REMOTE CONTROL

ASTRAL PROJECTION IN HIGHER ED

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REMOTE✳CONTROL
ASTRAL PROJECTION
IN HIGHER ED

Introduction

On March 11, 2020 the Novel Coronavirus Disease, COVID-19, was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization. Two days later, and months too late, President Trump reluctantly declared a national emergency concerning the outbreak. The shutdown followed, historic in its magnitude. Among the first to close were schools, colleges, and universities around the country, which suddenly faced the challenge of pivoting to "remote learning," their trusty educative frameworks upended for however long—there is no way of knowing.

Grief comes in waves. Whether or not we've suffered the death or illness of a loved one due to COVID-19, what we are experiencing is universal, unexpected loss—a LACK of something once familiar. This *something* is intangible, almost frustratingly so. I can't remember how I filled up all these tiny pockets of time before, or why wandering the CalArts library stacks on my lunch break felt so consistently restorative, like coming home to something ancient. I only know that what I hold in my pockets is noticeably lighter now. There's more hollow. I can see the holes in the lining.

I keep reading about the "new normal." In his study of "Western" attitudes towards death, French historian Phillipe Ariès writes that the sacred mission of the American funeral director is to aid survivors in returning to *normalcy*, which is a term I find suspect, pandemic or otherwise. But if, according to Ariès, funeral

directors are "doctors of grief," then perhaps educators in 2020 are de facto conductors of grief—and artists, the translators.

When John Baldessari arrived to teach at CalArts in 1970, none of the faculty had a plan. No one was even sure whether "teaching" "art" was a reasonable goal to have. Founding faculty focused instead on creating, according to Baldessari, "a situation where art might happen," which must have felt like a more viable aim. Soon this included Baldessari's Post Studio, Judy Chicago's Feminist Art Program, a clothing optional pool, and a radically permeable threshold between teacher/artist/student. Of my own time as a graduate student, the lesson I remember most was when Maggie Nelson delivered a two-hour lecture on poetic form with a sleeping baby strapped to her front, the soft, rhythmic thwack of her palm against her baby's seat simultaneously calming him and demonstrating iambic pentameter—a two for one lesson in gender, performance, and artistry with a child centered at the front of the room.

I'm cautious about the potential of the internet to recreate whatever unnamable chemistry that bubbles up when artists share physical space. It's hard to envision what to look forward to when there exists the reality that more Americans have died from COVID-19 than in the entirety of Vietnam War; that an overwhelming majority of those deceased are people of color; that our inadequate health care system has predictably collapsed in on itself; that we don't know how much longer we'll have to push

through the dark. But I still believe in the light contained in learning, and unlearning, and relearning. *Learning* is way of life, whereas "education" is more so a concern of institutions, just look at how the words make the same solid shape on the page:

EDUCATION
INSTITUTION

Here, you see it in reverse:

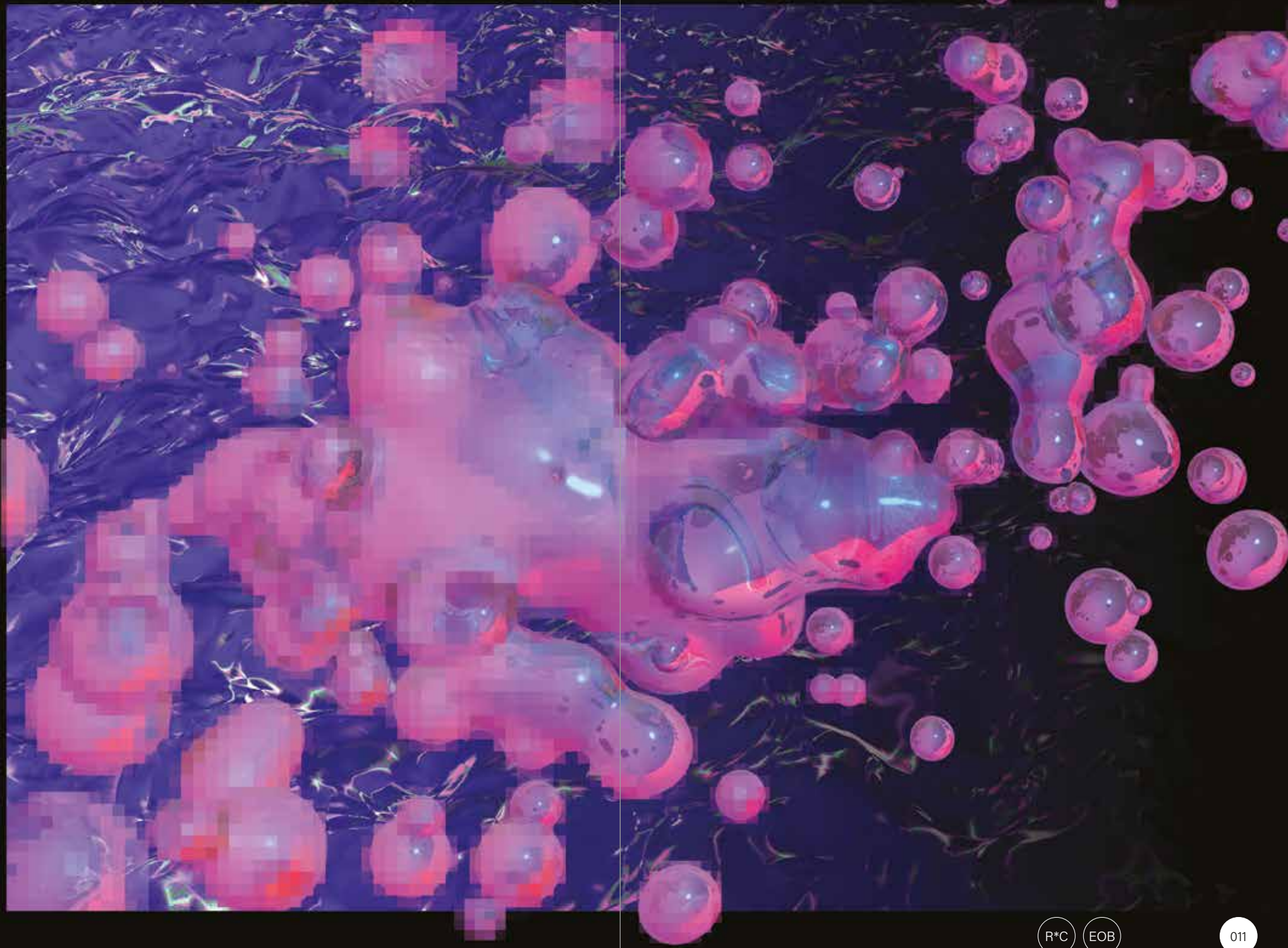
INSTITUTION
EDUCATION

What do we value when our institutions can no longer hold us up? What do we value when institutions no longer weigh us down? How do we forefront the young artists in the room when there is no room?

Why does the "new" have to be "normal"? Collected in these pages are a few reflections from artists who teach at various art & design institutions across the U.S. Together we perceive the boundary-less-ness of this moment to be, well—good/bad not evil (forgive me for the ref!) What I mean to say is LACK creates SPACE and the artist's work, always, is to find new ways to fill it up.

Adriana Widdoes

Managing Editor
East of Borneo



Janet Owen Driggs

RE: [EXTERNAL SENDER]

RE: JANET!! HI! + INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE: EAST OF BORNEO «REMOTE CONTROL/ LEARNING DISTANCE»

DATE: April 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Re: [External Sender] Re: Janet!! hi! + Invitation to Contribute: East of Borneo «Remote Control/Learning Distance»

I really appreciate being asked to participate in this, but writing is a luxury I can't afford right now, after all. The students' needs and the demands of teaching online are so great that I'm at the computer 13 hours/day, 7 days/week. It's particularly hard on my 12-year-old, who is also having to learn online.

My students are experiencing redundancies and the deaths of loved ones, loneliness, depression, running out of psych meds, taking care of young ones and old ones at home; or they are newly employed at grocery stores doing 40+ hour shifts. In the last day for instance, I've talked with a student who lost both a parent and a grandparent to COVID-19 this week; one that is caring for an adolescent child who has just started cutting themselves; another who was made homeless, having recently had surgery (he "zoomed" from a car via the school's parking lot wifi and is in a motel and recovering well); others who are experiencing anxiety and thus need greater support; and some who, with DSS accommodations, have always required extra support and reassurance.

I regularly give out the counseling and helpline numbers I have gathered, but these are not fast conversations; students are worried about handling their coursework—education is their (increasingly flimsy) ladder to more security, and so we work together to get them to the end of the semester.

In terms of teaching online I'm inventing, building, and riding the bicycle simultaneously. I could, I suppose, just create packets of reading and links, but the students signed up for a lecture class, and I try to give them some of that discursive experience. At the very least, they tell me, our two lecture classes each week help to provide some structure, some distraction, and a buffer against loneliness.

DATE: April 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Re: [External Sender] Re: Janet!! hi! + Invitation to Contribute: East of Borneo «Remote Control/Learning Distance»

Hello, I'm trying again: After sleeping through all of my undergrad art history classes and working as an artist, writer, and adjunct professor for years, in 2015 I got a job teaching art history full-time at Cypress Community College. I am a "Western" specialist charged with teaching the standard sweep of "Western" art history, from pre-history to the present day.

I am continually challenged by a subject that, if it was not actually created to justify the superiority myths of European colonizers, has long been used to propagandize the idea that white, patriarchal, Christian, capitalist culture is more "civilized" than any other.

My primary agendas in the classroom are as follows:

1. I teach the "Western" narrative because students need to know the orthodoxy of the art world into which they hope to step.

2. I seek to reveal that narrative as a constructed, multi-pronged, multivalent tool of power.

3. I do my darndest to create opportunities for students to practice articulating their thoughts with clarity and criticality.

This whole experience of teaching online has made the tensions inherent in that agenda more acute. Why? Because teaching online limits both the amount of information we can cover in class, and the depths we can reach. Should I aim to teach "just the facts ma'am" and give up the contextual analysis that helps my students to take a long view? Or should I abandon teaching the "Western" narrative and ditch, say, Augustus Prima Porta, and the Etruscans, in favor of discussing contemporary conditions? The two must go hand in hand. But I have not yet found a way to combine them in the limited online space.

DATE: April 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Re: [External Sender] Re: Janet!! hi! + Invitation to Contribute: East of Borneo «Remote Control/Learning Distance»

The move to teaching online has been difficult, especially with a child at home, but a couple of unexpected benefits have emerged: A couple of students who suffer from anxiety seem better able to talk from the security of their homes, while the intimacy of the online forum is provoking different conversations, particularly after class.

Today for instance, after a lecture on the Baroque, a student confided that she has been struggling all semester with the Survey 2 content, because it is so focused on Christian art made by white men. As a brown woman who identifies as gay and has experienced the censure of her Catholic family, she felt alienated. How, she asked, could she find a way in?

I was able to share why art history is so exciting to me and, in particular, to explain how I see it as a tool for understanding—literally for seeing—the construction, perpetuation, and glamorization of patriarchy and "whiteness." I realized that I have not been as clear about this in class as my student needed me to be, nor have I offered enough connections between old art and the present day. My teaching will certainly change… I'm just not sure how yet.

DATE: April 30, 2020

SUBJECT: Re: [External Sender] Re: Janet!! hi! + Invitation to Contribute: East of Borneo «Remote Control/Learning Distance»

I tried something new today. For too many reasons to enumerate here, I usually follow a chronological model of teaching art history. Today I tried a thematic approach, hoping to show that, as Faulkner wrote: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." We're at that point in the semester where the textbook has a chapter on Islamic art and architecture. It always feels anomalous, like it's been slotted into the narrative because it must be there, but simultaneously gathered up and boxed in to de-emphasize the interconnectedness of the Medieval Christian and Islamic worlds.

I wanted to show that, rather than the triumphalist story of white Christian progress that art history traditionally tells, the Renaissance was made possible by Greek, Byzantine, and Arab scholarship. I tried a c. 1500-year history of scientific thinking, beginning with Thales, whom we had already encountered, taking in the Vienna Dioscurides and Ibn Sina, and ending with Italian manuscript hunters and drawings by Leonardo.

It largely failed—I blitzed the students with too much information. But I like the idea of complementing a step-by-step linear approach to history with a kind of "core sample" that offers a longer view. I'll keep trying.

DATE: May 11, 2020

SUBJECT: Re: [External Sender] Re: Janet!! hi! + Invitation to Contribute: East of Borneo «Remote Control/Learning Distance»

OMFG—Week 15, almost two months since we went online. My body hurts. It needs exercise. From the physical impact of 13 hours, 7 days/week in front of a computer, to the psychological toll of responding to the needs of traumatized students, I'm exhausted. To say nothing of the stress of rewriting 8 classes every week so that they have at least a chance of working online.

But the worst hell of all is the impact of online learning on the quality of education. I have found, and students with whom I have discussed this agree, that the number of ideas we can encounter in a Zoom class period has had to shrink. Now, at the end of the semester, we were down to one core idea and maybe two subsidiaries per class. They have to be repeated numerous times, using as many different approaches as possible—straight lecture, discussion boards, video, quiz, breakout room exercises, diagrams—all repeating the same key idea/s. And this after the students have already done homework (which, on the whole, they have done) addressing those ideas.

Spoon-feeding has become the order of the day. Is it the COVID situation that's infantilizing, or is that the nature of online education?

DATE: May 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Re: [External Sender] Re: Janet!! hi! + Invitation to Contribute: East of Borneo «Remote Control/Learning Distance»

Online education is no substitute for the classroom. It does not support the kinds of engagement that encourage complexity and nuance; it just reinforces the information regurgitation model that characterizes K-12 education. Most of the students I meet at Cypress are either fresh out of high school, or they're recent returners to education after a long break—veterans, parents, people looking for a new career path. Usually, they come into the classroom with a "tell me the right answer" mentality and I hope that they leave it with a sense that there are questions to ask, and that they are the right people to ask them.

Once upon a time, the goal of U.S. public education, as envisioned by John Dewey et al., was to equip citizens for participation in a democratic society. Education of the "tell me the right answer" variety is the type an oligarch favors. COVID-19 means that we're getting there faster than even Betsy DeVos planned.

DATE: June 8, 2020

SUBJECT: Re: [External Sender] Re: Janet!! hi! + Invitation to Contribute: East of Borneo «Remote Control/Learning Distance»

Hello again—I'm sorry it has taken so long to get something to you about the experience of teaching online during quarantine. I tried to do it a number of times while the semester was still happening, but every time I started I had to stop; there was just so much to say, the ideas seemed disjointed, and I was swept up in a tide of activity and feeling.

I thought that I'd be able to complete it when grades went in and the tide calmed down, but then George Floyd was murdered and now there is a different sort of flow.

