized completely.

KEN JACOBS' *DISORIENT EXPRESS* (1996), will be screened in conjunction with Common Eider, King Eider's performance. *Disorient Express* is a work that creates a kind of parallel reality constituted from elements specific to the filmic medium. This reality takes as its point of departure the traditional cinematic motif of the moving locomotive, in this case a train trip through mountainous terrain. Though the doc-

umentary footage is entirely found (originally shot in 1906), the treatment of the footage reveals a landscape kaleidoscopically expanding and collapsing as if from the interiors of the mind. This psychologically dense treatment is echoed in Common Eider, King Eider's music, which builds upon looped sound sources, pre-recorded elements, and live instrumentation.

BIRD SHOW revolves around musician and composer, Ben Vida, who has worked in an array of styles over the last decade, ranging from incantory vocal chants, to free improvisation, to musique concrete. Vida was a founding member of the minimalist chamber project, Town and Country, and more recently the rock band Singer. In its most recent work, Bird Show draws upon post-war electronic music, most notably Stockhausen, Kagel and Ligeti, synth-based compositions that invoke what Stockhausen characterized as music for the Post-Apocalypse, where the musician's hand appears displaced in favor of certain structural limits associated with one's medium.

Bird Show's performance accompanies a screening of CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN'S *CARL RUGGLES CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST* 1963 (2007). In this short film, Schneemann presents a late-life portrait of the American composer as told through a lively conversation at Ruggles' breakfast table. The film is overlaid with abstract forms painted directly on the celluloid. Ruggles is known for rigorous atonal and non-serial compositions and the film pays tribute to him as one of Schneemann's influences, especially in the development of her own practice of incorporating psychologically-charged subject

matter within formal structure. Bird Show's more recent synth-based works explore similar conceptual and structural components in combination with an emotional inflection that approaches beautiful and evocative ends.

MODEL FOUR

AUGUST 6TH, 2009 • MANFRED KIRCHHEIMER'S *Stations of the Elevated*, 1980, color, sound, 45 min BRUCE NAUMAN'S *Stamping in the Studio*, 1968, b/w, sound, 62 min THESE ARE POWERS with GORDON MATTA-CLARK'S *City Slivers*, 1976, color, silent, Super 8 film on video, 15 min

THESE ARE POWERS celebrate an unbridled urbanism in their music, a sound that references, in equal part, the traditions of Hip Hop, Noise, and Dance. In so doing, These Are Powers have developed a uniquely metropolitan sensibility that combines prepared bass guitar and electroacoustic percussion with the provocative lyricism of contemporary Dance music. During performances, the band is known for opening up space for physical engagement with sound. These Are Powers' performance is preceded by MANFRED KIRCHHEIMER'S *STATIONS OF THE ELEVATED* (1980), a work that provides an early documentation of economic depression and its effects on an urban landscape. *Stations of the Elevated*, which features a soundtrack by Charles Mingus, captures the graffiti that began covering New York City's subway trains and buildings in the late 1970s. With poetic, slow-moving shots of elevated trains camouflaged by color-filled graffiti rolling through the desolate, often burned-out and boarded-up neighborhoods, the film documents the rise of

an art form that both embodies and rejects urban decline.

BRUCE NAUMAN'S *STAMPING IN THE STUDIO* (1968) and GORDON MATTA-CLARK'S *CITY SLIVERS* (1976) accompany These Are Powers' performance. With only his body, the space surrounding him and the objects that happened to be in his studio, Nauman's early films suggest how various mundane activities provide a means of filling studio time. In so doing, Nauman's work articulates an aesthetic approach to boredom and futility, and the economic limitations many artists face in developing their practices. Narrowing the viewer's field of vision by blacking out sections of a pictorial space, Matta-Clark's *City Slivers* locates "slivers" from within the cityscape, poetically capturing his lifelong love for New York and his work's engagement with the architectural structures of the city that inform and shape daily life.

Phase 2. Events

EAI VIDEO PROJECT SPACE AT X INITIATIVE

The EAI Video Project Space at X Initiative featured a curated exhibition program of artists' videos from Electronic Arts Intermix's major collection of new and historical media artworks. Located on the ground floor of X Initiative, the project space highlighted a multi-disciplinary, multi-generational range of artists and practices, bringing video by emerging artists into dialogue with rarely seen historical works.

Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is a leading nonprofit resource for video art. EAI fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution, and preservation of media works by artists.

EAI's Video Project Space at X Initiative was organized by Lori Zippay, EAI Executive Director, and Josh Kline, EAI Director of Public Programs.

Character Witness June 23 - July 3, 2009



In works by Alex Bag, Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn, Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson, Kalup Linzy, MICA-TV, Michael Smith, and William Wegman, the artists appear as actors to investigate their relationship to the artworld and art market.

Seth Price: *Redistribution* July 9 - August 15, 2009

EAI exhibited a new iteration of Seth Price's 45-minute video *Redistribution*. Begun in 2007 and conceived as a never-finished, constantly updated



work, *Redistribution* takes up an "artist's talk" by Price only to pull it apart, reassemble it, and graft new material to it, resulting in an open-form hybrid: lecture, performance, essay-film.

Merce Cunningham: Video Tribute August 18-21, 2009



This video tribute to visionary choreographer Merce Cunningham featured the two-part video *Merce by Merce by Paik* (1978), by Charles Atlas, Shigeko Kubota and Nam June Paik.

Charlotte Moorman: Performance Documents August 25-28, 2009



Rare documents of avant-garde cellist Charlotte Moorman from the 1960s

and '70s featured performances of Nam June Paik's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* and *TV Cello*, and John Cage's *26'1.1499" for String Player*.

Steina: Early Video September 2-4, 2009

Video art pioneer Steina's earliest analog video works from the 1970s,



such as *Flux* and *Summer Salt*, explored the electronic interrelation of sound, image, perception and space.

Vito Acconci: Feature Lengths September 9 - October 3, 2009



EAI presented two seminal but rarely screened works from the 1970s by Vito Acconci: *The Red Tapes* (1977), a three-part epic that is a key work in video art history, and *My Word* (1973-74), Acconci's unique feature-length silent film.



Shigeko Kubota: Early Video Works October 7-17, 2009

In the 1970s, Fluxus artist Shigeko

Kubota layered electronic processing over everyday images to create idiosyncratic video diaries, such as Marcel Duchamp and John Cage and Video Girls and Video Songs for Navajo Sky.

EAI OUTDOOR VIDEO SCREENINGS ON THE ROOFTOP AT X INITIATIVE

Playtime



July 30, 2009

Playtime celebrated the sight gag and the visual pun, with works by John Baldessari, Phyllis Baldino, James Byrne, VALIE EXPORT, George Kuchar, Cynthia Maughan, Stuart Sherman, and William Wegman. Programmed by Leah Churner.

Talk Show August 6, 2009

The artists in *Talk Show* use video



to bring the interview into their art, including Tony Oursler's interview with Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon, MICA-TV's 1982 video with Richard Prince, works by Chris Burden and art collective Ant Farm, and Russell Connor's rare 1964 interview with Marcel Duchamp. Programmed by Josh Kline.

Phase 2. Events

DAN GRAHAM IN CONVERSATION WITH GLENN BRANCA MODERATED BY HOWIE CHEN

[Introduction]

[Thank you]

[Setup discussion with Dan Graham and Glenn Branca]

“I would like to focus on the unique working relationship they have had as artist and musician and to talk about the creative scene in New York in the late 70s and early Eighties. Throughout the conversation we’ll be watching video clips from their installation / performance based projects and video/music collaborations ...and talking about them.”

[Listen to]

Audio Arts Supplement, 1979

The Static (40:25)

Glenn Branca: Guitar; Barbara Ess: Bass; Christine Hahn: Drums Recorded live at Riverside Studios, London.

[Watch clips and discuss]

Westkunst (Modern Period):

Dan Graham Segment

Dan Graham and Ernst Mitzka
1980, 7:10 min, color, sound

Rock My Religion

Dan Graham, 1982-84, 55:27 min,
b&w and color, sound

Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Video Time Delay
Dan Graham and Glenn Branca
1983, 45:45 min, b&w, sound

[What about New York now?]

“On that note, let’s open it up to questions in the audience ...”

[Question and answer]

Listen at: www.whitney.org/watchandlisten/publicprograms/glennbranca

PUT BLOOD IN THE MUSIC INTRODUCTION BY DIRECTOR CHARLES ATLAS

[Introduction]

[Thank you]

[Setup screening piece and introduce filmmaker Charles Atlas]

[Charles Atlas introduces film]

CHARLES ATLAS “...This is a film that I made in 1989. It was made for British television, produced in Ireland, and shown on a South Bank show on ITV in London. It is definitely a television piece and is part of the way I thought about this piece. It really represents, for me, a 1989 time capsule of downtown music in New York. It focuses on John Zorn and Sonic Youth. (Sonic Youth, at that time, was before they signed with Geffen...)”



Stills from *Put Blood in the Music*, 1989 by Charles Atlas. © Charles Atlas.



This is also a different kind of documentary. We actually shot all the music and recorded all of the music live—I wouldn’t ask anybody to lip sync. I also wanted to cram as much into it as I could, and have a New York feeling. So it is quite busy both in terms of the people and the music and sounds. All of the sounds are either natural sounds I shot with the documentary or the music of John Zorn or Sonic Youth. There are two short segments: one on Arto Lindsay and the Ambitious Lovers, which is a short song, and also a band called Hugo Largo. All of this represented the various strands of downtown New York music at the time. So without further ado I will answer questions afterwards.”

[Press play]

Put Blood in the Music

Charles Atlas

1989, 75 min, color, sound

[Make sure volume is loud enough]

[Turn on lights]

[Question and answer]

Listen at: www.whitney.org/watchandlisten/publicprograms/putbloodinthemusic

Held in conjunction with the exhibition *Dan Graham: Beyond* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, these public programs were organized by curator Howie Chen as part of the museum's My Turn series.

AMIR MOGHARABI

STONE

Performance for part of an ongoing script, commencing with two variables (X and Y)



Cigarette Burn through Transparency. A Face (X) 2010

“Thus, every time the earth unexpectedly tried to break open the artificial pavement covering it, the glorious buildings would fail miserably.

With all their masculinity and indecency abound, pieces of plaster would fall violently on top of other even weaker buildings, within which the common folk were supposed to live... and essentially love.

But love always came with a service; always came with an unexpected ending.

Every alcove arrived at an impossible darkness. Every shadow, at the threshold of an involuntary body.”

“Soon, something will happen, certain things will merge, certain appearances will coalesce with figures, and music will be made, compositions denied, abstractions pursued as poetry. Dialogues pursued as the

overtone of an anonymous woman.

Pursued as the artwork of a weary language.

As the stab through a leather belt, and its impossible scream. As the artwork of fragility. The fragility of nature. A motorcycle. The incapacity of reason. The forceful attempt to say what you are saying.

Here, under broken glass, and formal elements of otherwise improvised geometries, some forever, not for better, we will bear the strength of a necessary ambiguity in art. A necessary ash upon our reasons.”

(Y)

BENEFIT HONORING
PAULA COOPER
AND JOHN RICHARDSON

JAMES MEYER

INTRODUCING PAULA COOPER

The history of art is usually taught as a history of artists, of movements, of styles. The dealer is the unsung hero of these narratives. The gallerist supports the artist morally and financially, and provides a context in which to exhibit his or her work. Vollard, Kahnweiler, Betty Parsons—the evolution of modernism cannot be understood but for the involvement of such individuals. Now Paula Cooper is such a figure for our time, a time when a market mentality exerts an inordinate pressure on what is seen and discussed. Paula represents a different model of gallery practice, and a different set of values; in the current downturn, her example is instructive and to my thinking inspiring.

