

CULT URIC ACID

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First limited edition, 2022

ISBN 978-0-9732719-8-0

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INTRODUCTION

What new possibilities arise when we learn to cross, to blur, to undermine, overflow the hierarchical binary oppositions we have been taught to believe in. *Jamie Heckart*

Art's task was to "make the world strange," to shock the dulled sensibility, to forge a new reality by fragmenting the old. In art as in social practices, rebellion against a constricting and spiritually destitute society required the earnest, even systematic flouting of traditional values and assumptions. The sacred, made bland and empty by centuries of pious convention, seemed better expressed through the profane and blasphemous. Elemental passion and sensation could best draw forth the aboriginal wellsprings of the creative spirit. *Richard Tarnas*

Art's declaration of independence is thus the beginning of the end of art. *Guy Debord*

CULT URIC ACID: 'CULT', an institutional obsession with the control of the body / practice and the 'otherness' as demonstrated through, among other things, a conservative (normative) approach to presentation and relationships. I use concepts and references to religion and art throughout the text as examples of limited and flawed expressions of the enchanted. In this project I have used notions of bodily activity and the 'URIC' to help understand a problematic masculine control, and 'ACID' as an agent that both destroys and cleans like fire.

Citation—as a technique for creating genealogies—allows for a kind of lateral or wayward reproduction. As an art-making strategy, it's a useful way to articulate a relationship to the practices that have sustained you, a way of recognizing belonging outside of normal kinship relations, as well as outside the implicit metaphor of patriliney that structures "artistic influence." In my work, citation also has a pointedly queer ethic: It becomes an expanded field through which to rearrange desires, connections, and affinities beyond what's

allowable or available in the here and now, which has long been a strategy for queer subjects. It's a way of imagining that you are not alone. *Aliza Shvarts*

I have made reference to Aliza Shvarts multiple times in this text. I have the utmost respect for her work. I used her quote about citations (above) to help explain my numerous quotes and references, however, it is important to also mention her concern with citations: "You can use citation to call on people who might not recognize themselves as sustaining you- but from whom you insist on drawing sustenance nonetheless." I use quotes like assemblage and collage which have the potential of decontextualizing, reimagining, and hopefully profaning.

HEAT acid

Shadrach, Meshach, and to bed we go!

Four men are committed to the flames where they are seen in the furnace untouched by the heat. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and the son of god being the fourth. The guards became victim to the unbearable heat. The son of god as destructor and or constructor. This fire is a dry heat unlike the jungle heat, unlike the island heat that does little but to create sweat laden Europeans to drink in excess. The dry heat of the gods differs in that no whiskey will quench, whereas, the tropic oppression is made bearable by a cold Tom Collins and in fact made to feel somehow Romantic.

The Romantic requires some unknown. The mysterious undergrowth of Courbet's *Origin's* painting presents the world as earth, the body as earth, as opposed to the hairless world of traditional porn. A reminder though, in both cases of Courbet and most porn, their exists objectification and subjectification. Most pornography presents the world as a cold abstraction, an alienation of all things enchanted and immanent and Courbet, although realistic in its formal presentation, is still representative of the hungry male gaze.

Forest management has shifted from all out fire prevention to controlled burns in order to deal with the amassing under brush. The burning bush must be consumed and, if not, like the guards by the furnace, the heat will be too much. The forest has fuel that cannot be tamed and is able to burn for seemingly endless ages. The Romance in this case has shifted from the unknown present to the unknown destruction it is able to wield. This is some god. Outside, Luther, in the midst of his prolific 1519 residency in the Black Cloister Tower of Wittenberg, hidden for his own protection, wrote numerous letters expressing his profound pain due to constipation and anal fissures, an affliction by god. A reminder of the metaphysical concerns being one in the same with bowel movements- as to begin to understand that the body and spirit are linked profoundly. Jews emphasize the importance of praising god in every act of life including the time spent defecating and Gandhi spoke of the importance of examining one's stool. An underlining erotic connection with the anus and its function. Is it more

about alienation than sex? Or are these the same. It is nothing about hell and more about the body's connection to the gods? Hell hovers recklessly as threat binding many with the idea of shit. Prudent behavior produces hell in the form of shame. Notions of eternal damnation are more about constipation than it is to do with chronic burning.

GROTTO *uric*

The mysteries of a grotto both repel us and draw us near. Monsters that lurk and live and depictions on a cave wall of divine animals and humans with gods or treasures or orgies. The damp caverns breed pearls agitated by the earth's discomfort. Flames from a torch illuminate in a predictable manner and one's own filth dissolves into the walls. The caverns of hell smell of sulfur, those of earth smell of feces, the caverns of heaven also smell of feces. See Courbet's 1864 *La Grotte de la Loue*.

FECUNDITY AND MUSIC *uric*

In such spaces, the container and the contained undergo constant redefinition in part through mutual "reentry". This form is a term developed by the sociologist Niklas Luhman to describe the process whereby a distinction between inside and outside, defining what belongs to a system and what does not, is itself internalized in a system, as when the boundary between art and non-art becomes a matter for art in the ready-made. *Alexander Nagel*

A baby is born. Maybe this is the virgin birth, some sort of transcendent spirit contained within a physical body.

A man walks down the street
It's a street in a strange world
Maybe it's the third world
Maybe it's his first time around
Doesn't speak the language
He holds no currency
He is a foreign man
He is surrounded by the sound, the sound

Cattle in the marketplace
Scatterings and orphanages
He looks around, around
He sees angels in the architecture
Spinning in infinity
He says, "Amen and Hallelujah!"

Paul Simon

She said (Mary), 'My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?' *Quran 19:20*

But of course the baby is held and loved but not all are able to or are capable of this task. Like Aphrodite who was formed from the foam of Uranus's discarded genitals, cut and thrown into the sea by Kronos, so we might see her counterpart Venus (particularly the most famous depiction, Botticelli's Primavera) holding a child. This is where I can start. There are an infinite other places to start but this will do.

When the caregiver looks into their child's eyes they see the universe extend inward. A commonly held notion of universal physical scale places our physical body at the center. That is to say, the vast space larger than the body is similar to the vast space smaller than the body.

A story is told within a story, myth layered upon myth. Our attempt to rationalize fails miserably as we seem to always come up short with the exact information. The caregiver enchants the child and vice versa.

I'm not telling truth or lies
Its about convenience
To throw stones and you look stoned
Could you lie and mean it

Your rock it if you were able
Can you hang with Judas Cradle
Rock me baby off to sleep
Now you've fallen into deep

Bob Mould

ANOTHER PLANET *cult*

Inside these presentations there is a cycle, an absurd story about a person leaving behind a post apocalyptic earth in search of another planet where they find life. Meanwhile, on this planet, a person sets out on an internal quest. They lost their partner so they look inward by taking a residency. In this story, the mother of the one taking residency is derived from a longer and older story called “The Spatial Transitory Hole”. Her child looks at her and laughs. The mother admits the story’s title is absurd. By this time the child is getting older and has experienced their first true depressive sense of futility. This sense creeps in in the evenings and weighs on them. With it the distant planets in other galaxies no longer seem far away.

A noise gate blocks any sound/noise coming through your audio channel once you set a noise threshold. When sound sits below this threshold the gate closes, blocking any noise. When sound is louder than this threshold, the gate opens and allows the sound through.

There are four common parameters on a noise gate plugin:

- Threshold – the threshold determines when a gate should open and close
- Attack – determines how fast or slow a gate closes
- Release – determines how fast or slow a gate opens
- Hold – determines how long a gate remains (or is held) closed before it opens

You will see these four parameters on all software. On pedals, they are usually simpler and only have one or two of these parameters. You will notice other parameters in addition to these four on different types. Some noise gates are more advanced than others, others are designed for specific purposes and some are designed according to manufacturers’ preferences. But the four parameters mentioned above are the most important and can be found on every one of these tools. *Noise Gate: What Is a Noise Gate & How Do You Use It?* Music Gateway

MISSIONARY & CURATOR *cult*

Another story is told by a missionary. The missionary left their cold gray February life for a humid tropical eternal summer. Their pale skin is continually scorched by the sun and swelled by the stinging bugs. They tell their own adapted and translated ancient story to an even older people. The older people also have their myth. The missionary steals a mask and carries it back home. While on furlough they add brightly polished brass eyes to the mask, and in doing so, they believe they can return with an explanation as to how the old gods ought to act. It is questionable why the eyes might serve as an explanation, maybe they can look into the soul. The mask was also shown in the foyer of their home church as an example for the congregation in hopes that a deeper “understanding” might form.

A boy of 13 arrives in the foyer of the church and sees the masks. This is the second time that day he has been to church. Every Sunday he goes twice, once at 9:30 in the morning and then at 6:00 in the evening. The evening service is less formal and usually has some special speaker or performance. This evening is a presentation by the missionaries who speak about the lost souls of wherever. He can feel his wet sticky underwear through his pockets and he stands uncomfortably staring at the masks. He senses his guilt of pleasuring himself just before coming to church.

The circles of hell are easy to skip through. If one abstracts all the sin and leaves no trace of history then they can be permitted passage through a small cave guarded by another flaming sword. This sword is similar to the one guarding Eden but is shorter and sharper. There is a building beside a river near the cave. This building has a room filled with art which is cared for by an old curator.

Some of the pieces contained in this collection:

Carravagio's *Seven Works of Mercy, 1607*, in which the seven works of mercy are depicted; bury the dead, visit those in prison, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, give water to the thirsty.

Emelia and Ilya Kabakov's *Healing With Paintings*, 1996, in which:

The installation has a small corridor in the beginning, a typical corridor waiting area in a provincial hospital with two doors leading from it into 'exam rooms.' Immediately after the entrance, the path is blocked by a barrier behind which hangs a bright yellow curtain that is slightly separated in the middle, and the viewer, not able to go farther, views what is going on inside the room through these parted curtains. Inside the room to the left is a made bed, in front of it there is a large painting on the wall depicting an 'Italian landscape.' Everything is illuminated with a soft light and the music of Mozart can be heard softly playing. The second room has the same appearance, only the painting (the format is the same as the first) has a different subject, but music is playing that is no less 'classical' than in the first. Here the music of Bach is playing, entirely pacifying and calming.

Tintoretto's *Creation of Animals*, 1550, in which God is seen hovering in front of a tree among the newly created animals including the unicorn.

Fra Angelico's *Annunciation*, 1443, in which Mary receives the news of her divine pregnancy from the beautiful angel Gabriel who is dressed in a soft pinkish robe and equipped with a set of multicolored art nouveau wings.

Aliza Schvarts' *Knowing You Want It (Performance)*, 2010, in which:

This performance consists of a choreography structured around a sexual assault evidence collection kit, and uses the kit's included directions as a score for movement and mediation. When the directions call for me to look at parts of my body that are inaccessible to my gaze, I use a live-streaming video camera to project the desired view onto a large screen behind me. The use of the camera allows for a series of gestures that substitute evidentiary capture for filmic ones.

Annie Pootoogook's *Annie at the Sobey Awards 2006*, 2006, in which Annie Pootoogook depicts herself with a bouquet of flowers wiping a tear away from her eyes.

Annie Albers' *Intersecting*, 1962, In which a textile wall hanging shows a meandering squiggly lines overlaid onto a geometric pattern.

Luanne Martineau's *Drulpture (To Josef Albers)*, 2010, In which an interwoven assemblage sculptural mound sits atop a plinth. It is full of images and drawings that both expose and hide.

The last room, the one being the furthest from the cave, contains an installation. A hole cut through a wall with an old television set inside. The room is packed with fresh flowers that are changed and arranged every couple of days. The flowers can be smelt throughout the entire building. On the television a looped video plays were two men slowly fold a large sheet that covers a communion table. Many viewers leave comments about how lovely the space is.

My son cries in fear as I swim further away.

HELL & THE BRIMSTONERS *cult*

The formal creative program, which some believe has been overtaken by the greed of those colonial thinkers who insist on making something out of the nothing, have left us high and dry on the shore of a great beach that fronts a vast body of water. The sun is hot, which is okay for now because we are still cool from the water. There are high cliffs that rise up from the sand. Atop these cliffs is a village that rests securely among the rocks. Dizzying balconies look down over the water. This water is the same salty water where many holy people took their enchanting steps a very long time ago. The benefit here, clearly a misjudgment on the part of the those old thinkers, is that up there are those cafes in the village where one can discuss, with clarity due to the uninhabited view, the conspiracy of hell. (here is where one gives the finger to the preacher)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 10:28

In the 1800s, a well-known agnostic lecturer named Robert G. Ingersoll announced he would be giving an address on hell. Specifically, Ingersoll declared he would conclusively prove that hell was a wild dream of scheming theologians who invented it to terrify people.

As he approached the podium and began launching into his argument, a half-drunken man in the audience stood up and exclaimed, "Make it strong, Bob! There's a lot of us poor fellows depending on you. If you're wrong, we are all lost."

That man's outburst had so much truth in it. If those who deny the existence of heaven and hell are wrong, then they're all lost. In fact, it's quite possible – even probable – that many who argue so passionately against biblical notions of the afterlife do so out of fear, hoping they can stumble on just the right reasoning that will fully convince them they have nothing to worry about.

But heaven is real... and so is hell. We know this because the One who spoke the most about these subjects, Jesus Christ, was raised from the dead as a validation of every single word He preached.

Jesus' words are true because He is God in the flesh, and God cannot lie. So instead of trying to reason your way out of thinking about the afterlife, trust in Jesus and have full confidence that you'll escape hell and live with Him forever!

Oh, fuck off.
and...

Humankind, originally created in the image and likeness of God, fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both

physical and spiritual death. All people are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The destiny of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment, but that of the believer is everlasting joy and bliss. *First Alliance Church, from What we believe.*

VOLCANO *uric*

I imagine the crusty cooled rock that has amassed itself along the rim of some semi active volcano. A feces ridden anus that serves as the erotic entrance for Bosch's demons to come and go. A very smelly place. Fire and brimstone- the lake of fire with many degrees of burn. Our modern understanding of the infinite has emerged from a deeper appreciation of the universe. We still don't know, nor may never know, if the universe is infinite which creates a better appreciation of the concept of eternal punishment. When the sale of indulgences were at their height it was possible to decrease time spent in purgatory by thousands if not millions of years. This time span obviously pales in comparison to an eternity, however, certain translation of eternity may in fact indicate a finite time, not an infinite state. In addition to the state of infinite time we are faced with the problem of steady states. Time can probably only be felt if there is a perceived ending or beginning. Similar to Moby Dick's Ishmael in describing the need for one part of his body to be cold for the other to feel warm.

We felt very nice and snug, the more so since it was so chilly out of doors; indeed out of bed-clothes too, seeing that there was no fire in the room. The more so, I say, because truly to enjoy bodily warmth, some small part of you must be cold, for there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself. If you flatter yourself that you are all over comfortable, and have been so a long time, then you cannot be said to be comfortable any more. But if, like Queequeg and me in the bed, the tip of your nose or the crown of your head be slightly chilled, why then, indeed, in the general consciousness you feel most delightfully and unmistakably warm. For this reason a sleeping apartment should never be furnished with a fire,

which is one of the luxurious discomforts of the rich. For the height of this sort of deliciousness is to have nothing but the blanket between you and your snugness and the cold of the outer air. Then there you lie like the one warm spark in the heart of an arctic crystal. *Herman Melville, Moby-Dick*

The atmospheric temperature needs to be cool. The window needs to be open. The fiery hell that emits from the hearth only seems an aesthetic benefit. Hell is the myth of the glowing light that reminds us of our comfort here. The hell in our bedroom at night is claustrophobic, oppressive and frightening.

The American evangelical painter Tomas Kinkade demonstrates a bit of hell when he creates a visually cool picture with a small hint of warmth emanating from a window in a cottage in some idyllic landscape. There is something highly xenophobic about his paintings in the way the viewer is barred from the interior of the cottage where one can't help but sense that the traditional family contained therein is safe from the outsiders, the foreigners, the Others, this is the true hell. Who knows what is actually happening in the cottage, maybe tough love or a bit of fucking by candlelight, though, I doubt the joyfully available wife would keep the light on while being fucked by her husband. It could be that a few of Bosch's demons have slipped in unnoticed and are sodomizing each other in an act of mutual pleasure, a volcanic act. Spurting lava flows gratuitously over the furniture and ignite the little cottage in an eternal flame. This flame is far different than that of the refining flame of the spirit. The burning flame that hovers over the apostles heads enabling them to speak in tongues. The serpent's tongue lash out in the garden as it eats dust. The lover's tongue licks the vulva. Tongues wrestle each other silhouetted against the light of the burning sword. The angels wield this sword, full circle, at the crusty old anus of the volcano, feces flying like meteors over the earth and now let us sing this hymn:

Shall I, amidst a ghastly band
Dragged to the judgment-seat,
Far on the left with horror stand
My fearful doom to meet?

