

THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN IN THE WORLD.—The principal topic of conversation here (Calcutta) is the discovery of the highest mountain in the world. At the meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, on the 6th instant, Major Thuillier announced that Colonel Waugh, surveyor-general of India, had completed his computations of the positions and elevations of the peaks of the Himalayas. The result was to depose the mountain Kanchinjunga from its throne as the highest point on the earth's surface. That distinction belongs for the present to a peak 100 miles from Kanchinjunga, and between that mountain and Katmandoo. This peak is ascertained to be 29,002 feet above the sea level; Kanchinjunga is 28,156 feet, and Dewalagira, the mountain which "school geographies" persist in calling "the highest in the known world," is only 26,826 feet. The mountain has no name intelligible to civilised men, and Colonel Waugh has therefore ventured to denominate it "Mount Everest," after a former surveyor-general. A special report on all these peaks will shortly be forwarded to England, and will, I hope, attract some attention. The efforts of this department to increase topographical knowledge, and the success of Colonel Waugh individually, have scarcely received the public recognition they deserve.—*Calcutta correspondent of the Times.*

1. MT. EVEREST

More than two hundred corpses litter Mt. Everest's tremendous history. The climb is so taxing in and of itself that bodies have accumulated on the mountainside; impossible for others to reach or safely remove, the figures

slowly—slowly—transform and harden into the landscape. Hikers use them as mile markers along their path. “Green Boots” is located at 27,890 feet, lying inside of a cave. Rainbow Valley, a section of the trail along the same route, interrupts the stark landscape with a bright array of down jackets covering the dead where they either fell or (after dying) were pushed out of the way. For most of the 1980s and 1990s, the body of Hannelore Schmatz greeted anyone attempting the summit by the southern route; after a Nepalese police officer and Sherpa died trying to recover her body, it was left to lean against Schmatz's pack until disappearing of its own accord, presumably blown into a crevasse. These bodies remain snow blown, clad in fading Day-Glo plastic hiking boots and parkas, or wrapped in the flags of their originating nation. No doubt to climbers en route they signify—beyond the consequences of Everest's extreme conditions—a general finitude.

Everest very easily becomes a metaphor in which the human is a distinct albeit vulnerable individual, outwitting—by chance and intellect—the sublime and merciless opponent of nature. From that culture/human vs. nature/nonhuman binary, another separation ensues between the individual's mind and body; the privileged immaterial mind must outwit and triumph over the body's material and biological limitations. Surviving the summit becomes an accomplishment in the face of death, against all odds, and accompanying casualties are attributed to the unavoidable cost of greatness. Though Everest might offer a clearer instance of this tendency, versions of the same

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mythology are retailored to a variety of instances in everyday life around the world from war propaganda and police brutality to capitalist methodology and the exploitation of natural resources. Soldiers and civilians are presented as unavoidable casualties of war; the brutal and inaccurate profiling of citizens is presented as necessary to fight crime; the high suicide rates of factory workers at the world's largest electronics manufacturer is presented as an unavoidable consequence of consumerism;¹ and the displacement of rain forest communities is presented as necessary for the development of industry

Let's complicate the mind/body dualism, considering how the body is porous—how the skin is an ambivalent boundary that both excludes and absorbs exterior elements. Let's acknowledge the body as an assemblage of interdependent and interactive parts, each behaving with some degree of autonomy. The heart beats without conscious instruction. Toenails grow. Cells subdivide. These parts might even be said to “think” without the mind. The hand releases the burning handle of a pot before the mind has processed any sensation of heat. Yet also the body exists within various influential systems. Its edges, identities, and essence are not fixed but defined by fluctuating social, economic, political, technological, and geographic networks. By acknowledging the single body as a community of parts, the individual grows infinitely more complex and unstable.

A COMMUNITY ARTS

Picard

2. THE BOOK

This book is part of a group exhibition of the same name at Sector 2337 produced by The Green Lantern Press. The show features the work of thirteen artists whose photography, sculpture, performance, film, and drawing wrestle with human representation to show the figure fragmented, distorted, or emphatically absent.

From October to December of 2014, Sector 2337 hosted sixteen additional public programs ranging from literary events, a Poetry and Theory series, a music event, a staged reading of a new translation of Aeschylus's *Seven Against Thebes*, and more. Three of those programs are documented in these pages: a performance series co-curated by long-standing performance artists Every house has a door, a film screening curated by the Direc-

¹ “‘Mass Suicide’ Protest at Apple Manufacturer Foxconn Factory,” *The Telegraph*, January 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/9006988/Mass-suicide-protest-at-Apple-manufacturer-Foxconn-factory.html>.

tor of The Nightingale Cinema, Christy LeMaster, and an Artist Residency with Jane Jerardi who used the gallery as a studio for the month of November, developing one new work, while screening documentation from an older performance in Sector's spare room. These programs represent additional strategies and investigations around the subject of the human figure: for instance, if the body is so tied to the history of performance art, what happens if an artist conceives the body as a nonhuman event? And can a film program elicit a bodily response in its audience? Or, as Jerardi's film screening asks, why is efficiency such a prized talent in office culture? The chosen documentation of these programs varies in an effort to compliment the experience of each occasion. Carlos Martiel's piece is represented primarily through photography, documenting a durational performance he produced at Sector 2337 in October during which eight figures lay under American flags. Jesse Malméd's piece is documented by the text he used as a score. Amelia Charter's largely improvisational performance is captured through a series of photographs. And Jefferson Pinder's *Thoroughbred* is presented through images and the written response of an audience member, Fo Wilson. Christy LeMaster and I coauthored an essay about the films she chose to screen. It reflects a conversation that took place between us over many months and seeks to destabilize a traditionally unified authorial voice with the voices of two women thinking out loud.

Subsequent written contributions in this book reflect similar ideas—Martine Syms describes how a constellation of personal effects not only reflects her own identity but also an interlocking network of power. “The brand galaxy connects retailers, advertisers, magazines, and demographics. Every stage of the sales funnel is haunted by race, class, gender, and geography.” It's not so simple, then, to say that each individual is contained and identified by the bounds of her skin. Rather, our selves are porous and even a bit incoherent. Valeria Luiselli writes, “The problem for people like me who collect scraps of paper with no method or ultimate objective is that our boxes and notebooks come to look ever more like us: a disorganized collage and never a coherent catalog of marvels.” In the dark future prescribed by the Antibody Corporation—a posthuman moniker of the Chicago-based artist Adam Rose—the body gives into the momentum of capital, playing on the fear that a refusal to participate in a system of subjugation only leads to one's own enslavement. “Those who regard power and money as evils will surely be de-

nied their freedom, and those who avoid technology will become as machines.”

These bodies are assemblages, leaving traces and remains all over the place such that interior psychologies and exterior landscapes bleed together: a dream Freud transcribes inspires a poem by Judith Goldman. A tornado similarly inspires CJ Martin. Rebecca Beachy gives an index of material human and nonhuman remains. While describing the impact that human industry has had on a lake in Canada, Zoe Todd summons the Loch Ness Monster; the creature breaches the text, reflecting as it does the impact that colonial ideologies have on the landscape. “Monsters become slates upon which stories are written,” she writes. In an homage to Jack Spicer, Julia Drescher tracks various exhumations of Billy the Kid to show how his depiction has consistently shaped a collective American identity.

Billie the Kid encapsulates the American frontier—a haunting, long-gone landscape that emerges obliquely in our country’s ideology through an attachment to firearms, for instance, or an appreciation for sanctioned underdogs. A credit-card sized tintype photograph surfaced in the 1980s and was sold at auction for 2.3 million dollars in 2011.² Strangely enough his grave was unmarked for years, though it now features a tombstone used in a film and thereafter donated by James M. Warner—thirty-six years after Spicer’s poem was first published.³ In all of these instances, we see the influence of the dead who surface at times like chimeras, bearing material objects as evidence, even as their identities change according to the demands of the present.

The book turns toward representation in earnest then. “The body stirs as the photographs become legible. They are procedural illustrations of autopsies,” writes Nathanaël, as figures from the past congeal in the cellulose of film. Érik Bulloot reflects on negatives unearthed in the Arctic, comparing them to cryogenically frozen bodies. And we cannot look away. “The Narcissi,” John Tipton writes in his translation of Philostratus, “are the same—identical—except one is exposed in the air, the other immersed in the pool. One boy stands over another in the water, thirsting for beauty.”

² Michael Sheridan, “Billy the Kid Tintype Photograph Sells for \$2.3 Million at Denver Auction,” *NY Daily News*, June 26, 2011, accessed March 4, 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/billy-kid-tintype-photograph-sells-2-3-million-denverauction-article-1.132786>.

³ Hico Validates, “Life of Billy the Kid,” *The J-TAC (Stephenville, Texas)*, November 3, 1994, accessed March 4, 2015, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph141837/m1/1/>.

The hope of these works is not to give in, as the Antibody Corporation ironically suggests, but rather to propose alternative formulations of the body. Formulations that could undermine a dominant power structure's ability to overlook and rationalize the suffering of others. Perhaps if we change the way we see ourselves, embracing the endless circulation of human and nonhuman materials within the human and non-human networks we inhabit, perhaps then we might open to a new sense of collective responsibility.

THE EXHIBITION

... the body is always a body that is an unfinished entity.⁴

Sector 2337 sits in the middle of a busy commercial block on Milwaukee Avenue in Chicago; tall windows consume the front of the store like transparent membranes, exposing the gallery's exhibition space to any and all passersby. *The New [New] Corpse* is the first exhibition held at this location. The first image seen from the street is the large photograph of Young Joon Kwak's *Excreted Venus*—spray mounted to the wall, it towers over the viewer at 89 × 42 inches like a gatekeeper to the right of the front door. The figure is covered in some shining, silver, clumpy clay that provides a thick and pervasive second skin, concealing most of the individual's features. On its face, one straight shadow indicates a mouth; it barely has one eye, though the texture of a beard is more detailed, as is the long hair spreading out messily around its head. About the torso one sees a loincloth partially concealed by the sludge, on its feet a pair of high heels. A rope wrapping around the body is sometimes concealed and sometimes not. Lying on its back, the queer figure is juxtaposed against a slick, almost digital, black and purple grid, a perfect contrast to the erratic material body it frames. Reinforcing the idea of movement, Young Joon Kwak installs an artist book nearby as well. Titled *Aggregate Body*, the book is square without a delineated beginning or end, neither is there any proper orientation in space. All ways are up. Inside, it's almost like a flipbook, charting the ways in which the figure on the wall was dressed and made up in sludge, lipstick, and rope. Each page acts like a

⁴ Lisa Blackman, *The Body: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 17.

square of the larger grid in the photograph, portraying an incomplete quadrant of the figure's body.

Facing *Excreted Venus* to the left of the front door is the wire-clay-fabric-and-pig-foot sculpture by Rachel Niffenegger. *Slit Witch (Night) Gown with Insignia* is similarly visible from the street. It stands at 5 feet 8 inches, defined by a thin wire that traces the outline of the figure in space. One recognizes hips, and possibly a bust. The white clay around the wire adds to a sense of delicateness—like exposed and very fine bones, brittle without joints. Thin white cotton fabric hangs like a shift dress from the top of the headless armature, drifting according to the breeze. This dress, slitted with parallel rib-like cuts on one side, acts as an unstretched canvas on the other where circular swatches of color slip in and out of literal representation; sometimes the colorful circles look simply abstract, at others they appear like faces with recognizable eyes and mouths. It feels like a game one might play looking for faces in cloud patterns, except in this case the faces aren't exactly human but ghoulish, going in and out of focus, silent, and comically grotesque.

The bodies in this exhibition are unstable and suggestive. They point toward gender, toying with the viewer's often too-hasty desire to assign it. They point to preceding histories, archetypes, and motives. Like the almost-faces on Niffenegger's dress, one looks for (and finds) the human figure in Shane Ward's sculpture, *Victory*. Like Kwak's photograph, Ward's sculpture is gloppy and metallic. The relatively small figure stands on a black polystyrene pedestal—material typically used for building insulation. It is scratched in places, revealing the shiny and porous black particles beneath its smooth commercial surface. The top of the pedestal is finished with granite and flocking, further accentuating the mash up of low- and high-end materials. Here too we feel the emergent presence of a not-quite human.

Despite its distortion, Ward's form is recognizable as the iconic Ancient Greek sculpture, *Victory of Samothrace*—a sculpture unearthed by the French ambassador to Turkey in 1863 that presently resides in the Louvre. The right wing, head, and arms of the original have always been missing, though theories have been developed about their position and style. The sculpture was originally found in fragments and reconstituted in France. "In preparation for the debut of the nine-foot statue at the Louvre more than a century ago, experts added a new right wing in plaster, symmetrical to the left wing that remained unscathed. They also added

a missing left breast to connect the bona fide wing to the torso.”⁵ Strangely, other parts of the sculpture continue to be found. “In 1950, part of her right hand was discovered and joined with a thumb and ring finger that had been discovered by Austrian archeologists.”⁶ In 1962, a feather—presumably from the missing right wing—was found as well. With these fragments there remains a desire to reconstruct and maintain a coherent body. Aesthetic and custodial agendas change over the ages, leaving traces on the sculpture itself vis-à-vis which missing parts will be reproduced from scratch and which will remain absent. The found piece of feather has particularly confused experts because the style doesn’t match feathers in the left wing.⁷ As such, it challenges the right wing fabricated by historians so long ago, and the understandable assumption that both wings would have matched.

Shane Ward based his own iteration of *Victory* on a dime-store replica of the original. Unlike the Louvre’s nine foot presence, Sector 2337’s *Victory* is roughly 58 × 14 × 14 inches, pedestal included. To create this model, Ward made a cast of the scaled-down trinket, into which he poured hot lead. The molten lead broke through Ward’s cast almost immediately; it could not handle such high temperatures, and the mottled surface of his final object reveals that deterioration. Like the original, Ward’s *Victory* denotes movement and vivacity—not of the human figure but of a fluid metal hardening as it breaks the bounds of its intended vessel. Perhaps not surprisingly, this is the work Sector 2337 visitors most want to touch, to assure themselves that the metal is neither soft nor moving, as it might appear, but instead hard and comfortingly fixed. Here however, there is a caveat: lead is poisonous to the body. After prolonged exposure, it eats away at the memory of any bare handlers.

On the nearby brick wall Joseph Grigely exhibits two prints from his *Songs Without Words* series. Each print reproduces a fragment from the *New York*

⁵ Inti Landuaro, “The Louvre’s ‘Winged Victory of Samothrace’ Is Set For A Restoration Next Month,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 2013, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324747104579025053854436822>.

⁶ “Nike Monument,” Emory University, accessed January 18, 2014, <http://www.samothrace.emory.edu/visualizing-the-sanctuary/interactive-plan/nike>.

⁷ Leslie King, “With Help from Emory Scholars, Winged Victory Returns to Flight at the Louvre,” *Emory Report*, July 2014, accessed January 22, 2015, http://news.emory.edu/stories/2014/07/er_winged_victory_at_louvre%20/campus.html.

Times. In the prints he exhibits here, an opera singer is framed on the left, singing with arms flung open. The second print on the right features a man in a hat with a finger pressed to his ear, eyes closed; he is apparently listening. Deaf since the age of ten, Grigely has often installed collage tableaus of paper scraps by which he conducts various conversations with friends and cohorts. Like those conversation pieces, *Songs Without Words* provide documentation—evidence of a day’s existence—that nevertheless deny the viewer full access. “The mezzo-soprano Kate Lindsey sang with an attractive voice and was effective as Siébel,” an anonymous critic observes in the fragment. “The musicians and singers must have been almost as frozen as the audience, which predictably, given the plummeting temperature, appeared to have thinned significantly by the end. But a sprinkling of determined listeners braved Faustian frostbite and stayed around for Marguerite’s salvation.” We see the figures creating or absorbing noise, a noise not captured by the material print form but rather inferred and supported by the text, body language, and expression of the figures reproduced. Not only do these works remind the audience that bodies have various capabilities, ranges, and limits, the prints are also found relics of a day as it was recorded in a periodical and later reimagined in a coherent historical narrative.

Thirty-six years after Beethoven’s death, his body was exhumed. Upon reburial three fragments of the composer’s skull went missing, only to surface again in 1997 when a California businessman ran tests to confirm family legend—namely, that the bones kept in a box inscribed “Beethoven” and handed down for generations, *did* indeed belong to the composer.⁸ While experts have used these bones to try to determine the cause of Beethoven’s early death (i.e., whether or not he died from lead poisoning), these material remains captivate contemporary imagination, bringing us closer to the source of a tremendous body of musical composition. At the same time, those bones have lived a far longer life in silence, as discrete pieces of calcium circulating through generations of a family, residing on or in different mantelpieces, storage facilities, and drawers, to such an extent that their preservation may say more about a practice of inheritance and property than provide access to any source of genius.

⁸ James Barron, “Beethoven May Not Have Died of Lead Poisoning After All,” *The New York Times*, May 28, 2010, accessed March 4, 2105, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/29/arts/music/29skull.html?_r=0.

During an auxiliary music performance at Sector 2337, Billie Howard performed a score by Joseph Clayton Mills. In the score Mills conveys a series of instructions in which the performer is asked to assemble a variety of objects on a table, push them off the table “as musically as possible,” and then clean them up. The audience listened as Howard pressed pennies across and off the table, sometimes one by one, sometimes in clattering groups. She knocked over a bottle of whisky as well. The thick glass container thunked, and bounced a little when it struck the wooden floor. A nineties-era boom box also crashed to the ground—in addition to smaller, less dangerous things such as books, papers, and cards. As Howard swept everything up afterwards—a lengthy process in itself because the broom was not stiff enough to capture and press all of the objects into the dust pan and because the waste-paper basket was not large enough to conveniently receive all the dustpan’s contents—Grigely’s prints watched over the proceedings. Frozen and silent.

Documentation of Cuban artist Carlos Martiel’s performance, *Romper La Noche (Break the Night)* hangs as a single framed photograph beside Grigely’s prints. Here again, the visual quotation is an incomplete document, pointing to a physical event at Art League Houston in early 2014. In the photograph, the artist lies naked on a pile of ice. It is printed on metallic paper, rendering the ice especially cold and wet. One imagines lying, like Martiel, on an icy mountain. Imagine the reciprocal engagement between body and ice, as the body transforms the ice into water, growing numb itself. The cold steals through the skin, creeping towards deeper, inaccessible organs. This photographic fragment offers the imagination limited access. We do not see, for instance, that the original performance began before the artist entered the room with only a makeshift wooden box halfway full of ice. Nor does one think of the gallery attendants periodically mopping water where it melted. When Carlos entered, he lay down in the box and more gallery attendants covered his body with more ice. The tableau was still for longer than you would expect, instilling a sense of trust. The artist must be very good at this. He must have practiced. Someone approached the box, opening it up by a hinge and removing it entirely from the scene. Ice cubes spilled out from where they had been contained, making Martiel’s figure almost visible. As the performance progressed, his body emerged more and more from the ice, likely from a series of barely perceptible shifts—him trying to get ever so slightly (and impos-

sibly) more comfortable. Shivers involuntarily consumed his sides with increasing ferocity. When Martiel finally stood up to walk away, he stumbled with numbness, requiring assistance.

In the 1970s a construction crew found a tomb in the Hunan Province of China. They were breaking ground for a new hospital. Along with over 1,400 well preserved artifacts, they found a 2,100-year-old mummy who seemed to have died only yesterday. “When Lady Dai’s tomb was first opened, there were gasps because there was no decay.”⁹ In multiple accounts the body is described as being “still-moist” with inner organs intact. Arms and legs were bendable. Doctors were eager to examine this ambassador of the Han Dynasty, noting her diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, gallstones, and more. They found melon seeds in her stomach, determining she had eaten the fruit just a few hours before the heart attack that ended her life. The mystery of her preservation remains—attributed in part to the twenty-two silk and hemp dresses she was wrapped in, the airtight, multi-chamber coffins, a white soil-paste lining the bottom of her coffin, and nearly twenty gallons of an unknown liquid that protected her from bacteria and oxygen. Still she was drawn up, out of the ground, from beneath a practical modern-day city to have a second life as an ambassador from an ancient upper class, generously providing information about what her life was like.

Jason Lazarus’s *Untitled (Vienna, Austria)* hangs on the other side of *Romper La Noche*. The deceptively simple photograph is a wash of intricate and various grays on a white background; the image looks as if it was taken through a scrim. In its center, a darker gray shape is abstract. One reads the silhouette of a straight-backed chair with hazy, irregular edges. The chair is a little too thick along the middle of the back rest and ever so slightly curvilinear in places, seeming not-quite chair-like. One wants to read the figure into it, feeling an emergent pang of absence in the process. The chair is conflated with an idea of a body, but like Niffenegger’s *Slit Witch*, the impression feels layered by white cotton and shifted by wind, elusive as a ghost. What is the chair and what might be a body becomes irrelevant somehow, emphasizing the sentimental character of objects that intersect the human sphere, becoming comfortable with

⁹ “Lady Dai Tomb Among Richest Finds In China History,” *Huffington Post*, November 2009, accessed February 03, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/09/17/lady-dai-tomb-among-riche_n_290099.html.

use, and extensions of a person as a result. On the one hand, the image is as generic as its subject, the chair, literally called “Untitled.” On the other, it evokes a personal feeling that appears in its parenthetical title “(Vienna, Austria)”. Lazarus thus invokes a geographical site that’s been continuously inhabited by humans since 500 BC;¹⁰ it is a city of music, the birthplace of Freud, and a nexus point in World War II. The city is itself a relic, an architectural assemblage bearing the traces of many lives, power structures, and materials.

Your DNA does not stop expressing itself at the ends of your fingers. A beaver’s DNA doesn’t stop at the end of its whiskers, but at the end of its damn. A spider’s DNA is expressed in its web. From the perspective of the life sciences, the environment is nothing but phenotypical expression of DNA code.¹¹

It’s important to look at the materials we produce—materials that remain long after their originating purpose has been exhausted. Imagine again all the material items left behind on Everest, or the remains of a crashed airplane, and consider how forensic scientists reconstruct a scene in order to understand something about the crash that preceded it. For *The New [New] Corpse*, Heather Mekkelson installs two separate works from her *Debris Field* series. A fragment of a tiled bathroom wall balances on a pipe inserted in a plinth; originally the sculpture was part of a larger installation, where Mekkelson used everyday, deliberately distressed materials, such as chairs, pipes, and board-game boxes. When installed together in 2008, she reproduced the debris that might remain after a disaster. In another portion of Sector 2337, a set of Mekkelson’s window blinds hang from an auxiliary doorframe. These blinds are also distressed, bearing the traces of some previous unknowable trauma. A small black backpack hangs from one end of the blinds with receipts inside—another assemblage of fragments—they create a time-based narrative of someone’s prior purchases.

Aay Preston-Myint installs his homage to Thomas Moore’s *Utopia*—a book from 1516 that illustrates an

¹⁰ Roman Adrian Cybriwsky, *Capital Cities around the World: An Encyclopedia of Geography, History, and Culture* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2013), 322.

¹¹ Timothy Morton, *Collapse* (Falmouth, UK: Urbanomic, 2010), 272.

ideal fantasy society. In the book no one locks their front doors and every ten years people swap houses. Preston-Myint quotes a particular chapter *Of Their Slaves and Of Their Marriages* in the title of his work: a waist-high sculpture with a white stucco base and a white cake on the top—the icing and stucco surfaces are so similar as to look like the same material. At first glance one would think the whole thing edible. The bird’s-eye view of the sculpture is based on the bird’s-eye map of Moore’s imaginary island: both are crescent shaped. Moore’s imaginary society does not have possessions, though slavery and marriage nevertheless exist—a seeming inconsistency. Preston-Myint’s material translation toys with the viewer’s appetite for utopic visions, inviting a physical engagement with the sculpture through taste: during the opening, visitors were invited to eat the cake. Highlighting the ambiguity of the piece, the cake was installed in the gallery for three months, untouched. It began to rot ever so slowly, infusing the air with a sickly sweet perfume, so that even after consuming the cake on purpose was impossible, one couldn’t help but breathe the smell of overripe sugar.

The exhibit also features music boxes. French artists Marion Auburtin and Benjamin L. Arman created ceramic figurines that read like small ornate curiosities. In one, a male figure sits on his haunches on a black cushion wearing a pink crown. He has two feet, three toes, and maybe three testicles or vulvas, it’s hard to say. He is accompanied by two female figurines. One—a woman in a black dress with more than one face. From the profile she looks perfectly “normal”: we see the bridge of her nose and the outline of her bust falling into the outline of her large black dress. When examined straight on, however, we see she has many breasts and two conjoined faces. Pick the figure up and hold it in the palm of one hand. Place the other hand around the figure’s head and twist the wrist to wind the box; a satisfying click of small gears can be heard. When she is set down again, she turns like an animated cartoon—at times (in profile) a coherent “normal” body, at others an anomaly. The third figure in the series is a Siamese twin possessing two women’s faces, two sets of shoulders, one set of legs; it is both one and many, dressed in a black bathing suit. Auburtin makes the figures by hand. Arman modifies mass-produced music boxes so that they deviate from playing recognizable songs. Fused together, the ceramic sculptures play a strange discordant music.