Different, and also not different. Reading through the stops and starts, I see that they are not so disjointed after all. They speak to both the challenges of teaching online and the critical role that education must play in dismantling white supremacy and building a better future. The thing is, I can't put them into a single cohesive statement—I'm just not there yet, and it may take years. I know you can't wait that long, so I'm sending what I have. Please feel free to use any useful parts. I hope that's okay?

Emma Kemp

COMPLICIT LOVE

1: APRIL 2020

All week I've been watching a couple of wasps labor at building their nest on a garden ornament on the porch. *There is something to learn from their work ethic*, I think, as I collapse alone on my bed.

It's like this: I'm worried we'll forget. I'm worried that what survives the pandemic won't be worthy of this labor.

I'm worried that I might squander this opportunity. Each day is an acute mix of urgency and exhaustion, renewal and defeat. The wasp nest grows chamber by chamber, cell by cell.

Here's a new thing: proof of the arbitrariness of our civic structures. Some of America's cruelest regulations, items presumed to be permanent set pieces in the theatre of contemporary life, have been rendered blatantly superficial: roads have quietly reopened as pedestrian-only thoroughfares; office-centricity was exposed as a luxury avatar for real estate portfolios; doctors, nurses, and other frontline workers were encouraged to pursue higher education for free; hotels became hospitals and shelters; prison sentences were commuted; pharmaceutical prices were capped; standardized educational testing was scrapped; food stamps became more accessible; digital library collections came online; paywalls were lowered; Adobe offered free use; rent was deferred; money was printed (brrr); (meager) checks were delivered. None of this is to say that living conditions improved under quarantine, but that certitudes became less so. The flippancy of regulators who enforce violent infringements on compromised citizens can be wielded as a driving force. We can no longer claim that the conditions of our containment under a neoliberal regimen are immutable. Actually, it appears we can demand change.

I am a teacher at an art school and I think it's time for change. I have to do better if I'm gonna *do* at all. To be responsible to and for one's failings is a manageable beginning.

2: JUNE 2020

I'm no longer paying the wasps any mind because my attention is trained on a sweep of anti-racist protests. In the span of a week, citizenry has demonstrated its power as a collective force against systematic police brutality in the States.

I'm thinking of a conversation I had with a friend earlier this year. She told me I was silly for going plastic-free at home. *Individual action won't do a thing*, she said. But look what we achieve when we all commit to staying indoors, to standing 6 feet apart, to wearing masks. Look what we achieve when we show up on the street, when we call our senator, when we donate funds. These are individual acts coordinated at a mass scale. Communication, then, is the key.

Education, I think, is a forum of mass communication. Can education be just as mobilizing? "*Expertise is not the destination*," Teju Cole imparted to a room of Harvard design graduates last year; "*freedom is the destination.*"[1] He was riffing on Toni Morrison who, in a 2003 interview, revealed, "I tell my students, 'When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.'"

Undoubtedly it's a beautiful and impressive and inspiring message, but how does social and intellectual emancipation operate within a framework of immense, actual student debt? How does it relate to educational economies governed by institutional imperatives and admissions targets (the same devices that pay my wages)? How do I prevent my classes from re-inscribing the inequities they're designed to critique? What does it take to position oneself as an ally-instructor? Or more precisely, how do I fit myself into that small and urgent space, undetected, so that I might build, bit by bit, a nest so vast and complex and wondrous that no one dare knock it down?

1 From "Design Is Not an Intellectual Exercise," commencement coverage by Lydialyle Gibson in Harvard Magazine, published May 29, 2019.

3: JULY 2020

A documentary to love is called *A Time for Burning* and it was filmed in Omaha, Nebraska in 1966. In the film, a young Black man named Ernie Chambers, all passion, declares of the white church in town, "We're fighting ignorance in the place where there should be the most enlightenment." His observation comes to mind when I think of my school. And for a minute I was thinking of getting out. I was thinking that maybe the apple is too sour, too rotten, too wormy. But where would I go? "When something disappoints you your place is to stay in it and force it to honor its own values." This from Charles "Chip" Planck, the founder of the historic and anarchist Tolstoy College in Buffalo, NY, who fought against encroaching administrative roadblocks so that the college might exist to "combat the de-humanizing effects of 20th century civilization."[2] The contemporary educational institution, left to its own managerial, capitalist proclivities, will only reflect the rottenness of a rotten society. A society in which, in the year 2020, a Black woman can be murdered by police in her sleep. It is devastating. The devastation becomes immobilizing. But I look again to Ernie Chambers and he says fight. *Use the institution against itself*, Ernie Chambers might say—he who remains the longest-serving state senator in Nebraska history.

2 From Studies from the Bottom Up: Perspectives on Tolstoy College at the University at Buffalo, 1969–1985, ed. Julie Niemi, 2017.

He who is the only African-American to have run for governor and the first to have run for U.S. Senate in Nebraska history. He who, in 2007, filed a lawsuit against God, seeking an injunction for God to "cease certain harmful activities and the making of terroristic threats…", and he who energetically distributes "Erniegrams," a.k.a. poems and commentary on judiciary topics, to his fellow legislators in session. In Ernie's spirited response to the institutions and systems that attempt over and over again to suppress him is some kind of searing astral light. Ernie is angry because he is in love with life. He wants us to do better. Surely school should strive to ignite in people that kind of serious, violent, burning love?

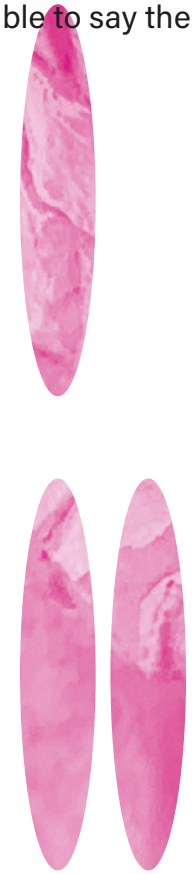
4: AUGUST 2020

It's 102 degrees in L.A. School might be "hybrid" or it might be "remote"; no one in power is willing to make the call. In contrast to this ambiguity is the force of the virus's spread: last week California overtook New York, boasting the nation's highest case count. But if you aren't directly impacted by death, life goes on largely uninterrupted. America's capacity for cognitive dissonance is astounding.

Every day on social media I read posts in which my neighbors seek advice for removing the wasp nests spackling their eaves. *Leave them*, I urge, posting pro-vespid propaganda in strangers' comment feeds. My calendar fills up with meetings: committee meetings, review meetings, diversity meetings, task force initiatives. What if instead of attending all these meetings to discuss democratizing and decolonizing higher education I just posted my class Zoom link on Reddit? What if everyone who joined a class Zoom session donated a sum of their choice to cover the tuition of *officially* enrolled students?

Perhaps this oversimplifies a complex problem. Perhaps I am wanting too much. Hypocrite is a word I repeat in my sleep.

A popular method for eradicating a wasp nest is to build a fire beneath it, suffocating the wasps until they die or abandon their home in distress. This practice is normalized because people balk at the notion of wasps/hornets/bees/insects (or any other wildlife for that matter) encroaching, which is to say *existing*, on their property. The insect becomes a pest, or worse, a threat, inhabiting a space that has been deemed off-limits by property owners who see themselves as righteous inhabitants. It should not require five eyes to observe the colonial implications of this metaphor, nor should it surprise us to read the M.O. of educational institutions in similar terms. "I've not sat here like a knot on a log," Chambers said of his extended time in the legislature. I hope one day to be able to say the same.



Jaymee Martin

GAME OVER

ARTICULATING THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

In my years as a student at a top-tier L.A. art school, now more than a decade ago, we only spent a single class period openly discussing the practicalities, logistics, and pressures of what a "real" career as a contemporary artist actually looked like. I remember my classmates clamoring for honest advice in an academic environment that seemed designed to hide its internal mechanics behind an Oz-like shroud, pointing us instead to abstract, decoy concerns like semiotics and psychoanalysis. As if Freud or de Saussure could save you when you couldn't pay your student loans back.

The professor of this particular requisite class seemed like a pretty nice, down-to-earth white guy, so he indulged us, setting aside the agenda for the day to let us put words to the previously unspoken. Many students began to share their plans for after graduation: some wanted to stay in the hustle, go to grad school, and get an MFA; others were not so sure. At one point the professor looked at me directly and asked me to tell the class what my plans were. Wearing as much of my heart on my sleeve as I could, I explained that I had been accepted into a master's program at another top-tier L.A. art school but would have to take out tens of thousands of dollars in student loans in order to attend. In the meantime, the only "job" I had lined up was interning at a non-profit art space as an assistant to their up-and-coming junior curator, where, a few days before, I had been asked to throw a catered spread of sushi into the dumpster behind the gallery, and instead surreptitiously loaded it into my car.

This anecdote was a roundabout, narrative way of suggesting that the glimpses I'd seen of my future in the art world did not paint an economically or ethically sustainable picture. The only problem was that up to this point I had built my entire life

to move in this direction, and I had no idea what else to do.

At the time, I had grown increasingly outspoken about what I was starting to piece together as the moral failings of art school, and in turn the art world it was training us for: namely that there were certain implicit codes of conduct, things you could and couldn't talk about. For example, if you made work about George W. Bush's recent "surge" policy in the Iraq War, this would have been dismissed as too obvious, too preachy, too moral—and morals were *uncool*. However, if you presented even the very same object with a claim to be about "the archive," for example, this would have fallen completely within the realm of acceptability and praise. Meanwhile, actual people were fucking dying in Iraq, and I was starting to think that we were all accomplices in rendering that violence invisible by carrying on this particular song-and-dance-routine and rewarding those who played by the rules of the game. Little did I know then that this line of thought was inadvertently working me into a position where I'd either have to comply with or disappear from this world altogether, because—as I would later read in the sociolinguist James Paul Gee's work about discourse communities such as the art world—to renounce it meant to forfeit my place in it.[1]

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Comply or disappear—poetically apt parallel to the "choice" that, as we finally seem to be realizing, so many women have been forced to make in the face of sexual assault and harassment: to shut up and keep silent and stay in their fields, or to be thrown out, humiliated, punished, erased.

1 In his book *Social Languages and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*, Gee frames this ultimatum through the language of being inside or out: "Discourses…crucially involve a set of values and viewpoints…about who is an outsider and who isn't, often who is 'normal' and who isn't. [They are also] resistant to internal criticism and self-criticism, since uttering viewpoints that seriously undermine them defines one as being outside them. The Discourse itself defines what counts as acceptable criticism." James Paul Gee, *Social Languages and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (London: Routledge, 2008), 49.

Last year the artist Coco Fusco described the art world and especially art schools as "the perfect place for sexual predators," citing decades of experience as a professor to support her claim that despite the prevalence of abuse and its unsurprising nature to anyone who has ever been involved in an art school, very few people—from students to professors and administrators—ever speak about it. Knowing that one of her female predecessors had been squeezed out of her job after complaining about a male colleague's behavior, Fusco reflects, "*we knew what would happen if we talked*." Meanwhile, art students learn their place within these power differentials by staying within a culture of rumor, a whisper network through which news travels but isn't spoken of openly: "At top-tier schools, where the ties to the art market are most pronounced, students learn quickly that their professional success is linked to their willingness to play by the rules."[2]

2 Coco Fusco, "How the Art World, and Art Schools, Are Ripe for Sexual Abuse," *Hyperallergic* (November 14, 2017).

All this is leaving out the fact that I was privileged enough to be let in to begin with. Between 2006 and 2008, I had only one Black classmate out of more than a hundred. She showed a razor-sharp awareness of this fact by referring to herself as "token" and employing explicitly racist symbols such as watermelon in her artworks. Some were confused about why she was so confrontational, when racism was *pretty much* over and besides, we were the good guys, not the racists—while in truth, we were inexcusably blind at best, silently complicit at worst, to the deeply entrenched institutional racism that resulted in hers being the only Black voice present at all.

Chris Kraus, writing in 2000 about the rise of Los Angeles art schools and the MFA as a key to art world and art market access, addresses the racist double standards hidden within the rules of the game. Citing the positive critical reception

bestowed upon a young white male MFA graduate for a work in which he spray painted the words "Fuck the Police" on the installation walls, she writes that "if a Black or Chicano artist working outside the institution were to mount an installation featuring the words 'Fuck the Police,' I think it would be reviewed very differently, if at all. Such an installation would be seen to be mired in the identity politics and didacticism that, in the 1990s, became the scourge of the L.A. art world." It's the same attitude that prompted a white male *Los Angeles Times* critic several years earlier to dismiss work by Black artist Isaac Julien as "myopic and opportunistic," "conservative," and "contend[ing] that the social group the artist belongs to is more important than the work he makes."[3]

I understand that things have changed in the 18 years since Kraus made this observation, and in the 10 years since I left L.A. Thanks in very large part to the Black Lives Matter movement started by women of color, conversations about racism, police brutality, and privilege have surged urgently into the open on a national scale. But the fact that it took so long for these conversations to reach the art world, and that Kraus's words held true for basically 20 years, is damning. Police shootings of unarmed Black men were happening regularly back then too, and certainly nobody in art school talked about Sean Bell being killed by police on his wedding day in 2006 despite the widespread media coverage the story received. There were no Sean Bells in art school. It was not "our" issue, or so we thought.

And since it wasn't *our* issue—not a legitimate, sanctioned issue according to the rules of the game—how could we speak of it? Remember, our "professional success is linked to [our] willingness to play by the rules," to return to Fusco. Better to stay silent, better not to risk exclusion and being dismissed as conservative, moral, or uncool. All the while our silence functioned as a tool to keep the perpetual violence out of our view and exempt us from having to address it.

3 Chris Kraus, *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and the Triumph of Nothingness* (New York: Semiotext[e], 2004), 20–21. *The Los Angeles Times* review quoted comes from critic David Pagel in 1996.

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Silence speaks as much as language does. We only spoke about the practicalities of an art career during one class period, but exactly what invisible, implicit social contract was keeping us from speaking about it more? Two of my former classmates directly mentioned this implicit social contract when I interviewed them several years later as part of a research paper on sociolinguistics, education, and discourses (emphasis mine):

1. During my time at [L.A. art school], I found very quickly that perhaps the most important things I could learn about how to be an artist would not be told to me outright. The value of implicit learning was primary. I felt that if I could exploit an ability to intuitively observe and remember the various social codes and languages that my educators represented to me and to their friends and colleagues, I could learn about what it was to be a successful artist. As they had created for themselves particular styles of address, modes of personal comportment, and working theoretical understandings that related to their practices, it seemed to be critical to model this for myself as I proceeded in my attempts at making things (learning how to make things).