While they enjoy his heavenly love
Must I in torments dwell?
And howl (while they sing hymns above)
And blow the flames of hell?

Charles Wesley, Terrible Thought! Shall I Alone (1780)

Or maybe this is more simple. The fixation with the anus is discussed more formally in terms of anal retention of children or to sexual trends like rim-jobs. It may be less likely due to some sort of eroticism and more to do with our desire for good bowel movements, or, maybe these are one in the same. Its difficult to commodify shit and easier to commodify sex. Maybe we aren't sexual beings as we have been led to believe but rather merely digesting beings (doubtful). Anal fixation and its historic hellish associations seem to be about some sort of alienation we sense toward our own bodily activities and an ongoing, though thankfully abating, aversion to homosexual activities. We are in fact living vibrant things who have a nuanced existence.

SHITLER *uric*

It seems that the bleaching of any part of ones skin, be it the private anus or the more public parts of ones body like the face for example, is the process of alienating oneself from their body. Its the denial of something human while bowing down to a commodification ritual- a false cleansing. Luther's 'shithouse' reminder that god can allow for beauty to occur even in this world. His famous thesis is sure to point us toward direct action / relation with god, but let us not forget about Luther's shitty turn to antisemitism and his continued understanding of an exclusive reading of the bible.

If the Lord God in this life in *das Sheisshaus* has given us such noble gifts, what will happen in that eternal life, where everything will be perfect and delightful? *Martin Luther*

Excrement is often used to humiliate the other by pointing out someones obvious need to defecate while pretending your own bowels somehow transcend this process. Back in the recesses of hell, swimming endless lengths in the lake of fire, pain and humiliation are

now but distant and eternal memories. In a famous painting entitled *Deus qui fecit (The God Maker)* a demon stands on the shore shouting curses while their own past life is a saddened state because of their fallen master, the one great destructor- the slitherer who embodies hubris. The elder snake who made the truth known to some as the fruit of the tree that we shall not eat- the knowledge of good and evil- the god-maker. The volcano erupts and drowns the immortals.

Hitler's (Shitler's) watercolors are painted in a straightforward technical manner. Most have heard the simplistic theory that it was partly due to his early rejection from art school that he became the monster he was. A doubtful story, though, it probably served as an additional bit that added to the already perfect storm that created this mass murderer whose psychotic followers delved deep into hell in order to dish out atrocities to millions. It was a fantastic example of hell- the kingdom of heaven was pushed aside in order to make room. Many people have not seen Hitler's watercolors. Many would not be able to distinguish them from any other artist of a similar genre.

Thomas Kinkade, the Painter of Light™, emphasized simple pleasures and inspirational messages through his art – and the branded products created from that art. From textiles, to collectibles, to music and books, Kinkade gave credit to a higher power for both the ability and the inspiration to create his paintings. His goal as an artist, who was Christian, was to touch people of all faiths, to bring peace and joy into their lives through the images he had created. *Thomas Kinkade*

In Kinkade's work we see a warm cottage and in Hitler's a piece of neo-classical architecture, both forms idealism. The American public seem fascinated with Kinkade because he is part of the Christian marketing machine and of course most Americans hate Hitler for obvious reasons. The neo-nazis don't hate Hitler. Some neo-nazis are skinheads and I don't know if they have policy to shave other hair on their body.

I know this guy named Howard,
and he's bald.
And he's got a goatee,

but not on his head.
He's a really bald guy,
bald as bald can get.
And I will tell ya, Howard Wulkan,
is bald to the bone.
B-b-b-b-b-b bald,
b-b-b-b-b bald,
b-b-b-b-b bald.
Bald to the bone.

Anal Cunt, Bald to the Bone 1995

THE BURNING BUSH *uric*

The cherubic women of classical art are not only hairless but also seem to exist without external genitals. Moses heard the voice of God in the burning bush and to this day there is still relics from the bush itself but certainly none are to be found on Ruben's women. The refined art of pubic hair removal in both men and women is a booming industry. Not only the hair disappearing but also, for women, the evidence of any formation of the vulva which disturbingly presents a prepubescent aesthetic. Much has been written about this concerning trend in pornography to an ever younger presentation of the body and of course the continual objectification of women. For the classical representation it may have been a sign of purity to remove the evidence of pubic hair or, more likely, the male viewer's desire to have a woman be as different and fantasied as possible- a purely fictitious entity for purposes of self pleasure.

There's an old art historical legend that artist and thinker John Ruskin passed out on his wedding night after seeing his wife's pubic hair for the first time. It turns out Victorian artworks and *Cosmopolitan* magazine had similar predilections for female grooming habits.

That's the funny (and oh-so frustrating) thing about the art world. Despite giving off the impression of being a radical, freewheeling utopia steps ahead of the uncreative world at large, the art world is, all too often, actually behind the curve when it comes to personal freedoms. For example, it's really

white, male dominated, and is obsessed with normative representations of the female nude. Come on, artists of yore, where's the hair? *Priscilla Frank*

Courbet whose *Origin of the World* or *Nude Reclining by the Sea*, is a voice from the bush. Here is the lush creative jungle that exist both in the pubic hair and armpit hair whose fire does not consume the leaves. In sharp contrast to Ruben, the body as wilderness is spread before the viewer totally objectified yet is reminiscent of the powerful fecund primacy of those who have a uterus. Both of these Courbets turn us in the direction away from the abstracted fleshy forms of the classics and present us with something that can be smelt and touched more vividly. Carolee Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* performance of 1975 literally takes me beyond questions of grooming and reminds me of the independent interioral existence of the other. On the scroll that she pulled slowly from her vagina she wrote:

I thought of the vagina in many ways – physically, conceptually: as a sculptural form, an architectural referent, the source of sacred knowledge, ecstasy, birth passage, transformation. I saw the vagina as a translucent chamber of which the serpent was an outward model: enlivened by its passage from the visible to the invisible, a spiralled coil ringed with the shape of desire and generative mysteries, attributes of both female and male sexual powers. This source of 'interior knowledge' would be symbolized as the primary index unifying spirit and flesh ... the source of conceptualizing, of interacting with materials, of imagining the world and composing its images. *Carolee Schneemann, Interior Scroll*

To mention Courbet and then Schneemann is to make a profoundly shallow connection using pubic hair. However, this is the threshold that existed and sadly still exists. Let it then be a signal to look deeper while re-imagining the various gazes and of course to dwell on what fails to make it past the threshold. It may be analogous to holding both in relation and connecting Lucas Cranach's 1502 *Crucifixion* woodcut to Andres Serrano's 1987 *Piss Christ* photo. In both connections, Courbet / Schneemann and Cranach / Serrano, there is, among other

considerations, the degree of mediation. It is clear as demonstrated by the infamous mayor Giuliani's attempt at censorship of the 1999 exhibition *Sensation* in which Serrano's *Piss Christ* was a part of.

The Mayor, who has seen the show's catalog but not the exhibition itself, derided the works of art generally as "sick stuff." But he singled out the portrait of the Virgin Mary as particularly offensive. *New York Times*

A greater degree of mediation the greater sense of comfort. For the *Piss Christ*, it is Serrano's urine we see and for Schneemann it is from her vagina we see her pull the scroll. The body is present. Giuliani plays the role of the sound engineer who tries to crank up the noise gate to eliminate the discomforts posed.

THE FANCY CHRIST *cult*

We were sitting around dolled up when one member, a traveling salesman who used to dress in his campervan, then troll round the campsite at night, commented, 'I'm so jealous of you lot all dolled up, I've got my ball gown in the campervan but I haven't got my wig.' The lady who owned the restaurant offered, 'I can lend you one.' This was great. He went to the toilet to change and when he came out he had the wig on back to front, and his lipstick and eye shadow looked as if it had been drawn on by a five-year-old. He said querulously, 'I couldn't find the light switch in the loo.' *Grayson Perry, Portrait of the Artist as Young Girl*

Could I make a savior into someone who meets all my desires? Someone who foreknows what I want? A god who personally attends to my whims and who grants wishes? In fact, could they be my best friend? Someone I could go out with on a date. The fancy christ, and I shutter to even write this, is the savior that helps numb the self's extension. The partner in culture who attends to the details of self presentation- a queering of friendship.

What is love? Intimacy? Romance?.... Many of us are left out of a culture that centers on white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, monogamous, and romantic relationships.

We've been conditioned to love based on obligation and expectation, so it takes peeling away of these layers to fully see ourselves and see each other. Queer intimacy stretches far beyond the parameters of who we date or have sex with, it comes in infinite shapes and forms. For many of us, this love is shared and cultivated within our friendships and platonic partnerships. *Jess Wu-O*

The fancy christ knocks on the door of the club not the heart. The pouring out of my heart on stage to the fancy one. An adherence to the commodification of all things white and gold, an agreeable sort who joins the crowd and cheers the thankful.

The stylized notion of gods, bejeweled creations, depictions of ornate half human half beast creatures are problematic in any idolatry or graven image sort of way. They are problematic in that they fail to live up to any standard of nature. This though is a potentially beautiful problem in that it allows for a struggle to occur. The image will always fail which is its success, then idolatry forms in the eyes of the indiscernible viewer. The viewer who uses the fancy christ for their own purposes perceiving somehow that this fancy christ is 'the' one, 'the' truth. The most improbable situation is the most probable for the gods. The Fancy one hikes the great volcano and circles its rim. It kicks the caked and dried mud from the opening and dives head first into the orifice. Weather its some form of an enema or merely an act of acceptance the fancy's bejeweled coat of many colors are burned to a crisp. The descent liberates triggering the moment of the earth. Millions of buildings burn and every bit of life is returned to itself, the pillars of salt crumble and provides flavor once more to dirt.

The fancy christ then is the one whose bejeweled existence is free of indulgences and pocket money. The robed magnificence upturn the temple tables where the prodigy of the sacrificed lay instead of the cut and polished rounded stones. The skins are scraped and have been discarded by indifferent men. The beasts whose conciseness can only recognize the fancy one as a new sacrifice. They are the drag queens in all their glory! Side by side with the gatherer hand in hand, the fancy one with the *antsy one* pick up the skins of their dear friends. The antsy christ refuses to wait and runs forward and climbs the mountain of the

skull. Everyone waits for the fancy one. From the height a rainbow forms in the distance. A temple from the east sparkles from the past rain. Figs in a bowl taste fresh. The sun dries the fig as well as the temple. The seeds are crunchy, the temple has no chairs, it is flat with carpets that are soft and at night after the doors are locked the gatherers lay staring at the shadowed ceiling eating figs quietly with only the seed crackling in their teeth. They fall asleep and dream about the golden fingers of dawn.

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. *Habakuk 2:3*

And now would the rosy-fingered Dawn have arisen upon their weeping, had not the goddess, flashing-eyed Athena, taken other counsel. The long night she held back at the end of its course, and likewise stayed the golden-throned Dawn at the streams of Oceanus, and would not suffer her to yoke her swift-footed horses that bring light to men, Lampus and Phaethon, who are the colts that bear the Dawn. *Homer*

GOLDEN FINGERS *acid*

The Golden fingers stretch out to take hold of the lost members of the clans that roam the earth. Without their tribes the lost wander from island to island, cursed by some gods and blessed by others. The earth-shaker sends one adrift in a ship to be swallowed whole by a whale. While inside, their fear is relaxed because of their devotion to the creators, but still this is a risky business. Curses can come to haunt you. A whale, or quadraparalysis, or the suffocating enclosure of ones throat due to weakened muscles might be the result of either committing one's life or avoiding a commitment to god. A man who walks on the church stage with a rubber hose and demonstrates how he inserts it down his throat daily in order to stretch out his esophagus in order to swallow. This was a result of some sort of cancer. The man claims it was all gods work.

Fear is not from the gods. Fear is from itself and contains all the evil in the world.

"But being and artist doesn't necessarily mean making drawing or paintings or sculpture, or even installations or videos. The desire to pursue a life in "fine art" simply means a desire to respond creatively to the present, just as the disciplines of "poetry" or "rock & roll" were ciphers for counter cultural lifestyles in other areas. The only real difference lies in credentialing. As the deviation of what constitutes fine art expands to include journalism, social work, landscape architecture, public policy, filmmaking, archiving, theater, poetry, school teaching, and literary nonfiction, under the banners of "social practice", "research," and "art writing," institutions respond by offering specialized, low residency degrees in these areas, taught by itinerant, poorly paid faculty." *Chris Kraus*

INSTITUTION *cult*

What is meant by an institution? John Searle defines the institutional structure as the following; X counts for Y in the context of C. Simply put, X could be something or someone who has no function beyond their innate being. When X is then placed within a context, which has been usually agreed on by a collective, it counts for something more than its innateness. Searle uses the example of currency. A piece of paper takes on value because of its political context. Without authority and agreement the money is only a worthless piece of paper. In the same way the president is a person who, without political context, counts for no more than anyone else. Now place a piece of art for X in Searl's formula and notice how it becomes dependent on its context. The context being that of an institution. A formed piece of porcelain in a bathroom is a urinal whereas the same formed piece of porcelain in a museum is piece of art. A formed block in a construction yard is a brick and in a gallery is a minimalist sculpture, and further, a group of placards on the street is a protest and in the gallery, as in Mark Wallinger's *State Britain*, is recontextualized as an art installation. The recontextualization of objects or people at best allows us to reconsider and challenge meaning by minimizing or altering the terms of reference, however, at worst runs the risk of losing function and meaning altogether.

Apply John Searl's description to the severely abstracted and rationally minimized Carle Andre's brick sculptures and let it reveal a deep and unrelenting fear of authority. The modernist approach is dependent on institutional acceptance by way of Duchamp's found objects- a straight forward linear progress from criticizing the institution to utter reliance on the institution. A visual begins by commenting on the state of art and then shifts to the art world commenting on Capitalism through its ability to commodify anything and everything. Duchamp once made a comment that there "is no solution because there is no problem". The problem though is alienation, Marx was right. The cold abstraction, the cold porcelain urinal (Duchamp) and the cold white light from fluorescent tubes (Flavin) tells us the body is no longer welcomed. Enchantment is inappropriate. We can no longer pee in the urinal and in the light of fluorescence we are cadavers.

CURATE / CARE GIVE *acid*

Currently, it seems everyone is a curator. Everyone is curating their lives in some sort of selective sense or another. This act or profession primarily should not exist merely to edit, stylize, prescribe, sensor, select, or promote ones personal taste but rather exist in order to give care for Relational Aesthetics.

It is appropriate to consider curators as caregivers and caregivers as curators. Curators are often associated with the arts and caregivers with social welfare. The realm of art should be regarded equally with that of other social endeavors and be discerned using the same criteria. Sadly though, a hierarchy has been structured putting the curator in a superior position relative to that of a social worker. By regarding them equally, void of hierarchy, and asking for a higher standard from both when it comes to encounters they begin to merge into one. In both cases each occupation has ignored the very thing the other has been attentive to. The curator is attentive to the individual's need in providing proper context in order to best and most constructively be received. The caregiver is attentive to the continuity of comfort and security and helps maintain dignity in the face of potential struggle. The curator may have tendencies to ignore the individual's security and dignity. The individual's security and dignity may be at the

expense of the curator's own conceptual goals because the curator has producers, sponsors, and ultimately the market, yes, even when it is entirely a public venture, to answer to. The caregiver, on the other hand, may have tendencies to ignore the necessity of the individual's need to be received within relevant context. This is due not to neglect but rather to the institutional failing of proper holistic education preparation of the caregiver and of course a lack of resources available to the caregiver.

At every level there are encounters. If a caregiver is there to help facilitate an individual's continuity they ultimately perform this facilitation through face to face encounters. The notion that they are caregivers of eternity places each individual at the centre of caring for one another's continuity. The creation stories that are at the heart of so many cultures exemplify our obligation to the Other. It is due to our encounters with the Other that allows for the creation of something new, which is in effect the continuity of ourselves. Without the Other our existence would cease. It would fade into a forgotten territory, void of both change and aesthetics. It would slip into some incomprehensible steady state. We are obliged to not let this occur. We are obliged to care for each other.

SHAME & INFERENCE *acid*

Individuals can act continuously without interruption regardless of circumstance. Authority, an institution for example, interprets an act of creativity through re-contextualization. A prayer is often something very different when performed in nature or private than publicly when in a church. The sexual act is something very different when in private than when in a recorded and distributed and commodified medium. Maybe its the difference of being rarefied or commodified. The found object is a prayer, a god made substance whose fragile existence is either further destroyed or constructed by the gatherer and destroyed through reliquary or constructed by means of recycling and assemblage. This is the act of gathering as opposed to hunting for relics. For a relic to have power it requires a belief initiated by an established authority. Relics have the added effect of fear as they are deemed magical. Duchamp's urinal is a relic in a similar way as Luther's postmortem enema might be.