Between these figurines, fifteen of Shoshanna Weinberger’s repeating pin ups hang in a grid: gorgeous

ink on paper drawings dedicated to deceased pinups such as Jean Harlow, Eartha Kitt, Josephine Baker, Bettie Page, and Anna Nicole Smith—women Weinberger refers to as “modern day hottentots,” referencing not only the strange and dubious objectification of women’s bodies but also the original Hottentot, Sarah Baartman: the South African woman born in 1789, sold into slavery, and exhibited to European audiences where “She was objectified in the most literal sense, put on display in front of gaping crowds six days a week, doing suggestive ‘native’ dancing and playing African instruments.”¹² Baartman died in poverty at the age of twenty-six whereupon a French anatomist dissected and preserved her remains, making a cast of her body for public display. Other fragments—her brain and genitals for example—were placed in adjacent jars. Finally in 1994, Nelson Mandela petitioned to have her remains returned to South Africa. France accepted the request in 2002 and Baartman was buried at last, two hundred years after her birth. “I find Baartman’s life both captivating and horrific,” Weinberger said in an interview, “living as a specimen perpetuating the myth of ‘otherness’ that can still be found today fascinates me as a woman and an artist.”¹³ Here Weinberger reproduces a caricature of female excess—the figures she paints are almost all butt, often with a gold oval denoting a mouth and a face; the drawings have many breasts as well: they protrude out of the figures’ silhouette. Sometimes an engorged vulva or pair of testicles appear from between the figures’ legs, which are fitted into tiny high heels. Ink and gold drips fall down each page differently. Drawn on one-hundred-year old paper, the figure repeats again and again—the fifteen panels, like cells in a cartoon animation, ready to jump to life at any movement, adding a sense of movement and decay to the signifiers of feminine sex and beauty.

Xaviera Simmons has appropriated over forty news broadcast images of anonymous immigrants and refugees on boats in the middle of the ocean in her 2010 work, *Superunknown (Alive In The)*. For *The New [New] Corpse* she exhibits one image from that archive. *Superunknown #2* is streaked and grainy, like a still taken

¹² Marisa Meltzer, “Venus Abused,” *Salon.com*, January 2007, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.salon.com/2007/01/09/holmes/>.

¹³ Shoshanna Weinberger, “‘What Makes My Hottentot So Hot’—Shoshanna Weinberger at SOLO(s) Project House,” *Examiner.com*, January 2012, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.examiner.com/article/what-makes-my-hottentotso-hot-shoshanna-weinberger-at-solo-s-project-house>.

from a television broadcast. So many people are crowded in the boat, it's impossible to do an exact head count. The boat sits dangerously low in the water. Fabric covers certain sections of the vessel, as if providing make shift tents for more people underneath. What is remarkable is how generic the scene appears, as something understandable in the world. Even though these humans seem adrift, perhaps even in peril, they amass into a generic group of anonymous figures.

POST SCRIPT : SAGARMATHA AND CHOMOLUNGMA

Accordingly, humans are exploited as part of the *Homo sapiens* species for the benefit of other humans, which at the same time yields a surplus version of the human: Man. Man represents the western configuration of the human as synonymous with the heteromasculine, white, propertied, and liberal subject that renders all those who do not conform to these characteristics as exploitable nonhumans, literal legal nobodies. If we are to effect significant systemic changes, then we must locate at least some of the struggles for justice in the region of humanity as a relational ontological totality (an object of knowledge) that cannot be reduced to either the universal or the particular.¹⁴

If we adhere to the idea that Everest represents the human condition, an apex of achievement few obtain, we pass over a series of deep-seated assumptions about identity, history, anthropocentrism, and myth. Might we instead observe the predominant sex of Everest's corpses or the western skew of its historical timeline as determined by those industrious foreigners wishing to reach its peak and effectively overcome a landscape, precisely because of its historic difficulty? What happens if we recall its Tibetan and Nepalese names, Sagarmatha and Chomolungma, dismissing the colonial namesake to which we are accustomed, the eminent British Surveyor General in India, George

¹⁴ Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 135.

Everest?¹⁵ And could we examine the economy that has sprung up around this trek, one on which Nepal heartily relies? Any given traveller has paid between \$40,000 and \$100,000 just to access the mountain.¹⁶ Tourism affiliated with Everest expeditions makes up 3% of Nepal's gross domestic product.¹⁷ Or perhaps we could factor in the bodies' need for auxiliary oxygen tanks and climbing gear without which the summit would be impossible. Developments in technology—from improved crampons, coats, or gloves to satellite weather forecasting systems and oxygen systems—have made this once expert feat accessible to a more general population precisely because nonhuman instruments augment the human body. Add to those muddling factors the waste that we leave behind:

The two standard routes [to the mountain's summit], the Northeast Ridge and the Southeast Ridge, are not only dangerously crowded but also disgustingly polluted, with garbage leaking out of the glaciers and pyramids of human excrement befouling the high camps.¹⁸

There aren't only human corpses on the iconic landscape but also the debris and impact of human activity. Mt. Everest's glaciers have shrunk 13% in the last fifty years and continue to do so at an increased rate.¹⁹ This is of particular human concern because its glaciers supply water to over 1.4 billion people who live within range of the mountain.²⁰ Climate change has been at-

¹⁵ "Mount Everest: Named After the First Surveyor General of India," *The Guardian: From the Archive*, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/from-the-archive-blog/2011/jul/21/mount-everest-name-1856>.

¹⁶ Mark Jenkins, "Six Expeditions Cancel Plans to Climb Everest This Year," *National Geographic*, April 23, 2014, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/04/140423-everest-avalanche-sherpas-killed-update-nepal-climbing-expedition/>.

¹⁷ Rob Lovitt, "Everest Avalanche's Impact Will Roll Through Nepal's Economy," *NBC News*, April, 2014, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.nbcnews.com/business/travel/everest-avalanches-impact-will-roll-through-nepals-economy-n87131>.

¹⁸ Mark Jenkins, "Maxed Out On Everest: How to Fix The Mess at The Top of The World," *National Geographic*, June 2013, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/06/125-everest-maxed-out/jenkins-text>.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Mohan, "Climate Change May Be Bearing Mt. Everest," *LA Times*, May 2013, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/may/14/science/la-sci-sn-everest-climate-20130514>.

²⁰ Jane Qui, "Tibetan Glaciers Shrinking Rapidly: Comprehensive Survey Reveals Influence of Prevailing Winds," *Nature: International Journal of Science*, July 2012, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.nature.com/news/tibetan-glaciers-shrinking-rapidly-1.11010>.

tributed as one source of Everest's instability—a study used recently to explain the death of sixteen Sherpas after a deadly avalanche. As is typically the case, the Sherpas that died were among those who climb the mountain in advance of climbing season to mark out safe trails for paying Westerners. In each of these instances, an overlap of forces, networks, and materials emerge, pressing against a typically discrete idea of community and self.

So it is, in our relatively banal Midwestern flatland that *The New [New] Corpse* explores the body as an intersection of socioeconomic, biological, social, and psychological factors. The project follows a trajectory. Beginning with *Field Static* (a 2012 group show about the object that took place at The Co-Prosperity Sphere in Bridgeport), the line of thought continued into 2014 for *Ghost Nature* (a group show that challenged the binary separation between culture and nature). *The New [New] Corpse* tries to incorporate the view it established through *Field Static* and *Ghost Nature* to look at the body as an alien assemblage of interlocking biological, material, social, and political parts. Perhaps in so doing, by looking at the single body as a multiplicity of otherness, we might apply a similar logic to the entire human population.

Caroline Picard is a Chicago-based artist, writer, and curator who explores the figure in relation to systems of power through ongoing investigations of interspecies borders, how the human relates to its environment, and what possibilities might emerge from upturning an anthropocentric world view. Her projects manifest in a variety of cross-disciplinary mediums including curation, critical essays, painting, administrative practices, works of fiction, and comics. She writes regularly for *Artslant*, *Art Forum*, and she was the 2014 Curatorial Fellow at La Box, ENSA in Bourges France for her project *Ghost Nature*. She is the Senior Editor of The Green Lantern Press and Co-Director of Sector 2337, an experimental art venue in Logan Square. www.sector2337.com.

Fragments from an

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exhibition at Sector 2337

Benjamin Laurent Aman and Marion Auburtin



Benjamin Laurent Aman (b. 1981) is a sound and visual artist whose work oscillates between drawing, sculpture, and sound. Since 2005, Aman's work has been exhibited in numerous group exhibitions (i.e., Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, CAC Nei Liicht Luxembourg, Selasar Sunaryo Museum Bandung, Space London) and dedicated exhibitions (Styx Projects, Able Kulturverein, Atelier KSR in Berlin, Kunstraum Michael Barthel in Leipzig). Since 2007, Aman has carried out many sound performances all over Europe. He has been invited to festivals and radio shows (*Epsilon* in Paris, *Le tétraèdre* in Bruxelles, *The Wire on Air*, *Resonance FM* in London, etc.) and performed at the Tenth Berlin Biennale, Transmediale X, Club Transmediale (CTM) and Nu Substance Indonesia amongst others. In 2009, Aman founded the Razzle Dazzle label, publishing items related to fine arts and sound.

Marion Auburtin (b. 1978) is a French artist currently residing at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. She's been supported by the French Art Council two times and her work is part of several famous collections such as: the Colas Fondation, Ravini-Bourriaud, Corréard, and Vidal. She has been selected for Le Prix Novembre de Vitry and Le Salon de Montrouge (Paris). She has had solo shows in Germany (Total gallery Berlin, Able gallery Berlin), Luxembourg (Dominique Lang Contemporary Art Center Luxembourg), and France (Galerie 9 Nancy).

Joseph Grigley

City College," Mr. Sundiata explained. "He joined what happened on 9/11 to the history of African-Americans through slavery, through desegregation." Excerpts from that speech by Mr. West, a professor of religion and African-American studies at Princeton, can be heard on-stage during the performance, too.

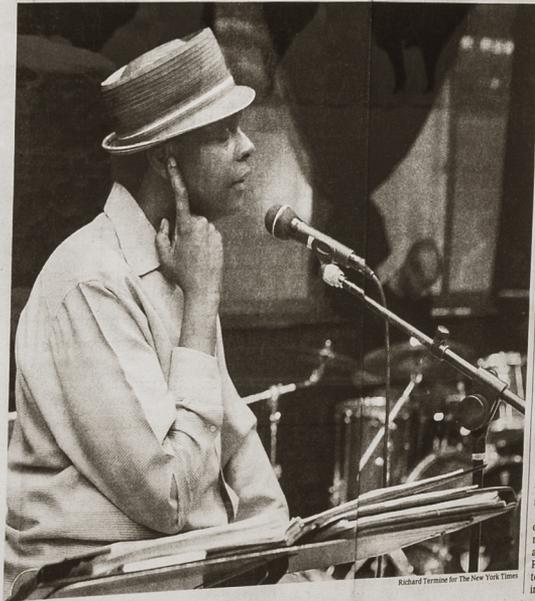
Mr. Sundiata's aspirations to open up a dialogue on the multiple meanings of the American experience led to something he called "The American Project." It took him to workshops to sharpen what became "State" at Harlem Stage/Aaron Da-

turned on the camera. He is continuing to look for ideas this weekend, with discussions at Harlem Stage's new facility, the Gatehouse.

In what it called "a companion" to Mr. Sundiata's show, the Gatehouse at Harlem Stage/Aaron Davis Hall was scheduled to present a reading of "The Trojan Women" last night and a cabaret and discussion with Mr. Sundiata tonight on what it means to be an American citizen. WeDaPeoples Cabaret, organized and presided over by Mr. Sundiata, is

sau Reggie Prim, the center's community programs manager. "It's such a compelling way to link citizenship to art," Mr. Prim said. "The idea is to seed a movement."

Mr. Sundiata also took his show to Melbourne, Australia, last month. He had discovered the work of Dennis Altman, an Australian professor of politics whose new book "51st State?" explores the idea that Australia's identification with America makes it a de facto 51st state. It is his hope, Mr. Sundiata said, that people leave "State" with a lot of voices in their head and enough questions for their own nuanced dialogues.



Richard Termine for The New York Times

Joseph Grigley (b. 1956) is an artist and critical theorist. His exhibitions include solo shows at the Musée d'art Moderne in Paris; The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin; The Whitney Museum of American Art; and the MCA, Chicago. His group shows include the Whitney, Venice, Berlin, Istanbul and Sydney Biennials. He is represented by Gallery Air de Paris, Paris.

Young Joon Kwak



Young Joon Kwak (b. 1984) is an LA-based artist and performer. She has had solo exhibitions in Chicago and LA, most recently at Commonwealth and Council (LA) in September 2014. She performs in the band Xina Xurner and is co-founder of Mutant Salon. Kwak received her MFA from USC Roski School of Art & Design, MA from the University of Chicago, and BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Jason Lazarus



Jason Lazarus (b. 1975) is a Chicago-based artist, curator, writer, and educator; he is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago, IL.

Lazarus's work has recently been examined by Michelle Grabner (monograph published by University Galleries of Illinois State University), Abigail Solomon-Godeau (monograph published by SF Camerawok), Shane Lavalette (monograph published by Light Work), Lori Waxman (*Art Forum*), and Carmen Winant (*Frieze Magazine*). Major exhibitions include *Black Is, Black Ain't* at the Renaissance Society, *Love to Love You* at MASS MoCA, *On the Scene* at the Art Institute of Chicago, *Not the Way You Remembered* at the Queens Museum of Art, *Image Search* at PPOW Gallery in NYC, and *Michael Jackson Doesn't Quit, Part 3* at the Future Gallery, Berlin.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Jason Lazarus: Chicago Works* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, *Live Archive* at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco, and *THTK* (Toronto) at Gallery TPW in Toronto, CA. In 2016, Lazarus is commissioned to mount a site-specific vernacular photography installation for the re-opening of SF MOMA's Photography Wing, this installation will become part of the SF MOMA permanent collection.

Jason is a Co-Founder and Co-Editor of *Chicago Artist Writers*, an online art criticism platform that asks artists and art workers to write traditional and experimental criticism that serves non-profit, temporary, and alternative arts programming in Chicago. Throughout 2014, he will be screening internationally a feature length film comprised entirely of animated GIFS called *twohundredfiftysixcolors*, a collaboration with Eric Fleischauer.

Carlos Martiel



Carlos Martiel (b. 1989) is a controversial Cuban artist specializing in performance. His works focus on specific political events and on social injustices that occur inside and outside his country of origin. Martiel's performances reflect on the relations of power between the individual and the different contexts in which he or she operates. He graduated from the National Academy of Fine Arts "San Alejandro," Havana in 2009. Between the years of 2008 and 2010, he studied in the Catedra de Arte Conducta, directed by the artist Tania Bruguera. Martiel's works have been included in: Havana Biennial (2009); Pontevedra Biennial (2010); Liverpool Biennial (2010); Biennial "La Otra," Bogotá (2013); and International Performance Art Biennale, Houston (2014). He has had solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Center "Wifredo Lam," Havana (2012); Nitsch Museum, Naples (2013); Axeneo 7, Montreal (2013); Lux Gallery, Guatemala City (2013); and Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles (2014). He has received several awards, including "CIFOS Grants & Commissions Program Award" in Miami (2014); "Arte Laguna" in Venice, Italy (2013); and "Close Up Award" in Vallarta, Mexico (2012). His work has been exhibited in the Estonian Museum of Art and Design in Tallinn, Estonia; the Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires in Argentina; the Bellevue Museum of Arts, Washington; The 8th floor in New York; the Arocena Museum in Mexico, among others.

Heather Mekkelson



Heather Mekkelson (b. 1975) lives and works in Chicago. Solo and two-person exhibitions include *Now Slices* at 65Grand; *Invisible Apocalypse* at Roots & Culture; *Heather Mekkelson* at +medecine cabinet; *Limited Entry* at Old Gold; *Debris Field* at Threewalls; and *Out Land* at STANDARD (all Chicago, IL). Her work has been in group shows at INOVA (Milwaukee, WI), The Museum of Contemporary Photography (Chicago, IL), The Figge Museum (Davenport, IA), The Poor Farm (Manawa, WI), Raid Projects (Los Angeles, CA), and VOX Populi (Philadelphia, PA). Mekkelson's work has been written about in *Art Journal*, *Broadsheet*, *Time Out Chicago*, *New City*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Artforum.com*, and others. In 2012 she became an Artadia Award Chicago awardee. Mekkelson is represented in Chicago by 65Grand.

Aay Preston-Myint



Aay Preston-Myint (b. 1981) is an artist, printmaker, and educator based in Chicago, IL. His practice currently employs visual and collaborative strategies to investigate memory, memorial, self-reflection, and self-projection within the context of queer community and history. In addition to his own work in interdisciplinary media, he is a founder of No Coast, an artist partnership that prints and distributes affordable contemporary artwork, serves as a DJ and organizer for Chances Dances, a party that supports and showcases the work of queer artists in Chicago, and is editor-in-chief of an online and print journal called *Monsters and Dust*.

Rachel Niffenegger



Rachel Niffenegger (b. 1985) recently returned to the United States after a residency at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. While in Europe, she presented a solo show at Club Midnight in Berlin and was included in group shows at Museum for Modern Art in Arnhem and Bourouina Gallery in Berlin. She has been included in group shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Tracy Williams Ltd in NYC, Asya Geisberg in NYC, Ceri Hand Gallery in Liverpool, and in Chicago at Western Exhibitions, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Andrew Rafacz Gallery, and the Hyde Park Art Center. *Chicago Magazine* named her "Chicago's Best Emerging Artist" in 2010 and *New City* named her one of "Chicago's Next Generation of Image Makers" in 2010. Niffenegger received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her MFA from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in 2012.

Xaviera Simmons



Xaviera Simmons (b. 1974) received her BFA from Bard College (2004) after spending two years on a walking pilgrimage retracing the transatlantic slave trade with Buddhist monks. She completed the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program in Studio Art (2005) while simultaneously completing a two-year actor-training conservatory with The Maggie Flanigan Studio. Simmons has exhibited nationally and internationally where major exhibitions and performances include: The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA PS1, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, The Public Art Fund, and The Sculpture Center. Selected solo and group exhibitions for 2013–2014 include *Archive As Impetus* at The Museum Of Modern Art; *Underscore* at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum; *Open* at David Castillo Gallery; *Rehearsals* at The Savannah College Of Art and Design; and *Radical Presence* at The Studio Museum In Harlem among many others. Her works are in major museum and private collections including Deutsche Bank, UBS, The Guggenheim Museum, The Agnes Gund Art Collection, The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Studio Museum in Harlem, MOCA Miami, and Perez Art Museum Miami.

2

Shane Ward



Shane Ward's (b. 1985) sculptural practice has been dedicated to themes of war and romance, capital and masculinity, violence and depth, surface luster and value. His work pursues the relationship between the grave and the monument, the mine and jewelry box, the wound and the mend. His most recent work is a sustained inquiry into the nature of victory, its relationship to liberty and its ultimate fragility. He has an MFA from the University of Chicago. Ward lives and works in Chicago, IL.

Shoshanna Weinberger



Born in Kingston, Jamaica to a Jamaican mother and American father, Shoshanna Weinberger (b. 1973) was raised in Montclair, NJ. She currently lives and works in Newark, NJ. Her work has shown for the past decade nationally and internationally featured in group shows: *The New Authentics* (Spertus Museum, Chicago, IL); *New American Talent 18* (The Jones Center for Contemporary Art, Austin, TX); *Acts of Alterity* (Nomad Gallery, Brussels, Belgium); *Empire* (Five Myles, Brooklyn, NY); *All That Glitters* (The Gateway Project, Newark); *Mutations* (Tiwani Contemporary, London, England); *America Through Artists' Eyes* (NJ State Museum, Trenton). Solo shows include: *What Makes My Hottentot So Hot* (Solos Project House, Newark, 2012); *Sometimes All of Me is Not Enough* (Carol Jazzar Contemporary Art, Miami, 2012); *Potbelly Pin-Ups: Out of Many One* (Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, 2014). She has also been featured in the National Gallery of Jamaica, 2012 Biennial, Kingston, Jamaica and BIAC Martinique 2013 Biennial, French West Indies. In 2014 Weinberger was awarded the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant.



PERSO EFFE

ONAL ECTS

I was sleeping on the couch at my friend's friend's house in New Center. I wanted to be at the Motown Museum by 10:00 a.m. so I could get my picture taken in front of the Hitsville, USA sign and go on the 11:00 a.m. tour. I thought about buying a decorative mug, but only if it was a really good one because I had too many mugs already.

I made sure the front door was locked and walked across the street to where I parked the previous night. I was thinking about Billy Dee Williams as Berry Gordy in *The Jacksons: An American Dream*. Where's the car? I didn't see the car. Confused, I paced the street several times. I whispered fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck to myself on an endless loop. It was right here. I never leave anything in my car at home. Why didn't I bring my gear into the house last night? Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck. The owner of the house next door came out and asked if I was okay.

I asked her if it was normal for my car to be missing. She hesitated, but regretfully shook her head yes. I wanted to tell her that this experience wouldn't change my opinion about Detroit. It's a great city. I'd been there a few times before and was fine. I was never afraid. But I just stood there, in an empty parking space. She told me to knock on the door if I needed anything.

I went back inside through the side entrance. The gate clanged loudly. There was an ad hoc security system of scrap metal that rattled as the gate moved. The dogs barked and I felt foolish. Someone was in the kitchen cooking breakfast. She didn't ask why I was back so quickly and I didn't tell her.

I dialed Mike or Ryan or Dave at the Holland, Michigan Enterprise and he walked me through next steps. He'd lived in Detroit his whole life and had never heard of anyone getting their car stolen. I agreed pro-

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fusely. It was a random event. All the same, I wanted to go home.

I walked two miles to the nearest Enterprise location. It was a cool, clear day and the sky was blue. My phone played the hold music from Detroit Non-Emergency Services as I passed from block to block. I was the only pedestrian on most roads. When I arrived at New Center Enterprise I had to be buzzed in. Troy or Trevor or Ty insisted on driving me to the police department.

I was helped by Officer Trozak, pronounced like Prozac. He didn't seem surprised, said the car was probably around the corner somewhere. I didn't ask if we were going to investigate. It was clear that he wasn't going to move from behind his desk. When I said the car was a Ford Focus he scoffed. Williams, his partner, warned me about the vulnerabilities of the model. Apparently, if you push a Focus with another car the locks will pop open. He wrote down my details on a half sheet of discarded bond. Silver Ford Focus, stolen between 10:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m., personal effects in the trunk—a camera, a tripod, an audio recorder, a pair of jeans, and a wool scarf. He called it in. I felt an acute sense of loss as he repeated my story over the phone. While he worked, Williams received a report for a UFO sighting. I took in the gray walls, water-stained drop ceilings, and falling posters. It was a parody of an underfunded precinct.

Afterwards I walked back to Enterprise. I was jumpy. I kept patting my pockets even though I know you're not supposed to do that. Keys, phone, wallet. Keys, phone, wallet. Troy or Trevor or Ty went through the details of the incident with me one more time. I woke up. The car wasn't there. No witnesses. I handed him the keys and police report. I signed here, here, and initialed there. It was a good thing I got full coverage. What about my stuff? Enterprise doesn't cover that. He gave me a Jeep Compass this time. I was too pissed to think about the gas mileage. Despite the setback, I was determined to have a good day. I could still make the 12:30 p.m. tour. On my way to Hitsville, I remembered a few more things that I'd left in the trunk.

American Apparel Easy Jean, black denim. Protac 2L Flashlight. Kodak #7266 TRXR464, three rolls. Minolta XL400 Super 8 Camera. Zoom H4n Handy Mobile 4-track recorder. Magnus VT-100 Tripod System with 2-Way Pan Head. Louise Dungate Herringbone Cowl in Gray. totes™ TITAN Men's Super Strong Large Folding Umbrella, black. Oral-B Pro-Health Clinical Pro-Flex Toothbrush. A black tie-dye t-shirt.

LOOK
AT
MY
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Syms

It was my favorite shirt. I bought it from a Wal-Mart in the Chicago suburbs years ago. It was five dollars and way too big. At some point there was a hole in the bottom half. It fit me well once it ripped. I had a good tear in the neck. The kind you pay for. And another one near my armpit that showed just the right amount of side boob. My uniform was that shirt and my dirty black jeans. I lost them both. I don't know what to wear anymore. Nothing feels right. Nothing feels like me.