2. I learned very little about 'how to be an artist.' In fact, the faculty at [L.A. art school] takes a firm stand against teaching one how to be an artist. Instead, they teach you how to participate in a discourse. The 'artist' component is taken as a

given. We were treated as though we already knew how to be an artist, or that we'd figure it out along the way.

My classmates' observations about "implicit learning" and "how to participate in a discourse" echo art historian Howard Singerman's thesis in his book *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*. He posits that in contemporary art schooling, students are no longer trained how to paint or hone technical skills, but rather how to position their identities within the discourse of the art world. He writes, "The art department provides its students with… tacit knowledge of the rules and orders of practice. It is part of a network of institutions—galleries, museums, granting agencies, journals, and the like—that define the boundaries of the field, construct the concerns or shared values of the community, and circulate its discourse—the language that marks its speakers as members of a community."[4] Just as art school disciplines students to only speak about what can (and cannot) be spoken of, it also socializes them at the level of language, that is, in how to speak: "Its rules concern what can be said, and in what form."[5]

It is no coincidence that both Fusco and Singerman focus on art schools, which have long been primary sites for socialization and discipline. Education scholar Philip W. Jackson coined the term *hidden curriculum* in 1968 to describe what my classmate called "implicit learning" and Singerman called "tacit knowledge": the unspoken social and cultural norms, values, and expectations that schools transmit to students apart from the official, formally taught subjects. *The Glossary of Education Reform* defines the concept of the hidden curriculum as based on the recognition that students absorb lessons in school that may or may not be part of the formal course of study—for example, how they should interact with peers, teachers, and other adults; how they should perceive different races, groups, or classes of people; or what ideas and behaviors are considered acceptable or unacceptable. The hidden curriculum is described as 'hidden' because it is usually unacknowledged or unexamined by students, educators, and the wider community.[6]

So, although no art school professor points at a whiteboard in a room of furiously note-scribbling students and says, "To be a real artist, wear more black, and also remember that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. does not count as high theory but wife-killer Althusser totally does," these lessons are nonetheless transmitted and learned. And because the very fact of their transmission is hidden, they are rarely, if ever, scrutinized or questioned.

The hidden nature of this learning also makes it virtually impossible to detect when it's happening in real time. Certainly, in my own case, I did not see how deeply I was internalizing the rules of the game, how wholly I was replacing the personal language I'd developed before art school with the sanctioned discourse. Looking back at an artist statement I produced in art school, I can see that all markers of my personal aesthetic were gone, replaced by trendy French philosopher quotes and jargon words like "criticality" and "articulation." My transformation from outsider to insider was most apparent in my language.

Singerman continues, "The task of art schools across the country is to provide a language that we can speak together as professionals, and to ensure that its concerns will be the students' concerns. The student's task…is to take—and to mark—his or her place."[7] In other words, if I as an outsider wanted to achieve the reward of becoming a recognized, visible participant in the dominant discourse community—to *mark my place* in the

4 Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 204.

5 Ibid, 201.

6 "Hidden Curriculum," *Edglossary.org*, last modified July 13, 2015.

7 Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 186.

art world—I had no choice but to take on its values and adopt its language, even if it meant compromising my own language and values at a degree so subtle and insidious I could not even see that it was taking place.

At this time I was starting to sell my work to a collector, was about to get into that graduate program, and was on my way to graduating with the highest GPA in the art department. This is not to say that the art world doles out rewards based upon objective notions of artistic quality, nor, as I look back at that artist statement, even upon the criterion of making any fucking sense. Rather, my rewards came for mastering the language and internalizing the rules of the game, for being fully and correctly socialized into the discipline and subtracting any language or values that were at odds with it.

Much of hidden curriculum scholarship focuses on how language specifically functions in schools as a weapon to strip students of their own personal or cultural identity and impose a dominant discourse. This history ranges from decades of boarding schools subjecting Native American students to beatings for speaking anything but English to one Texas school making its students write "I will not speak Spanish at school" on slips of paper that were then buried outside in a wooden box during a metaphorical funeral for "Mr. Spanish."[8] One contemporary scholar, Angela Valenzuela, uses the term "subtractive schooling" to describe the systematic stripping down of language and identity as students undergo a process of forced assimilation to the dominant culture.[9]

8 Mia Warren, "The Day a Texas School Held a Funeral for the Spanish Language," *Morning Edition*, NPR, October 20, 2017.

9 Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999).

My experience in art school is clearly benign compared to the horrific violence of the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the deep-seated institutional racism in Valenzuela's studies of Mexican-American high school students. So I guess the next question is, who the hell gives a shit? Art school is nowhere near the world's biggest problem right now. Yet here I am 10 years later and these ideas have not left me, because somewhere inside me this all still matters. Because, while the consequences differ, all these examples fall on the same spectrum of how personal identities are subtracted and dominant discourses are imposed for the sake of, in Jackson's words, "institutional conformity." And if losing whole swaths of myself and my artistic practice is wrong—and I know from firsthand experience that it is—then this whole spectrum must be wrong, and we should talk about it.

Because after all, isn't art supposed to be a site for the exact *opposite* of institutional conformity? At least that's what I felt when I decided to become an artist as a teenager, after reading books about Marcel Duchamp and conceptual art—that art's most electrifying potential lay in its power to challenge conformity, to push at the boundaries of the status quo, to question entrenched beliefs about what both art and life could be. Certainly, this liberating sense of a blown-open playing field is what has kept both Duchamp's and conceptual art's historical influence so potent and present for decades: the idea that art can be *anything*, not only what has been previously accepted or defined as art.

Yet art school—with official curricula that continue to explicitly teach the lasting reverberations of Duchamp, the dialectical history of the avant-garde, and art's relationship to 20th century emancipatory political movements—sends a

message about art's revolutionary potential that is fundamentally at odds with how its hidden curriculum trains students to comply or disappear. Ultimately, the formal curriculum's values of experimentation and boundary-pushing clash with the hidden curriculum's subtractive, unspoken socialization to rules of the game: sure, art ideas and objects can be avant-garde, revolutionary, or political, just so long as any threat posed to the status quo is cosmetic and not real.

"Guilty as charged," I think when I read this excerpt from artist Andrea Fraser's 2012 essay "There's No Place Like Home":

"Much of what is written about art now seems to me to be almost delusional in the grandiosity of its claims for social impact and critique, particularly given its often total disregard of the reality of art's social conditions. The broad and often unquestioned claims that art in some way critiques, negates, questions, challenges, confronts, contests, subverts, or transgresses norms, conventions, hierarchies, relations of power and domination, or other social structures… seem to have developed into little more than a rationale for some of the most cynical forms of collaboration with the most corrupt and exploitative forces in our society." [10]

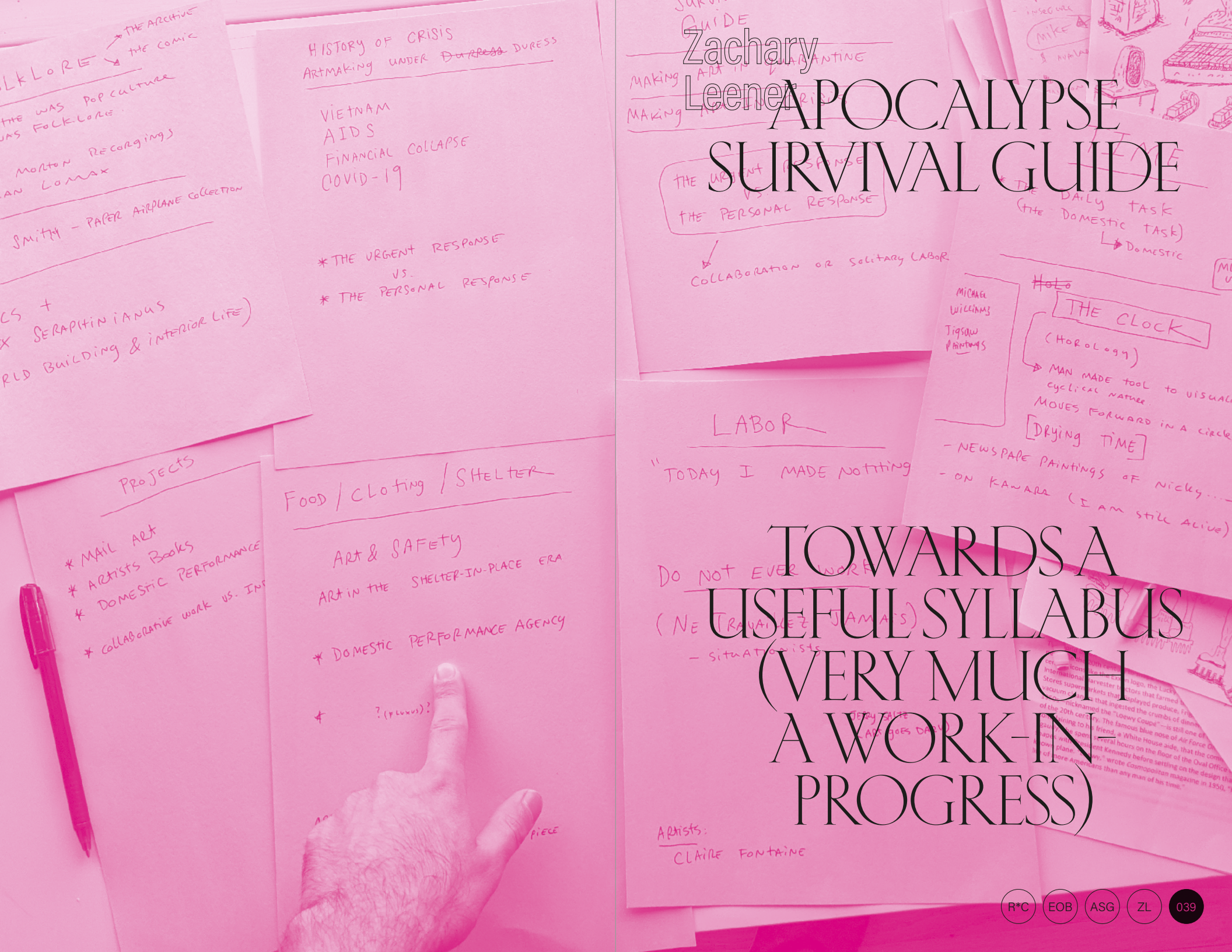
10 Andrea Fraser, "There's No Place Like Home," *Whitney Biennal* 2012, ed. Elisabeth Sussman and Jay Sanders (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 30.

At the end of art school, I attempted to point out this contradiction and my own complicity in it by asking the professor of the requisite class to fail me, as art. In critique, when one student broke with the generally disapproving group to say she saw this as an act of resistance, another student tellingly countered, "*But resistance has been done!*" Pierre Bourdieu describes this as "an objective collusion"—since critiquing the rules of the game positions one as outside of it, anyone who wants in must buy into the perpetuation of the game's definition of legitimacy, constantly reproducing the status quo ad *infinitum*. Calling the rules into question threatens to existentially derail the game itself, because after all, "What would become of the literary world if one began to argue, not about the value of this or that author's style, but about the value of arguments of style? The game is over when people start wondering if the cake is worth the candle." [11]

11 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991), 58.

Given the choice to *comply or disappear*, I ultimately opted to drop out. Since leaving, I've wondered if believing that comply or disappear are the only two options is itself a function of the game. Maybe if we refuse to adopt the dominant language and values that keep us silent about so many things that matter—including our very selves—we can change the rules, from the outside in.

Republished from East of Borneo, January 2019

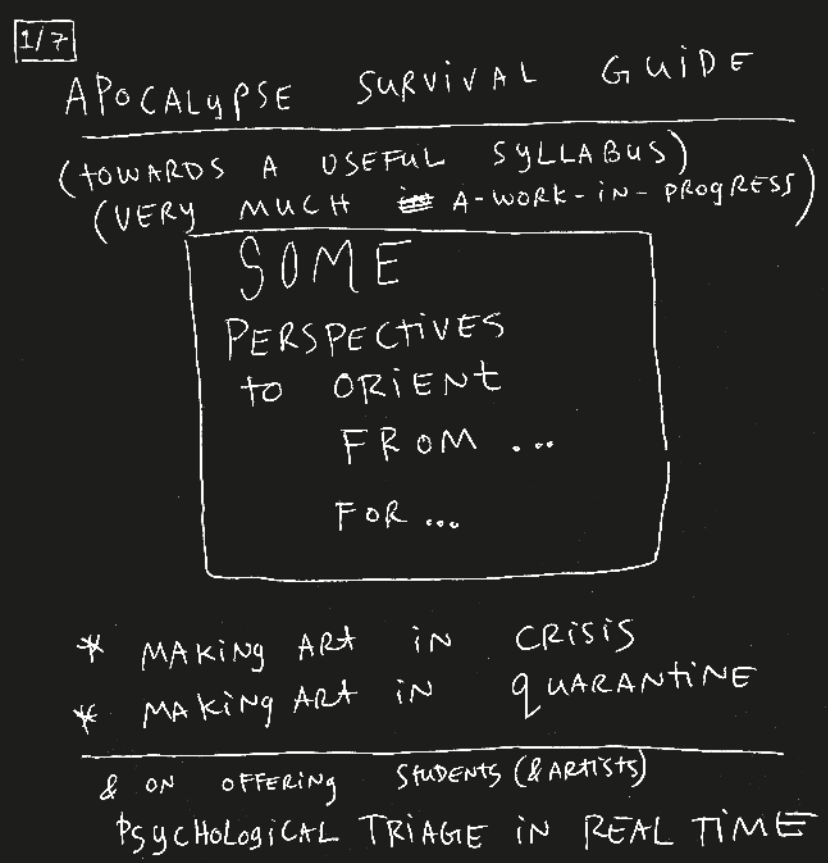


Zachary Leener

APOCALYPSE SURVIVAL GUIDE

TOWARDS A USEFUL SYLLABUS (VERY MUCH A WORK-IN PROGRESS)

These are my original notes (initially shared on social media) from March 2020, when my studio-classroom, along with most of the country, was unceremoniously shut down. I present them unedited, as a document of my desire to provide students with meaningful tools to work in and through our global catastrophe. Like many, I struggled with the technology, and struggled to form a space for students to make their own meaning. We tried to follow the path laid out in this document, with significant successes, and total failures. There are holes here, and things I would change. But for now I won't.



3/7

SPRING 2020 - "CERAMICS"
(ACTUALLY "CLAY") (ACTUALLY "SCULPTURE/NEW GENRES")

WITHOUT ACCESS TO MATERIALS & FACILITIES, HOW CAN I GIVE STUDENTS MEANINGFUL EDUCATION & MEANINGFUL TOOLS TO WORK WITH??