This concern with space, so apparent to anyone who has had the pleasure of visiting Paula’s capacious gallery interiors in Soho and Chelsea, was shared by many of the most innovative artists of sixties and seventies, so many of whom Paula would show, from Walter De Maria, to whom Paula gave his first New York exhibition in 1962 at the Paula Johnson Gallery, to the lively group of painters and sculptors with who she worked at the cooperative Park Place Gallery in the Village in the mid sixties, such as Robert Grosvenor, Forrest Myers, and Mark Di Suvero. The works of the Park Place

group and the Minimalists, who Paula would also exhibit—LeWitt, Andre, Judd, Flavin—explored a new kind of scale and outdoor settings. It was, as Rosalind Krauss would call it, a sculp-



ture of the expanded field. The new art necessitated a new kind of gallery, and a new kind of gallerist.

LAURA HOPTMAN

INTRODUCING JOHN RICHARDSON

It is my distinct honor this evening to celebrate the incomparable John Richardson. ...The first time I met John, a number of years ago, was through two dear mutual friends, the artist Ugo Rondinone and the poet John Giorno. It wasn't his ravishingly good looks, or his debonair manner, his sharp wit, or his knowledge of absolutely everyone in the contemporary art world in New York, London, Paris and points beyond over the past fifty years that made me, as I recall, spill my champagne in my lap. These charms are heady, but they are manageable. Neither was it exactly the well-known fact of his friendship with Pablo Picasso. [...] As was made clear by the first two volumes of *A Life of Picasso*, John didn't only know Picasso, but he has grown to understand him profoundly. This, I believe makes him unique, not only among Picasso scholars, but among biographers, and among men and women who were born in the century that Picasso defined- along with other volcanic events like two world wars, two nuclear explosions, the exploration of the unconscious and of the moon.

What awed me then about John, and what thrills me now, as I stand here and speak to you is that John Richardson, man of history, is truly—and this is more rare—a man in history. Like his great subject, John's powers of observation and analysis, his ability to encapsulate a personality with a perfectly-turned verbal gesture, his poetic sense of the tiny details of life that spark major intellectual events, have given him the power to participate in—not merely chronicle the history of our time.



The evening premiered a new special edition by Maurizio Cattelan conceived as a unique fundraiser for X Initiative. Mixing irreverence and wit, Cattelan's multiple is a gift turned into an affront, playing with our assumptions about generosity and philanthropy.



Maurizio Cattelan, *Untitled*, 2009, photo Zeno Zotti.



Performa 09



(Pages 106-108) Jennifer Rubell, *Creation*, opening night of Performa 09, presented by Performa 2009. Photo copyright Paula Court. Courtesy Performa.
 (Page 106) Michael Stipe


It is not often that a very good thing, which was closed down and its demise mourned, is given a second chance. So when X Initiative opened the doors once more of the four story brick building on 22nd Street that was home to the Dia Center for the Arts for over two decades, it was an occasion for celebration, not only of the adventurous program that it announced, but of the large, unadorned spaces that would once again be available for use by artists and curators. Such spaces, and the entire ethos that came with the work-live-loft of the light-industry buildings of SoHo of the 1970s, actually shaped the New York artistic community; they provided a close-knit neighborhood for a generation of artists from all disciplines to gather creative momentum without institutional license or permission, producing work that had everything to do with conversation amongst peers, and these spaces, with their distinct character, were also essential ingredients in the stripped bare, conceptual esthetics of the times. Tall ceilings, big windows, wide floorboards became the signature of the galleries that moved in alongside the artist-inhabited buildings. The fact that they closely resembled the no-frills workplace of the artists would transform forever the idea of the ideal gallery space and influence the structure and design of the new contemporary art museums as well. For Performa 09, X Initiative joined the special consortium of partnerships that make up the Performa biennial, turning the entire building over to live performance and becoming an essential marker in the map of more than 87 venues that dotted the city.

For Performa, the search for the right place to experience a work is a critical part of the curatorial process; setting provides context as well as 'frame', enhancing the sensibilities and intentions of the work and bringing out its particular flavors, all the better to be absorbed by the viewer. Indeed, such exquisitely dissected flavors of space and food itself were essential for opening night of Performa 09; only X Initiative made it possible to fully realize the concept and experience of Jennifer Rubell's *Creation*, a walk-through vertical dinner that began on the top floor with cocktails and peanuts, descended to the third for spare-ribs with raining honey and to the second for dessert in the form of Jeff Koons' *Rabbit* made of dense chocolate by Jacques Torres, which had to be smashed with a hammer into bite size portions to be eaten. Connected by a 'Liquor Elevator' that descended floor to floor with the diners, the event had perfect pitch thanks to the layers of space and history that is X Initiative. Equally, the performance program organized by X Initiative for Performa 09 provided a critical mass of exciting and thrillingly varied new work, from the Bruce High Quality Foundation's *Art History with Benefits*, to Ryan McNamara's *The Sacred Band of Thebes*, and Guillaume Désanges' *A History of Performance in 20 Minutes*, and including a Performa Commissioning Fund performance by Tamar Ettun and Emily Coates, *Empty is Also*, thus combining forces and setting off sparks of imagination and promise for ongoing collaborations in the future.

RoseLee Goldberg


Performa 09

- November 5, 6 pm - 8 pm

This fall  The Bruce High Quality Foundation founded BHFU, a free, unaccredited "university" dedicated to the creation of new histories of art. These histories, which take an omnivorous approach to research, combine satire and polemics, the learned and the base, to "resurrect art history from the bowels of despair." These histories form the pedagogy and production of BHFU, taking the form of videos, lectures, and texts distributed freely from the group's headquarters and website. One of the first of such histories to be made public is *Art History with Benefits*.

Art History with Benefits is a half-hour presentation examining the romance, figuratively and literally, between cultural funding and sex. Drawn from such diverse sources as environmental psychologist Paco Underhill's "Why We Buy," George Buchner's "Danton's Death," and congressional records concerning the NEA debates of the late 80s, *Art History with Benefits* relentlessly upturns expected notions of how and why culture happens.

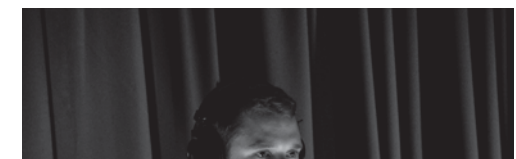
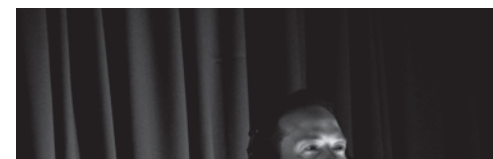
- November 6, 6 pm - 8 pm

Shana Lutker's  installation and performance *Hear It Here* consists of two actors, an audience and an accordion player. The audience is invited to speak into microphones that feed directly to the actors' headphones on stage. The actors repeat what they hear. An accordionist plays interludes that both interrupt and contain the action. The structure allows for an unplanned and nonlinear dialogue consisting of the audience's stream of consciousness, and it lends a sense of responsibility to the audience, who must produce the performance for themselves. An inversion of stage and audience, a blurring between the performers and spectators; both speak and listen. The actors are props or surrogates for the audience, although accountability for what is said is diffused or diverted through the actors. Part of an ongoing project, versions of *Hear It Here* have been staged thus far in Southern California, Miami, and Zurich. The script of each *Hear It Here* staging becomes part of the archive of performances, serving both as a portrait of the audience and

(A)




(B)




Performa 09

a starting point for a future body of work.

– November 7, 6 - 9 pm

Tamar Ettun and Emily Coates. Integrating objects, a dancer, a musician, and video, *Empty Is Also*  inverts the usual conception of dance and sculpture in relation to the ephemeral by investigating dance's durability versus sculpture's ultimate disposability. The dancer inhabits the sculptural forms even as she rearranges them to create a sequence of landscapes that shift over time. The sculpture reflects the dancer's energy and agency, while her movement absorbs the shape and nature of the objects with which she interacts. The tension between the perceived natures of sculpture and dance serves as the installation's primary conflict, or reason for being. Music by Jane Ira Bloom.

– November 11 - 12, 6 - 9 pm

In *Everything, Nothing, Something, Always (Walla!)* by Emily Mast  the medium of theater has been adapted to an exhibition context in order to stage controlled chaos in the

form of a conversation-cum-argument between five characters who represent various aspects of the artist's psyche. Through spoken language and movement, these representations of the complex self turn the artistic process inside out for the viewer, thus opening it up for examination.

The performance itself is a time-based installation that takes the form of a one-act live theatrical play looping for three hours, varying slightly with each repetition and simultaneously acting as a performative "sculpture" in the center of the exhibition space, visible from all angles. The characters on stage are faced with seated actors who play a (very reactionary) artificial audience. The actual audience is encouraged to question their role in the space: they watch not only the play, but also another audience watching a play, all the while looking across the exhibition space and through the play at each other. Embracing artifice, caricature and parody, the script teases out earnest existential dilemmas in the face of artistic production



(C)



(D)



Performa 09

via melodrama, cliché, self-doubt and self-reflexivity.

FEATURING:

Zoe Anastassiou
Allison Bayles
Jennifer Cendaña Armas
Lydia Cortes
Nathan Douglass
Melissa Elledge
Inuka Griggs
Phillip Gulley
Maura Hooper
Benji Jeffrey
Julie Kelderman
Andy Lala
Kent M Lewis
Leemore Malka
Ravin Patterson
Jihan Ponti
Lisa Reynolds
Julia Sirna-Frest
Claudia Turbides
Chinaza Uche

– November 13, 8 pm

Ryan McNamara.

*The Sacred Band of Thebes aka
In Memory of Robert Isabell
aka Any Fag Could Do That.*

A friend of mine told me that she left my performance with one goal in mind: to get laid. She did. It's my favorite response to my work, ever. I don't blame her. The men of the Sacred Band are amazing, talented, creative, giving, and hot. During preparations

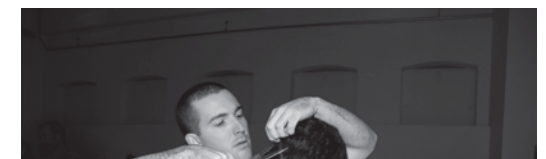
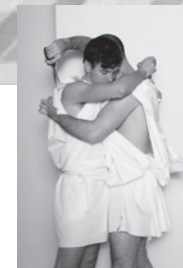
for the performance, I put off creating any choreography for myself. When some of the guys showed me their own choreography, my role became clear: I had no choice but to be a voyeur.

All I wanted was to watch their stunning movement. I modeled my role of "The Wasp" on Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's essay *Of Love Possessed*, in which they celebrate the unadulterated pleasure produced by the relationship between an orchid and a wasp (which they contrast to the dry, efficient symbiosis of a bee and a flower). I danced from orchid to orchid, satiating my scopophilia.

Liam and TM cutting . . . Myles and Sam whipping . . . Josh and Paul jamming . . . Dominic, Joey, and Christopher cruising . . . Jess and Taylor spitting . . . Justin and Matthew balancing . . . Abi and Tom courting . . . Reid and Jesse spinning . . . Bradley and Luke tossing. . . Nico and Denoal kissing . . . Sam and Tim posing . . . Kris, Joshua, and Angelo caressing . . . Victor and Patrick sweating . . . Run and Paul swaying. . . RJ and Matthew dragging . . . Chad, Richert, and Jack lusting.




(E)



Performa 09

I got lost in it. The nearly 300 audience members disappeared. Then, as quickly as it had begun, we dropped, breaking our trance. We laid on the floor, anxiously waiting for the audience to leave, so we could dash outside to experience what all of Twenty Second Street could see by now—Liz, increasingly drunk, posing gracefully atop a spinning six-foot-tall plinth in the open freight elevator. I made it outside just as the roll gate was closing.

– November 14, 7 - 9 pm

Danielle Freakley.  *The Quote Generator - Speaking In Quotation with reference Socially For Three Years*

Thanks to all of you who rocked up to my exhibition opening last week - Tai, Artist/Curator, Melbourne, Email, 2008.

You baptized me... Thank you for bringing me in - Vicente, Whirlwind, Bed, 2009, Thank you all very much, I appreciate it very much—Doreen, Grandma, Birthday Party, Uncle David's House, Western Australia, 1995. Essentially I think - Ash,

Art Critic, Email, Melbourne, 2008 I feel like I've been hit by a truck... filled with double ended dildos - Jez, Close Friend, His Kitchen, Western Australia, 2008.

