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# ISSUE 02

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# DÉNOUE<sup>m</sup>ent



# Editorial

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## ISSUE 02

In his 1940 essay *Theses on the Philosophy of History*<sup>1</sup>, Walter Benjamin argues that ‘the tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the “emergency situation” in which we live is not the exception but the rule’. He continues, ‘we must attain at a concept of history that is in keeping with this insight. Then we should clearly realize that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency...’

Urban life at Benjamin’s time would certainly have appeared not so different than the forces driving the mega-cities today. Sophisticated socio-economical strategies too often cannibalize citizens, condemning the city to a perpetual transformation and its inhabitants to a stifling condition of poverty and social injustice.

It is the post–post city. Post-everything: post-war, post-atomic, post-capitalist, post-communist, post-Fordist. Reality here needs to be experienced exclusively as a postponed horizon of expectations. It is primarily a problem of definition: post- is a prefix that implies the idea of an endless overcoming. If this prefix describes the potential of what is not already there, not defined or yet definable, the only effect of this linguistic liniment is to alleviate the feeling of exhaustion produced by our own expectations and projections. In such scenario experience has been transubstantiated into something else - a wireless connection, a flat screen, sexual frustration, anxiety, self-exploitation and a feeling of dispossession.

Apparently, all is in its place. The city is grey as usual. It is a lunar landscape, its heart emerging soon after the last scores of Strauss’ *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as in Kubrick’s 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. We expect catastrophe in other places, while it is really just within the sight. It is only a question how to present it: instead of noisy reverberations or blank spots, we have to imagine a

silent and slow disintegration.

Don't you perceive the tremors in the nice apartment in your *multikulti* neighbourhood while social and cultural crystallization is trashing and devouring the energies that once gathered us together? Don't we share this "state of emergency" that Benjamin rightly addressed as the contemporary collective condition? If the state of emergency is the rule, then catastrophe doesn't necessarily have to be considered a sudden disaster or transcendental force that we would have to accept as inevitable. Catastrophe could actually be experienced as a moment in which possibilities arise, yet not within a pre-existing structure, but in the somewhat threatening state of chaotic becoming.

Rather than generating prospects of pure decline, can the catastrophe be approached as a moment of openness, where the dissolution of the existing enables the formation of new collective structures?

As it is now, the instrumentalization of disaster, which Naomi Klein defined as "shock doctrine,"(2007)<sup>2</sup> is a well-functioning mechanism driven by the free market and directed toward the exploitation of *shocked* people to generate profit and a temporary politico-economic stability. But in such a suffocating returning circle, in this catastrophic moment, a ground emerges where new moments of collective social actions could potentially materialize. In the dissolution of existing conditions, catastrophe is not necessarily the falling apart of our civilization; it is, rather, the moment of its metamorphosis. It is the awakening of awareness of the immanent circumstances in a way that forces us to reconsider the concept of *belonging together* and the meaning of our actions within the limitation of our common condition.

In the theatrical tradition of Greek tragedy, the catastrophe (*kata strephein*) was the moment in which the chorus - the collective voice of the *politeia* (Athenians) - announced the final resolution of the tragic event: This is the prominent moment of the tragedy that functions as the final resolution of a narrative plot, opening a

series of ethical issues. While directing the performance towards a non-returning point, the *kata strephein* is that overturning moment which reverses the perspective. For an audience, the 'public', it is also the manifestation of a common horizon defined by and through the peculiarity of individuals' actions. Catastrophe's potential then resides in its being a space of disentanglement and openness.

Thus, it might be worth thinking about catastrophe as a starting point and not as an end. A *dénouement* is the epilogue of a story and its promise for the unexpected to unfold, for a collective future others to be discovered, developed, and narrated. This issue proposes a space to think about catastrophe as a starting point and not as an end.

October 2011

Federica Bueti Benoit Loiseau Clara Meister

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1 - Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*. Edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books Inc., 1968

2 - Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Metropolitan Books, 2007



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# **Images of Ritual Re-integration** **after Natural Disasters**

**Tobias Scholz**

Disasters stimulate our imagination. People cannot but imaginatively put themselves at the heart of catastrophic events, coping (or not) with the situation that some distant and unknown unfortunates experience as a reality. There is a fundamental – and one may say existential – interest in disasters, since they present the paradigmatic threat to society and individuals. Since the imagining of events, actions, people, objects, etc. leads to the production of images (as artefacts), disasters throughout human history have produced its own genre of engravings, paintings, and photographs. These images of disaster then *nourish the further imagination* of the particular event. One has the impression that this is the reality of modern mass media – to produce image after image of catastrophes, contributing to the continuous imagination of disasters. Thus questions such as these arise: Which forms does this imagining of disaster take? What is the social (individual or collective) function of images of distant disasters? Is this about single iconic images or about a genre; about series of images?

In this essay, I would like to a possibly unconventional hypothesis, by suggesting that images of disasters not only fulfill the essential task of social integration of societies in high modernity, but also for motive altruistic actions through enabling the collective sharing of emotions. They are the core components of the ritual logic of disasters as media events. The conception that disaster images operate as ‘vessels of communion’ (Maffesoli) between unfortunates suffering at the site of catastrophe and distant viewers/fortunates may convince most people. The assumption, however, that these are actually successful in producing commitment through shared emotions may provoke scepticism at best. Hence a few words on some popular and critical, yet oversimplifying theses in regard to mediatized images of suffering: Media effects research and regularly produces accounts that differ quite a bit from what is proposed in this essay. Be it the ‘cold heart’ (Winterhoff-Spurk), ‘states of denial’ (Cohen) or ‘compassion fatigue’ (Moeller) – metaphors that stress the modern individual’s inability to react sympathetically to the representation of distant suffering could go on. The dilemma remains: As viewers of unfortunates we are always cut off from the ability to (re)act at the instant.

Witnessing affliction without being able to act is frustrating, especially when it's on TV and you're having dinner with your loved ones. 'Why them and not us?' This dilemma is right at the heart of experiencing modernity (that is, modernity in its sociological definition). So often, we cannot help but feel pity and sympathy for the victims, whose hardship is served to us in graphic images and touching voiceovers, yet still find ourselves in no (dis)position to do anything about it. We're confused, asking ourselves: 'Am I really falling for this drippy report?'

Resentment against mediatized emotions is very common, as we all know. It's easy to get excited watching football but it's hard not to get confused when it comes to seeing people suffer. There is blame on the media – and its commercial interests – which tends to sensationalize, before soon moving on to matters of utter irrelevance just because its 'news' anyway. There is blame on the images that 'play' on our low instincts. And of course we blame ourselves for being voyeurs and fascinated with atrocity and pain. Seeing people suffer makes us despair for the authentic sympathy that Rousseau's 'homme naturel' and enlightenment ethics demand of us. We long for an imperative that makes us 'take a plane there and feel what she feels.' How can we not fail with this ambition and again look for somebody responsible?

Why not be a little more pragmatic, forgiving, and open to the realities of modern media? This at least is Susan Sontag's assessment, when she says of these images: 'It is felt that there is something morally wrong with the abstract of reality offered by photography; that one has no right to experience the suffering of others at a distance, denuded of its raw power; that we pay too high a human (or moral) price for those hitherto admired qualities of vision—the standing back from the aggressiveness of the world which frees us for observation and for elective attention. But this is only to describe the function of the mind itself. There's nothing wrong with standing back and thinking.' (Susan Sontag, 2002 ) I think we have every reason to deviate from a position that wants our motives to be as pure as Mother Theresa's and that credits the fact that feeling sympathy with distant others is an ambivalent matter.

We have to realize that, despite the influx of disaster images, people do help. At no point in our cultural history has there been a greater disposition to act and help distant and suffering others than today. Sums donated in the wake of disasters like the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, or the 2010 Haiti earthquake were higher than any campaign before; there are more transparent and specialized actors and NGOs in

the field; and people's willingness to commit themselves to something that doesn't concern them in their everyday lives is becoming more common. Furthermore, this commitment to open our bank accounts and transfer money is mostly at our own expense – nobody will pat you on the shoulder, nobody might even take notice – and surely not the victims', who will have fresh water for the day, a new fishing net, or even a boat. Let's not be too desperate for the pureness of our emotions and altruistic impulses.

*Emotions must be activated.* It is in the nature of solidarity or sympathy that emotions fade – they are not to be mistaken as a disposition, even when we wish this was the case. Emotions wear off. Conversely, this means that they have to be activated. This emotional activation is a primary function of the media.

Emotions don't belong to the individual – we don't start with a maximum amount of sympathetic capacity, there is no individual account of emotionality – but to situations and interactions that produce them. As easy as this is to understand on the individual level (a fight with a colleague, road rage), it is difficult when it comes to the realm of collective emotions. It has become common sense in social theory that these collective emotions play a major part in what is called the social integration of society: the creation of a collective conscience that becomes the basis for people's actions. In the widest possible domain – *Wel-tsgesellschaft* – *temporary integration* works through shared emotions. Globalized society, I would argue, needs these kinds of emotional states to motivate cooperation. So in high modernity, the function of emotions differs rather drastically from what traditional psychology, ethics, and aesthetics have successfully preached. In this perspective, disasters as media events offer people and societies at a distance a chance to get emotionally involved.

To put these aspects in a nutshell: [It is *not* asked] Why do accounts of distant suffering not always produce sympathy and altruism? With answers presenting the usual suspects (media images and our voyeuristic selves). Also, [It is asked] what is it that makes the medium work if it does work? How are images involved, when the disaster as media event does manage to create a ritual in which a huge public participates emotionally?

Natural catastrophes, it has to be admitted, are a special case. Only events, which have a fateful character qualify for this argument. Certain features of the event are required, such as suddenness, fatefulness (that leaves out the question of guilt), and of course, the visual qualities of

an event. One implication of the limitations mentioned above is that the problem is not one of visualization in general (*Visualisierbarkeit*), as with radioactivity. What has to be analyzed instead are the conventions of visualization (*Visualisierungspraktiken*).

The reflection of conventions must first address the role of the media and its reporting of disaster. I would argue that in cases of disaster the mass media do *much more than just report* the event: they enable distant viewers to imaginatively participate in the unfolding of events. For instance, after the tsunami in 2004, the mass media did not just present the news. Through the way they covered the event they initially contributed to the management of the catastrophe by creating empathy and making people donate money. I would go so far as to describe the media as *disaster managers*. But how exactly do the images of suffering create sympathy and altruism?

They do this within what can be termed the *ritual process of re-integration*, through which the media reporting on disasters can be understood. Media rituals of re-integration moderate the going-back-to-normal after the disintegration of the calamity. They guide the movement from 'loss of agency' to the 'recovery of autonomy' in which the media public can sympathetically participate and the distance between viewers and victims is suspended. Media events monopolize attention, they manage participation in terms of help and cooperation, their ultimate goal being the collective reinforcement of a 'holy social order' (Durkheim). For the duration of the media event a media public experiences itself as a *ritual communitas* (Turner) or *imagined community* (Anderson) that *nourishes its imagination from the same source* (Boltanski). The ideal product of this ritual is sympathy, solidarity, and last but not least, altruistic action. Now the function of images of suffering has to be understood as a part of this ritual process. How do these images operate as *actants of assembling the social* (Latour)? Analyses of the pictorial narration of recent natural disasters as well the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and similar events in the 19th and 20th centuries have produced four basic categories of motives that together form what I call the 'pictorial disaster story.' These categories include A) images that compare the original situation with the state of destruction, before/after-compositions, most often wide or establishing shots; B) more detailed images that show the impact of disaster, for instance the breaking of a tsunami-wave or scattered cars; C) images of suffering people, of dead or hurt bodies as well as – and most important – of bystanders and family members, who are witnessing the event; D) images that show the arrival and initiation of help and cooperation, of reconstruction.

When asking how the distant viewer's emotional participation in this

ritual story is motivated, category C comes into focus – images of suffering people (*Leidensbilder*). In the disaster images genre this is a small but crucial group. In discussions ‘regarding the pain of others’ (Sontag) these are the protagonists, because they are the ones that strategically activate our sympathetic imagination. Two kinds of victims can be distinguished here: The dead and severely wounded (first degree victims), as well as the ones affected by the catastrophe but still able to act (second degree victims). They are the ones that have to cope with the tragedy, we can relate to them because we can imaginatively take their role and put ourselves in their position.

These I call the ‘primary viewers’ because their (re)actions, looks, and countenance guide and exemplify the sympathetic response of the viewer. They direct our emotional involvement much in the way that a studio audience does in so-called audience-participation shows. The theory of *parasocial interaction* (Horton, Wohl, Strauss) in this case speaks of the ‘coaching of attitudes’ and the resulting ‘intimacy at a distance.’

In images of the 18th century from category C – images of the famous Lisbon quake – the ‘primary viewer’ is classically a ‘repoussoir-figure’ depicted in the foreground of the image, partly addressing the viewer gestures, partly looking at the pictured scene. In early images of disasters, I interpret this figure not as a visual feature about the sense of depth in a painting. Instead, this figure operates as a device that, through gestures, communicates affect. It tells the viewer that an emotional response to the scene is appropriate. In this way, it functions as a ‘primary viewer,’ instructing the reaction of the image’s viewer.

In contemporary images of disaster, this figure does not necessarily have to be in the foreground and it does not have to be a single person. In these images of suffering it is the looks and countenances of the second degree victims that inform our emotional response. As modern viewers, we have a competence in this ‘viewing viewing,’ (Mitchell) that is, in viewing and understanding relations of looks and expressions of others in images.

Another aspect of category C – yet this also extends to B and D – is that sympathetic reactions and altruistic impulses are more likely to be triggered when, in these constellations of looks, they include people that are less able to help themselves than others: children, the elderly, and also women. Imagine a picture of a father carrying his child down the aisle of a hospital, the child looking up at him, his own worried look focused straight ahead. The ritual power of this image within the larger ritual of the ‘pictorial disaster story’ profits of course from the iconographic tradition of the biblical canon as well as the passion of Christ.

My point is that the power of these images – at least some of it - derives from a ritual force that certain motives have had in the pre-modern religious doctrine. Contemporary press photographers know this and try to profit from this ritual force by finding and shooting these motives. This argument doesn't just indicate that of course there is an iconographic tradition of images of suffering. It does more than that by giving a sociological explanation for the way that ancient images of passion or suffering, in general, look the way they do. When it comes to suffering, it's always about the vulnerable, unable to help themselves - then a pictorial strategy to motivate the viewer to act.

We can now go back to the aspect of shared collective emotions and the question of why the emotional and ritual involvement sometimes works and sometimes doesn't. When speaking of a ritual (some say magical) force of images we have to keep in mind that in modernity ritual success can't be guaranteed anymore; rituals are a contingent phenomenon. Rituals today of course do not have the power that rituals had in pre-modern communities. When the mass media today tries to co-manage disasters they know that they don't have the power to involve a big public just like that. Nevertheless, at both the micro and the macro levels, both among individuals and between and within collectives, our societies still seem to be permeated by symbolic, ritual-like activities. So if the media ritual of re-integration is successful, if it manages to involve a global public emotionally through letting this public nourish its imagination and emotions from the same source, I argue that images of suffering and their narrative organization work together and interlock in the way just described. Media images of disaster – the 'pictorial disaster story' – follow a strategy that doesn't just make distant experience possible for the western/global audience, they also initiate cooperation (the financial support of institutional actors like the Red Cross or Doctors Without Borders) by affecting this audience. The experience of shared emotions can activate altruistic impulses and make people act.

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# ACCESS

The morning after.

The first moment of access to the colonies and to the military bases is a possible moment of transgression whose consequences are unpredictable. Although in the Gaza Strip it was the Israelis who demolished most of the buildings, those buildings left intact were mostly destroyed by the Palestinians. The morning after the military left, Palestinians destroyed the space and carried out as many remnants of building materials they could use and carry. This destruction is a spontaneous architectural moment of re-appropriation, and as such we believe that it should not be prevented or controlled. It is only after the indeterminate result of this moment of first encounter, and within the possible rubble of its physical results, that architectural construction may begin. This moment of first access questions the conception of architecture and urban planning. The acceptable precondition for planning is a situation of spatial and political certainty – a clear site demarcation, a schedule, a client and a budget. The erratic nature of Israeli control and the unpredictable military and political developments on the ground renders Palestine an environment of high uncertainty and indeterminacy. Planning in such conditions could not appeal to any tested professional methods.