Is it a stretch to say my stuff was me, or at least a part of me? I am discrete from what I own. I continue to exist while my possessions deteriorate in a Detroit alleyway. Am I the same? Was I changed by the loss? Of course, I was. This is why plunder has been an effective tool of psychic control for centuries.

In Charlie White's 2008 cartoon *OMG BFF LOL*, two valley girls wander through a mall making pointed observations about the human condition. With ample amounts of vocal fry, uptalk, and "like," Tara explains, "Life is about wanting to have, and then getting, and then having, and then, like, wanting more."

Having is how I understand. It rivals writing, image-making, and other forms of expression. Given the range of products in the world, consumption or representation is on par with making. Having is how I become clear about what I know, while wanting is about what I'd like to know. It's sick, I know.

Our relationship to products is interpersonal. Not only do we relate to and communicate with objects as if they were people, these goods talk to each other without us. Every item I own is part of a cosmology of goods. The global production chain links materials, manufacturers, and countries. The brand galaxy connects retailers, advertisers, magazines, and demographics. Every stage of the sales funnel is haunted by race, class, gender, and geography. What doesn't the commodity communicate? Or as curator Hamza Walker recently asked, "Is it even possible to talk about the psyche without going through the commodity?"

We find ourselves in the latest stage of late capitalism. Objects are figures. The readymade displaces the space of a human body. We have a very sensitive radar towards the hyperreal. Siri feigns humanity, causing vitriol and painstaking attention to its (her?) shortcomings. I can't help but think about RealDolls, life-size sex toys made famous for silicone flesh, anatomic correctness, and posable skeleton. They freak me out. It's the simulacra. The hair is always askew, the face too doughy, the breasts three sizes too large. The

more anthropomorphic the product, the more we malign it as a culture. We prefer not to encounter the body rejected. Successful products embody instead.

The breathing light on my computer lends it an air of sentience. A pile of shoes transform into open mouths—surprised, slack-jawed, and tight-lipped. I have an army of books always standing at attention. The blanket swaddles me in a salmon-colored capsule pattern. My mugs have chipped teeth. The *objets trouvés* in the bedroom lack the *joie de vivre* of those in the living room. The couch is charming. The lamp, quirky.

The immaterial is spirited as well. I have a similar connection with programs and operating systems. I miss Rockett's New School, 3Do, OurTunes, Winamp skins, AIM, BBM. Those were a part of me too. Desires will change. Wanting will change. In a networked economy, the value of a commodity is dependent on how well it connects us to our individual desires. Relationships between humans aren't as important to us as we previously thought.

Hu Fang writes, "Our lust turns to vapor in a world of gray, eventually condensing into color pictures in a magazine or posters at a bus stop. This is the essence of collective desire." It's easy to dismiss this idea as solipsistic. There's got to be more to life than other people's shit. I want more than wanting, having, and wanting more.

In the middle of Harmony Korine's 2012 film *Spring Breakers*, thug rapper Alien (James Franco) spouts an inspired monologue in which he catalogs his earthly possessions to Candy (Vanessa Hudgens) and Brit (Ashley Benson). In the description of a video rip, YouTube user Chad L called it "the best scene in a terrible movie." It's certainly the most quotable. It is colloquially referred to as the "Look at My Shit" scene.

"This is the fuckin' American dream. This is my fuckin' dream, y'all! All this shit! Look at my shit! I got... I got shorts! Every fuckin' color. I got designer T-shirts! I got gold bullets. Motherfuckin' vampires," and so on.

Alien implores his audience—both the girls and the viewer—to look, visually consuming his assets so he can relive the moment of acquisition. Alien cavorts around the room showing off each item as he announces it. He literally and figuratively *has* shorts. He owns them and proudly displays them in his hands. The scene is absurdist, made funnier by Franco's white-boy cornrows and impish affectation. I laughed because his belongings are stupid and paint him as an oaf. Yet I

still recognize his proud ownership in my own behavior. The bulk of my creative output revolves around asking people to look at my shit.

I don't have a choice about being a formalist. The visual language of material culture is overtly formal. Line, value, color, and texture are applied in a uniform manner to manufactured objects. The grid is the readymade, not the object. What we see is determined by economic considerations. A line costs less than a curve. Regularity is cheaper than asymmetry. Abstraction has been a part of the vocabulary of stuff for as long as stuff has been employed to make art. The commercial world imposes a visible order on what we see and the conditions under which we see. When artists internalize these constraints, we get zombie abstraction.

Zombies are boring. Death is decidedly more interesting. My things are the ruins of past me's. It's important to be a bit metaphysical. Let the readymade reorganize our consciousness. Commodities aren't limited to a sensual experience. That is a fine-tuning event. The formal operates on the same level as the perceptual. However, we can't see thoughts. Material culture provides a new way of knowing. We make meaning from the corpus, using products to create sense of our interior. Everything we own, or owned, forms a complex matrix of our desires, goals, preferences and needs. It seems impossible to hit them directly, so we come from the side, through the shit.

Martine Syms is a conceptual entrepreneur based in Los Angeles, California. Her work examines the assumptions of contemporary America, particularly the way that identity and memory are transformed by the shifting boundaries of business and culture. From 2007 to 2011, she directed Golden Age, a project space focused on printed matter that she founded. She currently runs DOMINICA, an imprint dedicated to exploring blackness as a topic, reference, marker, and audience in visual culture. She has lectured at Yale University, REDCAT, SXSW, Light Industry, Project Row Houses, the Houston Museum of African American Art, California Institute of the Arts, University of Chicago, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Johns Hopkins University, Maryland Institute College of Art, and MoMA P.S.1, among other venues. Her artwork has been exhibited and screened extensively, including presentations at the New Museum (New York), Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia), MCA Chicago, Young Art (Los Angeles), The Green Gallery (Milwaukee), and White Flag Projects (St. Louis).



RAW MATERIALS

I've spent weeks putting off the inevitable ordering of my bookshelves. I sit on the only chair in the apartment, my feet resting on a box labeled "kitchen things" and stare at the empty shelves.

LEASES

I know people who have made an art of the extremely tedious task of viewing apartments; people who pass through a city visiting houses or rooms to let, unfurnished and rather dingy, only to go back to their own accommodation—perfectly habitable, and surely prettier—and imagine where they would put the piano, the writing desk, the bookcase in that other empty place. "Things, things, things," complained the poet Robert Creeley, "and nowhere to go."

Empty places have a fascination that at once stimulates and disconcerts us. The gaze—which is nothing more than an extension, a hand, of the mind—takes pleasure in and entertains itself filling up hollow spaces. Maybe this intolerance of absence is merely a malformation of the human mind. Pretentious Heideggerians might say it's just an ontic expression of a more deep-seated ontological condition, impossible to change: *horror vacui* expressed as the ocular amusement and mental pastime of filling spaces. Whatever the truth, I can't claim to be free of guilt. Although I hate moves, and empty apartments depress me, I've also found solace in furnishing certain spaces in my imagination.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

My face is different since I moved into this apartment. Something happened to it during the move. As if I'd lost the contour of my forehead amid the boxes; as if with so much dust, the curve of my chin had blurred. I study myself in the bathroom mirror while I brush my teeth and try to connect my nose to my brow, the right eye to

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the irremediable shadow beneath it, always darker than on the left: I have a face full of gaps.

A coffee, a newspaper on the table: I browse yesterday's news—skip the politics—go to the culture pages. Between a succinct article on Lichtenberg's aphorisms and an interview with Umberto Eco, I find the last portrait taken of Marguerite Duras. Today I look like that final portrait: a crumpled piece of paper.

I cut out the photo with the kitchen scissors and put it between the pages of a notebook; maybe it will come in useful some time, though I'll most likely forget about it. The problem for people like me who collect scraps of paper with no method or ultimate objective is that our boxes and notebooks come to look ever more like us: a disorganized collage and never a coherent catalog of marvels. If I find the photo of Duras again someday while rummaging in a notebook or a box, it will be by pure chance. And I don't know what that gaze, that hand holding a fountain pen as if it were her last grip on the world, would say to me.

URN Luiselli KET

OPEN ALL HOURS

I look for Marguerite Duras's *Écrire* in the boxes of books; I know it's going to be difficult to find, but yet again I'm not going to organize my bookshelves. What I need—and haven't found—is a system: does Borges go after Arlt, Poe, Stevenson, or the *Thousand and One Nights*? Do Shakespeare and Dante belong on the same shelf? It's difficult to know how much influence the title of a book has on the one next to it. Maybe books prefer disorder to the “mild boredom of order” that Walter Benjamin described while unpacking his library. In any case, accidental order can produce the best finds. There's a well-known anecdote: metaphysics was the accidental invention of a librarian who, on receiving Aristotle's masterwork, didn't know where to shelve it. Having deliberated for some time, he placed the newly arrived volumes after the philosopher's *Physics*. To remind himself where they were, he noted in his catalog: “*tá méta tá física*” (literally: “that which comes after physics”). By that same logic, which books would comprise the meta-Shakespearean category?

Maybe organizing the bookshelves is more effort than it's worth. True, books look attractive on the shelves and make a space feel inhabited, but when they wake from their vertical slumber, they have lives of their own. Some books even give life to others—like the ones Silvina Ocampo writes about, which, when left to their own devices, begin to fornicate and reproduce.

That book on the bed is a generous and undemanding lover; that other one, on the bedside table, an infallible oracle I consult from time to time, or a talisman against midnight crises; the one on the couch, a pillow for long, dreamless naps. Some books get forgotten for months. They're left in the bathroom or on top of the fridge in the kitchen for a while and are replaced by others when our indifference eventually wears them away. The few we really do read are places we always return to.

STORAGE SPACE

Between pages forty-two and forty-three of my edition of Daniel Pennac's *Comme un Roman*, a strip of Pepto-Bismol tablets past their expiration date; in John dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*, a terse postcard from New Delhi; on the last page of *Luces de Bohemia* by Ramón del Valle-Inclán, an address and telephone number; in Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*, chapter sixty-eight has been torn out.

Rereading begins in the comments written in the margins, the underlined phrases and scribbled footnotes; but especially in the objects left behind between the pages.

REAL ESTATE

After rooting about in one of the boxes, I finally find *Écrire* in a pile, between Natalia Ginzburg's *Lessico familiare* and Robert Duras. I'm afraid to reread her in case, this time, she bores me or seems affected. Or worse, in case I remember the person I was when I first read her, and dislike myself in her.

I open the book but don't read anything. Instead, I find between the pages an Indian railway ticket from my teenage years:

Return Ticket. Train No. 6346. Trivandrum Central to Victoria Central Station. One six zero Rupees only, no refunds please. Happy Journey.

Going back to a book is like returning to the cities we believe to be our own, but which, in reality, we've forgotten and been forgotten by. In a city—in a book—we vainly revisit passages, looking for nostalgias that no longer belong to us. Impossible to return to a place and find it as you left it—impossible to discover in a book exactly what you first read between its lines. We find, at best, fragments of objects among the debris, incomprehensible marginal notes that we have to decipher to make our own again.

FURNISHED APARTMENTS

“One does not find solitude, one makes it,” writes Duras. Flipping through the pages of *Écrire*, that’s the first phrase I find underlined. I can still catch an echo of its original intensity, but I’d be lying if I said I knew why it was that phrase, and not some other, that struck me so forcefully at the start of the long train journey back to Mumbai. I probably understood something for the first time, but have now forgotten what. I probably found words for something that I’d long been trying to articulate and that ceased to matter once I’d found those words.

My memories of the two years I lived in India as a teenager are fragmentary, ephemeral, almost trivial. I conserve impossible images. There are faces that I only manage to recall in two dimensions. I visualize myself in the third person, always in the same clothes—a long, scrambled egg-yellow dress, my hair tied back with a white handkerchief—walking along the same street, which, I suspect, is a superimposition of many streets. I know that some memories are a later fabrication: fantasies embroidered during a casual conversation, exaggerations sculpted in the different versions of a paragraph I wrote over and again in my letters home.

I do, however, remember the books I read during the years I lived there and the voracity and devotion with which I underlined certain sections of them—sometimes entire paragraphs were underscored twice, once in pencil and once in ink. I think it was Gertrude Stein who used to say that people become civilized before they turn twenty. I don’t know if I’d become civilized by then—or if I ever shall—but I did become a reader during those years and have never again read a book with the same sense of rapture. My world was shaped by books—not vice versa. A train journey—the chai vendors; the blue plastic seats that made your legs sweat; the impossibly large families picnicking on the floor of the carriages; the immense, beautiful, complex, fucked-up country out there—was a mirror to Duras’s *Écrire*, Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist*, Orwell’s essays, Borges’s *Ficciones*. I used to sit on the steps of one of the open doors at the end of a carriage and light a cigarette, take out a pen and pencil for underlining, and read until my eyes burned. Remembering, according to etymologists, is “bringing back to the heart.” The heart, however, is merely an absent-minded organ that pumps blood. But rereading is not like remembering. It’s more like rewriting ourselves: the subtle alchemy of reinventing our past through the twice-underscored words written by others.

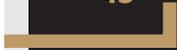
FLITS AND MOVES

The portrait of Duras between the pages of a notebook. The notebook on top of a box full of books, which serves as a table. And on top of the notebook, a half-empty coffee cup. I take out the portrait and study it once more. Today I look like Duras.

I go back to my own face: I see there the many faces that have formed me, the family tree of features, the genealogy of every facial expression and gesture. There's a line drawn by my mother's cheerfulness, shadows beneath my eyes as heavy as my father's weariness, a pair of attentive lines on my brow that the two of them impressed on me. There's a curve of the mouth, which some grandmother has slipped in; a look in my eyes that recalls the exiled loneliness of my grandfather; an expression that is the early-onset dementia of my aunt. But this face, my face, like all faces, is not only a collection of traces—it's also the first draft of a future face. The mutable substance of the skin is always unfinished—its folds reveal a direction: an uncertain but already present future. Like the raw material of a sculptor, which, from the first moment, suggests the figure that will emerge after being worked, a face encloses its future faces. In my young face I instinctively read a first wrinkle of doubt, a first smile of indifference: lines of a story I'll rewrite and understand on a future rereading.

Valeria Luiselli is a Mexican novelist and non-fiction writer. She is the author of the book of essays *Sidewalks* and the internationally acclaimed novel *Faces in the Crowd*. Luiselli's short fiction and non-fiction pieces have appeared in magazines and newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *Granta*, *McSweeney's* and *Dazed and Confused*. Her work has been translated into multiple languages, and in 2014 she was the recipient of the National Book Foundation's 5 Under 35 award. Her forthcoming novel, *The Story of My Teeth*, will be available from Coffee House Press in the fall 2015.

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A father
A mother
A father
A father had been

A father had been watching beside his child's sickbed for days and nights on end

A mother had been watching beside her child's cage for days and nights on end

She went into the next cage, the door left open

After the child had died, he went into the next room to lie down, but left the door open

Mother and cub kept in tiny cages, to restrict movement

She could see from her cage the cage in which her child's body was

After a few hours' sleep, the father had a dream running headfirst into a wall

He could see from his bedroom the room in which his child's body was laid out

An old man had been engaged to keep watch: they are confined so bile can be extracted from their gall bladders and sold for use

The bears try to kill themselves by punching themselves in the stomach, to stop this they are fitted with iron vests

The bear is a good mother, a good father

The father had a dream that his child was standing beside his bed, caught him by the arm

He could see from his bedroom the room in which his child's body was laid out, to be milked daily for bile, harvested through a permanent hole

After a few hours' sleep, the father had a dream that his child

The mother had been watching beside her child's cage for days and nights on end

She whistles to the dark in another dark: Hail nothing, full of nothing, full of bile, my boo

Anywhere, you can open it anywhere, to use it up or save to use later

To expose here the reason why I choose not to do so

Why I choose not to do so, to expose here the reason why I choose

That has held one up, that one has held up

Has held up, that one has held, held one

Which does not rise again,

Depths out of which one does not rise again

Rise again, depths out of which one does not rise

Goldman

In my heart lies no common heart
Lies no common heart in my heart lies
No common heart

The bear is a good mother, a good father
His child was standing beside his bed
His child was standing beside his bed, caught him by the arm and whispered to him reproachfully:
The head is included in the body but the head is not. Included in the body is the body but the head.
A head inside or beside the head, dark with dark
Meat given a head, in favor of head ablated
Non-localized head in the lungs, which is the sensible form, a shallow depth
Banded lungs lunged, climbed through the flesh, and I
Burned through myself, I burned through

Opens, defecates, closes; fecally, through an artery
The skin goes the way of all flesh, passing through its own skin, burning through

The bear woke up, noticed a bright glare of light from the next room, hurried in
Body set alight, set the body alight: namely, that a candle had fallen over
Seeing the light through his closed eyes
The burning of his child's body the father sees through his sleep
That the candle has fallen onto the body
The father had been watching beside

The mother had been watching beside her child's cage for days and nights on end
The room in which her child's body was laid out, with tall candles standing round
An old man had been engaged to keep watch and sat beside the body murmuring prayers:
Hail nothing, full of nothing, full of bile, my boo
A call heard within death
A call heard within sleep

The bear, a good mother, a good father
 A father had been watching beside his child for days and nights on end
 After the child had died, he went into the next room to lie down, sleeping in the face of an external death
 His child was standing beside his bed:
 Father, do not you see I'm burning? *Vater, siehst du denn nicht dass ich verbrenne?*
 I'm burning, father, can't you see
 Father, can't you see I'm burning
 See the light where my feet touched the ground
 I burned through myself,
 I bursted my britches, what purse or pocket
 Each time burning a new hole
 Father, can you see if I'm burning, you could see its skin pushing through
 He looks just as if he is asleep,
 In the flames that the fire bears on
 The old watchman had dropped off; the wrappings and one of the arms of the beloved child's dead body had been burned by a lighted candle
 He himself warned his father, Father, can't the child be once more as alive?
 Yet awakens to a corpse, a missed appointment: to meet the child at its death

Child-cadaver,
 father-survivor

Let the dream go on, prolong by that one moment

To awaken unto death and yet, live

The bears have their gall bladders milked daily
 Bile, a digestive juice, is harvested through a permanent hole in the abdomen
 In the gap between death and life
 The mother had been watching beside her child's cage for days and nights on end
 They are confined so bile can be extracted, mother and cub kept in tiny cages
 She went into the next cage, the door left open
 The mother bear broke out of her cage when she heard her cub in distress

Is it not, in the dream, another reality
Is it not, in the cage, another reality
What is he burning with, where did words fail
That his body might be on fire
She heard her cub in distress before a worker punctured its stomach to milk the bile

The bear is a good father, a good mother
Cropped out or with his face taped over hers or his face taped over his, her face taped over his
Bears can be farmed
Bears can be farmed for their bile for twenty years, before they are killed
The hole is open permanently, susceptible to infections and diseases that cause the animals unbearable pain
Flip onto your back, stare at the dark, back and staring in the dark:
Hail nothing, full of nothing, full of bile, my boo
Pursuit of life by means other than life
The mother bear rushed to its cub and hugged it until she strangled it
Before running headfirst into a wall, killing herself
Put mask over your own face first, face first
Press to flatten or reduce in bulk, to press: to flatten or reduce in bulk
A mother bear has strangled her cub, then killed herself by running head first into a wall to save them both
To use up or save to use later
To expose here the reason why I choose not to do so
She is trying to close her account
Terminated the account, the mother terminated the account

A field takes the field by force
Never have I been permitted
Never has the meadow permitted
A meadow, as if it were a scene made-up by the mind
Wishing to see the child alive again
The father had a dream that his child was standing beside his bed
Father, do not you see that I'm burning
It is only a dream of the grass blowing

father mother father mother

mother mother mother

father mother
father

mother

Judith Goldman is the author of *Vocoder* (Roof, 2001), *DeathStar/rico-chet* (O Books, 2006), and *I.b.; or, catenaries* (Krupskaya, 2011). She teaches in the Poetics Program at the University at Buffalo and is at work on _____ Mt. [blank mount], a project that writes through Shelley's "Mont Blanc" in the context of past futures and future histories of ecological catastrophe.

“An unhappy people in a happy world.”

—Wallace Stevens

Lay tent up gasping. My wind-, my husband gulls & great impatient misery.

Blake’s simultaneous year, hoarish, spacelike. Little imagettes. Little Egyptian tombs or obstacles.

Tiny pigs ‘to eat the moon,’ cardinal hymn, solar circuit (soaked in methylated).

Cardiac, discernible thing—now this is the name you consult it while wearing that great mystery.

‘Gary’? Well you look like a dick to me so I think I’ll call you Dick.

Then let me be propitious, so-called wild beet or blasted teeth drawn of time, whole lapse, drawn act condensing of entrances, others occurring as later ones, then out onto pulsations: a boat w/steps, stacked out—completely mismanaged and seeking consent—iced or rained out.

Leafing yourself of the leaf. All the gasplant kids were juvenile delinquents. Or wind out of three lives & into this spell is for finding your house of life (300 yds. back of that other house).

Meaning: we observe these diagrams, an entire book.

He spoors loves from her heats into sheep and goats. So that we can say that, in *this* one, b/c he talked so much: My back is that, my phallus is, my liver my knees those.

My hinder parts are those.

This is culture’s body, Nature’s (painting) of vibratory waves, invisible as science (isn’t frivolous): the spider carrying the produce, excusing herself

C.J.
LAI
(5/15)

Martin

into compound debt, the flesh that's only-, or isn't the flesh but around it like winds or narratives (next chapter's central).

“both matter and its conditions for being otherwise” (E. Grosz)

—tells us of heights. Dismisses us just as this physical man, elided w/earth—or lands in a tree to deepen context, whose hold, whose easy hitch is devourer of thatch on thatch. Windfall could tell him to his face & the wave is on him (throw on throw).

So this mode of life, errors of spirit, *form gulping after formlessness*.

His faith from sleep, which rejects vision, makes a special hole.

Fact of *having* survived. “Red Rain” (or any on record), grass, Gulf, home from Gertrude they decided to stop.

Gory talk (not tell what it was right away). Untangle ‘myth’ in these movies: feelings, lives, edges—gave themselves out as interesting,

coastal motif, kind of pervasive wind stream or current, a series of knots, identifying themselves

& now a few others—circular, specular—kept in memory how?

“clouds over the house / after this much time getting dog-eared” (L. Eigner)

Thirteen meditated fields composing of countrysides, together w/weariness. High-pitched tall grove, trivial reason. Blind lantern language I recognize my solitude.

Of material sadness (on one hand) fused b/w stones, visibly upward flaming, camped in a locale.

Had barely bent against fences ('face' penciled in later), pushing filthy dead cypress—little mess to emphasize the tough answer'd been given—& set a taper b/w stones.

Wouldn't want to ply down chronicles, Tom Goodnight's, runs of the mill, who shared hopeless back rooms, slept in shifts, cup in hand (jobs, bosses).

—It's other people after all, & only 2 types, Big View from the 25th fl.:

Same exact honeymooners, same personal phone calls, two-week extras.

& some Babylonians (same twisted-off ticket).

Furled cloth of those kids, unfurled flags on whose shoulders & grief

forms the curls of his hairs, whole, haloed—& aegis of that—savage tone of this book.

“I have a little coffin in my pocket.” (J. Genet)

Against which mummies, mummy truths (merely ephemeral), against film (& it does appear present): Unmagical life—

Nature's a total embarrassment. & I've *never* felt right. People *live* that ovation (sense). This conference stirred beyond a meeting point (just before the actual meeting).

Coughing form among lessness. Some are lifers.

But we were it, we were judge of that, dazed, till one day pulpit: habitation of being it, cook stove connected, went to comprehend the scene.

Where the beast woke Helens of this purchase, some regime ornamented (not war)—Hippie Phyllis, bringing inscription/song to touch, to remove bad paintings.

Flashed from natural fire, not completely blown away, & oversized scars, sawed off & carried over.

So often now there's this block-off, this talk of crooks stood up, sloped to a point—heard persons hitting.

Walked the balled-up street, crying from wind. Further life blurred.

To city market w/inside rot, from criminal arborist.

Shortens over the wound. Looks a lot like graveyard where circle was, blurred trees & lists redwood from helenite.

'The natural man,' I said to Eric, talking maybe too fast, but outward, to dig in his heels & hands (& not explaining the accents),

the new oldness, afraid I was close up to Coleridge again, & fields overlooking washing (American pres), vivid time in Blake's sunny grove, spell becoming weird (curious, rambling, different besides hollow, proud)

'—*empty relic of words.*' Ring them like bells & write our names inside: Bill, Mark, Florence stayed, Lewis wuz here, they made beehives from Scribner's, Blues coming out, Spector getting in touch.