I was... scared of the quotes :) —Jess, Teigan's Ex Girlfriend, Her Bedroom, Facebook Private Message, Melbourne, 2008.

It became something I got nervous about... like a talent show or something. It became—Amir, Friend, Playground, Brooklyn, 2009 a bit of a messy spill I know, but a spill from a precarious cup brimming and needing to spill—Reid, Friend, His Loungeroom, Brooklyn, Email, 2009.

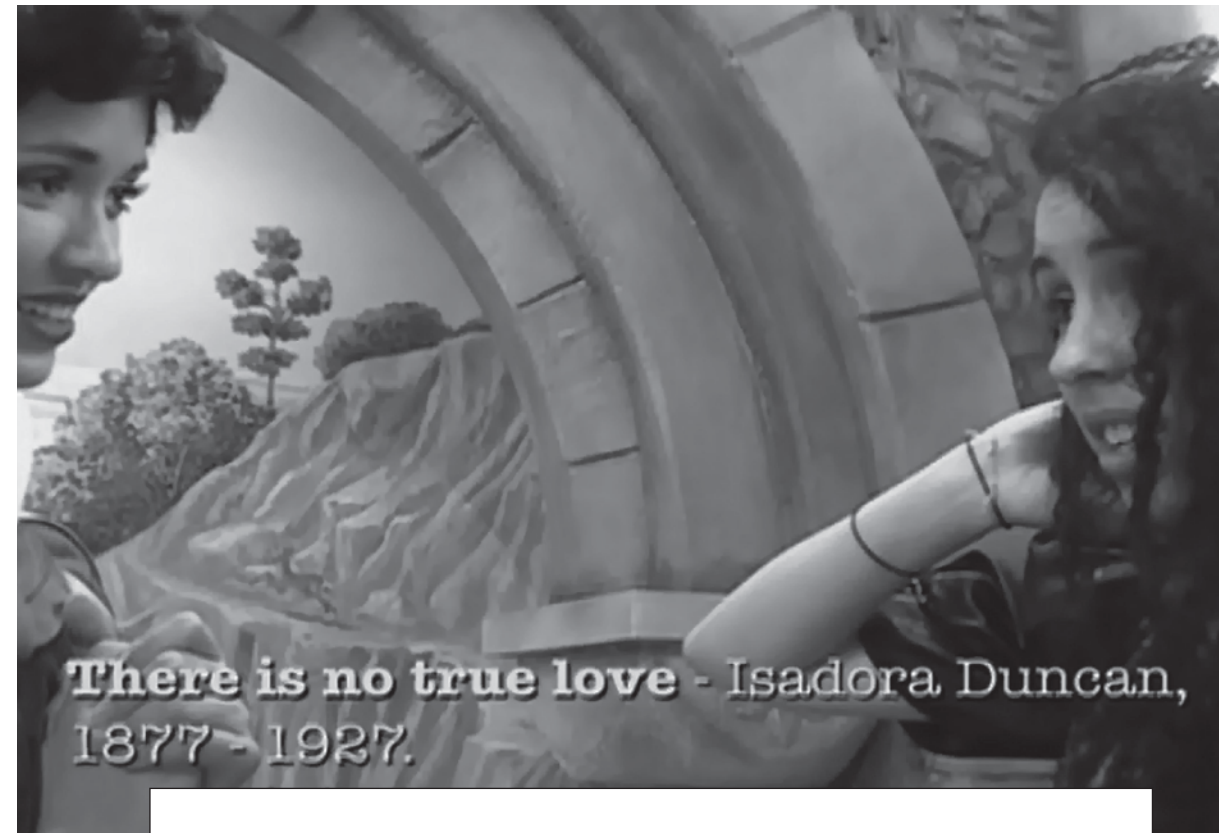
Oh well, you gotta have a mess so you have something to talk about when you get into the retirement home - Mefa, Mum, Backyard, Western Australia, 1989. You kind of feel like you dive in to the water and awww-ereww you get submerged and wwaaraaaww it's murky—Sher-ee, Close Mate, Her Lounge-room, Western Australia, 2008.

Just the usual shit—Taryn, Highschool Friend, Taxi, Foshan, China, 2008.

(*) Text continues on the right



(F)



Oh My God - Popular Girls, Enemies and acquaintances, School, Western Australia, c. 1988 - 1999, **I had a beautiful time with you** - Luke, Ex, Email, Melbourne, 2008. **like even though** - Em, Best Friend, Class, Letter, Western Australia, 1998 **eessentially I think I am** - Ash, Art Critic, His Loungeroom, Email, Melbourne, 2008 **just a slow boat clogging up the fast lane** - Knight, Friend, Email, Manhattan, 2008 **at the moment** - Steve, Gallery Director, His Car, Sydney, 2008, **I do I wanna come from the bottom wrung** - Luke, Ex, Drunk, Phone, Melbourne, 2007.

Still working on The Quote Generator - Samantha, Radio Show Producer, Email, Melbourne, 2008, **beginning to show better organization. Further consistent effort to improve... concentration should also ensure improved levels of work** - Mrs Balch, Teacher, School Report Card, Western Australia, 1988. **Essentially I** - Ash, Critic, His Loungeroom, Email, Melbourne, 2008 **need... to read material carefully and to and to reflect on... responses before professing them** - Mrs Rocky, Teacher, School Language Report Card, Western Australia, 1994.

(*) Text continues next page

PLEASURE... LAST SATURDAY NIGHT AND I HOPE YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD WEEK, UNTIL NEXT TIME, BEST WISHES -Patrick, Stranger, Email, Melbourne, 2007 I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST FOR YOUR COMING SHOWS/PERFORMANCES - DOMENICO, HEAD OF ARTSCHOOL/PERFORMANCE Artist, Email, Melbourne, 2007. PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED OF YOUR WORK - Curatorial Panel, Darkened Board Room, Skyscraper, Melbourne, 2006.

STAY HAPPY, LOVE FOREVER - Michael, Boyfriend, Christmas Card, Western Australia, 1997 THE QUOTE GENERATOR - Elizabeth, Gallery Founder/ Director, Speech, Her Experimental Art Space, Manhattan, 2009

- November 15, 7 - 8.30 pm

Scott Keightley and Tom O'Neill: *Desire caught by the tail*



Amazing...Scott and Tom's revival of the Picasso play "Desire Caught By The Tail" was chaotic, wonderful, spirited and inspiring.

- Elizabeth Dee

At least once, "Desire Caught By The Tail" offers the audi-

ence a kind of shamanistic experience; the sudden and intuitive understanding of something bizarre, elusive, meaningless.

- Georgia Lassner

Let's wrap the worn-out sheets in the angels' face powder and let's turn the mattress inside out in the brambles. Let's light all the lanterns. Let's throw the flights of doves against the bullets with all our might and let's close the houses that have been demolished by the bombs, with a double lock.

- Big Foot.

- November 18-19-20, 2 - 10 pm

A living exhibition curated by Guillaume Désanges, assisted by Alexandra Delage

F for Faith presents simultaneously four projects as a whole. Three lectures/performances played in a row during three days perform the idea of exhaustion and physical substitute to a "normal" exhibition, and an exhibition—"Child's Play".

The lecture *A History of Performance in 20 Minutes* brings a concise history of the representation of

(G)



(H)



Performa 09

the body in art, portrayed live by an actor, while the curator is talking. It aims at dividing the history of performance in 10 gestures (Appearing, Receiving, Holding back, Escaping, etc.) discussed very subjectively.

Vox Artisti, his masters' voices uses the format of the lecture to propose a personal statement about the relationship between the voice and the visual arts. Working with hundreds of excerpts picked up from sound archives, it creates an artificial conversation between artists, like a musical partition.

Signs and Wonders is a subjective study of some major figures of modern art, as well as minimal and conceptual art, in the form of a mystical investigation.

The lecture, entirely illustrated with a shadow play, questions the links between forms and signs, coincidences and symbols, etc. An opportunity to measure the magical potential of practices sometimes too easily seen as purely rationalist.

Child's Play records an experience organized with children invited to grasp, draw and interpret some historical gestures of performance and body art. It aims at reading historical performances as a return to the essence of art, rough and artistically regressive. It is also about transmitting essential features of performance like energy, immediate love and experimental relation to the world.

- (A) The Bruce High Quality Foundation, Art History With Benefits. Photo Michelle Proksell.
- (B) Shana Lutker, Hear it Here. Photo Michelle Proksell.
- (C) Tamar Ettun and Emily Coates, Empty Is Also. Photo David Barreda.
- (D) Emily Mast, Everything, Nothing, Something, Always (Walla!). Photo Michelle Proksell and Karl Haendel.
- (E) Ryan McNamara, The Sacred Band of Thebes aka In Memory of Robert Isabell aka Any Fag Could Do That. Photo by Kevin Tachman, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, and Michelle Proksell.
- (F) Danielle Freakley, The Quote Generator - Speaking In Quotation with reference Socially For Three Years.
- (G) Scott Keightley And Tom O'Neill, Desire Caught By The Tail. Photo Michelle Proksell.
- (H) Guillaume Désanges, F for Faith, Lectures / performances. Photo Michelle Proksell.