# **A Post-Manhattan Montage (Critic of Emotional Reason in the Nuclear Era)**

**Jean-Charles Massera**

We were about to form lines facing the front when we saw a B-29 approaching and about to fly over us. All of us were looking up to the sky, pointing at the aircraft...

*It's eight fifteen and that's the time that it's always been  
We got your message on the radio*

So we're coming down...

Then the teachers came out from the school building and the class leaders gave the command to fall in line.

We were told not to use the radio, but, hell, I had to. I told them I would say, "One minute out," "Thirty seconds out," "Twenty seconds" and "Ten" and then I'd count, "Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four seconds..."

All of us were looking up to the sky, pointing at the aircraft...

Which would give them time to drop their cargo. They knew what was going on because they knew where we were.

We were about to form lines facing the front

Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four seconds...

And the class leaders gave the command to fall in ...

And that's exactly the way it worked, it was absolutely perfect.

Our faces were shifted away from the direction of the sky to the platform.

We got to the point where I said, "One second..." and by the time I'd



got that second out of my mouth the airplane had lurched, because 10,000 lbs had come out of the front.

That was the moment when the blast came. And then there was that tremendous noise and we couldn't see anything.

Did you hear an explosion?

Oh yeah. The shockwave was coming up at us after we turned. And the tail-gunner said, "Here it comes."

We couldn't see anything. At the instant of detonation, the air temperature at the point of explosion exceeded a million degrees Celsius (the maximum temperature of conventional bombs is approximately 5,000 °C). A white-hot fireball appeared a millionth of a second after detonation. One second later, the fireball reached a diameter of approximately 280 meters. For the following three seconds, it emitted powerful heat rays, and continued to shine visibly for approximately 10 seconds. And then the tremendous noise came. At the instant of explosion, intense heat rays and radiation were released in all directions. The pressure on the surrounding air created a blast of unimaginable force.

Oh yeah. The shockwave was coming up at us after we turned.

Recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which had been communicated to me in a manuscript, lead me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future.

Oh yeah. And that's exactly the way it worked, it was absolutely perfect.

Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the administration.

We were ready at about four o'clock in the afternoon on the fifth, and we got word from the president that we were free to go...

I looked at myself and saw my clothes had turned into rags due to the

heat.

At the instant of detonation, the temperature of the air at the point of explosion exceeded a million degrees Celsius.

I was probably burned on the back of the head, on my back, on both arms and both legs. My skin was peeling and hanging like this.

That's exactly the way it worked...

Do you have any idea what happened down below?

Pandemonium! I think it's best stated by one of the historians, who said: "In one micro- second, the city of Hiroshima didn't exist."

You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing.

I saw everything. I saw the shockwave coming up at us after we turned around - I'm sure of it. The shockwave coming up at us after we turned around exists. How could I not have seen it?

You didn't see that I was probably burned on the back of the head, on my back, on both arms and both legs. My skin was peeling and hanging like this in Hiroshima.

*Enola Gay, you should have stayed at home yesterday  
Ah-ha words can't describe the feeling and the way you lied*

10,000 degrees in Peace Square. I know it.

I know in the course of the last four months it has been made probable — through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America — that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated so that in one micro-second, the city of Hiroshima wouldn't exist anymore.

10,000 degrees in Peace Square. I know it.

The temperature of the sun in Peace Square. Now it appears almost

certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future. I know it.

Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese Army base.

*We got your message on the radio  
Conditions normal and you're coming home*

Automatically I began to walk heading west because that was the direction of my home. After a while, I noticed somebody calling my name. I looked around and found a friend of mine who lived in my town and was studying at the same school. His name was Yamamoto. He was badly burnt just like myself.

10,000 degrees in Peace Square.

The temperature of the air at the point of explosion exceeded a million degrees Celsius (the maximum temperature of conventional bombs is approximately 5,000 °C).

*Enola Gay is mother proud of little boy today*

We walked towards the river. And along the way we saw many victims. At the instant of explosion, intense heat rays and radiation were released in all directions. You saw nothing. The pressure on the surrounding air created a blast of unimaginable force in Hiroshima.

I saw a man whose skin had completely peeled off the upper half of his body and a woman whose eye balls were sticking out.

That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T. It had more than two thousand times the blast power of the British Grand Slam which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare.

Yeah. And the little boy said, "Here it comes."

This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable — though much less certain — that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding

territory. I know it. However, such bombs might very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air. And yet that's the way it worked, it was absolutely perfect.

All of us were looking up to the sky, pointing at the aircraft...

The Japanese pointing at the aircraft began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare, we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces.

Yeah. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T.

In their present form these bombs are now in production and even more powerful forms are in development.

And Norman said: "OK, we've got what we call the Manhattan Project. What we're doing is trying to develop an atomic bomb. We've gotten to the point now where we can't go much further till we have airplanes to work with."

All of us were looking up to the sky.

You know what we're doing today?

Well, yeah, we're going on a bombing mission, but it's a little bit special.

We were ready to go at about four o'clock in the afternoon on the fifth and we got word from the president that we were free to go, then the teachers came out from the school building and the class leaders gave the command to fall in.

*Enola Gay, you should have stayed at home yesterday*

The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces, but it's a little bit special: Use 'em as you wish.

My tail-gunner, Bob Caron, was pretty alert. He said, "Colonel, we wouldn't be playing with atoms today, would we?" I said, "Bob, you've got it just exactly right."

Words can't describe the feeling and the way Bob played with atoms.

You've got it just exactly right.

Their faces were all shifted from the direction of the sky to the platform. That was when we played with atoms as we wished. And then the man whose skin had completely peeled off the upper half of his body and the woman whose eye balls were sticking out.

*Enola Gay is mother proud of little boy today*

Bob, you've got it just exactly right.

*These games you play they're going to end in more than tears some  
day*

It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East.

10,000 degrees in Peace Square.

Did you see that mushroom cloud?

The Hiroshima bomb did not make a mushroom. It was what I call a stringer. It just came up. It was black as hell, and it had light and colors and white in it and gray color in it and the top was like a folded-up Christmas tree.

The top was like a folded-up Christmas tree, but words can't describe that man whose skin had completely peeled off the upper half of his body and that woman whose eye balls were sticking out. I know it.

We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

So I went back up in the front end and I told the navigator, bombardier,

flight engineer, in turn.

I said, "OK, this is an atom bomb we're dropping."

Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness...

They listened intently but I didn't see any change in their faces or anything else. Those guys were no idiots. We'd been fiddling around with the most peculiar-shaped things we'd ever seen.

So we're coming down...

All of us were looking up to the sky, pointing at the aircraft used to shorten the agony of war...

Yeah, it was a little bit special.

I was actually blown about 10 m. My friends were all marked down on the ground by the blast just like this. Everything collapsed for as far as I could see. I felt the city of Hiroshima had disappeared.

I think it's best stated by one of the historians, who said: "In one micro-second, the city of Hiroshima didn't exist."

But the greatest marvel is not the size of the enterprise, its secrecy, nor its cost, but the achievement of scientific brains in putting together infinitely complex pieces of knowledge, held by many men in different fields of science, into a workable plan.

Colonel, we wouldn't be playing with atoms today, would we?

And hardly less marvelous has been the capacity of industry to design, and of labor to operate, the machines and methods to do things never done before, so that the brain child of many minds came forth in physical shape and performed as it was supposed to do.

And that's exactly the way it worked.

Bob, you've got it just exactly right. Both science and industry worked under the direction of the United States Army, which achieved a unique success in managing so diverse a problem in the advancement of knowledge in an amazingly short time. It was absolutely perfect.

On the way, I ran into an another friend of mine, Tokujiro Hatta. I wondered why the soles of his feet were badly burnt. It was unthinkable to get burned there.

That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T.

But it was undeniable that the soles were peeling and red muscle was exposed.

What has been done is the greatest achievement of organized science in history.

10,000 degrees in Peace Square.

*Enola Gay, is US proud of little boys today  
Ah-ha this word they got that they we were free to go, it's never ever  
going to fade away*

The greatest achievement of organized science in history.

Afterwards I was under medical treatment for a year and a half and I miraculously recovered. Out of sixty junior high school classmates, only ten of us are alive today. Yamamoto and Hatta soon died from the acute radiation disease. The radiation corroded their bodies and killed them.

The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East.

I myself am still alive on this earth suffering after-effects of the bomb dropped to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans. I have to see regularly an ear doctor, an eye doctor, a dermatologist and a surgeon. I feel uneasy about my health every day.

It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum.

All of us were looking up to the sky...

If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin

from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.

Paul Tibbets is the man to do it.

He said the only thing we can tell you about it is, it's going to explode with the force of 20,000 tons of TNT. I'd never seen 1lb of TNT blow up. I'd never heard of anybody who'd seen 100lbs of TNT blow up. All I felt was that this was gonna be one hell of a big bang.

Yeah, that was a little bit special.

My only regret on the use of the bomb was that, after the dust had cleared, the islands of Japan still existed!

Listen to me. I know something else.

We wouldn't be playing with atoms today, would we?

It will begin all over again: 200,000 dead. 80,000 wounded. In nine seconds. These figures are official. It will begin all over again. It will be 10,000 degrees on the earth, 10,000 suns, they will say. The asphalt will burn. Chaos will prevail.

I've been living on dragging my body full of sickness and from time to time I question myself I wonder if it is worth living in such hardship and pain and I become desperate...

I have told the Sec. of War, Mr. Stimson, to use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children. Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop this terrible bomb on the old capital or the new.

It will begin all over again.

It's time I manage to pull myself together and I tell myself once my life was saved, I should fulfill my mission as a survivor. Those who survived must continue to talk about our experiences. I know it.

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Only an unsaved idiot would believe the Japs forgot about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As Godly Baptist Christians, we recognize that the Japs have been planning to invade America since the day we humiliated them and sent them into the history books as a race of short-sighted nincompoops.

Yeah. That was one hell of a big bang

Even though the Japs run around with their eyes half shut, it doesn't mean they can't think straight! With the help of Satan, Japs have secretly declared war on America by using the Pokémon menace to brainwash our youth into accepting their fat murdering Buddha as God.

Those who survived must continue to talk about our experiences. I know it.

40 percent of Americans believe the world will end with the battle of Armageddon as described in the New Testament book of Revelation. Of those, some 47 percent believe the Antichrist is already on Earth.

These figures are official. It will begin all over again.

Only 7.2 percent of Americans believe China represents a military threat to the United States, and even fewer - 2.3 percent - believe the issue of Taiwan could strain relations with China.

The truth of the matter is that Europe's requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products — principally from America — are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help, or face economic, social, and political deterioration of a very grave character.

My idea of subversion is that of the left-wing terrorist organizations. Right-wing subversion or terrorism is not the same thing. When the social body of the country has been contaminated by a disease that eats away at its entrails, it forms antibodies. These antibodies cannot be considered in the same way as the microbes.

The Communists have had a number of advantages in the penetration of schools and colleges. Outstanding among these is the philosophy of pragmatism, as enunciated by Dr. John Dewey, which dominates the

present educational process. Pragmatism is not a Communist philosophy, but it serves as a convenient cover under which the Reds may operate and also under which they may win many allies in the educational field.

The remedy lies in breaking the vicious circle and restoring the confidence of the European people in the economic future of their own countries and of Europe as a whole. It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace.

Dusclops absorbs anything, however large the object may be. This Pokémon hypnotizes its foe by waving its hands in a macabre manner and by bringing its single eye to bear. The hypnotized foe is made to do Dusclops's bidding.

Having been processed in school and in life, and having learned cultural devices, the child now begins to use mediate techniques to solve the complex real-life problems that he had been unable to solve through natural, immediate adaptation. In an active encounter with the environment, he elaborates the ability to use the things of the external world as tools or symbols. While the functional use he makes of them is at first naive and inadequate, the child gradually masters them and eventually outgrows them, elaborating the ability to use his own neuro-psychic processes as devices for reaching certain objectives. Natural behavior becomes cultural, as external devices and cultural symbols, nurtured by social life, become internal processes.

I see, primarily, as part of this softening up process in America, the liquidation of our attitudes on what we used to recognize as right and wrong, what we used to accept as absolute moral standards. We now confuse moral standards with the sophistication of dialectical materialism, with a Communist crackpot theology, which teaches that everything changes, and that what is right or wrong, good or bad, changes as well.

I went back to my own room and closed the door. It was very frightening, because stones were coming through the windows. In a few minutes they were pounding on my door and starting to make a hole in it

with their knives. There was only one thing to do. I flung open the door and went right out into their midst. I put out my hand, saying, 'I am an American, just a plain American, and we're your friends.'

On the average, adult Americans believe that just over half (52%) of the whole world's population speak English. Younger adults, and people without a college education, tend to believe the proportion of the world's people who speak English is even higher, well over 50%. Having been processed in school and in life, and having learned cultural devices brainwashing our youth, we American people now begin to use mediate techniques to solve the complex real-life problems we have with people we humiliated or who penetrated our schools and colleges. In an active encounter with the international environment we elaborate the ability to use the fact that people we humiliated or who penetrated our schools and colleges have been planning to invade America as tools or symbols. While the functional use we make of them is at first naive and inadequate, we American people gradually master them and eventually outgrow them, elaborating the ability to use our own neuro-psychic processes as devices for reaching certain objectives. Natural superiority becomes cultural, as external devices brainwashing 40 percent of Americans believing the world will end with the battle of Armageddon as described in the New Testament book of Revelations or people without college education penetrated by the Communists tending to believe the proportion of the world's people who speak English is even higher, and technological and economical superiority nurtured by the fact that American presence will certainly be needed during the next turbulent months, become internal processes.

One boy looked at me and said, 'You hate Communists?' I said, 'Yes, I hate Communists.'

Americans have always believed they live in a land of opportunity, where anybody who has a good idea, determination, and willingness to work hard can start a business and prosper.

America is the greatest country in the world. Last week in Los Angeles, I talked about how, no matter the circumstances of one's birth, only in America can a Latino, Antonio Villaraigosa, be the mayor of one of the largest and most glamorous cities in the world, and how only in America can a young Coca-Cola salesman grow up to become the Attorney General of the United States, the chief law enforcement officer in the land.

America is the greatest country on earth. We have everything we want and need. We can be whatever we want to be. We have freedom of everything. We have free choice. We can accomplish whatever we set our minds to. There are no limits. We have gifts from God: oceans, deserts, forests, mountains, and the most beautiful places in the world. We have an awesome president. We are amazing.

He slashed his hand across his throat as if it were a knife and said, "My mother, father, sister killed by Communists."

The American presence will certainly be needed during the turbulent months that are bound to precede elections. As for the future, it is all but inconceivable that a freely constituted Vietnamese government would invite suicide by insisting that the U.S. go home.

The Communists have had a number of advantages in the penetration of schools and colleges.

Only a small 8% want to see a larger role in the world for American military power, on the assumption that "this is the only way in which Communism can be stopped" and "This is the only way respect for the U.S. can be maintained."

When the social body of the country has been contaminated by the liquidation of our attitudes on what we used to recognize as right and wrong, what we used to accept as absolute moral standards, it forms antibodies. These antibodies cannot be considered in the same way as the microbes we humiliated.

But more than four times this number, 34%, say they would like to reduce the U.S. military role in the world, reasoning that "We are overextended now," "It is too expensive to become too involved," "Others ought to solve their own problems," and "We have suffered too many casualties already."

Therefore, Mr. President, if you weigh the present situation with a cool head without giving way to passion, you will understand that the Soviet Union cannot afford not to decline the despotic demands of the USA.

Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos.

We have everything we want and need. We can be whatever we want to be. We have freedom of everything. We have free choice. We can accomplish whatever we set our minds to. There are no limits.

