lies and the sound of flutes and horns

a game of who said what, when, and where

the shadowy sphere of the private art market

102 110 136 178
The narrative of failed romance cannot rely on specious evidence alone. at an hour for illicit activity and for those not bound by the bore of a workweek from relative obscurity to monumental status

the highest price ever paid

Monstrosity was not the only epithet assigned
Why would I want that to be a Jewish space, or a Catholic space, or a Muslim space?
For although you reek, I enjoy listening to you.

This is today, and it will be something else tomorrow.

city hall.
impossible to fight

They figured it would be
part of a
world
imaginary

Speculations, Activism, and Possible Futures
While working on issue 43, a search for local scandal brought us to the MIT Institute Archives and the “Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom.” Contained in nineteen records boxes and some 587 folders were the remnants of a desktop activism movement against the commercial development of high-speed air travel. Founded in 1967 by W. Shurcliff and J. Edsall with the rise of supersonic flight, the League aggressively campaigned against the “shattering” sonic shockwaves produced by the new form of transport. A June advertisement in the New York Times warned, “In about five minutes time a single SST could boom everyone on Long Island—all 5,000,000 people, all animals, all schools, all hospitals.” Soon-to-be affected regions were visualized in diagrams and maps—one for each of the fifty United States—depicting the “boom zone” in a crisscrossing moiré of flight paths superimposed over the nation.

Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom sought to “change public policy through public outrage.” The archive’s collection of letters, news clippings, photographs, and fact sheets comprise the arsenal from which the group deployed scandal as political tactic. Yet beyond the temporal spike in headlines, the archive spoke to a legacy of murmurs: individuals’ responses to the League’s campaign attest to the broader history of the cultural movement. Personal correspondences paint a backdrop of the early seventies: the role of agencies and lobbyists, the growing power of civic disobedience, resistance to new tech-
nology. In these papers we saw a collective response to scandal that was just as revealing, if not more so, as the central issue at stake.

You’ll find the selected content for this issue of Thresholds is intended to ply and complicate the disruptive event rather than appropriate its shock value. Our contributors sort through the aftermath of architecture, art, and cultural scandals, provoking consideration not just of splashy headlines—outrageous one moment and then gone the next—but also our collective reactions and their implications.

In the bygone print newspaper, “above the fold” referred to what could be seen on the top half of a broadsheet: headlines, catchy hooks, and key images. We’ve introduced this model in our journal’s organization: texts and projects are previewed in the first half and then conclude in the second half. We hope this provokes unexpected adjacencies between contributions while also paying tribute to the original scandalous tabloid. In addition to a traditional table of contents located in the front matter, destination pages wrap the journal and offer an alternate means of navigation based on theme. Destination pages group and regroup content into: “Media and Historiography,” “Faith and Religion,” “Speculations, Activism and Possible Futures,” “Identity and the City,” and “Power, Government and Surveillance.”

In a 1967 letter to the Citizens League on the effects of sonic boom, Jean Martinon, then director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, asked: “Where will mankind find a rest to its constant and ever faster moving agitation?” While the League and its peers in other nations were ultimately successful, responsible in part for bans passed against commercial supersonic air travel in the US and Western Europe, Martinon’s question seems to speak also to a larger concern. Was he referring to the literal act of acceleration—the desire for ever-faster transport? Or instead to the League’s use of tactical “agitation”: the leveraging of social friction and performative disruption in the age of civic protests? Perhaps the issue of sonic pollution represented the fascination of humanity itself with scandal, newness, and friction. Today, as the League’s tactics have become commonplace and shocking headlines proliferate, those of Martinon’s persuasion wonder: is self-anaesthetization against the outside world the only solution? If a collective response to scandal shapes and reflects the historical moment, Thresholds issue 43 also hopes to ask what our growing de-sensitization says about our current condition.

—Nathan and Ann
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Thresholds

Scandalous
In his 1931 monograph on Adolf Loos, Heinrich Kulka wrote that “the history of the Michaelerplatz building was the story of the painful birth of the modern style,” describing the architect as a martyr for the modernist cause: “the man, who bled for it, who was nearly tortured to death by a pack of philistines both outside and within the architectural profession, made it possible, through his heroic perseverance against a whole nation, to enable us to build as we build now.” This text — written when the architect was still alive — exemplifies the theatrical tone of the Loosian historiography. The tone reflects both the type of discourse that emerged in Vienna at the turn of the century and the narrative that Loos himself promoted — a narrative based on the dramatization of the architect’s role. In the extensive body of historical work on this subject, the production of Loos’s architecture is narrated as a theatrical play: a *mise-en-scène* in which the architect is a character.

The theatricalization of Loos’s work must be understood in the context of the transformations that took place in fin-de-siècle Vienna. This is the period in which Vienna’s emergence as a cosmopolitan city — the emblem of which was the new Ringstrasse — triggered massive growth in the theatre sector. Between Loos’s birth in 1870 and the explosion of the Michaelerplatz controversy, Vienna saw the construction of a multitude of new theatres. Along with the Hopofer and Burgtheater — the theatres of the court and the aristocracy on the Ringstrasse — numerous private theatres emerged, opening their doors to a bourgeois and middle-class audience. The new stages were influenced by the so-called suburban theatres of the Biedermeier period: Carltheater, Theater in der Josefstadt and Theater an der Wien. These theatres provided an artistic home for playwrights such as Johann Nestroy and Ferdinand Raimund, composers such as Johann Strauss and Franz Lehár, and actresses such as Eleonora Duse and Sarah Bernhardt. Moreover, a number of theatres dedicated to cabaret started to appear: the Jewish venue of the Budapest Orpheumgesellschaft was established in 1890; the Kabarett Nachlicht operated between 1906 and 1907; and the legendary Kabarett Fledermaus, named after Strauss’s operetta, became the center of Vienna’s artistic scene from 1907 to 1913 (Fig. 1). Loos, along with his friends and collaborators Karl Kraus and Peter Altenberg, was a regular guest, designer, chronicler of the period.

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1 I would like to thank Michael Osman for taking the time to discuss this article with me and Lisa Fetchko for helping me in the editing process.


4 In the second half of the nineteenth century, a multitude of theatres opened in Vienna: Harmonietheater (1865), Stadttheater (1870), Ringtheater (1874), Volkstheater (1889), Raimundtheater (1893), Volksoper (1898) and Landstrasser Burgertheater (1905), among others.

5 Carltheater, Theater in der Josefstadt and Theater an der Wien are known as suburban theatres because they are located in three suburban districts of Vienna: Leopoldstadt, Josefstadt and Mariahilf.
and reviewer in these venues. As noted by Käthe Springer, the most influential actors in the "applied arts cabaret" were the designers, those responsible for the sets, the costumes, the direction and frequently the overall concept.⁶

The important role that theatrics came to play in Vienna reflected the social and political transformations that agitated the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. The revolutionary movements that overturned Prince Metternich's regime in 1848 brought about a number of liberal reforms: new parliaments held elections with broad franchise to create constituent assemblies in numerous regions of the Empire and new freedoms — including freedom of association and freedom of the press — were introduced. Even though the uprising did not have a successful ending, the social and political tensions erupted in the events of 1848 forced the central government to accept increasingly open forms of public debate. Theatre became a crucial space in this post-revolutionary period, as it gave voice to these latent tensions and helped the masses to access the stage of public life.

One of the most significant innovations brought about by the boom in the theatre sector was the introduction of a heterogeneous group of genres: operetta,

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cabaret, pantomime, vaudeville and comic opera, among others. Some of them originated in Vienna, while others were imported from foreign cities, such as Paris and Venice (commedia dell’arte). Unlike the genres hosted in the aristocratic venues, these performances were accessible — both intellectually and financially — to a broad audience and allowed for a new participatory form of theatre: spectators were expected to react to the performance, manifest their emotions, sing along with certain parts of the music or shout out phrases to the performers. The involvement of the audience often reached extreme levels. For example, at the premiere of Eine Wohnung ist zu Vermieten at the Theater an der Wien, the audience reacted antagonistically to Johann Nestroy’s social satire: the crowd tried to sabotage the event with an aggressive action of whistling and stamping, leading to a major theatre scandal. Many plays enacted in the Viennese theatres of the time were based on stories designed to raise controversy and to provoke strong reactions in the audience. Playwrights and actors wanted to address scandalous themes in order to engage and stimulate the crowd and — at the same time — the audience wanted to be provoked and involved in the action: a new scandal genre was being created. The participation of the audience assumed the status of theatrical performance, transforming the spectators into actors capable of influencing what was happening on stage. The political and social tensions that the Imperial government tried to repress in the city could be expressed and performed in the theatre, allowing those who were excluded from the public debate to make their voices heard.

The narrative and dialogic modes tested in these theatrical settings rapidly infiltrated a number of different fields, influencing the modes of public interaction between citizens. Loos’s interest in the theatre world, along with his collaboration with several Viennese theatres and cabarets, leads us to believe that he was very familiar with these principles. By virtue of his involvement in this world, Loos managed to transfer the language of theatre into the realm of architecture, allowing for the development of a broad public debate on architecture. The infiltration of theatrical modes into Loos’s work manifested itself very clearly in the controversy over the Michaelerplatz house. Located in front of the Imperial palace, in the heart of the city, Loos’s building sparked a major scandal because of its bare design and its rejection of the traditional ornaments. The architect, the clients (the tailors Goldman and Aufricht), the municipal authorities, the press and the Viennese citizens engaged in a harsh, two-year-long discussion over the design of this building, fuelling a heated controversy.  

The Michaelerplatz scandal, however, was not unprecedented in Vienna. The first precedent was the Hopofer, the Imperial opera house built on the Ringstrasse in 1869. The building was critiqued so harshly by the public that the lead architect Eduard van der Nüll hung himself, while his partner August von Sicardsburg died few weeks later under mysterious circumstances. Evidently, what interests us is not the mystery of the architect’s death, but rather the way in which the entire story was constructed and handed down to subsequent generations. The important point is the dramatization of the narrative that accompanies the production of architecture. A similar narrative was used in the controversies sparked by two other projects that preceded the Michaelerplatz house: Joseph Maria Olbrich’s Secession building (1898) and Otto Wagner’s Karlsplatz museum (1900). These examples show

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8 The reflections on the Michaelerplatz house that I present in this article rely on a consolidated body of historical research. Christopher Long’s research on Loos and the Michaelerplatz house, published in The Looshaus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), has been a particularly important source of historical data.

9 Nicholas Parsons, Vienna: A Cultural History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 209. In the late 1860s, the project for the Hopofer became the target of a polemical press campaign. The controversy escalated when the Emperor himself criticized the design of the opera house at the opening ceremony of the building. Deeply troubled by this criticism, Eduard van der Nüll committed suicide. His partner August von Sicardsburg died nearly ten weeks later, diagnosed with tuberculosis.

that, at the turn of the century, architecture was beginning to be conceived as a performance subject to public debate and exposed to a broad critical audience. The novelty did not lay in the theatricalization of architecture itself — which is an old *topos* — but rather in the theatricalization of the process that leads to the creation of architecture. Not only architecture was conceived in performative terms, but also the public debate and the narrative that accompany the design and building process took up a theatrical tone. The performativity of this architecture was not expressed through the staging of formal elements (as Baroque architects used to do), but rather through the staging of a collective dialogue on the production of architecture.

The theatricalization of architecture, along with the opening of the architectural debate to a mass audience, was deeply related to another phenomenon: the growth of the print media. Two main transformations allowed for the rise of the print media in the second half of the nineteenth century: on the one hand, the emergence of a broad bourgeoisie expanded the section of the Viennese population that could read and, therefore, access the press; on the other hand, the 1848 political upheavals forced the Emperor to loosen his repressive control over the press, allowing for the development of a dynamic and relatively free media landscape. Magazines and newspapers played a crucial role in the development of a public discussion about the performance of architecture. Loos was not out of place in the world of media: on the contrary, he had plenty of experience and knew how to deal with the press. When he started the Michaelerplatz project in 1909, he was known mainly for his work as a writer and journalist. In fact, after he returned from his American travel in the mid-1890s, he attracted notice for his articles and reviews in a number of Viennese newspapers. Because of a lack of commissions, in this initial phase of his career Loos took a step back from the architectural profession and focused on writing. In a 1902 autobiographical essay, he described himself as a “writer on art.”

Therefore, it is not surprising that Loos’s closest friends at the time were writers, not architects. Two figures were particularly important to him: Peter Altenberg — writer, poet and founder of the cultural review *Kunst* — and Karl Kraus — writer, director, actor and founder of the remarkably popular magazine *Die Fackel*. The friendship with Altenberg and Kraus, along with the frequentation of the most vibrant literary coffeehouses, pushed Loos to assume an active role in Vienna’s rich media landscape. With the financial support of the tailors Goldman and Aufricht (the clients of the Michaelerplatz project), Loos founded the magazine *Das Andere* in 1903. Published as a supplement to Altenberg’s review, *Das Andere* lasted only one year, but had an important role in establishing Loos’s position in the world of the Viennese print media.

Hence, when the project for the Michaelerplatz building began, the press provided the platform on which the theatrical plot of the public controversy could unfold. Which characters took part in this play? In Loos’s narrative, the protagonist was the architect, the solitary builder-hero in constant battle with a legion of opponents — from the municipal authorities to the architectural critics. Loos’s heroic status was accentuated by the physical pain that he endured during the construction process of the Michaelerplatz house. According to the historical narrative, in the summer of 1911 — weakened by the stress of the controversy — he experienced a severe ulcer attack. Loos’s sickness was widely publicized by his supporters, who blamed the ulcer attack on the municipal authorities and on those who criticized the project. Loos’s friends went to great lengths to emphasize the Michelangelesque suffering of the hero, who had sacrificed his health for his artistic creation. Loos told the press that he was “losing blood by the liter.” Kraus reported that the architect was “very sick.” Kulka wrote that he was “close to suicide.” Kokoschka accused the Viennese authorities of “forcing an artist

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15 Karl Kraus, Letter to Hearwarth Walden, September 1911. Translated by Christopher Long in *The Looshaus*.
onto his sickbed." Walden complained about this "unprecedented oppression of an artist." In the dramatization of Loos's illness, we see a clear example of both the influence that the theatre world exerted on the Michaelerplatz story and the role that the print media played in fuelling the controversy. The figure of the suffering hero — alone against institutions of political and cultural power — was a typical character on the Viennese stages of the turn of the century.