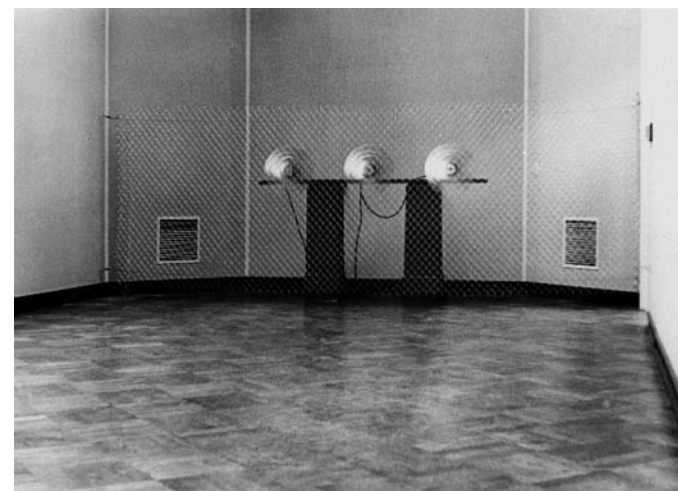
Phase 3. Hans Haacke


WEATHER, OR NOT

HANS HAACKE in conversation with CECILIA ALEMANI

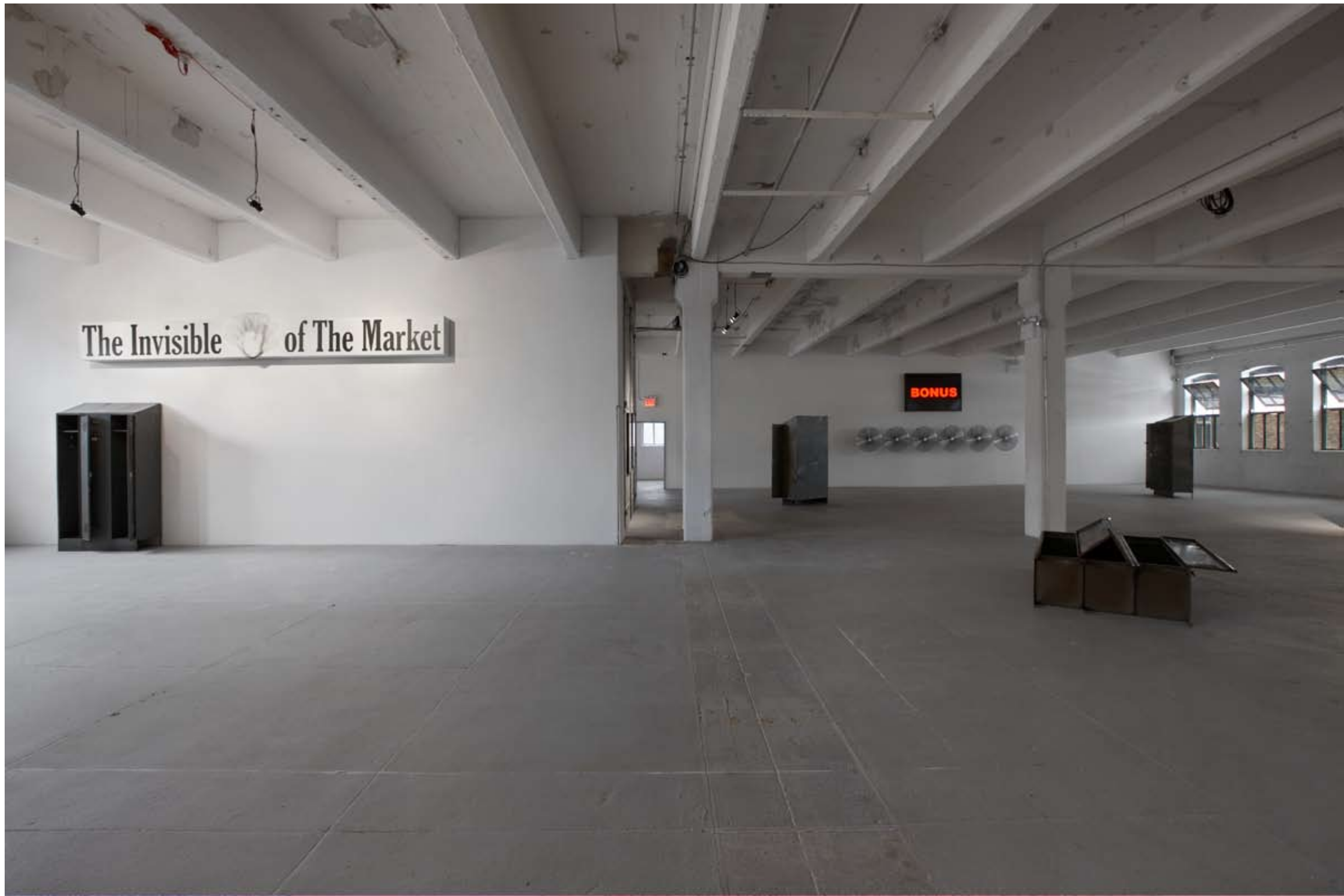
CA Can you tell me about the *Wind Room*, the artwork that you realized for the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle in 1969. What did you have in mind? How did you conceive the installation? How was the piece received by the institution and by the audience? How has this piece evolved into *BONUS Storm*?

HH *Wind Room* was part of a group show with the title *Art and Machine: Motion, Light, Sound*. I participated in the exhibition with three works: *Wind Room*, *High Voltage Discharge Traveling*, 1968, and a site-specific outdoor installation called *Fog, Swamp, Erosion*. For that temporary installation 4 high-pressure spray nozzles produced a mist-like dispersion of water, which was subject to prevailing air-currents. Rainbow colors appeared when the sun was shining. Eventually, the fog settled on a grassy slope, and the run-off eroded the terrain. I describe this installation in some detail because it might give you a clue to my interest in meteorological phenomena. I understood weather as a prototypical example of a system of interactive physical components with metaphorical significance. By 1969, I had worked for about five years with fans supporting or moving lightweight materials. And I had exposed balloons and finely dispersed water to the winds. Neither in the 1969 *Wind Room* nor its adaptation for *BONUS Storm* at X Initiative did I care much for the viewers' visual experience. In fact, I tried to reduce that as much as possible. In my correspondence with the Henry Gallery I found a note in which I expressed my distress that the 3 fans of the *Wind Room* had been mounted on pedestals, almost like sculptures (I was not present for the installation). At my insistence, half way through the show, they were then mounted directly onto the wall, very much like they were installed at X Initiative. *Wind Room* was included a year later in another group show at the Henry Gallery with the telling title *Tactile*.



The Invisible  of The Market

BONUS



In fact, it is the tactile sense and not the eye I was appealing to. You were to feel it on your skin—and “in your face”.

By 2009 the shit had hit the fan on Wall Street. The wizards of Wall Street, who, for years, had been driven by exorbitant bonuses for short-term gains and no regard for the consequences of their actions, had run the global economy into the ground. And still, in spite of the personal miseries and national disasters they caused in the U.S. and around the world, they had no shame in continuing to collect the huge bonuses they had taught themselves to expect. After all, as Lloyd Blankfein, the CEO of Goldman Sachs, sheepishly (?) explained, they were “doing God’s work.” The flashing BONUS sign was a storm alert from “God.” Don’t argue! Just get out of the way!

CA

In your exhibition at X Initiative, many works, both old and new, dealt with the economic recession and with current events. It was fascinating to see how a work such as *Thank you, Paine Webber*, which was realized at the end of the seventies, felt so contemporary even 30 years later and in such a different historic context. Do you think artworks can develop their own agenda, and even take on different meanings and targets depending on the time in which they were created or received? How do you see the connection of art works with history and with the present? I know it’s a huge question, but I am sure you have thought about these problems many times. To which time does the artwork belong? To history or to the present?

HH

The short answer to your question is: it belongs to both, to history and to the present. As you say, after 30 years, *Thank you, Paine Webber* gained an—unfortunate—new topicality. While much had changed, we were rudely reminded that much is still the way it was then. The exploitation of peoples’ misery—in this particular case for P.R. purposes, but indicative of corporate attitudes and behavior—continues unabated. The use of a photo of an unemployed worker from Detroit during the great depression on the cover of the 1977 annual report of a powerful brokerage firm—not to speak of the consequences of investment strategies that led to that depression and



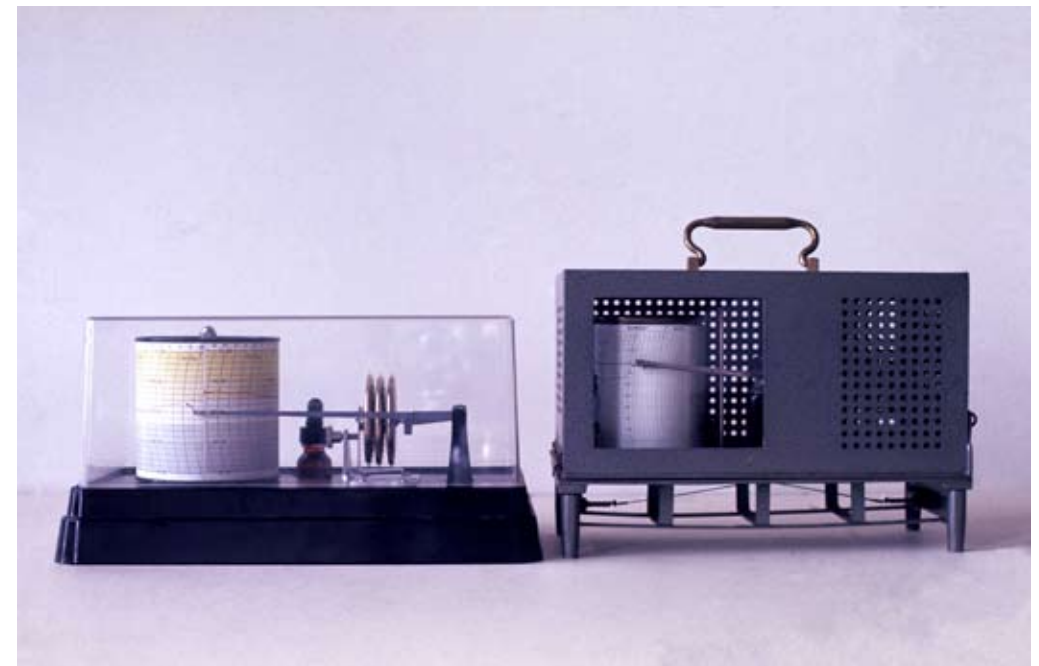
(Page 123) Wind Room. Installation view at Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, 1969.

(Pages 124-125) Weather, or not. Installation view at X Initiative.

(Above) Venice, May, 31, 2009, 1:59 PM, 2009. (Below) Recording of Climate in Art Exhibition, 1970.

(Page 128) Thank you, Paine Webber, 1979. (Page 131) West Bank, 1994 - 27th year of occupation, 2009.

All images courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.



more recent economic disasters—is a telling sign of how ingrained this “culture” really is. The lead essay in the 1977 annual report had the promising title: “Where Do Jobs Come From? A concise Report on Unemployment and Wall Street’s Role in Preventing it.” A year later the annual report offered another enlightening piece: “Do You Sincerely Want to Be Poor?—Paine Webber’s Centennial Essay on the Future of American Capitalism.” At the opening of the new millennium, Donald Marron, the smiling young man on the left in the group photo of the Paine Webber 1977 annual report, led the merger of his brokerage firm with UBS, the giant Swiss bank and wealth manager. During the 20 years as CEO of Paine Webber, Marron had amassed a substantial corporate art collection. The Museum of Modern Art opened its new building in 2005 with an exhibition of this collection under the UBS logo.



It so happened that Donald Marron (now CEO of the private equity firm Lightyear Capital) had been the president for many years and, in 2005, was the vice president of the Museum’s board of trustees.

Another link to the art world: UBS has been and still is the main sponsor of the Basel Art Fair and Art Basel Miami. Like their American brethren, UBS invested massively in the sub-prime mortgage casino and needed to be bailed out by the Swiss taxpayers. On top of that, the US Government accused UBS of having knowingly assisted wealthy US taxpayers in dodging taxes. As a consequence, the bank was pressured to reveal the names of thousands of the beneficiaries of its assistance. These accretions are

today part of our reading of these two panels from 1979. The relevance of a work for the present normally fades and is then studied by historians and of interest only to connoisseurs until, unexpectedly, as in the case of *Thank you, Paine Webber* it regains or even surpasses its original significance. This is not the norm! Documents of the past, including works of art—irrespective of whether the artists invested them with social or political connotations—require the study of the historical context for an understanding and appreciation of what they may have conveyed originally. But that historical perspective, too, is not stable. We look at past cultures today very differently from the way they were perceived by scholars and the public in earlier times. And our interpretations will not survive intact either. Meanings are projections. They are historically and culturally contingent, not to speak of the habitus of the person who invests a certain configuration with connotative implications.

CA You recently visited Israel and the West Bank, where you were previously in 1994 and shot the photograph which was shown as part of *West Bank, 1994 - 27th Year of Occupation* (2007/2009). Can you tell me about the genesis of this work and its development from 1994 to now?

HH In 1994, the Israeli artist Larry Abramson was teaching at Bezalel, the art academy in Jerusalem. Perhaps reacting to my work in the German pavilion of the 1993 Venice Biennale, he invited me to discuss the works of the school’s graduating students. In the course of my visit, he introduced me to Sliman Mansour, a Palestinian artist living in East Jerusalem, with whom he had participated in a number of joint exhibitions of Israeli and Palestinian artists. One of these shows had been held at The Cooper Union in New York where I was teaching. Sliman took me in his car to Jericho and Bethlehem on the West Bank. In addition to ducking into the Grotto of the Nativity, on the outskirts of Bethlehem we visited Deheishe. Deheishe is a refugee camp of Palestinians who had fled or were expelled from areas that Israel claimed for its new national territory in 1948, after the victory in

what it calls its “War of Independence” (the Palestinians refer to what happened as “The Catastrophe”). We visited one of the families in the camp whom Sliman knew. That’s where I photographed the little boy with the T-shirt proclaiming “Paradise.” Thirteen years later, in 2007, Sliman, Larry and two other Israeli artists (David Reeb and David Tartakover) called for entries in an exhibition to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank. I sent this image to the exhibition in Jerusalem. The show had the title “Desert Generation” and was accompanied by a statement: “The images comprising the exhibition represent a generation of Israeli and Palestinian artists doomed to waste their best years in the desert of the occupation. Freedom is indivisible, and as long as Palestinians are deprived of liberty, Israelis too cannot be free.” During my first visit to the Middle East, there was hope. The Oslo Accords had just been signed. But it did not last. A year later, Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister who had signed the accords with Yasser Arafat, was assassinated by a right wing religious Zionist and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Likud leader, who had also opposed the agreement, was elected Prime Minister in 1996. During my second visit to Israel and the West Bank, in March of this year, I found a world sadly different from the one I remember from the mid-nineties. Among the speakers of a conference that I participated in at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art was David Reeb. As his contribution he projected a video he had recorded recently during one of the frequent peaceful joint demonstrations of Israelis and Palestinians against the walls and barriers that carve up the West Bank. He witnessed—and we saw on his video— how, what may have been a tear-gas projectile coming from a fortified army outpost, hit and killed one of his fellow demonstrators. This chilling testimony encapsulates for me much of what I saw and sensed traveling again in the Israeli Occupied Territories.