Timeless, the ground at our feet, the forest bathing euphoria so removed from any object. Stripping away and void of any extra rhetoric, any planning, any instruction to orthodoxy. Always pointing back toward nature in hopes of an eventual return. There is a challenge to create this shift. To remove existing inferences. A relic in fact does have the ability to destroy certain inferences and create new ones. Strangely it could be considered a form of iconoclasm but from a secular starting point. The gathering of relics is a sport, a game.

In today's game, you can interview 20 different 3rd, 4th line fighters and every one of them would have their own version of the "code" and 20 years ago that wasn't the case. The original code states that fighters or goons don't fight anyone other than goons or fighters, as fair is fair and therefore they wouldn't hurt their own team or their opposition and fans would be happy because they witnessed a fight. The code in today's game has gone right out the window and players are making their own rules on when to fight and who to fight.

The game within the context of the institution is charged with competition which then forces one to consider whether or not a shift of inferences is disingenuous, though, it must be noted that disingenuity may in fact be an impossibility as one's actions are always a genuine performance- true even when contrived. Regardless, a shift in inference, even as a game, assists in the destruction and the reconstruction of something new. This newness sometimes serves the institution well. If controlled by and endorsed by the authority then a vicious cycle continues for example, a hockey league benefits from having rules that are meant to be broken for the sake of entertainment. The breakage of these rules, however, are not seen as sportsmanlike when they are off the rink. A hockey player punching another hockey player in the parking lot is frowned upon. Let us consider the demons and those who are convicted to hell by some mythical enterprise. It's difficult not to wonder whether or not they are under control or in control of their debaucherous undertakings and if these undertakings fall under some kind of authority. These actions with their smooth alien bodies are of course depictions which gives us the opportunity for a shift of inferences as they can become so far removed from their

original existence. The demons slip from symbols to real mental characters

VISHNU HOLDS THE RELICS *cult*

My many arms hold the sun in place. The ground toiled and seeded all the while we make policies and produce articles. We wait on ideas and serve all servants. I preserve my place in space and time making sure the gatherers have something to pick up. I march up with colleagues up higher and higher to the summit of the volcanoes. Mevangilicals carry packages of relics, tight seamless bundles of energy or darkness. These bundles, in their most severe character, have no effect on each other. In a bag one could carry several dozen of these packages without any concern of cross contamination. The relics contained there in might include the following: Buddha's tooth, The Blood of San Gennaro, The cloak of Muhammad, Head of St. John the Baptist, The foreskin of Christ, Muhammad's beard hairs, Mary's belt. These bundles fully crowd out all others in the mental life of owners. Analogies are lost and forgotten. They are passed through into and out of the bounds of the individual and earth. A missionary might recognize a floating bundle bobbing in the water among the reeds. A voice in the wilderness similar to the hero who grows from an infant found in the reeds into a king- a sun king. A king who claims all in the name of one. A mass exit into the lonely wilderness to discover ones own purpose even when it requires the death and destruction of entire cultures, all in the name of some cosmological idea that is able to focus- to magnify its complicated pattern on mere individuals. So, let us pray for the bundles of energy in front of our faces so they don't destroy us. As sacrifices we pray that all parcels are thrown into the volcano. We give ourselves up as living sacrifices in order to find ourselves, yes it is said that we lose ourselves to find ourselves. This is the magma that pours into the ocean and steams our pours and cleans us totally.

In a discussion about the Kingdom of Heaven there seems to be a need to agree on an institutional concept- a degree of abstraction far enough removed from the individual so that a kingdom can attain a critical number of peasants to be ruled. The peasants wear robes covering all their parts, their shape is hidden. They can then concern themselves more freely with the intricacies of their desperate life. Peasants fall

under the category of those who work (Laboratores) and not those who pray (oratores) or those who fight (pugnatores).

Sea anemones latched on rocks prodded by fingers of giants. The giants, the mythical titans of old who far exceed all our abilities speak and procreate with mortals. Samsons are birthed and refined. They are created by a loved language of wrestling and turmoil. Dripping honey from the lips of the dancing devil. Its now a club, a darkened tavern-Manhandlers Saloon. With a driving and heavy beat where I can imagine hundreds or even thousands of sea anemones pulsing in unison- what an absurdity, what an imagination that these giants have, this is how they dream. In reality a crisis overtakes us where our sons and daughters are infected with a plague. Not some sickness of the body that is easily accepted by friends and family, no, far worse, a mental disturbance that interrupts the continuity for all involved. It is a curse from the society, a society that is ill equipped to manhandle and only sees blessings in offspring. This curse holds us hostage through fear and trembling. A pattern continues in the kingdom. The villagers tremble.

NECESSARY EVILS *cult*

Governments, churches, hells, heavens, purgatories, schools, paintings, museums, only to name a few. They all arrive as “clothing” after the fall. Then formally stripped to lay bare in controversy, the fishiness (maybe fleshiness is better) of gods. The fig leaves and plant painters (1517, The council of Trent declared that “all lasciviousness be avoided; in such wise that figures shall not be painted or adorned with a beauty exciting to lust.”) are employed in order to keep the authority confident that the darkness is maintained- the codpiece employed. The power of the shaded bedrooms. On his back Michelangelo strains covered in paint and years later Carravaggio descended from scaffolding to give us realism. The pained reflection of true love for those depicted. Bosch's demons are melting away- they have become the dream character of Bacchus and the seven graces. A hierarchical assemblage take shape. This too is a necessary evil whose eventual destruction is assisted by the entire demise of legalism. The line is drawn further and further back and is in final retreat when the kingdom is finally seen for what it is. An impious and constructed crystalline descending cube

whose annihilation of all that is in its path is a rebirth of a new city. There are drawings littering the exterior. These markings interrupt the otherwise pristine reflective surface. Shallow etched bits of text and some simple line drawings depicting simple scenes, possibly like the markings at Writing on Stone in Alberta. In Blackfoot it is named Áísínai'pi meaning "it is pictured / written". The outside surface reflects the viewer and gives reference to a story. Together something is formed that gives rise to an aesthetic, something relational, something both dependent and interdependent.

MIRROR *acid*

The mirrored surface reflects and reveals exposing ideologies and their insufficient abstractions. These ideologies are mere justifications for injustices like greed. Some are unwilling to look in the mirror which might push them to drink and take leave of themselves or take medicine, leaves from bushes, ancient concoctions that help open horizons that expand their perception. Humans are awash in these traditions. Finally they might see themselves as insects resting in the grass, quietly pulsing in a state of willing submission to nature and to be burned eternally by the sun. Nothing that can be put to language will suffice, no analogies that will explain or convince the presence of their unique god. The mirrors reflect the land below. The landscape changes overtime. It is represented in many eras by the various painters, photographers and sculptors- from plein air to land art. If one is able to sink back into the landscape, a specific landscape and live beyond the ideologies and theologies, the very specific language, specific formulas, the legalism, the rhetoric that enable those in authority to maintain authority- if these specifics can be overcome then life on the earth below the great heavenly body is a dynamic one worth living. Its worth the compassion, the sex, the sickness and the other things that are largely uncontrollable. The mannerist painters were a stone when asked for bread, they made light of the land and ignored the real. Compassion is viewed at arms length like the child in the pool whose parent is rarely ever at arms length yet the child learns to swim. The stone sinks, whereas, the bread, of which the body is offered, is held aloft as manna-in-the-sky tethered to the sun and earth.

The world is personal. Maybe this what the claim that the mevangilical has made in saying that it is possible to have a personal relationship with god (I highly doubt this!). God then is personal through the 'not' exclusive, the 'not' formulaic, which are both fickle in nature. The world is personal with all it's energies and it's thoughts of which we are collaborators with. Thoughts are co-creators. So it is possible to consider that god works in the personal now and in a sense disregards all past and future giving anyone present.

THE RIVER *acid*

The beautification of wealth is created as the institutional belief contrives its evangelical mandate stating the general positive effect of trickle down economic effect. Do we praise these great saints of commodity? Central to this model is fear. What is fear but a misconception of control and power, or maybe, its the belief in power even if its one own. Even Luther feared that the devil had power- the power to empower and create demons and that of witches to produce spells. "Money talks bullshit walks!"(*This is Spinal Tap*), so it really doesn't matter how the particulars work or even if they do work as long as the abstracted notions are feared to be true. Transactions are the language, words that those who fear to speak. Some still fear the words that indicate weather or not to claim clear adherence to a given institutional faith. We find ourselves full circle on this topic, always scolding and always visiting the eternal beaches of the lake of fire. A fine time for beach combing, for what can be found is endless. Will anything evolve in this terrible place, evolve enough to crawl out of the fiery mud? Maybe nothing changes?

The river that one crosses in order to be saved flows quickly and endlessly. It is also the river where some are baptized and for some, these ritualistic individuals, loose their lives. Those who oppose the ritual hide on their stomachs behind bushes and in tress. They wait until the priest emerges with the followers and then they pounce. In a mocking and tortuous ceremony they hold the followers under the water to their death. Who has brought this down? Somewhere there are cruel priests who give orders. Ulrich Zwingli, in the early 1500's, drowned Anabaptists who he deemed as heretics. The priest are men. Like many of the Reformers Zwingli did not look to collecting great

pieces of art and having their coffins lined with gold leaches. The leaches with a long slim body and a crooked nose, though, probably not really a nose but something to grasp and hold and to suck. Imagine them as gold leafing writhing in a cup because a child scooped them from the still part in the creek. They are easily squished between their fingers and they effortlessly pop, however, they can suck endlessly when you are unaware. A mermaids purse occasionally washes up on shore. This purse is the remnants of the container created by some sharks and skates to hold their eggs. The purse is 'birthed' and attached to something secure under water and then left to hatch and release the young.

VAMPERICISM *cult*

Its a wonder to consider how an idea like satan might work. To clearly tempt and anger those who already are angry. A sin is something that is not done by someone who knows what should be done (consider the sins of omission and commission). The great wickedness is knowingness, its the consumption of the forbidden fruit. Where can I stand? Is it an issue then of the power of decision? A choice to eat or to starve? Well, this is impossible because we must eat or we die.

So, there is no choice at all, no choice in any matter. This is a principle created by those who have little imagination and who are only able to think in terms of abstraction, in principles, normalcy, and not in particulars. Attached to Modernism there exists a preoccupation to feel the need to minimize, formalize, and idealize spaces in order to feel at peace. This is done by disregarding the particulars of human relation. Abstraction is the devil. A figure who is tremendously binary who, with the correct understanding of shape and color, reduce the entire natural world to a piece of architecture that contains little if no natural reference. What is their justification? A clean unadulterated canvas for 'man' to make and live and function. The programming of space is an attempt to control, even with the best of intentions, the individual's social existence. Or, is it an open space to facilitate performance?

Instead, I wanted to define an internal space for creativity, distinct from the space of daily life. And in order for me to understand how to construct the crucible for the work that

they wanted to perform, I needed artists to be articulate to me about their process and about what they did. *David Adjaye*

It is a modern dream to entertain the devil himself within the comfort of the home and to see good design principles at work. We praise symmetry because it is what we are looking for at the micro and macro level. We project it on to our selves and our spaces thinking this is what we are missing, though, we may in fact be missing nothing. The volcanic eruption, the hurricanes, the earthquake, all are unpredictable and asymmetrical and cause great misery yet the misery is obviously possible because of the profound asymmetrical relation between us and nature that we have committed to. A sacrifice. The idea of tolerance becomes profoundly essential because it allows for the uncontrollable and gives no illusion to the notion that risk can be averted. The only way to remove risk is to rename it.

In Aliza Shvarts's *Untitled* (Senior Thesis, 2008) not only are the ideas of autonomy, in terms of control of one's own body, are deeply considered but also the idea of challenging notions of the social and institutional control of another's body and performance. For me Shvarts sheds light on the question of symmetry (with measurement) by asking if one's body can resist reproductive objectification by means of the self proactively reading 'measurement' as opposed to being subjected to someone else's acts of measurement. Aliza Shvarts's *Untitled* (Senior Thesis 2008):

From the 9th to the 15th day of my menstrual cycle, I used semen samples (collected from "fabricators") to privately self-inseminate; on the 28th day of my cycle, I would ingest an herbal abortifacient, after which I would experience cramps and heavy bleeding. This bleeding could have been either a normal period or a very early-stage self-induced miscarriage—the work was intentionally crafted so that not even I knew which. As a result of these formal constraints, acts of biological reproduction were collapsed onto acts of reading (my own reading no more authoritative than that of any spectator). I intended this piece to exist in its telling—a telling that was to take textual, visual, spatial, temporal, and performative forms, opening on to questions of material and discursive reproduction. Yet because the video and final installation for this

work were censored and deemed a “creative fiction” by the Yale University administration, the piece only exists as a narrative circulation, which has largely taken place online.

ABSTRACTION *cult*

Abstraction- the illusion of formalism. The abstraction of a saint, the further abstraction of Adam- a form of a man and of course the abstraction of a god who Adam reaches for is then overturned, but then further abstracted in geometric patterns of Islamic art and perfected formalism in the black stone on the Kaaba that sits unhinged from reality. Carle Andre's mere mimicry of the perfect psychologically loaded bit of earth which is mysteriously held and perfected by a grand institution. Andre and his contemporaries follow in the same tradition with as much formal heaviness as certain cultural builders do when they respond with two boards nailed together to form a cross – the shape made holy by these priests. The formal force pales in comparison to any individual's performance, be it Christ or Muhammad or, more relevantly, the Gorilla Girls. Their pursuit to expose and to question the vary nature of the abstracted male artist who gets away with assaulting his wife which ended in death. Neither death nor nature can be abstracted. The Gorilla Girls give us a constant reminder of this male formal force that attempts to prioritize form over fulfillment. Life cannot be abstracted, in fact, abstraction is idolatry. It is the same as the persistent reduction of any bit of nature to a formalist language be it color and composition.

We will reduced all nature to a lesson in symmetrical codes as long as we encounter nature's beauty in systematic and predictable fashion. This is a projection and a desire to control because many have lost their capacity to deal with a creative act and or to be involved with and collaborate with creation. Our encounter with our external world is anything but symmetrical. The whole exceeds the parts and consciousness emerges from the moving mechanisms. Our encounters at the high levels with other conscious entities contain very little symmetry. For example we may try to force a type of symmetry (meaning: with measure) by way of simplifying identities in order to more easily measure and define and thus categorize. The desire to

reduce individuals to a gender binary system is a form of abstraction. The response being that of queering is liberating and creative.

If the important thing now is to explore anew the possibilities of friendships, we should note that, to a large degree, all the social institutions are designed for heterosexual friendships and structures, and the denial of homosexual ones. Isn't the real task to set up new social relations, new value structures, familial structures, and so on? One of the things gay people don't have is easy access to all the structures and institutions that go along with monogamy and the nuclear family. What kinds of institutions do we need to begin to establish, in order not just to defend ourselves but also to create new social forms that are really going to be alternative? *Jess Wu-O*

Many our failures in art are actually reflections of our failures in relationships. An empirical approach attempts to convince that formal beauty is in fact a measurable quality. This is a mere human construct the same as if wine can be determined to be perfect or as if apples and oranges can be actually compared or even comparing sex with a bowel movement- ultimately neither can exist without the other and are incomparable.

WHERE ARE THE GORILLA GIRLS? *acid*

When asked in the Independent why should you receive the Turner Prize and not Brian Haw the activist? Wallinger responded "context is everything"

When confronted with Carle Andre's 1978 stack of bricks entitled *Equivalent VIII* we are asked to understand this particular stack of bricks in such a way that they may comply with and add to the tradition of art and more specifically, minimalism. Such a reading misrepresents minimalism and regresses towards complete reliance on the gallery as and institution for context. This regression leads to an increase in the authority of the art institution and a decrease in critique and activism. So many of Duchamp's advancements in authoritarian institutional critique are not only undermined but also disabled by artists such as Andre. Instead of moving away from institutional reliance we have become wholly dependent.

Only in this era of museums, when no artistic communication remains possible, can each and every earlier moment of art be accepted- and accepted as equal in value- for none, in view of the disappearance of the prerequisites of communication in general, suffers any longer from the disappearance of its own particular ability to communicate.
Guy Debord

Carl Andre's minimalist brick sculptures illustrate a long running formalist / activist conflict that arose predominately within the early Modernist movement. Artists felt themselves in conflict between their own values and the values of institutions. This underlying concern existed since the relationship of creative activity and institutions were formed. Exactly when this formation occurred is debatable, however, it manifested itself in modernity in the form of a crises in the mid 19th C with Manet disregarding the authority of the Academy and exhibiting in the Salon des Refusés in 1863. Manet's actions are part of the ongoing history of institutional critique which continues to be one of the central problems artists are facing in their practice whether they know it or not.