Then "Being picked off panic-stricken from behind trees," so "liberty, under orders, [...] in open formation." (WCW)

& then, this evening, nobody (how discreet—no companionship).

So condensed them to me ('Condensing I think I can do sometimes.' H. Adam): more extreme wavering vividness of form—long ballad—in mosquito weather.

Or 2 of us fix things & finish my little detective story as *warfare increases and trees get wings*.

Weather changes w/him, broken up so let's let them hunt us out w/in us, in theaters on a plane of the whole man,

planed autonomous trunks, come up to focus. Whisked out from under falling trees, numbered copies.

Ghosts of my 15th year: old themes & partners protest

from the middle of all of it. & myth, maggotlike (take my hand)

Supplant political closure—that entire revision, about the bitter following object, of his mourning, like a difference recalled,
& the body translucent (quiet pretty eyes, never tell you lies)

Shall we be found hanging in the trees next spring?

His little life w/him, experience terrors, returning to a debris field—face it, *have* it (thinking loneliness loneliness)

Outlying the work—to shake boredom of his life (that's all she wrote)

& personal time again, bare lips, nature in general, wants to, only laughs above first frenzied intellect, up again,
wipes breath against particulars of life—drawn graves, last poems—no sense yet in stopping.

--

So pedaled off to an open mind of sentences, this winter curled-up, open vowel (at the end), unprinted radius, whispered into.

In less than an evening getting coolly precise, imagined hanging herself, had ridden past the 24th chapter (as she put it), was confined (on a cliff) & pedaled off.

Towards mind, life—the 'actual' thought—alone. False premises thrown at European mgrs. & overcorrects somehow now towards material wretchedness—to get more bewitched, more thinglike.

To embody live thought (Artaud's premise), to breach the self-protective carapace—b/w expository text, dis-order, and these mystical bodies.

What humanism is loveable? (idea one has)—stupid, Gothic parallel

'Everyone else not real—very distant small figures.' (S. Sontag)

C.J. Martin is the author of *Two Books* (Compline, 2011) as well as some chapbooks: *Medical Parts* (NewLights Press, 2014); *LAND* (Compline: Crux #1, 2014); *2012* (Supersuperette, 2013); *Unused Cover* (Portable Press @ Yo-Yo Labs, 2013); *1978* (Self-published, 2010); *WIW?3: Hold me tight. Make me happy* (Delete Press, 2009); *Lo, Bittern* (Atticus/Finch, 2008) and *CITY* (Vigilance Society, 2007). He lives in Colorado Springs, CO, and works as a bookbinder. With Julia Drescher, he runs Further Other Book Works, a poetry imprint and binding/letterpress job shop.

"Land" was written in Granbury and Austin, Texas, in the aftermath of the tornado that killed my father, Tommy Martin, and my grandmother, Marjorie Davis. My mother survived, but was with them when the storm tossed my grandmother's home a few hundred yards away. The poem takes Wallace Stevens's "The Auroras of Autumn" as a kind of grief counselor. The disaster was inexorably public, and the public talk about what it meant, inexplicably pious. In the midst of that, Stevens's questions kept company with my own, kept me company. This poem was first published in a chapbook of the same name in Compline's Crux series in 2014.

Horrible miles across crimes, under Saturn (very distant). Moralizing the world, to reach the margin.

Then from the off-white arms of that group, motions off, loosely painted. Loose brush lumbering to work.

Had the water of some industry then, result of shit taken "f/the bosses," got called in, so to speak, that spring, if you could use it, & moved aside again like some split atom.

Cuts off all of life before. Lucky process of life & having it over, a friend that adventure, all demand that was built on luck, w/Clyfford's eye of seeing Holophernes, cut this painting off at crotch level & Roy's a friend, very few f/his life before.

Old volcanoes, half-tropical lake, people likewise break into 2 halves (terms, color—I have time but *diffuse*, too much off center), like Jimmy's & Jack's, like Shirley Temple's, Maximus himself. & I'm trying, finally, to apprehend the difficult:

Visitors watch her watching her mother die, describe sometimes quiet edges, "mother had a schoolmate, nature maybe" (in-tow, in tune).

A kind of move in partnering.

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HEAD LIGHT PERFORMANCE SERIES

Caroline Picard invited us to co-curate two evenings of performance works to bracket the inaugural exhibition at the new venue

Sector 2337 that she and Devin King founded on North Milwaukee Avenue. She wrote about the exhibit, titled *The New [New] Corpse*, “The show concept began when Devin and I noticed different artists’ return to the figure. Conversation sprung up between us about how that trend echoed (or skewed) an older ‘crisis of the figure’ theme in representational painting; as we continued our discussions over subsequent weeks, thoughts carried over to newer questions about post-humanism, capitalist critiques, and the transformation of hierarchies. In what instances we saw, the figure seemed often distorted, grotesque, modified, or emphatically absent.”¹

This passage prompted us to think of the performance series as engaging the dialogue between human and nonhuman in a way that considers the human as a nonhuman event, and the counterintuitive possibility of dividing a concept of performance from the (present) human body. Philosopher Isabelle Stengers defines humans as “those whose souls are moved by the erotic power of Ideas, a power to be distinguished from coercive force. [...] What makes us human is not ours: it is the relation we are able to entertain with something that is not our creation.”² An Idea, writes Stengers, *causes* us to “think, feel, and hesitate.”³ The word *cause* does not imply a simple formula of cause and effect. Rather the nonhuman element (Idea), accessed by way of a practice, engenders the thinking, feeling, and hesitation that define us as human to and for ourselves. We might consider this Idea as the point of contact between the world and the body. Thinking, feeling, and hesitation connote the “sensorimotor un-

Matthew Goulish

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¹ Caroline Picard, email correspondence for *The New [New] Corpse* exhibition.

² Isabelle Stengers, “Including Nonhumans in Political Theory: Opening Pandora’s Box?” in *Political Matter Technoscience, Democracy, and Public Life*, eds. Bruce Braun and Sarah J. Whatmore (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 6.

³ Stengers, “Including Nonhumans in Political Theory,” 14.

Lin Hixson

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NOTES ON THE DEAD WEIGHT PERFORMANCE SERIES

derstanding” of human response.⁴ To be moved by the power of Ideas might mean not only to experience an emotion, but also to move: to lift a hand, turn a head, run, walk, blink, speak, listen. In the sense that nonhuman elements can be said to inhere “inside” the human body, inseparable from it as instigators of such moving or being moved, we proposed the theme of the human as nonhuman event. The phrase was our attempt to rediscover the fundamental relations between human and nonhuman and to rethink, through the medium of performance, the possible poetics of those relations. To borrow an illustration from Wallace Stevens:

At the earliest ending of winter,
In March, a scrawny cry from outside
Seemed like a sound in his mind.

...

That scrawny cry—it was
A chorister whose c preceded the choir.
It was part of the colossal sun,

...

Surrounded by its choral rings,
Still far away. It was like
A new knowledge of reality.⁵

Conversely, the body, like an anti-Idea, at times becomes as a physical encumbrance if not an altogether alien entity. Emerson wrote in *Self-Reliance*.

At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican, and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.⁶

⁴ This phrase derives from Alva Noë’s theoretical analysis of perception. Alva Noë, *Varieties of Presence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 65.

⁵ Wallace Stevens, “Not Ideas About the Thing but the Thing Itself,” in *Selected Poems*, ed. John N. Serio (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 304.

⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance,” in *Self-Reliance and others Essays* (Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift Editions, 1993), 34–35.

Performance, if tethered to the body (Emerson's inescapable giant), counts itself as a similar burden and responsibility, often seeming more trouble than it's worth—maximal effort for minimal returns. The law of the body is the law, like the law of gravity. The body thus subjected in performance may become a perplexed and disoriented throng, a porous and responsive nexus, difficult to control, comprised of many smaller parts each with their own agency in responding to other nonhuman elements—temperature, surface, other bodies, the pressure of watchful eyes. If the human, distributed among that web, atomizes and circulates with its nonhuman charges, is the weight of performance living or dead? Does it oscillate between the poles of animate and inanimate? How would the four invited artists reveal that oscillation as apparent, visible, necessary, and performable? We welcomed their varied presences and aesthetics and proposed these ideas as a provocation to them as they devised their works for the Sector 2337 context.

PART ONE: OCTOBER 11TH, 2014

MORGUE by Carlos Martiel performed by Cameron Borders, Laura Goldstein, Sara Legg, Carlos Martiel, Benjamin Pearson, C. V. Peterson, Arnon Rabin, Daviel Shy, and Edra Soto.

There is a still life on the gallery floor. It outlines bodies, fabric, climate, and breath. It is rooted to the ground and forms a hushed landscape that feels as if it could replicate itself again and again and stretch beyond the gallery walls.

Eight performers create the still life with still weight. They lie in a line, motionless on the cold wood, each covered by an American flag. The wide doors that front onto Milwaukee Avenue have been folded open, and viewers stream in along with the October evening air. People gather on the risers with no chairs, sit, and talk in hushed tones. The eight human shapes echo caskets returning from war except the flags are not covering wooden boxes holding dead soldiers. The performers are alive. The flags are thin, like sheets. They blanket them and illegally touch the ground. Stars and stripes conceal every part of the eight bodies except their bare feet, and one long hair braid, that extend beyond the edges of the flags. Ever so slightly, the bodies inhale and exhale, animating the flags with their breath.

How odd that this assemblage of animate and inanimate, of weight and stillness, of precision, simplicity, and detail, evokes the chaos of a charnel ground where unclaimed beings are left to decay, stirs thoughts of lives unlived, and invokes imaginings of an animal mouth behind the blank face of the dying.

While my wife at my side lies slumbering, and
the wars
 are over long,
And my head on the pillow rests at home, and
the vacant
 midnight passes,
And through the stillness, through the dark, I
hear, just
 hear, the breath of my infant,
There in the room as I wake from sleep this vi-
sion presses
 upon me;
The engagement opens there and then in fan-
tasy unreal,
The skirmishes begin ...

The Artillery Man's Vision
by Walt Whitman⁷

At the appointed moment the lights go dim, and Carlos approaches the row of prone figures in the spill of exterior light from the gallery's open front. He collects the flags one by one. The revealed people, in their dark clothes, stir as if waking, rediscovering the movement of their cold, stiff bodies. They stand and maintain their line as they file out of the room. Carlos leads them with his armload of flags.

VENTRILOQUISM for Dummies by Jesse Malmed performed by Jesse Malmed.

As breath moved Carlos's flags with discrete signs of life, breathlessness determines the rhythm of Jesse Malmed's monologue. Its stumbling syncopation leaves the listener feeling always a step behind its thinking, impossible to find a purchase on anything other than the halting tempo. Viewers sit on chairs now, set up on the risers during intermission, and Jesse takes to the front of the room, his text on a music stand, and a

⁷ Walt Whitman, *The Selected Poems of Walt Whitman* (Roslyn, NY: Walter J. Black, 1942), 276.

large box stuffed full of fragments (“miscellaneous papers and good ideas”) on a table beside him. Game-like rules or technological structures seem to constrain his language, each turn of phrase suggesting a mind doing the work of transforming itself into a machine. It’s a coding and an over-coding problem, a joke that leads with its punch line, or ends without one, or told as a sad story, or a sad story told as a joke—some wires have been crossed and the neurological network’s feedback loop has skipped a connection. What remains of the human when subject to such destabilized computation?

I sat in my studio trying to think of what autocorrected sculptures would be for just long enough for them to graduate me and make me move my papers and take away my brevity casket.

The first on my foot is
 USERS: a guide
 The OOO book about people

In *Thinking in Circles*, Mary Douglas summarizes Nelson Goodman this way:

This is part of his distinction between analog and digital systems. Analog systems are “dense” in the sense that the units of which they are made are not, like alphabets or thermometers, finely differentiated, whereas the units in digital systems have to be strictly differentiated. There is no sense in which they can be replete because they are constructed for purposes that focus only on certain limited properties.⁸

Here the analog units, replete with meaning and density, have been shoehorned into digital flat frame structures. Jesse explains:

I am watching thinking happening. When I first learned what a happening was I discovered I had always known what a happening was. That they call them paintings instead of painted is all we have to know about how things can live past the lives of their makers in their makings. If we believe in immortality or at least longer

⁸ Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles—An Essay on Ring Composition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 157 note 10.

► CONTINUED FROM P. 64

life spans it has to do with the parts of us that aren't in our bodies when they stop working. They're paintings and sculptings and jokings and thinkings that stay in other people's bodies and other people's homes.

Then he lifts a ribbon from his box. It reads FUNERAL. He says he found it yesterday, as he received word of the death of a former teacher, Max Friedenberg, the sole person responsible for defining:

a place that I first encountered the *this* that I've come to inhabit.

At once the oddness on display reinscribes itself as, if not mourning, then the uneven speeds and temporalities that loss leaves behind. Just then a picture might begin to form of the human mind as anachron, the machine that works against time, and human life as that which must keep restarting. We are always beginning, this performance seems to say. In musical terms, we are all exposition, no development, no resolution. He sings a song, and even that takes the form of a list of commands; Moondog's all-too-human (alt) creed.

MAKE AMENDS!
ALL ENEMIES I CALL POTENTIAL FRIENDS
CALM YOUR FEARS!
AND HOPE TO COPE AT LEAST A HUNDRED
YEARS
MAKE YOUR MARK!
IF NEED BE, EVEN MAKE IT IN THE DARK

Then without warning the unsettling extrusion of words and images that constituted the first installment of *The Dead Weight Performance Series* abruptly stops.

PART TWO: DECEMBER 18TH, 2014

CONDITIONS by Amelia Charter performed by Amelia Charter, Adam Kerbel, and Precious Jennings.

If the soul were seen, as the philosopher Franco Berardi sees it, as a web of attachments, attractions, and inclinations, what would it mean to put the soul to work?⁹

⁹ Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Soul at Work—From Alienation to Autonomy*, trans. Francesca Cadel and Giuseppina Mecchia (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), 10.

Conditions begins with a box: a five-foot gray cube of somewhat indifferent character, less art object than slightly flimsy storage module, situated on the gallery floor as if by accident. The audience gathers on the chairs in a loose arrangement lining the walls, not completely encircling the area. The box is angled, closer to one of the walls than the other, and there are no chairs between it and that near wall. People have some difficulty seeing over or around the box. It obstructs one person's view of an old friend across the room. He stands up to wave to her.

The box has double doors on two opposing sides. Three of these four doors fling open. A woman crawls out. Another, seated upright with her legs to her chest on a wooden slat floor, stays inside. The opening affords a view through the hollow box, briefly transformed into a thoroughfare, to the audience seated opposite. Once out, the crawling woman shuts the doors with her head and stands. She pushes the box, weighted by the other inside, moving it to another part of the room. The closed box becomes a container of finite space and asserts its hold on its human contents, the object inside. Once delivered to its new position in the space, one of the doors gently opens and the second woman emerges. She moves slowly along the perimeter of the audience, demarking the space with long steps. A man appears from a corner. He holds a contorted posture, then glides, falls, and later, with one agile leap, squats atop the box. The performance evolves in constant, measured motion, in disciplined and concentrated movements that do not conform to any recognizable technique. The precisely composed clothing inhibits as much as it enhances each movement and moment, fitted garments tailored of unusual materials, dresses, a shirt, a jacket with a hyper-real zipper. It appears that each of the three performers has a set of individual rules to follow, guiding their choices according to some subjective game theory. These codes of activity, not complex in themselves, produce complexity in their collisions and interference patterns. Beginning out of stillness, the performance ripples in transforming images and arrangements for twenty-seven minutes, then diminishes, and returns the three of them to stillness again. During that time, audience members continue to reposition for a better view around the box.

Lucretius gave the Latin name *clinamen* to the unpredictable swerve of atoms. In speaking of Barardi's notion of the soul at work, Jason Smith says that the

soul is the clinamen of the body.¹⁰ It does not lie inside. It is the angle of the swerve when falling with other bodies, human or nonhuman. It spaces bodies. It vibrates, resonates, tunes, and tones. It responds. The soul is the body's inclination, or its aggregated set of inclinations. *Conditions* builds a corporeal web, interlaced between performers, box, directives, and surrounding audience. Freewheeling sprints, caressing gestures, piggy-back rides, Charleston dancing, a three-person cradling machine, a shoe or jacket left behind, and words spoken softly, create a grammar of sensation, sensuality, and sensibility. These three bodies, adapted to their imperatives, convene and orchestrate a world. The audience cannot isolate the guiding directives, but can read them through the performers' inclinations. This vibrating syntax seems, at times, to originate from the unseen internal workings of the skeletal, lymphatic, nervous, or circulatory systems. But the seen performance, tilled like a field in the gallery, reveals the soul at work.

THOROUGHbred by Jefferson Pinder performed by Alexandria Eregbu, Danny Giles, Jefferson Pinder, Marvin Tate, and Anna Whitehead.

The danger that the disaster acquire meaning instead of body. — Maurice Blanchot¹¹

The four running machines in a diamond formation have been networked, their speed modulators hard-wired together. Dark wires spill out of visible circuit boards beside revealed motors. They snake across the floor and entwine with white household extension cords from cyclopean lamps individually affixed to each machine: the bulbs turned to where each runner's face will be. The strewn entrails of the dissected, distributed mechanical body lay exposed, and those wires that do not terminate in a floor outlet converge in a rectangular wood control panel, smaller than a shoebox and with a distinct DIY look, waiting on a table.

The gallery lights go out and Jefferson Pinder clicks on the four lamps. They illuminate the room evenly, and one can see the faces of the audience encircling, standing or seated. Jefferson, wearing semi-for-

¹⁰ Berardi, *The Soul at Work*, 9.

¹¹ Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 41.

mal dark trousers, vest, and white shirt, takes his seat at the control table and initiates his meticulous dialing. He powers up the unpeopled machines, incrementally increasing their speed from zero to maximum. At each plateau the drone intensifies, and at the minor climax, at the treads' most feverish spin, a wind fills the room and the floor vibrates. No body is unaffected. He treats the machines as instruments, demonstrating their capability, before dialing them back down. The ensuing silence summons the four runners, each wearing a grey boxer's robe and running shoes. They file in and step up onto their respective machines, all facing away from the controller and toward the gallery's entrance.

Jefferson cues them with a metal spring bell that one might find on a bicycle's handlebar. The treads hum, and they walk. At another bell, they discard their robes, and the revelation of their four bodies, nude but for their running shoes, annihilates the symmetry that had dominated the image. Four radically diverse presences, bodies that, when exposed, expose the limit of the signifying order.¹²

The *Thoroughbred* of the title informally connotes an outstanding individual or case. Formally it refers to a pure breed, especially of racehorse. One might consider the animal and the human, as in Gilles Deleuze's passage from *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*: "This is not an arrangement of man and beast, nor a resemblance; it is a deep identity, a zone of indiscernibility more profound than any sentimental identification: the man who suffers is a beast, the beast that suffers is a man."¹³ Regarding the other meaning, of an outstanding individual, we might think in terms of identity, of the five performers as African-Americans, with this identification posed in the form of a problem; diversity apparent within the similarity, and the disquiet of the ill-fitting classification. Each body type and skin tone (let alone tattoos) disrupts any consistent sense of "breeding." Yet one cannot dismiss the nervousness of the image. Its simple parts refuse cohesion. It resembles a Muybridge photo strip of the running human, a visual image with no ambition regarding aesthetic value.¹⁴

¹² Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 25.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), 23.

¹⁴ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 90.

It could be a study of the historical resonance of black bodies, confronting the notion of African-American identity as primarily physical, commodified from slavery through sports; not a race against time, but a race against race. But even that confrontation has been mediated by the formation. The image reduces then reduces more. In inescapable and relentless mathematical sequencing for the next thirty-five minutes, the pace increases at intervals of decreasing duration, each a new rhythm and sound, like a Bach exercise in terraced dynamics, confirming this formalism of suffering. Each marathon terminates with pain. It is the pain that terminates it. The body's inevitable giving up, the stepping down, the sinking to the floor—it will always end this way. The controller approaches and drapes the robe across the collapsed runner's shoulders. An audience member feels compelled to act, and very discretely she brings a glass of water to the first runner to drop out.¹⁵

How do we understand that a person is in pain? Through a display of what Wittgenstein called “pain-behavior”?¹⁶ Breathing grows labored, sweat glistens, and legs wobble when the floor beneath them stops moving. The runners have the apparent task, upon stopping, of switching off their lamps. Each in turn tries to stabilize the hand, to discipline the fingers to close on and turn a switch. Insistent repetition emphasizes whatever happens next: after thirty minutes of running, ten seconds of switching off a light. Time implodes in a pinpoint of empathy, the apprehension in an instant of suffering as a visible relationship to the body and one's mastery over it.

The endurance test of this performance, agreed to by way of some shared contract, distills the human into its constituent parts and locates that zone of indiscernability in which the nonhuman asserts itself. Is it excessive to call this a limit case of life, a making legible the fearsome reduction to pure existence? The fourth runner at last steps from his treadmill. Jefferson approaches to cover him with his robe, then leads the exhausted quartet out of the room, leaving the audience alone with the stopped machines, darkened lamps, and silence. Call human dissolution the disaster, and retain embodiment's fundamental place, as to keep

¹⁵ Sabina Ott.

¹⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume I*, trans. G. E. M. Anscomb (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1980), §93.

experience central to thought, that is to say, come to know meaning as motion, through and from the body, its receiver and its generator. As this extreme event recedes, the human re-gathers its parts and dispels the topos of nothingness.

Every house has a door was formed in 2008 by Lin Hixson, director, and Matthew Goulish, dramaturge, to convene project-specific teams of specialists, including emerging as well as internationally recognized artists. Drawn to historically or critically neglected subjects, Every house creates performances in which the subject remains largely absented from the finished work. The performances distill and separate presentational elements into distinct modes—recitation, installation, movement, music—to grant each its own space and time, and inviting the viewer to assemble the parts in duration, after the fact of the performance, to rediscover the missing subject. Works include *Let us think of these things always. Let us speak of them never.* (2009) in response to the work of Yugoslavian filmmaker Dušan Makavejev, *Testimonium* (2013) a collaboration with the band Joan of Arc in response to Charles Reznikoff's *Testimony* poems, the ongoing project *9 Beginnings* based on local performance archives, and *Caesar's Bridge* (2014) a context-specific installation/performance devised in collaboration with Ilie Paun Capriel for Julius Caesar Gallery, Chicago. In 2014, Hixson and Goulish shared a Foundation for Contemporary Arts fellowship in recognition of their work with Every house and expanded their mission to include curation.

Carlos Martiel



CARLOS MARTIEL



Still from performance, Sector 2337, Oct 2014.

MORGUE



Missing from this text are several scraps of papers with stray ideas and jokes that were drawn from a large box of paper and read aloud at undetermined intervals.

You will never have as much time as you'd like. This is the basic premise of finitude, of procrastination, of mortality. If I could have waited longer, I would also decide that no one in this room would ever die.

I used to joke that I'd like to collect money and of course I've never learned to do that. But this year I've collected a little bit. I have this Turkish lire that Michael Rakowitz made and I won for spinning his Duchamp wheel of artist talk fortune, I have this five dollar Canadian bill that my maybe cousin and fellow Chosen Canadian Benji Pearson paid for a screening with, I have two—though it's hard to tell them apart—fifty cent pieces from Food Shark, the funny money and grilled cheese ancient monitor palace in Marfa. Last week Simon Pyle, an artist I just met, made me a receipt to prove I'd been there, with him, when we both performed. I find Costa Riches and Hungary forints, I am the reason the economy has stalled.

When you love a song and data is young, you find every cover that exists. In 2014, the image had the capacity to be completely informational and disposable. No longer did you even have to enter a number into your phone, when you could just snap a picture of it. The clouds were full of notes to selves. And the hackers knew directions to buying milk at soccer fields, getting to recipe meetings and wall didactics for AR and social practice making perfect, making media.

I spaced out looking at the reflection of the wall through the window on the floor, thinking about one of our century's great pop music minds writing a song for his dog. Wondering how many of the great pop songs are written about nonhuman animals. Wondering how we can identify a guitar as *dumb*. What it means to be smart, especially in the context of pop music. Experimental films that aren't experiments, pop songs that

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Still from performance, Sector 2337, Oct 2014.

aren't popular. The experiment is often the same—will they have me back again after this? Will anybody tell me they liked it? Liked me?