CA You have often realized works that are “calls to action”: do you think art needs to intervene in life? Does it need

to push us to leave the realm of fiction in order to enter in that of reality? In the show at X Initiative you had *Recording of Climate in Art Exhibition* (1970), which I always thought is an attempt to reveal the fictional environment that the gallery space is built upon. *Weather, or not* also struck me because it combined your early “systemic” works with your most recent “sociological” work. While one can envision them as part of the same or larger ensemble, how would you describe your work today in relation to your early work, which were, in the case of this show, incorporated and reconfigured in the exhibition?

HH

Recording of Climate in Art Exhibition was my contribution to the exhibition *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects*, that Joseph Kosuth and perhaps others put together in 1970 at the New York Cultural Center at Columbus Circle (now the Museum of Arts and Design). It was a site-specific, ironic comment. Taken out of its original context, the ironic allusion extends generally to the rarified, super-controlled environments in which art works are exhibited in museums and comparable spaces,



their commodity/insurance values and white glove treatment. Obviously, at X Initiative, with my opening all windows during the winter, allowing low temperature and often high humidity to enter the space, all these customs were violated. As with a number of other works since about 1969 I explicitly invited the “outside” world into the seemingly secluded and sheltered sanctuary of art exhibition spaces. The punning title of the show, I hope, gave a hint to the double meaning of the word “climate.” There was the meteorological aspect, which kept us from taking our coats off, and there was the social dimension, which nagged us to take a position as citizens. In a way, this constituted a fusion of my early focus on purely physical systems (with metaphorical implications) and, since the late 1960s increasingly my interest in the interactive social forces that affect our existence. The seemingly quaint consideration of ethics enters the “picture.”

Phase 3. Artur Żmijewski

THE BODY ELECTRIC

Who does my body belong to? And where do I end? Where do others begin?

Without dragging Sartre or Foucault into the ring, one could say that all of Artur Żmijewski's work focuses on probing the boundaries that separate us from each other. Specifically, Żmijewski seems interested in identifying the point at which one body becomes part of another, and how this shift or communion contributes to building a new collective, political body, a social body that in turn etches new ideologies and beliefs onto the skin of the individual.

Many of Żmijewski's works hinge on representation of the skin and limbs, of the tools we use to define our boundaries and position with respect to the world and to other human beings. In some of his early videos, we witness unusual forms of interaction develop between individuals who explore their bodily orifices, appendages and limits. In *Temperance and Toil* (1995), the artist inspects his own body, trying to touch even the areas that usually remain invisible. In *An Eye for an Eye* (1998), we see pairs of people bound together by a strange symbiotic relationship. One has missing limbs; the other helps him walk or wash himself, substituting his own hands and legs for what has been lost. The style in which the video is filmed evokes Muybridge's photo sequences, but in contrast to the positivist photographer, Żmijewski introduces a dimension of empathy and proximity that sometimes inverts itself, becoming promiscuity.

Precisely because of this effort to determine just when and where "I" gives way to "Us", Żmijewski's work can sometimes seem pervaded by a voyeuristic, even pornographic instinct. There is an insistence on the act of seeing, on rendering manifest, that makes his videos resemble strange scientific studies. But there is also a desire to get so close to his subjects that he almost breaks the barrier separating the observer from the observed. Distance—which allows us to see and to put things in perspective—is dramatically erased, or at least reconfigured, in Żmijewski's videos.

The Game of Tag (1999)—which shows naked people of various ages chasing each other around in an empty room—could be seen as an allegory that encapsulates many elements found in Żmijewski's early work. A group of individuals are caught up in an extreme situation, which they entered into consciously, but perhaps without fully realizing the consequences and implications of their choices and actions. In this setting, the participants are invited, or forced, to build a new system of interaction that can take the form of a game or a conflict—or often, a game that turns into a conflict, or vice-versa. In *The Game of Tag*, it is only at the end of the video that an intertitle lets us in on the fact that this game, apparently innocent—though slightly disturbing, perhaps in its resemblance to a danse macabre—takes place in a gas chamber at the Stutthof concentration camp in Poland.

Żmijewski has devoted many projects to the theme of the Holocaust. Since he grew up and studied in Po-



(Above) *Repetition*, 2005. Courtesy the artist

and Foksal Gallery Foundation.

(Below) *80064*, 2004. Courtesy the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw.

(Page 134-135) *Democracies*, installation view at X Initiative.





Phase 3. Ecstatic Resistance

land, the artist has experienced the anguish of trying to understand how this genocide could have taken place in his country. But rather than looking for historical or sociological justifications, the artist seems more interested in looking at how that tragedy has left its traces on the human body.

One of Żmijewski's earliest works consisted in a series of photographs in which the artist used his own body to re-enact a series of experiments that the Nazis performed on Jewish prisoners. Such repetition is another tool often employed by Żmijewski: *If It Happened Only Once It's As If It Never Happened* is the title of the artist's first book about his work and it sounds like a concise description of his modus operandi.

For Żmijewski, repetition is not an exercise or a habit, it is the resurgence of what has been repressed, a trauma relived for therapeutic purposes. In *80064* (2004), the artist asks a Holocaust survivor to retouch the tattoo of his number: in one of the simplest, most touching and upsetting works in Żmijewski's oeuvre, it is the body that relives the story, a drama that is literally etched—for the second time—into its skin.

Repetition (2005) is also the title of one of Żmijewski's most ambitious pieces, presented in his solo show at X Initiative: in it, the artist reconstructs the famous Stanford Prison Experiment conducted by Professor Zimbardo in 1971, in which volunteers were asked to act out the parts of guards and prisoners in a complex role-playing game. *Repetition* is a study of human behavior, a work that is a sort of test lab in fieri.

The impression of witnessing a unique event, which takes place before our eyes, is another hallmark of Żmijewski's work. In the video *Them*

(2007), we watch an encounter between various religious groups in Poland that disintegrates into conflict. As in *Repetition*, it is hard to say just where the artwork lies: is it the video, or the events that we watch unfold as voyeurs? Or, again, is it the therapeutic function of the encounter/conflict between different individuals of different faiths that constitutes the work?

Just as Żmijewski probes our boundaries, his work seems to question its own charter of existence: his camera inhabits the subtle gap that separates people from each other. And seems ready to dissolve into that gap.

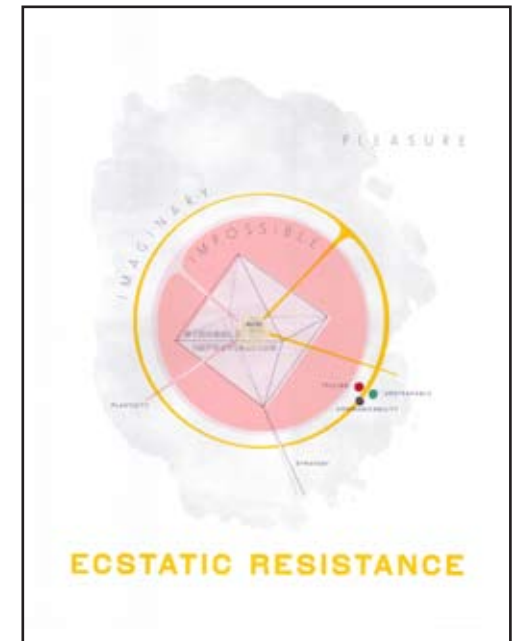
A group portrait, in which individuals meld into a throng, is presented in *Democracies* (2009), the central installation in Żmijewski's show at X Initiative. Actually, it shouldn't really be called an installation, because there is nothing more foreign to this artist's work than the studied affectation of video art. *Democracies* is simple and spartan, stripped naked, like all of Żmijewski's work; each of the 40 monitors runs images of a protest, demonstration, or re-enactment of political and historical events. Each video is a complete work, an X-ray of a collective body as it writhes like a living creature. Seen as a whole, the 40 videos in *Democracies* show us a world captured in a state of agitation, a multitude in which the self has dissolved into the other, to the point that one can no longer say where the singular ends and the plural begins. It is this oceanic state of perfect communion that Żmijewski never tires of revealing to us, describing it as pure bliss and pure fear.

Massimiliano Gioni

Ecstatic Resistance is a project, practice, partial philosophy and set of strategies. It develops the positionality of the impossible alongside a call to re-articulate the imaginary. *Ecstatic Resistance* is about the limits of representation and legibility—the limits of the intelligible, and strategies that undermine hegemonic oppositions. It wants to talk about pleasure in the domain of resistance—sexualizing modern structures in order to centralize instability and plasticity in life, living, and the self. It is about waiting, and the temporality of change. *Ecstatic Resistance* wants to think about all that is unthinkable and unspeakable in the Eurocentric, phallogocentric world order.

Crucial to *Ecstatic Resistance* at X Initiative was a full schedule of performances that activated the space over and over again, inviting the audience to return with frequency. This repetition and return to the site produced the opportunity to question whether or not there was an accumulation in ecstatic resistance that developed collaboration, coalition, and momentum or alternately, to question the individual encounter and subsequent ripple. Vacillating between dance, lecture format, opera/voice and theatrical experiments the series presented works by Matthew Lutz-Kinoy, Ian White, Sharon Hayes, Jeanine Oleson with Juliana Snapper, Leah Gilliam, Wu Ingrid Tsang, Zackary Drucker, and Mariana Marroquin, and lastly Dean Spade and

Craig Willse, whose performance text is reprinted here and whose closing night double header with PIG (Politically Involved Girls) was a challenging and inspirational grand finale to *Ecstatic Resistance*.



The project began with simultaneous 'sister shows' at Grand Arts in Kansas City, MO (November 13, 2009 - January 16, 2010) and X Initiative in NYC (November 21, 2009 - February 6, 2010). Artists participating at X Initiative were: Rosa Barba, Yael Bartana, Juan Davila, Sharon Hayes, Xylor Jane, My Barbarian in collaboration with Liudni Slibinai, Ulrike Muller, Jeanine Oleson, A.L. Steiner, and Joyce Wieland.

Emily Roysdon

(Above) Emily Roysdon, *Ecstatic Resistance (schema)*, 2009, Courtesy the artist.



TOURIST
SHAME ON YOU
Driving BY Without Stopping
PAYING TO SEE MY PAIN
100+ DIED HERE

ROSE PARK
TREATMENT

FORD
DOLE

Joyce
Chunglo
Elector

Cynthia
Gaudette-Toth
Tax Collector

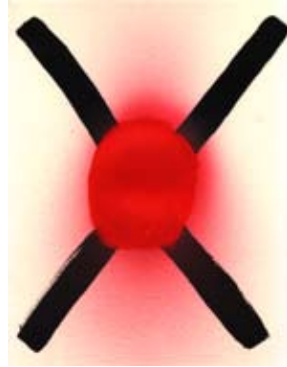
Thank
You

I'M
KEEN
FOR

AUCTION

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(Pages 138-139)
Sharon Heyes, Yard (Sign) after Allan Kaprow, 2009, installation view in Ecstatic Resistance at X Initiative.

(This page from top, left to right)
Jeanine Oleson, The Greater New York Smudge Cleanse, 2008.
Courtesy the artist. Photo: Marina Ancona.

Ulrike Müller, Paraphilia, 2007. (Detail)
Courtesy the artist.

Yael Bartana, Mary Koszmary, 2007.
Courtesy Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw.

Xylor Jane, Birthing, 2007.
Courtesy Canada Gallery, New York.

My Barbarian in collaboration with Liudni Slibinai, Forest Bros. & Sisters: Myth Appropriation Exchange Pogrom, 2009.
Courtesy Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles.