It must be understood what is meant by an activist based practice and a formalist based practice. The first is simpler to explain and can be thought primarily as a practice whose main concern is critiquing the social environment. This is a broad category that could reach from challenging power balances between student and teacher to exposing human rights issues. As Mark Wallinger states, it is about 'unpacking power's rhetoric'.

A formalist base practice is more difficult to describe as it involves extreme attention to subtleties, a nuanced approach to sensual experience, and the understanding of visual rhetoric. An essential aspect also involves reflection on the prior which means a keen awareness of the historical artistic movements in order to knowingly appropriate and exploit them through carefully placed visual references. In other words it's intentional art about art's form, hence formalism. In essence, added to the already canonized compositional elements of Formalism, are historic visual strategies. The most obvious example of this occurs in Contemporary painting. Peter Doig challenges compositional elements and historic visual strategies very

knowingly causing awkward combinations of color and shape while parodying Romanticism and Fauvism all in the name of effective Contemporary painting.

A (Peter Doig) figurative painter. He was nominated for the Turner Prize once, and all the young artists like his paintings even though they are all well done and you have to scratch your head and frown to see where the irony is. *Mathew Collings*

The paintings remain strictly paintings and nothing else. It conforms to painting's history of self-reliance, self-reference, and expression. Writer Dominic Eichler skeptically states: I suspect that the reference game remains a source of validation and framing in order to emphasize quality and continuity, a way of scratching initials into the limestone edifice of the cultural pantheon.

GALLERY WHITES *cult*

Some places to experience art are those that collectively exists as a space where our suspension of disbelief is essential. This suspension is not due to the fictions like in theater but rather that space gives us rest from something outside that we have been asked to believe. Our suspension also is in response to a secular sacred space that is set apart from the crude outside, yet, not to be confused with an escape into fiction, rather, a removal from the outside fictional space. Inside it continues to feed the creation of a culture and an entire support system, an odd mix of private and public patronage.

Renoir's whites are captivating. They aren't ghost like, not snow like, and not angelic like, instead they are paint like. The magic is in the painterly consideration. The white pops off the canvas not as some usual trick but rather as a studio relic, a thing added on to and over top another thing. A negation of illusion and an acceptance of a process by an individual who made the thing. In the gallery space the white glows a sacred light which affirms the human not the divine. A mist or some magical dust emanates from the flat panel it is painted upon.

"Ah, your Marx is bigger than your bite, but the whiteness of Renoir dispels all myth. The supple whites pale in comparison to Ruben's bodies. No one as soft

as those. A body is left to disintegrate or rather change in respond to the various social conceptions, the various sexes, genders, and motives sadly bow down to constructed heteronormative norms. I wish I had a more queer childhood where I could be cuddled by my friends in a sleeping bag. No breakfast for me, no thanks, maybe just an apple and then a good dinner- I am watching my weight. Ruben's people may eat their heart out. Durer's woodcuts produce a vision of fantastic evil bowel movements, final judgments purgatorial purges. Oh my lord- we've tried so hard...compose the hymns in a minor key, nothing too energetic, rather, in a monotonous din, echoed slightly through and empty space."

Deep inside a war room there are works of art that are far from the Mannerists and even further away from Schneemann and Serrano. Inside the cavernous cold lit room displayed along a back cabinet are a number of bronzes. Ones of horses and ranchers and of cowboys and indigenous representations. Some have slightly tormented faces and some soft faces at rest while riding helplessly through the vast fields which we do not see. Someone, I'm sure, knew of suggesting William Morris fabrics on the chairs, an absurd idea that most others would have laughed at because both of Morris's socialistic tendencies and also for the clashing visuals that his graphic botanicals would create against the otherwise brutal oakish interior. A dull heavy table lies like a great tomb in the middle of the room. On it another bronze, a famous Canadian sculpture who idealized the notion of the West- the great frontier, a conquerable vast landscape to be overcome , settled and individualized and reduced to pathos. The man depicted in this bronze sits by a fire with his horse whose head is bowed. Together it is clear that they exist peacefully. The man shows muscles and a degree of health that is hard to believe. He looks well fed which furthers his descent into abstraction not dissimilar to the fleshy Rubens who are hairless and compliant, though, maybe this is the role of the horse.

Bart: Huh? What's going on?

Nelson: Her smile makes me feel full, like I actually ate dinner last night.

Bart: If you never eat, how come you're so fat? Owl!

Nelson: Americans can be fat and poor. That's what makes us so great. *The Simpsons*

IMMERSION *acid*

Immersion is appealing. It is to wander into a state where holistically our existence is fully engaged. This is more than merely sensory. It is something much more subtle and enveloping, a sinking into flesh where a loss of time occurs, not due to some brief sexual stimulus that is connected to attraction, but rather a development or creation of desires that will give us pleasure. The bow and arrow is a ceremonial performance. At the Vatican, Artemis is depicted with a crescent moon on her head. She is the moon goddess. The bow is missing its string but we know it would be stretched tight containing potential energy though merely resting. Christians often use the analogy of archery by speaking of missing the mark when defining the concept of sin. Sin probably has its Latin roots in the word 'sons' meaning guilty and not in how one might use the word sincere which has its etymology in the word 'sincerus' which means clean or unadulterated which has been associated with the word 'cera' meaning wax, so, being without wax. This was in reference to a piece of marble being said to be without wax as not to hide its imperfection from a potential buyer- an unadulterated product. I learned all this in Sunday school. Sin pushes us in the wrong way, out of immersion and into conversion. Conversion is control and in most cases a limited space. Paul on the road to Damascus has been depicted many times in paintings each with their own theological agenda. How then could he be depicted to demonstrate his shift from hater of Christ to lover of Christ? Specificity and full immersion. Immersion, has something to do with Baptism.

Frankenstein's monster searched for baptism and some form of acceptance or alliance with community yet his form was too much to bare. It was an abstraction that destroyed his surroundings, an abstraction of the body which led to consciousness that transcended and was made whole. The abstraction remained physical and could not be overcome. The monster was both too demonstrative and not demonstrative enough- too much in its abstract conceptual manifestation of human as species and not demonstrative enough in its failed performance as an individual.

One of the perennial men's fashion headlines is "Color is back!" As a lover of strong colors, I rejoice when I can go into

a men's clothes shop and buy bright green trousers, electric blue sneakers and zingy pink T-shirts. But most of the time the racks are a sea of black, gray, navy and khaki. Bright color is too demonstrative. We've all seen those photo ops of world leaders: color and pattern shriek out as anachronistically feminine. *Grayson Perry*

To know thy self and thine enemy which in the best case is be one and the same. The Art of War shows us the extreme, the outlying scenario, the horrendous logical end of anti-relation aesthetics. It is the Frankenstein of abstraction of the body which requires deception to navigate the world as opposed to immersion or baptism. Under the water fully we must venture in order to reflect others and ourselves, to loose ourselves. The monster has an insatiable desire for this as his body towers and his formal qualities are too grand and exotic, too real, thus it loses the ever closing window to relate to the other so it must turn to war and seek weakness- it must turn vampire and find its enemies nakedness- its soft supple rubenesque skin in order to suck the life out and fill its own vacant being in order to become an individual. To create an existence that is more than a mere product of engineering.

People thought Divine — they always think wrong — was trans. Divine never dressed as a woman except when he was working. He had no desire to be a woman. He was fat. It was too hot to wear all that shit. He couldn't wait to get that wig off. His tits were so hot. He hated it. He didn't want to pass as a woman; he wanted to pass as a monster. He was thought up to scare hippies. And that's what he wanted to do. He wanted to be Godzilla. Well, he wanted to be Elizabeth Taylor and Godzilla put together. *John Waters speaking about Harris Glenn Milstead*

ODYSSEY & THE BEACH *acid*

The Golden Dawn of the Odyssey- from Homer's account of Odysseus's journey back home after the Trojan War where each morning the sun is seen anew and the blurred lines between gods and humans continue to drive the mortals onward. In considering stories such as these there

are relics and artifacts that emerge. These artifacts and art create their own experiences for the observer begetting a new and sensual experience that continually add to the original, if in fact there is an original. The sun is a central element. It serves as the guiding light where all others are layered. The drawings and sculptures are in the foreground (even if only conceptually) and the paintings that are primarily demonstrative of transparent light are the stage. Each element can be seen on their own, as an artifact or as an object whose referenced can shift, not dissimilar from a stage where a flower vase can serve as mere decoration in one play and in another a murder weapon, or a painting serve to convince the audience of a particular time period or it might serve as a character in the play- being a central element. Of course in addition to both of these cases the actual painter becomes connected in some strange way like any other stage builder. The artifacts and relics play out in this way. They can cross from Odysseus's boat to the sun in the sky.

On a bible, written on the cover is: 'The Holy Bible' and in the bottom right embellished in gold reads: Dr. & Mrs. Robert _____. The fear spreads from these pages onto the beach. It creeps up the frail looking legs of the rich mothers and the tentative and dull faced skinny fat men who drink insulated 0 calorie drinks. This a Christian beach adrift in the traditions that contains one god who is easy to hold and who is able to send the unbelievers directly to hell. The sun is high and hot. A tan not dissimilar that can be attained on the shore of the lake of fire. If set foot on the shore the poor mortals would be destroyed or maybe a mere gesture would suffice, like the rolling of one's eyes. This would be enough for the god Zeus. In Christianity fear is flat, it has very little depth. Christian tradition is good at flattening things out whereas on the same topic Judaism can wrestle, splashing in the water in front of the blond haired bodies. The depth of the water increases and the chance of drowning is ever present so many of the small children have life jackets on.

STARS *acid*

The stars are out tonight. We are alienated from the cosmos, the simple unaided observations and the emergent stories that creep and filter through history. These stories of the stars are more applicable than any

amount of equations, any amount of beautiful math that may or may not explain the distant galaxies. The myths give direction and dig deep into the human psyche but the bulk of scientific discovery leaves us cold, yet now more than ever we rely on the abstraction and are deaf to the profound voices that emerge through nature- the particulars that seek to reflect the complexity of the human experience. Our age sores because of breakthroughs. It exposes the primitive for who they are! Oh how we are blinded by our own arrogance. The depth of relationship, not only to each other but to that of the stars is great and wondrous and more profound than any western religious traditions have represented. The names given to god are not merely expression, rather, they are projections and wishes or prayers. Classify yet again, Le Corbusier in the suburbs- in the sad and trusted followers, not of Athens but of Sparta! The slaves serve the bound who take no creative leap forward or backward, no heroic laying down of arms and taking up the pencil in order to compose. No swords to plowshares. They resent those who pay enough to keep them enslaved and find their plowshare turned instead to skis, golf clubs, or rackets of some sort. Their compositions are in the form of contracts with recreation and leisure and not a some Marxist fantasy of discussing the nuances of society and art. The stars have been replaced by bargains that eventually end in the purchase of time and held as commodity.

BLAKE & ANDRE *cult*

I have never read Blake's poems. I know someone who has and loves them, in fact, they also converse with others who have passed over to the 'other side' via mediums and the like. I think this is a form of symmetry. The belief that our existence here has a counterpart on the other side. Blake's visual art I am more familiar with. A beastly nature with monsters that lump up but are never disorganized. Carle Andre's bricks have a similar spirit but in ways they are more liberated from the flesh while at other times more constrained by the institution- how else can his brick exist? I suppose a brick can exist outside quite nicely, and does, without any help, which is possibly one of Andre's points.

Consider how this brick in all it's brickness provides us with something akin to a chronic state. An existence where through its symmetry, being that of a well formed shape whose requirements are to

effectively stack and lie among its kin, neither grows because of adversity nor progresses because of some acute encounter. A life less dynamic than the ground on which it rests.

My life has been without much pain. I have enough leisure and psychological available space to pick up and put down, on a whim, *The Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. I am a brick in Andre's sculpture.

MORE BRICKS *acid*

A pickup truck stops in an alley close to a school in a slowly gentrifying neighborhood. A house has recently been demolished. The driver of the pickup enters the property and begins to collect the remaining intact bricks that lay scattered in the dirt. They are old red bricks from a time before the driver was born. Here, the driver experiences a threshold. This driver, a man in his thirties, has been close to this threshold for a number of weeks. His young children are causing him stress and his finances are in a precarious position. In loading his truck with bricks he notices that his rear tires are deflated. He kicks the dirt and looks closely at the tires and notices that the rear tires have been punctured badly with nails. Annoyed and unable to control himself he throws a brick at his door and dents it. He proceeds to pick up brick after brick hurtling them at his truck. The windows smash and the entire truck becomes more and more scratched and dented. Finally he stops and sits down on the dirt. He notices how silent everything is.

It is possible to be brought to tears if they are in a certain frame of mind and if they stare long enough at Paul Delaroche's *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, which hangs in the National Gallery of London. It is one of my Mother's favorite paintings. I think this work is an acknowledgment of what we all really desire.

Immersion.

That is, not some sprinkling at the font but full coverage, fully drenched in the experience no matter what the cost, be it your head or your mind. If you ever stand facing the congregation and speak timidly into the microphone, voice shaking, and describe your conversion

experience then a small reassurance is given that most likely the fires of hell won't touch you. Of course, there is no guarantee because who are we to judge?

“Judge not lest yest be judged, what a beautiful refrain” *REM*

Well, this could go on and on and many heads will roll before we come up with a final answer. Truly frightening!

Or, as the moments occur to me: a Japanese boy talking about Meher Baba and meditation, two Big Sur carpenters building a Fuller dome, two nude couples fucking by candlelight, a girl with sewn wrists, two topless dancers, my own son crooning: thank you, fire, thank you, thank you for your warm heart...
Peter Marin

SAILORS & THE LEAD *acid*

Vespucci's account, like many accounts from European explorers, wondered at the hairless naked bodies of the ingenious people who they encountered. With the vast ocean crossed, powered by wind the sailor's confidence bolstered as to rape whomever they desired without consideration let alone consent. Consent is a lacking word, as if consent is ever enough.

A bottle of Bourdeaux too sweet for my liking rests upon my lap. The cork is day-glow pink, the label depicts a morning sun with rays piercing the sky with clouds.

“Who's there?”

In walks a sailor with a story and I listen carefully. The sailor smashes a bottle on the floor for effect.

“It makes me feel powerful! And now! it looks like a crown.”

He holds up the half smashed bottle with edges dripping with wine.

“Now, all those fucking arrogant sons of bitches will listen, they're scared shitless once alone and then I stick this up to their face.”

He demonstrates by shoving the jagged edge of the bottle to his own face.

“They beam with pride, don't they? They're always rubbing their cocks with their rusty hands. The sons of bitches can't even take care of their

own children, can't cook, can't clean, but here I am angry as hell doing all the fucking work for them down in the stinking belly of this boat. I feed their insatiable appetites every hour on the hour, my God they're hungry! Listen, its the bell again, more food! I'm always available to serve because I do requests. Today, before I go I want some music."

He turns around and pushes a button I had never noticed before and a song started. A repeating bit of piano, a pattern that begins to layer. If I was only able to describe this music better I would but its hard to explain. The composer...

The sailor brightens up.

"I want to tell you my favorite joke. A pirate walks into a bar with a steering wheel down his pants. The bartender points at his pants and comments on it. "Hey buddy, you have a steering wheel in your pants!" The sailor responds, "Yarr, and she's driving me nuts!" Ha!"

I laugh and tell him how much I love that joke.

"You've heard it before?"

Still laughing I nod my head.

"Damn!"

He turns serious.

"Who was steering the boat when that poor bastard Jonah was rudely thrown off? All man handled and such by the devil himself. I should be careful as the devil is a broad being, all tied up and stuff, too sober for my liking."

He paused and began to shuffle around the room.

"Lead. To tell you this story I need lead, and quite a bit of it, In fact, I think I need a solid piece about the size of your torso."

I looked at him quite surprised and explained that I doubted weather the floorboards could handle such a weight.

"No, I don't think so, anyway, we could reinforce the deck easily, just a few timbers to distribute the weight."

"Okay, then what?"

"Well, I start to hammer it. Lead can be hammered nicely into shapes and that's how I'll tell me story."

Recently, Jean Baudrillard has suggested one reason why fascism is the site of such attraction. We suffer, he says, from a " loss of the real," and in order to compensate we have

made a fetish of the period prior to this loss – the period of fascism (especially World War 2).¹ For Freud the fetish is a substitute which blocks or displaces a traumatic discovery of loss (i.e., castration); it is often the last thing experienced before the event. Thus, if the trauma of postwar consumer society is the loss of the real, fascism might well be our fetish period. Now on the face of it this idea seems absurd. Fascism as a period with a purchase on the real? It is infamous instead for its irrationality. But this paradox is precisely why it fascinates us, for it is in fascism that one sees a culture struggle with the loss of the real. *Hal Foster*

FETISH *acid*

A book nook could be technically considered a diorama. Its essentially a miniature room or model that occupies a place on a bookshelf in place of a book or books depending on its size. Sometimes they contain mirrors to give the effect of a vast infinite space and by using multiple mirrors and glass a multitude of visual and spacial effects can be achieved. Miniatures can be fetishes, a little personal icon, a small crucifix, things that can be held that normally are out of reach.

alchemical / alchemical / alcohol / alcohol

The fetish continues in the form of possessions like jewelry. The jeweler, a craft person, whose trade is a prominent cultural manifestation throughout history all over the world, is proud that their work exists in burial mounds and all sort of dead places. Tomb robbers have made fortunes on the trade of these small wearable objects. Oddly, the basic look of jewelry hasn't change much over thousands of years.