OPTION 1) SHIP THEM PLAY-DOH & HAVE A "ZOOM CRITIQUE". IS THIS DISHONEST APPROXIMATION OF UNIVERSITY TRULY THE BEST WE CAN OFFER? A POOR SIMULATION THAT IS ONLY A FRACTION OF WHAT THEIR TUITION DEMANDS. (BTW I FULLY SUPPORT STUDENTS DESIRE FOR REIMBURSEMENT. SOLVENCY OF THE INSTITUTION CANNOT BE THE FINANCIAL LIABILITY OF THE STUDENTS FOR FUCKS SAKE!)

OPTION 2) GIVE STUDENTS WHAT THEY ARE ASKING FOR: A FRAMEWORK TO MAKE ART THAT ENGAGES HEAD-ON THE SCOPE OF THIS CATASTROPHIE. WORK THAT IS ANTI-ISOLATIONIST & RECOGNIZES THEIR HUMANITY. IS IT OKAY TO THOROUGHLY ABANDON THE MATERIAL "CLAY" AND STILL KEEP THE FOCUS ON CRAFT, COMMUNITY & THE INDIVIDUATED VOICE? (ACTUALLY ISNT THE REAL MATERIAL THE "CLAY STUDIO" -- WITH ITS LONG HISTORY AS A GENERATIVE, COLLABORATIVE MEETING PLACE?)

3/7

FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER

↑ THE B. WURTZ APPROACH

* MAKING WITH WHAT YOU HAVE
  → ART FOR THE SHELTER IN PLACE ERA

* SEE: D.P.A. (ATHENA KOKORONIS)
  DOMESTIC PERFORMANCE AGENCY
  ("CHOREOGRAPHIC SOLUTIONS TO DOMESTIC PROBLEMS")

* BOREDOM AS A MATERIAL?
  (AS THE UNIQUE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THIS CRISIS CAN OSCILATE FROM URGENT TO MUNDANE)

ARTISTS/WORKS:
ALLISON KNOWLES • THE IDENTICAL LUNCH
FISCHLI & WEISS • FOOD PHOTOGRAPHS, TABLESCAPES
FRANZ ERHARD WALTHER • GARMENT/PERFORMANCE
ANNI ALBERS → CHRISTINA FORRER, RUGS

4/7

TIME

1 2
↕ FELIX g.T.

* THE DAILY TASKS, THE DOMESTIC TASKS

(HOROLOGY → GROUP EXHIBITION OF CLOCKS JACK HANLEY GALLERY 2019)

- A ~~MAN~~ HUMAN MADE TOOL THAT MOVES FORWARD IN A CIRCLE
- ADVANCES THROUGH A SERIES OF PRESENT MOMENTS

THINKING OF NICKY NODJOUMI'S "NEW YORK TIMES SKETCHBOOKS"
– DAILY RITUAL OF A PAINTING ON THE FRONT PAGE OF NYT 96-99

ALSO : SARA FRENCH'S "DRYING TIME"
↳ CLOCKS MADE FROM PULPED NEWSPAPER

OF COURSE : ON KAWARA I AM STILL ALIVE

- MICHAEL WILLIAMS' JIGSAW PUZZLE PAINTINGS
- LOUISE BOURGEOIS : INSOMNIA DRAWINGS

5/7

POET: DANIL KHARMS
↳ AESTHETIC REFUSAL

LABOR & REFUSAL

& CONSIDERATIONS OF PRODUCTIVITY

"TODAY I MADE NOTHING"
↳ 2010 GROUP EXHIBITION AT ELIZABETH DEE GALLERY
- CONSIDER THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK & LEISURE, NON-PRODUCTIVITY & THE NEGATION OF WORK
- ART PRACTICE VS. LABOR PRACTICE

"DO NOT WORK EVER"
"NE TRAVAILLEZ JAMAIS"
– DETOURNEMENT/PRANKS/PUNK/CULTURE JAM
* DERIVE - A PLAY FORM OF WANDERING THROUGH SPACE.

ALSO : CLAIRE FONTAINE'S "CHANGE" 25¢ COINS W/ BOX CUTTER BLADES

6/7

THX JEREMY SIGLER WHO TOLD ME:

FOLKLORE

THE DOCUMENTARIAN ARTIST (UNRELIABLE)!

A good thing.

BEFORE THERE WAS POP-CULTURE THERE WAS FOLKLORE.

- STORYTELLING & COMMUNITY & GENERATIONAL CONTINUITY

- ALAN LOMAX RECORDINGS OF JELLY ROLL MORTON (LOTS OF STORYTELLING)
- HARRY SMITH'S PAPER AIRPLANE COLLECTION

NARRATIVE SALVE & WORLD BUILDING EXERCISE

&

COMICS

↳ THE DARK (LIGHT?) NARRATIVE

↳ WORLD BUILDING & INTERIOR LIFE

MACRO

- CODEX SERAPHINIANUS: ABSURDIST ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR REBUILDING THE WORLD
- KEVIN HUIZENGA · THE RIVER AT NIGHT: MEMOIRS OF AN INSOMNIAC

MICRO

7/7

SERIOUS QUESTIONS FOR HOW TO

- MAKE ASSIGNMENTS THAT ADDRESS CURRENT EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF STUDENT-ARTISTS
- PROVIDE CONTINUITY & ACKNOWLEDGE RUPTURE
- CREATE OPPORTUNITY FOR MEANINGFUL RESPONSE
- FOSTER CONNECTIONS & DOCUMENT THIS
- CONSIDER "CRAFT" (THIS IS AFTERALL A "CERAMICS" CLASS)

ARTWORK AS THE UNRELIABLE DOCUMENT ☺

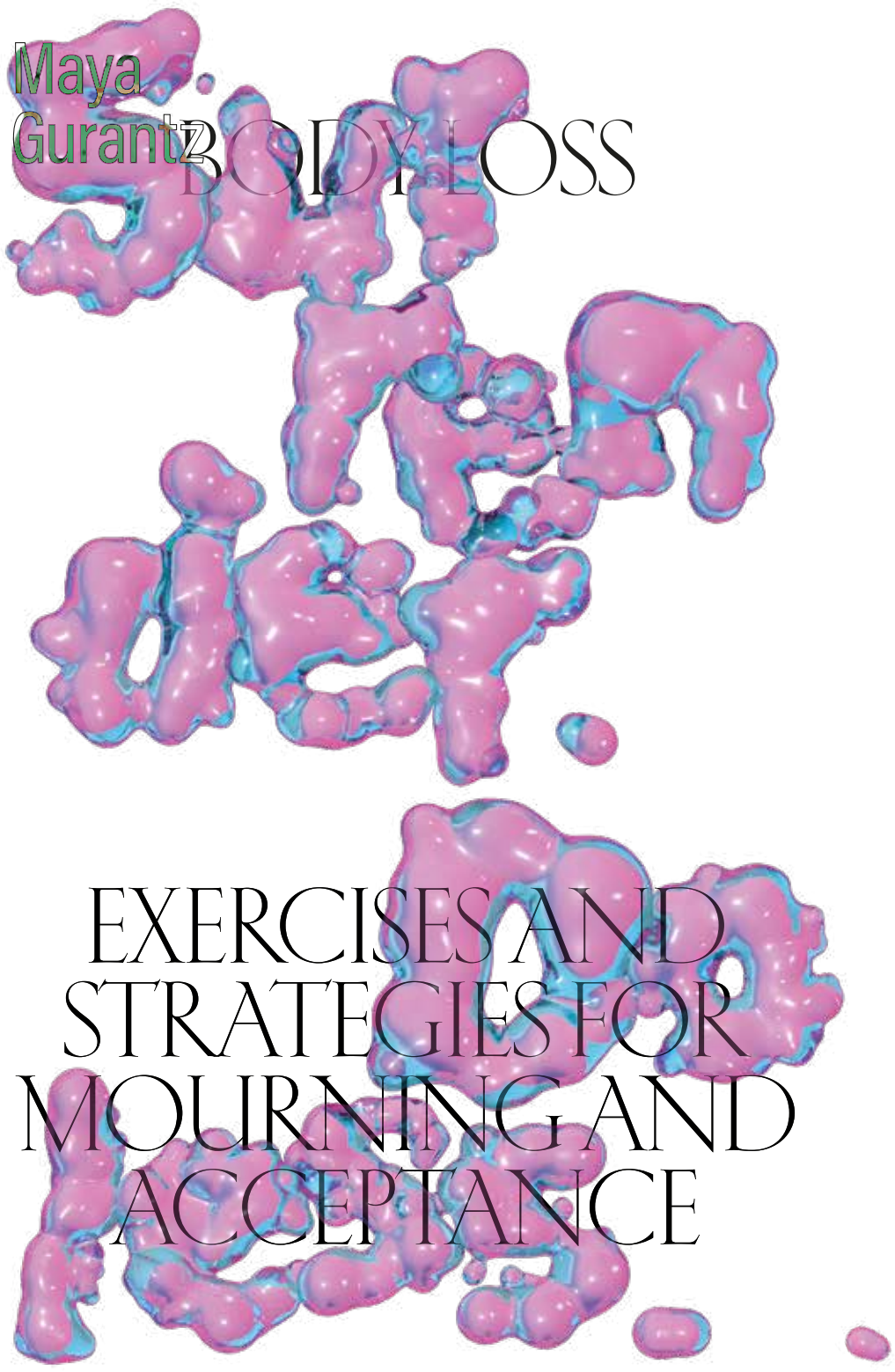
- MAIL ART (USPS AS A TIME BASED MEDIUM)
- DOMESTIC PERFORMANCES, DOCUMENTED (WHAT FORM)?
- COLLABORATIVE WORK VS. INDIVIDUATED ACTION ?????
- TIME PIECES & KENETIC SCULPTURES
- ZOOM as FLUX FEST
- FOOD, CLOTHES, SHELTER (AS RAW MATERIAL AS THE PRODUCT)
- ~~SOLICA~~ COMIX/ARTIST BOOK AS DOCUMENT

ART MATERIALS OR PROVISIONAL MATERIALS

HOW TO MAKE A DOCUMENT??

Maya Gurantz

BODY LOSS



EXERCISES AND STRATEGIES FOR MOURNING AND ACCEPTANCE

Body Loss

Teaching, the act of holding space for guiding discussion, learning, and interaction, exists as a proprioceptive body-mind joyride in four dimensions—three dimensions plus time. Or rather, five dimensions—three plus time and then non-visible energy. Or five senses plus extra-sensory perceptual awareness.

The constant adjustment and shifting of tactics—seducing, threatening, commanding, cheerleading, lifting the energy, focusing the energy, reading the room—e.g. testing the difference between your student's skepticism as true arrogance or as a mask for their unbearable desire to please—this cannot happen through a screen.

No flat image, even a moving one, can replace smelling the sharpness of your students' coffee, seeing the crust in their eyes, feeling their fidgeting, hearing their feet under the table, having the stray inappropriate sexual thought about the person in front of you while communicating information, plugging into the hyperawareness of who is or is not paying attention, who's sleepy, who's engaged, who just has a dumb listening face, knowing when to hold silence to give the room space to speak, and when to speak instead because the students are still struggling to pin down the words in their own head.

Dynamics of teaching are a reminder of the multivalent, explosive, and indirect journey of learning, which can never be separated from teaching. You can't replace teaching in a room. Then how can you teach? How can your students learn?

Surrender/Do Less

Briefly consider a metaphor: teaching as steering a boat on the river of learning. You cannot steer a boat remotely; you must trust your students' ability to steer their own goddamn boat. Will it be as smooth and supple as your steering in a river of other boats pushing one another forward and on track? No.

Ok, that's a terrible metaphor, because learning isn't a straight path, and it isn't one boat at a time that you're steering. If anything, you are the river. Be the river. How can a boat flow on a river that's so far away?

For those of us with families from whom we have no respite, for those of us who are so lonely

that speaking becomes an act of breathing air after days and weeks of suffocation-by-silence, everyone currently lives in a bubble of what they can manage right now.

Surrender. Do less. Expect less. What is necessary in this moment? Is it what you are teaching, or is it the act of grieving loss? If grieving loss is the urgent task at hand, become a river of grieving loss. Iterate and reiterate to your students that they are in a river of learning, but you cannot currently provide that river so they must understand what their own river is, without you.

An Exercise: Grieving Intimacy

I have been keeping a list of activities I cannot properly do at the moment because of our pandemic inability to share physical space:

Gossip*
Flirt
Eavesdrop
Track/Trace
Rehearse

* (We all attempt gossip and flirtation over text and email, but tone can be too easily misconstrued in such formats—delicate insinuation and irony just don't work properly).

How can we reinscribe intimacy in this moment when we are grieving the lack of these other intimacies? Have that conversation with your students. Have your students make their own list. Let them grieve.

Tool: Form Study Cells

Break your class into study cells of 3-4. As far as they know, they are now the class. They receive information and some guidance from you, but they are there to negotiate and foment learning with one another. If some people end up with assholes

in their cell, acknowledge this possibility and let them know that negotiating such assholes will make them a better leader come the revolution.

An Exercise: Playing "Telephone"

In the game "Telephone," Person 1 whispers a message to Person 2. Person 2 whispers the same message to Person 3, and so on, all the way down a line, until the final Person has to share what they heard and we all laugh at how the message from Person 1 was transformed.

Play this game with your study cells. Set the rule that for a certain assignment or reading, cells can only communicate via one-on-one phone calls. The phone (like, the audio phone) might remain the best tool we currently have.

Podcasts are so popular in an age of erumpent and ubiquitous video content because sound possesses an intimacy that is physical even when it travels over a phone. Audio waves remain physical, tactile.

This means that members of the cell have to communicate the learning they receive from others in the cell, like the game of Telephone. Have them witness and document how various messages did and did not get communicated properly.

An Exercise: Translating Learning into Spiritual Practice of Surrender

Meditation is surrender—acknowledgement of emotions, of the pains of impermanence, the struggles of life. Seeing and feeling them, then letting them go.

Transform your various “lessons,” “themes,” and “readings” into guided audio meditations for your students that they then absorb through the physical intimacy of listening, should they choose.

An Exercise: Improvisational Archival Research

Promote improvisational, spontaneous online archival digging with no purpose in mind. Provide lists of archives with outstanding online resources.

An Exercise: Feel Interaction, Feel History

Choose three people you love. Imagine their geographical location. Think about how people traveled the space between you and that location 10 years ago, 50, 100, 200, 1,000 years.

An Exercise: Feel Invisible Ties

We are all constantly tied to on another, invisibly. Visualize what it is to feel other bodies in your home, in your neighborhood, in your city.

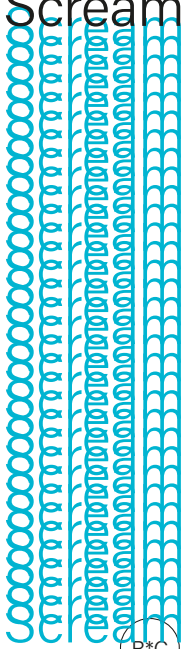
A Socially Distant Exercise

Once you can be together with your class again, even if it’s socially distant, stand 10 feet apart from one another.