Its purpose should be the revival of working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions that haven't been contaminated by the liquidation of our attitudes on what we used to recognize as right and wrong can exist.

They have declared war on the civilized world — and war is what they got.

The philosophy of pragmatism rejects the supernatural and declares there is no absolute good or absolute truth, and that morality is growth and growth is morality.

The Communists believe that there is an absolute truth, Marxism-Leninism.

They carried out a counter attack on a nation that invaded their country. They attacked civilians just like America does.

For the first time ever, everything is in place for the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ.

This summer, there's a new 3D Pokémon game coming to stores with its eyes half shut to brainwash your youth.

Americans who have everything they want and need, who can be whatever they want to be, who have freedom of everything, who have free choice, who can accomplish whatever they set their minds to and have gifts from God are asking, why do they hate us?

We don't hate you. We want very much to be friends, but we also want to reclaim our land, our dignity, and our pride.

They hate what we see right here in this chamber — a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedom — our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

The election of Allende as President of Chile poses for us one of the

most serious challenges ever faced in this hemisphere. It would become part of the Soviet/Socialist world, not only philosophically but in terms of power dynamics; and it might constitute a support base and entry point for expansion of Soviet and Cuban presence and activity in the region. In my judgment the dangers of doing nothing are greater than the risks we run in trying to do something.

Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare couldn't drop this terrible bomb on the old capital or the new. Even if the Reds sign a truce and then break it with another offensive in Korea, the U.S. will not confine its resistance to Korea or even concentrate on Korea. Instead, it will blockade the coast of China and attack Chinese coastal cities by air.

It will begin all over again. I know it. They hate your despotic demands. There is no absolute good or absolute truth.

We have to run a risk in trying to do something in order to prevent thousands and thousands of young Americans from Communism. The Communists have already had a number of advantages in the penetration of schools and colleges. Outstanding among these is the philosophy of pragmatism, as enunciated by Dr. John Dewey, which dominates the present educational process.

Therefore, Mr. President, if you weigh the present situation with a cool head without giving way to passion, you will understand that your policy is directed against some particular countries or doctrines and not against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos.

Even if the terrorists had a 90% chance of failure in a nuclear attack on a major American city that would leave a 10% chance of success.

They attacked civilians just like America does.

The only obstacle to renewed friendship has been the blind bias of the successive American administrations for Israel at the expense of Arab rights. This regrettable constant in US policy is pushing some Arabs to become anti-American and fueling fanaticism. It will begin all over again. I know it.

Even if Iraq does have weapons, they are almost impossible to disper-

se and, most importantly, Saddam will not use them. The Gulf War proves that Saddam is rational and will not use weapons of mass destruction against the West. Saddam did not use WMDs during the Gulf War because he was deterred by the threat of U.S. nuclear weapons.

Nearly seven out of ten Americans believe it is likely that ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September 11 attacks. I know it.

Only an unsaved idiot would believe they hate us because the only obstacle to renewed friendship has been the blind bias of the successive American administrations for Israel at the expense of Arab rights. As Godly Baptist Christians, we encourage the perspective that Saddam is irrational and will use weapons of mass destruction against the West since the day we, as the leader of the world for the common welfare, humiliated him and pushed some Arabs to become anti-American and fueling fanaticism. We know it. Even though this regrettable constant in US policy hypnotizes us with its imbecile, war-mongering rhetoric, encouraging a racist, religious and chauvinist perspective, it doesn't mean we can't think straight! With the help of God's grace, and with support from one another, the families of terror victims have shown a strength that survives all hurt. Each of them remains in the thoughts and prayers of the American people. The war on terror goes on. The resolve of our nation is still being tested. And in the face of danger we are showing our character.

We wouldn't be playing with atoms today, would we?

We don't hate you, nor do we hate your way of life. We want very much to be friends, but we also want to reclaim our land, our dignity, and our pride.

We recognized the deep humiliation that can come as a result of living in a land where you can't have everything we want and need, but they have declared war on the civilized world — and war is what they got.

*Been away so long I hardly knew the place  
Gee, it's good to be back home  
Leave it till tomorrow to unpack my case  
Honey disconnect the phone  
I'm back in the USSR*

*You don't know how lucky you are, boy*  
*Back in the US*  
*Back in the US*  
*Back in the USSR*

Listen to me. We have conducted this campaign from the mountains of Afghanistan, to the heart of the Middle East, to the horn of Africa, to the islands of the Philippines, to hidden cells within our own country.

*You don't know how lucky you are, boy*

Cette constante regrettable dans notre politique pousse certains Arabes à devenir anti- américains et alimente le fanatisme. Nous le savons.

Even if your help to transform the Middle East and increase the safety of your children and grandchildren is savage, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as men and women reclaiming our land, our dignity, and our pride, haven't been planning to invade America. And if Israel signs peace treaties with Syria and the Palestinians based on the 1967 borders and finds a consensual solution to the refugee problem, all of the Arab states would sign the peace with Israel and twenty-two Arab flags would fly over their embassies in Israeli Jerusalem.

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Expressing further its regret that civilians, considered in the same way as microbes, account for the vast majority of casualties in armed conflicts and increasingly are targeted by brainwashed combatants and armed elements flying over us, reaffirming its concern at the hardships borne by civilians during armed conflict, in particular as a result of acts of violence directed against them, especially women, children and other vulnerable groups, including refugees and internally displaced persons, and recognizing the consequent impact this has on young alert Americans we want to prevent from Communism,

Bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the day we humiliated them, and underlining there is absolute good and absolute truth, Reaffirming that we as men and women having everything we want and need, who can be whatever we want to be, who have freedom of everything, who have free choice, who can accomplish whatever we



set their minds to and have gifts from God, could not drop this terrible bomb,

Being especially aware of the mounting danger of the recognition that they have been planning to invade us since the day we humiliated them,

Reaffirm we are here to stay and let it be clear that we shall use the bomb if our existence is threatened.

Massera's text has been previously published in the catalogue M.E.D. Manhattan Engineering District produced on occasion of the show M.E.D., FRAC des Pays de la Loire, 2007, Carquefou. Edited by Henrik Plenge Jakobsen and Jean-Charles Massera. Published by Isthme (2007).

**Jean-Charles Massera's publications include France guide de l'utilisateur, (1998); United Emmerdemments of New Oredr précédé de United problems of Coût de la Main-d'œuvre (2002); A Cauchemar is Born (2007); Jean de La Ciotat, la légende (2007); We Are L'Europe (2009) and Le guide du démocrate - Les clés pour gérer une vie sans projet (with Éric Arlix, 2010). Several of his writings have been written for theatre plays, directed by, among others, Brigitte Mounier, Jean-Pierre Vincent and Benoît Lambert. Massera's current activities involve sound installations, music, photography, film and video. His most recent exhibition was presented last year at Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne. Jean-Charles Massera lives and works in Paris and Berlin.**

# BREAK

From les damnés de la terre, Frantz Fanon (1961):

Violent act: National liberation, national reawakening, the restoration of nationhood to the people or Commonwealth, whatever the name used, whatever the latest expression, decolonization is always a violent event. At whatever level we study it [...] decolonization is quite simply the substitution of one 'species' of mankind by another. The substitution is unconditional, absolute, total and seamless. [...]

Tabula rasa: To destroy the colonial world means nothing less than demolishing the colonist's city, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory.

Eyal Weizman: You cannot think of transformation of space without a moment of transgression, of revolution. This moment is necessary in our process of decolonization. You cannot think of this moment without some destruction of the buildings. This was very clear in the military camp. The first moment of access is as well the first moment of transgression. This decolonizing moment is something that we cannot and should not control. The worst thing on our part would be to say to people, 'Okay, you have access but now we are going to control it.' There needs be this moment of spontaneity. This recalls the evacuation of Gaza. The only thing that was not destroyed by Israel was the synagogues. The Israeli court decided they must be left. When the Palestinians came into the settlements these synagogues were destroyed. This project has a kind of inbuilt paradox: We are designing on an indeterminate plane. We do not know what happens after the access; destruction? Perhaps... We are at the point of indeterminacy, because we cannot attempt to control this moment. The Palestinians need to enter the settlement and do whatever they want.

We call this transgression because it is the moment between the transfer of one set of laws to another set of laws. It is the most architectural moment; it is the most spontaneous moment in anyone's relation to architecture. In Gaza, James Wolfenson took half a million dollars of his own money and collected some more to buy the greenhouses from the settlements to give to the Palestinians. When the Palestinians had

access to the settlements, they destroyed them. Although they were bought for them and they could have used them, there was nothing else to destroy. This is not a moment of rationality, of planning for the future. It is a spontaneous outbreak. Some people I spoke with in Gaza described it as a kind of exorcism.

This revolutionary moment is a crucial moment and any project that deals with the settlements will have to address this point. In some ways I have been trying to avoid it. I was hoping that maybe the new Palestinian Authority will be ready for this moment and that people will not have to be violent and this transgression will not be necessary.

EW: Historically, there is seldom change from one system to another without an act which is somehow violent. It need not be physically or spectacularly violent, but there is a kind of break.

It is an unpredictable moment of excess, of interference. The site we imagine now is not the site that we will get. If we were working like ARIJ, in a very institutional manner, we would be missing the crucial moment of transition. The last thing we should do is to intervene or define this unpredictability. But we do not know, the act of destruction could be done by the Israelis, could be done by the Palestinians, it could be done by both sequentially or simultaneously.

Sandi Hilal: Exactly what we were discussing at the military camp. Looking at the destruction of the buildings, we thought at first that the Israelis destroyed it, but then we thought the Palestinians could have done it. It was a kind of confusion, because both of them could have done it.

Alessandro Petti: It will be a chaotic moment; there is a tension in the society that could be violent or unpredictable. At the same time, the action also could be categorized as re-appropriation or constructive. I imagine there will be some destructive actions, based on frustration, but there will also be some practices where you can already see the re-appropriation of the space. The idea that now you can have new life here. Gaza needs to be investigated in these terms. The act of destruction is also the moment that they very practically stole things, not for ideology or frustration, but to reuse.

EW: The destruction of the settlements appears in houses in Gaza. You can see pieces of the red tiles, doorframes, and window frames all

reused in Gaza houses.

AP: This is re-appropriation, not destruction. When there was this moment in Gaza, the majority of people were transgressing this barrier, in a very positive way. At the same time there were people shooting in the air and yelling, and it almost devastated this moment of transgression, which alone was quite strong. When you do something new, you have people only interested in devastation. Because some people have access to weapons, means they could also force a kind of repression again on people.

EW: Think about why people would destroy their own greenhouses, greenhouses that were bought for them. Because they don't accept the order that has been put on them, they don't accept the World Bank or their deal. Even in this completely chaotic moment there is a real power and meaning to this.

AP: How do you then activate a kind of positive practice in this moment?

EW: For me the destruction of the settlements could be a positive start, especially if you think of it as the first stage in the transformation of the built environment. This is the break; a radically different moment.

This undoes the traditional terms of planning and architecture. Architecture needs some ground of determinacy: Site, time frame, and budget. Here we operate with maximum indeterminacy. How do you put design energy into such indeterminacy?

This is the reason that our design seeks to intervene in the field of cultural sensibility that is a public, cultural and political category. It is seeking to explore the possibility of transformation. Whenever it happens, there will be a theoretical thinking that has developed and that allows us to approach the situation in certain ways. Against the field of indeterminacy our approach is to define the field of the possible, to imagine what is possible.

SH: Paradoxically, one of the perceived strengths of this project is that it plans ahead. As Palestinians we are always reacting and in this project we are planning.

AP: What could be our strategy? What can we plan? Because if we

have too many ideas in this determinacy, then we cannot plan. Where we will enter in the project? What are the basic structures that will allow us to present some evidence? How will this integrity be used? I've seen many places, modernist and very rational; planned for two families and kids, and was used in a very different way. Planning does not always determine how the space will be used. In the settlements we would be using very determinate structures and turning them into more flexible spaces.

SH: Again, I think it is important to see architecture as an arena of speculation. From the moment we start working with NGOs on the ground, as an example. Would this determine the moment of the break? We can't expect that because of the NGOs and the people on the ground, the revolutionary moment will not happen. But it might influence it or raise questions. Does architecture as speculation determine historical moments? Is the project aiming to intervene on this moment, directly or indirectly?

EW: There are 700,000 buildings that Israel has put in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We don't have to stop at the Occupied Territories; there are a number of community settlements inside Israel that justifiably should be decolonized. But the numbers of typologies of the buildings are very limited, so the intervention on specific details – doors, windows – allows one to do political work on a different scale. It is like affecting politics on the level of atoms.



**The military camp at Oush Grab after being partly demolished by Palestinians**

## **A Close Reading of *In Free Fall* by Hito Steyerl**

**David Riff**

The airplane crash. A great readymade game for long flights between workshops and biennials. Something sudden to interrupt the endless easyjet. Forget all those meditations on motionless speed. Forget futurism. Life is more mundane. Really, nothing happens, until something finally does. The stewardess comes with a hot towel that's meant for someone else. Another hour passes. At some point the MacBook Pro battery runs out. Then suddenly there's a lurch and a teeter on the brink. That sinking moment when it becomes clear that everything is lost, a point of no return, in which potential reaches its maximum point and tips into actuality. What comes after that is less important, you don't actually need to see it, though a certain Schadenfreude can't prevent you from registering what you already know: an eerie silence of white light from the window burns your retina and that's it, the aircraft goes off the radar, reels out of control, breaks up, and careens to the ground. The smell of kerosene like napalm in the morning, the lurching breakup with flying chunks of engine; Air Force One is down, off the radar. But it's what came before, that sinking moment you should hold on to, it is the moment when knowledge is about to become. It is the moment you continue to rehearse, the moment immediately after the inevitable establishment of a fact and the moment before its ultimate fulfilment. It is the moment upon which Hito Steyerl's *In Free Fall* (2010) hangs suspended.

The last sentence of the preceding paragraph sounds like airplane armchair metaphysics, when actually, it is clearly matter that is at stake in Steyerl's film, or to be more precise, the materiality of images, images as things. You can see that in a very literal way in the montage that serves as the film's opening and binds together its three parts as a refrain. Against an apocalyptic sky, a jetliner breaks up in mid-air, and people get sucked out the back. The plane smashes into the ground wing first. Chunks of burning engine fall to the palm-lined beach. Survivors emerge from the debris, crying children in their arms. YouTube fragments become blurred geometries in the darkroom clarity of HD. This is a collective material we all know in the moment before we see

it; cut sequences subconsciously memorized, screaming to be reused. 'Poor images,' blockbuster crashes filtering straight from the obsolescent Fordist dream factory onto the internet, where they join the other living dead in the peer-to-peer afterlife, recut, cropped, uploaded, and juggled in a kind of labour of love by some invisible mass audience of anonymous prosumers, maintained on 'public' spaces owned by private corporations, familiar to almost everyone, a no-man's land of phantasms, one of which is the crash, the catastrophe, the end.

We know all about the crash, and why this image would be emblematic. The plummet of commodity values on global markets, we feel on our skin. The 'crash' itself is a spectacular image whose repeatable suddenness hides the reality it claims to represent, if one thinks about the delayed effects of ongoing economic crisis, continual governance by state of exception, repeated shock therapy and privatization, and overt class war from above, a slow war of position, waged through small electroshocks and doses of disinformation everyday. Crisis is



never sudden; it simmers forever and boils over one day. People go to the movies after they lose their jobs; spend hours waiting for something to happen, rehearsing the next batch of shockwork on Facebook and YouTube. In real time, a certain systemic logic, an economy of poverty emerges: the crisis generates its own ways of visualizing itself, its ways of coping, its own affects, its own resources, its own

modes of recycling the ruins.