It was rumored that the Chapman brothers (Jake and Dino), the infamous YBA's, were to head the department of fine arts at Goldsmiths College in London a number of years ago. One can take a short ride on a bus from Goldsmiths to Greenwich Village to see some of Haris's clocks. Some are still working and wound regularly. They are in ways a miniature of a small aspect of the universe- a fetishization of an incomprehensible manifestation. The Chapman brothers made

gruesome depictions in miniature of Nazi death camps, another miniature representation of a part of the universe. They became quite famous and continue to shock some, however, it is now commonly thought to be less shocking when the attempt is to be overtly shocking. This, though, is further turned on its head as one continues deeper and deeper into a cultural critique using various subtle winks and nods. This is a bit of a game no doubt for the young especially which can sharpen their abilities without much effort.

GOD, THIS IS FUNNY *acid*

God is very old, they left the game ions ago. It seems to me that with the Greek's gods, each succeeding generation become more likely to see the humor, whereas, with the old Titans, for example, humor was really not much part of their existence.

Truth! Certainty! That in which there is no doubt!
That which is above is from that which is below, and that
which is below is from that which is above,
working the miracles of one [thing]. As all things were from
One.
Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon.
The Earth carried it in her belly, and the Wind nourished it in
her belly,
as Earth which shall become Fire.
Feed the Earth from that which is subtle,
with the greatest power. It ascends from the earth to the
heaven
and becomes ruler over that which is above

The Emerald Tablet

RELIC *cult*

This a mandylion. The lead pressed hard against a rigid body in the tomb quickly before it resurrects. There the lead sheet, poison to the hands, is delicate by itself without proper support. It folds onto itself by its sheer weight so it is placed against a formed blank that closely

aligns with its general shape. It is then placed into a wooden box and set out to a place of worship. Here is the story of a relic- my eyes are like lead. I hope the baby sleeps soundly and I will be up early.

From the middle age, a vantage point.

In speaking about the vastness of the Documenta exhibition and the heightened expectations surrounding it:

This is due to the fact that people are not really well equipped to deal with radical fromlessness. They tend to feel the challenge deeply and they counter this challenge by seeking for identity. But how does one keep the balance between identification and fixation? Art can teach us this discipline.
Roger M. Buerger, Ruth Noack

There is a refuge in those self-satisfied shadows. Take Annie Pootoogook's work seen at Documenta 12. Her tragic death reminding many, though not enough, of their privilege in this world, their unapologetic position.

There is no fucking (insert cult of personality) arrogance- my personal pale baggage floats to the surface.

or

There is no fucking arrogance that (insert cult of personality) speaks of- my personal pale baggage floats to the surface.

Man's solemn reminder, bracket maker of truth, the mantle of authority, that the last tribesmen will burn in hell. To return to the shadows, dynamic lighting like the empty foyer and darkened chapel where, on the off night when no choir practice occurs, one could sink into a dark black corner or hide under a pew and role toward the pulpit. Annie's work was lit with sharpness showing the white of the paper to be something impossibly clean knowing the grime she encountered on the street. Clear like the black of the church corners to be impossibly Romantic, so much so, that the raining sky above turned summer black competed for satisfaction. A chorus of Deep and Wide

sweeps us away and distracts us from her (the missionary warns about the failure to preach the good news- he's an asshole. He warns about the last tribesmen vanquishing, oh my lord, we've tried so hard.)

THOTH *acid*

The alchemical process as the Egyptian god Thoth the Baboon demonstrated or instructed of transforming a brick into a consecrated object or a bone into a sacred relic or a bike wheel into a profound experience (beyond the joy given in riding on a summer night!) is a process much ingrained into our spirit. The religious tendency is unceasing. It is the Baboon into human and as it is god into man. Of course, there is no limit to the failed attempt and further, no limit to the successful attempts that have proved themselves destructive- minerals into missiles.

Headline: Iraq's Top Shia Cleric welcomes Pope into his home for talk on peaceful coexistence.

Oh, we are very interested in something odd, very strange. It involves collecting and distributing paintings. We collect from artist and distribute to museums. All the better, of course- the smaller the artist to the bigger institution. We suppose the strangest part of all this is...

This is where the recording stops, in fact the tape itself is sliced and joined. Its quite an aggressive act, and yes, you guessed it, the tape continues mid song with Bowie's *Let's Dance*. How very appropriate and predictable.

I hope this transcends, I hope this transcends, I hope this transcends... *Gilbert and George*

Is it easy to transform from on thing to another? How about jinx the thing you are proud of? This is a milky place to be. How fortunate, how engrossing.

We don't like happy artists, Van Gough couldn't have cared less about himself, wasn't preoccupied with his own little ego.

Other artists paint simply to have friendly little meals, buy a house and have nice holidays. He was the opposite. He would destroy himself to paint a picture. Totally self destructive!"
Gilbert and George

ECSTASY *acid*

A shift in how we see things. Be it through altered states, the arts, religion etc, takes one beyond/through the layer of contemporaneity. It is curious that we use the term contemporary art when it is the pursuit of the practitioner (shaman, artist, priestess, etc...) to expose or investigate our more basic existence. I want to use the word primitive but not in any colonial way but rather in its etymological way being that of origin / not derivative. The body as a city like Athens, a temple, a ship, and I as a mere moving occupant or observer, temporarily light into whatever it is I am occupying.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy and you are that temple. *1 Corinthian 3:16-17*

I lay writhing in a mesh. outside the face in the tree, the branch's spirit face watches me. The mythical beings, the great gods come to penetrate me and I writhe in ecstasy and shed tears of thanks.

So it is not possible to deceive or go beyond the will of Zeus; for not even the son of Iapetus, kindly Prometheus, escaped his heavy anger, but of necessity strong bands confined him, although he knew many a wile. *Hesiod*

In Ecstasy there may be no pleasure, rather it is something more eternal, an access to something deeper and all occurring.

Shamanic: There is no bliss in this state. Its not addictive, its about access to the universal which manifests in various themes.

Abstraction is akin to idolatry in that in worshipping the form as an intrinsic thing (formalism for example) is like praising the instrument / the sacrament / idol / art / tool that is instead intended as a means not an end. This could be taken further by worshipping god as end which is both an abstraction and form due of course to our limited understanding and capacity to conceptualize any god.

A crack in the contemporary edifice. A baby, instinctively aware of the basics of karate and Judo is evident in their natural movements to avoid a diaper change or their defensive strategies to avoid the seat belt. The edifice that babies do not abide by gives them a primitive (as defined earlier) freedom. This is the crack.

A falter at the alter

Sex to shaman

Like other sacraments, intimacy can be seen as an instrument, a vehicle, to understand something universally transcendent.

Zeus's penetrating gaze/ body/ thunder bolt.

Our normal limited notion of fantasy consists of a real existing desire taken to an absurd level, whereas, the fantasy that is in the realm of the transcendence is the fantastical as a new desire or the want for a new desire, a foreign desire that is discovered by way of a vision or a revelation. It is the want of a want as opposed to a mere extreme version of an existing want. This new desire may not even be possible—all the more interesting! The actual want is not even obtainable so the fantasy is to experience the want (desire) not that actual act.

The option of ecstasy is about this somehow. It begins to be about the emotional (universal) response to the powerful.

There is a fundamental similarity to the act of curating (Speaking about the nature of Switzerland in its being a polyglot culture while being a place that does not admit new influences) which at its most basic is simply about connecting culture, bring their elements into proximate to each other - the task of curating is to make junctions, to allow different elements to touch... *Hans Ulrich Obrist*

Designing an environment or a situation that allows for and encourages elements "to touch" is where ecstasy can occur, specifically various powers and forces to touch.

Any trial whatever that come to you can be conquered by silence. *Thomas Merton*

I remember back in the deep holds of the ship as it sways gently a man who was a man like no other. He appeared as a god from the deep. I told him that I have no desire for you yet I fantasize of the idea of being overtaken by you. He looked at me with confusion and began to come near. I awoke and the smell of coffee came through the door mixed with acetone. Someone was cleaning something.

The obvious physical manifestation is present- one that includes impact- a fist against something that gives a little- a breakage- this is certainly cliché as the tradition of hitting walls has been quite established. A tremendous increase in frustration followed by undeniable amount of guilt, a sense of failure of being a good father- my God! What a cliché! Then to say, the sheer act of writing this indicates such by the fact that I could be spending the time dealing with the problem. This is where I see my head splitting - this vision always gives me pleasure. In front of me is the great fire breathing dragon- full of pleasant rage. It asks me what makes me unique, the best? Can you come up with the minimum amount of things that when combined makes you the best in the world at?

It is easy to consider this when we focus on mere physical. The Olympics for example. What combination of events, if any, would you

do that would give you the gold. The more desperate the events the better.

PAPA NEW GUINEA *cult*

The devil departs then returns to discuss unrealized projects. One includes creating a performance where a series of acts lead to the self-actualization of a specific part of being. This is refereed to in the discussion of fantasies. There is a missionary. Its important to understand that in this idea the missionary is abiding by an alternative tradition of Christianity where sexuality and gender have been liberated. The missionary still finds themselves in Papa New Guinea but was fulfilled relationally because they have their desired partner who is a fully engaged and a conspiring individual (at least in a relational sense) living with the locals. The couple return to their hut for a meal and afterward have satisfying sex. They have chosen each other. This is an odd thing. On their prayer card the couple embraces each other on the beach somewhere in Mexico. The card is pinned on a cork board in a foyer of a church. On furlough they visit their home church and speak to their congregation. In the distance the rumble of Zeus can be heard. A strange murmuring as the shifted sense of space is felt. A discovery, not of a new identity, no, rather an all pervasive force, something of the gods (both of fertility and of power- the ones that dwell in us all). And christ, who washed the feet of his friends, who raised Lazarus from the dead and who turned water in to wine- the life giving ambrosia...

The body then serves as a reminder of our temporary stop and occupation in the universe. A hemorrhoid or constipation like Luther's torment is a mere speck in the scheme of things and yet it can bind us.

Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through the relationship with the Other. *Edouard Glissant*

MULTIPLES *acid*

Joseph Beuys gives access points, various bits of enteral engagement in order to relate. They are not illustrative of an issue, rather they are demonstrative of an ongoing performative existence. My son has nightmares, or rather lays awake fixated on something disturbing. What is the root? This is a mental multiple. No, there is no root to attack, rather the performance is ongoing and eventful. He moves from his bed to mine- to feel safe, to travel from essential space to another.

Look into the eye of god! A scene from the passion of Christ, Bosch. Found on the reverse of St. John on Patmos. In the center, a pelican gives it's young it's own blood to eat above a point of flames. The fire seems as though someone has begun to burn the painting from behind with a direct point of heat. These are prophetic flames. Indeed the risen Christ is humankind burning from the inside out surrounded by a veil- a mesh as seen by means of psychedelics, and split apart again by the cross like shape.

Tom of Finland's "uncomplicated" drawings. This is hardly the word for it. Think gods- a response to humankind and the "fall" at the garden. Regardless of one's own sexual preferences these are the burning flames buried deep inside- look into the eye of god. The golden ocula-ocular- to hide deep inside. The madness they create, what, the drawings? The anus's of Bosch? Its a mystery and an investigation.

The curious way of looking at this would be to understand the ocula and any orifice as the rhizomatic entry point, or exit point for that matter, to and from the particular world of any individual. Considering it is as complex root system with very little hierarchy not as some sort of foundation of the individual. It is a place to travel and explore in relation to the universe- a place to visit among an infinite itinerary. Here, allow for the individual to express themselves in relation to their surroundings with kin becoming a mere fact, whereas their nomadic expression and reactions and connections are the great developing fictions.

TOOLS *acid*

Recognition of need becomes clear. I am no different than the drunk fucker who searches out violent and exploitative porn except that they lack a few tools in order to create. It is a subtle sense, a subtle nudge that urges the hand to grasp for a different tool when the time arises, an ongoing and ever increasing pursuit. Something as a tool allows for the ability to make something quite un-creative to be life altering. Its essential to see beyond production. Production is a mere secondary manifestation at best and a distraction at worst.

There is no solution because there is no problem. *Marcel Duchamp*

This is a tool. A shift in perspective. Similar to the shift from victim to creator or destroyer to the investigator.

And...

Thoughts about time drop off like dead skin. Dance takes place with one foot in the grave. *John Cage*

Sometimes the only access to the tool storage is by way of a small service hatch only big enough for my arm. I can reach in but the only two tools within my grasp is a bottle of scotch (this is a Romantic and a cliché tool) in the form a stapler and a long frantic walk in the form of a utility knife.

MISDIRECTION *acid*

Maplethorp takes beautiful pictures of his friends.

On the bus, in a frenzied state, where everyone's world is mere inches in diameter and where the exhilarating act of sitting beside a co-conspirator is equal to any great intimate moment in the dark. This lasts for the briefest of times. Only a mere speck of time in one's life. In

then considering the darkness that we spread out later, when we think we get our way, it is curious nostalgia that haunts us. In our dreams we still have the encounters that on the rare occasion strike the same chord in us as when we were younger.

All anger is misdirected, or, maybe at least it is a secondary emotion. Direct anger doesn't seem to exist- it feels like an impossible state. A state of anger or an angry reaction can ultimately be traced to something other than which is directed at which in turn can be traced to another thing, a chain of causation. Consider the elder who speaks about everyone as a victim of colonization and how many of us have been colonized many times over. What makes indigenous people unique is that their colonization has occurred only once or twice and only a short time ago. They have a better knowledge of what it means. Not only are they less blinded by the process and have greater insight, but also experience more pain, as in many cases the act of colonization is still occurring. With each colonization their brings a further separation from nature. Indigenous people are closer to nature, to themselves, to a spirit, and can sense pain more acutely. Those further away from nature are living in a bewildered state which is made worse by sheer luxury and privilege. We have babies, we have sex, we get sick, all things that are reminders of nature and ourselves as animals, yet our desperate existence of life in the city making money creates schizophrenia and we become very depressed and angry.

PLASTIC ARTS *cult*

The trials of success and their measure is what grants us unique status? The creaking shadows? The open eyelids? The cracked door to an office that contains the priest on a wet spring day. These are certainly odd things, all of which have no beginning and no end, only nightmares and dreams.

There needs to be restraint, particularly as momentum increases-look closely at the blank spaces, see and admit the sunk costs and begin again, very little can be corrected except through re-creation, from

scratch. So start again and see how incremental progress is and be sure to provide and excuse. (The Painter)

My spectrum is small/ short, but high functioning then it breaks down quickly. Is there time for all the desires to be fit in? In the darkened, after hours, chapel kneeling on the dark red carpet feeling like a bug (grasshopper) in the field on a blade of grass, slipping under a pew hoping for action. My day job is a painter, no actually I'm in textiles because I mostly cut and paint cloth. (The Painter)

The textiles are for renovation. Laughter from the baby is also a form of renovation. Further, its the other child who makes the baby laugh. One can see this documented in the tapestry. The cut cloth forms the substrate and the threads build depth and form and color.

As I relate more with my own story it becomes less and less a performance. The boasting and self fixation or pride is brought to reality by others severity. One's performance gradually is seen in a new light- a light that shows the sad theatrics, the destruction, and the necessity. Progress/ awareness is less about giving up or growing out of one's performance and more about the audience we perform to. This audience shifts from the other to the self while simultaneously listening and engaging with the other.

Maybe all production is a manifestation of misdirected anger stemming from the frustration of disconnect with various forms of nature. Then to settle into the sickness / illness / semiconscious / psychedelia etc.. is to taste a different manner. Our bodies carve out a small space. There are of course the agonizing ecstatic moments. Sacraments vary in their relative position with nature. Traditional ones like plants are direct whereas bread is more processed. It could be that the closer the sacrament is to its natural state the better an access point it is- less mediated.

And now, the idyllic garden is filled with dust from the young sculptor. She is very angry. She had started a zine called the Deadend Times,

clever title but as it turned out not original, In fact, nothing she created was original except her seemingly endless but unique mishaps in parenting.

Wilted guilt!

Guiled guilt!

A weak afternoon light.

Meekness- a good Christian attribute.

“Dark beast of Babylon” (*Boy George*)

Shame- from the commerce.