Scream in one direction.

Scream all facing random directions.

Form a circle. Scream facing out.



Nika Simovich Fisher

FORESHADOWS

A SERIES OF SLIDES AND CAPTIONS

01 **Screenshot of echonyc.com**

Echo is a text-only social network founded by Stacy Horn in 1989 that is still online today. This is a screenshot of the web homepage, the actual network is only available through Telnet.

02 Screenshot of echonyc.com

The Echo website is a fossil—a functioning website from another time. This page is an archive of all the Echo members with links to their homepages.

03 Screenshot of Karen Rose's website, circa 2000

The artist and Echo member Karen Rose's website from the year 2000 is still online. I enjoyed her surreal acrylic paintings that blur digital and analogue tools. The interface of her website highlighted photos of the artist and utilized a welcoming tone of voice, instructing the user how to engage with the content.

"While you're here, bookmark this page so you can come back often."

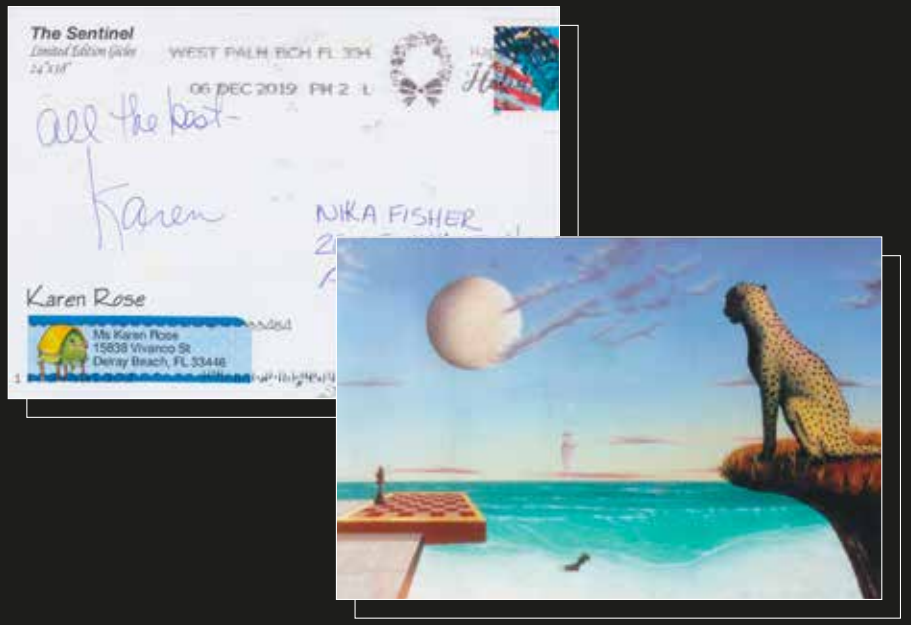
04 Tight crop of language on Karen Rose's website, circa 2000

Before you leave, send me some email with any comments you may have. If you include your snail-mail address, I will send you a signed postcard of one of my pieces.

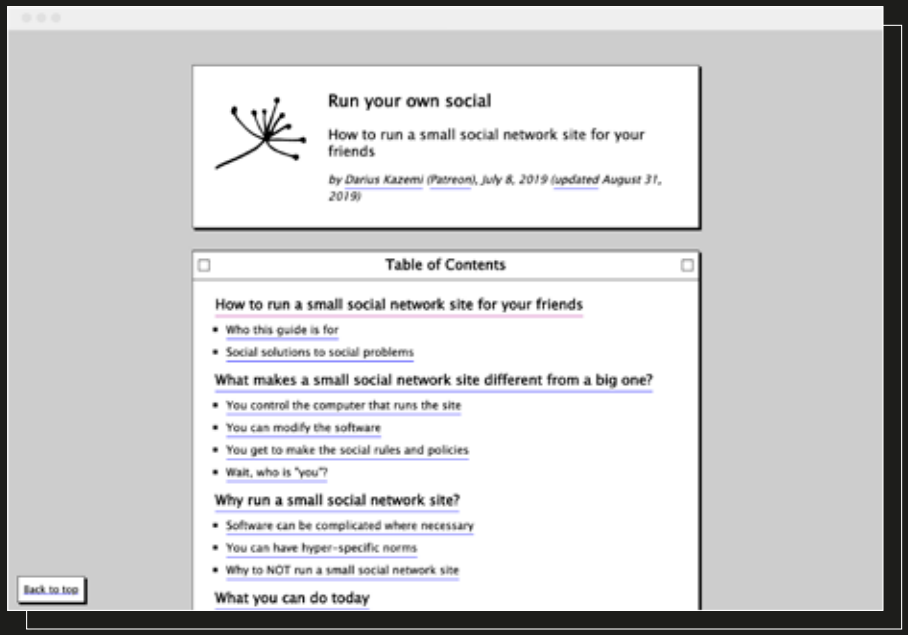
Enjoy!

Karen Rose

05 Scan of signed postcard from Karen Rose received December 2019



06 Screenshot of runyourown.social by Darius Kazemi

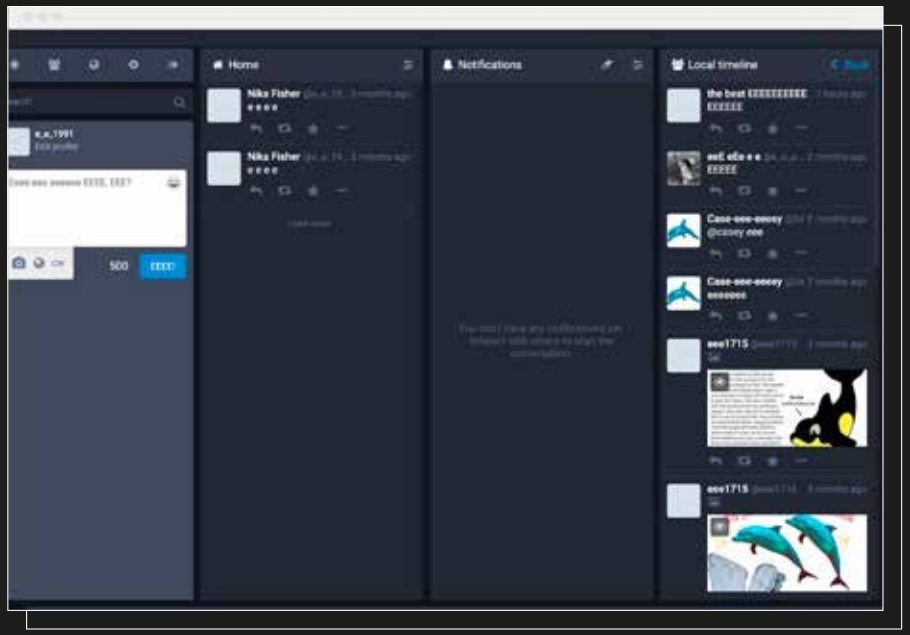


In this article, artist Darius Kazemi outlines the differences between well known social networks such as Facebook and Twitter and small, independent communities. He creates an outline for how you might start your own social network and stresses the importance of custom introductions and community building. This article inspired me to create my own recipe-sharing social network.

07 Pull quote from runyourown.social by Darius Kazemi

> But none of this is unique to running a social network site. I think all of this stuff applies if you take away the internet and computers entirely. This is exactly the cost of starting a community theater group, activist group, social group, sports club, book club, and so on. Even the bit about "down time" applies if you run a physical space like a theater. You can't be there for every performance but if something goes wrong with the building, you'd better have a plan to deal with it.
>
> In other words, the costs of running a small social network site end up being more or less the costs of starting, well, anything involving other people.

08 Screenshot of dashboard on dolphin.town

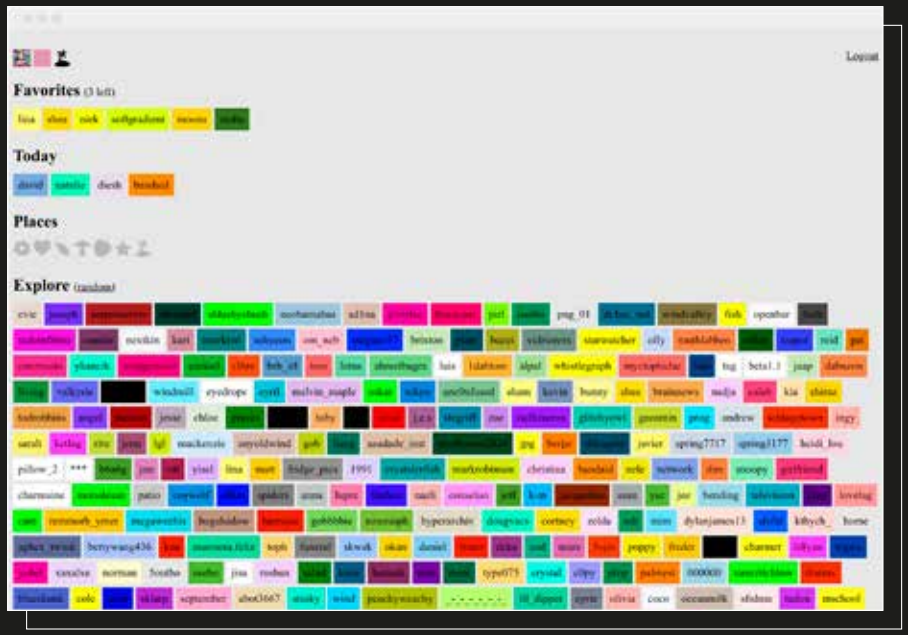


Dolphin Town, a small social network created by Darius Kazemi, runs on Mastodon. Mastodon is a free, open-source social network that can be forked and repurposed with custom rules and guidelines. In this instance, you can only communicate with the letter "e."

09 Image posted by Dolphin Town user eee1715

There are instances where characters other than "e" are permitted. Images are a loophole. This user created a dolphin-inspired graphic to communicate a message.

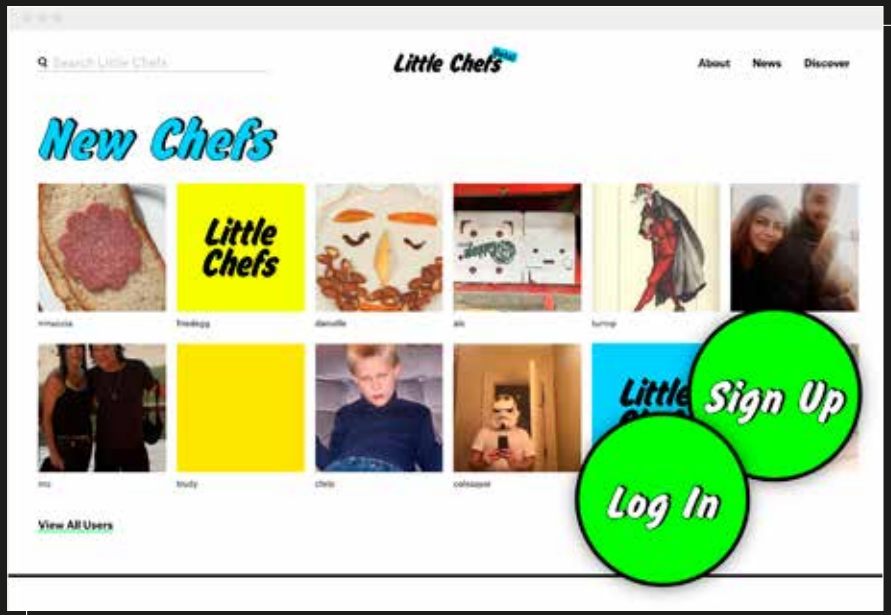
10 Screenshot of special.fish, a community by Elliott Cost



Special Fish is a small text-based social network created in 2020 by Elliott Cost. On the FAQ page, he describes the network as a “public word processor,” with the intention of sharing users’ rtf/txt documents in a public setting.

11 Screenshot of my Special Fish profile

12 Screenshot of little.chefs.fun, a recipe sharing platform



Little Chefs is a recipe organizing platform my partner and I launched in April of 2020. We worked on this on/off for 5 years and finally launched the current iteration during the quarantine. We're hoping it can be a useful tool as well as a small community of people putting recipes in their own words and learning from each other.

13 Image of marzipan posted by Little Chefs user nmuccia

14 Screenshot of my Parsons Core Interaction students on one of our first Zoom calls

During the quarantine, all of my classes shifted to an online environment. This is what our online classroom looked like. Students faces have been concealed for their privacy.

15 Isolation Diary

Core Interaction

- Projects

Agenda
Readings
Workshops
Students
Resources
Info

Parsons School of Design
Spring 2020

Nika Simovich Fisher
& Dylan Fisher

Isolation Diary

Studio, Lab

Overview

Last class, we discussed process and the importance of having both an archive of things that inspire you as well as making work and looking at it at as a whole. As the world is experiencing a pandemic crisis, governments and institutions are encouraging citizens to self-quarantine as a preventative measure. Let's use this time as an opportunity to reflect on our processes.

Instructions

1. Starting today, pick a tangential topic regarding the Coronavirus COVID-19 to visually document each day. A tangential topic can be something that obviously relates to the outbreak (visualizing the spread of the illness) or something that touches on the effects of the outbreak (documenting your window each day, highlighting your view as you're in isolation).
2. During Spring Break and the week immediately after, you'll continue to document your subject each day, and you must be able to perform this documentation without interruption (e.g. if you know you will be traveling, don't pick a location in NYC you won't have

This project asked students to visually document something tangentially related to COVID-19 over the course of 3 weeks. The idea for this project was to help the students observe what's going on around them while developing their own image making processes.

16 A few free Zoom backgrounds from a variety of sources

Many of the Zoom backgrounds included interiors of houses.

17 Screenshot of Chris Cuomo and his brother, Governor Andrew Cuomo, chatting on CNN (Chris Cuomo was working from home while sick with COVID-19)

Prior to the quarantine, CNN didn't allow Chris Cuomo to interview his brother, Governor Andrew Cuomo. During the quarantine, this ban was lifted and we saw the two brothers discussing current events while poking fun at each other through tender, sibling rivalry-fueled banter.

In this project, students utilize a variety of free online tools to create a set of posters and graphics, culminating in a presentation regarding "good" and "bad" design.

Prior to Adobe allowing for free student licenses, I thought that using free online tools would be an interesting way of getting the students to experiment with form and highlight how an idea can be visually communicated without the tools they're comfortable with.