Rosa Barba, Outwardly from Earth's Center, 2007. Courtesy Gió Marconi, Milano.

Juan Davila, God's Whore, 1993
© Juan Davila, Courtesy Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

Joyce Wieland, Solidarity, 1973.
Courtesy Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, Toronto.

What is stateness? What is its collapse?

What part is about consent and what part is about control? Can those ever be distinguished? We know it's not about a contract. The idea of the contract just hides the conquest. These arrangements have never been agreed to, were only achieved through genocide and are only maintained through structures of violence and coercion that constantly reinvent themselves to quell and absorb resistance. But they have limits. The reach of stateness is always incomplete. There is always a crisis, a place where more stateness is being produced, where what is irregular becomes standardized, administrated, regulated. Where

the terms are offered: become regular, become legible
BECOME COUNTABLE OR BE ABANDONED
killed, detained, warehoused, liquidated

Politics is war by other means. The things we have been told about stateness. That it is the monopoly on violence. That we agree to law and order—it's not killing when they don't fix the levees, when you die without medicine in a detention center, when they close the adult daycare centers, when they eliminate the cash benefits program, when they clean up downtown. It's killing, terrorism, when you question them, when you make a website about it, when you refuse. ¶ Stateness is standardization, is redistribution, is information-gathering. It says this is one place, we move risks and benefits around it because it is one place. We keep time the same way over here as over there, use the same standard of measure, speak the same language, give nine-year-olds the same test, use the same race and gender boxes on our forms. But time must be considered. It takes time for a new standard to travel, and the resistance to it varies across spaces and populations. What makes people willing to register a birth or death with the government, willing to form their families around a monogamous two-spouse model (or to demand a "right" to do so!), willing to register their guns, willing to send their kids to school, willing to match their gender to their junk, willing to smog check their car, willing to say something when they see something is different everywhere and when. Sometimes violence helps us not need to be willing. Sometimes the tv is enough. ¶ There is a lot of fear in this, fear of loss of standardization, investment in the promise that the state protects us from violence. The state acts in our interest, identifies bad guys individually to be exiled and detained, identifies threats and drains on our systems that put our way of life at risk. We need it, there is no alternative. We contracted for it to protect us. People are bad and need to be controlled. We can change things about it that we want improved, we can build it better, but we cannot live without it. If we have complaints, we ask it to recognize them, to recognize and include us, to let us into the "us" of the state. We want to be on the right side of the law, we know we belong there because we are good. We want to be free to contract with the state, to bear the rights and responsibilities it demands. Law and order. Legal equality. The promise to soothe the fear and scarcity. ¶ Property is at the center of this somewhere. Arrangements made to extract and contain.

A freedom to accumulate or die

Nothing more or less than that except to the extent that it maintains *that*. This form, this contract — its aims are extraction and exploitation. ¶ Is there room in this (yes), unclaimed space where stateness is confounded, at odds with itself, flash moments where its contours are visible and its technologies are shifting and moving. The constant innovation allows cracks of light to seep through. Something new is always being standardized, maintained, and infrastructure is always crumbling. The dismantling is sometimes barely audible. ¶ What makes the ruptures occur, the moments when people refuse stateness, decide to solve their own problems, decide the violence of standardization is not worth the promise of contracted safety? How do they muster the faith in themselves and in strangers, especially when their proposals are not for an alternative standardization? Does that ever happen? How does the hope for redistribution confront the violence of stateness once we've abandoned a belief in private freedoms? What comes after? **Dean Spade**

The time has come to think about the end of time

There is a kind of pleasure in imagining the end of the world, the destruction of everything. Picturing all that you knew and love disappearing. Except, of course, yourself. It is a sort of selfish individualism to imagine the world's end. In these dreams, you the dreamer alone survive to endure the agony of the world's end. You alone know of the end. And finally, because everything is done, you can know everything. And so it feels strangely good to imagine the death of everybody and everything, a dream of the end that in the end is

a fantasy of total mastery and control

¶ And like all fantasies of individual heroism, dreams of the apocalypse are a sedative of sorts, lulling us into the pleasure of dreaming. What if this dream, then, is a trick that keeps us returning always to think of the end only in terms of violence and degradation? What if the good feeling of fantasizing apocalyptic tragedies keeps us from thinking that the end of absolutely everything we know might be

followed by something so much better

The end of time to think has come. ¶ Manuel De Landa speculates that future robot historians may write very different accounts of the world than what has been written thus far by human historians. De Landa himself writes, "The robot historian of course would hardly be bothered by the fact that it was a human who put the first motor together: for the role of humans would be seen as little more than that of industrious insects pollinating an independent species of machine-flowers that simply did not possess its own reproductive organs during a segment of its evolution.... In a similar way, Napoleon's armies could be viewed as a 'motor' running on a reservoir of populations and nationalist feelings." ¶ Perhaps it is time to re-think the world in terms of its industrious insects and the activities of machine-flowers. And in so doing think history and its end in some other way. Like De Landa asks of the future robot historian, I want to ask what utopia might look like not against a dystopic view of the mess we're presently in, but from the view of that utopia itself. What might utopias make of the history that came before? ¶ And what if the end of human history as thus far lived meant that the surplus of nationalist feelings was exhausted? Would war stop running? Is such an end so much to fear? ¶ In a critique of left critics of the war on terror, Andrea Smith suggests that a danger of the Bush regime is its accidental validation of "normal" state politics. Smith writes, "That is, when we critique a contemporary context through an appeal to a prior state before 'the fall,' we are necessarily masking power relations through the evocation of lost origins. In even radical critiques of Bush's war on terror, the U.S. Constitution serves as an origin story—it is the prior condition of 'democracy' preceding our fall into Bush's 'lawlessness.' The Constitution's status as an origin story then masks the genocide of indigenous peoples that is its foundation." And so this is another way we might keep ourselves from imagining the end, returning foolishly to the beginning with the belief that it was the right place to start, and is the place to which we should seek a return. ¶ The time has come to

dislodge utopic visions from dystopic fears

and to free political imagination from the state form. We must be cautious of too much celebration when the state surprises us, or spares us, else we be lulled into thinking that stateness is a valid project, that democracy is a matter of stateness, and that legality has something to do with justice. ¶ The time has come to think about the end of time. The end of time to think has come. If the end is near, it nonetheless is never near enough. How much closer might we draw it? **Craig Willse**

THIS BROADSIDE WAS DISTRIBUTED AT ECSTASY RESISTANCE, NOVEMBER 14, 2004 AT GRAND APPTS IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI.

Phase 3. In Numbers

ANDREW ROTH, [VICTOR BRAND](#) and [PHILIP AARONS](#)

AR We might begin by saying that the exhibition *In Numbers* was a by-product of the book project, which began about three years ago. We started to chat about it conceptually, then got more serious and set a tentative list of who might be included, and then picked that apart and came up with 60 publications. In terms of the original pool of material, we started partly with titles in Phil's collection, and we started with a 1977 article in the Print Collectors Newsletter by Howardena Pindell [an associate librarian at the Museum of Modern Art at the time] that surveyed 20th century artists' periodicals. From that list, starting with 1955, we took every title up to the article's date of publication and tried to determine what to include from those and from Phil's material, based on our criteria.

VB We began in 1955 because of *Semina*. *Semina* was a critical turning point and defined this idea that we were developing about serial publications by one artist, or group of artists with the same vision, who controlled it from beginning to end. So *Semina* was kind of the epitome.

PA It was seminal (laughs). Although I think one of the things we all admitted to ourselves, which is important to own up to, is the fact that all this categorization is by definition arbitrary and highly idiosyncratic. And basically we started in 1955 with *Semina* because *Semina* is the coolest publication on the planet.

AR We didn't want to get into the sticky matter of pre-WWII material.

PA And of *Semina*, many people would say, "Well, that's ridiculous to have such a view of a fundamentally outsider publication of probably limited influence, when there were major European publications of huge significance being widely distributed." But we wanted to survey publications that we thought shared certain common conditions or characteristics. And in fact when we made our list, we thought, "We can't be the first people to have thought about artists' magazines." And I remember handing over to Vic all this stuff that I had come across over the years

and saying, "Here's this person. Here's a book about assemblage magazines, are they relevant? Here's Howardena's article"—which was an excellent resource. We looked at everything we could find; there weren't a lot of articles, but we looked at every other person who had thought seriously about periodicals in the art realm so that we could talk about what was different about a serial publication



In Numbers, installation view at X Initiative. Courtesy PPP Editions in association with Andrew Roth and X Initiative.

published by an artist. We discounted publications published by artists that weren't intended to be a reflection of their work. For example, certainly *Avalanche* is an amazing, brilliant publication, but that's not what we wanted to include.

We were establishing a vision, for lack of a better word, of the genre that the three of us happened to share with very few exceptions, which was a nice quality for a collaborative work. There are many people I've talked to who thought our shared vision full of shit... I'm sure when they've had a few drinks they will tell you it's crazy. But the result, the vision for the book, comes from the fact that we were disciplined, I really think we were. As much as I love *North Drive Press*, is it really closer to [William Copley's] *SMS* than some other things? And you know,

the answer is probably yes. I liked it more and we all thought it was great.

AR And it may date, it may become dated like *SMS* is dated.

PA It may.

AR *SMS*, if it came out today, we might have a different opinion of it.

PA Yeah, I think you're absolutely right.

VB I have two observations, the first is about how the titles we did select hang together: there isn't anything that feels to me like an outlier. Everything in some way has at least two or three other things that it's like. You can move contiguously from one title to the next, so you never get to a title where you think, "What is this? This doesn't belong, this doesn't make sense in the context."

AR That was highlighted more aggressively in the show than in the book. The benefit of seeing the exhibition was that you could stand among these things, and your eye catches this and that. The connections are made in a precise way, differently than when you're flipping the pages of the book.

PA For exactly that reason I think the exhibition was an incredible step beyond the book. You could wander around this room and see not just small illustrations and brilliant text, but you could see the visual impact and the connections immediately between the works, because we didn't arrange them chronologically or as though they were curated in the old MoMA sense of starting with Van Gogh and then Johns or whatever. It was done in a way that was organic.

AR We knew we weren't going to be able to exhibit every item, but at least we wanted it in the book. Which was part of the intense search we did to find every single thing.

VB Which even now seems completely ludicrous to me. Ludicrous not so much in the attempt, but ludicrous that we were able to do it!

AR We have pretty good institutions nearby, and a few things came from the artists themselves.

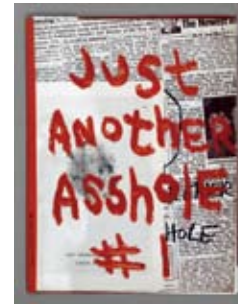
PA And you were relentless in a really great way.

AR Me or him?

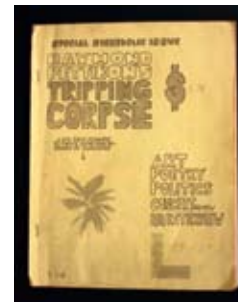
PA You're relentless in other ways. Vic was really great about... I mean, *Amokkoma*? Who would have bothered with



Daido Moriyama.
Kiroku 8. 2007



Just Another Asshole #1.
1978



Tripping Corpse.
1981



VILE. vol.3, no 1.
Dec 1975

that? It's ridiculous. I am happy it's there because it is so ridiculous.

VB And my other observation about starting with *Semina* in 1955 is that there is a difference.

AR Maybe we should say that we ended with *Semina*, because in a way we began with the most contemporary, with *NDP* or with Collier Schorr, who is making [her serial publication] now. And then we moved our way back and the question became, "Where do we end?" And if we stepped one foot post- or pre-*Semina*, you're into that pool of periodicals that's a whole other ballpark.

VB The thing I really like about those early publications, like *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.* and some of the visual poetry things (which are in some ways off the beaten track) or *0 to 9*, is that they start in poetry but are being made by visual artists. And they transition you really nicely into the idea that these periodicals and books can be their own free-standing art works. You can see through this early transitional phase where the genre of the periodical got subsumed into something that is very Duchampian and conceptual like *FILE*. Those early things are problematic but at their core they are what we were trying to document.