I’m in love with everything that I never fell in love with from the past. I miss the desires that I have never had. She continues to cut stone and at night she dances in the clubs with friends.

BODYBUILDER *cult*

Its a long afternoon.

My body bears witness to the bullshit that I bought into

The resentment- those dependents that I have become.

But, now my knuckles are sore from hammering. The day is done, no, I’m done with the day. When one consider the push and pull of an interrupted space combined with an inability to find solitude- the voice increasingly becomes cliché. These are common problems. A child up early, an overthrown kitchen, its all the same. A grating voice, my God! Oh to split my head open- be thou my vision. (*From: The Body Builder Sings in the Last Choir*)

Art as necessary evil. When you catch sight through the corner of your eye of an El Greco alter piece you are struck with the immediacy made obvious by way of his execution. The psychological distance between his vision and the production is small. These painting are drawings. They are unmediated representation of an agonizing ecstatic moment. What are they but a mere form? They are necessary as such because we are unable to have a face to face with this person whose passions and problems most likely are ours. The sense to create is profoundly satisfying while at the same time gives evidence of our longing. Yes, that is what it is, the partially consummated lives between myself and

creation. Each mark, each stroke is a prayer. This prayer speaks to the dark distance- the shadow between, the night of the longing.

An evil that remains dark- dark as prescription and description what is necessary is to explore quietly, subtly, with nuances that give urge.

FORM / ACTIVISM *cult*

But now let us move on past this pathos and self indulgence to the crude acknowledgment of certain facts that surround commercial galleries. A confusing world to the outsider, however, I believe there might be an access point. The question is not what Contemporary art is but rather what it is not. Can a given piece pass as legitimate given the perfect context- the correct context? If it can, then, well its something but if it can't then what is it?

The Formalist / Activist dichotomy has been created and then ignored partly due to the sentimentally obsessed. The artist and their individual followers for the most part throughout history have been Romantics. The most critical and detached artist who would consider themselves the most serious of Conceptual artists has fundamental Romantic tendencies. By the sheer nature of art's metaphysical preoccupation there is a longing for the past and the beautified unfulfilled dreams of the dead artists who went before. In addition, the living authoritarian presence of who gets to determine what is good and bad art exists within a realm of an ideal that is based on something beyond the empirical. Whether it is a collector, curator, editor, or dealer all are in part responsible for art's, in Searle's term, 'status function'. Artists are torn between the past and the present and due to their immense insecurities they feel the need to be constantly validated by the authorities no matter how obscure or irrelevant they might be. This system has stood erect for so many years. As Augustine so bluntly stated about his institutional attachments and reliance, "the Church is whore, but she is still my mother." Who then is the whore's benefactor and why have they resisted such deconstruction and real critique? Is it time to question the lineage outright by denying our relations with institutions and accepting a new path?

So what does this Formalist / Activist dichotomy look and act like? It looks like Contemporary art and acts with highly schizophrenic characteristics, one side being that of formalism and the other side activism. Rather than Andres' piece lay inactive on the gallery floor it should have been used to smashed through the window onto the street below. Mark Wallinger's 'State Britain', in light of brick throwing, is a sociopolitical activist piece of art in the context of a formal-aesthetic based institution. For Wallinger, I would argue that the failure was an attempt to properly raise real issues of freedom of expression or create new and profound formal qualities. What it did succeed to do is to reinforce the institutions ability, through the use of its status function capabilities, to institutionalize and commodify activism by removing it from the street and placing it in the museum.

...every political practice can find its place in the international art world, where it is quickly accepted, assimilated and divested of any significant power. *James Elkin*

This particular way of entering into a relation with the past also constitutes the foundation of the activity of a figure with which Benjamin felt an instinctive affinity: that of the collector. The collector also "quotes" the object outside of its context and in this way destroys the order inside which it finds its value and meaning. Whether it is a work of art or any simple commodity that he, with an arbitrary gesture, elevate to the object of his passion, the collector takes on the task of transfiguring things, suddenly depriving them both of their use value and of the ethical-social significance with which tradition had endowed them. *Giorgio Agamben*

Mark Wallinger's State Britain exemplifies a form of culture washing in that the very thing a critic sets out to comment on is then assimilated into establishment (the museum). The Culture washing tradition has been an effective public relation technique. Throughout history various private and public organizations have sought to have their image polished by seemingly altruistic and unbiased support for the arts. Commissioning and funding artists to produce art works that seem in appearance to be free from any corporate or institutional agenda. Obviously this is not the case. The last "Cultural Olympiad" in

Vancouver for the 2010 winter Olympic games required all participants to sign a contract that contained

The artist shall at all times refrain from making any negative or derogatory remarks respecting VANOC (the organizing committee), the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Olympic movement generally, Bell and/or other sponsors associated with VANOC.

It is common for the artist to face rejection. Rejection comes in various forms and from a variety of sources. Rejection may in fact be the saving grace that allows artists to continue to create in a critical state. It is difficult to know whether the developed critique of a given institution by an artist is caused by a deep philosophical concern or merely due to rejection by that given institution to the artist. In a sense there is truth in sour grapes. As one progresses in life rejection lurks around every corner. The critical moment upon being rejected lies within one's ability to act creatively and not merely sink out of existence. It is this ability to act creatively that allows for anyone to see what the process of rejection needs to reveal. Take for example a company that an applicant has dreamed of working for. Up until the actual rejection letter they are unable to see the inevitable flaws in the company, but after, if they choose the critical creative path, they might begin to see the problems. Some may call this sour grapes, the fruit that is out of reach, but I believe here lies some bit of discovered realization.

DEATH FOR A MOMENT *acid*

There is a character in a book whose purpose is the relentless pursuit of an out of body experience. Many times this character comes close but always questions how legitimate the experience is. The book was written by someone who fled an extremely oppressive country whose dictator believed that they were an incarnated god. The dictator had personally imprisoned the author and had all their books banned and all existing copies publicly burned. The dictator had initially enjoyed some of the author's books and referenced them numerous times early on their political career, however, at the suggestion of a religious leader, an old family friend of the dictator, the dictator turned against the author believing his works to be sacrilegious. After the author's successful escape they went onto write four more books, one

containing the character whose only purpose is to have an out of body experience.

Our days are numbered! Each second that passes while staring at a Henry Moore sculpture is a second closer to the final breath. Each second wasted sipping a whiskey is one second closer to our final heart beat. Let us protest! Walk the streets- take to the streets- have sex, go to Sunday school, up from the foyer on the 3rd door to the right where a felt board presents the lost sheep. Who are the lost sheep that Christ makes his way for? Does he waste an extra second searching?

Dangerous dancing (on the floor)
Preachers preaching (hear them roar)
Charismatic (I'm a whore- what a bore)

Chorus repeats (in a trance)
Now with feeling (coming close)
Now I'm feeling (here's the host- here's the host)

We all know how this ends
In the alley our friends
A pitch black night in the summer
Where's the enemy?

The tale, one that has some moral vision, or some agenda, even though its bias, fails. The novel if easily understood is further away from reality. The story- the clearer the worse.

The afternoon is gray.

CORPORAL *cult*

In a state of clarity, or if one's house is in order and satan is not against their own place- a deep emotional response might be able to well up free of pain or joy. There exists a belief that emotion such as this must

be connected to an event, be it joyful or painful (with all their related emotions). There is another source of this emotion. The source is relative work or passive relation. It might be considered a payoff... no, a residue, no, better yet a consequence.

The church doesn't know what to do with a divorced church leader, no, it doesn't know how to deal with leadership.

The dream was one of those that truly gave the feeling something authentic. I had a sex change. I stood there in a completely new body with completely new sensations. I had felt new and exciting, confident to be out and about. I now see it as reincarnation. At one point though I had a feeling of regret because I was to go home and visit my parents which made me nervous. (*From: The Body Builder Sings in the Last Choir*)

Its important to move away from a perceived center, especially when the perceived center is some sort of personal identity. Consider a move away from the bridge of the ship to a mere observer in the hold. It might allow for a change in perspective rather than external change. I wonder about the freedom of accepting a dream or psychedelic experience that contains an extremely different version / vision. The freedom and joy of acceptance occurs when my position in the ship is further away from the bridge.

It all starts with a physical relation- this could involve another individual but also anything outside. There is a subtle confrontation then we choose to place our relation within some known context- less than an analogy and more of a picture, a place, a previously seen relationship. This allows us to settled for a moment but what seems to be wanting is the next desperate move which is to be rejected from the scene / vision and be placed Romantically into exile. Exile as seen by the other on display even if only to nature, a performance. After which one can observe the centre they once were, see the rejection, and feel the distance from home and all the nurtured urges.

The repetitive fiction. God's only son- the crucifixion, crucifixion- the "x" in the word. Francis Bacons's Christ is full of blood unlike the

hovering Christ of Dali. The relation - as justified by this event continues the narrative that somehow two wrongs make a right. The tradition of an eye for an eye etc... blood must be shed etc... even in the torment unleashed by the executor- all this is happily permitted. The lake of fire reflects the blood- red on red but this time boiling over on the shore. It is finally done when the lake is drained and what is found on the bottom? All gold coins. They were once skipped across the surface. Various dates and faces litter the bottom and no demon dares to dive for them. As the last bit of this fire water dries up the shore line expands leaving room for the classic bathers of antiquity and beyond. Their traditional bodies established by the belief of a perfect body are held in aspiration as given to us by Mann's *Death in Venice*, however, unlike the beautiful young Tadzio, these bodies are made to be consummated. Their counterparts bath somewhere else. A far away place less visited by those passive tourists and more frequented by the torn and playful types who are used to drinking too much and crying too often.

Errantry: "The quality, condition, or desire of wandering especially a roving in search of chivalrous adventure."

Its beauty springs from the stable and the unstable, from the deviance of many particular poetics and the clairvoyance of a relational poetic. The more things it standardizes into a state of lethargy, the more rebellious consciousness it arouses.
Édouard Glissant

Influential psychopaths and related types, in fact, get their power not from originality, but from a perception of just what unacknowledged motives lie waiting to be exploited, and just what aspect of the world currently provide a suitable patch of darkness on to which they can be projected. In order to catch the wind, they must (if Heiden is right) be without any specific, positive motivation of their own which might distract them from taking up and using skillfully whatever has most popular appeal at the time.(...) To gain great power popular power, you must either be a genuinely creative genius, able to communicate new ideas very widely, or must

manage to give a great multitude permission for things it already wants, but for which nobody else is currently prepared to give that permission. *Mary Midgley*

CONSTRUCTION *cult*

There is a neurological developmental stage when humans, as well as some other animals, are able to recognize that the image they see in a mirrored surface is a reflection of the real environment they find themselves in. At some point a monkey ceases to get angry at the threat they see in a mirror or in other cases it becomes obvious to a child that there exists nothing behind the flat two dimensional surface of the mirror. In these cases the viewers see the reflection for what it is. The question of what degree art plays as a reflective role within culture is important as it will allow the viewer to be either more or less threatened by what they see, as with the monkey, and come to a better understanding of what exactly is behind the reflection. Understanding the reflective role in art will then speak to whether art is primarily descriptive or primarily prescriptive which is important in understanding art's cultural effect rather than its reason for being.

To what degree is a manufactured aesthetic experience a reflection of a culture?

Art is entirely a reflection of a specific area of culture.

Art is not at all a reflection but rather an experience that is in of itself totally original.

Either way it should be viewed merely as a reflection in order for the audience to resist prescriptive influence.

If number three is not applied then art could be held responsible for many things. On the other hand if it is indeed a reflection then it would be both futile and foolish to judge a reflection let alone hold it responsible. Can it be both reflective and original? I believe it can, however, I will speak to this when we look at exploitative actions taken by the creator. I would suggest then that number three is the most defensible until at least we move away from disenchantment into enchantment.

CONCLUSION *cult*

Reflections are not illusions. Reflections are neither negative nor positive. I am speaking of the subjective qualities and not the objective qualities. Since there are virtually infinite ways to place a combination of colors together we will always be able to produce an original abstract painting, however, conceptually it will always be an abstract painting in that it would be easily understood within a certain conceptual framework and thus reflects exactly certain combination of cultural characteristics. Whether the culture is institutional, feminine, masculine, minority based, romantically based, poverty based, or an infinite number of other things and combinations. Regardless of all this, art will serve as a reflection. It gets complicated and what often makes good art and design are the many subtle and various complex reflections. The ability to fully analyze these cultural reflections encroaches upon the realm of sociology, psychology, anthropology and a number of many other fields of study. As complex as it may get we never leave the realm of reflection unless the artist's actions were exploitative. If exploitation was used then the viewer must consider if they are willing or ready to be transformed.

So why does it matter if art should be viewed as being merely reflective unless it contains aspects of exploitation. When we understand art work in this way all the potential problems that we may face in a reading can be correctly and categorically understood for exactly what they are which is cultural and not creative. In other words we cannot blame the artwork nor can we lay blame upon the artist for anything that they produce. In fact, we could take this further and say that we could never hold the artist accountable for their manufactured aesthetic experiences. In this case all art work that contains no trace of exploitation is descriptive. As soon as there is an element of exploitation it can become prescriptive, and to repeat myself again, must be approached with caution. The reason being is that exploitation is an aggressive action that intervenes relationally. Relationally here implies that the artist has exploited other individuals or groups in order to produce the artwork. We may say that an actual social interaction has occurred and individuals have been affected. Thus, an artwork that is produced through exploitative actions must be judged differently and the artist must be held accountable. It is not a given though that all exploitative actions are

wrong, however, since the work now is in the realm of prescription we must be highly critical of what effect the art work will have to the individual viewer. Understanding whether an artwork contains exploitative aspects or is reflecting exploitative societal aspects is important as we must be careful not to label a reflective work prescriptive. At worst this could lead to censorship which in fact could be a disservice to society as it removes the potentially reflective element that might allow for illumination on certain pathological exploitation.

To be clear, art work is descriptive or reflective unless it has been created by means of exploitation. Art work is still descriptive when it reflects exploitative aspects of culture. This is a fine line and must be carefully examined.

By accepting the reflective role of art and examining carefully whether art is exploitative or not frees ourselves as the audience from a role of judge to one of investigator and experienter. It in fact allows one to fully appreciate the important role that art can play. Art can serve to magnify and reflect aspects of ourselves that we may never see otherwise. Artists do have an ability to reflect the banal or bits of obscure it. Understanding that this then is a reflection calls for greater action for those who experience art. If profundity or even the lack of profundity is present then we cannot just settle for the experience for experience sake. What potentially is disturbing is the corralling of our artists to reflect only narrowly. We must also guard against general arrested development. When, for example, there seems to be some arbitrary and contrived political interjection we must not look at the artist as being at fault for doing so but rather look at what aspect of culture that encourages it. This is pointing out the problem as being that of culture and not art. This is a call for a greater refinement of our artistic pursuits and a more in depth understanding of aesthetic experiences.

The possibility of exploitative activity must be thoroughly considered when experiencing any art form. Most forms of exploitation are easily missed or ignored as such. Unlike the obvious example of child pornography so much exploitative activity is not viewed as illegal. Further, some exploitation can be highly acceptable and even seemingly consensual. Exploitative works of art do not always have a

negative effect. The idea is that art work that has no exploitative activity in its production is only reflective, whereas art forms that contain exploitative action within their production can become prescriptive, in a relational manner and in a culturally transformative way.

LANGUAGE *acid*

Is this a process of normalizing shock and desensitizing, a shift in language usage like when one uses the term “Rapacious”? Can this term only refer to the thing itself. A rape is unlike anything else, yet a flippant usage evolves. A state of lethargy is a state of complacency in passive omission- inaction on the face-to-face level as a relational one. Consider that the art critic has the ability to do this openly. They are encouraged and enabled by commodification. What we are not referring to is some grandiose social action that surpasses human scale. Rape is an act at the human scale- it occurs at a level akin to face to face which makes it so destructive.

The Contemporary philosophical shift from product to process is important to understand in relation to the bolstering of contemporary practices which can make something out of nothing. Take for example the dependency on the curatorial essay or press release that can justify a less than relevant practice and place it within a contrived and often forced social context.

But going by recent press releases, most gallerist and curators are claiming “their” artists have ambitions that would make Mahatma Gandhi look like an underachiever.” *Jennifer Higgie*

Here Jennifer Higgie suggests that this reliance on the supporting text stems from the commercial galleries financial and emotional commitment to the artist. The investment on the gallery’s part must pay off and to do so every effort to exalt and play up the artist’s intentions and meanings must be sought out, these are marketing fundamentals. Sadly the vibrant and extraordinary Contemporary art market pseudo-critical success, unfortunately, does often equal commercial success. The international success of the few ultra successful commercial galleries have a detrimental effect on those not

in the system. They are outliers yet dictate the direction and public understanding of what art is.