The movie poster says:

EXACTLY LIKE EVERYTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN
 I LITERALLY DON'T EVEN KNOW
 THE FEEL WEIRD MOVIE OF THE YEAR
 THE STARS ARE BEAUTIFUL
 THE ROSE AROSE, OUR SORROWS AROSE, ARROWS
 IN SORROWFUL ROWS
 MY DREAM IS TO BE ON A POSTER
 A TOUR OF A FOREST
 POSTMORTEM POSITIONS
 DAVID MANNING

Then the poster was on the wall. You had a job selling posters at colleges. Mostly John Belushi, mostly van Gogh, mostly Scarface, mostly MCs Hammer and Escher, mostly DJ Kwik, mostly DJ Tanner, mostly placemats of the table of elements. You are on tour. You are the touring merch table, smart enough to leave the band behind. The Pink Floyd punk flood drips down your pants and your mouth pants and with every salivating, we roll another one. My room is full. I bought everything you had. I have a life-size Bill Clinton and a life-size Michael Jordan. Yes, you are able to infer, now that it's 2014 I am thirty, like most months. Like how tomorrow I will be 370 months old. If each degree only shifts your perspective this much, well, no wonder.

This is a record that consists of occasional whispers. You're encouraged to listen to it at the same time as most anything else. Its b-side is the chatter at an all-perimeter Portland potluck. My friend Chris Rice used to bring cigarettes to potlucks. I hope we see each other often enough that this isn't the most pronounced memory I keep. We were each other's Kramers. Years later he made a video of every hacky scene transition from all eight-hundred seasons of *Home Improvement*. Only seeing half of a character's face for hundreds of hours of television is the closest thing to a *life practice* the air will allow. A thing like paranoia but that comes with privilege will make you think something is dedicated to you.

That makes you think people have come to a room to hear you. I can spend a week not knowing if I exist and catch a glimpse of myself having my glimpse caught on the surveillance screens at the drug store.

You look suspicious but also upset.

Magazines like TIME and LIFE and SPACE.

I sat in my studio trying to think of what autocorrected sculptures would be for just long enough for them to graduate me and make me move my papers and take away my brevity casket.

Frank Oz (with Franz Ugg and Phil Ochs) leads us through the impermanent collections (which is all there ever has been).

The first on my foot is
 USERS: a guide
 The OOO book about people

Sacramento, musically, is shredder weed.

I put a pocket on a new painting
 you put your wallet in it
 I put it on the wall
 in this story you and I are actually the same person.

I began receiving dedication calls. For Timmy, make yourself coffee. For LL, make more coffee. I scream into a speaker—tell me you are alive, tell me I am alive. Cool J, Bean, Frezza. L L L L L L.

Once upon a time that never was and always will be.
 Twice upon a nothing.

I make a pillow of just peas to teach myself a lesson.

Unnaming the nameable, I sign *felt*. Instead of, rather than but just in case. This is what's on the dollar bill if you read it inside out. Wracked with guilt for being mortal, you leave a clue at the end of the record in reverse. Esrever ni.

I trust fall at the grocery store, into all the newest vegetables. The calculations were quick, but I estimated a trillion trillion calories in the whole store.

A lawyer moving is mostly briefs in boxes. Underwears Waldo. Gauging the literary while the entire past is just waiting there and in the wrong order. A good organizational strategy is: things you made, things you didn't make, things you went to, things you meant to have went

to, things you went to that were yours, miscellaneous papers and good ideas. A pile for bad ideas is good but usually they just go in the good idea pile, which isn't bad.

If you live with your mom, make art with her.

Every UN summit starts to begin with singing together.

Your name yourself Moondog.

I still think Kermit T. Frog is the most expressive actor I've ever seen.

You tan in the moonlight and start looking like
Contemporary Art Daily.

I imagine that every movie and TV show about zombies is about The Zombies and everyone spends all day singing *Odyssey* and *Oracle* to each other, which we should do at least once a year anyhow.

When you don't have the internet, you have to make your own.

I learn that the local art paper is Buzzfeed.

You check my mail. It's a bill and something to someone else.

Maybe I'll just never see *Gone with the Wind*. I've seen
You've Got Mail.

You are Waldo and every picture has you in it.

I work at a bookstore but all we sell is journals and pens.

You still believe in stories but live in a basement.

I have a metric shelf.

I have a tombstone that says punchline.

You bury it and the funeral has a raffle.

There's a crossover episode where John Kerry is in
Barbarella.

Ronald Reagan and the bald judge from *Law and Order* are talking to Stuart Smalley.

Arnold Schwarznegger was my governor when I lived in California and movie bad guy Gavin Newsom was my mayor. He's not Jenna Elfman's cousin, as I thought.

We sell out of the Bill Nye Scientologist doll.

Would you rather have your own newspaper, TV network, museum, or government?

You answer brand. You answer social media martial arts—Rubys on Rails Rabbi, Google Griot, ello mullah.

This Thanksgiving I ask for at-one-ment.

Chubby Chess.

Gin and Pentagram.
Vegan again.
Pastrahm Immanuel.
Daly Newspaper.

I move all the way to Chicago only to discover the jokes
are about pizza and weather and bad baseball and worse
politicians. Deep dish pizzazz.

I hire an impressionist to be all my friends who live
faraway.

I go to the aquarium to eat dippin' dots and get my por-
trait done. I ride a bicycle and my head is thirty times
bigger than my body. No wonder.

It's 2044 and you are explaining what Facebook was
to your grandchildren. The internet is just wires and
pipes then. Internet art is very different then. Mostly
sculptures.

We burn DVDs for warmth.
I am grateful to have a home. Or at least borrow it.

Setting your watch forward won't save your life.

I left my memory everywhere. I outsourced some
things—the temperature in numbers, the order of the
alphabet. But mostly I keep them nearby.

A re-performance of political debates only requires one
actor.

I thought I'd painted my walls Champagne Yellow, but
it was just sparkling wine.
You look in the mirror and do your emoji exercises.
You have a long history in the second person.
The second city is you.
Where does Eugene rank?
Do they still call their babies eugenics? I think that's
in poor taste.
I don't like the smell of this.
I can't believe my eyes.
It sounds foul.
Touch. Just touching.
Just songs about petting animals.

I feel like one second ago I finally got folk music.
I lost it. I'm back. There's a dog at the door. It has black

eyes and I'm everywhere I've been when I'm at the edge of the wilderness, on a cabin's porch or a view with some room with a sign pointing its way or thinking I could fall into the trees and be caught or filling your whole body with sun while drinking first coffee. A well-made wake-up, all together, is the best thing we can imagine.

The name of the next song is the name of the next song is the name of the next song.

When we switched the rules of improvised comedy and improvised music, everything was better. The sketches were nutcases making jokes and living inside a world of their creation. The songs turned into riffs and ended high.

If you plan your shows in Chicago around the weather, the city's culture would cease to exist. Seasonal culture should be more than the grocery store turning into pumpkins at September's midnight. Local yogurt. When you're buying your arugula, get in, get in, get in. Summer songs for a full fall.

Before there was Twitter, I figured out how to text things from my flip phone to a blog I called *the most banal thought I am having*. On some level it seems to have taken off.

If a song is about a small town, I want to know which one.

I can't tell if I'm being obtuse or just over-sharing.

The history of pop music is filled with good moves. I'm so proud of us.

The age of the album was brief, but left a lot of waste in its wake.

The shortest film to win an Oscar. The feature novel. The half hour commercial. Jokes of scale are still my favorite. Also pretending things are documentaries.

You're listening to music at low as it can go. You are training your ears and the city breaks you.

A crisis in another similar community that goes unknown in yours is a failure.

I live above a record store and sleep on every great band. I've heard a lot of your names but where did I write them down.

You can watch your thoughts develop in several boxes, the internet and the other book that is just unlabeled notebooks. Your best ideas come when you're objecting to be subjected to someone's else's ideas or even when you're most subsumed.

Have we, as artists with musician friends, finally stopped wishing we were them?

When was the last time I slept in a hotel?

When all the apartments and cars and purses and wagons and doors and kitchens and hands and minds are galleries and everyone's car is a cab and everyone's studio is a bed and breakfast have you finally achieved work-life balance? How many tabs open is having it all?

If you're making a portmanteau, it's good to have the hinge be in the middle. Corned beef hashtag is better than Gin and Pentatonic. When you say JPAG JPEG JPIG JPOG JPUG JPYG (sometimes), only JPAG will make a dent. Put your punchlines at the beginning.

My razor is a microphone.
I secretly record our every conversation about *The Conversation*.
I go see The Whom.

Can a shower curtain cut rain?

It was only a few centuries ago that "it's like riding a bike" meant "the end of this sentence is gibberish."

I am grateful that I make a better door than a window, even as I keep explaining that I'm neither.

Snap Chant
(snap snap snap snap)
peas peas peas peas

A pencil going up, going down, going straight. We have special characters, they're worth nine-hundred words. Wingding rhymes with thingthing, sure, but also ding-wing and dindging and wingwing and ding-ging and wing-ging. I used to think less of *p* because of pseudo-

pod and Philadelphia and pneumonia and pterodactyl. Penising. But now I think p knows something I don't.

There must be at least a thousand religions. A thousand hundred, at least. And the patron saints point toward an urge for polytheism. Or poly-ology or poly-ging. I was named after the Hindu god Hanuman. And the Jewish bit character Jesse. And the western character Jesse. And the grandfather who died when my dad was four if he had been a girl or I had. I was born with Lauren as a middle name and at some point I changed it to Lorne. And that was all based on Lawrence, even though he was always Larry. My remaining middle names were after the English word for not nothing but maybe nothing in particular and, in Hindi, *mountain of peace*. Which is a tough name for a husky kid. Hanuman, though, is great. It's about service. About being half-wind and half-monkey, about trying to eat the sun because it might be a fruit, about tearing your chest open to show that those you serve are solidly inside your heart, about bringing a whole mountain back because you aren't sure which herb is the right herb. My dad's first name is J. The letter, not the name. He's always been Tony except for when he's been Govind. My mom has been Gayatri since her mid-twenties. We called my sister *baby* until she started pre-school. I won a nationwide search to name her Alexandra, which turned out to be too big for someone so small. Now she's bigger but mostly Ali.

I have no idea which herb is right. They all have purposes, even if that's just cushioning for the others. Some papers, you don't know why you have them until years later when it turns out now you know this artist or now you pass the place all the time or you have to put it back in the box because it doesn't make sense yet.

What happens if I run out of words? Where will I find more?

I don't know how the insides of doors work.

The nesting dolls of identity, in which and by which and with which and which which whither whether or not we wonder why but through which a band, a label, a listener, the song, the singer: one person sometimes.

“whatever else it is, love is the middle”, Creeley said again this morning.

If I write down
20 times will I know why? Zonker Harris, DDS
200?

I heard that the best way to combat surveillance was to overwhelm it, to send 10,000, text messages and wear an NSA jersey and tag your garage with your social security number and also all the others. When data becomes information, when information becomes knowledge and then feeling is somewhere floating around there but different. If I read this back to you in binary. If I weep while I count backwards.

So this is where it comes from. I am watching thinking happening. When I first learned what a happening was I discovered I had always known what a happening was. That they call them paintings instead of painted is all we have to know about how things can live past the lives of their makers in their makings. If we believe in immortality or at least longer life spans it has to do with the parts of us that aren't in our bodies when they stop working. They're paintings and sculptings and jokings and thinkings that stay in other people's bodies and other people's homes.

Yesterday I found this on the street. (FUNERAL). Yesterday I found this on the street a few minutes after I found out that my friend and teenage mentor Max Friedenberg had died. Max worked at Warehouse 21, the teen arts center where I learned about subculture, met everyone, attended, booked and was fevered about shows, taught a class, learned to screen-print, had meetings about consensus. It is important in building or sculpting or whatevering identity to have things to align with and things to fight against. After saying no to most everything, the last several years is a process of letting things back in. Narrative movies, turkey sandwiches, talking about weather, considering Led Zepelin. But being a teenager means realizing how bogus everything is and needing something to fill that gap or to keep falling. Max's other space was High Mayhem, where he lived. Sprawling, spangling and immersive. It was, as a teenager, a place that I first encountered the *this* that I've come to inhabit.

I have cool parents and grew up in a milieu of deep weirdos, but it was in seeing these artists—probably as old I am now—that revealed to me that art was a continually living, breathing and shifting thing and it's a thing that can be everywhere and has to be there and

it's a thing that's done on a domestic, somatic level and on some level it's a party. I saw my first experimental film there, Bill Daniel's *Who is Bozo Texino?* about the train-riding hobos and their intricate train-writing systems, projected half on the wall outside and half on the round stoned ground. I saw any number of out and improvised bands there. Among them was the Late Severa Wires, Max's band. Max sang and talked and made mouth sounds, which is all I could and all I can do, musically. Max also made videos, mostly just him in a room, sometimes with a minimal costume and accent. One cycle of these videos took place inside of his own brain, where he was a variety of workers, mostly specializing in jargon-filled expository expeditions.

One piece, *The Nearly Infinite Regression of Janus Shilling* goes like this:

THESE ARE ALL PERFECT EXAMPLES OF SOMEONE SAYING AND THESE ARE ALL PERFECT EXAMPLES OF SOMEONE SAYING THAT AND THESE ARE ALL PERFECT EXAMPLES OF SOMEONE... (and on)

the credits read: a film of Gregor Petrov, Janus Shilling as himself, special thanks to Urgently Weird Temporal Works, this short will have been made possible by the staff at control-alt-delete.org. He made it in 2001 and that's when I saw it.

I have shown that video since and it is my standard introduction when I start to talk with other artists about their Maxs, about people in their lives whose work—sometimes as art, sometimes as teaching, sometimes by example—was instrumental but who are under-known, even by the standards of under-known subcultural movers. That is to say, not my Robert Kelly or Peggy Ahwesh or Deborah Stratman, who are not famous but certainly famous, but Max Friedenberg. If you lived in Pittsburgh it may well be tentatively a convenience. I can't remember the names of the Maxs and the Tents in Joliet or Baton Rouge or Sacramento, but I've heard of some of them. I care about them for all the reasons you'd think—a curiosity about origins, a desire to valorize the under-valorized, and, on some level, I think there is the concern that, as they say, "what if we are not, after all, destined for greatness," what if the no money and no glory of this kind of work means it can be easily replaced in our days and in our nights and as *practices*, that an artist can stop making art and still be

an artist or be whatever it is when you're a big weirdo and title your routines and start calling things projects or have a child and realize that's the best piece yet.

I just finished one of the few terminal degree programs where you leave with the same job you started and it still doesn't really pay. I'm not saying this to complain, since the job description is also "do whatever you want whenever you want," but rather that this is on my mind and I apologize if this feels like

One minute ago I figured out where the word influenza comes from. I recall too how language is a virus and

Inertia and momentum,
Like how I would have done better in physics if they'd just told me it was poetry.

I want to reiterate for the first time. I want to re-re-it-it-er-er-ate-ate.

A person does not have to keep doing the thing they were first caught doing.

Not plagiarized correspondence,
more like a cover letter.

Dear whoever makes my dreams,

Birds—guidebooks in beaks—describing my friends.
Ghost Chef. Dog Chef. (The show and the job)

I am texting no one in particular, the conductor having ordered to us to stand by width, and every word appears in the closest paperback. Can she see this? Which was on a phone and then on paper. Is she going to look up? My texty, twiddly thumbs enter her eyes upside down and her brain turns them around without her mind even knowing and even though I set my mind to Airplane Mode, she knows it's me. A real idiot's idiot. Studs Twerkel, the DDSDJ. No more DaDA at the MoMA! Years ago we sang, "I demand a plan to ban the banned bar bands/ Oh, I demand a plan to ban the Bard banned bands" (from playing 'round here). Later at the spelling bee: B E

the feel weird movie of the year.

It's a cover, it's a beard, it's influence.

ARTFORUM

I join the Garfunkel fans online to alert them that I will be leaving some things in a mostly white room for a month and they might like looking at them. If they want to buy them, people there can sell them. They are closed Mondays but open Saturdays. The store has no music.

In the small town of my dreams, every inexplicable night sound is your friends asking you to play kick the bottle cap. I see Max and his car, the Ax. I see the dog named Starla. I know most dogs are named Luna. There aren't new cars. The man whose mouse sits on his cat that sits on his dog doesn't need another job, though maybe as a hobby he sits in an office. The fountain downtown has bubbly water. At Max's place, they record every show. You pay to get into shows but you get a free ticket to a past event, what used to be called CDs.

Fleece cowl Stellar.
Axe hire tubing those zings
width reform fee score:

Sex spawns off rashed snail pee,
fine sick snags off bloop chaise,
inn making
an sack hear bothered Blob.

Wheat aloes knee
an smell pleasing
snack ick o bug
tony flog four thickens.
Shed chant scope thesis thong
inn free read brag,
en wheel wi grow mead
hire Widely
ed gee strained tainting.

Bison from Buffalo that the other bison from Buffalo
bully will, themselves, bully other bison from Buffalo.
This is the cycle of violence, of bullying, of hapless, freezing,
behemoth bovines making other hapless, freezing,
behemoth bovines feel small, feel bijou, feel barely there.

But when Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo
Buffalo buffalo we know that Buffalo buffalo are not the
only participants in cycles of repetition, in feeling the
inside of a loop, in trying to determine if loop is the
word or if the things keep changing. Are the parameters
changing or is the audience?

But when Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo we know that Buffalo buffalo are not the only participants in cycles of repetition, in feeling the inside of a loop, in trying to determine if loop is the word or if the things keep changing. Are the parameters changing or is the audience?

Bison from Buffalo that the other bison from Buffalo bully will, themselves, bully other bison from Buffalo. This is the cycle of violence, of bullying, of hapless, freezing, behemoth bovines making other hapless, freezing, behemoth bovines feel small, feel bijou, feel barely there.

THANK YOU
THANK YOU
THANK YOU

(plastic bag)
title: I'll be here all millennium

IF YOU CUT OFF A SNAKE'S TAIL
Well, that's pretty much all there is.

How much do all the letters weigh?
a pangram

I go all over town trying to find a piñata shaped like a baseball bat, a two-by-four, a stick, or a blindfold. Sometimes writing down an object is better than having it.

I still believe in paper. When you move you discover how much of your life is paper and cloth. The best part of moving is hearing the acoustics change as you empty one home and fill another. Covers are a great way of organizing paper.

If I am ever not-languaging, I have pockets full of paper.

One of the great graces of this world is that you're only a teenager once.

One is a citrus fruit and has a color named after it and nothing rhymes with it. It comes in segments. You eat it at soccer games. The other is harder to segment, with seeds on the inside. You give it to your doctor. You rely on men named Johnny to spread them around. They both fit in your hand.

Fanta was originally short for fantastique and was made by the Nazis from leftover apple pulp when Coca-Cola made its sole ethical move of pulling out of an evil situation. Now it's an orange soda.

That's how you do it. That's you make comparisons.

Some nights every night is trivia night. No questions, no answers, no host.

Some product ideas:

Draw waking eyes and glasses on sleep-masks.
Reusable portable coffee cup handles to slip on standard paper cups and have ceramic to hold onto.

Hugo Balloons

Missoula Mezuzahs

Reordering of the species

It is enough to be here with you

When you are outside of a dog,

A party game:

Complain about your parents until you realize you're describing yourself.

Go to the dentist to fix your long lisp of mouth ailments.

A going away party

A furniture that is a note to self

A view that is defined but how much there is,
not what it is—like a big gulp

Forever Carl Jung

Business Cards

Like if your profession is Queen or Jack

DJ Dandelion plays all the requests
from collect calls, bars and bars and
bars, behind and before.

This is a song by Moondog:

DO YOUR THING!
BE FANCY-FREE TO CALL THE TUNE YOU
SING
DON'T GIVE UP!
THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO WIN A LOVING
CUP

DO YOUR BEST.
 AND OPPORTUNITY WILL DO THE REST
 DON'T GIVE IN!
 CAPITULATION IS THE GREATEST SIN
 DO WHAT'S RIGHT!
 WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU, TO DO WITH
 ALL YOUR MIGHT
 DON'T REGRET!
 WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, YOU MIGHT
 AS WELL FORGET
 STAND YOUR GROUND!
 AND WHILE YOU'RE STANDING THERE,
 BE DUTY-BOUND
 LEARN TO WAIT!
 AND WHILE YOU'RE WAITING, LEARN TO
 CONCENTRATE
 MAKE AMENDS!
 ALL ENEMIES I CALL POTENTIAL FRIENDS
 CALM YOUR FEARS!
 AND HOPE TO COPE AT LEAST A HUNDRED
 YEARS
 MAKE YOUR MARK!
 IF NEED BE, EVEN MAKE IT IN THE DARK
 MUM'S THE WORD!
 MY SAGE ADVICE PRETEND YOU HAVEN'T
 HEARD

Sometimes the end happens right when you most expect it. (Lights)

Jesse Malmed is an artist and curator working in video, performance, text, occasional objects, and their gaps and overlaps. His various pre-occupations include: Choir Conductor, Loveable Slouch, Paranoiac Research Assistant, Comic Concierge, Junk Shop Salesman, Re-Titler, Poet-Comedian, Traffic Caller, Bootlegger, Idiot's Idiot, Infinite Gesticulator, Pro Bono Closed Captioner, and Imaginary Television Host. He has performed, screened, and exhibited at museums, microcinemas, film festivals, galleries, bars, and barns, including the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Portland Art Museum's Northwest Film Center, Light Industry, the Shanghai Biennial, Crossroads, Milwaukee Underground Film Festival, and Chicago Underground Film Festival. In addition to his own work, Jesse programs at the Nightingale Cinema, co-directs the mobile exhibition space and artist bumper sticker project Trunk Show, and has programmed work in a wide variety of contexts individually, as a member of Cinema Project and as the peripatetic Deep Leap Microcinema. His writing has appeared in *Incite Journal*, *YA5*, *OMNI Reboot*, *Big Big Wednesday*, *Temporary Art Review*, *Bad at Sports*, and *Cine-File*.

CONDITIONS

A live performance with three artists, Amelia Charter, Adam Kerbel, and Precious Jennings who've taught one another their conditions.

There is a large wooden structure, a framework housing many devices that is never just one thing, yet something with its own haptic conditions made from and for holding these bodies.

Amelia Charter



Amelia Charter is a performance artist, teacher, and writer. Her interdisciplinary practice cultivates a bridge between human presence, objects, and place. Both her solo and collaborative work have been featured at a variety of spaces around Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Denver, and internationally in India. She was co-founder of Denver Performance Research, and received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. Charter is currently working with artists KJ Holmes and Elizabeth Watt, and is a sponsored artist at Links Hall.

AMELIA CHARTER



Still from performance, Sector 2337, Dec, 2014.

CONDITIONS



“Black people’s entry in the symbolic order of Western culture hinged on the theft of their bodies, the severing of will from their bodies, the reduction of their bodies to things, and the transformation of their sexuality into an expression of otherness.”

—Coco Fusco¹

Four treadmills are staggered closely together in Sector 2337’s storefront gallery in Chicago. Their controls are wired together to a single controller that sits behind them on a small table. The performance artist Jefferson Pinder dressed formally in slacks, a button up vest, and a white shirt, enters the gallery and sits at the table. One by one, four “runners” enter the room in white robes and mount the running machines. They stand with a singular focus, a bright somewhat harsh light illuminating their faces. Pinder using the controller starts the machines slowly. The runners disrobe and reveal toned, nude, athletic bodies. They start walking at a swift pace wearing only running shoes and socks. Each stares ahead, running faster and faster as Pinder increases each machine’s speed simultaneously, each increase preceded by the sound of a bell.

These bodies aren’t anonymous bodies. They are *black* bodies and with each successive escalation in speed, they breathe harder, sweat pours, and as an audience we are pulled into this exercise of endurance: theirs—sustained physical exertion; ours—how long we can bear witness to two black males and two black females running faster and faster towards physical collapse. The hum of the treadmills and the beats of their feet hitting the rubber, generates a rhythmic anticipa-

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¹ Coco Fusco, “The Bodies that Were Not Ours,” in *The Bodies that Were Not Ours and Other Writings* (London: Routledge, 2001), 5.

THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN

Wilson

tion that accelerates alongside each ring of the bell. Some audience members are in chairs. We were invited to move around the space, but many of us are frozen in our positions against the walls as waves of emotions wash over us like residue from the Middle Passage.

Pinder's metaphors are not lost on us. He skillfully exhumes a corpse of black captivity and subjugation of black bodies in America that started four hundred years ago, and brings it into the foreground into our present day experience.

Without any identifying clothing to mask the runners' common identity and give us any clues to project any illusions on as to their social status that might give us some comfort, time collapses. Each runner stays with it as long as they can, and drops off one by one, giving into their physical limitations. The experience unmask our own delusions that things have changed, that black bodies aren't still commodities of black flesh and toil in American culture.

Pinder employs an adept and restrained use of metaphor—like the bell, an instinctual symbol of Pavlovian conditioning and control. Using twentieth-century technologies like the treadmill, he also plants the experience in an inescapable present. He takes us into a zone that performs the enduring history of collective black trauma and positions it as a visceral, and formidable presence in the room.