It is to such a site of recycling that Hito Steyerl takes us. With pristine HD steadicam footage, she visits Mojave Air and Space Center, a scrapyard under a piercingly blue California sky where airplanes come to die. A jolly captain with a pearl studded cap and a wheelchair cart becomes the entrepreneurial Virgil, the informant who leads us through their afterlife. He tells us about his business ever since the Chinese started buying scrap. 'Every time there's a dip in the economy, it's windfall to us,' he says, surrounded by profitable ghosts. The montage of the footage breaks the interviewee's own narrative into discrete, even disjointed units, conscious cracks and jumps in speech. They reinforce the double identification of the airplane graveyard as a site of economic catastrophe then transformed into a Hollywood soundstage: the graveyard's owner first uses the gutted airplane carcasses for special effects explosions (boom, away she goes, he says, as we see the ball of flame on a perfect day, a Hollywood image that repeats again and again). And then he sells the remains, the raw aluminium. The 'vicious situation of the economy' is a profitable explosion. He understands, he knows: 'you're making money no matter what you sell.' To reinforce the constructive edit, Steyerl transforms this new knowledge - namely that there is a profitable life after the crash - into a thing: we see the explosion on a small DVD-player, playing against the backdrop of airplane wreckage. It is an image that will haunt the whole film, its frontispiece. Machine pincers crunch their way through aluminium sheeting, providing the soundtrack for ongoing images of catastrophe, caught in slow motion, overwritten by an electronic shofar. Is this for real? asks the captain.

This is where Steyerl's film really takes off and becomes danceable. Michael Jackson syncopates a re-cut Discovery Channel documercial on aluminium recycling that now plays on the little laptop DVD player instead of the image of explosions we saw before. The thing about aluminium is that 'it's so recyclable,' suggests the loop, it can be used again and again, like the 'poor images' of the crash itself, one might add. The DVD player shows us how airplane scrap travels down the assembly line, to be melted down back into molecules, becoming the extremely durable coating on DVDs, again and again, overlaid by other samples from the captain's interview, forever. The airplane is transubstantiated, turned into a medium for the picture of its own explosive dissolution. The symbol of Fordism at its cruising altitude (the jetliner)



takes wings into its own afterlife as a DVD, becoming a temporary symbol of post-Fordist crisis as commodity. Another early CGI image that will haunt the film: the simple ellipse of the DVD traveling around the globe as an orbital vehicle, much more like a flying saucer than the Lear jet-like lobe of Spaceship One, the suborbital private spacecraft that took off from another part of the Mojave Air and Space Port in 2004, around the same time 'the Chinese started buying scrap,' by the way. Scaled Composites, the aerospace company that launched this private suborbital flight, was bought by Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic, who plans to take ultra-rich private passengers on short joy rides to outer space sometime around 2015, if the world doesn't end before then. For the mass consumer, such joyrides will presumably be some 3D HD home technology, the good old affect simulator of the stamp-and-cut Hollywood movie of apocalypse, presumably also courtesy Virgin via Apple i3D, again and again, forever. Until the next crash, when all the screens go blank, that is.

This, of course, is the refrain to which Steyerl's film must return, as its passengers embark to the sounds of the 5th Dimension's 'Up, up, and away.' The pilot introduces the air safety video. You know you are in for some bad eternity when the guy from *Lost* looks out of the window. The lurch that stood at the film's beginning repeats, leading into the same old good old, any old crash sequence. It is a false ending that will send the careless spectator out of the black box and on to the next exhibit, if not for the subtle differences and additions in the montage. Another reproduction, another turn, another crash: Air Force One is down again, another shock effect to extend the general trauma that facilitates the kinds of drastic economic redefinitions that crises always bring. How much can we know about this endless repetition? How do we know? Can we ever change it? Can we stop ourselves from falling? Falling for what? Is this just another repetition, another rehearsal?

(...)

Gravel crunches underfoot. The sun is bright. The silence holds. The steadicam pan over girders, wires, scraps of fuselage. On his trip through the zone, you can almost hear the cameraman breathing. 'Good morning, Kevan,' says Steyerl off screen, asking who shot these images. We are now seeing for them for the third time around. 'I photographed them,' he confesses from skype. What follows at first looks a little like a 'making of' as it is usually told in special features on

commercial DVDs. The cameraman directs the claw hovering over the dinky little DVD player, which now, lacking its motion graphics YouTube, looks all the more like a prop, an empty shell. From Skype - a medium that embodies a constant panoptical potential for unexpected confrontations with instant humanity, creating an imperfect, contingent space of disarming interruptions and bendings of time - Kevan tells us that he was trying to extricate himself from a financial situation. The claw moves too abruptly and hits him, but he laughs, the steadicam shadow bobbing ghostly sharp on desert sand. Fuselage, wiring, removed aluminium sheets where airline decals used to be. Kevan talks about the little house he bought and turned into an architectural masterpiece. Oddly enough, he remarks, it was clad in aluminium like an airplane. But the crisis forced him to sell it when the real estate market was at an all-time low. Part of a landing gear stands alone on the edge of the Mojave runway, a little like the ghost towns of Arizona and California. The claw crunches into fuselage again. 'We had to prepare for a crash. Once the process of descent began, there wasn't anything to stop it.' Kevan confirms that allegories have a certain use-value when he talks about how watching and editing the film helped him to understand that he needed to ride it out and put something back together on the other side. The introductory sequence of radar disappearances and rapid descent are back as an illustration, so overloaded with significance now that there is a waning of affect. We know this all by heart, we knew it from the beginning, and we know it even better now in all variations. We have become numb to terror itself. We are living through the consequences.

To mark this transition, the dinky DVD player migrates to a new location. There is a large oil painting in the background up on a huge easel, a smaller one dangles suspended from the ceiling, which almost looks like a bondage quote from Steyerl's earlier film *Lovely Andrea* (2007). Comrade thing is a bondage model recast as an oil painting, an exemplar for which theorists like Boris Arvatov and Sergei Tretyakov exhibited an almost pathological (and one could say misogynistic) hatred. The moving image threatened by crisis and made obsolete through co-optation by the Internet's 'communism of capital,' returns to painting. Abstract expressionism 2.0. This is strangely appropriate, if you think about the genealogy of post-war painting, which already made its home in the equivalent of the airplane graveyard, a jumble of mimetic devices and strokes. For abstract expressionism, canvas and paint had become base matter, to be recycled, a little like aluminium;

the formlessness of gravity had replaced the gravitas of form. The ultimate claim is that painting after the collapse of painting could be more indexical than photography. The moment of contact was key, its ultimate goal to create comrade things that are more like lovers than friends, like the canvases of Mark Rothko, which are supposed to quicken in proximity effects like silky skin, if you don't get distracted by the security guards. There is no truth beyond that; abstract expressionism does not need any veracity devices, save that of the romantic authorial biography, which now finds ways to connect and internalize truth as base matter, to intern it in a personal form whose process or 'happening' is far more important than any material result. Kevan returns to painting after the crash of painting, a site all the more specific because it is linked to a very definite cultural tradition deployed as a knowledge weapon in the Cold War. At the same time, unlike the original abstract expressionism, these canvases are not made with the pretence of being high art; instead, they are abreactions that delve beyond the image into the world of matter, much more about the physical human use of creating and destroying on a flat picture plane, just to ride it out, get it over with, and constitute something on the other side.

We see Kevan at work in his studio, presumably located in a space provided by a former part of the military-industrial complex. He talks about how he worked as a video engineer who would put moving images on TV-screens or other devices into films in any circumstance. We see him projecting the explosion of 4X-JYI from a notebook to canvas, juggling the pictures in real time. 'There was a great need for veracity in film, and one of the best ways to do it would be to put a television in what you're doing,' he tells us from the DVD player, which itself has served as such a veracity device. 'It makes things seem real.' Painting used to be full of such devices, so in that sense too, Kevan's practice is a painting after painting, a world of homeless representations. That turn in painting was only possible because its veracity devices turned out to be little more than scenery, props and projection surfaces, even if they once had the validity of law. Think of Jan Van Eyck's 'Arnolfini Wedding Portrait,' where the mirror – a little like Steyerl's DVD player – is a seal on a visual marriage contract, as well as a symbol for mimesis and its capacity to reflect reality, which supplies the author with his juridical authority. It comes as no surprise that later scholarship shows this marriage contract itself to be a fake. The bride on the picture was possibly thirteen years younger, a dreamy teenager living not in Bruges but in Paris, promised away by dad to a lesser merchant from Lucca

who looks like Vladimir Putin to underwrite a major loan. By painting her on this canvas and claiming that this picture mirrors reality completely, Van Eyck turned her into a mobile image, a Thing detached from any human biography, worth more money than any living being, not only in its own time, but especially now, when the picture hangs in London's National Gallery as a founding document of an entirely painterly tradition.

Steyerl involuntarily returns us to such a long history of mobile images by showing us Kevan as he sketches the flying saucer of the DVD on a canvas in pencil. Images circulate, he tells us, and precisely that is the problem. People no longer watch television, or at least not like they used to. The time that used to stream back to the corporations as money now streams back down to the user as a torrent. The 'user's freedom' to watch TV without commercial breaks online produces the strange new freedom for Kevan to manipulate his canvases like familiar comrade things, in destigmatized degraded surfaces that will never reach any museum: the ubiquity of images means that he is out of a job, destined to produce the kind of painting that by no stretch of the imagination is a valuable art market commodity. 'The corporations have to squeeze somebody so then they squeeze labour, the means of production,' says Kevan. The emblematic image of the DVD, applied in oil paint and burnt by a blowtorch, looks like it has been through a crash itself, remarks Steyerl. Indeed, it was 'caught in the digital revolution.' Painting this emblem of obsolescence becomes the only possible therapy after that 'experience of descent.' It is the only way of dealing with that feeling of flying a plane that you can't land.

Suddenly, the skype confessional breaks off. The jolly captain is back to tell us another story, only now this story is true. 'We're heading down through 20,000 feet in our approach,' he says, when air traffic control calls him and tells him that there's a bomb on board. Because stuff like this really happens. The footage on the DVD player is back again briefly with its ticking bomb. Only now, the Hollywood soundtrack illustrates a real-life experience, finally giving credence to phrases that we have been hearing all along, torn out of context and used as material for biographies of things. Is this for real? This is like a simulator ride. Here, the footage itself is related back to a real close encounter on the part of the film's most fictitious and uncanny character, who suddenly turns out to be a subject too, and not just some Howard Hughes type Fat Controller. Precarity is ubiquitous. Danger

is everywhere. Following the logic of equivalencies, the crash footage becomes a document of his experience, too, much like painting could be understood as more of a document or a prompt for some universal aesthetic experience than an aesthetic experience in and of itself. Again we are about to suspend our disbelief. Whoa, remarks the Israeli expert qua captain, and what happens to the passengers? The spectators? The audience? Breathe normally, says the safety video, as the aircraft breaks apart in half. And does anybody make it out alive? A skydiver plummets from the explosion. Wind whistles as he tries to catch a falling parachute. Oxygen masks drop into the abandoned cockpit. The film goes back to that point of undecidability where fiction and reality merge, where knowledge hangs suspended, where there is so much air that you cannot breathe.

It is at this point that Steyerl's film generates what is perhaps its most memorable and its most painterly image. The Israeli expert and Steyerl are in uniform and unison, rehearsing the mechanical ballet of the airline safety routine against the backdrop of windmills turning desert wind into energy. The safety routine is an individualized mass ornament, biomechanical in the sense of avant-garde theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold, who instructed his actors in Taylorist moves gleaned directly from Alexei Gastev's rationalization manuals; a performance of post-human robotics, an internalization of the Futurist costumes in *Victory over the Sun*. The windmills indicate the possibility for a new stage of post-Fordist rationalization involving 'smart energy,' knowledge production, and other new sources of income for a nicer, 'softer' capitalism with a post-human face, where people-qua-commodities continually 'maintain' and 'reproduce' their routines in loose and grandiose biomechanical performances. This is mimetic labour: building potentialities that can never quite be actualized, sometimes approaching virtuosic grace, sometimes on the verge of comic disintegration into total dilettantism. Virgin winds upturned; productive leisure performed by imperfect bodies reformed in late afternoon sunlight.

There is some uncanny proximity to painting from the height of the Stalinist purges in these images. It makes sense. Meyerhold was shot as a Japanese spy. Sergei Tretyakov jumped to his death down a flight of stairs while in the clutches of the NKVD. Boris Arvatov ended his days in the madhouse. Socialist realism is factography's afterlife, a precursor of peer-to-peer. What we see in these sun-drenched images is a little

like the work of former October-group member Alexander Deineka. A similar source of oxygen lies buried somewhere in his painting of three little boys on a shoreline watching a seaplane fly away. It is air from a postcard. Air you try to breath when you crane your neck to look at Deineka's famous ceiling mosaics in the Moscow metro station 'Mayakovskaya' under what was supposed to be Meyerhold's theatre, upward views of Soviet aviation at all times of day, suggesting sky more than 30 meters underground. Such oxygen is the air of disposable time, time that can be stolen in a noisy crowd, on an assembly line escalator, in a pause during a lecture, under almost any regime. It is the air of total inoperativity at the height of production, fatally locked into the black box of the High Definition video cube. From outside that box, all one can hear is the sound of its own making, that oxygen hymn with which Hito Steyerl's film *In Free Fall* reaches its end.

Image: Film still *In Free Fall* (2010), Hito Steyerl.

David Riff's text has previously appeared on the multilingual web journal Transversal 03/11. Art/Knowledge: overlaps and neighbouring zones edited by the eipcp – European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies. More info on: [eipcp.net/transversal](http://eipcp.net/transversal)  
(A full version of the text is available on our website [www.journalment.org](http://www.journalment.org))

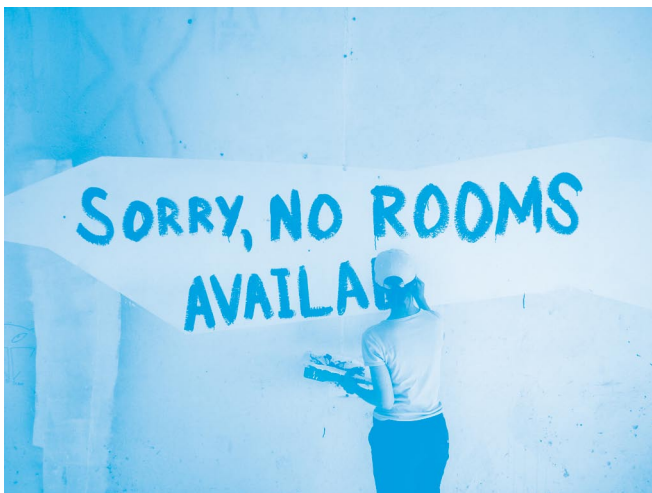
**David Riff studied cultural anthropology at SUNY New Paltz, New York and Slavonic studies and art history at the Ruhr University Bochum. In the early 2000s, he wrote two monographs on the non-conformist Soviet artists of the 1960s, Vadim Sidur and Vladimir Yankilevsky. He has been living in Moscow since 2002, where he has been translating and writing art criticism and theory, contributing to Flash Art, springerin, Moscow Art Magazine, documenta 12 magazine (issues 2 and 3), as well as Rethinking Marxism. A member of the workgroup 'Chto delat' and co-editor of its newspaper since 2003, Riff also participated in the 52nd Venice Biennale in collaboration with Dmitry Gutov on a project called the Karl Marx School of the English Language. He is currently contributing editor of the Russian Internet culture portal [openspace.ru](http://openspace.ru)**

# INHABITATION

Eyal Weizman: To inhabit a subject, or have research embodied in yourself is to be part of the particular constellation of forces in the area of your research. Research is thus written from within. You have various entry points into describing a particular reality. One's practice is producing the information that you are writing on. Research is not prior to practice. You are living it, part of it; the subject is embodied in you. The body is very important in this, where you are, where you have chosen to position yourself.

Alessandro Petti: A platform where people are involved and have their own space. It is a form of inhabitation inside the project. Without this it would be difficult for me to live here. I am not passive; I feel that I can do something. I can work on two levels: My personal life and what I can research and theorize.

Sandi Hilal: Inhabiting the research is a kind of resistance. I participated in the First Intifada and my thinking about resistance was in that direction. Now my resistance is different, it makes no sense to stay here without resistance. By inhabiting the project this way, it is a cultural resistance.