Where is the human scale evident in the mass commodification of art? A sobering activity! Obviously as one finishes their third cocktail and then steps inside the blinding white which is strategically packed with contemporary art and affixed red dots, not to the wall of course as this would be too crude, the red dots are conceptual red dots that the gallerist have stored in their mind. Then, in a religious stupor to the illusory spectacle that allows for brief transcendence, a re-enchantment with the present world and maybe some sense of imminent salvation from the chaos outside, a drunken purchase is made followed by regret the next morning.

CONVERSATION *acid*

The following morning involves a routine. While making coffee some religious text is read. Read non religiously, only objectively then coffee is served. First to the servants who are already up eating their toast and jam then to the curator sitting in their office who is opening yesterday's mail. In this office there is a large bookcase with many interesting books and little objects. There is a desk, a couple of chairs with a small table where a pile of recent catalogs from various exhibits lie and two large pictures hung. One picture facing the other on opposing walls.

One picture is a painting of an abstracted archway with loosely drawn vases on each side. The entire picture is done in bright tropical colors over raw canvas. The other picture is a photograph that depicts what seems to be a family sitting around a table engaged in a serious discussion. Two young teens and two parents. One of the kids, the older, has very watery eyes and a mouth distorted as if beginning to cry.

How does any conversation go? At the point in a conversation about a given event there seems to be so much futility. Its too late. The best it can achieve is a debrief and a possible plan for the next issue. Most

likely it is a reflective manifestation, a performance, and that is it. “We must do our work, no, I must do work. The work feels urgent yet when in the midst of it, it feels utterly madding.”

There was a conversation about a place where people worked in an unorthodox manner. Each citizen was given a base salary from which it was possible to live an average existence. The salary provided enough for good food and drink if desired and even enough to save for travel or luxury goods. The salary was based on a job description that stated that the ‘employee’ only need not to be destructive. This could be as simple as not littering and as serious as refraining from violent physical acts. It involved things like not exceeding sound levels in public areas and not exceeding an amount of pollution. In essence it was a ‘less is more’ description. Punishment for the less destructive crimes would be dock in pay and for the more destructive crimes their would be more suitable punishments. This place was an island paradise where exports included artisan goods, fish, and of course tourism. All resorts were state owned as was all resource based exploits, everything was kept very transparent. Individuals could make their own wealth through various extra initiatives like arts and crafts.

This conversation occurred between two politicians who were attending a trade conference while in the Bahamas. They were drinking late into the night at a small strip club after the first days talks.

Another conversation was about a far away planet that had been discovered. It was close enough for a probe to be sent out in order to explore the odd radiation illuminating from around the planet. Of course it was in the future when the earth had sufficient technology to send probes beyond the solar system. The probe discovered a vast amount of debris that was clearly constructed but not of human origin. It was floating around an uninhabited planet. Oddly shaped objects with no discernible functions. It remained a mystery. What earth would finally discover many years later was that the objects were debris left from an alien civilization that for 100,000’s of years had been using this particular planet as a turn around point for their intergalactic races. These races occurred every 200 years or so and were a major part of

their culture. This planet was the half way point at which the ships were allowed to jettison their used energy modules and begin to race home many light years away.

“Well, that is absurd!” The politician said as he stared at a large breasted young woman in front him.

MOSQUITOES *acid*

The compounding effect of emotion- a fortunate thing. Even in the distance, recorded in light years, pales in comparison to the welling up of an un-categorized emotion, a trickle of a tear. Its not dissimilar from ecstasy which is a reminder that we are not alienated entirely from nature.

The debate provoked by the conquest of the Americas was about whether the “people without religion” found in Columbus’ voyages were “people with a soul or without a soul.” The logic of the argument was as follows: 1) if you do not have religion, you do not have a God; 2) if you do not have a God, then you do not have a soul; and 3) if you do not have a soul, you are not human but animal-like. *Ramón Grosfoguel*

In nature there are wild-men, those who roam the countryside and sneak into the basement bars to have sex with other wild-men (they look hetero-normal yet under their jeans they were fancy underwear). Arrested development in friendships have destroyed this fantasy for many men. There are also ice makers that exist at the edge of the frontier like Paul Theroux’s *Mosquito Coast*. They can divine cold drinks from hot drinks. They allow for a foot rub in the evening before bed by their friends. The ice maker is an artist who pretends, they are an impostor, unlike the scientist who has no struggle about their place. In the darkness where the web of light sticks to the fingers one can emerge anew. So, I’ll make something. A gate for paradise to exit. The gate is reflected in the lake of fire but it is obviously prolific due to its surrounding foliage which drowns out the flames. Paradise walks through happily into the sun and feels the morning heat on their cheek. They follow a dusty road to visit the early risers of dawn. The symbols are only gestures, nods to the numerous expressionist who have proceeded- the poets from years ago and to come.

MOMENTUM OF TRUTH *acid*

How does the *Momentum of Truth* work? First, a viewer willfully steps into a soundproof room about of 8'x8'. They sit on a chair at a table. In front of the table, facing the viewer, is a screen mounted on the wall. To give some context, in the 80's and 90's there was a gimmick of using scripted conversations to mimic live feeds in videos. The conversation, part of which has been recorded previously, and the other part, the interviewer for example, was performed in real time giving the effect that there was a real conversation occurring via a live feed. It was popular at camps and youth group events. Someone would record the days events and interview the kids as a reporter. The reporter speaks to the camera as if someone was listening and responding. Later the recorded video would be shown to the kids as if was live. This would always get a good laugh because the kids were now watching it six hours after the fact and could see their own faces and hear their voices from a previous time. The reporter would speak to the host or interviewer in a simple scripted conversation to appear live adding another layer of comedy. It was both real and impossible.

In the *Momentum of Truth* the viewer would trigger the video by pressing a button on the table. An interviewer would appear and begin to ask the viewer questions. At first the interview would ask questions and wait an appropriate amount of time for the viewer to respond but regardless of their response they would continue with a new question. It would appear as if this video was prerecorded as it would sometimes interrupt the viewer or react in arbitrary ways to the viewer's answers. After some time, the interviewer would become to be more accurate in their responses. It might seem by chance that the video was corresponding correctly, but soon the questions and responses would become awkwardly accurate. In the end, the viewer would ideally not be convinced either way as if this was a prerecorded video or if in fact the interviewer was live. In reality the interviewer was and an actor stationed in another room linked with a live feed.

If we back out we lose the story. The story is about attraction, set in motion by gods and interrupted by our failure to allow for acceptance. This is wide ranging; from parent/child, child/parent, and all sorts of

lovers and partnerships. When we black out we forget the conversations that may have given us a bit of progress- the conversations with our neighbor that in the light of day seems either blurry or plain ridiculous, or a conversation with ourselves about an unrealized project with some other person who no longer exists.

SURVIVAL *acid*

..., I don't know how to take care of the basics and never learned to use tools of preservation or self-preservation in terms of my health, in terms of my body, in terms of whatever. *David Wojnarowicz*

We preserve our rituals for various reasons. Out of survival, out of obsession or whatever. I guess they might be our connection with our external pressures. It is a way to release the anxiety that comes as a result of some universal knocking. A certain amount of recourse (resource) allows for ritual.

Resources: Money or the lack of money but with addition of one's knowledge of their lack of money and their conscious disregard for the this particular resource.

Desire for self-preservation: A combination of belief in something greater along with a critical position in relation to some overarching institution.

At the beach under the sun with a slight breeze some sort of ritual changes. Again, consider Mann's character Gustav von Aschenbach. A ritual and repressed attraction. A ritual that includes the establishment of a different aesthetic...and then it comes to me, the shape of the letters are different because it is a different time, the shape of the bodies are different as well for the same reason, however, a memory that is gouged into the ground- maybe like the finger of a god sowing, or of how the bit of a soft native grass and soil is pressed to resemble that hairy genitalia- a reasonable comparison (fecundity), especially under the aging yet timeless moonlight. It also is unpleasant in a way as when one's eyes sting after a windy sunny day or a burning sensation in your throat after days of consecutively drinking. The

shapes change and take on a form that we sometimes long for- a desperate one like in the desert or in the center of the city. In both of the above cases/places some beginnings of infinity take place. Maybe it is the simple adage of “nothing to lose”, so when pushed against a wall or a wasted waterless landscape the only place to turn is inward. This is the wisdom of the desert that so many monks and Jesus and Mohamed etc... experienced as with Wojnarowicz and Basquiat to only name two who were against the wall in an urban sense. Infinity in terms of a new unrealized universe springs forth from the desperate environment.

LAME uric

But this is “lame”. My grandma used to use the word lame like most of that her generation to describe someone who had some physical disability- which at least in the King James translation of the bible (published 1611) was used as in the “lame man could walk.” or “...and a certain man lame from his mother’s womb.” Acts 3. It is an unsettling word that has seen it’s popularity ebb and flo. Often synonymous with “stupid” the word lame continues to be an unsettling word. Hephestus is truly lame- “But if there is a defect in it, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the lord your God.” *Deuteronomy 14:21.*

Repentateuch
Mevangelicalism
Moral Fabrication
Crook and Nanny
Lamental

Do you have a dream home? Is it your forever home?
Do you recover in this home? Is is too new to alter and change and is it
you who is to blame for the design of this lame home?

Over relate vs. restraint

The lame tenet who lives in the basement suite of your dream home is unable to climb the stairs because of a permanent injury sustained after jumping off a bridge into a river. They weren't sure what they hit but suspect it was a log floating below the surface. The dream home was equipped with an assist device to carry the occupant up and down the stairs. They are now involved with an organization to encourage disabled individuals to be active outdoors. They raise money in order to supply low cost prosthetic sport devices like sit skis and off road wheel chairs. Hephaestus, the god of fire- blacksmith to the gods, a creator for the gods was lame in some accounts as he was said to have a malformed foot.

We are not categorically lame, this or that. Hitler might have chased his grand children around in a game of tag while having no hesitation in orchestrating mass killings. The man was a destroyer. These destroyers go to work and feed the furnace in order to create tools to destroy. They create trauma as they were born of trauma. The same figure, by constructed authority "brings someone to Christ" also sexually abuses another. These destroyers live comfortably in the realm of traumas, all sorts of severe and extreme life changing events- occurrences that continue and or create destructive cycles- distant from nature and thus desperate from relation. A net negative effect and the ultimate creation of exploitative aesthetics.

FORM AND ACTION *cult*

Cynically let us consider the formalist / activist conflict as two separate plants placed side by side choking and stunting each other's growth and disabling both their maturity. One plant appears as an activist based practice that is concerned primarily with social and political issues. The second plant, though its appearance is misleading, is an academic Formalism which relies on self-reflexivity and derivative value, as opposed to fundamental value. The institutions that support art often fail to recognize these plants as being separate thus causing confusion not only to the plants themselves but also to the observer. This confusion is laid out clearly in Thierry De Duve's article that appeared in the Magazine October titled "Art in the Face of Radical

Evil". "...: mine are poised on the threshold where aesthetics leads into ethics and only then into politics...". In this article he debates the status of Nhem Ein's photographs taken between 1975 and 1979 in S-21, a Cambodian extermination facility. The photographs depict those who were admitted into the facility. It was purely a documentative procedure of the Khmer Rouge. Ein, at the age of 15, was trained by the Khmer Rouge to photograph the inmates prior to their death. Some 6000 negatives were found in 1979, then in 1997 one hundred of the photographs were exhibited in France at the *Les Rencontres photographiques d'Arles*. At the same time MoMA purchased a number of Ein's photographs and exhibited them in their museum. Here lies the confusion and conflict. It arises due to the photograph's context in the MoMA and the intention of the photographer, curator, and the viewer. Does the viewer compare the photographs with MoMA's existing collection that hangs on the nearby wall and reads them aesthetically or do they read them as historical documents, or do they read them as a commentary on genocide? And, after all that, can be called art and does it even matter?

To be a constructor then is to expand attraction to the other- the potential beloved. It is to push beyond what is normative. From the physical (external) to the internal- one constructs the context and tools for attraction in order for the expansion of transcendent desire.

CONSTRUCTION AND FANTASY *acid*

I fantasize about a man that I haven't met, someone ideal like one of the gods described by the ancients. Attraction of course is a loaded word. Here the destroyer enters and creates a complexity that reeks havoc on attraction. Liberty is destroyed and the beloved is pushed into the lake of fire. Maybe all the men have been destroyed. In this age their capacity is no longer or entirely buried and overrun by power. Unfortunately this is what our culture is sustained by. It might be changing but the leftovers are many. They remain strong and steadfast in their normative masculine outlook. Many continue to prescribe the beloved other, they prescribe attraction. Traditionally it was difficult to view someone like Jesus as a lover to anyone but a woman- how unfortunate.

The traditional masculine manifestation of a double set of dualities on a jacked up white as snow pick up truck with a set of testicles hanging from the rear is a fiery piercing arrow- an erect penis. It is a curious thing to describe the washing away of sins as an attempt at being spotless- white as snow as if this whiteness is something to be desired. Snow is quite lifeless. Snow will squeak when crushed when temperatures are below -10C, this is a lifeless disturbing sound. In one of the favorite poems of the North, Robert W. Service's 1907 *The Cremation of Sam McGee*, suggests it would be far better to burn in the flames than to live freezing in the wild. The fiery hell for the Northerner is a different manifestation than that of the desert dweller, my God! give me heat!

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no; then he says
with a sort of moan:

"It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled
clean through to the bone.

Yet 'tain't being dead—it's my awful dread of the icy grave
that pains;

So I want you to swear that, foul or fair, you'll cremate my
last remains."

Robert W. Service

Heat is a weapon. Who do we commune with? The victims? The victimizers? We want to move on- beyond the allegorical and into the specifics of the individual who uses every opportunity to take. Ask them if they want a glass of wine... of course! and then the glass is discarded at the end of the evening. Are these the destroyers who blindly and without internal dialogue float through life and have nothing to say about art? They are the anti-artists who prescribe the arena, you asshole! They will lead you to salvation in order to fondle your breast. St. Paul on the road to Damascus, Caravaggio's horse witness is traumatized. He is alone in his internal experience though surrounded by his past of persecution and his future of idolatrous Pauline theology- maybe not his fault, but theory laden work always begets something questionable.

If my Soul had not been created by god equal to himself, then indeed it would wish for nothing more than external beauty, which pleases the eyes; but because this is so deceptive, the soul rises above to beauty's universal form. *Berthold Hub*

His hand slips around me and follows my hip down and over.

THE CHURCH AND THE COW *cult*

I'm interested in how we have those who have a tremendous amount of technical skill- a real gift be it singing, drawing, speaking, physical or sporting capabilities- where those skills overtake creativity. Music is an obvious example of where we know of those whose technical ability is great yet seem to be unable to do anything but exact mimicry, whereas, we see some musicians who can barely sing or play an instrument yet are able to create profound works. Can this be extended to less obvious pursuits and practices, less noble pursuits like that of drug taking or church going? For those who lack technical strength a different type of work is called forth as they cannot rely on an intrinsic skill. When one takes drugs or goes to church there is a great amount of work required to come out with something constructive and creative. For those who don't do the work, they are like the musician who relies totally on their technical ability (I have turned this around, I know)- they are the addict who takes it without adding effort. They are the fundamentalist church goer. Now let us be clear- the addict in many ways is using for reasons of pain and this is valid and has its own set of values in the same way the church goer uses religion for pain relief as well.

The crystal clear vision from the rear pew to the pulpit occurs very rarely in the life of the believer. They are called into existence by the missionary on furlough who speaks of the un-churched. Of course the conversion to be born again- the ones in the center pews are bored again and unwilling to take part in the front or the rear or in a matter of contrived history- neither hot or cold- god spews the lukewarm from his mouth. At the airport, there was a number of years where one was required to walk over a chemically drenched mat in order to disinfect one's shoes to ward off a form of hand, foot, and mouth

disease that was effecting certain farm animals. Hand, foot, and mouth of god from the deep recesses of space.

God then breathes and destroys- or constructs in a manner different than our custom. The desolation of architecture through a different gender- one less established and consistent. The men who build- those who construct with heavy bricks but no fertility gods. Consider the great example of miniature self-portraiture in the *Venus of Willendorf* produced approximately 25000 years ago compared to the 1913 *Fagus Factory* by Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer. Both will appear on the pages of most art history text books. Look at the size and relation to human scale. Is this an absurd comparison? Of course but there are much more interesting realized and unrealized projects by the women and those fluid, non-masculine people who find themselves connected with nature- those left in the village- the curators of the home. At home, left to their own devices buildings are erected that resemble temporary shrines devoted to animal spirits and plant based gods. What do the gods ask of their followers? What of the futurists?

These miniature futurist wonder about a time in the future when humankind finds no purpose in traditionally dominate pursuits like "creating wealth". So, then what? These tiny gods speak in unison: "Praise Ford!". Worship is the pursuit that each individual must find in their own way. They must overcome every overbearing tendency and begin to live along side nature (the children as well) and merely be.