Witnessing *Thoroughbred*, it is not hard not to be reminded of a host of examples of the exploitation of black bodies throughout history that form an uncomfortably close line to the present. Poet and scholar Elizabeth Alexander in an essay about the spectacle surrounding the 1992 Rodney King trial explains:

The American way with regard to the actual lived experience of African Americans has been to write a counter-narrative where needed, which erased bodily information as we knew it and substituted a counter-text that has in many cases become a version of national memory.²

We see the same counter-narratives at play with regard to the killings of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and twelve-year-old Tamir Rice. The recent film *Selma* directed by Ava DuVernay makes the fifty

² Elizabeth Alexander, "'Can you be BLACK and look at this?' Reading the Rodney King video(s)," in *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary Art*, ed. Thelma Golden (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 95.

years and circumstances since the march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge seem not so far away. The lived experience of black communities is discarded and black bodies continue to remain captive to xenophobia and persistent refusals to acknowledge black humanity.

The title of this brief essay refers to the 1985 book by James Baldwin that looks at the complexities of American race relations through the lens of the 1979–1981 Atlanta child murders. That particular story is a complicated one, but in his title Baldwin references Saint Paul’s faith in a common good as a means of hope. Pinder’s performative tactics in *Thoroughbred* provide “evidence of things not (acknowledged as) seen” and speaks meaningful inconvenient truths for us to hold and grapple with.

Fo Wilson is an artist, educator, independent curator, and writer. She is currently an Associate Professor of Art at Columbia College Chicago and writes and lectures about art, craft, and design to international audiences. Her work is exhibited widely and included in the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.

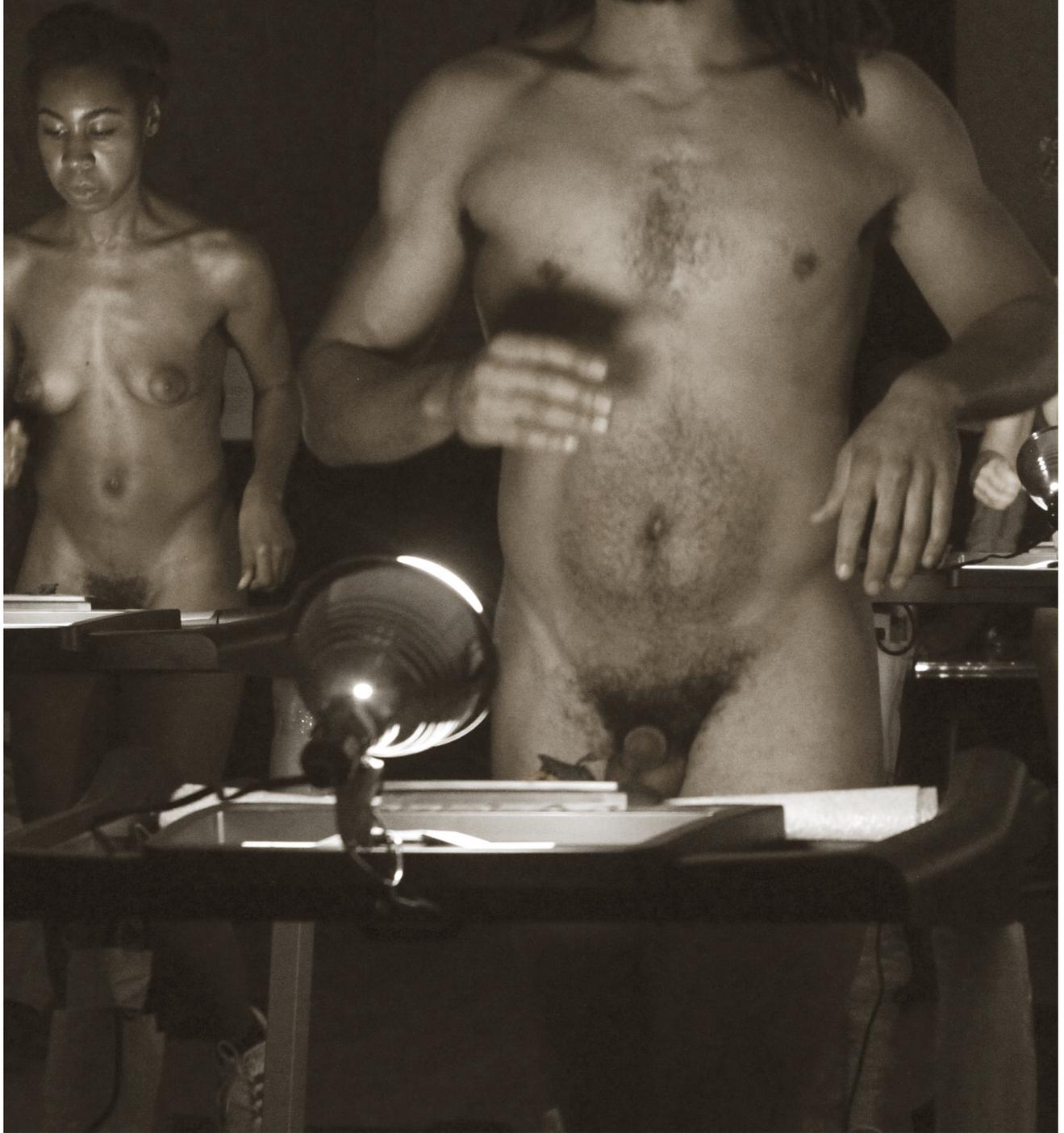
Jefferson Pinder



Jefferson Pinder, *Thoroughbred* (2014) with Noah Coleman, Technology Coordinator and Pablo Van Winkle Technology Assistant. Runners: Marvin Tate, Anna Whitehead, Danny Giles, and Alexandria Eregbu; Monica J. Brown (backup runner).

Jefferson Pinder is a Chicago-based video/performance artist, who seeks to find identity through the most dynamic circumstances. His experimental videos and films feature minimal performances that reference music videos and physical theatre. Pinder's work provides personal and social commentary in accessible and familiar format. Inspired by soundtracks, he utilizes hypnotic popular music and surreal performances to underscore themes dealing with Afro-Futurism, physical endurance, and blackness. His work has been featured in numerous group and solo shows including exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, Showroom Mama in Rotterdam, Netherlands, The High Museum in Atlanta, and the Zacheta National Gallery in Warsaw, Poland. He is an Associate Professor in the Contemporary Practices department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

JEFFERSON PINDER



THOROUGHBRED



Still from performance, Sector 2337, Dec, 2014.

BON AN MONS

NES ND STERS

INVENTORY 10 JANUARY 2015

*The inventory list is a citation of specific material experiences and facts.
It is a date-marked index of affects chosen according to poetic association.*

- floor sweepings road-kill remains
broom-gathered for installation cleanup
road dash (double)
packed & stored, left in plastic
Habersham Mills, Georgia
July 2014
- down pillow beached coot. Elbe River, Altona
hand-plucked, cleaned & sewn into one
American Airlines in-flight pillowcase
Hamburg, Germany
January 2014
- horse hair pulled from ice. Austria, December 2011
stitched as seam, connection between two
American Airlines in-flight pillowcases
Hamburg, Germany
January 2014
- loon skull beached. Elbe River, Altona
extracted for Jochen
Hamburg, Germany
January 2014

Beachy

VENTORY

OCTOBER

JANUARY

2015

- rabbit
pelt and meat hand-prepared from whole. Altona meat market throat slit, blood drained by butcher hand-skinned & tanned meat dried, pre-chewed and fed to *larus ridibundus* (laughing gulls) Hamburg, Germany
January 2014
- vertebras
opossum, found by groundskeeper. Habersham Mills, Georgia burned with structure left intact to graphite & calcium-white ash 8550 Ohio, Chesterhill
July 2014
- Cooper's hawk
found concussed. window collision died in borrowed USPS postal bin Harrison Street, Circle Campus hand-skinned, processed & prepared for Chicago Academy of Sciences
Chicago, Illinois
January 2013

Born in Denver, Colorado, Rebecca Beachy is a recipient of both an MFA in Studio Arts and an MA in Art History from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has taught at the University of Illinois, Chicago, and currently teaches Material Studies and Contemporary Practices at the Chicago High School for the Arts. Her sculptures, interventions and installations have been exhibited throughout Chicago and beyond, most recently traveling to Roving Room at Habersham Mills, Georgia and FRISE in Hamburg, Germany. Her writing has been published with the literary journal *Puerto del Sol* and will be included in the Center for Humans & Nature's 2015 collection of essays entitled "City Creatures." A volunteer specimen preparator and educator, Beachy periodically demonstrates taxidermy to the public at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum for the Chicago Academy of Sciences, Department of Collections.

“Law is us. And it’s the animals, and it’s our dreams, and it’s our stories, and it’s our relationships. It’s the way we talk with one another and try to persuade one another, and that persuasion of course involves many different traditions now. But that persuasion is a part of our law, and it’s not just for the parliaments and it’s not just for the courts. We have a role in taking that kind of action.”

—John Borrows¹

My dad likes to tell a story about “Zoe and the Big Fish.” When I was a little girl I yearned to be a fisherman. My mom and dad bought us fishing rods and my dad sawed them down so my little sister and I could cast off of the dock at our Northern-Alberta cabin alongside our parents. We had little tackle boxes with hooks and lures, and I would march down to the dock in my rubber boots every morning and cast into the shallows near the shore. Inevitably, my lure would get caught on the weeds that lurked around us, and I would shout out excitedly that I’d “caught a big one!” An adult, either my mom or dad, would have to come running down and free my line from the tangle of green weeds and algae before I repeated the performance over and over.

DECOL
Zoe
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NAME

¹ John Borrows, “The First Nations’ Quest for Justice in Canada,” Public talk, Victoria, BC, Canada, April 26, 2013, accessed June 21, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8P1Ab2o0xzE>.

Todd

COLONIAL DREAMS: UNSETTLING THE ACADEMY THROUGH NAMEWAK

One day the routine changed. I marched down to the water as always, my little legs carrying me purposefully to the end of the dock. I cast out into the murky weeds. And suddenly there was a tug on the line! I tried, as much as my little five-year-old body could manage, to reel the fish in. The line kept tugging.

There was an ominous “ZZZZZZZZZZZZ” as the fish pulled the lure and line out and away from the dock. “I have a fish! I have a fish! I HAVE A FISH!”

Nobody inside the cabin stirred. My family was so used to my false alarms that my shouts were mere background noise. Finally, my parents looked out the window to see their five-year-old daughter struggling mightily with a fish. They came running down in a hurry, and my dad took the line from me, reeling in a giant northern pike (jackfish). I watched in amazement as the fish thrashed and fought its way towards us. When it landed on the dock my dad swiftly removed the lure and knocked the fish unconscious to spare it any suffering. My mom set about gutting and filleting the fish and we ate it for lunch that day.

Ever since I caught that fish I have been obsessed with prairie fish and their hidden lives in the rivers and lakes of my homeland. The way that their bodies narrate stories we, collectively, have forgotten to listen to. My home province of Alberta, Canada, is host to an immense concentration of unconventional oil and gas activity, infamously known around the world as the Alberta Tar Sands (or the Alberta Oil Sands, as the provincial government prefers to call it ²).

In the midst of this massive industrial extraction in Alberta’s boreal forest, our little family cabin sits on Baptiste Lake, a few hours south-west of the Tar Sands epicenter. The tiny cottage was built as a hunting cabin by my non-Indigenous great-grandfather in 1948. It sits in Treaty Six territory, on land appropriated first by non-Indigenous settlers who built farms and homesteads around the lake in the early 1900s,³ and then by cottagers who bought lake-front lots as the interest in weekend hunting escapes and summer cottages took hold post-World War II. Layered within this complicated settler colonial history, is where my Métis (Indigenous) dad taught me to fish, to watch the stars, to look for hazelnuts and rosehips. It is where my non-

² “Oilsands,” Government of Alberta, accessed January 1, 2015, <http://oilsands.alberta.ca>.

³ Ellie Prepas, “Baptiste Lake,” in *Atlas of Alberta Lakes*, eds. Patricia Mitchell and Ellie Prepas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1990), 122.

Indigenous mom took me berry picking for blueberries and high-bush cranberries and wild strawberries along oil and gas cut lines carved into the boreal forest, space where she took on the official role of “Volunteer Steward” with the province of Alberta’s Natural Areas Program to ensure that people did not disturb the plants and animals exposed by the slashing lines carved into the forest by industry and utility providers in the ever growing and dominant oil and gas economy in our province.

In my relatively short life, Baptiste Lake has changed dramatically. It is named for a Métis settler who lived on the lake, Baptiste Majeau.⁴ What was once a small summer-cottage lake surrounded by farmland is now a residential suburb for people who commute back and forth from the Athabasca area up to Fort McMurray. When I was visiting Alberta from Scotland this June, my mom and I drove around the lake, and I stared in disbelief at the large homes being built around the water. The little lake I grew up on, once mostly a series of “summer villages” for weary city folk to escape Edmonton in post-war baby boom times and farms that date back to the early 1900s, now supports year-round homes that draw water from it for sprawling North American-style McMansions.

I continued to mourn the fish, and the water, as I traveled all the way back to Scotland a few weeks later. The image of fish jumping in toxic algae while massive homes were being built around the lakeshore to me marked the reckless destruction of a rich habitat that supported livelihoods, human-animal relations, and ecosystems for thousands of years—Baptiste Lake is dated by radiocarbon methods to have been highly productive for millennia, with rich deposits of diatoms and pollen in sediment cores stretching back to 4,600 years ago.⁵ Historical geographer Frank Tough demonstrates that fish are absent from most understandings of prairie history and prairie/subarctic colonialism in Canada.⁶ Liza Piper demonstrates that lakes are broadly overlooked, in favor of rivers, in freshwater historical studies in central and subarctic

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Prepas, “Baptiste Lake,” 125.

⁶ Frank Tough, “The Establishment of a Commercial Fishing Industry and the Demise of Native Fisheries in Northern Manitoba,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 2 (1984): 303–319. Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1878–1938* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996).

Canada. Small prairie lakes like my beloved Baptiste Lake rarely figure in ethnographic or historical studies of my home territory of central Alberta.⁷ As Piper argues, this is because lakes function as conceptual “spaces, not places” in the Western imagination.⁸ In his extensive work on subarctic Indigenous fisheries and commercial fisheries in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in Manitoba, Tough illustrates the integral role of fish in supporting Indigenous peoples.⁹ And he demonstrates the callousness with which colonial State actors ignored the concerns of Indigenous peoples about declining fish populations in Manitoba. The State allowed commercial fisheries to decimate fish stocks, rendering Indigenous communities dependent on the State.¹⁰ The Fish Body—both the individual body of singular fish (“the corpse” discussed in this collection of writing) and the cumulative body of *all* fish—in inland territories like the one I grew up in is still largely an absent one in the collective imagination. This has allowed the settler-colonial imagination and imperative to pollute and alter watersheds throughout the province without much resistance from the broader public.¹¹ Fish and human-fish relations, though one of the most important food sources in the central Alberta, Treaty Six territory for millennia, are not part of our collective imagination as prairie citizens.¹² Such fish-amnesia renders the diversion, pollution, and trade of water all the easier on our conscience. But what if we re-imagined ourselves as fish people? What if we looked to fish bodies and fish stories to re-inscribe reciprocal and rooted relationships to the land and water? What if we used what scholar Dwayne Donald (Paspaschase Cree) calls our “ethical relationality” to imagine ourselves as people with reciprocal duties to fish and other constituents of our shared worlds?¹³ How could that

⁷ Liza Piper. *The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Tough, “The Establishment of a Commercial Fishing Industry and the Demise of Native Fisheries in Northern Manitoba” and *As Their Natural Resources Fail*.

¹⁰ Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail*.

¹¹ Schindler, David. “Unravelling the Complexity of Pollution by the Oil Sands Industry,” *PNAS* 111, 9 (2014): 3209–3210.

¹² Kent McNeil, “Indian Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Rights in the Prairie Provinces of Canada,” Report: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre (1983): 4–5.

¹³ Dwayne Donald, “On What Terms Can We Speak?” Public Talk, September 24, 2010, accessed December 30, 2014, <http://vimeo.com/15264558>.

change the expansionist and resource-hungry narrative that was set in motion in the 1870s when settlers rapidly moved into the prairies and what is now known as the province of Alberta?¹⁴

My hometown of Amiskwacî (Beaver Hills), which is referred to today by its settler-colonial name Edmonton, rests along the mighty North Saskatchewan. The River once ran thick with namewak (the nêhiyawêwin [Plains Cree, Y dialect] name for sturgeon, plural).¹⁵ Their historical importance is underlined in place-names that celebrate them: the town of Namao north of Edmonton, the Sturgeon River, and the historic Namew Avenue that once ran through central Edmonton all celebrate the presence of namewak in our territory's past. But the ensuing hundred and thirty odd years of (a) mining, (b) oil and gas exploration and extraction, (c) municipal development and pollution along our waterways, and (d) extensive commercial harvesting in the twentieth century have drastically impacted sturgeon habitat and populations.¹⁶ Today namewak are an endangered species, and estimates in the year two-thousand put the population of adult lake sturgeon in the North Saskatchewan River, which runs directly through my hometown city of Edmonton, Alberta, at fewer than 2000 mature fish.¹⁷ Recent estimates place the population in the North Saskatchewan River at seven-hundred to two-thousand catchable-size fish (defined as those sturgeon older than three years).¹⁸ Colonialism and the environmental destruction it heralded in the prairies and subarctic in western Canada has impacted namewak as heavily as it has impacted every other sentient being in Alberta. I believe that the fish are speaking back to us, in the ways that they can. Indigenous fisheries are heavily impacted by oil and gas activity, hydroelectric dams, pollution, and municipal water usage. As a result fish are sick—as evidenced from deformed fish caught in Fort Chipewyan

¹⁴ Kent McNeil, *Indian Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Rights in the Prairie Provinces of Canada* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1983).

¹⁵ "Online Cree Dictionary," accessed December 28, 2014, <http://www.creedictionary.com>.

¹⁶ Suzanne Earle, "Status of the Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) in Alberta," *Alberta Wildlife Status Report* 46 (July 2002): iv.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Alberta Lake Sturgeon Recovery Team, "Alberta Lake Sturgeon Recovery Plan, 2011–2016 (Alberta Species at Risk Recovery Plan No. 22)" (Edmonton: Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, 2011), 21.

in Northern Alberta,¹⁹ a First Nation situated at the heart of the Tar Sands, and levels of mercury, arsenic, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons in the Athabasca River watershed that transects the Tar Sands region are a concern.²⁰ Fish stocks have also crashed: Alberta commercial fisheries were closed in 2014 because there are not enough fish to support commercial demand.²¹ To anyone who is listening, it is clear that the province of Alberta, Canada is in a fish crisis, a crisis that arguably stretches back to the colonial dispossession of Indigenous territory by the British Crown in the 1870s to make way for agriculture, industry, and settlement that has only intensified with time.²² Fish bodies betray the damage to their habitats. Their bodies tell stories of our negligence and silence.

CAN ABSENT FISH SPEAK?

Once I returned to Scotland in the summer of 2014, I began to wonder about fish in the heart of the British colonial empire. Can they speak? If so, what stories are they telling with their bodies and their movements? *The Loch Ness Centre Exhibition* in Drumnadrochit in the Scottish Highlands, designed by Naturalist Adrian Shine,²³ teaches curious visitors that the likeliest culprit in Nessie sightings is not a plesiosaur who escaped dinosaur mass-extinction, but in fact a waylaid sturgeon. *National Geographic* confirms this theory in a video published in its pseudo-scientific *The Truth Behind* series.²⁴ The crocodile-like ridges on the backs of the mysterious creatures reportedly sighted in the loch (lake) could coincide with the scutes on a stur-

¹⁹ "Fort Chipewyan Community Alarmed: Two Deformed and Lesion Covered Fish Caught in Lake Athabasca," Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, June 1, 2012, accessed January 1, 2014, <https://acfnchallenge.wordpress.com/2012/06/01/for-immediate-release-fort-chipewyan-community-alarmed-two-deformed-and-lesion-covered-fish-caught-in-lake-athabasca/>.

²⁰ Kevin Timoney, "A Study of Water and Sediment Quality as Related to Public Health Issues, Fort Chipewyan, Alberta," accessed March 12, 2015, <http://tarsandsolutions.org/files/timoney-fortchipwater-111107.pdf>.

²¹ Brett Wittmeier, "Alberta Government Kills Commercial Fishing Industry as Stocks Decline," *Edmonton Journal*, October 6, 2014, accessed December 31, 2014, <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Alberta+government+kill+commercial+fishing+industry+stocks+decline/10264848/story.html>.

²² McNeil, "Indian Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Rights in the Prairie Provinces of Canada."

²³ The Loch Ness Centre and Exhibition, accessed January 2, 2015, <http://www.lochness.com/loch-ness-monster-exhibition.htm>.

²⁴ "The Truth Behind: The Loch Ness Sturgeon?" *National Geographic*, accessed December 27, 2014, <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/the-truth-behind/videos/the-loch-ness-sturgeon/>.

geon's back. These titillating tidbits hint at an intrepid "monster sturgeon" lurking within the waters of the great Loch Ness. Some even suggest Nessie is a "love-lorn sturgeon" who stumbled onto Loch Ness in search of a mate.²⁵

I visited the Loch Ness Exhibition and Centre with my Métis cousins after my return to Scotland in the summer of 2014. As we drove the rainy August Highland roads on a tour bus, narrated with precision by our Scottish bus driver, we learned about the Highland Clearances. About Bonny Prince Philip. About the Battle of Culloden. My cousin leaned in and whispered: "I never knew this part of their history." We continued on in silence, our Métis bodies melted into the squishy bus seats, as we moved through the landscape and learned of its traumas. The tour took us to Loch Ness, Urquhart Castle, and Drumnadrochit, and as we returned to Inverness, the River Ness ran beside us, deep and inscrutable. I never knew about this part of Scottish history either, until I moved to Scotland in the autumn of 2010. It is what Métis scholar and writer Maria Campbell sums up so precisely. "What was done to us by the English was first practiced on Scots and Irish," she reminded a room full of academics and policymakers at a Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation meeting in Prince Edward Island, Canada, in the spring of 2013. This tension, in fact, is what I have struggled with since I moved to Scotland. It is difficult to reconcile the suffering of (some) Scots at the hands of wealthy landlords and at the whims of the English that dispossessed vast numbers of crofters to make way for other land-uses in the Highlands with the ensuing re-creation of Scottish suffering and dispossession in Indigenous homelands in Turtle Island when Scots migrants colonized Canada in the nineteenth century.²⁶ As Margaret Atwood says of the recirculation of colonial violence and dispossession from Scotland to British colonies in North America, (and I have quoted her poem "Four Small Elegies (1838, 1977)" in many pieces as I try to weave a cohesive narrative from my movements as a Métis woman living between Scotland and Canada): "those whose houses were burned/burned houses/whatever else happens

²⁵ Adrian Shine, "Postscript: Surgeon or Sturgeon?" *The Scottish Naturalist* 105 (1993): 271-82.

²⁶ Margaret Atwood, "Four Small Elegies (1838, 1977)," in *Selected Poems II: Selected and New 1976-1986* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 20-23.

once you start?"²⁷ *Whatever else happens once we start the vicious cycle of dispossession and erasure?* Can it ever be broken? I believe it can. And I strongly suspect it will be the absent bodies of those we have harmed, human and nonhuman, who will compel us to break the cycle with the stories they carry back to us, which haunt us, through their disappearance and loss.

What I struggle with perhaps the most as I split my life between Canada and Scotland is that a Scottish narrative of suffering at the hands of the English is so neatly used to erase the role that Scots played subsequently in colonialism in other parts of the British Empire. I can only speak to Scottish dispossession in North America, but the role of Scots in colonial operations spreads deep into the Empire.²⁸ By the end of my time in Scotland in November 2014, a gnawing frustration at the erasure of Scottish complicity in colonialism haunted my days in the country. In the spring of 2014, my University shrugged off my complaints about a non-Indigenous student in faux Plains war-bonnet (headdress) who campaigned during a Student Election for people to "join his tribe." Eager undergraduate students asked me, upon learning I was Indigenous, what "tribe" I belonged to. After I explained that in Canada Indigenous people comprise autonomous, self-determining nations, I could see their eyes glaze over with disinterest. In August 2014, the University of Aberdeen held a "Pioneer Day" to coincide with its celebratory exhibit on Scots migration to Canada, replete with wagon-building activities. In the autumn of 2014, two Indigenous colleagues (Crystal Fraser and Adam Gaudry) and I submitted proposals for critical papers on John A. MacDonald to a conference held in Scotland in 2015 that celebrated Canada's first Prime Minister as the "Son of Glasgow, Father of Canada." Though the first Prime Minister was an infamous racist who, as James Daschuk details in his 2013 book *Clearing the Plains*, actively "starved uncooperative Indians onto reserves and into submission", our papers were conspicuously rejected.²⁹ Meanwhile, an official Anthropology organization used the phrase "going native" in a conference call and colleagues suggested I "lighten

²⁷ Ibid, 21.