The nemesis of the architect-hero was the city council, the powerhouse of the municipal government. In fact, as soon as the scaffoldings of the Michaelerplatz building were removed, the city council cried scandal and decided to suspend the building permit. Representative Karl Rykl demanded that the permit for what he called a "monstrosity of a building" (scheusal von einem wohnhaus) be delayed until the façade was redesigned according to the Viennese traditional style. Shortly after, representative Hans Schneider did a sketch over Loos's elevation, requesting a set of revisions for the façade. At the beginning of the controversy, the position of the municipal authorities was strongly supported by the press: the tabloid Die Neue Zeitung, for example, published an article which demanded "most energetically that the building office put an end to such work, before the whole city is shot to hell." Such a bold, polemic tone was not unusual in the print media of fin-de-siècle Vienna: a style of journalism based on a satirical attitude and a spectacularly aggressive criticism was emerging and most writers (Loos included) were attracted by it.

In the narrative that accompanies the historiography of the Michaelerplatz controversy, Loos is not the only figure performing as a theatrical character: the members of the city council, for example, seem to be taken directly from a theatrical play. The leader of the council, Major Karl Lueger, was an old, nearly blind man: his blindness prevented him from seeing the

17 Oskar Kokoschka, Letter to Hearwarth Walden, July 1911. Translated by Christopher Long in The Looshaus.


20 "Die Mistkiste am Michaelerplatz." Die Neue Zeitung, December 7, 1910. Translated by Christopher Long in The Looshaus.


22 Long, Ti

23 Adolf Loos, Morgen, translated by Christopher Long in The Looshaus.


26 In fact, the controversy of something that exploded the building as the motto of controversy, Loos's hero of a building" as the motto at the end of 1911. In his closing words, with the motto printed on the stage at the end of the play, was not unusual in the print media of fin-de-siècle Vienna: a style of journalism based on a satirical attitude and a spectacularly aggressive criticism was emerging and most writers (Loos included) were attracted by it.

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What appears so striking in retrospect about the French artist Yves Klein’s legendary Parisian debut performance of the Anthropometries in 1960 is how disparate were its shortly successive waves of reception—and not without cause. The event was designed by Klein: to appeal to the beau monde invited; to expose the conceits of art world that this beau monde patronized; and to introduce Klein and his artistic project to a much larger audience. Only the art world was genuinely scandalized in the aftermath of the debut, refusing to recognize what Klein had created as art: Georges Mathieu, then the leading young French painter, dismissed it as “comportement,” while the art critic Claude Rivière viewed it as “d’éléments d’exhibition annexes à l’art.”

Likewise, over the course of the next year, Klein would most often serve in the mass media as self-evident proof of the modern artist’s depravity, which, it is worth emphasizing at the start, did not dissuade Klein from pursuing a project in late 1960 with Alain Bernardin, the king of Parisian striptease. Even more, such a project arguably appeared as a logical next step, given Klein’s ongoing interests and that the debut itself had featured three naked young women, sponging themselves with paint and, under Klein’s direction, pressing their wet, colored bodies against white paper supports. Although there would be neither stripping nor teasing at the debut, Klein deliberately invoked this contemporary fashion otherwise. Popular culture, especially its supposedly most vulgar varieties, had long provided modern artists with inherently contentious source material and the means with which to challenge the dominant conventions and institutions of art. In contrast to the art world and the larger public, the beau monde applauded this debut performance as “l’art,” viewing it as scandal in the tradition of the historic avant-garde. “Yves Klein est un des rares contemporains,” wrote a journalist, delivering the verdict of the social set in the mainstream weekly magazine L’Express: “capables de concevoir un ‘scandale’ digne de la belle époque surréaliste, et de réussir son exécution, alors que Mathieu, avec ou sans jabot de dentelle, Dalí, avec ou sans rhinocéros, s’essoufflent à vouloir estomacer avec une pareille ‘force de frappe’.”

The French fin-de-siècle expression “succès de scandale” in 1960

4 As Klein wrote in a manifesto of 1960: “I shout it out very loudly: ‘KITSCH, THE CORNY, BAD TASTE.’ This is a new notion in ART. While we’re at it, let’s forget ART altogether!” Yves Klein, “Truth becomes reality,” in Klein, Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein, trans. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, Conn: Spring Publications, 2007), 189.
contains the beginnings of an explanation for the divergence of opinion that still structures the interpretation of Klein. Was Klein guilty, as Hal Foster has written, of turning “Dadaist provocation” into “bourgeois spectacle”?

As it denotes in a single phrase both artwork and reception, the term “sucée de scandale” emphasizes the profoundly social character of modern art. It has particular relevance to performance, in which people encounter art as a select group. In 1960, when the Anthropométries debuted, there was no medium by the name of performance within modern art. However, during the early postwar period, several long- and short-term factors had conspired to pressure modern artists, who were engaged in the fine arts, to effectively become performing artists; indeed, the adaptability of large-scale gestural abstraction to dramatic presentations of painting for the camera can largely account for this French and American period style’s success.

Formally entitled “Anthropométries de l’Époque bleue” (Anthropométries of the Blue Period), Klein’s debut would parody the modern male artistic subjectivity, descending from Picasso, in which artistic virtuosity was demonstrated, increasingly ostentatiously during the postwar period, through physical virility. Depending upon much older, gendered stereotypes of artistic production, this male quality-cum-force would be emphasized in contrasts with its apparent opposite: namely, the gentle, obliging, maléable bodies of women, whether mimetically depicted or more indirectly invoked. Klein’s Blue Period was, of course, a mockery of Picasso’s famous, early, near monochromatic, Klein’s ecstatic version not only recast Picasso’s bohemian origin story of icon painting and thus reveal contemporary art as idolatrous; the debut would be a proto-Conceptual, iconoclast.

When faced, as other modern artists of the postwar period, with the pressure of becoming a performing artist, Klein turned, as Picasso and Dalí did, to the drama of the camera and the mise en scène to exceed the limitations of the easel. As director of the Galerie internationale d’art contemporain, in which the more senior artists were taking to a new, almost caricature, style’s success.

At the same time, moreover, such performances of painting featured the young, slim, chic French painter excitingly squeezing tube after tube of paint directly onto the canvas in repeated explosions, whose ferocity simulated orgasm, a metaphor that Mathieu had employed as early as 1948 to describe painting as the transcendental experience of release, of losing control, for this French and American period style. The second would be the true scandal of the debut: Klein would dramatize the early Christian origin story of icon painting, using it as a metaphor for painting, Pollock as a Western or Native American shaman, and Mathieu as a French medieval knight, painting with brushes as long as swords, both remained beholden to these metaphors. For Klein, as for others, during the mid to late 1950s, Mathieu initially served as a model; an early alliance, however, as Klein adapted Mathieu’smodel and challenged his supremacy, developed into a major rivalry, Mathieu and Klein becoming each other’s primary targets.

This competition made Klein’s personal invitation of Mathieu to the debut performance of the Anthropométries the more significant, a debut, furthermore, that would be taking place at the very gallery, the Galerie internationale d’art contemporain, in which the more senior artist was regularly exhibiting and with which he was very much identified.
That members of the media and patrons of the gallery constituted the majority of the guests only raised the stakes of what would emerge as a decisive showdown. For his part, Mathieu took care to advertise his invitation in an article published on the morning of the event in the art-world’s main newspaper, Arts, making sure also to spoil the surprise of that evening’s program, featuring, as Mathieu revealed: “Des femmes nues trempées dans le bleu, projetées savamment contre les murs.” Mathieu would fail, humiliatingly, in his attempt to publicly expose “cet enfant terrible, le jeune Klein,” as Mathieu referred to Klein, losing that night’s artistic and verbal jousts by all accounts.

Pure, mere parody, however, or the entertainment of watching an art star fall would not have persuaded the special social set invited to the debut of Klein’s significance. What deep existential need did the debut performance of the Anthropometries fulfill? Or, how did Klein suspend disbelief, managing to convince a sophisticated, socially self-conscious audience of nearly a hundred people that the three naked young women before them were “living paintbrushes”? The answer will lead us to the original ancient and Biblical meaning of scandal as the incitement of others to sin.

In anticipation, we may recall that in 1960, before performance existed as a fine-art medium, it appeared most often and distinctively within entertainment and religion, two structurally opposed cultural spheres.

Klein intensified this dichotomy in the debut, pairing their characteristic components so systematically, that their interdependence and, ultimately, their identity were revealed. It is, in the final analysis, crucial that the debut performance of the Anthropometries constituted both a succès de scandale and scandal in the original etymological sense of irrereligious, for these two types of scandal, separated by thousands of years of culture, could not in principle be more disparate: the former symptomatic of the contorted, adversarial logic of modernism, in which offense is enjoyed and rewarded, while the latter, between its Hebrew, Christian and Greek uses, describes an irresponsible, malicious or even cruel act that is dangerous, because it can potentially lead an entire community astray, away from the true religion.

The debut could accurately be called a succès de scandale, in that it was undoubtedly through the work’s scandalous character that Klein achieved fame. But, the expression also contains the implication—which is in this case misleading—that the work in question lacks inherent artistic merit or significance. In spite of the facts that both the critical and popular scandal that the Anthropometries generated ensured Klein’s success and that, especially after his premature death at age 34, much serious scholarly attention has been paid to Klein, the nature and value of his artistic achievement is still a subject of debate within art history.

10 Mathieu, “Le Bloc-Notes de Georges Mathieu,” 2. According to Annette Kahn, Mathieu, as the hosting gallery’s most important artist, had approved of the event and even been invited to an informal rehearsal held two days before the debut, at which Mathieu reserved the right to respond in the discussion that would follow the performance. For a fascinating account, based on interviews of the specific conversations that took place in the organization of this event, see Kahn, Yves Klein: Le Maître du bleu (Paris: Editions Stock, 2000), 283–286. Kahn also reports that after the debut Mathieu forced the gallery’s director to choose between him and Klein. The article that Mathieu wrote and published in Arts certainly confirms that Mathieu knew the program’s content beforehand. That, if faced with such an ultimatum, the galleryist chose Mathieu can be evidenced by the fact that Mathieu soon had another exhibition at the gallery, while Klein never showed at it again. In my interview with Rotraut Klein-Moquay, who was present at the rehearsal, Ms. Klein-Moquay could not recall if Mathieu had come to the rehearsal but did not believe so. Interview of Rotraut Klein-Moquay conducted by the author in Paris on June 16, 2011.


12 Klein’s interest in religion was not exceptional during this period. On both sides of the Atlantic, there was a religious revival, including in modern art, for instance, in the chromatic abstraction of Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, whose works parallel Klein’s monochromes in many ways.

13 Thomas McEvilley has brilliantly documented Klein’s Catholic upbringing and epiphany upon his discovery of Rosicrucianism. See McEvilley, Yves the Provocateur: Yves Klein and Twentieth-Century Art (Kington, N. Y.: McPherson & Co, 2010). Critics of Klein have long derided the debut’s salacious nature. Here, I argue that it was necessarily linked to its sacred aspect.


Klein would produce a jarring combination of exactly the kind of distinct class-specific activities, in which such an audience would have been engaged on any other late night of the week. One of the strategies of Klein’s defenders has been to attribute the organization of the Anthropometries to either the art critic Pierre Restany or to the owner and director of the gallery, Comte Maurice d’Arquian. It is a tactic that has been employed in Klein studies in general to outwardly resolve the aspects of his person and work that appear most problematic from the contemporary perspective, including notably his right-wing politics and his showmanship. 17 While Restany helped to compose the text of the event’s invitations and introduced the debate following the performance, and while d’Arquian did host the event itself in his exhibition space, lending also his gravitas, this shifting of credit or blame only diminishes and obscures Klein’s project and achievement, starting with the artful mise-en-scène, which was both deliberately theatrical and churchly. Expressly denying that such work was motivated by the desire for publicity, Klein insisted, in an interview conducted by Restany in 1961, that he arranged every detail of his exhibitions in an effort to create an environment for the serious contemplation and discussion of his art. 18 To disavow Klein’s showmanship is thus to refuse his project as he saw it, as well as his crucial role in a larger historical phenomenon. At the debut, Klein catered to the contemporary interests of his mondaine audience in mysticism and striptease. It should be no surprise that the only previous version of Klein’s Anthropometries was performed two years earlier in the home of Robert Godet, Klein’s mentor and also a mystic, or that Klein would later that year enter into discussions about a project with the French importer of American striptease, Bernardin, the creator of the famed, chic Crazy Horse Saloon. 19 The common pursuits of the basest physical pleasure and loftiest spiritual awakening bonded the beau monde and differentiated it from the ascetic, intellectual middle-class—for whom entertainment was bread and circuses, and religion the opiate of the masses.

Given recent art-historical debates about Klein’s personal character and artistic intentions, it is important to note that Klein himself was not seduced or overcome by what is currently called, following its Situationist conception, spectacle:

19 “César, Duchamp et les visions d’art,” Arts, Dec. 7, 1960, Press Albums of the Yves Klein Archives. Klein would be creating a project for Bernardin’s new nightclub. For more information, see work cited in footnote 6. The Crazy Horse Saloon was so chic that even Mathieu wrote an homage to Bernardin. Mathieu, “Alain Bernardin: Prince de l’imaginaire,” Désormais sans…”

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23 The Situationist conception of the emergent threat to it, or a potential material. Describing his personal epiphany in retrospect, Klein wrote in 1960: “Painting is no more a function of the eye. My works are only the ashes of my art.” 24

Klein did not frequent nightclubs (if personal preferences and habits can be submitted as evidence), and it was likely Klein’s former gallerist, Iris Clert, who suggested the collaboration with Bernardin, when Klein was seeking such a contact. 20 As Clert explained, “Klein n’était pas mondain, il ne connaissait rien de tout ça.” 21 Nonetheless, nor was Klein attempting to systematically decipher and undermine such popular entertainment, as Roland Barthes, for instance, in his famous essay on striptease, which was first published in 1955, and in his cultural criticism in general. 22 Instead of feeling compelled to either celebrate or critique popular culture, to take, that is, a position either for or against, Klein regarded popular culture, without compunctions, without concerns, as an obvious, preexisting resource for modern art—rather than an emergent threat to it.
Uncompromising Reasons for Going West:

A Story of Sex and Real Estate,

“I have decided to speak up.”
Such is the threshold between a private affair and a public scandal: one person speaks. These are also the opening lines to “The Threat to the Next America,” which appears in the April 1953 issue of House Beautiful. Penned by editor Elizabeth Gordon, the article describes an unnamed, but “highly intelligent, now disillusioned, woman who spent more than $70,000 building a one-room house that is nothing but a glass cage on stilts.”