# **Blank.**

## **Visualizing Nuclear Catastrophes**

**Daniel Bürkner**

The disaster of the Fukushima power plant is marked by abstract vagueness. Even now, people throughout Japan cannot clearly define whether the nuclear threat, which can only be registered by measuring devices and internationally differing limit values, is a latent or acute one. The issue is also fundamentally pictorial. Even a few months after the initial accident, an iconic image of the catastrophe was not yet been established. In accordance with the substantial epistemic role of images in visual culture and information society, this lack of visualization goes along with a lack of perception.

It can be argued that denying pictorial representation belongs to the cultural constants of nuclear catastrophes. Due to the invisibility of radioactivity for the human senses, many techniques of visualization have been established ever since the first nuclear threats, especially in photography. However, radiation, the core of nuclear catastrophe, remains unregistered in visual culture and therefore in the collective understanding of the event.

The issue of invisibility is clearly reflected in the development of international media coverage of the Fukushima disaster. In the case of Western Europe, the news bore a nightmarish resemblance to the traumatic Chernobyl accident in 1986. Gradually, however, the media attention faded.

This development can only partly be explained with the general short span of media-based attention for international catastrophes. After all, the events of Fukushima differ fundamentally from other disasters in terms of time. The accident of Fukushima may have had a beginning, but it lacks any sense of an ending. The radioactive contamination has turned out to be permanent, as opposed to the representation of the event in the media. The decrease of media attention can thus be seen as a symptom of a larger, basic pictorial problem: the invisibility of radioactive contamination. With no possibility to produce images of the on-going contamination, mass media withdrew according to their focus on visual sensation.



There has been a vast number of images that reflected the dramatic tsunami in the run-up to the nuclear accident; however, no images have contributed to a meaningful understanding of the invisible and permanent threat of radioactive contamination.

Of course, there have been attempts to confront this lack of visualization of nuclear contamination. The rolling news coverage of the first days following the disaster consisted mainly of a live stream depicting a motionless reactor hall, leaving the spectator gazing at its fine example of 1970s Japanese exterior wall design.

To counteract this visual monotony, graphic images of the hydrogen explosion that tore away the roof of reactor 3 on March 14 2011 were thus repeated extensively. The media embraced the cloud indicating the explosion for its putative iconic effect: It might have borne an iconographic resemblance to the atomic mushroom clouds that rose above Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It might have reminded the viewer of the enigmatic role of the Chernobyl cloud that represented the invisible international contamination in the news and literary afterimages.

However, it seems like the Fukushima cloud remained merely a visual effect, never attaining an iconographic status. It merely expressed a small symptom of the catastrophe's course and failed to represent a larger idea of permanent radioactive contamination.

In early June 2011, three months after the accident, this lack of visual referents came to an absurd eruption. A YouTube video of uncertain provenance gained wide attention for showing a hare without ears, reputedly born in the Fukushima region in May. If this video was authentic, even serious newspapers speculated, there would finally be a visual symbol of the nuclear catastrophe, probably bearing in mind the horrid images of deformed children and animals that were born in the Chernobyl region in the late 1980s. However, the pitiable animal could not live up to these expectations.

This visual lack of radiation itself is not solely an issue of Fukushima. It is a phenomenon that occurs with every nuclear catastrophe perceived by mass media, be it the accidents of Three Mile Island, Sellafield or - predominantly - the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Chernobyl accident.<sup>1</sup>

The radiation effects of the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki can be considered intentional nuclear catastrophes. They brought an invisible threat coming after the visible effects of the atomic blast that pulverized and burned kilometres of city grounds, represented in the icon of the mushroom cloud. There was invisible contamination, causing people's deaths from radiation sickness a few days after they were exposed to the atomic flash, or even after they entered the city grounds the day following the explosion. It is an invisible threat that continued in the physical suffering and social stigmatization of the Hibakusha, the affected survivors of the atomic bombs.

There have been many artistic attempts to articulate this issue, working iconographically with the ambiguous implications of the mushroom cloud like Andy Warhol or Robert Longo, but also the mimetic representation of topography, relics, and the human body, which can be traced in the works of Shomei Tomatsu, Kikuji Kawada or, to name more recent positions, Guillaume Herbaut and Miwa Yanagi.

Furthermore, there have been strategies that sought to articulate the implications of radiation not only by the means of iconography but also by the means of the media. These strategies attempted to represent nuclear catastrophe especially through the analogies between invisible radioactive radiation and the medium of photography. Robert Rauschenberg and Susan Weil, as well as Yves Klein, tried to express the force of radiation by adapting its effects into the artistic media. Artists like Jim Sanborn have used radioactive material to cause photographic effects and therefore visualize the initial invisibility of radiation.

In the course of these attempts, a use of photography was established that resembled its early functions in the late 19th century. The same medium that had conveyed x-rays to the human eye that had led spiritualists to new theories about displaying paranormal sensations, now supposedly served as means to visualize the atomic age.

In the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, similar attempts can be observed. Photography of the catastrophe utilized certain visual elements to indicate the invisible menace, be it the destroyed power plant, dosimeters, or the trefoil symbol.

Also in this case, visual techniques operated not only with iconography but as well with the material medium of photography. Ukrainian photo-

grapher Igor Kostin took the only photograph that documents the site on the day of the accident. It shows not only the damaged reactor hall with its roof torn off, but also a grainy quality of the medium itself. Radiation, Kostin proposed, supposedly photographed itself by causing damage to the photographic material.

The photographic failure thus was added to the iconography of attempts to visualize nuclear catastrophes, and was perceived in art and popular culture. These recursions range from artistic attempts like Alice Micelli's struggle to depict the radiation of the contamination zone with a pinhole camera that only reacts to radioactive rays to graphic effects in popular computer games like *S.T.A.L.K.E.R. – Shadow of Chernobyl*.

Thus, the media of photography itself, its alteration and even destruction, added to the forms of representing nuclear catastrophes. This iconography of nuclear catastrophes, however, represents for the greater part an iconography of attempting, and very often failing, to establish profound representation. The positions of art that most strikingly refer to nuclear threats are particularly those that represent the monstrous blank that radiation is leaving in our attempts to understand it.

Canadian photographer Robert Polidori, for example, visited the restricted areas of Chernobyl, like countless other professional photographers and tourists. Yet his clean, sober images of the topography in its plain static existence convey different dimensions of radiation most dominantly through its visual absence.

A similar understanding can be found in the warm nostalgia of Andrej Krementschouk's photographic journeys to the restricted zone of Chernobyl and its humble elementariness of daily life. Paradoxically, it is the explicit rural romanticism of Krementschouk's images that evoke an abysmal consciousness of the invisible aspect of life in the affected areas, a present blank that transcends the senses and the images that attempt depiction.

The issue of visual absence of radioactive contamination, it seems, can be confronted by establishing the explicit blank as an icon of nuclear catastrophe. It represents both the visual transgression of the events as well as the general cultural questionability of exploiting atomic energy. It is a causal blank of consumption culture to harness an energy

form that transgresses the human scale of energy, time, and causality.

The artistic afterimages of Fukushima have yet to arise. Focusing on the gap that nuclear energy leaves both in terms of visibility, as well as in terms of perception, could turn out to be a paradoxical but sincere way of depicting the core of the catastrophe, which is not only of physical but also of social and cultural nature. One can hope that the future attempts of artists to work with Fukushima's visual absences and cultural blanks will seek to depict a socio-cultural issue instead of a mythical ghost.

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1 - Significantly, one of the most severe accidents in the history of the atomic age, the Mayak power plant accident near Chelyabinsk in 1957, was at no time part of these visual discourses, since it had not been revealed to the public until 1989.

**Art Historian and Cultural Anthropologist Daniel Bürkner is writing his doctoral thesis in Art History at the Humboldt University, Berlin on the topic of atomic catastrophes in photography. He has worked and publicized on aspects of public art, cultural trauma and cultures of remembrance, and is now holding a scholarship from the German National Academic Foundation. He is active both as a composer and as the Founder and Curator of the Frameworks Festival in Munich.**

# NARRATION

A crucial issue in this project is land ownership. The buildings of the colony of P'sagot, much like in many such other colonies, are built upon land that either belonged to Palestinian families, i.e. private lands, or on public land that was used by Palestinians for recreation purposes or for the development of their public needs, i.e. public lands. There are various types of 'private' and 'public' lands but we would not expand on this issue at present. It depends on the deactivation of the Israeli land regime and the reinstatement of lands to their owners. Tracing the land ownership in and around the settlement has led to a challenging and unexpected part of the project – finding those families and individuals who own land on which part of the settlement is now located. Our investigation, still in process, traced some of the Palestinian landowners in the US, Australia, Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, Iraq and of course in Palestine closer at hand. Their private and family histories are the intertwined histories of Palestine and of its displaced communities, forced out by the occupation and by economic and professional opportunities overseas. Our project thus seeks to re-discover the history of the land silenced by the massive development of the colony, allowing the fragments of land to 'tell their story'. In this section of the project – the fate of the settlement to be decolonized – stands as the narrative device for a multiplicity of private histories. We engaged as well in interviews with the Jewish residents of the settlement, many of whom arrived from the US to settle the occupied territories.

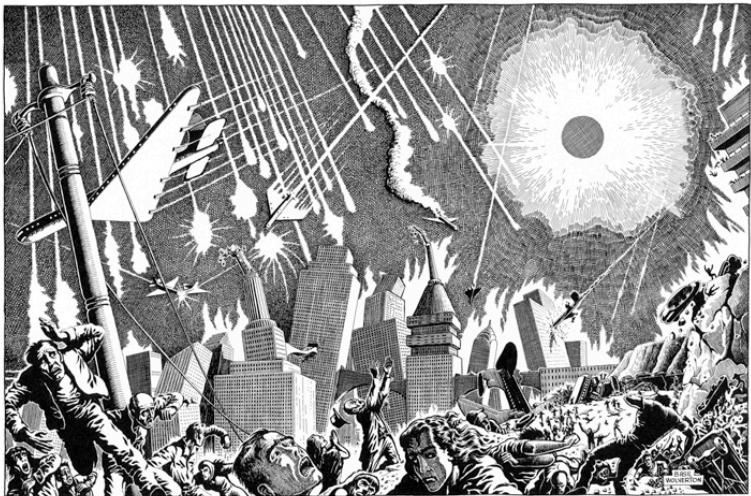
In this growing archive of filmed interviews/testimonies, Jabal Tawil / P'sagot will be presented as the gravitational centre of various orbits, near and far, of displaced communities and individuals; migrations and family connections. The filmed archive of these interviews would create thus a microcosm of the conflict between Jews and Arabs and the intermeshed and reciprocal extra-territoriality of their diasporas that both fed the conflict and that was created by it.

# The Signs Indicate Stormy Weather Tonight... A Visual Essay around depicted catastrophes in comics

Jens Meinrenken

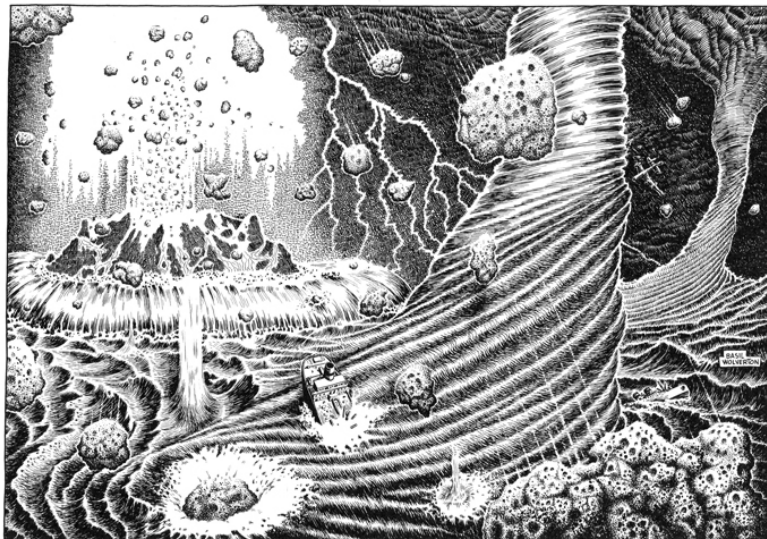


1. The visionary power of the human imagination has been digging its teeth into catastrophe for a long time.



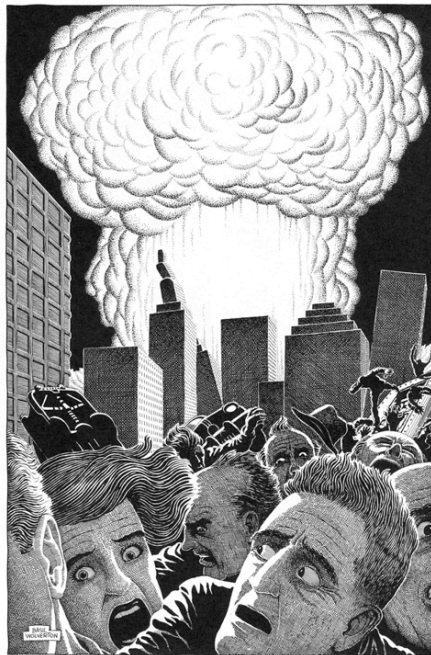
2. Real and phantasmagorical images compliment each other to envisage an event whose natural power directly affects the observer.





3. Crashing planes, shattered skyscrapers and humans mutated into hollow-eyed zombies are modern motives of horror for a popular illustration of the apocalypse.





4. The beginning and the end of this development is the human being. The images consolidate and prophesize a reality that is actively shaped by mankind itself. The catastrophes that are being imagined are therefore no longer limited to natural disasters such as tsunamis, tornadoes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The demon of technology sits enthroned above them; the atomic bomb as a symbol of an anti-human and global society.

Image source: the illustrations are by American comic-strip artist Basil Wolverton (1909-1978). The Wolverton Bible was reissued in 2009 by the publishing house Fantagraphics, and originally commissioned by the Radio Church of God in the period from 1953 to 1974.

**Jens Meinrenken is an art historian living in Berlin. He has written various articles on comics, computer games, film and animation. Currently he is working on his dissertation on the relation between comics, storyboard and cinema.**



## *Theses on the Philosophy of History*

### I

The story is told of an automaton constructed in such a way that it could play a winning game of chess, answering each move of an opponent with a countermove. A puppet in Turkish attire and with a hookah in its mouth sat before a chessboard placed on a large table. A system of mirrors created the illusion that this table was transparent from all sides. Actually, a little hunchback who was an expert chess player sat inside and guided the puppet's hand by means of strings. One can imagine a philosophical counterpart to this device. The puppet called "historical materialism" is to win all the time. It can easily be a match for anyone if it enlists the services of theology, which today, as we know, is wizened and has to keep out of sight.

### II

"One of the most remarkable characteristics of human nature," writes Lotze, "is, alongside so much selfishness in specific instances, the freedom from envy which the present displays toward the future." Reflection shows us that our image of happi-

### *Illuminations*

ness is thoroughly colored by the time to which the course of our own existence has assigned us. The kind of happiness that could arouse envy in us exists only in the air we have breathed, among people we could have talked to, women who could have given themselves to us. In other words, our image of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption. The same applies to our view of the past, which is the concern of history. The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply. Historical materialists are aware of that.

### III

A chronicler who recites events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accordance with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history. To be sure, only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past—which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments. Each moment it has lived becomes a *citation à l'ordre du jour*—and that day is Judgment Day.

### IV

*Seek for food and clothing first, then  
the Kingdom of God shall be added unto you.*

—Hegel, 1807

The class struggle, which is always present to a historian influenced by Marx, is a fight for the crude and material things without which no refined and spiritual things could exist. Nevertheless, it is not in the form of the spoils which fall to the victor that the latter make their presence felt in the class struggle. They

### *Theses on the Philosophy of History*

manifest themselves in this struggle as courage, humor, cunning, and fortitude. They have retroactive force and will constantly call in question every victory, past and present, of the rulers. As flowers turn toward the sun, by dint of a secret heliotropism the past strives to turn toward that sun which is rising in the sky of history. A historical materialist must be aware of this most inconspicuous of all transformations.