When I think of richness in a text a choice is made weather or not to Romanticize the subject matter and or the text as an object. We want to be correct- superior either by one upping or one downing. It doesn't matter the trauma of the perceived success (good or bad) where one experiences arrested development. I make things in order to move on or to counter the arrested development. "I'm at the beach- too long away from thinking and writing so I wonder where to start. "These people are starved for affection- rejected time and time again, but please understand that you are the common factor here.

Nothing is really a start or beginning so lets refer to heat as the trigger where things like rebirth and hell seem to be connected and flourish.

With the shift in the world's climate the weather that will continue to be the most devastating is heat. Already the vast majority of weather-related deaths are caused by heat. The dramatic events like hurricanes or torrential rain that causes flooding pale in comparison to dull oppressive heat. It's not difficult to understand weather as a manifestation of other things- a misdirection of anger on the part of the earth. It may be a ridiculous way of understanding the earth but when seen in a relational way we can begin to see an outcome as being, or at least analogous to relational aesthetics. In this way heat is a place to ground ourselves in order to wrestle with the above questions.

HELL acid

The reference to hell is numerous and wide ranging. Hell, as referenced in the bible is surprisingly odd, first for its shockingly few references despite its dominant role it has played in the mythological enterprises of religion- for institutional control and the like, and surprisingly odd for some of the meanings that have been lost in translation. Particularly "genna" is translated as the Valley of Tophet, a burning landfill outside of Jerusalem.

To the landfill- the burning rubbish where metal and ceramics are left cleansed for future archaeologists to find which in a sense is a performance of contemporaneity. Hell made visible- heat made manifest, this to is an alchemical action which shifts anger into a different direction, still a misdirection but like in a mishap in translation we can share in a new mythology.

Contemporary art performs in such a way as to both involve itself within a perceived history while individualizing through personal experience. It might be simple enough to say all art is an expression of anger, a cathartic release. For religion hell and heat are expressions of anger. The madness of Bosch's hell gives way to a space full of fascinating bits of horror and fantasy- it is bad but also strangely fanciful, angry, and beautiful which is what makes it richly human.

It is easy to become frustrated with others. The colonists complained bitterly about the lazy island inhabitants and their unproductive ways in the tropic heat. These colonial settlers provided and projected their destructive ideology of the protestant work ethic. A narrative that revolves around hell for enslavement purposes. I suppose it would be easy to subjugate the artist by promising riches. The island's indigenous people were not promised riches and their practices were exploited and destroyed. Maybe in this way the market is able to attempt to commodify the uncontrollable. Culture for example, or mythology in general can be presented in a way as to adhere to a system of power- not adhere, no, subjugate. The demons have their subjects who beach comb at the edge of the lake of fire. Is this a creative act?

FOREST FIRE *acid*

The fine line between destruction and creation is illustrated in forest management. It was once believed responsible to prevent all forest fires at all costs. It soon became evident that in some ecosystems undergrowth was given too much time to thrive. Naturally occurring (more regular fires) would normally prevent such a build up of undergrowth. Now when a fire does eventually start it becomes unstoppable due to the huge amounts of fuel. The fire produces incredible amounts of heat. So much heat that the benefits from a regular burn are no longer reaped. Seeds for example from certain types of trees are utterly destroyed whereas once with cooler fires the heat was able to safely open up the seed for propagation. Also, the undergrowth allows for long periods of smoldering often sending the effects of burning deep into the root system of established trees.

Extreme heat shifts from mere process to a prescriptive force. Maybe forest management as an analogy or example proves the wrong point in that the lower heat in the forest fires breeds new life whereas from a cultural production / art production higher heat crates a critical creative emergence, a singularity maybe. Full heat, real prescriptive heat is total immersion. Contemporary art experience/ production/ practice is just this, though, not to be confused with the necessity of a

total installation experience within a controlled space be it a gallery or other institutional arena. Ilya Kabakov's total installations are indeed successful where ever they are seen but it is hard not to imagine at how much more impact his early work had when he would exhibit in his apartment prior to institutional support. In this latter case the immersion- the full turned on heat was as much about the actual physical context and material work as it was about immersive social / political performance.

Recently an entire small town burned down. Record breaking temperatures combined with severe wind drove unstoppable flames ruthlessly destroying structures and nature. How do we proceed?

...that is what I tried to reproduce in exhibitions- in other words, not just reproducing the object detached from its context...I find it very stimulating because art doesn't appear detached from a context, but is, on the contrary, part of the whole. *Hand Obrist*

BAPTISM *cult*

Missionaries warn the heathen, preaching that without repentance they will not have eternal life. Their message is one of certainty and fear. There are certainly gentle missionaries who emphasize grace and love and there are still others whose message centers around the social gospel. The various practices differ in their approach and ideology. Some baptize and some help develop literacy programs. Many assist in cultural genocide. Consider the baptizers in relation to the immersiveness of art. In fact some christians dismiss traditional catholic infant baptismal practices as meaningless and ineffective and biblically unfounded. The anglican practice of mere sprinkling too also fails to meet the baptismal criteria of many christians (evangelical and baptists to name a few). According to these groups nothing less than full immersion will do. The mimicry of dying to the self (represented by sinking into the water) and the new self rising in christ (represented by the emergence from the water). Here we have the full immersive experience, or at least a desire for one.

All this somehow is ultimately an attempt to ground one's self. Consider the immersive experience in water. We are thrown from wave to wave with our body completely at the whim of the force of the sea- although bearable and at times even enjoyable, there is a point that we seek either some form of anchorage or harbor (both require solid ground). The sea is often said to be angry, a possible misdirected anger, or we are one in the same in the performance. The performative aspect of art is about the search for that ground amidst the immersion. I don't deny the fluidity between all these analogies as it is important to resist concise definitions or stagnate ideas about how or why something is. This is about acknowledging dynamism.

Contemporary art is not problem solving. It relates to problems or it acknowledges, like dynamism or complexity, that there are no problems (Like Duchamp already said). That is to say, problems as we understand them are understood not as particulars nor abstractions but rather as complexities that re-emerge thus shifting from a problem to something else. For example, I often wonder why parenting is annoying. If decontextualized, clearly the problem cannot originate from the natural face-to-face process of the experience, or rather the majority of problems are a reflection of the complex social environment that force certain behavior between parent and child. This behavior increasingly is beyond the human scale which is the cause of the annoyance. The social environment forces stressful unnatural transitions in daily activity that are a reality for most parents. Transitions that are a result of demanding time sensitive schedules. This is about wrestling not problem solving. The desire to become a more rational being is challenged by the act of highlighting any and all potential decisions- isn't this what contributes to our humanness. Instead of asking what the best and most rational decision is we accept what is the most complex and diverse approach. A decision (the presentation of a decision) is merely an indication / manifestation of the depth of relations. It is a mistake to feel compelled to seek an answer, rather it is a call for a personal immersion.

Some might see this as having skin in the game, and it might also look like one is serving a deep connection to a giving interest.

Contemporary art relates to the relief of personal suffering in terms of the importance of a relational activity and the exposure of causes of suffering to others. Production / performance serves as grounding to have a different constructive perspective of one's suffering. A performance requires a degree of focus that helps realize the essential non-essence of situations. It is preparation. A preparation for the ending of suffering (death), or at least to the ending of the part of suffering which we like to or want to hold onto. The part that sits somewhere within our identities and that messes with illusion of essence.

This essence or the illusion of essence is discovered through the process of grounding- a stripping away. As one ages for example, the body deteriorates and we are faced with choices to either attempt to hold onto the youthful illusion or allow for the psychical stripping to take us to the ground- literally the return to dust.

We are charged with silence- judgment has no room to grow or reciprocate. This ability to silence is somehow connected to how effective we are at tying loose ends. Usually a physical operation where by some action (self-control is necessary) is taken to put one's house in order. This is performed for example by not yelling across a room but rather walking to the individual one is try to communicate with. This is relational aesthetics.

"...does not consist so much in injuring and annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves, making them betray not only commitment but their own substance, making them carry out actions that will destroy every possibility for action. *Levinas*

LEVITICUS *cult*

I was told that a commonly held perspective on Leviticus, the third book of the Torah which documents God's instructions to Moses, is primarily about decontamination, particularly about the process of making a place clean in order for a deity to dwell. This is somehow

connected to the heating process- the cleansing of fire or through fire-entropy (heat death). A constant process of decontamination of space through a series of small blood (skin in the game) sacrifices. Maybe these are performances- everyday private or public performances that might range from cleaning to drawing. The traditional evangelical reading of Leviticus, in which forms a dominant narrative (mevangelicalism), understands sacrifice as the cleansing of a person- an individual as opposed to space. How does this change our performances?

Again, as it seems to be always the case, this returns to nature. In this case the emphasis is about color primarily. Blood is a deep naphthol red with a bit of crimson which is very pervasive, slightly translucent (originates from an organic compound and often used in automotive finishing). This red is sprinkled in places and of course sourced by means of animal sacrifice. In many ways the preparation for rest- an eternal rest.

We had summited later in the day than intended. It was difficult to stay on the trail as the cairns became increasingly invisible against the lowering dense clouds. Upon the descent we decided to attempt a quicker route, at least is looked that way. It required a steep climb down into a narrow chute which opened up as it lowered below the treeline. It was tricky to maintain our foothold. Already at this point in the like our legs were tired and we were getting impatient. We forced ourselves to climb backward (the proper way) though every part of us wanted to move quicker by scrambling face out down the rocks. Finally as we began to level out among the scattered trees we came across a beautiful intact skull of a mountain goat. This is the goat that escaped.

The goat carries with it the transgression and iniquities of the people into the wilderness, that is, into an area hidden from others.

Do no place politics on me. Do not place politics on the goat! Let the power ratio shrink finally 1:1 (not the pastor on stage in front of 1000's). The goat is free and is left to wonder. No one takes it for their own purpose. It has become untouchable. Where the goat ends up is a

surprise for everyone. (Punctum: a feature of an image that seems to produce or convey meaning without involving any recognizable symbolic image). The goat will hide in among some bushes or in some shadows. It is difficult not to mention the importance of the tension that this shadow causes. This freed goat- this scapegoat hides from danger and the sun. (shadow work)

What lies in the shadow?

Mosquitoes- they suck blood and spread disease

Spiders make traps for other traveling insects (they can kill at a distance)

Nests- birds hide from predators (animals that make buildings)

Snow from the previous winter- slow to melt- ancient waters and gases.

Snakes have the nests in the shadow but sun themselves in the open

Mushroom sometimes grow in the shade

This shadowy place is somewhere in a valley. It is in a valley on the side of a mountain because it allows for the long maintenance of deep snow. It exists all summer with a trickling steam passing beneath. A snow bridge can be unstable for hikers and collapse. At this altitude there are no snakes. In Morocco in the foothills of the Atlas mountains a large snake had lodged itself under one of the small sheds that stores play equipment for the orphans. Apparently there is an altitude at which poisonous snakes do not exist. The orphanage was at this altitude. The snake was in the dark under the shed.

OCULTANY *acid*

The famous etching of Goya's 1799 *The Sleep of Reason Produces monsters* is not the resting snake under the shed nor is it the prostrate charismatic modern man who falls before the altar in some megachurch. It might be the misunderstood laziness thought by the settler colonialists- a projected scapegoat of the settlers. The snake who eats dust is a part of who we ought to be- both existing in the sun and shade- a cold blooded reptile.

Consider a character from a Graham Green novel (Though I have read all his books, I have a poor ability to remember specifics so the characters blend together as one.) The character is a middle aged white British man who is stationed in some colonial town on some tropical island. He is washed up and in many ways has been forgotten by his country but somehow maintains a reasonable stable presence in a small foreign office, a barely functional office who is haunted by locals. He gets along well with the locals and has delicate relations with the government- power is somehow juggled. His intimate relationships consist of a colleague who is less than likely to stay and a number of loose sexually charged exploitative relationships with local younger women. In many ways it is a typical picture and of course there are deeper story lines of varying degrees that also deserve a good amount of criticism. There is a sense of lazy sleepy religion that is offset by a tropic heat that can only be settled by moonlit drinking. I cannot recall if there are snakes in any of his stories but I think there are one or two. I don't think there really is much dreaming either. The man in Green's novel does sleep well- most likely late at night into the late morning but they are not restful sleeps and dreamless otherwise there might not be a story at all. So what do we beget? I am a lazy tourist who sits on the beach. I have dreams of the bodies in front of me. I project and devour beauty, I idealize the tropics, the hot cafes with the regular but tasty sweets.

An exhibit: (unrealized)

A BUILT ROOM (sterile) within a room where the tattoo artist creates drawings/ tattoos on collector's bodies. The reference being the displayed surrounding drawings, however, an agreement is reached to perform the tattoo freehand. The room allows for the artist to sit with the receiver who lies down. The receiver is a participant- a different mode of sociality.

There is a shamanic connection.

A therapeutic approach with no commodity that gives additional context to the drawings.

I recall a sculpture conference I attended many years ago as a student. The inaugural speaker was Eduardo Chillida. He spoke with a beautiful strong Spanish accent. He was quite old at the time and I managed to have my picture with him. I used my father's old Rollei 35 (designed by Heinz Waaske). Another photo, not mine, emerged in the following edition of *Sculpture Magazine* which had sponsored the conference (emphasis on formalism), where I could be seen sitting in the crowd- I was very proud to see my face published! David Hickey, the critic (*Air Guitar: Essays on Art and Democracy*) also presented a talk where he spoke about the vanishing imagination of our young. He made a claim that some of the recent mass shootings were partly due to the lack of imagination of the teenage shooters. They were unable to imagine the tragic outcome of their actions. Oddly enough it was this speech where I first comprehended the term "rapacious capitalism". I had probably heard the term before but for whatever reason it stuck with me in that moment. I was reminded of the term again when anti-vaxers began comparing the various COVID vaccination programs to Nazi Germany and the Holocaust where the mandatory Yellow star for the Jews is akin to vaccination passports.

To see other periods as mirrors of our own is to turn history into narcissism; to see other styles as open to our own is to turn history into a dream. *Hal Foster*

In both cases the comparison / analogy / terminology is wildly different. Although unregulated capitalism may have its destructive tendencies it certainly is not what an individual experiences during or after rape. In the same way the comparison of vaccination to the Holocaust is utterly insane on too many levels to discuss. Both analogies are insulting and destroy the real value and significance of the lessons we can potentially learn from both the Holocaust and rape. Among the worst errors we can make is to politicize the tragedy and suffering of individuals.

To shiver- Kuru, a disease found particularly in New Guinea among the Fore people. A neurological illness related to cannibalizing corpses. There was a strange number of Christian missionaries returning from New Guinea during late 1980's. They spoke of this dark place to the western churches. Slides were shared that pictured "primitive" tribes within their various cultural contexts. Kuru was believed to be a

manifestation and indication of the extreme sin and demonic world many of these people lived in. To a child in the midst of puberty a bizarre psychological connection was made between masturbation and cannibalism. Somehow the exploration of the self was connected to the eating of the self and Kuru became an actual concern to a 13 year old living in the Canadian Prairies.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) which is caused by eating infected meat is a comparable disease which created a serious threat to the production and sales of meat in North America. It was referred to as Mad Cow disease. It isn't difficult to imagine the madness of shivering, the ceremonial consumption of human flesh, and the act of masturbation all happening in the shadows.

Each of our journeys takes work to explore the shadow while grounding ourselves in order to focus on the task. I have seen many times someone who is high living on the street attempting to make order around them. It is common for the obsessive reorganizing of one's things be it the contents of a purse or the contents of cart, whatever it is there is a need for organization though the process seem pointless and fruitless. The shadows are deep and complex for all of us.

What thing is art and how is it present? Priests throughout various epochs have inquired in order to project heresy. The heretics were then placed onto the pyre and their property was confiscated and appropriated for the institution (the inquisition). Not always this case and certainly not always as clearly managed. Maybe there is an inquiry into what art is in order to find the heretic. Not really a true search, rather a theatrical procedure in order to commodify. A burning. A burnt offering. A sacrifice to cleanse the white cube or black space.

This, then, is the crucial issue that faces both art and criticism today; how to retain (or restore) a radicality to art without a new foreclosure or dogmatism. *Hal Foster*

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Theirry De Duve, October 125 p15

Colophon

This limited edition copy of CULT URIC ACID has been designed and hand bound by Leslie Drisdale for the exhibition CULT URIC ACID at Herringer Kiss Gallery, Calgary, May 2022. The book structure is a Tu-Mouche binding, developed by binder Benjamin Elbel. The inside text paper is Zerkall text vellum. The cover paper is zaanchbord from the De Schoolmeester paper mill in Westzaan, Netherlands. This mill has been producing paper since 1692 and continues to make paper using original methods. Printing of this edition was done by Resolve Photographic Services, Calgary.

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