Gordon warns readers of a design movement sweeping the nation:

Something is rotten in the state of design—and it is spoiling some of our best efforts in modern living. After watching it for several years, after meeting it with silence, House Beautiful has decided to speak out and appeal to your common sense, because it is common sense that is mostly under attack. Two ways of life stretch before us. One leads to the richness of variety, to comfort and beauty. The other, the one we want fully to expose to you, retreats to poverty and unlivability. Worst of all, it contains the threat of cultural dictatorship.

1 Elizabeth Gordon, “The Threat to the Next America,” House Beautiful 95 (April 1953), 129.
2 Ibid., 127.
The subject of her article is the Farnsworth House, designed by Mies van der Rohe for Dr. Edith Farnsworth in rural Plano, Illinois (1946–51). Though Farnsworth is not named here, this article contains statements and concerns that Farnsworth would share with media outlets while a legal dispute between her and Mies played out in a “steamy little courtroom” in Yorkville, Illinois. Mies sued Farnsworth for an outstanding construction cost of $3,673.09, in addition to fees of $15,000 and $12,000 for architect’s and supervisory services—regardless of the fact that there was no contract between the two that would have upheld the cost of fees. Farnsworth countersued on the basis of fraud, claiming that the architect had misrepresented the cost of the house to her, as well as his abilities as an architect, and demanded he return $33,872.10, the amount she had paid above the original estimate. Her interviews with *House Beautiful* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* were well-timed to this end, their gripping headlines suggestive of an exposé—“Charges Famed Architect with Fraud, Deceit,” and, as framed by *Newsweek*, “Glass House Stones.”

In an article entitled “Report on the Battle between Good and Bad Modern Houses” in the following issue of *House Beautiful* (May 1953), Joseph A. Barry foregrounds a conversation with Farnsworth with a simple and provocative question: “How about the ‘individual human being’ in question? How about Dr. Farnsworth herself on the subject of her own house?” Farnsworth answers clearly: “Do I feel implacable calm?...The truth is that in this house with its four walls of glass I feel like a prowling animal, always on the alert. I am always restless. Even in the evening, I feel like a sentinel on guard day and night. I can rarely stretch out and relax...What else? I don’t keep a garbage can under my sink. Do you know why? Because you can see the whole ‘kitchen’ from the road on the way in here and the can would spoil the appearance of the whole house. So I hide it in the closet farther down from the sink. Mies talks about his ‘free space’: but his space is very fixed. I can’t even put a clothes hanger in my house without considering how it affects everything from the outside. Any arrangement of furniture becomes a major problem, because the house is transparent, like an X-ray.”

These graphic descriptions of life in a glass house are rich with visual description, the language reflecting who Farnsworth was—a versed and intelligent physician and researcher of nephrology who also held a degree in English Literature and Composition from The University of Chicago. If these articles in *House Beautiful* were scandalous to a wider public when they were first published sixty years ago because they played upon the fears of a McCarthy-era America—Elizabeth Gordon warned readers against the rising tide of a ‘cult of austerity’ made evident by the glass house—the articles are scandalous today because they disrupt the narrative of the canonical Farnsworth House, largely considered the only house of note that Mies would complete in the United States.

Farnsworth refutes the historical, canonical narrative of the Farnsworth House. She would continue to author such sentiments as appear in *House Beautiful* when she wrote her unpublished memoirs in the 1970s, upon retiring to Italy after selling the Farnsworth House. Held in the Inventory of the Edith Farnsworth Papers (1900–1977) at the Newberry Library, her memoirs take the form of a series of notebooks filled with the tangled hand-
of it is lacking,” Schulze writes. Such a possibility is a compelling story, and it diverted attention away from the potential problems of the house, as outlined by Farnsworth herself in *House Beautiful*, and toward the relationship between client and architect: “Technically at issue [in the legal conflict between Farnsworth and Mies] was the question of who owed what to whom for the unexpectedly high cost of the house… the real struggle, however, was over bigger stakes. It was a clash of two personalities of immense force and authority.”

As the first historian to grapple with the history of the Farnsworth House, Schulze attends to the subject without the convenience of prior histories. He conducts personal interviews with the employees and remaining family of Mies van der Rohe, mainly his daughters, with Farnsworth’s estranged sister, Marion Carpenter. In an interview with Schulze, Carpenter recalls that: “[Edith] was mesmerized by him and she probably had an affair with him.” According to Schulze, others—mainly Mies’ all-male staff—had also speculated upon this possibility. Schulze also includes as evidence a phrase attributed to Mies in an editor’s short response to a letter in *Newsweek* in 1969: “the lady expected the architect to go along with the house.” The editor hints at no source for this quip.

But the narrative of failed romance cannot rely on specious evidence alone, so Schulze brings into the discussion the appearance of the client as confirmation. A passport photograph of Dr. Farnsworth, taken in her late 60s, long after this history has occurred, is published alongside the following, cementing

8 Edith Farnsworth, “Memoirs,” unpublished in three notebooks, Farnsworth Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Chap. 11, unpag.
9 Ibid., Chap. 13, unpag.
12 Ibid., 252.
14 Ibid. The comment is based upon a quote in an editor’s reply to the letter of Mary Z. Valatka of Abington, Mass. in *Newsweek*, 29 September 1969 under the headline “House Yes, Architect No.” The editor’s reply has no footnote, source, or basis for Mies’ statement, stating: “Mies and Dr. Farnsworth were good friends and Mies once cracked that Dr. Farnsworth’s discontent occurred because ‘the lady expected the architect to go along with the house.’”

However, despite its richness, Dr. Farnsworth’s archive has been only selectively utilized as a primary source on the history of the house. In fact, historians Franz Schulze, Maritz Vandenberg and even Alice T. Friedman—who authors the first (and only) in-depth and beautifully researched account of Farnsworth’s agency in the realization of the Farnsworth House—all highlight in their accounts one particular line from Chapter Eleven of Farnsworth’s memoirs, a statement in which she describes meeting Mies for the first time at a dinner party: “The effect was tremendous, like a storm, a flood, or other act of God.” Here, Farnsworth is awkwardly cast as the breathless and possibly infatuated single woman client of the great architect. However, a preceding sentence contextualizes and clarifies Farnsworth’s awe: “The response was the most dramatic for having been preceded by two hours of [Mies’] unbroken silence. ‘I would love to build any kind of house for you.’”

The selective use of Farnsworth’s memoirs allows the subtle construction of the historical narrative that Farnsworth did not publicly lambast the house because it had any legitimate flaws, but because she was heartbroken not to have acquired the architect alongside it: a “failed romance,” in Vandenberg’s words. This theory of failed romance appears for the first time in Franz Schulze’s *Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography* (1985). As this is a history of the house in the larger context of a biography of the architect, the social aspects of the history become primary—in particular the soured relationship between client and architect. “Most witnesses to the Mies-Farnsworth friendship agree that it was a romance of some sort for a time, yet proof of the extent

writing of a woman in her 70s; folders full of poems she authored, endless correspondence, and photographs of the glass house in a decidedly un-Miesian state all collected in three boxes and one oversized box.
subjective views alongside other archival sources, legitimizing them as historical evidence, and negating the story of jilted romance:

“Although it was widely assumed that the two were romantically involved, there is nothing in Farnsworth’s Memoirs to support that contention,” she writes. However, even Friedman cannot entirely escape the narrative laid out by Schulze. She, too, selects just the partial quote from Farnsworth’s memoirs regarding the evening that the client first meets Mies van der Rohe, characterizing Farnsworth’s impression of the meeting as “…like a storm, a flood or other act of God.”

With the exception of Friedman’s revision to this essay for her *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History* (1998), all successive histories of the Farnsworth House elect to focus not on the potential flaws of the Farnsworth House that Farnsworth outlines—or the potential flaws of the power imbalance of architect-client relations—but rather on the original, baseless story that Farnsworth was heartbroken and vengeful when approaching the press. Franz Schulze, in his 1997 monograph on the house (produced by Dirk Lohan, Mies’ grandson) describes their personal relationship as “inseparable from the history of the house.” He reminds the reader that Mies, though legally married, had left his wife and family in Europe long before emigrating, leaving potential room for a relationship between the two to flourish: “The evidence suggests that she yearned to find a friend, not just an architect. Less certain is whether she wanted more than that. Did she know that Mies had relationships of a more or less romantic nature with other women during the very years he was working on her house?”

In a 2003 monograph on the house, Maritz Vandenberg continues the suggestion of

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15 Ibid., 258.
21 Ibid., 18.
something untoward, writing that “…unfortunately, the initially sympathetic relationship between architect and client had turned sour. Everyone who knew them agrees that this was at least partly due to a failed romance between Mies van der Rohe and Edith Farnsworth.” Vandenberg cites Schulze’s 1985 book as his primary source and he, too, recalls the specious quote attributed to Mies in Newsweek.

The relationship between client and architect informs the headline of William Norich’s article for the New York Times Style Magazine on June 1, 2003, which appeared announcing the auction of the house via Sotheby’s, perhaps one of the most widely-read contemporary articles on the Farnsworth House: “Sex and Real Estate: Farnsworth House, Mies van der Rohe’s masterpiece, is up for grabs. Along with a Juicy Tale.” And in the most recent historicization of the house, Franz Schulze’s thorough revision to Mies’ biography written in collaboration with Edward Windhorst and published in 2012, the suggestion of an architect-client-house love triangle still exists: “The spectacle was fascinating; two distinguished professionals, both single, socializing and working so closely together as to suggest—what? A dalliance? A romance?”

Thus, in even our most contemporary historicizations of the Farnsworth House, the story of sex and real estate has replaced any other history of the house. It is a story in which the experimental and decidedly flawed glass house is left unsullied—and perhaps this is a hint at its origin, a history that began as rumors intended to drown out the bad publicity and public sympathy that Farnsworth’s interviews generated during the infamous trial. This story has stayed present in the minds of many critics and historians who cite even specious references to it—perhaps because it salvages the house’s architectural reputation and because lifting the story of sex and real estate makes it unnecessary to critique the house at all.

The ensuing conflict—the scandal of the house—is therefore laid at the feet of its client, a supposedly scorned and vengeful woman. That the prevailing social attitudes toward gender and gender expectations which have emerged in the wake of feminism and postmodernism have not had an effect upon the historicizing of the Farnsworth House, outside of Friedman’s scholarship, reveals a phenomenon that Friedman herself puts best, that “[s]pace and sub-jectivity (except perhaps that of the architect) are suppressed in favor of a pictorial representation which distorts the subject of inquiry, collapsing the distinction between the building and the representation.” Indeed, even in architectural history—which is one of those representations of architecture—it seems only the subjectivity of the architect is worth upholding.

What Farnsworth’s own papers reveal is an alternate history of her relationship with this glass house and its architect—one that cannot be collapsed into a palatable form, and that is far more ambiguous and complex than the story of sex and real estate. Farnsworth’s archive is rich with material, its nuances inaccessible to superficial historical interpretations. It contains four folders of correspondence, fourteen folders of photographs, seventeen folders of her English translations of Italian poetry, two folders of poems she certainly authored and one folder of unidentified poems—unsigned, unattributed to any particular poet and thought perhaps to be authored by Farnsworth. Seven folders hold her memoirs—handwritten in three journals and typed in multiple sheaves of paper—best described by Farnsworth’s sister, Marion Carpenter, in a letter: “I found Edith’s memoirs had such gaps that I was not able to put them in order with any continuity.”

In addition to being disordered, Farnsworth’s memoirs are accused of being partly fictitious, not the stuff of history. 

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25 Newberry Library, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Midwest MS Farnsworth. Letter by Marion to “Ruthie” Jan 2nd, no year.
26 Sentiment expressed to the author during a tour of the Farnsworth House, when a Farnsworth House tour guide made an unqualified statement in response to my question about the Farnsworth’s memoirs as a source of history, “But you can’t use that! She made everything up!”
While the history of the Farnsworth House has long been located within the context of the relationship between client and architect, it is in Chapter Thirteen of her memoirs that Farnsworth’s relationship with the house itself fully begins:

By the end of 1950, it seemed possible to spend a night in the house, and on New Year’s Eve I brought out a couple of foam mattresses and a number of other indispensable articles and prepared to inhabit the glass house for the first time. With the light of a bare, sixty-watt bulb on an extension cord I made up the foam rubber mattress on the floor, turned up the air furnaces and got something to eat. Spots and strokes of paint remained here and there on the expanses of the glass walls and the sills were covered with ice. The silent meadows outside, white with old and hardened snow, reflected the bleak bulb within, as if the glass house itself were an unshaded bulb of uncalculated watts lighting the winter plains. The telephone rang, shattering the solitary scene.

It was an uneasy night, partly from the novel exposure provided by the uncurtained glass walls and partly from the dread of Mies’ implacable intentions. Expenses in connection with the house had risen far beyond what I had expected or could well afford and the glacial bleakness of that winter night showed very clearly how much more would have to be spent before the place could be made even remotely inhabitable.  

This passage of Farnsworth’s memoirs is teeming not only with her uneasiness, but with the ambiguity of the entire situation. The structure is uninhabitable, she writes, and yet she inhabits it for an evening. She has paid a handsome sum—nearly double what she’d originally planned to spend—but what she’s gained is an uncertain triumph. Certainly, it is an extraordinary house by an architect who has earned international acclaim, but he is still building his career in America. And the house is in a raw state: Farnsworth dreads “Mies’ implacable intentions,” uncertain how to live within them. In the house’s open plan, the relationship between she and a hypothetical guest would be defined by the social contract between them, not by (the non-existent) walls:

…a guest would have a bathroom but no bedroom. He, or she, could sleep on a sofa or I would spread a mattress on the travertine floor. We would cohabit a sort of three-dimensional sketch, I in my “sleeping space” and he in his*  

An abrupt asterisk refers us to a handwritten note on the otherwise blank left page of Farnsworth’s notebook: “*unless sheer discomfort and depression should drive us together.”