One of the free image-making tools I provided for the *Junk Mail* project was makesweet.com. This website allows you to customize low fidelity mock-ups using a library of photos and animations. This one features a dog using a laptop. I added the fictional social network for dogs, "dogs.world" on the laptop's screen.

20 Screenshot of Zoom call on 04/20/20

On April 20, 2020, I was notified of a last minute (7pm), mandatory all-team meeting by one of my employers. During this webinar style call, we were all informed that the design department of this online school was closing due to COVID-19. I had never spoken to this person before, which added to the impersonal feeling of this moment.

21 Photo of an empty co-working space

The online program I taught at is owned by a large co-working institution that visually informed the 2010s. While all industries are deeply impacted by recent events, I'm curious which ones will transcend into the 2020s, and which will be left behind.

Co-working spaces were a way for individuals to carve a fluid professional space for themselves while still maintaining their autonomy as freelancers and small businesses. While it's easy for many of these types of professions to continue work online, the physical component of the location highlighted our inclination to be around others and the desire for connection.

* Concluding Thoughts

Prior to the quarantine, there was a desire for "Web 3.0," a decentralized internet, and quieter social networks. Through this time of transition to online learning and widespread remote workflows, this desire has amplified. The tools and infrastructure required to work remotely already exist, but we're using them to connect in new ways. We may see an increase in independent sub-domains of niche interests, much like the BBS of the early internet, but visually distinct from Slack channels.

In terms of pedagogy, the tools and knowledge we have access to will become democratized and divergent. As with the early days of glitter text and fan art focused Angelfire/GeoCities pages, we'll see a resurgence of custom, personal content intended for much smaller audiences. This will coincide with mainstream networks such as TikTok and Instagram, of course, but it will become more widespread and form an online "counter culture," which hasn't existed in the same way in the past ten years.

The beginning of this decade feels like the beginning of a drastic new chapter in history. I'm curious to see what impact this has on visual culture. Typically, new technologies push aesthetics into a defining characteristic due to the nature of the media itself (just look at early computer art, built within the limitations of the software of the time). The extended stay-at-home time, emerging online communities, and a desire to learn from each other will encourage us to use existing tools in new and memorable ways.

Perhaps we'll finally have time to unpack the plethora of stored information in front of us and build a more positive and visually engaging network of resources.

Anonymous

A CALL FOR COMPLAINT

The word 'complaint' derives from 'plague,' in a vulgar sense, to strike at the breast. A complaint: sick speech.

–Sara Ahmed, "Complaint"[2]

FOR PLAGUE SPEECH, FOR SICK SPEECH.[1]

1 First put online in late March of 2020 with the following introduction: "This is a commons. At the following link, and pasted again at the bottom of this page, all faculty, students, and staff at educational institutions may document their stories and experiences with this crisis anonymously: https://pad.riseup.net/p/Open_Commons_for_Complaint. The first answer was transferred there on April 3, 2020. Please do not delete or edit this essay; it will be restored immediately." Since then, this piece has been published, with additional edits by its author, in *Urgency Reader 2: Mutual Aid Publishing During Crisis*, published by Paul Soulellis, and the catalog for Art in the Age of Anxiety, at Sharjah Art Foundation, curated by Omar Kholeif. The author welcomes readers to document their stories and sick speech at the link for the Open Commons.

2 From the website of theorist and writer Sara Ahmed, under *Projects*, describing her forthcoming book on complaint, found at https://www.saranahmed.com/complaint.

Complaint is, by definition, "sick speech": the speech of sickness, and the speech we make during sickness. The sickness is multivalent. The first sickness is the virus of 2020, the physical sickness, real and deadly, threatening our families and our communities. There are the other sicknesses we know, those that are deeply rooted, that fail to protect us during sickness: the sickness of institutions, universities, and governments, their ideology, and their technocratic logics.

We are asked to return home, to our apartments and houses, or to our lack of a home. Wherever home may be, the supposed neutrality of the institutional space dissipates. Distance allows us to see its structures clearly. We are not caught in them, walking and muddling through them. As we become re-rooted in the histories of our families or non-families, our solitude, the mess of our lives outside the institution, the logic of the institution also appears in sharp relief. We see its delays, its twisting of language, its tone-deaf proclamations, its erasures, its slow violence, in real time, unfolding on screens in its dissonant, harping language.

I am a part-time faculty member at a U.S.-based art and design school, the child of immigrants, a woman of color, and, because of my position at the cross of these various vectors of precarity, easily fired, or punished, dismissed from making a living. Most importantly, of all those markers—before, through, and beyond those markers—I am a critic. As a critic caught, stuck, and in thrall to powerful and inane voices, I find my obligation in crisis is to listen to those voices. To track how they warp, bend, deflect, proclaim, harangue, and echo. My work is in listening, documenting, and making space for others to speak. At first, in marking this piece as anonymous, I want to dissolve the power of the

author, the brand, and enact my understanding of institutional logic. I note how the institution acts itself like an anonymous body, and, in this context, a name, the ownership of critique, functions more like a thermal test target.

Over the past two weeks, as the crisis has unfolded, we have listened very carefully, as faculty, as staff, as students, to people in power. We have listened, waiting, for the language that meets our intelligence and energy, our labour and our criticality. We know we deserve more than performance, more than self-congratulation. In response to students asking for tuition refunds, art school deans send videos of themselves dancing, mostly proud of knowing how to attach a video to an email. The heartbreak, the sharp, informed critique of students, is met with a shrug, a show of unfathomable callousness.

What can our speech sound like now, outside of the institution? Even as we have returned home, we have carried our frustrations, our sense of what we know was not quite right, our *politics*, with us. We carry our complaint. Just because we have gone home, we don't start over with a blank. We carry our individual histories, and memories of our time inside the institution, home with us. As we are now asked to continue our contract from our homes, we can pause to remember our complaint.

We might not have begun this crisis as critics, or had any interest in dismantling, deconstructing, or destabilizing a place. The virus has revealed, on every level, the weakness and failures of institutions, scrambling to assert their mandates. It has revealed how the institution speaks, how it hears selectively. We treat it as a person, as it desires. Crisis creates a rupture, a profound vacuum, which reveals the possibility of other spaces of learning, of better worlds we want to live in.

SILENCE

We are told we are all in the same boat. Yes: *we are all in the same boat*. But what part of the boat is one in? Are you on the upper deck, the lower deck, in the hold? Do you have a view? Can you breathe fresh air? Are you near the engine? Sick speech comes up from the hold of a ship. Sick speech, whether it is aired and explicit, or buried in the body, seeps through, regardless.

We might have thought of this boat we're all in, as we watched a formal, canned address, given in an empty auditorium, after almost 2,000 students, faculty, and staff waited two hours for a livestream to work. In lieu of the dialogue that the community deserved, we watched a farcical, surreal piece of administrative performance art. And this delay—to keep nearly 2,000 people *waiting*—is a capture of the relationship of the institution to the people whose labor and income and debt keep it alive.

What was most striking was the *silence*: the absence of any voices to respond. When there are no other voices, it seems that there was never any protest, no critical response. Only a few, nervous, angry voices are heard on a stage. In that moment, watching that address, it became clear just how powerful and consuming the silence, the refusal of dialogue, can be. How the empty audience without bodies serves institutions, how the silence is then turned outward for us to absorb. The dialogue between administration and students reached its limit.

With sickness comes this quiet, beneath the already awful, eerie silence of the outside, the empty streets. Sickness sets in when trust has been violated and the break is not acknowledged. The show must go on: and a deeper sickness sets in, congeals. Ideological sickness grows the more it is not named, and, even when named, it has a way of evading capture.

Indeed, all the vaunted critical training the university offers must end when that criticality turns its eye back to the university. A bumbling inability to livestream may well be a mistake, but the refusal to change, to move with students clearly articulating their critique—that an embodied materials-based practice *cannot* be translated online at home—is intentional. It is a choice.

Many institutions seem downright hungry for this transition to remote learning. It can seem, within a bureaucratic paradigm, an ideal and devastatingly effective way of dispersing voices, of weakening the community, of closing doors to the institutional hold.

But I also imagine that a university that cannot manage a livestream has no grasp of the (actual) radical potential inherent in the digital commons, of precisely how the digital will and can dissolve hierarchy, will and can eliminate fear of authoritative position. *Mute and unfollow.*

The crisis of this institution is a reflection of the crisis of every institution. And many of us have found a profound sense of community in grieving our losses—one of them being the idea of the institution. Colleagues across many other art and design schools are naming the slower, strategic violences that their universities have been able to leverage in crisis. The levels of stress, mental duress, and risk these decisions have caused our students, trying to continue learning at home during a global pandemic, have been articulated. Petition after petition, signed by thousands of students at different schools, have clearly outlined the economic and moral costs of this approach.

And so, before we embrace a toxic solidarity, we should question what solidarity we in fact

can practice. We must be cognizant of the vast differentials in power between students and faculty, within faculty, between faculty and staff, between the whole collective and the administration. We must be aware of how the university *speaks* like a community but acts, often, in ways that directly undermine that community. We must question the speculative future of a continued education that encourages questioning, but not of the institution. If students are asked to practice critical thinking, that criticality must, in turn, include the administration. Any other approach is bad faith. It is the institution that misunderstands what critical thinking is and misunderstands the power of its students and faculty to leverage that thought.

RADICAL IMAGINATION

The institution, which shows no radical imagination, cannot, in good faith, call for radical imagination, not without its faculty or students or staff. Simply put: *radical imagination* does not and cannot replace material resources. "Experimental verve," to create an "innovation and adventurous" education through technology-solutions, comes up against a brutal reality.

We are buried in hundreds of jargon-filled emails, filled with neoliberal abstractions to *think creatively*—language that has been widely, roundly, and justifiably ridiculed. The burden, they imply, is on you to use your imagination to imagine materials into being, to imagine your studio support into being. Rather than focusing on the systemic issues, this administrative language focuses on what you should do to manage the crisis on your own. Resist this language, as it echoes the language of the system at every level, in which organizational responsibility is abdicated in favor of the specter of individual responsibility. Any failure to do so is not a failure of your capacity to innovate.

That pressure in the back of one's head is this ask, for you to figure it out on your own. But systemic issues are not always a matter of designing the right tool or technology. A new app, a new website, a new interface will not solve this, just as one digging into one's "creative resources" when taxed financially and mentally, without the support of resources one has paid and gone into debt for, is an unfair, even obscene, call. Systemic issues cannot be solved through individual bootstrapping and our pedagogy should not be falling back on concepts of individual, artistic exceptionalism. This sets us all up to fail.

If you are a low-income student, an international student, a student with disabilities, these questions take on stark urgency. The radical imagination you exercise is the basic act of making, despite the failures of institutions, universities, and governments. If you are a student in an emotionally or physically abusive home, the stability of school, its escape, has been a matter of survival. Your radical imagination is expressed in the act of how you survive.

My fear is that the reaction, the dismissal of this shallow formulation of creativity, as a bludgeon, will cause us to lose sight of creativity as it can help us function beyond this moment. If there is any balm in this moment, it is that one's anger, shock, and disappointment with the institution is not the end of one's life as an artist, but catalyzing. An art career does not end with the institution's failures. Your life as a creative, as an artist, began before it and continues, by necessity, outside of it. At a distance, the institution can be seen as a tool, a key, and a name to use. A platform through which you find one another,

your peers, the minds you respect and depend on. It's here that the sacrifices you've made so far to be here, all the loans, all the social precarity you've taken on to have a kind of creative life, can be honored. The goal was always to continue on, to live and thrive past the institution.

We will tune in, ostensibly, to our online lectures and critiques, thinking about this new space, one that is clearly and starkly carried on through our collective labor. Dispersed in this way, we can think about what other spaces we will want to move on to, what spaces we want to create. We must resist the promise of technology as a band-aid. We can slow down. We can reevaluate and reconsider the role of "radical imagination" in this new territory. Yes, artists and designers handle "difficult situations and uncertainty" well. But the language of innovation and creativity, of radical imagination, cannot be co-opted to serve the institution.

If we are asked to "creatively reimagine" coursework, maybe the most imaginative move would be to turn away from the language of the institution, its obfuscations, its ambiguity. To instead affirm what we have experienced in this crisis and what we will continue to experience in its wake, to ensure it is documented, recognized as real. This is an opportunity, if anything, to talk together, away from the institution. We critique at a remove; we identify our experience together within this. We close read to identify what happened. We remember in order to not be disparate and separate.

Complaint, or sick speech, is a refusal of this dichotomy. A refusal to accept that things should go on without memory. Complaint names the response as inadequate. Filing the complaint, one after another, creates an archive. Registering the complaint means it cannot fester in the body and mind and turn into an anger that squashes momentum and creativity. Without documentation of complaint, there is no record.

Note that when a complaint is turned to examine the institution, it becomes petulant; it suddenly becomes a misunderstanding of how things work. The critic becomes the object; it is a matter of their role and position, their inability to *get along*. Complaint helps us understand the structures of power within not just this institution, but every other institution like it. And the role of a critic is to archive and retain memory and to give shape to the collective demand for better answers. It is to make space for others' complaints as a formal expression of critical thinking, exactly the kind of critical thinking about power and labor that an institution might claim to be training its students in.

In this moment, our communities express radical creativity—the chain of mentors, peers, teachers, students, and colleagues who sustain us in the pursuit of learning, despite the institution's violence. With them, we can ask again: who do we exert ourselves for? What do we put our energy into? Who is expected to work on as usual? What support is there for carrying on? What is our creative work in service of? What is the opportunity here, to at last stop identifying with the institution?

Ultimately, the role of an educator is to bear witness and listen to the thinking, the articulation, and the thoughts of students. To give them space to speak, space to debate, and space to work through their energy, their frustration, and their massively curtailed practice. The thinking about practice—how it lands, who it is for, and what its forms are—does not end.

For my students, I want to say this: My role as an educator and as a critic is to refuse any punishing concept of exceptionalism. My role

instead is to see your struggle, to acknowledge it, and to meet you. My role is to defend you and engage with you. It is to reject any focus on individual responsibility, rigor, or excellence as it might have been conceived on the institution's grounds. I hope instead to push and change the framework of what excellence and rigor in crisis can be. My role is to continually name what we are going through as being both a structural crisis as well as an epidemiological one. My role is to continue to question ideology with you. It is to name with you. It is to have conversations with you, in between the learning, to manage this crisis.

Many of your faculty are struggling through these questions, desperate that the work of learning remain meaningful. I promise you this. They are here, listening to you. Your part-time professors, your adjunct faculty, your precarious faculty, who comprise a huge part of the teaching load of your institution, are also doubting their positions. They wonder how to invest in institutions that push making and production before critical thinking and reflection. They wonder what values of the institution should even transition into these remote spaces. And, together, as faculty, staff, and students, our trust in the institution's capacity to care for, to manage well, has been stretched past an irreparable point.