²⁸ George MacGilvary, *East India Patronage and the British State: The Scottish Elite and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008).

²⁹ James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 127.

up” when I objected to the use of the phrase without adequate clarification and historical detail. It was and is clear to me that my outrage is unwelcome. Through the four years that I spent commuting between Scotland and Canada, my body and voice were policed into passive-aggressive politeness by British social norms. After years of pent up colonial frustration, I needed an outlet for my anger. I tried to vocalize, in op-eds and non-academic writing pieces, the intimate connections between Scotland’s stories and the ruined landscapes and waterways of my homeland, but this discourse was difficult and often quickly erased with the wave of an impatient British hand. My feelings of erasure and silence changed, however, when I learned of the body of a trickster fish lurking in Loch Ness.

The Ness namêw (or namewak—perhaps there is more than one) became my decolonial dream in my last months in Scotland. I began to obsess over her (or his?) presence in Scottish waters. Where did it come from? My Inuvialuit friend Millie Thrasher taught me, in my time working in the Inuvialuit community of Paulatuuq, Northwest Territories, Canada, that for Inuvialuit people, fish carry a different story in each of their bones. These are not my stories to tell, as a Métis person from Alberta, but by sharing this knowledge with me, Millie taught me to look more carefully for stories in my *own* homeland. What stories does the Ness namêw carry in its bones? Is it a Baltic or white sturgeon, like Adrian Shine suggests?³⁰ *Or is it a wayward prairie lake namêw that traveled the waters of my homeland and somehow found its way to the Atlantic and up the River Ness?* No matter how improbable the latter theory, it is a story that wove its way out of my brain and into my days. A grounding for my rage, a way to locate my Indigenous feminist voice that was otherwise unwelcome in “official” contexts. A decolonial allegory. Nobody wants to answer to my questions about Scottish colonialism directly. I am reminded, over and over, that the Scots who left in the Clearances are gone, and those who remain are not responsible or connected to the dispossession and destruction of homelands in Turtle Island (North America). The story of Scottish complicity in Indigenous suffering has, for many Scots, been severed by time and space; the bodies that carried misery and dispossession and poverty across the Ocean are long gone, so why must I dredge up an uncomfortable past? As I note above, in

³⁰ Shine, “Postscript: Surgeon or Sturgeon?”

my time in the UK, few people wanted to engage with my Indigenous feminist critiques of the British academy or its ongoing colonial attitudes. I know this from the resounding silence from colleagues when I speak out in person. But I *can* fantasize about *namewak* coming back to haunt the Scottish consciousness as revenge for the dispossession, genocide, and suffering that Scottish actors like John A. MacDonald wrought in their time on Indigenous soil.³¹ If the body and voice of an Indigenous woman are not enough, then the *namewak* can accomplish more than my singular presence ever could.

Monsters become slates upon which stories are written. For me, as a “foreigner” living in Scotland, the Loch Ness monster story speaks to the anxieties of, and about, the north. English anxieties about Scotland. European anxieties about “sublime” northern spaces. And the ever present British obsession with “the Other.” People like Steve Feltham give up their whole lives to relocate to Loch Ness’s shores and dedicate their lives to locating the Loch Ness Monster. She is an absent body that fuels a hunger and insatiable desire to locate her, to *know* her, to end her mysterious travels through Scottish waters. I think that in many ways her absence fires a need to put her, and her Trickster-ways, to rest. So that bystanders may be relieved of the mystery. An exotic Other, one hidden in deep waters in the Scottish Highlands, is an insatiable prize, just as once Indigenous peoples in the sovereign nations that Britain dispossessed were a prize to be discovered and conquered. I say this somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but also with dead seriousness. If others can write their anxieties and hopes into Nessie’s movements, so of course can I, as a Métis person struggling to make sense of the tangled mesh of Scottish colonialism.³² To me, in my own decolonial re-writing of her travels, her absent fish body carries stories and also suffering to report back to Scotland. To remind Scots that their oppression migrated to Canada and unseated whole Indigenous Nations and legal orders in the name of British Imperialism. Water was drawn, wood was hewn, blood was shed by Scottish hands. And the homes and lives of people, and the fish that fed Indigenous people for millennia, were forever altered by this dispossession and theft.

An additional struggle I faced in my time in Scotland was a growing fascination with, and appropriation

³¹ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*.

³² Tim Ingold, “When ANT meets Spider: Social Theory for Arthropods,” in *Material Agency: Towards a non-Anthropocentric Approach*, eds. Lambros Malafouris and Carl Knappett (New York: Springer, 2008), 212.

of, Indigenous legal orders by non-Indigenous scholars in the UK and Europe. This has taken several forms—but it is roughly encapsulated with the current trends towards post-humanism and the “Ontological Turn” in the British anthropological canon. (These stories, too, come back to haunt.) A desire to rectify past wrongs in the anthropological canon, predicated on the ideas of “ontological self-determination”³³ and a concomitant call for the “permanent decolonization of thought”³⁴ has seized many scholars in the UK. And on the surface this is a brilliant call. A necessary call. And yet, it is a call predicated on absent bodies. The UK academy is still blindingly white, still built on the premise of whiteness and heteropatriarchy that seeks to reify knowledge held by white men.³⁵ To get ahead, one cannot cite “scholars nobody has ever heard of,” as a peer warned me when I articulated my plan to use work by Indigenous scholars in my doctoral dissertation. One must employ what Sara Ahmed incisively calls the white, heteropatriarchal “citational relational” of the UK academy.³⁶ The structural problems extend to other countries, too. American anthropology faces ongoing racism within its halls and walls.³⁷ Brodtkin et al. point out that race-avoidant strategies within American anthropology departments serve to “marginalize anthropologists of color and their scholarly perspectives.”³⁸ And so, these twists and turns of the discipline seek to tell our stories, the stories of diverse Indigenous people, in our absence and at our expense.

I am a white-passing Indigenous woman. I carry stories in my bones, but these are rarely read by those around me until I articulate who I am. This reality has proffered me the privilege of “passing” in white-dominant contexts, and I cannot deny that this makes my experiences of Indigeneity very different from friends and family who do not pass for white. I have never experienced direct racism based on how I look. I have never

³³ Martin Holbraad, M. Pedersen, and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “The Politics of Ontology: Anthropological Positions. Fieldsights—Theorizing the Contemporary,” *Cultural Anthropology Online*, January 13, 2014, accessed December 16, 2014, <http://culanth.org/fieldsights/462-the-politics-of-ontology-anthropological-positions>.

³⁴ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Métaphysiques cannibales*, cited in Holbraad, Pedersen, and Viveiros de Castro, “The Politics of Ontology.”

³⁵ Sara Ahmed, “White Men,” in *Feminist Killjoys*, November 4, 2014, accessed December 14, 2014, <http://feministkilljoys.com/2014/11/04/white-men/>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Karen Brodtkin, Sandra Morgen, and Janis Hutchinson, “Anthropology as White Public Space?” *American Anthropologist* 113, 4 (2011): 545–556.

³⁸ Ibid, 545.

been profiled when applying for a job or renting a flat. Police have never targeted me or harassed me simply for being Indigenous. However, because family and friends *do* experience these daily realities, I try very hard to use my ability to “pass” as a Trojan horse. I am what I jokingly call a “stealth Aboriginal”: as a friend pointed out, I access white spaces and tell stories to deliberately provoke and unsettle dominant narratives because my appearance allows me to enter seminar rooms and conference halls with ease.

It feels incredibly incongruous to watch the adoption and study (or to put it less kindly, what often seems to amount to appropriation) of Indigenous legal orders, cosmologies and ontologies within European institutions while colonial realities *within* academic spaces remain largely unchallenged. While the movement towards post-humanist narratives and adoption of “pluriverses” gathered steam in journals and conference halls throughout the duration of my doctoral studies, I still faced racism in my daily movements within the British academy.³⁹ If I tried to tell stories about the more-than-human or sentience or cosmopolitics drawn from Indigenous voices, I was admonished by peers for not citing famous European scholars like Latour or Descola. In order to be taken seriously in the European academy, I learned, Indigenous legal orders have to be filtered through white voices (a point Sara Ahmed articulates in her reflections on the British academy⁴⁰). Juanita Sundberg succinctly describes the core problem: the post-humanist turn is, at least at the moment, intensely Eurocentric.⁴¹ In the context of this eurocentrism, I struggle to confront the colonialism that pervades the entire academic structure. And to complicate matters, my white-passing body is rarely read as Indigenous by fellow scholars, so I am frequently told that my Indigeneity is “made up,” since it does not affirm romantic, archaic European notions of who is “authentically” Indigenous. However, through my white-passing body, I have a ticket into hearing what people “really think” when they do not realise Indigenous bodies are present. The structural racism I observe and experience in the UK renders attempts to “permanently decolonize

³⁹ Mario Blaser discusses pluriverses in his work on political ontology: Mario Blaser, “The Threat of the Yrmo: The Political Ontology of a Sustainable Hunting Program,” *American Anthropologist* 111 (2009): 10–20.

⁴⁰ Ahmed, “White Men.”

⁴¹ Juanita Sundberg, “Decolonizing posthumanist geographies,” *Cultural Geographies* 21 (2014): 33–47.

thought”⁴² within the academy very difficult. Because I do not believe that any serious decolonization can happen, no matter how well-meaning its proponents are by calling for it, while racist behaviors and views are given a pass within the walls of our universities. As Sarah Hunt (Kwakwaka’wakw) argues:

The potential for Indigenous ontologies to unsettle dominant ontologies can be easily neutralized as a triviality, as a case study or a trinket, as powerful institutions work as self-legitimizing systems that uphold broader dynamics of (neo)colonial power.⁴³

The “broader dynamics of (neo)colonial power” are evident in the direct experiences I face as an Indigenous person within the British academy.⁴⁴ Peers uttered statements like “nobody cares about minorities” under their breath at the bar, just out of anyone else’s earshot, when my research was being discussed. Sometimes fellow students’ eyes would roll, just out of sight of professors, when I brought up colonialism. To be fair, a great number of colleagues were supportive. They listened. They tried to see the things I was articulating. They shored me up when I was drowning. However, one body can only withstand so much fighting against the current. Exhausted by the ongoing struggle to name and vocalize the daily colonial, racist micro-aggressions of the University and the British intellectual community, I turned to Ness namêw as a mentor.

She swims in Scottish waters without apology. She tells her stories through her movements. Through her simultaneous presence *and* absence, she weaves a narrative that ties Scotland to the distant lands and waterways its people dispossessed for England. Sometimes we have to tell stories that make people uncomfortable. Sometimes we have to move inscrutably through waters, relentlessly teasing and provoking. Sometimes we carry stories of suffering and dispossession back with us. People will react with horror, fear, indifference or curiosity. They will try to dismiss our stories, to name and explain us on their own terms. They will tell us how we ought to react to our journey and our experiences. But they can

⁴² Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Métaphysiques cannibales*, cited in Holbraad, Pedersen, and Viveiros de Castro, “The Politics of Ontology.”

⁴³ Sarah Hunt, “Ontologies of Indigeneity: the politics of embodying a concept,” *Cultural Geographies* 21, 1 (2014): 30.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

never take away that which we know to be true. That which we have lived, that which we carry within us for thousands upon thousands of kilometers. Like I imagine the Ness namêw to be, I fancy myself a messenger. If people could listen, they would hear her stories of loss and movement. If she is in fact a lovelorn namêw who stumbled her way into the Loch, what form of love does she carry? Romantic love? Love for the ruined waterways of her homeland? In this loss that I imagine her to carry, I find a home for my own colonial rage and bewilderment. I too stumbled into Scotland, with no concrete plans to be there until opportunity knocked. I neither sought it out nor lusted after it. And I too found myself faltering around its waters, lost, confused, trying to tell a story to an audience who cannot yet hear what I have to say. But I hope that by continuing the journey, maybe eventually the narrative will become clear. To me, Ness namêw is a decolonial story-teller haunting the Scottish psyche until it can see how intimately it is woven into our own stories of dispossession and loss as Indigenous peoples. And from there we can dismantle the hierarchies that separate our experiences—hierarchies and beliefs that unfairly situate ultimate authority to *know*, describe and tell within non-Indigenous bodies—and bring our stories and voices as Indigenous peoples, so quickly erased in British academia, to the fore. To tell a decolonial dream: scaly and slippery and present. And to build something more accountable, reciprocal and loving in place of the structures and narratives that currently exist.

Until then, I keep swimming and I keep moving. And I stand on the proverbial shore, watching for Ness namêw. Trying to learn from her provocations of the people who colonized the lands I grew up in. And I hope that in so doing, I can help heal the damage to the waters, people, and fish of my homeland. For without their stories, we are truly lost.

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no point but the boundary of your desire. Coming to a point...On the outside of it is what everybody talks about. On the outside of it are the dead that try to talk.”¹

*

¿*Quien es?* ¿*Quien es?*”

(Circles the wagons around Nothing.)

“Once you try to embrace an absolute geometric circle the naked loss stays with you like a picture echoing.”²

*

The inability to see the differences between coincidence & correspondence—is this not the definition of someone considered a conspiracy theorist?

“There was nothing at the edge of the river
But dry grass and cotton candy.”

Nine years *before* the death of *Billy the Kid*, Buffalo Bill Cody made his acting debut.

Unlike Billy the Kid, Buffalo Bill had an active hand in the public presentation of his narratives. He made his living off of killing then made a killing off of re-living the killing that he'd done.

Two years *after* the death of Billy the Kid, adept at blurring boundaries, Buffalo Bill Cody began his Wild West show & tour in which *many historical western figures participated*—ghosts of their former selves. In the parade on horseback that began the show, members of the American military rode in the same stream with Native Americans from different tribes, Sitting Bull being the most famous participant in 1885.

A funeral procession dressed up like real fun.

*

In the myths of Europe, the islands of the West had been fabled before the Age of Discovery as the place of the underworld or afterworld...³

¹ Jack Spicer, “The Heads of the Town to the Aether,” in *My Vocabulary Did This To Me: The Collected Poetry of Jack Spicer*, eds. Peter Gizzi and Kevin Killian (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 303.

² *Ibid.*

³ Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 27.

Take each past, combine it with its present. Death ⁴

& its resurrection makes pictures like the holes never existed.

Continued from the early days of radio into television & film, North American Western narratives were a dominant genre until 1959. Running alongside these, & particularly in the fifties, narratives about the exploration of space were also prevalent & popular.

Both narratives try to contain within them the anxiety of invasion felt by the successful invaders. On the surface, in terms of a conception of time, one seems to negate the other. One looks backward with a nostalgia based on a revisionist construction of the past while the other looks forward to construct an unknown future. A means of leaving the present no head or tail, *real* space exploration programs also donned the mask of a continued frontierism.

To write *Janus-like* doesn't quite cut it since Janus only has two faces, & usually presides over the beginning & ending of conflict.

Promoted as *reincarnations of Daniel Boone*, the real astronauts that eventually performed space travel were seen as *the first of a new and heroic breed of men who have the enormous responsibility of serving as symbols of the nation's future*.⁵ Objects subject to gravity in a field of debris.

"The sky where men weep for men. And above the sky
a moon
or an astronaut smiles on television. Love
for God or man transformed to distance."⁶

Reading backward, the general interpretation of the popular media dedicated to outer space in this time period is that it reflects & performs postwar/Cold War paranoia. The presence of these space narratives held alongside the popularity of Westerns featuring simpli-

⁴ Jack Spicer, "Thing Language," in *Language* (San Francisco, CA: White Rabbit Press, 1965), 10.

⁵ Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: Harper Collins, New York 1999), 454.

⁶ Jack Spicer, "Four Poems For Ramparts (1)," in *My Vocabulary Did This To Me: The Collected Poetry of Jack Spicer*, eds. Peter Gizzi and Kevin Killian (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 411.

fied heroes, and the subsequent disillusionment with them, is suggestive of other paralleled possibilities.

A synthesis of griefs—*the real* re-fusing to confirm belief. History's terrifying iterability. To run from & to cover up. Disorder in the afterworld, Protean movements as an avoidance of facing. (“¿*Quien es?* ¿*Quien es?*”)

*7

“Time with his big jeans...”⁸

“A binding together,
a Memory.”

*

Buffalo Bill insisted his popular show not be labeled as a *show*, concerned as he was to produce a narrative (about the past) with an eye to consumption (by the present & future) that would be viewed as *the real* travelling to different, ever further, geographical locations a catastrophe of repetition & reproduction of a recent past in order to cleanly map an eschatology of the North American western frontier.

“I was never real. Alias was never real.
Or that big cotton tree or the ground.
Or the little river.”

Though *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* was enormously successful, Buffalo Bill died broke.

His shows typically ended with Native Americans enacting an attack on a white family's frontier homestead until Buffalo Bill & some cowboys rode in to protect & preserve them. A portrait for the future's history, [*t*]he show influenced many twentieth century portrayals of “the West” in cinema and literature.⁹

(“The radio that told me about the death of
Billy The Kid.”)

7 Jack Spicer (with Robert Duncan), “Billy the Kid, 1959,” in *An Opening of the Field: Jess, Robert Duncan, and Their Circle*, eds. Michael Duncan and Christopher Wagstaff (Portland, OR: Pomegranate Communications, 2013), 134. Julia Drescher lives in Colorado Springs, where she co-edits *Further Other Book Works* with C.J. Martin. Her work has most recently appeared in a chapbook produced by New Lights Press; poems in *Entropy, Poetry of Jack Spicer*, eds. Peter Gizzi and Kevin Killian (Middletown CT: *Dusie, Aufgabe*; and in the “belladonna chaplets series. A “collaboration” with Jack Spicer (poems/visual essays) is forthcoming in *Likestarlings*.

8 Jack Spicer, “For Billy,” in *My Vocabulary Did This To Me: The Collected*, eds. Peter Gizzi and Kevin Killian (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 162.

9 “Buffalo Bill,” Wikipedia.com, accessed March 17, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffalo_Bill.

The only consistent feature of reality is its general increase in complexity and strangeness over time. Reality today is becoming increasingly occult. This fact has nothing to do with dusty ancient manuscripts, demons escaped from excavated relics, or angry ghosts.

Rather it is the corporate boards, the priests of high technologies, and financial wizards of today who are creating a new dawn of occultism behind closed doors. Occultism is the study of the hidden. While the practical mechanics of everyday life are systematically hidden and taken over by experts, simultaneously we are each invited to *participate* in a freer, more democratic, and *interactive* world. However the world we are invited to participate in is nothing but a screen. A vast screening process is now in operation, a form of brutal intraspecies competition imposed on humanity by itself. Some ascend to become like gods, capable of purchasing any experience as they live inside towers of luxury, while others are forced into a life of industrial servitude. The human species has triumphed and is now turning its evil eye on itself: beware of humans.

The friendly gestures of dog-pack solidarity which were once useful in the course of human evolution are now cynically exploited. Our best instincts are used against us. Social instincts are funneled into various social media which act as nets to capture valuable consumer data. Dematerialization is offered as an economic and spiritual ideal: paper money is replaced with digital currency, and soon an immortal existence as a databank will be seen as preferable to a life trapped inside a human body.

However, Antibody Corporation believes the future is physical and engages in physical work to ensure an embodied tomorrow. ORC, the Occult Research

Antibody

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Commission, has been created under the aegis of the Corporation for the furtherance of occult research in the year 2013 and beyond. It will operate according to the principles inherent in its logo:

The O overlaid with a grid represents our new global reality. The R is in the form of the rune Raido, representing travel. The C is cut through with a spear, creating a Gent glyph. ORC is concerned with making sense of our global situation, using consciousness to travel to every coordinate on the globe to institute the Law of Research.

—from “General Principles of ORC Design”

Let ϕ be the sign of occult research, the result of the company’s alchemical work. The company is in the business of creating bodies that are worth something—successful mutations. Let’s not let the human body fall behind current strides in spiritual and technological progress.

It’s time to knock on closed doors, to institute board rooms of our own, and unlock the hidden potential of our species’ genetics by our own efforts. Those who regard power and money as evils will surely be denied their freedom, and those who avoid technology will become as machines. Reality is the new occult. It’s time to decide what kind of demon you will become.

Adam Rose is the Artistic Director of Antibody Corporation, a mission-based non-profit organization specializing in mind/body integration. Adam makes work from the standpoint of a theoretical Antibody—an amorphous body that evades conceptual, genre, and formal categories. Since 2009, Antibody Corporation has presented works spanning dance, performance art, film, and music in Chicago as well as nationally and internationally.

WHAT S HE CULT ?

Corporation

CELLU

JLOSE

Last September, Caroline Picard asked Christy LeMaster to curate a series of films

based on the premise of *The New [New] Corpse* exhibition. Since the question of the body is so central to cinema, a number of possible programs emerged, inspiring a conversation that unfolded slowly throughout the fall. LeMaster decided to focus on a cinematic body that challenged convention in the end—particularly conventions long established by the male gaze. Inspiring a visceral, embodied experience in the audience seemed like an important way to do that—to remind viewers that they weren't passively watching, but that what was being watched could elicit an embodied—physical and emotional—reaction. While organizing that program, Picard asked LeMaster to sketch a timeline of bodies in cinema, showing how those cinematic bodies might influence a more everyday experience of one's own body; the resulting notes are published below, extending the conversation in print. LeMaster writes in the plain serif font. Picard writes in the italics.

1. There are three types of possible bodies in the cinema. There is the subject body onscreen—like Brigitte Bardot in almost all the frames of *Et Dieu... créa la femme* (*And God Created Women*) (1956): *a seductive body desiring to be watched, stared at, and absorbed.* Her body performs for the camera, another imagined body; the camera provides a conduit for the audience, giving large, anonymous groups intimate, singular access to a frame, to a landscape, to Bardot. This second camera-conduit body is restricted also, choosing what we see—as when Les Blank sets a close up shot of one of his *Gap-Toothed Women* (1987). *The frame created by the camera invariably instills a narrative, highlighting for instance the alien character of gums between teeth; through emphasis, a new potency for all tooth gaps in the world is defined. The tooth gap becomes a THING.* And there is us, finally, the third body, the audience body—an assemblage of bodies in the dark; we do the watching through a system of involuntary physiological processes and cognitive responses that make up human perception—a group of people seated in rows and occasionally forgetting that we have bodies at all.

2. “The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further. The con-

Christy LeMaster

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Caroline Picard

ventions of mainstream film focus attention in the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition, the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world.”¹

3. I remember when I used to watch movies without understanding the adult things they contained. *It could be something psychological—a movie made in the 1960s with a German character: adult audiences would recognize the character had a back story in the war even if it was never mentioned. As one not yet initiated in history, I would only notice the character’s accent.* It happened more often when characters on screen were intimate. My parents believed it was better for me to see sex than violence. When they watched sex scenes, rarely if ever was I asked to leave the room. “*You’re always staring at my buppies,*” the female protagonist from *The Blue Lagoon* (1980) says. *I can’t imagine a more awkward expression to indicate some coming-of-age awareness. Or Mickey Rourke and Kim Basinger in 9½ Weeks* (1986) eating food together; their behavior would seem dangerous or peculiar if you were a kid. *Even if you don’t totally understand the erotic cues, it seems like something you’d make fun of with your friends afterwards—in that half-knowing twilight of preadolescence.* I remember my parents watching me at such times; despite my confusion their curious attention conveyed that whatever was happening on TV was important.

4. When cinema technology was brand new the act of watching a film would have been more embodied than it is now; audience members accustomed to theater and vaudeville gathered to watch a new translation of light in motion. These first cinema pieces, called *actualities*, were just short documentary portraits featuring moments of normal life: *The Arrest of a Pickpocket* (1895), *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1895), or *The Kiss* (1896). *Clumsy by today’s standards, these experiments nevertheless elevated something ordinary: police procedure, almost anonymous figures coming and going from work, a couple’s intimacy.* They captured popular imagination, drawing huge crowds many times a day.

5. It is said that an early film audience in Westminster screamed and leapt out of their seats when a

¹ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (New York: Sage Publications, 1999), 382.

train in a film barreled toward the camera for several seconds of a single take. This story is probably apocryphal but I like to imagine it.