It is possible to imagine that Farnsworth is referring to Mies here, but romantic allusions do not appear elsewhere in her memoirs, where her depictions of the architect are by turns admiring, less-than-flattering and damning. Farnsworth describes visits to the site with him as “great fun,” and Mies’ office as “a club room, a sanctuary and a kibbutz” where “the boys vied for the privilege of contributing to the realization of ‘the most important house in the world.’”

Mies and Farnsworth do socialize between 1947 and 1950, and have many conversations about architecture, philosophy, and life—and the difference in their approach to the latter is remarkable. In a desire to understand Mies’ approach to architecture, Farnsworth reads texts by Romano Guardini. She urges him, in return, to read the physicist Erwin Schrödinger’s *What is Life?* It upsets him, and in her memoirs she records his response:

It is unspiritual. What about man and his hopes for immortality? Does Schroedinger [sic] think I can sit staring at the snowflakes on the window or the salt crystals on the dinner table and be satisfied? I want to know what I have to expect after death.

Her response to Mies, that “even by deleting the questions of the natural longings of human beings for a hereafter,” Schrödinger “still offers to man the very considerable dignity of the observer of life,” is of no use to the architect. The difference in their views strikes her as remarkable, and she writes, “I was struck with the force of Mies’ preoccupation with death and it lent a mystic context even to the project of the house by the river, and an indefinable dimension to the personality of Mies.” The house begins to take on its poetic and transcendent potential.

The final rift between the client and architect, according to Farnsworth’s memoirs, is logistical. It occurs when Farnsworth argues that a young man from Mies’ office is bothering construction workers with unnecessary questions, thus delaying their progress. Mies responds curtly: “You go back to your nephritis where you belong and leave me to build your house without interference.” From this moment forward, her memoirs reflect that Farnsworth is suspicious of the architect and his intentions. Thus, when expenses for the house rise higher than she had anticipated, she takes action:

…I wrote to Mies that I was unable to underwrite any further expenses in connection with the Fox River project. I remember he did not acknowledge my communication either in writing or by word of mouth, and I felt that a refusal to authorize further expenses should not involve a rupture of friendship between us and therefore made efforts to continue all of our cordial customs.

It seems that the only story that cannot be found in Farnsworth’s archive is the story of sex and real estate. The ‘scandalous’ story of a woman scorned stems not from the client’s recollections, then, but from a gender normative, if not entirely sexist, fabrication: the perception that the only cause for her counter-suit against Mies van der Rohe is a romantic failure, rather than a professional one.

31 Ibid., unpag.
32 Ibid., unpag.
33 Ibid., Chap. 13, unpag.
34 Ibid.
Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

—Thomas Jefferson, 1802

In 2010, author Joshua Foer hosted an architectural design-build competition “Sukkah City: New York City.” Austin+Mergold (A+M) was invited by Foer to enter the competition that called for twelve “radically temporary, experimental pavilions.” Their entry, Subway Sukkah, was noted by Natalie Jeremijenko in the New York Times as provoking a discussion “about whether or not you could turn a public space into a religious one.”

The competition required rediscovering the ancient Jewish practice of constructing a liminal realm between enclosure and nature for the festival of Sukkot. The Union Square competition site provoked A+M to consider the overlap between New York City zoning codes and sukkah design prescriptions outlined in the Talmud.

According to Jewish tradition, the sukkah is a structure meant to acknowledge power of the Higher Authority and to commemorate a nomadic past through abstinence from various comforts. It is also an acknowledgment of the connection and interface between the mundane and the divine. The architecture of a sukkah is described in sacred Hebrew texts in ways that are not dissimilar to how New York City Zoning and Building Codes regulate construction. Zoning informs one where to build and building codes regulate materials, structure and methods of assembly. Everything else (in sukkah or NYC construction) is open to interpretation, as long as the design remains “as of right.”

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2 In an e-mail to A+M on Wednesday, June 09, 2010 at 12:32 PM Joshua Foer wrote: “Dear Austin+Mergold, As an admirer of your work, it is my pleasure to invite you to enter ‘Sukkah City: New York City,’ an international design competition that will result in 12 radically temporary, experimental pavilions being constructed in Union Square Park, NYC this fall. The sukkah, as you may know, is an ancient, ephemeral archetypally erected for one week each fall by Jews to celebrate the autumn harvest. Our competition aims to re-imagine and reinvent the structure within its traditional design constraints. Jurors include Ron Arad, Michael Arad, Adam Yarinsky, Thom Mayne, Ada Tolla, Natalie Jeremijenko, Rick Bell, and Paul Goldberger. This is a design/build competition. All 12 winning structures will be fully funded by a financial award. The registration deadline is July 1, and entry deadline is August 1. I hope you’ll consider entering the competition: www.sukkahcity.com.”


5 Sukkah City, Dir. Jason Hutt, Oxbow Lake Films, 2013, Film. For more information about SUKKAH CITY, or to inquire about booking or acquiring the film, visit www.oxbowlakemfilms.com.

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New York City Subway entrances are ideal pre-made sukkah spaces, convertible with minimal effort. The 2008 NYC Building Code further stipulates in Section BC 1014 that “two exits or exit access doorways from any space shall be provided [...]” Considering that there are at least two ways out of each subway station, the “wall of separation” can still be maintained providing a discerning citizen a choice of a “secular” or “religious” exit.

In 2013, filmmaker Joshua Hutt released the film SUKKAH CITY which included documentation of the jury deliberations between Michael Arad, Ron Arad, Rick Bell, Paul Goldberger, Natalie Jeremijenko, Thom Mayne, Ada Tolla, and Adam Yarinsky, among others.

The Sukkah City design-build competition received approximately 600 entries. A twelve-person jury was tasked with selecting twelve winners that would be built and exhibited, meeting on Sunday August 8, 2010 at the Center for Architecture in Manhattan. After eleven finalists had been selected the jury needed to choose a final entry, focusing on the A+M proposal Subway Sukkah.

The following transcript is an excerpt from the documentary film SUKKAH CITY, directed by Jason Hutt, and appears courtesy of Oxbow Lake Films.
Beginning at 17:01:

**Offscreen voice**  One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight... nine, ten, eleven...

**Ada Tolla**  So who would vote for the subway? Come on. Let's do a show of hands.

**Thomas de Monchaux**  Can I just speak to the subway? Why I find it troubling is: you don't have a choice as to whether to be in it or not. If you want to get out of the subway in Union Square, which is a very...

**Paul Goldberger**  There are a dozen different ways out of the Union Square station.

**Ada Tolla**  There could be something interesting in linking this off-site moment to the rest of the site which is far down south. So I do think that there is something to this entry.

**Maira Kalman**  But how are you reconciling the religion part of it? Which is the most...

**Ada Tolla**  I can't reconcile that.

**Maira Kalman**  Which is the biggest part of it.

**Ada Tolla**  I can't reconcile that.

**Maira Kalman**  Using the structure in the city, which is clever and wonderful, and all of those things. But ultimately, what are you saying? The question becomes: is taking it into the religious aspect something that takes away from the...

**Michael Arad**  Public realm.

**Ada Tolla**  I cannot reconcile that.

**Maira Kalman**  And that, that to me is a problem.

**Ron Arad**  I can. I can. It's no different than any of the other structures that you're going to impose on Union Square.

**Maira Kalman**  That's not true. [With the other structures,] you're not taking a public space and saying, "This is now a Jewish space."

**Ron Arad**  But it's not. First of all, it's not built forever, and it's just...

**Maira Kalman**  So what?

**Ron Arad**  It's just like, Christmas decoration.
**Thom Mayne**  For me, it does not have any transformative power, to move from a contingent infrastructural space to one of ritual.

**Ada Tolla**  I think it has the potential to be so surprising to go into this space.

**Multiple voices**  [Inaudible / talking over each other]

**Adam Yarinsky**  But the fact that it causes this argument, I think makes it interesting to put there. Because there will be people who say, “This doesn’t do enough.” And that’s a very legitimate criticism, and others who...

**Multiple voices**  [Inaudible / talking at the same time]

**Maira Kalman**  To create a controversy about something that ultimately [is] more of an offense in a way than an interesting conversation. Because how many public spaces would you want to be transformed into anybody’s religion for any amount of time? And that goes back to the question for me. Why would I want that to be a Jewish space, or a Catholic space, or a Muslim space?

**Ada Tolla**  This is this today, and it will be something else tomorrow. The idea that the spaces that we have around change, and have the flexibility to absorb that.

**Michael Arad**  To speak on your side for a moment here, I think if something is offensive as it is to you, then, you know, the willful majority should not be imposed on [and] overrule a minority voice in this case, I think.

**Paul Goldberger**  There is something extraordinary about the way in which this most ordinary of public spaces, of public circulation spaces, has such a strange resemblance to a space of ritual. And to point out that odd intersection is itself I think important. And worthy. But if it can’t carry itself far enough to be a true space with meaning, is the question. I don’t know.

**Thomas de Monchaux**  I don’t think there’s any evidence that it does.

**Rick Bell**  Since they are not sure that the subway is going to be permissible with the MTA, let’s put it among the alternates. If we then have twelve, and one of them doesn’t work, these people can’t do it, the people who want to do the Wachsmann knots can’t tie them, then we start to look at the alternatives. But we have twelve, plus eight runners up, and we’re done.

6 Ultimately, eleven out of twelve sukkahs were built on Union Square in September of 2010. Entrance to all pavilions was prohibited. After two days, they were removed.
Family style.

NYC style.
Above ground.

Below ground.
In the winter of 1965–66 newspapers across the country ran stories claiming that a group of students from Immaculate Heart College (IHC) and their teacher Sister Corita Kent had protested the Vietnam War in an art installation on the most consumerist street in New York City, Madison Avenue. Even more scandalous, the exhibition had been commissioned by IBM, who moved quickly to neutralize this threat by demanding changes. The headlines were inflammatory: “What Is Wrong With These Photographs? ... Ask IBM,” “Changes in Nun’s Art Display Disturb Communists—Not Her,” and The Militant’s sharply sarcastic piece titled “IBM Meets Subversive Challenge.” ¹ The interviews of participants seemed to confirm a clash between hippie, peace-loving Catholics and a wary corporate giant.

Peace on Earth is one of the IHC community’s most documented projects because the controversy it instigated was recorded in newspaper and magazine articles, but this paper will examine how that interpretation was inaccurate and inflammatory. This 1965 commission provides a case study that encapsulates the state of scholarship on Corita and her students: the most famous and sometimes controversial pieces have gained attention, but bought at the steep price of fallacy and exaggeration.² For these artists, who operated at a distance from the elite art world, being labeled “scandalous” put them in a frustrating double bind. On one hand, it expanded the profile of the work and its creators, insuring increased attention, commissions, publicity, etc. On the other, the art was not examined nearly as closely for its own merits as it was for its catchy story, a frustrating reality for the IHC community. After the media reporting of Peace on Earth had calmed down, an IHC faculty newsletter lamented, “Predictably, much of the press coverage of ‘Peace on Earth’ centered on how it had been received by the IBM officials rather than what it was or what it said.”³


² This relationship is further exemplified by Corita’s beloved Boston Gas Tank, which when it was unveiled faced charges that a profile of Hồ Chí Minh was hidden in one of the oversized brushstrokes. In interviews, Corita laughingly denied the questions of a secret communist agenda. (For example, “Creativity in Adversity” interview on cassette tape, 24 October 1985. Corita Papers, 1936–1992. T-247.7. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

³ “IBM...Last Chapter,” Comment, 14 January 1966. Article Binder 2, Corita Art Center, Los Angeles, California.
By 1965 Corita was a national figure, and was already overextended between her IHC duties and her own artistic career. Having joined the Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) religious community after high school, she eventually taught in and then chaired the art department of Immaculate Heart College. In addition, she was a nationally celebrated serigraph artist with exhibitions around the country and a packed speaking schedule. The IHM nuns took the 1965 Vatican II decree called “Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life” as an opportunity to further IHC’s reputation for openness, social activism, progressive reinterpretation, and religious modernization. The students were encouraged to get involved in current events and were allowed to explore controversial topics in their art and the school newspaper, and the school faculty often substituted listening to the news on the radio for the homily at Mass. The school became known as a hothouse of creative activity, befriended by Buckminster Fuller, Charles and Ray Eames, and many other Los Angeles intellectuals and artists of the time.

It had become Corita’s habit to spend the summer months on her own work, creating dozens of series and hundreds of prints in a flurry of activity—and enlisting anyone available to help—and then focus on her teaching responsibilities during the school year (Fig. 1). As her fame grew, it became more disruptive: throughout the school year producers, gallery directors, and interested fans would drop in to Corita’s classes uninvited. As much as she tried to balance these activities, in the fall of 1965 two senior students felt that they were being deprived. Roommates Mickey Myers and Paula McGowan decided to meet with Corita, “sitting on a stone wall on the hill” since the professors did not have office hours. Corita listened to their concerns and answered them with a challenge of her own, offering the students the directorship of the IBM commission she had received a few days before. Corita herself worked out the contract for the project—which was to be a source of friction later—but, in an inspired move, siphoned off one of her responsibilities while granting an unimaginable opportunity to a group of college art students. This master/apprentice relationship was the IHC’s modus operandi, and fit the hierarchical structure of both the Catholic Church and the parochial school system.

IHC had worked with IBM before, on a 1963 Christmas project called The Tall Ones completed under the direction of Sister Magdalen Mary, the other art teacher in the department at the time. For this new commission, the formal guidelines were as follows: the students, under Corita’s direction, were responsible for creating an exhibit on the theme “Peace on Earth” for 133 feet of running space in the Product Display Center on the corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue. The street-level space was windowed, which meant that the exhibition would be visible to pedestrians on the sidewalk as well as people inside of IBM (Fig. 2).