SICK SPEECH

In the coming weeks and months, as we talk, debate, work, and commune remotely, I suggest we actively make space here, online, for ongoing complaint, for sick speech. I would offer here that our sick speech is a way of surviving this transition. This is that critical, annoying, interruptive, insistent, troubling, maddening, and digressive speech that one might tamp down in person, face to face.

Online we interrupt with speech that mirrors the sickness. Because we are in the same sick ship together, we can create resistance against any further compromises, any more mystifications of ideology, through our reliance on one another.

Our being unable to meet in physical space does not mean we will not continue to place critique on a sick system. There are no bodies on campus, but that does not mean there are no voices. In sharing and expressing our shared precarity, in witnessing one another's struggles, we can embolden one another. We will be present, but we must also recognize and make space for the geographic scatter, the loans, the lack of materials, the fear of graduation prospects, the stress of housing, of making payments, of finding jobs. We must make space for the mental and physical health issues that will arise, as the impact of overloaded digital consumption deeply affects the vivacity of atomized individuals without social support. This will be incredibly hard. We will need to listen carefully to each other to find survival strategies.

Mark the effort of maintaining our focus, our ability to work. How difficult it feels, how it wears us down physically, mentally, and emotionally. Sick speech helps us acknowledge that marking this moment in the full dimensionality of its violence is part of the education and the work. As a way to keep the silence at bay, we log in. The insides of our houses are raucous with the voices of friends, family, colleagues. In the absence of physical spaces, we establish a commons.

We want to be here, still, because we want to invest, we want to have our values align. This new space we are entering is a place of common speech, of cacophonous, rowdy, diverse perspectives. Identifying our positions here helps us think clearly about power, so the work

can continue despite power. If we recount and proclaim and account for what it is to be an artist and writer in this time, we account for our own power. We can and will articulate through the *why* of why we make or create. We can use this time to look beyond this institution to living beyond paradigms of self-exploitation and pathological frameworks of creative production. We do this precisely because of the call to abandon complaint, to set it aside. We refuse to set aside circumspection and criticality, as though identifying how institutional decisions actively harm is "work for later."

Ahmed calls for the complaint to become a collective, "in order to create a shared record or to share experiences," because "the work of complaint does not stop with a complaint (although it is hard to tell when a complaint stops and starts) in part because when you complain you find out about others who have complained."[3] There is a balm, a relief in shared complaint. Change does not begin without infected speech that slows a machine from moving forward. Plague speech is the act.

I invite us to create this collective of complaint, to file sick speech, regardless of shaming calls for respectability and unity. Sick speech is the speech of this moment: marking exactly what we hear in the dissonant, self-contradicting, sick language of power.

Complaint: a pause to name, to articulate what is happening, to assemble bodies around the naming, to legitimize.

Complaint: to *honor* the good we have experienced, the learning, and the loss and grief of losing that space.

Complaint: to archive, under pressure, in resistance to the pressure of forgetting.

We speak to remember, to maintain memory. We speak to name and account for obfuscation and evasion recast as care. We speak to remember what this moment broke open. We must keep speaking, writing, and making sense in the face of the overriding pressure there is to abandon sense.

This is the time, we hear, that artists move. Claim the speech that crisis makes possible. That speech from the gut, stirred, unearthed, and drawn up to the surface. Resist the pressure to forget. To accept this as the way things are. In this transition, we break.

You do not just pay to go to the university. You are the university. *Your thinking is the most important part of the university*. And your power and capability and radical imagination will extend past the university.

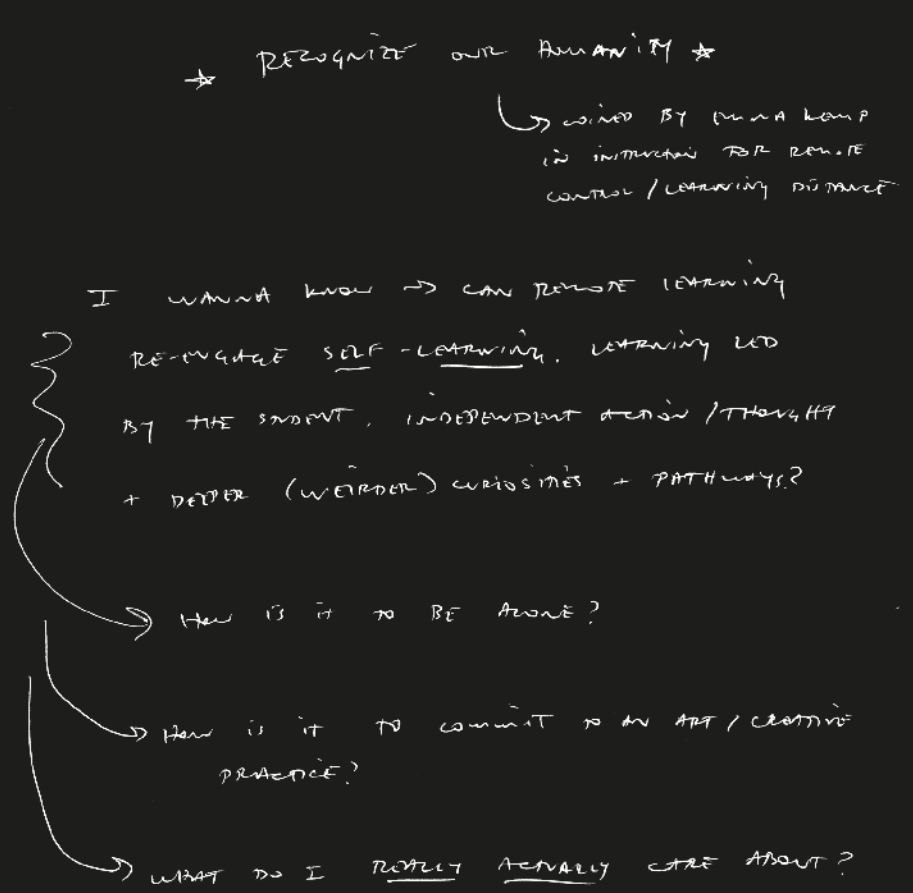
This collection of complaint—of sick speech—will circulate until heard.

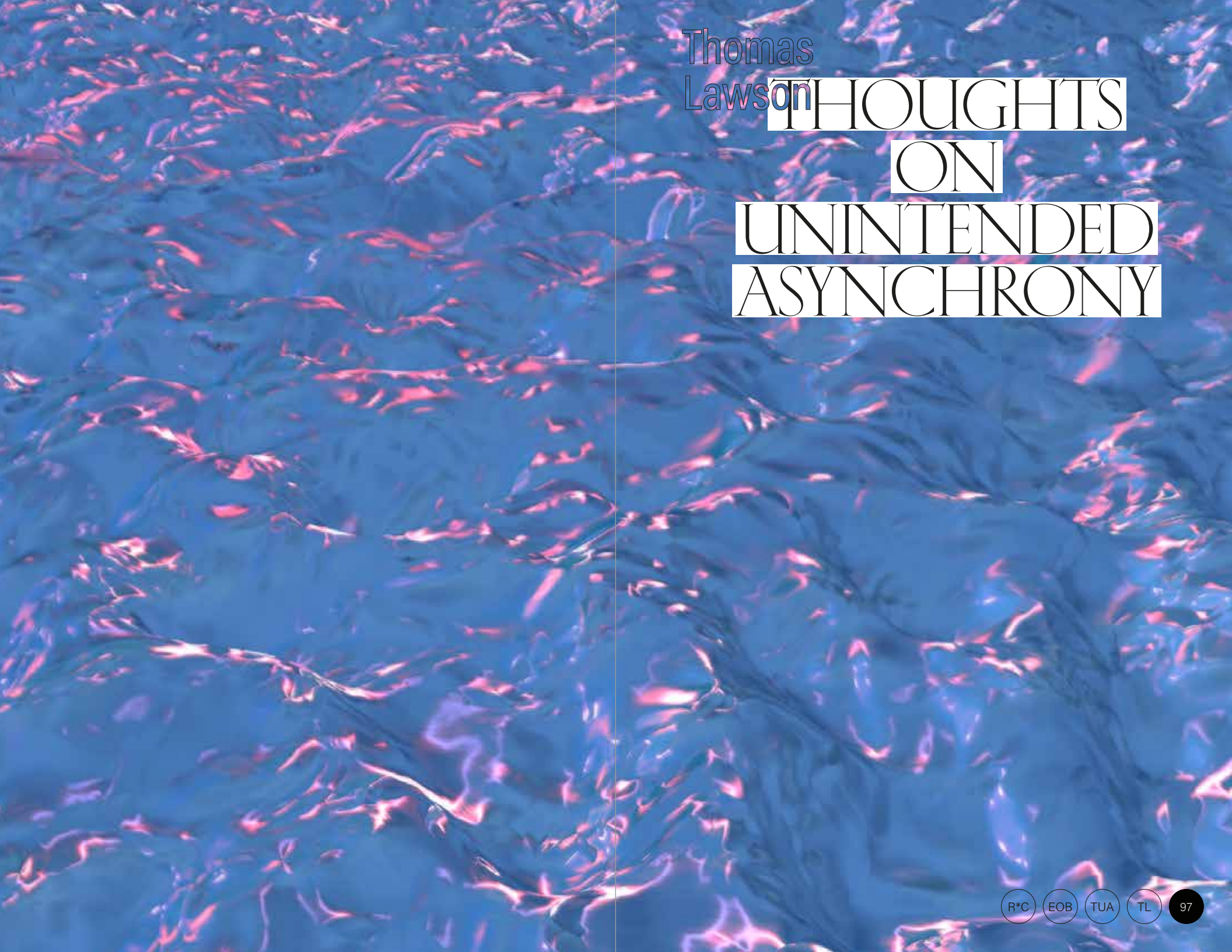
Please enter your complaint/sick speech/story, if so moved:
https://pad.riseup.net/p/Open_Commons_for_Complaint.

3. Sara Ahmed, "Why Complain?" from her blog *Feminist Killjoys*, posted July 22, 2019.

Cara Levine

TO RECOGNIZE OUR HUMANITY





Thomas Lawson

THOUGHTS ON UNINTENDED ASYNCHRONY

This semester I was teaching a seminar focusing on questions of nationalism, using the 700th anniversary of a Scottish document that makes early claims for national self-determination as a kind of lens through which we would examine more recent events, including Brexit, and the possible break-up of the United Kingdom, and of course the virulent white nationalism sweeping this country.

While discussing the late medieval landscape in an art school could seem obscure, there were surprising points of contact, echoes across the centuries. It was the time of the Crusades, when a not-yet dominant Christianity was fighting a powerful and expanding Islam, while fearing an even greater, and more alien, threat from Genghis Khan and his descendants. In that context the claims for autonomy from small groups of landowning militia leaders on the western fringes of Europe seemed something of a sideshow. But then, shortly after these Scottish landowners successfully established their independence from the English crown, the bubonic plague swept the world, turning all societies inward; the idea of nation states that could close down borders and keep out contagion began to make sense.

We were just beginning to discuss all this when the news of the new coronavirus gripping parts of China became more insistent, adding some contemporaneity to the proceedings. Things moved along, to the 18th century development of an idea of Britishness, an expression of militant, English-speaking Protestantism and increasingly rapacious imperialism. And this of

course is where America comes in, supplier of cheap (thanks to slavery) commodity crops like sugar, tobacco, cotton, which kickstarted industrialization back in the UK, creating massive wealth for the owners of production, a decent living for the managerial class, and alienated poverty for everyone else, all wrapped up in a strangely boastful sense of national pride that saw all other peoples as inferior. And then, of course, the whole vexed notion of liberty—an individual right to action, or a collective standing together to create a space free of fear? We were now set up to take on a variety of current ills, from Hindu nationalism to Cuban repression, from the suspect politics of American modernism to the racism of small-town America.

Then we went into lockdown, and the class dispersed. For six weeks we had been meeting in a room, sitting around a table. We had shared PowerPoints, movies, YouTube fragments, essays. We would take a break, get coffee, re-adjourn. Normal seminar behavior. And now suddenly we reconvened via Zoom, sharing hitherto unknown private spaces as we faced each other, and ourselves, confined to the dimensions of our laptop screens. Some hovered as indistinct shadows, others strange fractals, blending into exotic photomural backdrops. From the specificity of the classroom we were now everywhere, dispersed over Los Angeles, and over the country, Texas, Ohio, New York, one of us on the other side of the Atlantic. Space and time both distended and

flattened, creating an odd intimacy, each in our own sense of the present moment.