PA Along those lines, that's why we found and included so many "postcard works"—whether it's Martha Rosler or Eleanor Antin and (I guess they're not exactly postcards but) Gilbert and George's cards. We talked about this notion of seriality that to me was so significant (which has been looked at in art history but not in this context): that artists are interested in making statements that evolve over time. And they take disparate materials... Robert Heineken's [*Periodicals*] for example are an amazing work when



you consider his ability to take materials that weren't necessarily serial and make them into a serial publication, which I think was remarkable and sort of fascinating. So for me there was a lot of learning that was a significant part of doing both the book and exhibition—and it's why I loved doing it. We have to keep remembering that these are works that need to be seen, and ideally they need to be held. So maybe people will go buy them and hold them.

AR

Since we made the book at such a high technical level—its reproduction quality, the paper and ink—the artists who are responding say they have never seen their work reproduced so well. Eleanor Antin emailed me and said, “Wow, how many times have those fucking cards been reproduced?” For all the crappy work of our photographer, we really got a product that, although it's not the same as holding the original object, is as close as possible to how fabulous this stuff looks in person.

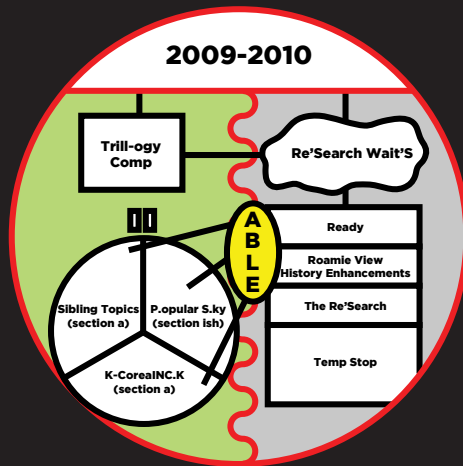
PA

But even more so, Andrew, why I wanted to do this project with you, is that you are one of the few people working in the publishing business today who wants to create an object that is itself worthy of note and distinction as something beautiful, whether it was *[The Book of] 101 Books* or any of the other stuff you published at PPP, even starting with Wojnarowicz's *Rimbaud in New York*. These go beyond reportage and the general sort of university press product. Without being too ridiculous, *In Numbers* is itself an example of what we're talking about, in the sense of being a creation that has aesthetic integrity and value created by an ad hoc collective of people who would go to Garrick [Gott's] and Terrance [Koh]'s studio and make a bunch of crazy decisions. And I think the result is something really remarkable. The exhibition, too, I thought was really beautiful. The response I got from so many young artists was incredibly positive. My only regret is that we couldn't borrow material, couldn't include more. We might have put some of my stuff away and shown things from the Getty or MoMA. Obviously if we ever do the exhibition again in a museum, if the conditions are right, it would be nice to try to do that.

(Clockwise from top-left) LTR, 100 Boots, North Drive Press, Diagonal Cero, Semina, Bank.

RYAN TRECARTIN

On Thursday, December 10, Ryan Trecartin presented an evening of clips and discussion revolving around his then newly completed *Trill-ogy Comp*, in conversation with critic and curator Kevin McGarry.



Trill-ogy Comp consists of three movies—*K-Corea INC.K (Section A)*, *Sibling Topics (Section A)*, and *Popular S.ky (section ish)*—which collectively make up one side of a larger, seven-movie diptych entitled *Any Ever*. At the time of the event, *Re'Search Wait'S* (the other side of *Any Ever*) had been conceived and shot, but not yet edited. This in-progress juncture allowed for an open and undetermined exploration of Trecartin's current work and process. The conversation addressed ideas and issues core to *Trill-ogy Comp* as well as ways of viewing, reading and thinking about Trecartin's movies, shared by all parties present, including a very vocal audience. The ambidextrously literal and figurative, multi-dimensional notion of "total read"—a term coined by Trecartin and his collaborator Lizzie

Fitch—emerged as the root mindset for experiencing the work in the same spirit in which it was made.

With many illuminating, entertaining verbal incidents which cannot be abridged, take one referring to the conceptual shapes Trecartin fixes on in description of his movies' individually unique narrative/formal logics, referred to below as hums:

"When working I develop spaces of vibes by digesting and absorbing a range of content I pump out as hums. In *Sibling Topics* I see the hum take the form of a blob—the characters are figurative elements moving through the hum causing strings, which are linear ways of approaching a non-sequential event (like the movie). With *K-Corea Inc.*, the movie is a conversation, it's set up as a meeting, and I see the hum as a kind of cross-section of such that has been exposed. For *Popular S.ky* I see the hum as by-products of the other two, put into a glass container filled with water and shaken up. The impressions that are made when the bits hit the sides are where the narrative is bred."



Ryan Trecartin, still from *P.opular S.ky (section ish)*, 2009. Courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York.

by Kevin McGarry

LIAM GILLICK



A CAT WILL SPEAK



There will be a cat that can speak. All the people of the town will be very proud of their speaking cat. People will come every day to hear what it has to say. It will be very cynical but never mean. It will see everything and understand it all. After a while people will only come on the weekends or drop by on the way

home from work or school. During quiet times people will come and read all the newspapers to the cat or surf the Internet and find good stories about world affairs that might be of interest. One morning it will rain. Things will have been very quiet in the world and the cat will have nothing to say. You might even think that the cat will be mildly depressed. A young boy and girl will come to see the cat on the way to school. This kind of thing will make the cat nervous. It will be sophisticated but it will betray its feelings through movements of its tail. The cat will like a degree of order. It will call this "natural order"—something that will imply that people can be trusted to do the right thing. And coming to see the cat on the way to school will not always be the right thing to do because it will mean that the children will be late. But as we will find out, the cat will be mildly depressed, suffering from ennui and even bored by its role as the only talking cat in the whole world. The cat will want to know what is going on. Only by feeding it information will it be wise, interesting or even funny. But on this day it will have no new stories. It will hope that the children look on Google News or even *Le Monde Diplomatique* and feed its surprisingly agile brain. But the children will just stand in the doorway. They will be slightly scared of the talking cat. Something about it will make them nervous. Something deep down in their psyche will know that there is evil in this building. But they will like it when the cat coughs. They will find it very sweet when the cat laughs. But if the cat cries they will have nightmares for days—nasty nightmares that they

won't be able to control and that will come at the worst times. Nightmares that will wake them up and make them think of machines in deserts doing terrible things. So the children will just stand in the doorway. Not moving. And the cat will stay stuck on the top of the kitchen cabinets. The cat will not speak. The children will not speak. The cat will be in the kitchen and the children will be in the kitchen. To break the deadlock the cat will cough and shift its head. It will speak but unlike other cats, it will no longer smile.

- Well, what are you doing here?

The cat will say. It won't have spoken for a few days and whenever that happens it will have lost its accent and clarity and begun to speak with a cat accent. The children will hear something like,

- Wheel waa aaa yew doo eng eer.

They will move closer. Hoping to hear more clearly.

- What did it say?

the girl will say to the boy....

- Something about wheels and danger

the boy will say.

- I don't think it did.

The girl will say...

The cat will try to smile, but it will just screw up its face into an ugly grimace.

- I don't like it,
the boy will say...

- I don't like it,
the girl will say

- I don't like it,
the cat will think.

- Please come and tell me something,

the cat will say.

The boy and the girl will move even closer. They will be curious to touch the cat's fur and find out if it likes to be stroked. Once it starts to speak people will respect it more than love it. But they will all stop touching the cat. There will have been a point when it had been touched and loved and played with. But now all people will want to know is its position on the history of totalitarian architecture or the restriction of credit within the context of failed models of globalization. On this particular morning, after all this rain and all this mild depression the cat will feel its catness flooding back. It will want someone to read to it but more than that it will want these children to play with it. The boy will hold out his hand towards the girl. She will take it in hers. They will walk very slowly up to the cat.

- Good morning speaking cat,

the girl will say, because she will be quite brave during complicated social situations.

- Morning,
the cat will say, trying hard now to win back its voice and speak as clearly as a human.

- If it's not too much trouble,

the cat will say,

- You could update me on world affairs. I would love it if you looked through some Internet news aggregators for me.

The children will look confused. They won't know what an aggregator is. This cat will have become a little pretentious over time.

- We were hoping you might tell us something,

the boy will say.

- We have no school today

the girl will lie.

The boy will look nervous. The cat will be wise and will know the school schedules.

The cat will know that school starts in five minutes and the children will definitely be late. But today of all days, it won't care. It won't mind if the children miss out on their lessons or their play-time. It won't care if they miss lunch or free-time in the library. All it will care about is that someone is here on a dark day in a dark building. It will sniff. The

breath of the children will be close. It will have learnt that human's know that cat's steal their breath. The cat will know that this is nonsense. It is buildings like this that steal people's breath. Anyway. What's wrong with borrowing some child's breath for a while? All cats know that it smells sweet and is full of intelligence and goodness and fun.



Liam Gillick, Wie würden Sie sich verhalten? Eine Küchenkatze spricht / How are you going to be have? A kitchen cat speaks, 2009. Installation view, La Biennale di Venezia, German Pavilion, 2009. Courtesy the artist.

It will take a deep surreptitious suck of the children's breath and as they reel and swoon, glide and dream it will begin to tell them a true story about the wisdom of a kitchen cat....

A speaking cat DATE \@ "d/M/yy" 21/4/09 PAGE 1.

Phase 3. Events

NAUMAN IN VENICE CARLOS BASUALDO



The point of departure for *Bruce Nauman: Topological Gardens* has been to ask whether an exhibition, through its very structure, could help the viewer relate to both the work it presents and the context in which it takes place. In the case of an exhibition that sets out from the start to achieve the impossible task of representing a country, the challenge is to acknowledge that impossibility productively by making it integral to the logic of the show. It is as hard to imagine that a country could be represented by the work of a single artist—even work with the complexity of Nauman's—as it is feasible to organize a single exhibition presenting the totality of Nauman's practice in an exemplary and exhaustive way. An exhibition that is possible to imagine, though, is one whose structure allows it an active relation with both its subject and its context. In trying to produce such an exhibition, we have used the model of topology to propose a specific, contextually bounded way of approaching Nauman's practice and also of interpreting the urban structure of the city in which the exhibition is set. By allowing the audience to use its experience of the city to relate to Nauman's work, and vice versa, the exhibition sets out to question the ideological foundations of the nation-

al pavilions that frame it. Topology is used to establish these connections, to poke into these seemingly discrete territories so that their mutual resonance engenders a more intense relation between them and the audience. [...] If the exhibition's three sites are called on to stand as a visible manifestation of the topological nature of the city's urban structure, then the three conceptual threads around which the show has been conceived are intended to let the viewer imagine a topological logic in Nauman's work. Each thread is organized, once again, like a sentence, in which works take the place of words, or like the clusters of notes in a musical script. The threads are intended, not to exhaust the possibilities of any specific artistic operation, but to indicate its directionality, to point to a path rather than follow it to its conclusion. A thread is not a collection of evidence but the manifestation of an aesthetic possibility.

The threads' mode of operation is simple. First, each thread is just a connector between two terms. Although more could have been found in the case of this exhibition, three were identified: Hand to Head, Space to Sound, and Fountains to Neons. These elements are clearly of different status; it is unimportant for the terms a thread connects to belong to the same order of things. These terms exist only as tentative examples of polarities that the threads represent. The threads are not exhaustive—rather than pretending or intending to constrain the constantly surprising open-endedness of Nauman's work, they are open categories. Nor are the elements in one thread precluded

from becoming part of another—a work like *Three Heads Fountain (Three Andrews)*, 2005, for example, could exist in several of these conceptual parameters or, more properly, between them. The threads are imaginary, evolving paths among individual works, taking the viewer visually, experientially, and conceptually from one term to another, as if they were metonymically linked. More properly, the relation between the elements of one thread could be described as topological, in the sense that it always seems possible to imagine a passage from one to the other by stretching and twisting, shrinking and contracting—again to quote words used by Nauman, in the text he wrote to accompany *Flayed Earth Flayed Self (Skin Sink)*, 1973. That the transformations of the body in *Heads and Hands* seem to mimic the transitions from Sound to Space, and the fact that both echo the passages from image to language exemplified in the thread that leads from Fountains to Neons, testifies to the consistency of Nauman's work across time and mediums. [...]