4 The Perfectae Caritatis, as it is also known, was a document issued by the Second Vatican Council in October 1965 that dealt with the renewal of the life of Roman Catholic religious communities. It was notably vague, and encouraged modernization and adaptation, and so was left open to wide interpretation.


7 Mickey Myers, interview by author, 6 May 2010.

8 Barbara Loste, interview by author, 9 May 2010.
Fig. 3
Peace on Earth, December 1965.

Fig. 2
Peace on Earth, December 1965.
Corita gave the assignment to her lettering and display class, divided into two teams of about ten students each under the leadership of McGowan and Myers, and the project was theirs to actualize. The class met twice a week and the commission became its major project for the semester. The students worked under Corita’s supervision but were afforded significant freedom.

The exhibit took the form of a cardboard box installation, which was a reliable aesthetic device for Immaculate Heart students. Cardboard boxes were convenient for the financial constraints the college was operating under, being cheap to buy, easy to replace, and convenient to ship when collapsed and stacked. Each face on the box became its own canvas, and either operated as a single discrete design or was part of a larger composition (Fig. 3). When the boxes were stacked tightly they formed a grid that complemented graphic and optical designs, but in other instances they were loosely heaped or built into deceptively solid-looking architectural units. The students created the layouts through multimedia application of paint, collage, stamps, and stamps, often working on cardstock or paper and then pasting the layouts onto the boxes instead of working directly on the cardboard. The two teams constructed and pasted the layouts in California, covering multiple faces of each box since the display was to be seen from both inside and outside the gallery (Fig. 4).

The project took shape around the words of five men of peace: Pope John XXIII, President John F. Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, Dag Hammarskjöld, and Jawaharlal Nehru. Corita said that they were chosen because “these men have all done constructive work in the field of peace and were in contact with the modern world during their lifetimes.” Perhaps already sensing potential controversy, Corita and IBM agreed to restrict the material to the words of these famous and recently deceased statesmen, which would evade the possibility of altercation with living personalities as well as make certain that the people so prominently promoted would not say or do anything unpredictable. Yet, in a letter promoting the exhibition to a television producer, Marj Shippey, IHC’s Director of Public Information, wrote that IBM “gave Sister Corita and her art students carte blanche in the matter. [IBM] will not see the completed work until it is unpacked in New York.”

The source material was varied yet current; Corita used package design motifs and advertisements in her own artwork, and her students implemented similar materials. One contemporaneous newspaper article inventoried some material on the boxes: “a photograph of Elizabeth Taylor, accompanied

9 Ellen Shulte, “Brotherhood Message in Christmas Packages,” Los Angeles Times, 26 November 1965. Family Entertainment Part V. Eventually, when the two windows were complete, some remarked that McGowan’s boxes were “more stately” while Myers’s were “more optical fun,” although Myers denies any concerted effort to define their individual styles. Myers, interview.

10 In the future, some classes were simply titled after the commission they would fulfill: for example, “Century City” (“The Peace on Earth Project,” Century City Centurion, 27 November, 1969, Advertising Supplement to the Los Angeles Times. Corita Papers, 1936–1992. MC 583, series I, folder 1-5. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts).


12 Myers, interview.


14 Letter from Marj Shippey to Gil Fates, 8 November 1965. Envelope 9, Corita Archive, Corita Art Center, Los Angeles, California.
by two quotations from Dag Hammarskjöld; a medieval print; a quotation from the Beatles; a photograph of an Asian child; a quotation from Adlai Stevenson and one from John Kennedy; and photographs of an atomic cloud, a military figure sighting a weapon, a South American peasant, and the Watts riots, in California.”

This conglomeration of religious symbolism and pop culture, current events and celebrities, was one reason viewers would stop and linger as long as they did. Also mimicking Corita’s distinctive serigraph aesthetic, quotes overlapped each other and wrapped around the sides of boxes, requiring attention and interaction from viewers. Each excerpt could be related to the theme or to other images and words around it, and the associations took the installation’s theme and implications off in myriad directions.

The pieces must have been finished by mid-November, because they served as the backdrop for two campus plays before being numbered, collapsed and shipped to New York for the display crew to re-form and install. Myers and McGowan followed their pieces, arriving in New York on December 7th. Corita was not with them, having left on her annual cross-country tour of speaking engagements and gallery exhibitions, but the women were accompanied by a film crew from NBC that was recording the entire story from the creation of the boxes in the classroom to the unveiling of the completed exhibition. The women examined the exhibition on December 8th (fittingly, the day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception), and the window shades were finally lifted to reveal it on December 9th at 7:30pm (Fig. 2). The next day Myers and McGowan were photographed

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15 Stevenson, “Peace on Earth,” 22.

16 The plays were Gertrude Stein’s The Photograph and An Exercise in Analysis. “Los Angeles, Calif,” Tidings, 19 November 1965. Article Binder 2, Corita Archives, Corita Art Center, California.
What to make of Mollino, architect, interior designer, furniture maker, engineer, photographer, fashion designer, set designer, car designer, patent inventor, novelist, stunt pilot, champion skier, racing car driver, professor of architecture, author...? Marginalized in architectural history as “enigmatic,” “non conformist,” “elusive,” “individualistic,” “lone wolf,” “troublesome,” “unique case,” “marginal,” “special,” “eccentric,” “turbulent,” “holy madman,” “prima donna,” “diabolic,” “occult worshiper,” “unconventional at all costs,” “dissolute,” “erotomaniac,” “kinky,” and “dangerous.” Mollino can never be pinned down and there is an irreducible sense of the illicit.

Even Mollino’s strongest supporters seem embarrassed by their support. Bruno Zevi, who acknowledged Mollino’s work only after his death, called his designs “turbulent” and his photographs “blasphemous” (a big word in Catholic Italy) in an otherwise extremely laudatory obituary where he also manages to describe his dangerous marginality as: “abnormal behavior,” “abrasive character,” “enfant-terrible,” “intense,” “problematic,” “hermetic,” “profane” and “heretic.” While chastening Zevi for not having noticed Mollino earlier, Manfredo Tafuri dedicates just a few lines, an image, and a footnote to this “caso unico” in his book Modern Architecture in Italy (1982), the first time that he himself ever mentioned his name. More contemporary work on Mollino continues the litany, describing him as “wild,” “eccentric,” “bizarre,” “obsessive,” “crazy,” “dark,” “sinister,” “a genius obsessed with sex, drugs, superstitions,” fascinated by “esoteric disciplines,” engaged in “death-defying exploits,”... all of this while enthusiastically celebrating his work.

And what of Mollino, the eternal bachelor living in his father’s house, developing his photographs in the darkroom his father had built in the attic when Carlo was only seven years old, sharing even an office with him and eventually dying in that very room, the office in Via Cordero de Pamparato 9, the afternoon of August 27, 1973, the plate “Eugenio Mollino, Engineer” still by the door despite the fact that Eugenio had died twenty years before? Mollino never thought he should take down the plate and put his name instead. He preferred to work under his father’s name in the same way he preferred to live under his father’s roof even if his father strongly disapproved of his, in his own words, “dissolute,” “reckless, good-for-nothing” son, who preferred to work at night and sleep during the day and alternated short periods of “ferocious action” with “lethargic incubation,” as his fellow students at the Polytechnic of Torino put it in a humorous caricature of
Mollino at the time of his graduation. Even the news of Mollino’s appointment as professor in the Polytechnic of Turin is supposed to have been met with “stony silence” by the older Mollino.

In a letter to a friend he writes:

Regardless of the daily silent Homeric battle with my father, whom I love dearly, I have no wish to live and work anywhere else: the office is the exact copy of a Dutch trading space; the house is a marvelous collection of different ways of living and thinking from the Umbertine period to Art Nouveau, with all the ramifications that the total lack of concern for taste can generate. If I were left alone I wouldn’t move a single chair; the interior is the most “neutral” I could wish for: it doesn’t disturb me, it doesn’t wrongly excite me, but it leaves me free to be alone with my imagination, we might call it my inner landscape, ...

But there does remain a perceptible ongoing sense of slight nausea necessary to prevent acceptance, comfort.

It is hard not to think of Walter Benjamin’s famous essay, “Louis-Philippe, or the Interior,” in which he describes the radical separation between place of work and living space. Mollino himself had invoked Louis Philippe in one of his texts, “Utopia e ambientazione,” published in Domus in 1949, where he talks about the “eclectic” nineteenth century interior with its “suffocating bric-a-brac,” that corresponds to the “golden age of industry and commerce,” echoing Walter Benjamin’s famous words:

Under Louis-Philippe, the private citizen enters the stage of history. ... For the private person, living space becomes, for the first time, antithetical to the place of work. The former is constituted by the interior; the office is its complement. The private person who squares his accounts with reality in his office demands that his interior be maintained in his illusions. ... From this spring the phantasmagorias of the interior. For the private individual the private environment represents the universe. In it he gathers remote places and the past. His living room is a box in the world theater.

But what about the nausea, the “slight nausea necessary to prevent acceptance, comfort”? Nausea, from the Greek nausíē, means “motion sickness.” At home, Mollino chooses nausea over comfort, forever lurking in the uncanniness, making each voyage out a dramatic statement, an artwork. Everything done outside is only a partial fragment of the endless intensity on the inside. The inside is infinitely bigger than the outside.

The camera is the instrument to negotiate this divide. Already as a 7-year-old boy, Mollino had his own camera and had drawn a section of it his first architectural drawing. The camera is a modern house (“camera” in Italian means also “room”), a house on the move, inseparable from the body, even the mind and emotions of the person who uses/inhabits it. “This small piece of equipment will always be an extension of ourselves, an organ expressing sentiment, if such a thing exists,” Mollino wrote in Message from the Darkroom.

Mollino’s interior can only be seen through the camera. His literal interiors, the private spaces he designed for himself, are really designed for, and inhabited by the camera.

**Casa Miller**, 1936–1942, Via Talucchi 43. At the age of 31, Mollino stages for the first time a departure from his father’s house by creating a dream interior of his own. The street was the border of France at the time; a marginal figure in the very margins of his country. The windows are blocked. The curtains in the living room and bedroom are permanently drawn. No outside is possible. Mollino stages a move from his father’s house yet he doesn’t go outside. It’s more that he stretches the interior, the dark room, the space of dreams, to the very border. The name Miller is the anglicization of Mollino (Italian for mill) and echoes the name of Casa Milá, the house of Gaudí in Barcelona that Mollino so admired, and whose name also comes from mill. Casa Miller doesn’t house Mollino in the traditional sense. It houses the fantasy of Mollino. This is the house of his alter ego.

But Mollino never actually lived there, slept there or entertained there. Casa Miller, an ordinary two-room apartment with a bathroom but no kitchen, was a stage set for Mollino’s photography. It existed only for those photographs. In fact, the images were manipulated to present an interior closer to what Mollino had dreamed of. The interior is therefore never more than a photograph. Casa Miller is nothing other than a single set of photographs, 43 black and white prints carefully developed over 5 years, and published in magazines, starting with a first tantalizing image of a space of the apartment on the cover of Domus in 1937 without any explanation other than a caption,
followed a year later in the same magazine by a full article which begins with the same image, a text of Carlo Levi, and another 22 images (Fig. 1).

The article includes a plan of the apartment by Mollino criss-crossed with arrows, recalling drawings of the rational movements of the efficient modern house (Fig. 2). But what the arrows indicate is not the functioning movement inside of the apartment, but the angle of the photographs taken, the inefficient zigzagging movements of the photographer in search of himself. As in a film, each framed scene exists in its own right and is connected to other scenes by cutting. The relationships between the images and within the images are always unexpected juxtapositions. Amputated body parts become interchangeable with architectural elements. A mirror (the Milo mirror) has the shape of the body of a woman (Venus de Milo) without head or limbs, while disembodied heads, arms, hands, feet and eyes appear throughout other images. One amputated hand rests on a table with human legs. The surface of a desk table is covered by a full size photograph of Michelangelo’s Prisoner behind a plate of Securit glass (Fig. 3). A thoughtful figurine sits in the palm of a hand encased in a glass vitrine like some kind of relic. Elements float without visible support. The disembodied head of a horse resting on the carpet of the bedroom stares directly into the bed. The ambiguities are unambiguously surrealist, if one could say that. Is this what surrealist architecture looks like? Or in as much as it is surrealist, it is no longer architecture?

The architecture of Mollino is not just a set for a photograph. The photograph is itself the site of his architecture. All that matters are the photographs. The architecture, the furniture, the draperies, the lamps, the casts of body parts, the fashion, the careful choice of models...the staging of all of the above in one single image, a black and white print crafted in the darkest of rooms.

Modern architecture was also produced within the space of photographs and publications and modern architects also saw everything through the camera. They made decisions on the basis of what they saw through the lens. But with Mollino, the position of the camera is already determined. The camera is already part of the interior being photographed, or the interior is but an extension of the lens. In other words, it is not that Mollino moves the camera into the interior to photograph it. The interior only exists for the camera in one position.

The camera negotiates these crossings. For Mollino, the camera is not simply inseparable from the architectural space; it is
inseparable from the space of the deepest fantasies. The camera is connected to that which cannot normally show itself, the “fantasies of an impossible daily life.”

The depth of this clandestine engagement starts to manifest itself in the “Ritratti ambientati,” photographic portraits in carefully staged ambiances in Casa Miller, and published in Occhio magico n. 4, 1945, and in Message from the Darkroom. In these pictures, the figure of the woman emerges as the central element in the composition, a figure that Mollino argues in Message from the Darkroom only exists for the camera.

The women in these staged portraits are all women Mollino knew, clients such as Ada Minola, or Lina Suwarowski, his presumed girlfriend at the time, but the women don’t appear as themselves. They are figures in a fantasy, leading actresses in a film. The style is that of Hollywood publicity shots. The lighting on the face is always immaculate and the gleaming and flowing hair is often the center of the image. Sometimes the hair takes over from the face, becoming the protagonist, as in “Scalp,” the cover image of the issue of Occhio magico where platinum blond locks float on a leopard skin. The body doesn’t appear very often and when it does it is diminished: Bodies without limbs are sheathed in a silky wrapping that turns it into an object, an architectural element, desexualized, or re-sexualized through juxtaposition with other objects. It is rarely clear where the enigmatic figure is. One imagines her against a mirror, emerging from a closet, facing the back of a chair, looking through a glass case, etc. But every time, it is finally uncertain what is going on. The figure is never simply in the space; rather, it becomes part of the space that becomes itself a fantasy (Fig. 4).