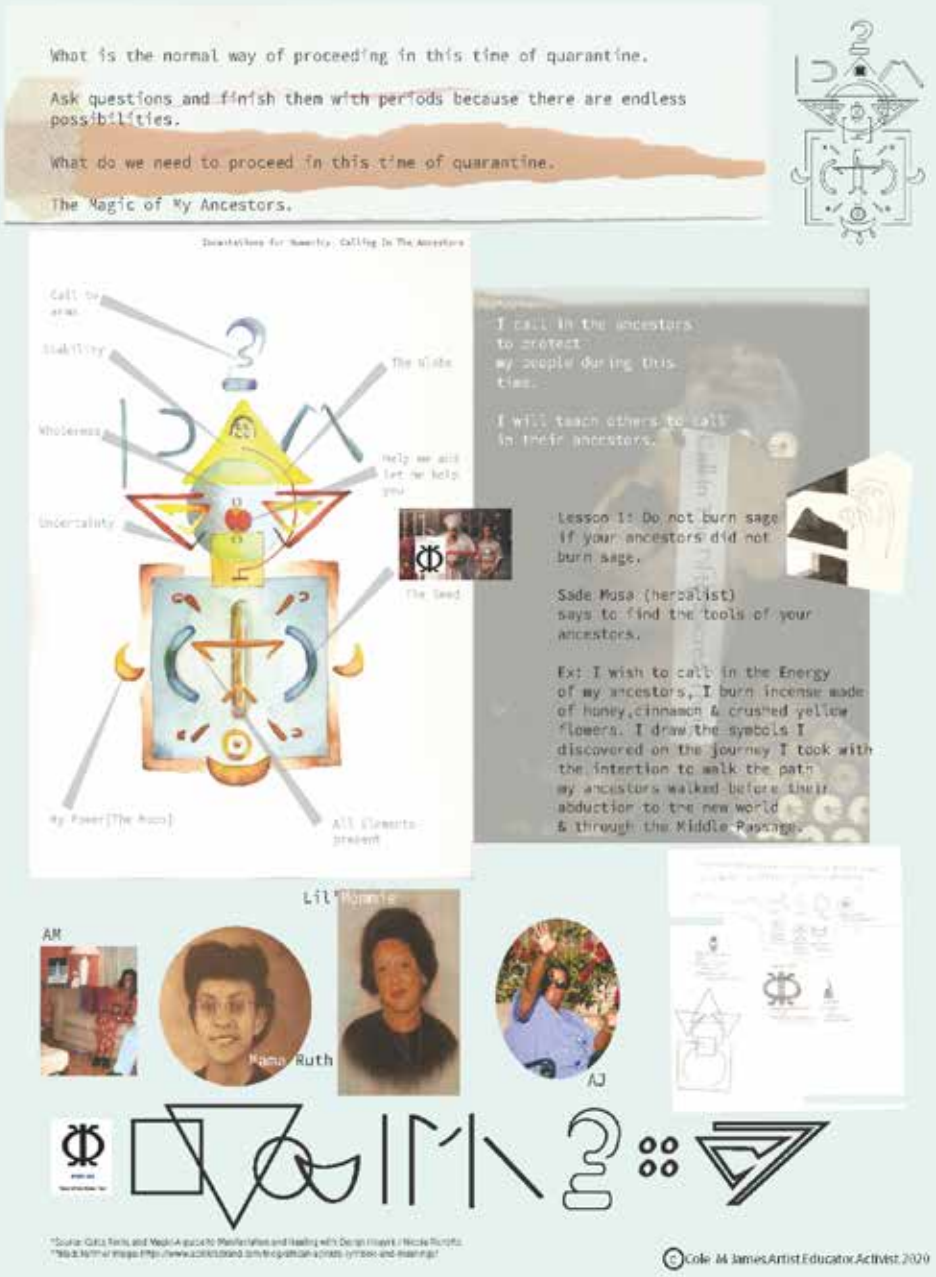
We continued to check in together on the weekly schedule, but also began to investigate a deeper connectivity. Thanks to my GA, we quickly repositioned ourselves on Slack, each uploading films, readings, and current news stories, usefully organized in topic areas. We now communed all week, dipping in as time allowed, adding material as it came to mind. We were now officially participating in asynchronous learning, but it felt much more personal than that sounds, somehow participating in each other's associative thinking, as we watched a John Akomfrah film on racism in 80s Britain one day, and read a post-9/11 essay by Judith Butler on violence, mourning, and politics the next. Or toggled between an anti-Trump satire by Randy Rainbow and an interview with Coco Fusco discussing the role of artists in Cuba. I found this opened up a somatic interrogation of our subject, less analytic but more affecting avenues of thought. As I write, the country is in the seventh day of protest against deep-seated racism at levels of our institutions, and I feel slightly more prepared to understand the depth of rage and despair. I hope the others found our out-of-time class as useful.

June 2, 2020

Cole M. James

CALL THEM IN

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ANCESTORS



Linda Swanson

AFTERTHOUGHTS

P.S.

And in my next letter, I want to talk about how to recalibrate the "currency" of degrees, which may have unwittingly become part of the global capitalist commodification of education…and related to that, how do we create more credible (less credentialed??), sustainable, localized communities of learning that still engage vibrant histories with uncharted scenarios?

P.S.(2)

Also, let's see what models this post-corona moment offers for institutions to better organize and "deliver" learning/teaching and, at the same time, create new (relevant) futures for themselves. For instance, "closed" restaurants (even some Michelin-starred) have pivoted to pick-up/delivery "family style" meals

at more affordable prices. This has relocated them more deeply into local neighborhoods and connected them more closely to their core beliefs in feeding/nourishing people. At the same time, it's providing a financial pathway forward, however fragile. This provisional state of the "makeshift" (a word built on agency + adjustment) is full of possibility without the confinement of long-term commitment. It welcomes the experimental tender wonderings about which I think you are asking.

P.S.(3)

Could we create a shared reading list? I would nominate Julie Ault's "The Double Edge of History" for concisely articulating the value and jeopardies of organizations, even those like Group Material that were loosely formed, highly maneuverable, and on guard against self-perpetuation: "At some unpinpointable time, what had been a productive and generative foundation (a history) transformed into webs of expectations, both internal to the group and from outside sources."[1] There are all sorts of values of institutional education (or educational institutions?) that are double-edged in such a way: what assures, or at least aims, toward equity and accountability is shaped, and then enforced, by repetition. Articulations achieved by thoughtful consensus can seem pruned of straggling generative ends. Security and compensation (rightfully provided for faculty) can also make sluggish the responsiveness of programs. Accreditation oversight

1 *In Part: Writings by Julie Ault*, p. 38, Dancing Foxes Press, 2017

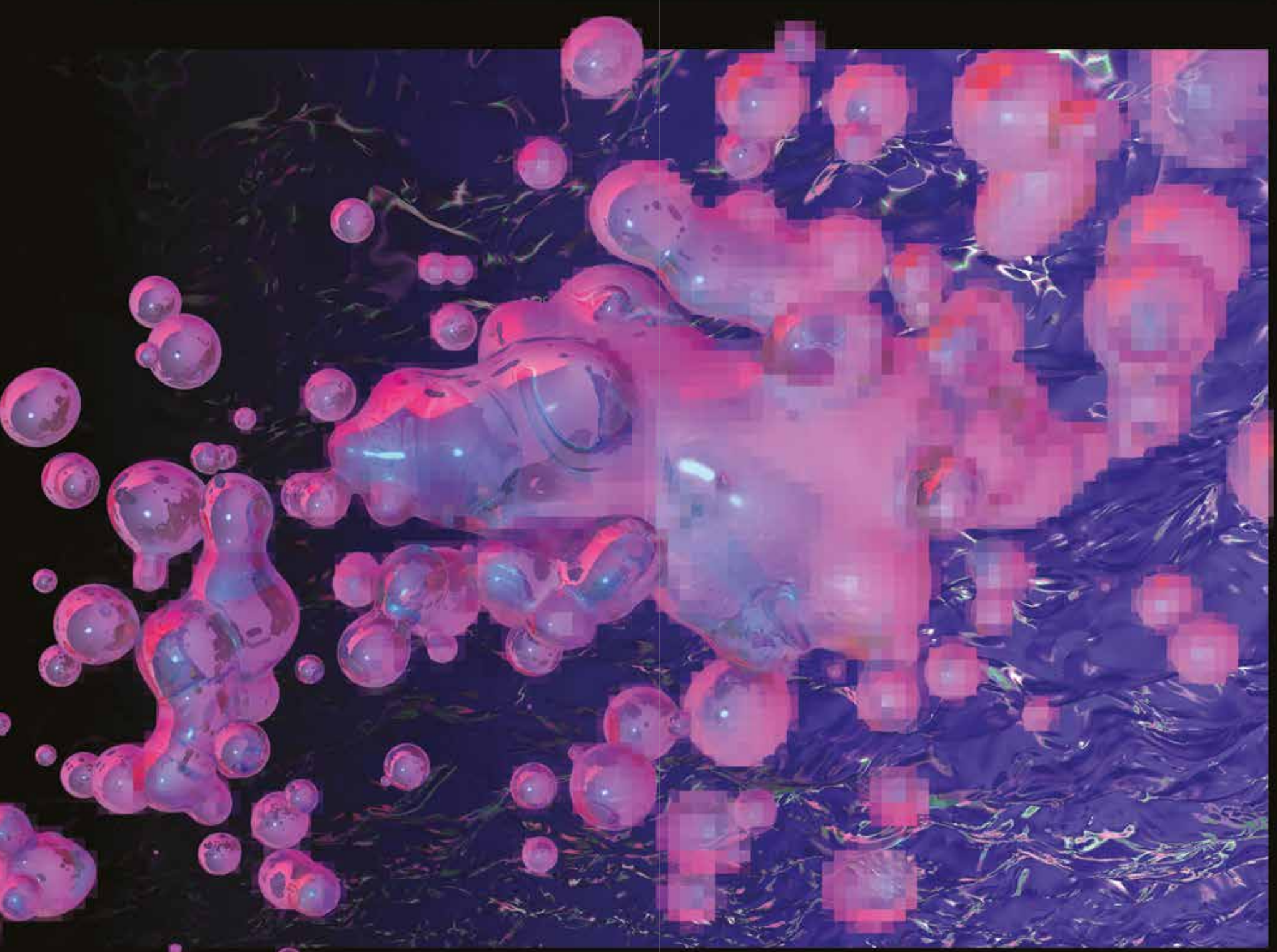
(and consumer protection) can narrow the lanes of real and diverse educational options.

P.S.(4)

And, in a nod to academic values, it's important to keep defining our terms. For instance, in this semester's remedy-shift of online teaching, we are experiencing an expansion of ways to make connection that we may want to retain, because we value connection. This morning I heard curator-educator-writer Chus Martinez, in a livestream Instagram interview, differentiate between "connection" as corporate social media might mean it (i.e. as "transmission") and "connection" as the art community might mean it (as "an actuation of public space"). This is no time to get sloppy or vague in what we mean and want.

P.S.(5)

Connection and distance… clearly those will be huge dynamics in the future virus-watchful world, and educational communities will use them both to animate their practices. Together they suggest expansion and contraction, like breathing, or "folding"—which, in shifting 2D to 3D, is a simple structure to bring the faraway nearby; like opening and closing a book over and over (airing it out?), or like playing an accordion…



Contributors

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JANET OWEN DRIGGS is a writer, curator, and educator who is currently Associate Professor of Art History at Cypress College, CA, and Director of the Cypress College Art Gallery. As an educator, Janet is driven by three certitudes: firstly, that education is a tool of power to which everyone has a right. Secondly, that art and design are primary tools for making meaning in the contemporary world. Thirdly, that artists—that we all—have an obligation to understand the meanings that our work makes in the world. As a professor of art history, it is her absolute pleasure to both introduce students to these ideas, and take them walking in fields that equip them for that practice.

EMMA KEMP writes and teaches at Otis College of Art & Design.

JAYMEE MARTIN is a writer who writes about the same stuff over and over, namely how her time in art school reminded her of the prison-industrial complex and how living with the artist Channa Horwitz taught her how to keep making art anyway. She is working on a secret book (shh) about leaving L.A. to live in the totally, actually nonfictional microstate of Andorra, and would love you to say hello via jaymeemartin.com.

ZACHARY LEENER (b. 1981) is an artist and occasional educator living in Los Angeles. He received an MFA from UC Riverside and a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Notable solo and two-person exhibitions include those at the Manetti-Shrem Museum of Art (Davis, CA), Klaus von Nichtssagend (New York), Cooper-Cole (Toronto), Tif Sigfrids (Los Angeles), and Lisa Cooley (New York).

MAYA GURANTZ works in video, performance, installation, social practice, and writing. Selected recent shows include (solo, collaborative) Catharine Clark Gallery, (solo) the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, the Grand Central Art Center, Greenleaf Gallery, Pieter PASD, (group) the Museum of Contemporary Art Utah, the Oakland Museum of California, Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall, Art Center College of Design, The Goat Farm Atlanta, The Great Wall of Oakland, High Desert Test Sites, and Movement Research at Judson Church. She received the inaugural Pieter Performance Grant for Dancemakers and a recent McColl Center for Art + Innovation Artist Residency. She has written for This American Life, The Frame on KPCC, The Awl, Notes on Looking, Avidly, the Los Angeles Review of Books, Acid-Free, Baumtest Quarterly, and RECAPS Magazine, and co-hosts The Sauce, a podcast that dissects the intersections of culture and politics.

NIKA SIMOVICH FISHER is a multi-disciplinary graphic designer and educator based in New York. She is currently a partner at Labud, a design and development studio she founded in 2018. She teaches interaction design at several universities, including Parsons School of Design and Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts. Nika holds a BFA from Parsons School of Design and is currently pursuing her Masters in Journalism at Columbia University.

ANONYMOUS is a writer, critic, professor, and sometimes curator. Her primary interest is the history of technology, and further, how artists have engaged with, supported, or critiqued technological systems over time, with various degrees of success. This extends to an interest in all systems—social, political, and aesthetic. How do powerful regimes simulate us and our futures within ontologies of prediction? How are we programmed within each system

according to demands of legibility and clarity? How can we understand arguing from within a system using its tools, and the difficulty of imagining tools beyond extraction and surveillance ideologies? In her research practice and teaching of graduate students in an MFA program, the primary focus is examining the ideology of technological tools, and the possibility of critique through them, around them. She programs through books, essays, shows, and exhibitions, but finds writing and criticism best when collectively-made, strategic, and active. In distributing critique across artists and programmers, musicians and critics, across competing and disparate forms of knowledge, we might offer a more robust criticism.

CARA LEVINE lives in Los Angeles, CA. Levine is an artist exploring the intersections of the physical, metaphysical, traumatic, and illusionary through sculpture, video, and socially-engaged practice. She is the founder of This Is Not A Gun, a multidisciplinary project aiming to create awareness and activism through collective creative action. She is currently an associate adjunct professor at Otis College of Art and Design. She received her MFA in sculpture from CCA in 2012 and has shown work in various places, including the Wattis Center for Contemporary Art in San Francisco, YoungArts Miami Art Basel, and The Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv. She has been a recent artist in residence at The Arctic Circle Residency, Sim Residency in Iceland, and Anderson Ranch in Colorado.

THOMAS LAWSON had a show of relatively recent paintings at AFProjects, Los Angeles, in February 2020. Beyond the studio, he works as Editor-in-Chief of East of Borneo, and still, after many years, as dean of the Art School at CalArts.

COLE M. JAMES is an interdisciplinary artist. Her work uses both figurative and abstract images, sound, and scent to amplify the subtle ways perception can collapse and expand time. She received an MFA from Claremont Graduate University in Installation & Digital Media and a BA from Cal State San Bernardino in Painting. She was awarded the Alfred B. Friedman Grant, Walker Parker Artist Fellowship, Mignon Schweitzer Award, and is the 2019-20 Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation Artist in Residence. Her work has been exhibited in New York, Miami, Korea, and throughout Los Angeles. James creates objects and community engagement workshops centered on empathy and civic engagement. She has worked as a community collaborative partner with organizations such as JusticeLA, artworxLA, Liberated Arts Collective, Los Angeles Nomadic Division, Project 51, Hammer Museum, LACMA, California African American Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and Michelada Think Tank. James is Assistant Professor at Otis College of Art & Design and lives in Los Angeles.

LINDA SWANSON (MFA Goddard College, BFA Indiana University) is an artist and a writer. Her current work, the Forde Visser Archive, engages research, drawn investigations, installations, and performative actions. Her paintings are in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum and the Newark Museum. She has recently collaborated with the transdisciplinary design studio BLESS (Paris and Berlin). She is an editor at Openhouse Magazine (Barcelona). Throughout her career, she has had an actively engaged passion for students, faculty, and programs, serving until recently as Dean of the School of Visual and Communication Arts at Santa Fe University of Art and Design.

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