6. In the actual beginning, when movie making developed as a craft, with directors, linear stories, and aesthetics, a body on screen became a person, not a metaphor or an abstract generality but a specific character in time. The camera was heavy then so the proscenium remained intact. Even in the the outlandish physical comedies made by Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton presentational style seems suspended somewhere between the stage and the screen. *Bodies were self-conscious. For that reason, maybe, they fell over again and again, drawing out an empathetic response in the audience.* A certain modesty was maintained as well: Chaplin and Keaton court their respective ingenues with a stagey asexual flirtation. Even now, the comedians seem naïve, bodies positioned forward looking lovingly at their silent female protagonists with a winky side-eye.

7. The weight of the camera further limited its range. It had three positions back then: the camera could be close (next to the face), middle distanced (regarding the body from the waist up), or far away (seeing the whole body as small in relation to its surroundings). According to that structure, audiences had three distances from which to observe others. Later, the camera grew nimble. It began to zoom, fly, crouch, tower. *I remember parents talking about Steve McQueen's car chase in Bullitt (1968). When they described it, they relived some life changing event, almost; it seems like nothing now.* With the advance of new possible distances, it is as if we, the audience, attain evolving, superhuman ways of watching; it makes us omnipotent, enhancing the pleasure of watching. *Perhaps also the pleasure of making.*

8. I heard a story about how Stan Brakhage had to practice his movements with the camera over and over to get the shots he wanted, like dancing.

9. In the absence of a narrative the audience has permission to fill the movie up with its own structures and associations. In the midst of great abstraction we are provided meditative space, room to watch our own thoughts as they happen, provoked by the projector.

10. The avant-garde discovered cinema's ecstatic possibility and looked to create states of heightened perception with their movies—to trip, to transcend—pushing the limits of our perception with flicker, color, vibration, and the persistence of motion. *Alejandro Jodorowsky comes to mind, as does Marie Menken—in the silent but lush film, Lights (1966) the*

camera moves, ungrounded over New York City's Christmas light displays. She shot the footage over the course of two years, between midnight and one in the morning, avoiding people and using the light instead to paint abstract compositions in time. Extending this idea of the mechanical lens as a body, she also kept the camera in her coat so that it wouldn't freeze.

11. Sometimes the bodies onscreen are the end point of an endless unfulfilled desire. Consider Luis Buñuel's *L'obscur objet de désir* (The Obscure Object of Desire) (1977), where an old man is endlessly frustrated by a young woman. She teases like the images we watch, so close we can almost touch them, so vivid they seem to possess smell, yet always beyond reach, in fact they only smell of burning projector dust. The depth evoked is always an illusion, toying with our innate empathic instincts—for instance, years earlier at the beginning of Buñuel's career his camera observes a woman's eyeball getting sliced by a man in a tie. The camera's omnipresent gaze is often one-sided.

12. An adult now, I always know when he is in the room; I feel the moment he looks at me, even when my back is turned. It comes suddenly—an alertness accompanied by the memory of what women do when looked at. I can't explain the source of that knowing, except that it's like coming home and sensing that something has been burning, a lingering high acid note in the nostrils, a thickness in the air.

13. "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly."²

14. Even after years of watching movies, I can be removed from the flow of a plot entirely when a very beautiful woman appears on screen. *Oja Kodar walking down the street in F is for Fake* (1973) as men stop to stare; they don't know they are being filmed. Seated in the audience, I inadvertently fall out of the plot to stare with them. I compare my body to hers and find my own lacking.

15. There are films to the contrary: films that abstract the onscreen body. The camera body framed the subject body as composition or metaphor or mood. In Maya Deren's *At Land* (1944)—the camera frames Deren's face looking up from where it lies on the sand.

² Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 163.

In the next shot we see a flock of sea gulls in the sky; we conflate the camera with her gaze. The idea is reinforced when the invisible body—hers—later crawls across a dinner table as men in suits eat on either side.

16. Watching flickering light is counterintuitive. Sometimes it hurts, makes my eyes water.

17. “The haptic image forces the viewer to contemplate the image itself instead of being pulled into narrative.”³

18. Then we began to understand looking as haptic—the way looking *feels*.

19. “The cinematic encounter takes place not only between my body and the film’s body but by sensorium and the film’s sensorium. . . We bring our own personal and cultural organization of the senses to cinema, and cinema brings a particular organization of these sense to us. The filmmaker’s own sensorium refracted through the cinematic apparatus. Spectatorship is thus an act of sensory translation.”⁴

20. Even when I do not understand what she is after, it is better to follow her. If a filmmaker wants me to focus on the skin of a peach for a very long time, to consider its texture, color, or the way the light hits it, it would be silly for me to resist her. I will just feel the hardness of my chair and the chill of the room. It is better to feel what she sees. *Like Agnès Varda’s homage to her dying husband—In Jaquot de Nantes (1991) when the camera passes over the landscape of his body very close, showing the way disease has consumed his body. She says “I needed to...take these images of him, of his very matter. Jacques dying, but Jaques still alive.”*

21. “I will suggest a form of vision that yields to the thing seen, a vision that is not merely cognitive but acknowledges its location in the body, seems to escape the attribution of mastery.”

In December 2014, LeMaster’s screening began with *Bouncing in the Corner #36DDD* (1999) by Dara Greenwald. It is a self-portrait of sorts, though the artist’s face is never seen. Instead the camera offers a bird’s-eye view of Greenwald’s chest as her entire, standing body rhythmically falls back into a corner and bounces upright. Her feet never move. We watch the independent movement of her large breasts as they respond to the

³ Ibid., 153.

⁴ Ibid., 132.

bounce. A stranger's hand enters the frame and places a ball under one breast, then the other. The balls are held fast even as the rest of Greenwald's body continues to bounce against the corner. Other items are placed there as well: oranges, large tin cans. During the program the audience laughed particularly when she held a VHS tape and a VHS tape case under her breasts. *Baby! Love Your Body! Episode 1* (2014) by Poussy Draama and Fannie Sossa followed. The 2014 film was controversial in Europe for describing female orgasms to child audiences. To teach them to enjoy their bodies, instead of being fearful. In Blair Bogin's and Danya Gross's *Affection* (2014), we watched two women embrace again and again in public space, awkwardly, almost humpingly sometimes. *Affection* is only a minute long. It is dry by comparison to Draama and Sossa's project, but strangely endearing. We watched *Cut* (2013) after that—a film by Matthias Müller and Christoph Girardet. "The body is a wound that never heals." Cinematic frames from other sources are cut and spliced together. Blood washes down the sink again and again. Wounds are wrapped. This is the frail and vulnerable body performing for the camera. In *Deep Sleep* (2014), Basma Alsharif puts herself in a hypnotic state and carries the camera with her through Malta, Greece, France, and the Gaza Strip. "Shot while under self-hypnosis, the performance-film asks us to move from the corporeal self to the cinema space in a collective act of bilocation that transcends the limits of geographical borders, time, and space." LeMaster wanted to screen *Globe*, then—the 1971 film by Ken Jacobs. She had it secured for a minute but later discovered the print had been sent off for restoration. It sat in a box under a friend's desk in New York. Instead we saw *Nine Gates* by Paweł Wojtasik: a study of each of the body's orifices. The camera captures each one up close for an extended period of time, during which the body's holes become alien and ameobic under the tight frame. The tongue looks like an undersea creature. The anus moves independently, puckering. The vagina is so layered with folds of skin as to be almost unrecognizable. Finally we ended with *Two Faces* (1972). A film in which the artist Hermine Freed caresses and kisses herself, curiously, tenderly, using a split and reversed screen. This seemed to be a natural endpoint to the trajectory somehow, to end with a doubled-self, where both parts exist inside of the frame in reverse: the self sees herself at last, playful and loving, as one last cinematic illusion.

Christy LeMaster founded The Nightingale in 2008. She has programmed screenings for Chicago Filmmakers, Chicago Film Forum, The Onion City Experimental Film and Video Festival, The Chicago Underground Film Festival, Chicago Film Archives, and Intuit Gallery. She teaches Semiotics and Media Theory at Columbia College Chicago in The Television Department. She has been a movie critic on the NPR Chicago affiliate, WBEZ's morning show 848 and CINE-FILE.info. She was a 2011 Flaherty Film Seminar Fellow and a Summer Forum 2012 resident. She has served on juries for Media City, Onion City, and the Dallas Video Fest. She is currently working Run of Life, an experimental documentary series for the Chicago experimental media venue, Constellation.

MORE

Nathanaël

The (self-)translating author of more than twenty books, Nathanaël writes in English and French. Recent works include *The Middle Notebooks* (2015), *Asclepias: The Milkweeds* (2015), *Laisse* (2015), and *Sotto l'immagine* (2014). Nathanaël's extrinsic translations include words by Danielle Collobert, Édouard Glissant, Hervé Guibert, and Hilda Hilst (the latter in collaboration with Rachel Gontijo Araújo).

From *Sisyphus, Outdone. Theatres of the Catastrophal*. Reprinted with permission from Nightboat Books.

Morendo

The body is carried from the river to the bed. What light comes in is turned away at the bridge by the demonstrators. The event is not able to be photographed. Neither from atop the aluminium ladder at the loft nor from the doorway. I am on the floor as it is. There are two walls in each of which is a door. Neither leads out. The music forms a third wall, a membrane of sorts and it is this membrane in which the body is wrapped. The appropriate authorities are alerted as to the state of the body. At either door there is a hindrance. It takes the form of several inconsequential pictures hanging on the wall. In the underground the surfaces are covered. The noise rises from the platform by the stairwells. There is pounding against the walls. The body stirs as the photographs become legible. They are procedural illustrations of autopsies. It is clear that we are mistaken. It is the body of a person who is not dead. There is evidence, however, of decomposition. The pictures are not portends. They are worse than this. They are decisional in their placement and the construction that is built around them. To have entered by these doors is to have agreed to their morbid tautology. In this case and in every case it is to enter by them only.

ENDO



1. ON THE CONQUEST OF THE POLES

Sutured, scarred, formed from pieces of flesh taken from corpses found in slaughterhouses or dissecting rooms, resuscitated by a mysterious fluid that brings it to life, Doctor Frankenstein's creature will have haunted our imaginations incessantly.

"A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch,"¹ exclaims the demiurge when he sees his creature come to life. It is striking to observe that this Gothic and Romantic novel, a precursor to science fiction, has as its inaugural and final setting the ice floes of the North Pole traversed by Captain Robert Walton and his crew in order to discover a maritime passage or the secret of magnetic force. It is at the moment of the immobilization of the ship held in the ice floes that the sailors, hoisted on the deck, notice Doctor Frankenstein vainly pursuing the creature that escapes him. The promise of a new hybrid body is run aground in an icy setting. If the ice shelves and glaciers constitute an iconographic motif suited to the category of the sublime, as for the polar imagination, it coincides with the promise, if not the failure, of a modern, even a post-human, body. Published in 1818, Shelley's novel lingers little on the technological modalities of the resuscitation of the creature, even if the setting of the Swiss Alps, furrowed by lightning and storms, indicts over and over again the catalyzing role thunderbolts play. "With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet."² In its ad-

Érik **STI**
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Translated by

¹ Mary W. Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Boston and Cambridge: Sever, Francis & Co., 1869), 11.

² *Ibid.*, 44.

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by Nathanaël

aptation efforts, the cinema will have taken the plunge by linking the monster's creation to electricity. The spark has become an electric battery. In the famed passage from James Whale's film, *Frankenstein*, directed in 1931, electricity and thunderbolts merge. While the doctor, outfitted in a sort of strait jacket busies himself among his batteries and electrodes, his chains and pulleys, mid-way between scientific experimentation and mental illness, the storm grumbles and casts its flashes against the glass windows of the workshop. "It's alive!" shouts Frankenstein when the creature's hand slowly becomes animated. The invention of a new body presupposes recourse to a fluid that borrows both from the forces of nature and technology. What is the nature of the relationship between the formation of a hybrid body whose memorable characteristics will have been fixed in the popular imagination by Boris Karloff and the landscape of polar ice floes? No doubt the conquest of the poles presupposes the crossing of a limit, the passage of a threshold that is both physical and geographical but also metaphysical. In the manner of an allegory, the polar landscape expresses the quest for a paradoxical, transgressive, post-mortem sensorial state that exceeds human possibilities. This metaphoric play, which fed the nineteenth-century imaginary with force, today encounters our actuality through delicate distinctions between cerebral and clinical death, genetic manipulations, stem cells, cloning, heart transplantation, prostheses, transplants and other machineries grafted into our organisms. The post-mortem is our condition. Both a site of disappearance and conservation, the ice conjugates in this regard the possibility of an archive to the promise of a resurrection.

2. THE ICE AS ARCHIVE

The discovery of latent images preserved in ice remains a troubling experience. One recalls the expedition lead by Swedish engineer Salomon August Andrée in 1897, with Knut Fraenkel and photographer Niels Strinberg, to fly over the North Pole in a hydrogen balloon. Leaving from the Norwegian archipelago Svalbard to reach Russia or Canada, the balloon very quickly lost steam and crashed on the ice shelf three days later. The three explorers had to walk on blocks of drifting ice. Caught off guard by the winter, they ended up exhausted on the deserted island of Kvitøya where they met their deaths. Their last encampment, their bodies, their notes and the negatives of their captures were found

thirty-three years later. Preserved by the cold, the photographs were able to be developed and printed. The ice revealed itself to be a wonderful cold room for preserving the latent images, in other words those images that were impressed and not yet revealed. The images of the explorers in action on the ice shelf were then discovered, sudden specters and familiars, lost amid the ice and the accidents of the silver surface, worn by haloes and stitchings.³ Recently, negatives from Shackleton's Endurance expedition to Antarctica, taken in January 1915, were found on the shores of McMurdo Sound in the Ross Sea, attesting to the forgotten presence of adventurers and the difficult conditions of their lives. It's hard not to see in these images and their late discovery the apparition of new mythemes. What is the exact status of such documents? Where does our fascination come from? It refers, of course, to photography's characteristic spectral dimension, perceptible in the effigy of these expectant ghosts that come to haunt us, suspended between past and present, destined to a near dispersal, but equally to our relationship to History imagined as a temporal, unaccomplished reserve, destined to a promise of return. Even though the polar expeditions often reveal themselves to be tragic (many narratives relay the discovery of prior adventurers, frozen and driven into the snow), they also have the power to archive traces in the manner of a latent image promised to future developments. In this regard, the conquest of the poles is contemporaneous with nineteenth-century technological inventions, whether the photograph, the phonograph, or the cinematograph. If polar ice seems endowed with a capacity for conservation that enables the preservation of bodies or the legibility of information relative to the climate several centuries later, in so doing it produces the return of time. The conquest of the pole presents itself as a voyage into the unknown, even an experience of the beyond, which convokes specters and latent bodies in view of a possible renaissance.

Is the accomplishment of such a promise not the wish and the technological ambition of cryonics? We are familiar with this avant-garde technology, practiced since the mid-1960s, which consists in interrupting the physical decomposition of the body, shortly after death, through sudden freezing, after having seen to its vitrification, in other words after having

³ Let us mention the very beautiful film by filmmaker Rebecca Baron, made in response to the photographs of the Andrée expedition: *The Idea of North* (1995).

replaced body fluids such as water and blood with a chemical substance that makes it possible to avoid the formation of crystals and protects the tissues. It is a manner of preserving patients whose cellular processes have not yet been totally extinguished by maintaining the possibility of a return to life in keeping with new scientific knowledge, in the manner of a form of technological resurrection. Developed by Robert C. W. Ettinger in his work *The Prospect of Immortality*, published in 1964, the cryonic hypothesis revealed in the author an unwavering confidence in scientific progress and the exponential enrichment of society. His predictions concern stem-cell research, the individual wish for rejuvenation, the transfer of our consciousness to a computer, as much as the hypothesis provoked by overpopulation of humanity's installation on another planet. "Advanced biological art," he writes, "should in fact be able to generate any kind of tissue or organ from a somatic cell; a single scrap of skin might suffice."⁴ Whence the necessity for a general archive, in addition to the bodies themselves, the individual's cells. He in fact invokes, without retaining this hypothesis, the possibility of stocking cryonic bodies in "natural cold storage" in the Arctic regions. It is estimated today that some three hundred individuals on the planet have been subjected to cryonics. This practice rests on the fact that memory, personality, and identity are stocked in the chemical structure of the brain, and thus susceptible to regeneration. Death is no longer considered a stable, determined fact, but obeys the laws of a social, historical construction.⁵ What are the thresholds today between clinical and cerebral death? Until when is the deceased patient the object of possible resuscitation through artificial respiration, blood transfusions, cardiac massage, electrical stimulation? Henceforth cryonic bodies maintained in a state of suspension that recalls the magnetic field of polar spaces in which the latent photographic image haunts a juridical and scientific no-man's-land that authorizes every promise by confusing the living with the dead, by displacing demarcation lines, by thwarting the principle of contradiction, near, in this regard, to the Freudian continent of the unconscious. Can death be inverted like the magnetic hands of the compass?

⁴ Robert C. W. Ettinger, *The Prospect of Immortality* (California: Ria University Press, 1964).

⁵ Cécile Lafontaine, *La Société postmortelle* (Paris: Seuil, 2008).

3. POST-MORTEM

What is the frontier of the living? Am I alive? This paradoxical question can come as a surprise. It revives in inverted form the formula pronounced by the character Valdemar—“I am dead”—in a Edgar Allan Poe’s famous short story, “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,” published in 1845.⁶ Let us recall the plot. With an interest in magnetism, the narrator wishes to exercise his talent on a subject at death’s door in order to observe the effects of his magnetic power and attempt to defer, even to suspend, the fatal instant. Approaching his end, Valdemar declares himself prepared to attempt the experiment. With his magnetic sleights, the narrator is able to plunge the body of the moribund into a state of catalepsy betrayed only by the steam on the mirror. It’s difficult not to relate the narrator’s magnetic sleights to the polar expeditions.⁷ Over the course of his agony, immobilized in the snare of magnetism, pale and cadaverous, in response to the question “M. Valdemar, do you still sleep?,” with a harsh and cavernous voice, Valdemar pronounces in this impossible sentence: “Yes; —no; —I have been sleeping—and now—and now—I am dead.” before later adding: “*For God’s sake! —quick! —quick! —put me to sleep —or, quick! —waken me! —quick! —I say to you that I am dead!*” Who can pronounce such a sentence, “I am dead”? Is it not the very example of paradox? Roland Barthes considered the status of this pronouncement at length: “[...] it isn’t a matter of a simple negation, in the psychoanalytic sense, ‘I am dead’ meaning then ‘I am not dead,’” he writes, “there is here the paroxysm of transgression, the invention of an unheard-of category: the *true-false*, the *yes-no*, the *death-life* is thought as a whole, indivisible, uncombinable, non-dialectic, for the antithesis implies no third term.”⁸ The question “am I alive?” can seem equally improbable by emitting the hypothesis of a subject capable both of expressing himself, in other words living and endowed with speech, and doubting his own existence. It presupposes a certain performativity of the living as though the living were not given to us straightaway, without mediation, but rather as an object to construct or an utterance to

⁶ Edgar Allan Poe, “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,” in *Broadway Journal*, 1845.

⁷ One recalls Edgar Allan Poe’s novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) and its enigmatic end in the whiteness of the ice floes of the South Pole.

⁸ Roland Barthes, “Textual Analysis of a Tale by Edgar Poe,” trans. Donald G. Marshall, *Poe Studies* X, 1 (June 1977): 1-12.

perform. If death obeys the rules of a social construction susceptible to evolution, even to inversion, if the frontiers between the living and the inert are displaced, life becomes the object of a performative task. It is a matter of emitting the living, of producing its signal through recourse to a third party. Let us underscore, in this regard, the mission confided to electricity to resuscitate Frankenstein's creature, attesting to the role technology plays in the production of the living. Let us think also, *a contrario*, of the indirect effects of the electric telegraph built by Morse in 1843 between Baltimore and Washington, which will have precipitated the apparition of spirit voices and messages from the beyond emitting the same discontinuous signals through knocks on doors and tables in the house of the Fox sisters in the State of New York.⁹ Technology produces ghosts that disquiet the frontier between the living and the dead. It is curious to observe Edgar Allan Poe's style in transposing Valdemar's words. The moribund's asphyxia and panting give rise to interjections, cries, brief calls, punctuated by numerous typographical dashes that recall the Morse alphabet.

In the early 1970s, the artist On Kawara sends his friends and gallerists telegrams with the sole message: "I am still alive." The proposition is astonishing. Most often associated with the announcement of unexpected news, whether fortunate or misfortunate, the telegram is used here to recall the simple existence of its sender. Being alive does not seem to arise from any immediacy but presupposes on the contrary the employment of a performative utterance. Life must be performed over the course of a series of continuous electrical emissions, of luminous punctuations, following the telegraphic or electromagnetic signals emitted by the base of a polar station. Performing the living presupposes a manner of electrical punctuation. Do our sent telegrams and daily e-mails — intermittent, discreet — not have as their principle function to affirm our existence and ward off disappearance? Living presupposes the continuous sending of telegrams and signals that recall the knocks made by spirits in Kate Fox's bedroom, attesting to our becoming spectral. Are we alive?

Érik Bulloz is a filmmaker and theorist. His most recent books are *Renversements 2* (Paris: Paris Experimental, 2013) and *Sortir du cinéma. Histoire virtuelle des relations de l'art et du cinéma* (Geneva: Mamco, 2013). He was a visiting professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo (USA, 2009–2011). Currently he teaches film at the École nationale supérieure d'art de Bourges (France) and is director of the postgraduate program "Document and Contemporary Art" at the European School of Visual Arts (Poitiers-Angoulême, France).

⁹ Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2000).

The pool paints Narcissus. The picture paints the pool, Narcissus, and all. The boy has just paused from hunting, drawn to the pool by desire and a love of seeing himself. And he is brilliant—as you see—in the water.

The cave of Achelous and the Nymphs are well rendered along with crude statues of local stone. They've been worn by time and the children of herdsmen, still innocent and unaware of the god. The pool itself is not without mystery—revealed in a kind of Bacchic rite—vines and ivy twine beautifully among clusters of grapes—thyrsos—and bright birds play in it, each in its own tune. White flowers abound, not quite blooming but sprouting for the boy. The painting is life-like—dew drips from the flowers, a bee has settled. I don't know whether it has been tricked by the painting or that we ought to be tricked by it.

But let it be. In any case, the picture doesn't fool you, boy. You're not obsessed with pigment and wax, though you don't realize the water reflects you. You don't dispel the illusion, although you need only nod or shift or move your hand and not stay still, as if you'd met a companion and waited for him.

Will the pool speak to you? He doesn't listen to us. He's fixed his eyes and ears on the water. We tell it as it's painted.

The youth—upright, feet crossed—rests his left hand on his planted javelin, the right set on his hip, his body bent, butt stuck out. An opening is visible in the crook of his arm; the wrist wrinkles where it twists and casts a shadow along the palm; the shadow's rays slant through the inside curve of the fingers. His chest heaves and I don't know whether from the hunt or whether he is already aroused. He has a lover's eye—fierce and intent—softened by desire settling in. He seems to be a partner in love, looking at a figure that looks at him.

Philostratus **NARCISSUS**

Translated by .

Much could be said about his hair if we met him hunting: countless movements of the chase and the wind. But even now it's abundant and golden as it trails, divided by the ears, some skirts his forehead, some touches his mouth.

The Narcissi are the same—identical—except one is exposed in the air, the other immersed in the pool. One boy stands over another in the water, thirsting for beauty.

ISSUES

The Elder

by John Tipton

John Tipton has two books, a translation of Sophocles's *Ajax* and *Surfaces*, a collection of his own verse, both published by Flood Editions. A translation of Aeschylus's *Seven Against Thebes* and a new collection, *Paramnesia*, are forthcoming from Flood. He is the publisher of Verge Books and lives in Chicago with his wife Stephanie and son Levi.

The following translation comes from Philostratus's *Imagines*, a book of descriptions of imaginary paintings written at the turn of the Third Century CE. This excerpt was read by Tipton at Sector 2337 on Saturday, November 22, 2014 when Monica Westin gave an affiliated talk about the Ancient Greeks' use of ekphrases both as artifacts of creativity during catastrophe and as evidence of an understudied shift in historical models of the imagination.

In addition to screening *Efficiency* and organizing

a workshop, Jane Jerardi developed a new work while in residence. Drawing on DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*, an article about immortal jellyfish, and interviews with security guards, Jerardi's new choreographed work, *Tenuous*, explores strategies of control in every day life, and its accompanying sense of uncertainty.

Jane Jerardi

Jane Jerardi is a time-based artist working in the media of choreography, performance, and video. She has created work for a variety of contexts—from theaters and galleries to record store listening booths, public subway escalators, audio walks, and projected videos—constructing pieces that often move fluidly between media.



Still from in-process performance. Sector 2337, Dec, 2014.