It is not by chance that Mollino called one of the stage portraits in Casa Miller “Fairy tales for grown-ups” (1936). We see the same woman in many other images, emerging from, or lingering on the threshold of a closet she shares with, among other things, the head of a horse and a dismembered foot. Her arms are cut off from view, and there is some kind of mysterious gauzy ring around her neck, as if holding her back. Yet, she looks directly at us, neither happy nor unhappy, leaving us wondering forever what exactly is going on. What are these fairy tales for the grown-up Mollino?

By the end of the war, Casa Miller had been dismantled and Mollino built a new space to stage his fantasies. The Mollino apartment of 1946 is again completely cut off from the outside; floor to ceiling curtains cover every opening. The space is sparse, other than a writing desk, a day bed, a three-legged chair with a “spine-shaped” back, and a statue without head, arms or feet. The primary function is again photographic. The desk, chairs and bed become props for fantasy scenes. But the scenario is now explicitly sexual. In a remarkable photograph of around 1950, a woman kneels on a cushion facing the wall. She wears a tight black corset. Her arms are seemingly cut off and the letters C M appear imprinted on her bare buttocks. An Olivetti Lexicon 80 typewriter on a small table, a bottle of champagne and a freshly poured glass on a silvery tray complete the scene (Fig. 5).

Anything is possible here. But the literal imprint of Mollino’s initials in typeface on the woman’s face. We don’t know who she is and we don’t know who she was. As Mollino’s photographs became more erotic, he preferred to photograph strangers.

Casa Mollino. 2 Via Napione, Turin, 1960, the secret apartment in an 18th century house on a bank of the river Po. The design was completed in 1968 but Mollino never told even his closest friends the surreal details of the house are more labyrinthine, the eroticism more explicit, the photographs more secret. Mollino had no intention of using them instead into albums such as “Epifania, 1961,” and “A Dragon to take for walks” (1964). The glamour of the glamourous images never told even his closest friends about its existence. The surrealist writer on a small table, a bottle of champagne and a freshly poured glass on a silvery tray complete the scene...

It is precisely in this tiled corridor where most of the photographs are taken in Casa Mollino. The tomb is of course the ultimate house, the own mausoleum, a corridor of my house to be a twilit avenue of amateur porn. Instead of the 43 carefully chosen images of Casa Miller, more than 2000 Polaroid photos were found in Casa Mollino. The desk, chairs and bed become props for fantasy scenes. The desk, a day bed, a three-legged chair with a “spine-shaped” back, and a statue without head, arms or feet. The primary function is again photographic. The desk, chairs and bed become props for fantasy scenes. But the scenario is now explicitly sexual. In a remarkable photograph of around 1950, a woman kneels on a cushion facing the wall. She wears a tight black corset. Her arms are seemingly cut off and the letters C M appear imprinted on her bare buttocks. An Olivetti Lexicon 80 typewriter on a small table, a bottle of champagne and a freshly poured glass on a silvery tray complete the scene (Fig. 5).

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After moving back to Boston, I had to peruse several bookshops in search of Henry James' 1886 novel *The Bostonians*. How could the book be so hard to locate in its city of inspiration? Every other major James novel was always in stock, yet *The Bostonians*, the classic feminist killjoy, was notably absent. Wasn't it a staple of local history and literature?

Against the backdrop of Boston's burgeoning feminist movement in the 1870s, *The Bostonians* pivots around Olive Chancellor, an upper-class suffragist; her estranged cousin Basil Ransom, a conservative lawyer from Mississippi; and Verena Tarrant, Olive's gifted pupil and companion who is also courted by Basil. After promising never to marry, Verena moves into Olive's Back Bay home, where they focus on emancipating women in law and society. Over the course of the novel, Olive and Basil vie for Verena's love and loyalty. Whereas Olive longs to turn her protégée into the voice of the feminist movement, Basil wants to marry her and put an end to her activism.

*The Bostonians* gave rise to the term “Boston marriage,” describing two women like Olive and
Verena living together in a monogamous partnership, financially independent of men. Boston marriage does not necessarily denote a lesbian relationship, yet the novel is teeming with same-sex erotics. Olive is very much enamored of angelic Verena, though it is unclear to what degree her love is requited. For both women, however, at times it’s hard to distinguish their commitment to feminism from their deep affection for each other.

Right after I found out I’d be returning to Boston for grad school, the terrible Marathon bombings took place. From Toronto, I anxiously kept track of the American news coverage with diligence. It was the first time in a while that I felt something for Boston, that I cared about it in some capacity. That maybe after all these years I could stop pretending to be Canadian and embrace my four generations of Bostonian roots once and for all.

After the city-wide lockdown and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev’s arrest in the pit of a sailboat, I watched online as Bostonians emerged to celebrate the wounded suspect’s captivity. In horror I observed hundreds of white men assembling in the dark at the Parkman Bandstand on the Common. Just four days after the tragic bombings, they gleefully banged their shirtless chests, drunkenly belting patriotic songs like “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “Sweet Caroline.”

As the mainstream media generated racist reports on terrorism, a white man physically assaulted a random woman wearing a hijab. He screamed, “Fuck you Muslims! You are terrorists! I hate you! You are involved in the Boston explosions! Fuck you!”

In the subsequent months, article after article was published in “liberal” newspapers and magazines about how white men and sometimes women are exemplary Bostonians because they are heroic and resilient in the face of terrorism.

The mantras “Boston Strong” and “Boston Pride” continue to be ubiquitous. They follow me everywhere I turn—advertised on Facebook, printed onto cocktail napkins, scratched into bathroom stalls.

“Boston Strong” reeks of “Army Strong,” the U.S. Army’s recruiting campaign of the past decade. One has to admit how linguistically puzzling this noun-adjective brand is—why not “Strong Army”? Or perhaps it’s the other way around: “Army” modifies “Strong.” As if we live in an age when “Army” simply describes an everyday mode of living, feeling, and belonging to the strong nation. “Army”—rife with its imperialist, racist, sexist, and homophobic ideologies—is the only way we can be “Strong.”

“Boston” easily replaces “Army.”

For me, the army of white frat boy go-go dancers decked the Parkman Bandstand inimitably encapsulated what it means to be Bostonian.

The phrase “Boston Pride,” on the other hand, is certainly borrowed from the city’s gay pride celebration. In high school I used to live for these annual festivities. I planned my outfits months in advance and prayed that my acne wouldn’t be too atrocious. Marching in the parades around the
Common in my tightest skinny jeans (my “come-fuck-me pants” according to my disapproving mother), I was indeed desperate to get laid or find true love or both.

Now I couldn’t care less about Pride. I just use it as an opportunity to rant about queer shame or protest intersectional political issues I consider pressing. I cannot celebrate my queer identification at these corporate festivals.

And I surely cannot celebrate being Bostonian.

In Boston, I resort to literature and history in search of feminist and queer role models: strong Bostonians who fill me with pride.

Though I know little about American literature, I initially sought out *The Bostonians* because it’s about feminism. Plus, Merchant Ivory Productions turned it into a mediocre film.

At first, reading *The Bostonians* in Boston seemed like a scandalous political act, a big fuck you to my present-day hometown. It was a way to dissent from reactionary public discourse.

According to James, the book’s title refers not to every Bostonian but specifically to Olive and Verena, the feminists who embodied the city’s zeitgeist in the eyes of Basil.3

(How might we characterize Boston’s zeitgeist today?)

Before it got too cold, I made a point to read the novel in public places, particularly on the Common, the oldest city park in the country. The common ground for all Bostonians.

Here Ann Hibbins was hanged from an oak tree in 1656 for witchcraft almost forty years before the first Salem witch trials. Two centuries later she inspired the creepy witch Mistress Hibbins who tries to further corrupt Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*.

In addition to public executions, the Common has historically served as an important site of demonstration, from abolitionist meetings to Vietnam and ACT UP riots.

In Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar* Esther Greenwood schleps here from the suburbs to see her psychiatrist. Between appointments she sits on the benches along the Common and reads “scandal sheets”—popular little papers announcing suicides, murders, and robberies. “I didn’t know why I had never bought any of these papers before,” Esther claims. “They were the only things I could read.”4

Reading *The Bostonians* became a performance, my point of entry to the past. I started to identify with Esther as I sat on the same park benches, reading madly to make sense of my role as a political subject in the contemporary city.

What happened to the days when Boston was the international hub of abolitionism and feminism? What does it mean to be Bostonian today? How should a Bostonian be?
Though about feminists, *The Bostonians* is not feminist.

To my dismay, reading *The Bostonians* in Boston was not in the least a radical gesture. Written by a male novelist who was, to be generous, wary of the women's rights movement, the book is a literary attempt to fossilize and satirize a particular narrative of political struggle.

For the most part, Verena is totally vapid. Her oracle-like ability to speak is constantly upstaged by her good looks and charm. She is caught in the middle of a vicious tug-of-war between Olive and Basil, who both manipulate her naiveté to their liking. Since Verena needs to please everyone, she is always on the verge of tears.

Olive, on the other hand, still strikes me as strong-willed. Dry and awkward and man-hating, she dedicates herself to female emancipation and rails against the institution of marriage. Vanessa Redgrave’s depiction of her in the film is far too lovely.

Despite her discomfort talking in public, Olive approaches theorist Sara Ahmed’s figure of the feminist killjoy who ruins everybody’s fun and happiness by speaking her mind. As Ahmed writes, “feminists are read as being unhappy, such that situations of conflict, violence, and power are read as about the unhappiness of feminists, rather than being what feminists are unhappy about.”

Olive incessantly points out the relationship between female suffering and suffrage, but her politics don’t get much more advanced than that. For James, the feminist movement thus functioned as a novelistic tool to portray women as unhappy rather than to designate why they’re unhappy. As suffragist Lucia True Ames penned in her 1886 review of the novel in *Woman’s Journal*, “We hear a great deal about the great ‘cause’ for which all are laboring, but exactly what the ‘cause’ is, does not seem apparent.” Every now and then James vaguely alludes to how, for example, suffragists want “certain laws to be repealed by Congress and by the State legislatures, and others to be enacted,” but on the whole the novelist is completely disengaged from the political discourse and activism of 1870s Boston.

The book therefore isn’t really about feminism. It’s a novel about a vulnerable heroine torn apart by desire and politics. Since she’s a woman, she can’t subscribe to both. She can only dwell in her negative feelings.

We all know history is a political project, a stringing together of violently hegemonic and teleological narratives. Foucault teaches us that history relies on and exacerbates the link between knowledge and power. To rewrite history, we must turn to critical theory. Doing so is an ethical act, a political practice, an ambition to make the world hurt slightly less than it already does.

While learning history has the potential to be abolitionist, it’s impossible to become emancipated from history’s shackles. We cannot strive for emancipation. But as feminists and queers, we can
endeavor to be abolitionist, to spurn practices and institutions that are wrong. We can be killjoys. Despite being embedded in disparate ideologies ourselves, we must approach history—through writing, activism, and art—with an abolitionist commitment to continuing the fight.

Can we move on while looking backward? We’re stuck in this wretched impasse: the past hovers behind and the future in front. I want to be stuck, and I don’t want to be stuck. It’s infuriating. Instead of moving on, we need to look backward to contemplate how history affects us in vital ways now—what theorist Heather Love calls “feeling backward.”

In the gay progress narrative, feeling backward rouses too many ugly and negative emotions to be comfortable. Today most gays don’t like to feel backward to times when they weren’t as powerful or rich or healthy. It’s far easier to talk about pride than shame, despair, or loneliness.

The first time I heard of a Boston marriage was in high school. Some Boston-based LGBT history or rights organization randomly sent not one but two copies of a glossy coffee-table book about Massachusetts’ fight for marriage equality to my high school’s Gay-Straight Alliance. On the cover there were two white gay men kissing in front of the Statehouse, showing off their wedding rings like idiots. The book traced the fight for marriage back to the Boston marriage, vividly chronicling in photographs gay and lesbian couples from the past hundred years.

Bullshit. The Boston marriage—a very queer partnership—was by no means the forebear to today’s normative model of gay marriage. It was outstanding precisely because it wasn’t a marriage.

Naturally, the book came to a halt in 2004 with Massachusetts’ legalization of gay marriage: white middle-class cisgender gay men and lesbians were basically just as privileged as their straight counterparts. After all, with the exception of gay adoption and military service, and perhaps participation at Sochi, there wasn’t anything left for them to fight for.

What nerve the organization had to gift these books to us, the awkward queer kids. Were we supposed to look at the pictures of the happy white couples and share in their happiness, imagining that one day we too could be happy? That “it gets better”?

We didn’t give a fuck about marriage. Did gay marriage make us feel safer and more accepted in or outside of school? When people want to talk about how progressive Boston is, the first thing they say is that Massachusetts legalized gay marriage. But why should gay freedoms constitute a barometer of forward movement?

I moved back to Boston Pride, two months after the Marathon bombings. The celebrations coincided with my high school friend Liv’s funeral. I got off the bus from Canada with my big duffel bags and headed directly to the candlelight vigil in Copley Square. It was touching to see familiar faces of old friends and local activists and to mourn toger.

I can’t stop watching Liv’s YouTube poetry from years ago, the video where he says, “a strong woman once told me, there needs to be more of us. Strong women who stay and fight, who don’t get hit, stuck to the pavement.”
They figured it would be impossible to fight city hall. Authorities in Vilnius had already sold the last movie theater to developers. So two local artists made saving the cinema called “Lietuva” (Lithuania) into an art project. That way Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas wouldn’t measure success on reclaiming the theater but on seeing how far they could go. This aesthetic criterion freed them to launch an impractical project. They also acknowledge another—extra-artistic—reason for pressing past despair. It is an ethical imperative to protect public space. No amount of subsequent blackmail and bullying deterred them from the exhilarating obligation to participate in a free, post-Soviet society. The Urbonas project runs on the double motor of civic responsibility and experimental art. If it were not for civic commitments, Nomeda and Gediminas would not have taken this art assignment. And were it not for this work of art, Lithuanians would not have defended the political right to assembly. Meeting in public space literally sustains the res publica, which was imploding under rampant post-Soviet privatization.