#### V

The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again. "The truth will not run away from us": in the historical outlook of historicism these words of Gottfried Keller mark the exact point where historical materialism cuts through historicism. For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably. (The good tidings which the historian of the past brings with throbbing heart may be lost in a void the very moment he opens his mouth.)

#### VI

To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was" (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it. The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer, he comes as the subduer of Antichrist. Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

VII

*Consider the darkness and the great cold  
In this vale which resounds with misery.*

—Brecht, THE THREEPENNY OPERA

To historians who wish to relive an era, Fustel de Coulanges recommends that they blot out everything they know about the later course of history. There is no better way of characterizing the method with which historical materialism has broken. It is a process of empathy whose origin is the indolence of the heart, *acedia*, which despairs of grasping and holding the genuine historical image as it flares up briefly. Among medieval theologians it was regarded as the root cause of sadness. Flaubert, who was familiar with it, wrote: "*Peu de gens devineront combien il a fallu être triste pour ressusciter Carthage.*" \* The nature of this sadness stands out more clearly if one asks with whom the adherents of historicism actually empathize. The answer is inevitable: with the victor. And all rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them. Hence, empathy with the victor invariably benefits the rulers. Historical materialists know what that means. Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he surveys have an origin which he cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another. A historical materialist therefore dissoci-

\* "Few will be able to guess how sad one had to be in order to resuscitate Carthage."

ates himself from it as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain.

VIII

The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight. Then we shall clearly realize that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency, and this will improve our position in the struggle against Fascism. One reason why Fascism has a chance is that in the name of progress its opponents treat it as a historical norm. The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are "still" possible in the twentieth century is *not* philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge—unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable.

IX

*Mein Flügel ist zum Schwung bereit,  
ich kehrte gern zurück,  
denn blieb ich auch lebendige Zeit,  
ich hätte wenig Glück.*

—Gerhard Scholem, "Gruss vom Angelus" \*

A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has

\* *My wing is ready for flight,  
I would like to turn back.  
If I stayed timeless time,  
I would have little luck.*

### *Illuminations*

got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

#### X

The themes which monastic discipline assigned to friars for meditation were designed to turn them away from the world and its affairs. The thoughts which we are developing here originate from similar considerations. At a moment when the politicians in whom the opponents of Fascism had placed their hopes are prostrate and confirm their defeat by betraying their own cause, these observations are intended to disentangle the political worldlings from the snares in which the traitors have entrapped them. Our consideration proceeds from the insight that the politicians' stubborn faith in progress, their confidence in their "mass basis," and, finally, their servile integration in an uncontrollable apparatus have been three aspects of the same thing. It seeks to convey an idea of the high price our accustomed thinking will have to pay for a conception of history that avoids any complicity with the thinking to which these politicians continue to adhere.

#### XI

The conformism which has been part and parcel of Social Democracy from the beginning attaches not only to its political tactics but to its economic views as well. It is one reason for its later breakdown. Nothing has corrupted the German working class so much as the notion that it was moving with the current. It regarded technological developments as the fall of the stream with which it thought it was moving. From there it was but a step to the illusion that the factory work which was supposed to tend toward technological progress constituted a political achievement. The old Protestant ethics of work was resurrected among



German workers in secularized form. The Gotha Program \* already bears traces of this confusion, defining labor as "the source of all wealth and all culture." Smelling a rat, Marx countered that "... the man who possesses no other property than his labor power" must of necessity become "the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners. . . ." However, the confusion spread, and soon thereafter Josef Dietzgen proclaimed: "The savior of modern times is called work. The . . . improvement . . . of labor constitutes the wealth which is now able to accomplish what no redeemer has ever been able to do." This vulgar-Marxist conception of the nature of labor bypasses the question of how its products might benefit the workers while still not being at their disposal. It recognizes only the progress in the mastery of nature, not the retrogression of society; it already displays the technocratic features later encountered in Fascism. Among these is a conception of nature which differs ominously from the one in the Socialist utopias before the 1848 revolution. The new conception of labor amounts to the exploitation of nature, which with naïve complacency is contrasted with the exploitation of the proletariat. Compared with this positivistic conception, Fourier's fantasies, which have so often been ridiculed, prove to be surprisingly sound. According to Fourier, as a result of efficient co-operative labor, four moons would illuminate the earthly night, the ice would recede from the poles, sea water would no longer taste salty, and beasts of prey would do man's bidding. All this illustrates a kind of labor which, far from exploiting nature, is capable of delivering her of the creations which lie dormant in her womb as potentials. Nature, which, as Dietzgen puts it, "exists gratis," is a complement to the corrupted conception of labor.

\* The Gotha Congress of 1875 united the two German Socialist parties, one led by Ferdinand Lassalle, the other by Karl Marx and Wilhelm Liebknecht. The program, drafted by Liebknecht and Lassalle, was severely attacked by Marx in London. See his "Critique of the Gotha Program."

XII

*We need history, but not the way a spoiled loafer  
in the garden of knowledge needs it.*

—Nietzsche, OF THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY

Not man or men but the struggling, oppressed class itself is the depository of historical knowledge. In Marx it appears as the last enslaved class, as the avenger that completes the task of liberation in the name of generations of the downtrodden. This conviction, which had a brief resurgence in the Spartacist group,\* has always been objectionable to Social Democrats. Within three decades they managed virtually to erase the name of Blanqui, though it had been the rallying sound that had reverberated through the preceding century. Social Democracy thought fit to assign to the working class the role of the redeemer of future generations, in this way cutting the sinews of its greatest strength. This training made the working class forget both its hatred and its spirit of sacrifice, for both are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren.

XIII

*Every day our cause becomes clearer and people get smarter.*

—Wilhelm Dietzen, DIE RELIGION DER SOZIALDEMOKRATIE

Social Democratic theory, and even more its practice, have been formed by a conception of progress which did not adhere to reality but made dogmatic claims. Progress as pictured in the minds of Social Democrats was, first of all, the progress of mankind itself (and not just advances in men's ability and knowledge). Secondly, it was something boundless, in keeping with the infinite perfectibility of mankind. Thirdly, progress was regarded as irresistible, something that automatically pursued a straight or spiral course. Each of these predicates is controversial and open

\* Leftist group, founded by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg at the beginning of World War I in opposition to the pro-war policies of the German Socialist party, later absorbed by the Communist party.

### *Theses on the Philosophy of History*

to criticism. However, when the chips are down, criticism must penetrate beyond these predicates and focus on something that they have in common. The concept of the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogeneous, empty time. A critique of the concept of such a progression must be the basis of any criticism of the concept of progress itself.

#### X I V

*Origin is the goal.*

—Karl Kraus, *WORTE IN VERSEN*, Vol. I

History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*].\* Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of the now which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome reincarnate. It evoked ancient Rome the way fashion evokes costumes of the past. Fashion has a flair for the topical, no matter where it stirs in the thickets of long ago; it is a tiger's leap into the past. This jump, however, takes place in an arena where the ruling class gives the commands. The same leap in the open air of history is the dialectical one, which is how Marx understood the revolution.

#### X V

The awareness that they are about to make the continuum of history explode is characteristic of the revolutionary classes at the moment of their action. The great revolution introduced a new calendar. The initial day of a calendar serves as a historical time-lapse camera. And, basically, it is the same day that keeps recurring in the guise of holidays, which are days of remembrance. Thus the calendars do not measure time as clocks do; they are

\* Benjamin says "*Jetztzeit*" and indicates by the quotation marks that he does not simply mean an equivalent to *Gegenwart*, that is, present. He clearly is thinking of the mystical *nunc stans*.

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monuments of a historical consciousness of which not the slightest trace has been apparent in Europe in the past hundred years. In the July revolution an incident occurred which showed this consciousness still alive. On the first evening of fighting it turned out that the clocks in towers were being fired on simultaneously and independently from several places in Paris. An eye-witness, who may have owed his insight to the rhyme, wrote as follows:

Qui le croirait! on dit, qu'irrités contre l'heure  
De nouveaux Josués au pied de chaque tour,  
Tiraient sur les cadrans pour arrêter le jour.\*

### XVI

A historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to a stop. For this notion defines the present in which he himself is writing history. Historicism gives the "eternal" image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past. The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called "Once upon a time" in historicism's bordello. He remains in control of his powers, man enough to blast open the continuum of history.

### XVII

Historicism rightly culminates in universal history. Materialistic historiography differs from it as to method more clearly than from any other kind. Universal history has no theoretical armature. Its method is additive; it musters a mass of data to fill the homogeneous, empty time. Materialistic historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystal-

\* Who would have believed it! we are told that new Joshuas at the foot of every tower, as though irritated with time itself, fired at the dials in order to stop the day.

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lizes into a monad. A historical materialist approaches a historical subject only where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a Messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history—blasting a specific life out of the era or a specific work out of the lifework. As a result of this method the lifework is preserved in this work and at the same time canceled\*; in the lifework, the era; and in the era, the entire course of history. The nourishing fruit of the historically understood contains time as a precious but tasteless seed.

### XVIII

"In relation to the history of organic life on earth," writes a modern biologist, "the paltry fifty millennia of *homo sapiens* constitute something like two seconds at the close of a twenty-four-hour day. On this scale, the history of civilized mankind would fill one-fifth of the last second of the last hour." The present, which, as a model of Messianic time, comprises the entire history of mankind in an enormous abridgment, coincides exactly with the stature which the history of mankind has in the universe.

### A

Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical. It became historical posthumously, as it were, through events that may be separated from it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one. Thus he establishes a conception of the present as the "time of the now" which is shot through with chips of Messianic time.

\* The Hegelian term *aufheben* in its threefold meaning: to preserve, to elevate, to cancel.

## *Illuminations*

### B

The soothsayers who found out from time what it had in store certainly did not experience time as either homogeneous or empty. Anyone who keeps this in mind will perhaps get an idea of how past times were experienced in remembrance—namely, in just the same way. We know that the Jews were prohibited from investigating the future. The Torah and the prayers instruct them in remembrance, however. This stripped the future of its magic, to which all those succumb who turn to the soothsayers for enlightenment. This does not imply, however, that for the Jews the future turned into homogeneous, empty time. For every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter.

Benjamin's *Theses on Philosophy of History* was first published in a mimeographed booklet entitled *Walter Benjamin zum Gedächtnis* (In memory of Walter Benjamin). Republished by Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt a. M. (1955). In 1947, a French translation by Pierre Missac appeared in the journal *Les Temps Modernes*. The present English translation by Harry Zohn is included in the collection of essays *Walter Benjamin, Illuminations*. Edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (1968), Published in the U.S. by Schocken Books Inc.

# SCENARIOS

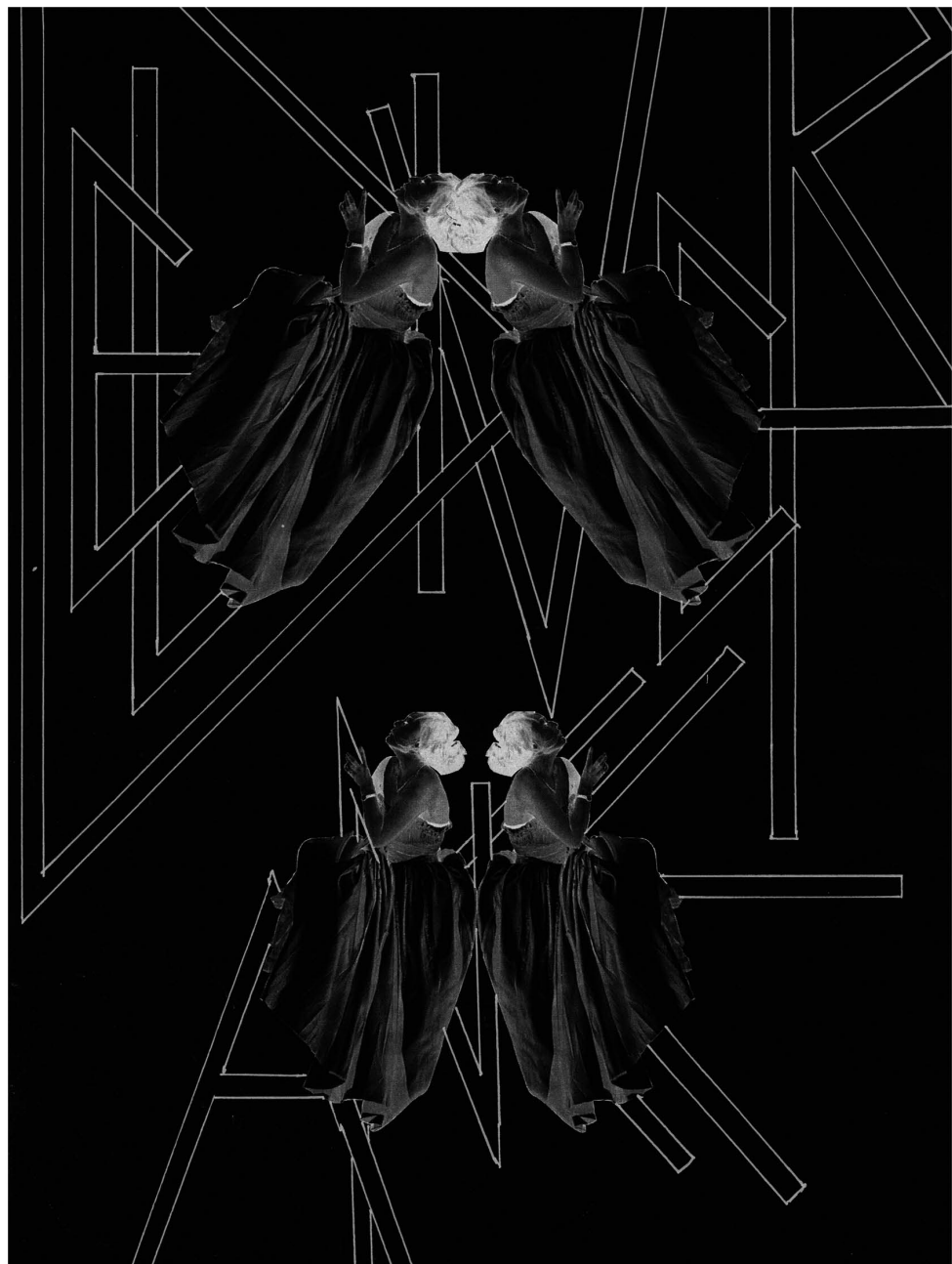
The project is organized around a series of weekly meetings with representative of various organizations and individuals. Amongst these guests are stake holders in this transformations – members of a variety of NGOs, private organizations, public institutions, refugee associations, culture and art institutions, private landowners, architects, planners, writers, journalists, academics etc. The idea is to set up an ‘architectural playground’ of negotiations, an arena of speculation, in which different actors could simulate and evaluate a set of scenarios for possible transformation. These meetings are video-recorded.