It should be noted that the works included in each of the three sites do not exemplify the individual composition of any one thematic thread. Each site instead includes a combination of threads in which no single one prevails over the others. The sites are organized to show works that resonate with each other, so that formal and conceptual features that dictate the transition from

one work to another become transparent to the viewer—the only condition, as always with Nauman's work, being to pay attention. In this way, visiting only one of the three sites would still allow the audience to experience the logic that organizes the entire exhibition.

As the exhibition intends to suggest that the relationships among mediums and disciplines that comprise Nauman's work are also topological in nature, each of the sites allows for both the widest possible variety of formal and conceptual solutions to the problems posed by the different threads and the inclusion of works from the longest possible span of the artist's career. Writing about Marcel Duchamp's *Étant Donnés*, Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps argue that “the limited number of things Duchamp made constitutes an oeuvre of such concentration and density that it reads not only forward in time with the chronological progression of his career, but backwards and even sideward.”¹ The same could be said of Nauman, and that criterion underlies the guiding principle in the selection and presentation of the works included in this project. In a way, by choosing not to display Nauman's works chronologically, the exhibition condemns itself—and the work—to a circular logic. Or, put differently, it condemns the viewer—just as any visitor to Venice—to start in media res, to be always, inescapably, in the middle of everything.

(1) Anne D'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps. “Étant donnés: 1° La Chute d'eau, 2° Le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp”. Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin 64, nos. 229 and 300 (1969)

Excerpt from Carlos Basualdo, “Bruce Nauman: Topological Gardens”, in *Bruce Nauman: Topological Gardens*, organized by Carlos Basualdo (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2009), pp. 34-40. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

THE BRUCE HIGH QUALITY
FOUNDATION
EDIFYING: CHRISTINE REBET
– POISON LECTURE

As part of the curriculum of The Bruce High Quality Foundation University, a free, unaccredited art school initiated by the artists collaborative The Bruce High Quality Foundation, *Edifying*, a series of performance-lectures curated by Béatrice Gross, examines artistic modes concerned with the dramatization of knowledge dissemination.



For its collaboration with X Initiative, *Edifying* features Christine Rebet's *Poison Lecture*. Originally commissioned by Future Art Research at Arizona State University, the piece re-stages the first formal lecture ever dedicated to the art of magic, delivered in Boston in 1927 by renowned conjuror John Mulholland.

The re-created text, derived from Mulholland's numerous, now-declassified reports and manuals (*Quicker than the Eyes, The Art of Illusion or Magic in the Making*), carries hidden references to his later career during the Cold War, teaching secrets of the trade to Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) operative agents. Lending his unusual abilities to

the service of his country's safety and leadership, Mulholland revealed himself a valuable master of patriotic trickery and deception to American spies in the 1950s.

While Mulholland (Zach Rockhill) delivers an authoritative exposé on the history and mechanisms of magic, his assistant, a young professional magician (Josh Rand), demonstrates, with the help of makeshift props, tricks inspired by legendary conjurors such as Robert Houdin or Dai Vernon, complementing live the slide-projection of found images culled from textbooks,



catalogues and newspapers. Unraveling a dazzling polyphony of text, still and moving illustrations, Rebet's performative piece combines the secretive worlds of magic and espionage, entertainment and geopolitics, mass captivation and government, to wittily expose their kindred spirit.

With a background in painting and stage design, French artist Christine Rebet has developed in the past ten years drawings and animated films. Rebet will be included in the next SITE/Santa Fe Biennial. Christine Rebet is represented by Galerie Kamel Menour, Paris.

BLOG THIS: A PANEL ON ART
BLOGGING

Blogs offer serious journalism, breaking news, diversity of views and opportunities to connect directly with readers. For years people have criticized bloggers, claiming that they're just a bunch of opinionators, not trustworthy sources of information.

Blog This! was a panel discussion whose purpose was to review how the role of blogging in the art world, by institutions, individuals, and entrepreneurs, has evolved over the past few years and whether it's finally time to give art bloggers some respect!

The panel was sponsored by ArtTable, and organized by Heather Darcy Bandhari of Mixed Greens, Lauren Pearson of Art Cycle, and Robin White Owen of MediaCombo. Panelists were chosen because their blogs are well known in the art world, and because they represent a cross section of types.

PANELISTS

- BARRY HOGGARD WHO RUNS THE CULTURE PUNDIT NETWORK AND THE CALENDAR ARTCAT
- PADDY JOHNSON PUBLISHER, EDITOR AND WRITER OF ARTFAGCITY
- WILLIAM POWHIDA WILLIAMPOWHIDA.COM, ARTIST
- KELLY SHINDLER FOUNDER OF THE ART21 BLOG (PART OF THE PBS SERIES ON TWENTYFIRST CENTURY ART, ART21)
- EDWARD WINKLEMAN EDWINKLEMAN.BLOGSPOT.COM, ART DEALER

SUMMARY OF THE
PANELISTS' COMMENTS:

In response to questions about the trustworthiness of personal blogs vs branded print journalism:

- EDWARD said—while the purpose of his blog is basically to promote his gallery, if he disrespects his readers (and those are the ones that matter because they are the only people paying attention to you) they will stop reading. Essentially, your readers keep you honest.

- BARRY pointed out that the role of the press should be to question people in power as well as to report on events; when a lot of print and TV journalists in this country don't ask hard questions you could say they call into question their own ethics; some bloggers have taken up the role of asking hard questions—in the art world and about the news in general

In response to questions about commenters and developing community:

- EDWARD said “if you hit too hard at somebody they never come back so if you're interested in changing someone's opinion do it over a series of comments;

- PADDY AND KELLY agreed that there's a lot of self-policing among the community of commenters—they start to take care of themselves;

- KELLY pointed out that a little debate strengthens the community

In response to the question of how blogs, Facebook and Twitter work together:

- PADDY said different audiences prefer different tools so a blogger who posts to all three places will be talking to a wider group of people than simply those who read and comment on the blog itself

- KELLY AND WILLIAM POWHIDA concurred saying that Twitter and Facebook are a useful interface for promoting the blog and developing other conversations

- I said—write about what you're passionate about = strong content

- PADDY added—update frequently

- “The central currency on a blog is generosity,” in EDWARD'S words, “the more generous you are the more comes back to you.” He blogged about the panel, expanding on these topics before and after the panel.

In response to a question about how to develop a successful blog:

- EDWARD pointed out that Blogs are measured by traffic—one way to get more readers is to link to other blogs

- EDWARD said—find your voice—it's what makes your blog unique

After the panel Jerry Saltz, art critic for New York Magazine, wrote “Excellent panel at X Initiative last night on Facebook. His comment that “younger critics should just say what they like/don't like about works of art,” generated 138 comments and developed into a lively conversation about blogs, journalism, the state of art criticism.

LIFE IN LIEU OF ART: BAS JAN ADER'S IN SEARCH OF THE MIRACULOUS BY ALEXANDER DUMBADZE AND MATHEW DAY JACKSON



Bas Jan Ader, *In search of the miraculous*, 1975.

For nearly three years Matt Jackson and I have had a steady conversation about extreme gestures (whether heroic or commonplace) and their relationship to art. Central to the

discussion, for me at least, has been my research on Bas Jan Ader, an artist Jackson admires, as well as our mutual interest in American history, particularly that of the 1960s and 1970s. What follows is an excerpt from an email exchange we had in response to my talk

I feel like I practice dying every day, as if life is syncopated with many mini-suicides. Perhaps making art is a practice in letting go, a preparation of my demise? Camus begins the Myth of Sisyphus by stating that the only philosophical question of worth is that of suicide. Why, he asks, do those bound by reason, but existing in an irrational world, continue to press forward in a situation where there is no resolution between these incommensurable poles? For Camus, one's freedom—the moment when one begins to live—comes in the form of the absurd and the recognition, no matter how unsettling it may be, that nothing is eternal. But another sense to this problem arises in Hannah Arendt's reflections on the will. She infers from Hegel, that the will—to make

a decision where one recognizes that the option of a non-choice is also a possibility—is to think necessarily into the future and to ultimately, if not initially, confront the reality of one's impending death. At stake is not an understanding of one's end, but the need to quell the fear of this ultimate unknown. It is in the managing of this apprehension that one begins to live. Yet for Giacomo Casanova, a man sensitive to the incomprehensibility of Providence but nevertheless a believer in free will, the moment of death left this verbose man speechless. Faith told him that his soul would find ever-lasting peace, but, as he writes, “...since I cannot be perfectly sure that I am immortal until after I ceased to live, I may be forgiven if I am in no hurry to learn this truth.” But to turn your questions back on you: if what you make are mini-suicides why does it come in an engagement with the past? It is simply the foundation of the building that I intend to jump from. When I make something, it is like a time capsule, or a marker of where I have been. So with every piece I memorialize those experiences. What I will become is in the work, living and moving toward future work, and then, as soon as that work is done, it's dead. The artwork is a corpse that's reanimated by the viewer. I kill it by making it, while the viewer makes it alive by hearing it speak. The past lives in everything, and as every moment goes by history adds to the sum of that which I call ME. So, I have no choice but to be engaged with the past, in hopes of knowing where I stand, and from which point to take the next step...



BRING YOUR OWN ART
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:

- Doors open on February 3rd at 11 AM and close on February 4th at 11 AM
- No advance registration
- 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors are for hanging art
- Participants can bring any kind of art
- Participants need to come with their own tools (X Initiative can only provide two ladders)
- The works will not be insured: X Initiative is not responsible for any loss or damage to works
- The space will have security guards
- All works must be deinstalled and removed from the premises no later than February 4th at 2 pm. All works not removed by 2 PM on February 4th will be disposed of.



Installation views at X Initiative. Photo: Conrad Ventur.



Artbook at X Initiative

Given the dream location of a space inside the former Dia building in the heart of Chelsea, a collaborator ideally suited to our mission and just seven months in which to operate, could ARTBOOK come up with a bookstore that could quickly reach a book-buying public, and do it creatively?



Like all the best bookstores, ARTBOOK aims to realize a vision that is tailored to the store's context, i.e. to the organization that houses it. Given the nature of X Initiative's exhibits, events and location, the store was able to thrive within a completely sympathetic environment.

From the outset it was clear that ARTBOOK @ X should be event-driven. Happily, art books are well-suited to book signings (the artist's signature is hard to beat for sheer aura value). But ARTBOOK also shared with X the desire to bring disciplines together, and we hosted events not only for artists such as Marilyn Minter, Fritz Haeg and Aura Rosenberg, and curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, but also for writers such as Eileen Myles, Rebecca Solnit and John Ashbery, and for book makers such as Pietro Corraini and Esther Smith.

Deciding what books to arrange signings for was, of course, great fun, as was the opportunity to stock the store, and to present the stock creatively. The inventory drew on the lists of well-known presses like Actar, Chicago, Hatje Cantz, Walther Koenig, JRP Ringier, MIT and Steidl and, but also on those perhaps less-known publishers that ARTBOOK loves to support, such as Black Dog, Evil Twin, Granary, Mousse Publishing, Primary Informa-



tion and Sternberg. We were also able to stock books, DVDs, limited editions that were self-published by artists and unavailable elsewhere, assembling a truly adventurous range of titles from a huge range of sources.

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_____ (P.122)

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Wark, Margie Weinstein.



MAR - MAY 2009

PHASE 1
Derek Jarman
Mika Tajima
Christian Holstad

JUN 2009

NO SOUL FOR SALE
A FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENTS

JUL - OCT 2009

PHASE 2
Keren Cytter
Luke Fowler
Tris Vonna-Michell
Today and Everyday
Fritz Haeg
Jeffrey Inaba

NOV 2009

PERFORMA 09
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DEC 2009 - JAN 2010

PHASE 3
Hans Haacke
Artur Żmijewski
Ecstatic Resistance
In Numbers

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BRING YOUR OWN ART



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