Restrictions on assembly were inherited from Soviet times. Kitchens, where people normally cluster, continue today to accommodate only three people, maximum. By con-

1

This text was originally published as “Press Here: Cultural Acupuncture and Civic Stimulation,” in The Work of Art in the World, Doris Sommer, pp. 73–80. Copyright, 2014, Duke University Press. All rights reserved. Republished by permission of the copyright holder. www.dukeupress.edu.

2


3

Independence was declared on March 11, 1990, though recognition came a year later, first from Iceland, then the United States and others.

4

contrat, the beloved “Lithuania” is roomy and welcoming. Built in 1965, while the Soviets developed a people’s urbanism inspired by an exhibit in 1958 of U.S. modern architecture in Moscow, the cinema’s attractions include its sleek lines and broad access from a popular plaza. The same centrally located plaza had long been the site of demonstrations and meetings, including the anti-Soviet People’s Road to Independence. The building seated almost one thousand in the main hall and another eighty-eight in the intimate theater. This is substantial capacity for a city of only half-a-million inhabitants in a country of barely more than three million. The enormous lobby hosted poetry readings, art exhibits, concerts, even “decadent” jazz concerts. Relatively free from official vigilance, the cinema was a safety valve built into a totalitarian Soviet state. Throughout the 1990s, it showed mostly independent films, becoming the city’s art house and home for a successful international film festival. By 2005, when plans for demolition were announced, the Lietuva was about to celebrate its tenth annual festival.

It was technically a private limited liability company, with 93 percent of the shares owned by the Vilnius Municipality and 7 percent acquired by the fourteen cinema employees. The public future of the building and its accompanying plaza had been secured in 1994, when the company signed a State Land Lease that was good until 2093. Scandalously, “Lithuania” was put up for auction to private bidders in 2002. And tragically, the municipal government included the cinema among its treasures in a proposal in 2004 to designate Vilnius as Europe’s Capital of Culture. Almost everyone felt frustrated. What had been common—libraries, stadiums, concert halls, public swimming pools, and other recreational sites—became private or disappeared altogether along with the collective memories that places embody. During the twenty years of official independence since 1990, nothing public had been built. The only new structures were shopping malls and private housing. But no one protested. The very word “protest” conjured an unpopular Soviet ideology.

A first move was to invent “Vilma,” an e-mail list of artists and activists invited by Gediminas and Nomeda to formulate questions for the municipal government. Questions were an innovation akin to art. During Soviet times, questioning anything official was vilified as bourgeois backsliding. Complaints could be registered, but the consequences were either insignificant or unpleasant. By April 2005, “Vil-


6 The State Land Lease Agreement, operative until 2093 (Lease number N00 1194–1745). Article 8.1 determines the primary purpose of the land use: “the land lot can only be used for economic activities, associated with the mission of the cinema theater.”
ma" spurred a wildly heterogeneous coalition, though few artists joined because political art had long been associated with service to the state. But vegetarians, feminists, alternative educators, students of architecture, new media activists, leftists, nationalists, and neighbors came together “For 'Lithuania'” to create the Pro-Test Lab.

The clever name contains protest in the double sense of inclusion and control. The Lab’s activities would be experiments in art-making. Events in public spaces throughout the city included private screenings of sometimes pirated films, rock and folk concerts, milk bars, masquerades, all of which produced almost daily interruptions of neo-liberal business. There were more than sixty events in the first half of 2005, a barrage that worried the new owners of “Lietuva” enough to resell the property to “Paradise Apartments,” a front for Lithuanian and Russian investors.

The movement started modestly inside the movie house. Gediminas and Nomeda proposed to interview patrons of the final International Film Festival and to produce a documentary called *Cinema Spring* in reference to the Prague Spring of 1968. The cinema staff gave more than permission; they invited the collective to occupy become headquarters. The chart the explosive difference huddled in the cinema to sit sions. The solution was to that kept the Lab clear of that comes instructively collects that develop mix thickened when t meeting to change it. “For ‘Lietuva’,” to without Quotation ' presented new group Party, true Society of heritage expression movement was

Among the movement a photo of eating po famously is an er huge

Urbonas and Urbonas, “pro-test lab dossier: / 2005”

It is impossible to know who they are because the identity of corporate shareholders is protected from public scrutiny.
Editors’ note:
These six posters advertise an archive that collects “images and props” used in the 2005 Pro-Test Lab: a series of acts of activism at The Lietuva cinema by Urbonas Studio. The text preceding this project, “Press Here: Cultural Acupuncture and Civic Stimulation” by Doris Sommer, provides further introduction. In 2014, this ongoing narrative and artistic intervention was revisited through an architectural competition to develop administrative offices and a museum on the same site. One of the entries, by NADAAA in collaboration with Cristina Parreño Architecture and Urbonas Studio, follows this project in the issue.
In 2002, the Vilnius municipal authorities privatised and destroyed during the past decade is named after the country: Lietuva.

During the Soviet period, cinema was a California gold rush, speculative real-estate market targeted cinema buildings. In a mad period of privatisation (and legal proceedings) against the principal victims of their rampage.

In March 2005 the former Lietuva ticket office of protest (and legal proceedings) against the principal victims of their rampage. 

Public space, land-mark buildings, cultural life, and public opinion have been the principal victims of their rampage. 

With a bit of dash, turning “pro” and “test” opinion have been testing the potential of protest.

WHAT IS THE PRO-TEST lab? 

The PRO-TEST lab archive is an art project that can produce with the act of protest. The archive method is simple: tell the population that a market economy is the best way to erase the Soviet period. 

As such has played an important role in the collective production and participation, aiming to create a community that would activate the imagination of protest scenarios; to both inspire action to create a community that would activate the people’s cultural and political imagination.

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After independence, as Soviet structures crumbled in a wholesale fashion, the real-estate market targeted cinema buildings. In a short period of time, the country was caught up in a mad period of corporate privatisation of public space.

I. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

II. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

III. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

IV. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

V. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

VI. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

VII. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

VIII. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

IX. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.

X. Public space, land

A. Lietuva, the principal victim of the mallification of the country.
Lithuania has been caught up in a mad rush to build huge movie theatres, reflecting the country's Soviet past, making the country attractive for everything. Convince them that they are the principal victims of their own West land-grab or a California gold rush, turning the largest shopping mall into a representative multiplex. Hollywood movies: thus, the demolition of one of the cinema's most important landmarks - the famous Lietuva movie theatre in Vilnius, which is representative of the city's cultural identity, as it never bore any Soviet overtones (i.e. it wasn't called the cinema of any particular country).

The Lietuva was crucial to the cultural life of the city, and its destruction was a blow to its population that a market economy is a kind of meritocracy, aiming to create a community that would live up to the expectations of the country's leaders. The film 'The Lietuva' was an important part of the film festival's programme, and it has a special place in the hearts of the citizens of Vilnius, who consider it a site for testing the potential of protest. The pro-test lab addressed issues of political and social activism, providing a platform for the public to gather, debate, chat, and hang out, creating a space for various forms of protest (and legal activities). The more they imagine a positive kind of protest, the more they activate people's cultural and political imaginations. The citizens of Vilnius who are students and pensioners, intellectuals and workers - all trying to imagine a positive kind of protest. With the help of the authorities, they have been able to imagine a positive kind of protest, turning "pro" and "test" into action.

In March 2005, the former Lietuva ticket office in Vilnius was squatted and the authorities decided to redevelop the country at a rate of 1,000 seats per annum. As part of this process, the Lietuva was demolished and replaced with a new building in the suburbs. The new building is representative of the city's cultural identity, as it never bore any Soviet overtones, and it is expected to be ready by 2010. The authorities are hoping that the new building will attract investment and development, and that the demolition of the Lietuva will be a success story for the country's privatisation programme.
LIETUVA CINEMA II: MODERNAUS MENO CENTRAS
IN COLLABORATION WITH
CRISTINA PARREÑO ARCHITECTURE
AND URBONAS STUDIO

Located on a site of polemical charge, where the Lietuva Cinema Theater currently sits, the competition for the Lithuanian Architects Union finds itself in a precarious historical moment; at once announcing the inevitable destruction of a historical Modern building, but also a building whose legacy is rooted in its affiliation with the Soviet presence which dominated Lithuania after the Second World War. The mission to assign new programs to the site—the combination of administrative offices and a world-class museum—is also a significant materialization of the shift in the cultural values of our time. It registers the presence of free-market forces in their ability to fund cultural venues while underlying the idea that once culture is not promoted from the position of governmental centrality the nature of institutions tend to change, bringing seemingly disparate programs into productive dialogue. For this reason, this proposal is rooted in a fascination of how to merge these two building programs, not so much side by side in their differences, but moreover encrypted in each other and interlocked in a meaning embrace. This requires the understanding of how a hybrid building can be developed as a new form of invention, but also, how each program—both the workplace and the museum—can benefit from this transformation on their own terms.
Ground floor plan
“Because I am so melancholy,” Alberti writes, “it is perhaps suitable to live in that place where men go when they dream.” There, so he adds, “one is permitted to rave in safety and to one’s heart’s content.” With such words, Alberti begins one of the earliest dream journeys of the Renaissance, remarkable in its Bosch-like grottesqueness. Entitled Somnium and written as part of a larger work called Intercoenales (Table Talks), the dream was one of about two dozen short dialogues that explore a range of issues from family, love, and politics to life itself. Compiled around 1440, Intercoenales, as the title indicates, was intended to be read inter coenas et pocula, that is, “between food and drink,” in other words as entertainment pieces between the courses of a banquet. The dialogues are, however, far from being just entertainment, and Somnium is certainly one of the strangest if not the darkest of these pieces. Coming from a person who is otherwise known as the epitome of the “The Renaissance Man,” its less than optimistic tone is perhaps a bit puzzling.

The dream is, of course, not a real dream, but a literary genre. The fifth century Macrobius codified the different types of dreams in his Commentary on Scipio’s Dream. There are five: insomnium, a

1 The translations used in this article are mine. For the full English translation of Intercoenales see: Dinner Pieces, trans. David Marsh (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987).
nightmare; visium, a daydream; visio, a prevision of the future; oraculum, a declaration by a venerable person, and finally somnium, a political allegory, which is what we more or less have here. By the beginning of the 13th century, such dreams had begun to be used by philosophers, theologians, saints and lay writers. King Henry I of England, for example, had a somnium in 1130 in which he saw himself attacked by representatives of different elements of society. There is Boccaccio’s Amorosa Visone (1342) and Brunetto Latini’s Tresoretto (1262). Perhaps most relevant is Roman de la Rose by Guillaume de Lorris, composed around 1220, a work known to both Dante and Petrarch, which begins with the lover falling asleep at the end of a beautiful spring day. His various subsequent experiences revolve around the tension between love and suffering, and between the real and the illusory. But Amorosa Visone in fifty cantos is far different from Alberti’s short Somnium. Amorosa Visone is a story of love interspersed with didactic lectures that charts the “victory” of wisdom, glory, wealth, fortune and love. Somnium, though it does address the futilities of love, is a social commentary with a minimum of allegoricalism.

Alberti’s dreamer is a man called Libripeta, whose name means Lover of Books. A scholar and a philosopher, he has just emerged from a type of underworld, and tells his story to an acquaintance, Lepidus, whose name means something like Mr. Charming. Lepidus is the proverbial man about town. But he is not completely devoid of intelligence. At the end of the story, when Lepidus advises Libripeta to “take a bath” and to wash off the stink from the sewer through which he crawled, he is implying that Libripeta should wash off more than just the stink, perhaps even the “wisdom learned from the sewer” (...cloacarium prudentiam...). But it is unlikely that Libripeta can completely cleanse his mind, for his discovery of the terrible truth of life leaves him in a quandary of how to proceed with his knowledge.

Though Libripeta is a character in Alberti’s imagination, he is strikingly close to an autobiographical figure. And this forces us to consider the words in De pictura where Alberti states that “we should paint what we see.” Clearly the instructions to the painter keeps him focused on the real and not on the ‘philosophical’ with all its potential for melancholic despair. The Albertian painter is, of course, told to learn a little oratory and some mathematics, but he is given one and only one book to read, namely De picture itself, thus entrapping the Albertian artist in a world that allows not a single, dangerous glimpse into the darker realities of life. The artist, just like his work, is a necessary illusion. Between the philosopher and the artist, the one “dreams,” the other paints; the one knows too much, the other not enough. The disaster that is society thus seems to require a cunning between different types of knowing. The painter is not just a skilled artisan, but an ontological construct that perpetuates and even constructs a type of perspectival mythology. The painter embraces the self-interest of self-deception.

The crisis of mimesis—or perhaps better stated, the crisis that is mimesis—becomes even more complex when we take into consideration the famous treatise De re aedificatoria. Scholars when studying this work have missed a rather important component, a description in Book 8 of a carefully-planned journey from the countryside to the center of town. In Chapters 1 and 2 of the book, the author is on the outskirts of the city. Traveling along a highway he views “houses and villas, a fine hill, now a river, now a spring, now a clearing.” He soon comes upon great and noble sepulchers of important families, and then upon monuments to the heroes of the city. In Chapter 3 he passes other graveyards with obelisks, pyramids and small chapels. In Chapter 4 he even pauses to read some inspiring and noteworthy inscriptions on these monuments. Then he describes, in Chapter 5, large watchtowers just outside the city, testament to the city’s strength. At the beginning of the next chapter, he announces: “It is now time to make our entrance into the city.” Going through the city gates and over bridges and following the streets, he observes the bustling squares, the protected porticoes and the various types of markets. Then in Chapter 7 he comes to public theaters and other places of diversion and amusement along with amphitheaters and public walks. Finally he comes to the center of the city, where he sees the senate house, the temple, shady groves and lakes for swimming and finally—and how could it be otherwise—a library.