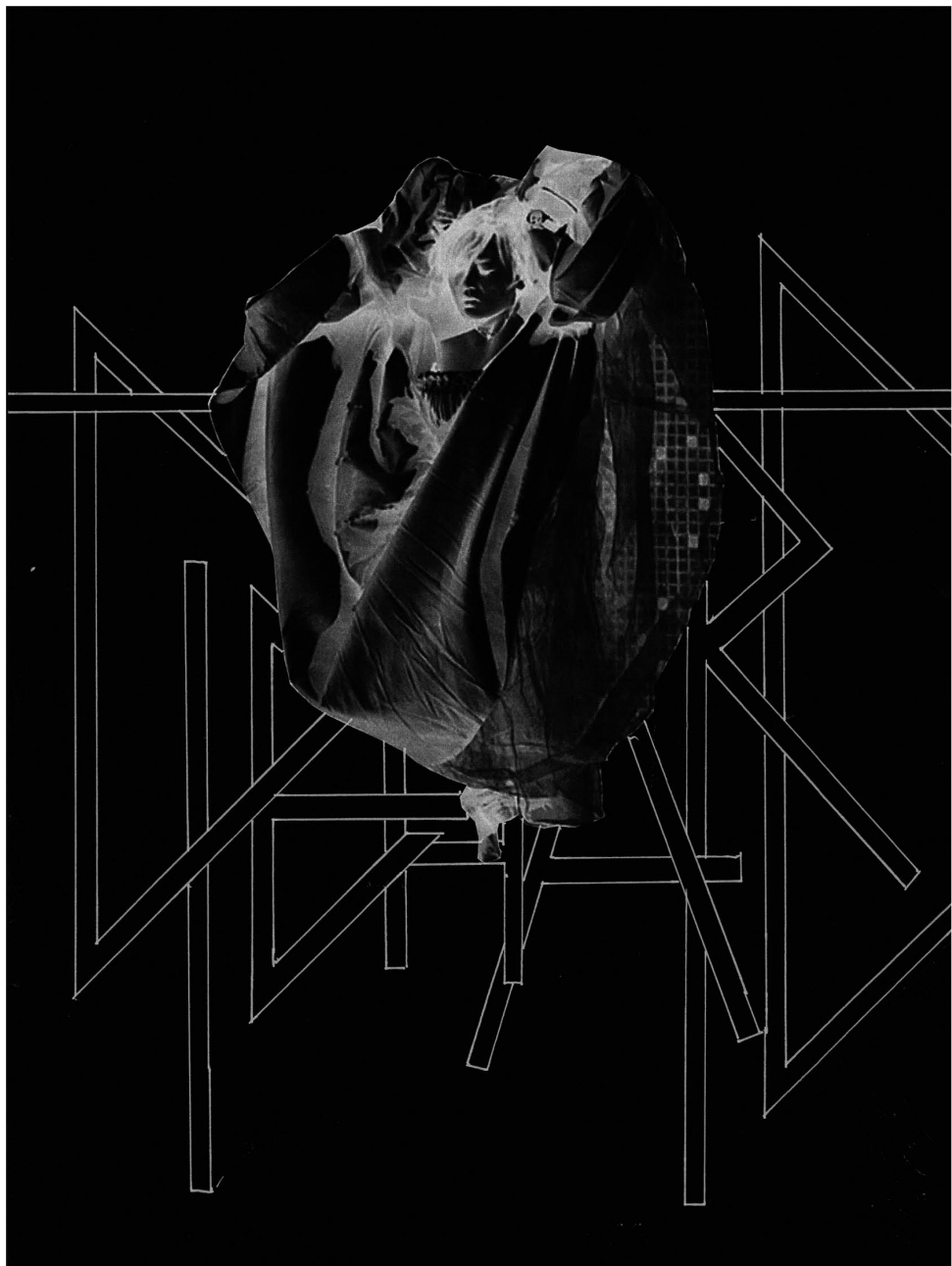
# **Die Hard / Falling Down / Deliverance**

**Bo Christian Larsson**

Bo Christian Larsson is a Swedish artist based in Berlin. His performances are often linked to installations and objects and deal with alter ego characters. He studied at AKI, Academy of Visual Arts, Enschede and has upcoming solo exhibitions at Kunstverein Braunschweig; Gallery Bo Bjerggaard, Copenhagen and Kalmar Konstmuseum, Kalmar. His work has been exhibited in group shows at the Hayward Gallery, London; Virserums Konsthall, Virserum and at Lenbachhaus Kunstbau, Munich. The following series and the postcard was conceived for this issue of ...ment







# STATELESSNESS

Sandi Hilal: Stateless and NGO, for me are two terms that are connected. The Palestinians are under a kind of stateless regime. Before the First Intifada (1987-1993) we were totally dependent on Israel. Our civil society was not strong, we were even considered by the others in the Palestinian scene to be the sleeping people in the West Bank. And then suddenly the First Intifada came and we started acting collectively for justice. This was the beginning of building a very strong civil society in Palestine. It is still a crucial period in our lives. I studied for three years in informal schools because the schools were closed. So the Palestinian society organized themselves and created these schools, illegal informal schools, in their garages. This permitted us to go to school, even under curfew. We managed to plant and share gardens in any empty lands around our homes. Here we began to form a strong civil society. Then the Palestinian Authority came in and there was a clash between leaders. How was the Palestinian Authority supposed to take control over people that had governed themselves for many years during the First Intifada? The only way to continue and strengthen this kind of civil society and allow for the Palestinian Authority was through the NGO structure. This is why the West Bank is called the NGO Society. NGOs cover many parts of the Palestinian society that the Authority cannot cover. They work parallel to each other.

The leaders in the West Bank found themselves more suitable to be the directors of NGOs than to be politicians in the Authority. That is why you have Mustafa Barghouti leading a health network. You will find all the Popular Front leaders in a position of leading NGOs.

I don't want to criticize the Palestinian Authority because they don't even have the possibility to act as a government. They are not a state and they find themselves in a situation where they have to govern without the instruments of a nation or state. The NGOs are leading the social society in all sectors; they are doing the work on the ground. If we want to work on a scenario where the people are active in Decolonizing Architecture, the NGOs are the best entrance to the Palestinian people.

# **Anna: A Love Story For Puppets**

**Heather & Ivan Morison**

Heather and Ivan Morison work collaboratively and make art as an active engagement with materials, histories, sites and processes. They have produced sculpture, photographs, installations, buildings, and site-specific projects internationally, including the establishment of an arboretum in a remote village in Wales. Recently they have received acclaim for their architectural structures that relate to ideas of escape, shelter and refuge, the transformation of the modern city, weight and levity, solidity and transparency; the construction of which are often part of a broad community effort.

Puppet show based Upon the novel *Ice* and the life of the book's author Anna Kavan.

First performed at Eastside Projects, Birmingham on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The voiceover artists were Dermot Keaney as The Warden, Victoria Lewis as the Girl, and Rain Peak Morison as the Child. The puppeteers were Owen Davies as the Girl and Ivan Morison as the Warden.

## ANNA

*A concrete stage, a vase of flowers, a cracked jug of water with two glasses beside it, a cage with a red cloth placed over it, a rock, and a candle (unlit).*

### ACT 1 (introduction)

*ANNA moves slowly around the stage from one item to another.*

WARDEN: This is the Girl. Albino white skin with hair of spun glass. She represents the purest of ideas. *[ANNA stops in front of the flowers.]* But she is a woman now, lost and remade.

ANNA: *[Turning to address the audience directly.]* This is the Warden, burnt black. *[THE WARDEN, standing at the back of the stage, motions to audience.]* He has come to take me back.

WARDEN: This is a love story, and we are the lovers.

ANNA: Our love is like a jug of pure water.

WARDEN: The fate of our love is the subject of the story.

ANNA: The jug is old now, cracked and remade.

WARDEN: Our story is an allegory for the fate of the place in which it is now being told.

ANNA: Our story began when the world was a beautiful late summer's afternoon, before the troubles, before loss, before the ice began to spread. Sunlight through birch, dry moss under foot, large flat pebbles next to dark waters. I was young. He was already old. He was a collector of things, of ideas.

WARDEN: She was the purest of things. An idea so perfect, held within a fragile translucent skin.

ANNA: Startling blue eyes looking down at me, holding me suspended. I was pulled into his orbit, too much for a young girl to escape.

WARDEN: I knew I had to shield her fragile gift from the world as soon as I saw lying there by the shore. That was before I was burnt black, before I was the Warden.

ANNA: The Warden represents the history of the place in which this story is being told, the collected actions and thoughts acted out upon it.

CHILD: I represent this place in which you are now, my fate is the object of the allegory. I am also a child that never got the chance to become a woman. The story of The Girl and The Warden is also my story.

ANNA: The story starts with me alone. The Warden has not yet come to take me back.

## ACT 2 (present)

WARDEN: The story starts with the Girl alone, she is alone in the present. The Girl is the daughter of cold and wealthy parents. Her remote, selfish and glamorous mother is represented by a vase of aching beautiful flowers at the moment before their petals fall. Her sadistic mother has left her in a state of perpetual terror.

The same vase of flowers also represents the physical manifestation of an idea.

THE GIRL *pours water from the jug into a glass*

WARDEN: The jug of pure water that stands for our love also represents the man who collects ideas in the place this story is being performed.

CHILD: There is a rock next to the jug. It has been split in two and put back together again.

WARDEN: There is also a candle that the Girl, who introduces herself as Anna Kavan, will light before I arrive to take her back.

CHILD: She will not leave with him. She will pour him water from the jug into a second glass.

ANNA: My name is Anna Kavan.

WARDEN: The world Anna exists in is a catastrophic place. She has fled through cold black forests, to escape the dark soundless room, to escape a secret organization and to escape me.

ANNA: This candle is like a man who conceives of things in the place where the story is told.

WARDEN: Beyond the black forest, in a room beside a dark frozen ocean, Anna waits. She uses the objects around her to read her past.

CHILD: This is the same world as the place in which the story is being performed, only at some future time.

I knew the Girl before she was Anna. That's when our story began.

### ACT 3 (far in the past)

ANNA: [*She has assumed a pose with her hands up above her head, her body trembles very slightly.*] Can we stop now?

CHILD: One day I came into a room to find her standing in the centre, naked, her fragile arms held high above her head, her body pulled long and thin. He stood in the corner watching her. I saw her wrists and ankles were tied with cord, pulling and holding her into that unnatural pose. Ice formed on the windows, a gale blew snow in between the gaps and broken panes. He wore a great woven coat with glistening fur collar, but no heater was provided for her shaking fragile body.

WARDEN: What is it that you want? [*No answer*]

WARDEN: I can't live in this silence. I can't sit here in silence for hours, just because you choose not to open your mouth. [*More silence*]

WARDEN: What is wrong with you these days? Why can't you behave like a normal person? I might as well be in solitary confinement; I might as well be out there.

ANNA: Can we stop? May I rest?

WARDEN: [*Who is intently looking at her from the back corner of the*

stage.] Rest?

ANNA: Stop this.

WARDEN: Stop? [*He walks over and very begrudgingly and unties her hands and feet.*] You may dress.

ANNA, *her body collapses onto the ground, she staggers up, rubbing her wrists.*

CHILD: The cord had left deep angry lines around her wrists and ankles. Still he watched her, not moving, as she tried to pull clothes around her with dead limbs.

ANNA: Always, your eyes upon my eyes. I won't give you what you want.

WARDEN: [*Turning away from the Girl sharply, but talking to her.*] You're shaking. This cold, it's not normal. There is trouble coming.

ANNA: The ice?

WARDEN: Yes, the ice. But something more.

ANNA: The child?

WARDEN: You'll be safe here.

The WARDEN *turns and leaves the stage.*

#### ACT 4 (back in the present)

ANNA: This jug has been broken many times but each time mended. Now it slowly leaks.

*There is a cage covered in a red felt blanket. Anna removes the blanket. In the cage is a myna bird.*

ANNA: [*To the bird in the cage.*] You forget things. You forget things. You have to. You forget things. You forget things. You have to. Du vergisst Dinge. Du vergisst Dinge. Du musst. You forget things.



WARDEN: The bird represents Anna's addiction. The ice laden world in which she lives, the terror of losing her mind. The unlit candle her lost daughter.

ANNA: Du vergisst Dinge. Du vergisst Dinge. Du musst. You forget things. You forget things. You have to.

WARDEN: The bird is a force at odds with the jug of pure water, the candle (when lit), and the vase of flowers.

ANNA: You forget things. You have to.

### ACT 5 (past)

CHILD: The GIRL, Helen, remade herself as a character from her own imagination. An idea once broken then remade, Anna Kavan. The man, no place left for him, went away and was remade as the Warden.

WARDEN: I travelled for many days, first through the mountains in the big powerful motor car my old position allowed for, then by foot when the roads became impassable down to the coast, after that switching from boat to boat through the freezing sea, small vessels carrying supplies up to the front. Always traveling against the tide of dispossessed, I said I was on official duties, a correspondent sent to make a report, to assess the situation for others far away.

The Girl had changed me, the glass-sharp perfection of her being cutting through everything else I had ever known, everything I had collected through my lifetime, leaving me lost, terrified and then angry for how foolish she made me feel. I manipulated the terror her mother had instilled in her, punishing her, trying to pollute her spirit. But finally the image of the Girl cowed in subjection before me was too much, and I knew I had mutated into something dreadful, that I had to leave her if she was to have any hope. I had become a different man, one of aggression and war, and I was drawn away toward the dark centre of the trouble we had both felt coming.

The launch barely slowing to allow me to jump from it into the shallows before making back out to sea to re-join the old frigate that had bought me this far. I waded ashore and across the wide black silt flats towards the outline of the city that was appearing along its edge now that a dull grey light was creeping across the sky. I found the city to be

a deserted ruin, but thin trailing paths through the carpet of ash suggested survivors. I took up a position and waited.

Indeed there were people living there, behind boarded up windows or hidden with food stashes deep in basements beneath the rubble. Through the subsequent days I made myself known to them and they to me. I found lodgings on the floor of a long since closed bar. I used the money I had to buy information and a harsh homebrewed spirit to keep me warm and my mind away from the Girl. A great-fortified tower loomed silently on a craggy rise above the city. I was lost for how to gain access or even a way to begin a dialogue with its occupiers. To the locals the tower may as well have not existed, no amount of money could elicit the slightest suggestion of what might go on in there. And although it rose high above them, visible from almost all parts, I never saw a single person look directly at it, all instead averting their gaze downward or outward away from its great walls: A black hole, a collective lie, at the centre of a city.

And then one night, as I lay semi-conscious on the bar floor, an empty bottle beside me, it began. A wall of noise fast approaching. Closer, single shouts, shots and screams definable. In the streets people fled past me, a naked woman cut across her breasts, other people who would soon be dead. I saw the glow of buildings burning in adjacent streets, the sound of large machines moving through them. I ran toward the tower, its silhouette illuminated by rockets bursting off its sides. I came closer and saw that the forces had amassed around the tower's base. I stood and watched from a small rise for many hours through that night as the enemy forces engaged in the towers destruction. And although rock fragments flew from its walls as their shells exploded against it, they never breached those walls. Then, just before dawn noise began to swell from the very centre of the tower, barely perceptible at first, gradually it built and rose to an unbearable pitch and intensity. The sound filled me forcefully, pushing out from inside me, pressing behind my eyeballs, expanding my chest until it felt like it was splitting down the centre and exploding through my skull. At the very edge of my consciousness, as I began to topple downward into a freshly blown crater, I felt the sound contract back into the heart of the tower, and almost instantly detonate out again in a single shock wave of devastating pure energy.

I awoke in a soundless room, a huge domed ceiling arching over me. I lay on a bed, on a platform directly beneath the domes centre. White sheets, a vase of flowers, a jug of water with a single glass, a candle lit beside me.

They brought me back inside the tower. They remade me more than mended me. I had been lost, saved and then remade. The flash of the energy wave had left me deaf and burnt black, but slowly my hearing returned and they introduced themselves. They remade me as The Warden. But that took time. Time to learn my way around the dark corridors, to distinguish soundless room from soundless room. Time to forget my old self and apply myself to what was asked of me. Time to learn how to remake others, time to become part of the organization. Time passed.

Then I heard that the battle was spreading back down the coast and over the mountains. That's when I thought for the first time again of the Girl, and what was approaching her.

#### ACT 6 (present)

CHILD: The WARDEN will want to take Anna back but Anna won't go. The WARDEN calls her Helen, her name before he left her, before her breakdown, before her loss, and before he had her brought to the tower.

*ANNA lights the candle. The WARDEN enters, as if for the first time upon the stage. Finding her finally after a long search.*

WARDEN: Helen.

ANNA doesn't move or acknowledge him.

WARDEN: Come with me.

*ANNA still doesn't move or acknowledge him.*

WARDEN: Helen, what do you want?

ANNA: [*Quietly to the bird*] You forget things. [*To the Warden*] You have to forget things.

WARDEN: Forget what, us?

ANNA: It was never love, only possession.

WARDEN: Helen, what do you want from me?

ANNA: I don't want anything from you, that's for sure.

WARDEN: Why don't you want anything?

ANNA: Because I don't think anything is going to help.

WARDEN: What do you mean by that?

ANNA: You see this rock? It has been broken and put back together again. This rock is like you, Warden. When I met you were whole, but one day something within you shifted and your old self was cleaved in two and what came out was abominable to me. You will forever bear that scar in my eyes.

CHILD: She thinks of the Warden as that rock, forever broken. She thinks of her mother as the vase of dying flowers, petals refusing to drop, and how her mother made her not to love but to suffer. She thinks of the burning candle as her dead daughter. She says she is like the caged bird unable to forget. She looks at the cracked and mended jug, now almost empty. She looks at the two glasses of water, but can make no sense of them. She thinks of the ice, and when it will arrive in this place. Beyond that she has nothing left to think with.

ANNA: Warden, I am like the bird, unable to forget.

WARDEN: I need you to forget, I want you to come with me.

*Pause.*

ANNA: They came so suddenly. It had been getting colder every day since you left us, but I hadn't expected them, not then. They tied me and raped me and cut me and they left me for dead. I found the Child not far from the house lying face down by the edge of the frozen stream. Her neck was twisted at an angle no living person would hold themselves in. Blood ran from her lips not long before kissing me. Bruising spread fresh across the cheek I so recently stroked. Hair, this morning so lovingly brushed, remained twisted as if still in her attackers grasp. Her young strong arms fractured, forced back behind her. Splintered bone tearing pale flesh where she had been beaten. Blood still fresh soaking through her torn clothing, bright against the whiteness of the snow. I alone had the right to touch that blossom skin, to hold and crush her hands, to destroy that body of my body. I lent down and stroked her now cold skin; I pressed my lips to those now blue lips of hers, I kissed her huge dark eyes closed for the last

time. I lay down beside her, and pulled her to me; mother and daughter asleep in the snow.

Others came for me, and took me from her. They kept me alive against my wishes. There was a long journey, then a soundless room, so vast I couldn't see its edges, so dark I couldn't see my guard, on a huge cold bed, beside which they placed a shallow bowl, a jug of water and a bar of soap for washing myself with, along with a candle they never lit. I often sensed the presence of my guard, though no one ever spoke to me. Sometimes I would wake and know that I had been touched. When I thought that no one else was in the room I smashed the jug of water and tried to cut myself with it, but arms came out of the blackness and forced me down into the bed. When I awoke the jug had been mended and refilled.

Time passed.

Then I awoke, and for the first time since being in that place I saw a thin vertical line of light far off coming in through the wall of my room. I held my breath and listened hard for my hidden guard, for a trap that had been laid, but heard nothing. I bolted from the bed, across the room, through the open heavy door, and away down twisting long corridors, out across black silt plains, though cold sharp forests, and on until I came to this place besides a freezing sea.

I came here to understand what has happened, I have used the things I find to act out my past, but I have come to an end, I have nothing left to think with.

Pause, then THE WARDEN *takes a blue duck egg from his pocket and places it at the edge of table.*

WARDEN: I want you to think of this blue egg as our future.

ANNA: Now I have this I have a way to think of as my son.

WARDEN: Your son?

ANNA: Yes, a son who died in a war at the hands of a secret organisation. [ANNA *rolls it slowly to the edge of the table upon which it has been placed*] There is no way to think of our future.

THE WARDEN *takes a bar of worn white soap from his other pocket.*

WARDEN: I want you to have this. One more chance.

*Anna takes the soap and places it in one of the glasses of water. She stirs the water in the glass. The water turns white as the soap dissolves.*

ANNA: You see the soap has turned the water white. The soap is slowly diminishing in the water, disappearing before our eyes. I wish to be like the soap dissolving in a glass of water, no longer like the bird, unable to forget.

Now the bird represents a secret organization that killed my son in a war long ago, a war that recently killed my daughter, an organization that kept me locked up in a soundless room as the terrors of losing my mind slowly engulfed me.

WARDEN: No, this is not what matters, come back with me, back to that summer's afternoon.

*Anna moves the rock over towards the caged bird*

ANNA: Warden, I understand now that the rock and the bird are connected. I understand that you are connected to them. You were my jailer; you are the Warden of the tower. You sent for me to be brought to the tower after my child was killed, you planned my escape, and now they have sent you to bring me back.

WARDEN: All I wish for is a time before all this, before we changed. Anna places the rock that was split and put back together again into the other glass of water.

ANNA: The same water from the jug that can make the soap dissolve cannot make this rock split again nor can it mend the rock, and I will not leave with you.

WARDEN: And I shall not leave without you.

ANNA: You see this white soap? It represents the atrophy of desire and will.

WARDEN: And this balanced blue duck egg represents an imminent disaster in the place our story is being performed.

ANNA: I will not leave.

CHILD: Anna wills for the rock to split into two, the bird to forget her, the petals to tumble from their stems, the candle to keep on burning, the blue egg never to roll over the edge, the soap to dissolve and finally for the ice to come and take her away.

**Heather Peak (b.1973 Desborough) and Ivan Morison (b.1974 Istanbul) are based in Brighton and Arthog, North West Wales. Their work has been exhibited widely in the UK and abroad, including at Tate Britain, Barbican and the 52nd Venice Biennale where they represented Wales. Recent shows include Anna Swartz, Sydney; Or Gallery, Berlin; Artspeak, Vancouver; The Hepworth, Wakefield and Southbank Centre, London.**

# VISION

We believe that any act of decolonization must include interventions in the field of vision. The settlements are organized as optical devices on a suburban scale. Their pattern of streets as concentric rings around the hilltop, the placement of each house, the space between the houses and the organization of windows and rooms follow design principles that seek to maximize the power of vision with both ideological and strategic aims in mind. The pastoral view out of home windows reinforces a sense of national belonging when it reads traces of Palestinian daily lives – olive groves, stone terraces, and livestock – as signifiers of an ancient holy landscape. The view is also strategic in overseeing tactical roadways and surveying the Palestinian cities and refugee camps. The visual affect of the settlements on Palestinians is in generating a constant sense of being seen. From Palestinian cities one can hardly avoid seeing a settlement, and one is most often seen by one.

Because the organization of homes is directed toward the surrounding view, the main door into each settlement home is approached from the inner areas of the settlement. Entering the home one moves into the living areas and the main window, which opens onto the landscape. But what happens if the people that should now be arriving at these houses are those formerly ‘composing the view?’ What if the new user would now approach the house from the view? Our response is a small-scale intervention. We propose to change the direction of the front door to face, not to the inner areas of the settlement, but the Palestinian cities. Changing the direction, from which one enters the house, also alters the spatial syntax of its interior. This small-scale intervention is ‘cinematic’ in the sense that it is an intervention in the framing of the conditions of vision and in directing ways of seeing. It reorganizes the field of the visible, a perspective folded onto itself.

Eyal Weizman: The urban-suburban, layout of the settlement as an optical device designed for vision. This organizes the architecture of the house and of the colony. But, as well, as we saw today in the military base, it also organized the architecture of the military. Quite simply it is designed to oversee things. The act of de-colonization is an



intervention in the field of vision. If we see the colony structure as an optical device on an urban scale, the idea of vision must be subverted – turned on its head. For example, what is the settlement looking on? They are looking on the Palestinian towns and villages, obviously for control and supervision. But now this same vision could be charged with another contents. The idea of de-colonization as an intervention in the field of vision is not only about physical occupation. How do you own something through vision? How do you participate in the landscape through vision?

The settler's vision is ambivalent in relation to the landscape. There is a kind of contradiction when they speak about visibility. With their open kind of vision, everything is visible but cannot be accessed. This interplay is rather curious, because on the one hand, there is an admiration on the part of the settlers of the authenticity of the Palestinians; on the other hand, the desire to displace them. There is a kind of contradiction in their field of vision. I think about decolonization as not only change of use, but as intervention in the field of vision.

Sandi Hilal: When Eyal was speaking I was thinking about this road we call Wadi Nar Road, which means Road of the Fire. They call it this because it is a very difficult way that we have to go around the hills and the desert. At other times when we were able to go through Jerusalem to Ramallah, to go to Tel Aviv, we weren't using that part of the desert. It wasn't accessible; you went only to walk there. It was not part of our surroundings, our imagination. All these roads closed with Oslo at the beginning of the 1990s and we could not go to or through Jerusalem. So they opened this bypass road through the desert. The first time I drove on this road I had mixed feelings. On the one hand I was angry for having to travel on this road because of colonial decision, but at the same time, it is one of the most beautiful roads I had ever seen, and the desert has entered my geography again. The road goes through the hills. It brings us back to what is seen as the 'authentic' Palestinian landscape. And if I had to suggest the most 'typical' landscape of Palestine, I might have suggested this road.

EW: When we were today at the military base, or yesterday, at the top of the colony, you could see Palestine from these places, and I think this de-colonization of these sites would open new ways of seeing Palestine. What does it mean to take a vision of control and turn it into a vision of another nature, which is part of your own landscape? If

there is something in the settlement that we need to know how to use, it is that possibility to see, to see from there. By using topography in a different way we reopen the landscape.



The settlement P'sagot seen from Ramallah



Ramallah seen from P'sagot

Decolonizing Architecture is a project initiated by Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal and Eyal Weizman in 2007. Set up as a studio/residency program in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem and recently re-established as the Decolonizing Architecture/Art Residency (DAAR), they engage spatial research and theory, taking the conflict over Palestine as their main case study. Decolonizing Architecture seeks to use spatial practice as a form of political intervention and narration. Their practice continuously engages a complex set of architectural problems centred around one of the most difficult dilemmas of political practice: how to act both propositionally and critically within an environment in which the political force field, as complex as it may be, is so dramatically skewed.

# MANIFESTO WORLD

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## Gustav Metzger

everything everything everything everything

A world on edge of destruction. Objects become precious, matter becomes subject to feelings of reverence. This is an art form for artists. The mass of people appreciate Modern art 50 years after its practice. This art form will not be subject to this time lag since it is unlikely that in 50 years time there will be a world in which to practice it.

An art of extreme sensibility and consciousness.

We take art out of art galleries and museums.

The artist must destroy art galleries. Capitalist institutions. Boxes of deceit.

Events happening. Artist cannot compete with reality. The increasing quantity of events, happenings. Artist cannot integrate within himself all the experience of the present.

He cannot render it in painting and sculpture.

New realism. The most vital movement now. However inevitably its course now is one of increasing commercialisation.

Nature imitates art.

New realism was a necessary step toward the next development of art. The world in its totality as work of art. Including sound. Newspapers.

New realism shows the importance of one object or relationship between a number of objects. This obviously is the first step to a large ensemble, the total relationship of objects including the human figure. You stinking fucking cigar smoking bastards and you scented fashionable cows who deal in works of art.

There was a time where there were men and animals.

And men painted men and animals.

Then gods and kings came and men painted gods and kings.

Then men sat in carriages that moved over the earth and men painted carriages.

And now men fly to the stars. And men paint flying to the stars.

At this moment in London millions of men millions of objects millions of

machines

Millions of interactions each fraction of a second between men objects and machines.

Day and night inventors create new machines, objects that will be produced day and night.

The artist's entire visual field becomes the work of art.

It is question of a new artistic sensibility. The artist does not want his work to be in the possession of stinking people. He does not want to be indirectly polluted through his work being stared at by people he detests.

The appropriation by the artist of an object is in many ways a bourgeois activity.

An element of condescension, superiority to workman.

Profit motive – this is now worth xxx franc because I have chosen.

The artist acts in a political framework whether he knows it or not.

Whether he wants to or not.

The quantity of experience the artist has to pack into a work is so vast now, it is not possible to compress it all into the space of an object.

The acceptance, substitution of World is thus not an escape from production.

The Door by Robin Page is the catalyst of the new aesthetic.

7<sup>th</sup> October 1962

Gustav Metzger, "On Random Activity in Material/Transforming Works of Art" (30 July 1964), in Metzger at AA (London: Destruction/Creation, 1965). Manifesto World has previously published on 'Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1996)

**Gustav Metzger is a London-based artist, born in Nuremberg, Germany in 1926 to Polish-Jewish parents. He was evacuated to England with his brother as part of the Kindertransport in 1939. From 1945 to 1953, Metzger studied at various art schools in Cambridge, London, including David Bomberg's class at the Borough Polytechnic, Antwerp and Oxford. In 1959, he developed the concept of auto-destructive art, proposing works that could self-destruct, to reflect the similarly destructive nature of political and social systems. At the heart of his practice, which has spanned over sixty years, are a series of constantly opposing yet interdependent forces such as destruction and creation.**

# **Fallen Empire / Bond-fires / Fires of Desire**

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## **DOXA**

### Fallen Empire

As the fire continues to cling on the roofs of a fallen empire, the charred black smoke lingers. Desperate bodies wander to find scraps to savour and remnants to rescue. Their aged bones are physically unable to rebuild the mythical glory they once relished 40 years ago. The Kingdom has crumbled. It has been ten years since the impending hit - 9/11- the event that created the first crack in the monumental symbol of wealth, power and security, and where we see for the first time, fear and doubt seeping into the human imagination. It was an American dream, a fallen dream that was once everyone's dream that we are seeing beginning to shatter. But what is left?

In the dust and ashes of the decade to follow we observe sudden shifts in values and visions. We see the election of the first president of colour, an increasing awareness of global warming, a scaling back of industries, the rise of the global south, and in 2008, a major global economic meltdown. Ten years after the first meteorite in the shape of an airplane penetrated the psyche of the masses, what can we fathom of the world? Can we accept that dust is dust, and now, we must build anew?

The fires of the forest continue to burn as nature claims its rightful power over humanity; the remaining debris of many human civilizations that came before lie buried in the Earth.

### Bond-fires

What we see emerging from the ashes is a new consciousness and awareness of each other in the world and in nature. We witness a new generation burning with energy, one left to undo, remake and re-imagine a world that was destroyed by the misled visions of previous generations. We see an ecological turning and a movement towards traditional forms of pedagogy, craftsmanship and knowledge sharing that was lost in industrialization. But what continues to burn now are

the fires that bring us together.

Around the fire we gather, to keep warm, to provide mutual support for survival. We talk, we share stories, we dream of the past. A new system is emerging, one that connects us by Ethernet, that creates a model of the human mind, and where we search for a collective vision. But there are forces trying to control it. A gripping past of former demons that haunts us.

We believe and worship the spirit that brings us together, and celebrate the fires that burn within us.

### Fires of Desire

Fire is heat and burning. Fires spread. It lies dormant in hotspots within the Earth, waiting to re-emerge again, connected by a network of embers. When a flame is killed, it can still grow strong again, in another time and place. Fire moves silently - warming, cooling, sparking and burning. It is a fire of desire that lies within all our hearts. It is a desire that moves between us and links us. There are no words for this desire that grows and burns. It is a desire that emerges and burns when fuelled and brought together collectively.

In a seeming apocalyptic time of immense changes, in a collapsed economy for culture as conservative governments around the world demolish the welfare state; as uprisings emerge across Europe by disenchanted youth mobilized by social media resisting against high rates of unemployment and an astronomical rise in tuition fees, how do we maintain hope? How do we find space for the desire beyond economic concerns and to find new sustainable models of subsistence? Within a globalized community around the world, there is still a desire to create, and that fire will never die despite any economy or government support. How can we now begin to rebuild from the ashes a new world, a new vision of culture? How will it manifest in flames? How can we begin to spark imagination of new possibilities and utopias and to question the structures that have crumbled?

Flames spread. They grow and flare up.

As a collective of individuals from a generation lost of opportunities, lost in a time of great uncertainty, altering weather patterns, economic

structural upheaval, social re-organization through digital innovations and change. Fires of desire is a sparking and ignition of an exploration of new platforms and ideas of collective working to find and create our own visions and possibilities in a world of dwindling finances and hopes for the future.

**DOXA is an international collective of artists, theorists, designers, architects, and engineers. Through an on-going project on 'Creative Space', DOXA seeks to generate transdisciplinary and cross-sector dialogue to explore new possibilities and visions for culture in an increasingly networked/digital and globalized society. Since 2010, DOXA has produced events and published papers in London, Hong Kong and Madrid. DOXA ( $\delta\omicron\xi\alpha$ ): a common belief, as opposed to knowledge, doxa is associated with community, dialogue and truth.**

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