These two ‘walks,’ the one in Somnium and the other in De re aedificatoria, seem to be set against each other. The first one takes place in the underbelly of the city where Libripeta traverses a large volcanic garbage dump; there he sees things that are thrown away—everything that is except stupidity. The other walk takes place in a world at peace with itself and portrays a society in an untroubled condition. Here too, there are precedents, such as that great masterpiece of visualization, The
Allegory of Good and Bad Government (1338) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Siena Town Hall. On the one wall of the Sala dei Nove the fresco shows the virtues lined up along with the elegant figures of Justice and Truth. The city behind them is home to busy merchants and to men and women doing their daily tasks. There is a wedding procession, and maidens can be seen dancing gracefully. On the other side of the room, we see an image haunted by the self-assured presence of the demonic tyrant holding a dagger in his hand. The city is in disrepair and to one side a woman is sawing herself in half.

This means that if we take Alberti’s De pictura and De re aedificatoria as stand-alone writings, we will come to the predictable conclusion that these texts are ‘the first’ such treatises on their respective topics and that the primary reference is to Latin antiquity. Somnium changes all of that. It shows a much more plausible continuity not just with medieval worldviews, but also with the powerful dualism of good and evil. Alberti, however, is not arguing for a religious resolution to evil nor are we dealing here with the conventional theological view that knowing evil helps us understand the value of good. What makes his approach different, and perhaps one can say modern, is that the knowledge of good and evil are separate and distinct epistemological realms. The Albertian architect and painter have to operate without knowing of the truth of social reality. Thus, unlike a medieval morality tale, and unlike the Sala dei Nove where the two worlds are equipoised, here evil does not release itself into the higher metaphysics of good. It exists in its own world, meaning that Libripeta struggles with the resultant melancholy and its concomitant “safety of madness” that will never resolve itself into redemption. As Lepidus so artfully points out, Libripeta will always keep his books “under lock and key.”

Alberti was well aware of the ancient satirist tradition that aimed to expose the vices of a world. But I would hold that to locate Somnium in that context does not go far enough. Somnium evokes an underlying fear, one that is so potent in Alberti’s mind, that it has to remain fully compartmentalized. There is no reconciliation of opposing forces and this means that the project of an edifying morality has collapsed into two distinct operations, the one suitable to philosophy and to the soul of the melancholic, and the other suitable to aesthetics and to the activities of the artist and architect. It is not the medieval both-and, but an all-together new, either-or. Aesthetics—i.e. the theory and practice of art and architecture—has to be operative as an extension of the ideology of the ‘good’, but to perform in this way it has to be cleaved from other more esoteric forms of theory and practice. Perhaps it is here that we can see the seed of an emerging crisis in architecture about its theoretical purpose in the urban and social sphere.

**LEPIDUS** Great Gods! Is that really you, Libripeta? What’s going on here? Why are you covered with foul mud? Where are coming from? Where are you going?

**LIBRIPETA** Me? I came from down there.

**LEPIDUS** What? From that fetid sewer? My god man.

**LIBRIPETA** Ha! Ha! Ha!

**LEPIDUS** Madman!

**LIBRIPETA** Not at all. Indeed, you should know that the greatest wisdom moved me to down there.
LEPIDUS I understand: you probably heard that some ancient tomes were in the sewer, and so you descended into it because you are so dedicated to collecting books.

LIBRIPETA Your limpid thought Lepidus, always did lack the salt of wit.

LEPIDUS Insults of this kind do not please us uneducated ones whom you publicly call ‘demented’ and ‘insipid’. Nonetheless, tell me about the sewer-wisdom of yours.

LIBRIPETA You want to hear?

LEPIDUS Yes.

LIBRIPETA I will tell you then. While reflecting on the flood of fools in which thus age abounds, I had the idea in my typical melancholic way (in mentem moribus) that the most suitable place to live was where men go when they dream. There you are safely permitted to rave, just as dreamers do, to your heart’s content. I therefore visited a certain priest, who was clearly learned in the art of magic and from him I learned how to use a set of exalted spells to set out for that province to which dreamers fly. Immediately I hastened to go there.

LEPIDUS And thus you remained awake in the midst o’ remarkable

LIBRIPETA Does it please you?

LEPIDUS Like

LIBRIPETA Yes, I am glad that your more observations I more along in the prose aspect of the land andy. These credible even along in the

LEPIDUS And thus you remained awake in the midst of dreamers? What a remarkable story!

LIBRIPETA Does it seem remarkable to you?

LEPIDUS Like nothing else.

LIBRIPETA You will find the observations I made in that land even more remarkable. I saw rivers, mountains, meadows, fields, whose aspect would cause you to gape. These observations are incredible even to mention. They belong in the writings of a philosopher!

LEPIDUS There you have it! Since you consider our whole age unable to speak for itself and wish yourself to be regarded as a philosopher, you can’t neglect this opportunity for recognition. I know you will fulfill your philosopher’s duty by recounting your dream.

LIBRIPETA I wish my talents would suffice to pursue this matter! For I want to describe all the other things, but especially that river which is located at the entrance of the land and which is by far the most remarkable of all the things I could tell or even perhaps some dark river of the nether? Or did it flow with the
In the summer of 2008, a public display of preservation politics established Alison and Peter Smithson’s 1972 public housing scheme Robin Hood Gardens as the new face of the British architectural press. The building rose to stardom following a profusely publicized campaign pursued by the British architectural journal Building Design (BD) and Twentieth Century Society (C20) to protest the Department for Culture Media and Sport’s (DCMS) controversial decision to exclude it from a national register of listed buildings, making it a vulnerable target for developers. Despite earlier successes to immortalize a number of Brutalist housing schemes from the 1970s, the Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979, and specializes in lobbying for the conservation of British architecture from the period after 1914 through research surveys and campaigns. Today, buildings completed after 1945 consists of only 0.2% of all listed buildings in Britain. 

1. The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979, and specializes in lobbying for the conservation of British architecture from the period after 1914 through research surveys and campaigns. Today, buildings completed after 1945 consists of only 0.2% of all listed buildings in Britain. “Twentieth Century Society,” accessed 10 Aug. 2014, http://www.c20society.org.uk.

2. The process of listing buildings began in England in the aftermath of World War II as a means of determining the extent of reconstruction based on historical and architectural interest. Today the list is a national government register maintained by the Secretary of Culture with the statutory advice of English Heritage, an executive non-departmental public body of the British Government sponsored by the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). Listed buildings are divided into Grades I, II, and III, with I being the most protected. Criteria for listing include age and rarity, aesthetic merits, selectivity (whether it is the most representative example of a style or era), and national interest. State of repair is not usually considered a relevant factor in the decision. “English Heritage,” accessed 10 Aug. 2014, http://www.english-heritage.org.uk.
same era through the process of listing, Robin Hood Gardens did not meet the criteria for this rare form of deification. The verdict was based upon recommendations from English Heritage that the building did not possess sufficient architectural or historical interest, with many arguing that the significance of the Smithsons’ concepts was better embodied in their polemics than in their built work. Other members of the advisory committee dismissed the building’s historic significance by recalling that it was a latecomer on the scene of British Modernism, “obsolete even before its first tenants moved in.”

The dispute was spurred on by the Secretary of Culture Andy Burnham’s decision to grant a “Certificate of Immunity from Listing” to the Tower Hamlets Council, the owners of the property. Adding insult to injury, this document ensured that Robin Hood Gardens was exempt from listing for the next five years, thereby placing it under immediate threat to demolition to make way for the Blackwall Reach Regeneration Project—a large scale redevelopment that proposed to replace the current 252 apartments on site with up to 1,700 new homes, 700 of which would be designated social housing or shared ownership. The development would also include a number of communal amenities including a day care center, a relocated mosque, and a public park. The story is one that the architectural community is all too familiar with—a battle of wills between preservationists and developers, between the communal ideology of the welfare state and the brutal efficiencies of a private real estate market, played out through an assessment of architectural merit.

Reputations emerge in the midst of a good scandal. Similarly, architectural canons are forged through an interpretive process in which heated public debates can act as a catalyst to propel a building from relative obscurity to monumental status, seemingly overnight. In Meaning in Architecture, Charles Jencks remarked that “the Brutalists were some of the first to show that a critic could praise a man by faint damnation,” alluding to the ease with which Brutalist architects embraced the contentious quality of their buildings. While their concrete facades exude an air of unshakable unity, Brutalism is governed by a pluralist logic. On the one hand, it served as a critic could praise a man by faint damnation, the public image of shifting bureaucracies. At the same time Brutalist buildings, in the form of housing projects throughout Britain and Europe, functioned as reluctant containers for the quotidian habitats of countless individuals—all of whom felt entitled to an opinion on their architecture.

In December 2012, final approval of the redevelopment scheme was granted and today Robin Hood Gardens is undergoing its final stages of demolition, an extended process that began in April 2013 nearly five years after the preservation campaign. During this limbo of stalled development, which resulted in part from the financial crisis, the British media was able to transform the previously insular process of listing buildings into a drawn out public spectacle. Robin Hood Gardens emerged at its center, serving as a symbolic martyr for doomed post-war housing projects nationwide. While the campaign built its case on the significance of physical heritage in architectural preservation, one might argue that the corporeal presence of the building was rendered
negligible within these debates, reduced to an inert backdrop for a process of cultural production that quickly outgrew its material origin.

Architectural production resides within a discourse of originality. The birth of a building is often anchored to a single author and a year of completion, establishing a sanctified link between its physical form and a specific instant in time. The birth of interpretation, on the other hand, allows the success of a building to hinge upon its ability to point away from that origin, both forwards and backwards, to a much broader field of constantly shifting criteria. In Architecture and Its Interpretation, Juan Pablo Bonta proposes a reading of buildings as semantically charged objects prone to disputes. He adopts a quantifiably approach to architectural criticism through a semiotic analysis of the ways in which opinions are formed, spread, and fade—a kind of origin theory of the architectural rumor. Bonta describes the formation of architectural canons as a cyclical five-stage process that consists of Blindness, Pre-Canonical, Canonical, Dissemination, and finally Silence. As the building gains recognition, a cacophony of divergent reactions emerge and are distilled, with the consensus of a few authoritative voices, into an accredited set of accepted truths. From there, these authored accounts disseminate through the repetitive spread of chatter from a small group of architects to a wider audience. The cycle concludes when all meaning is exhausted and the building is forgotten, returned back into obscurity. The process reinforces a clear distinction between the physical shelf life of building materials and the endurance of interpretations that form around it, fueled by the reverberant power of gossip. By treating bricks and mortar as superficial emblems capable of representing multiple agendas at different points in time, these categories provide a useful framework for reading the history of a work of architecture through a game of who said what, when, and where.

One of the first reviews of Robin Hood Gardens, written by Peter Eisenman, was published in Architectural Design in September 1972, the year of the building’s completion. The essay presents a fitting prehistory to this chronology. Eisenman argued that Robin Hood Gardens was a compromised scaling down, both literally and figuratively, of the Smithsons’ heroic urban visions for Golden Lane. For him, the project failed to integrate the scale of the idea with the contingencies of time and place. During the project’s construction, Peter Smithson had aspired to such large-scale thinking, remarking in one interview that Robin Hood Gardens was “just big enough for us to say, and for people to read, a whole sentence in the language of architecture.” Eisenman disputed this statement, arguing that while Golden Lane was able to link a series of sentences into a universal discourse on inhabitation, Robin Hood Gardens remained a mute statement in isolation.

Architectural reviews are often based on the assumption that a building has something to say, speaking on behalf of its architects, its inhabitants, or even an entire aesthetic movement. This mode of criticism also reinforces the central role of authorship in the interpretive process, suggesting that individual works can only be read as an instance of the architect’s body of work. The Smithsons’ influence today is primarily attributed to their unbuilt and conceptual projects that address the theme of inhabitation, two widely discussed examples being the 1952 competition entry for the Golden Lane Estates (Fig. 1), mentioned above, and the 1956 Patio and Pavilion installation at the Whitechapel Gallery (Fig. 2). While Golden Lane coined the formal typology of the “streets in the sky” as a precedent for housing, the Patio and Pavilion presented a scaled down model for the Smithsons’ social, and programmatic agenda. Together, the two projects established a genealogical backdrop against which Robin Hood Gardens was received. Eisenman’s review—incidentally one of the only reviews of the building from the time—not only illustrated the apathetic initial reception of the project, but went on to suggest that the building failed to embody the Smithsons’ theoretical ideals visible in these projects, pointing to the loss through translation in the move from conceptual work to built work. In a repetition of fates, this was the same opinion voiced by English Heritage sixteen years later in their refusal to recommend the building for listing—once again, it was deemed
In comparing the critical climate of both its completion and demolition, the physical lifespan of Robin Hood Gardens was neatly bookended by damning reviews—at both points in time, backed by different authorities, the architecture itself had nothing of significance to say.

Similarly tepid attitudes prevailed in the years leading up to its planned demolition. A quick survey of the building's publication history in BD's archives reveals only three articles published between 2005 and 2007 that allude to Robin Hood Gardens tangentially, including a snide book review on an Architectural Association publication from a symposium on Peter Smithson from 2003. Titled “Who cares about the Smithsons anyway?” the review was written by Christopher Woodward, who worked for the Smithsons between 1963 and 1971 as a project architect for Robin Hood Gardens. Thirty years later, Woodward points out the discrepancy between the Smithsons’ ideology and the built project, and dismisses the building as merely the outcome of “the gung-ho enthusiasm of the chair of the Greater London Council’s housing committee.”

Beginning in February of 2008, an altogether different account emerged in a series of elegiac petitions by renowned architects and historians in BD, claiming Robin Hood Gardens as an undisputed monument to post-war British architecture. The myth unfolded through a proliferation of over a hundred articles, published shortly after the DCMS’s refusal to list the building. The pieces were often preceded by titles announcing an air of lyrical urgency—“To the Rescue of Robin

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10 Excerpts from an open letter to English Heritage’s advisory committee from John Allan, director of Avanti Architects and a member of the committee. “...But while the principles of Golden Lane had by then been dramatically built out by others at Park Hill, Sheffield, the conditions there bore little similarity to the site in Poplar and what had once represented innovation no longer did.” “Robin Hood Gardens,” English Heritage Conservation Bulletin, No. 59, 12, Dec., 2008, 31.

11 “Robin Hood Gardens was actually the outcome of the gung-ho enthusiasm of the chair of the Greater London Council’s housing committee and the Smithsons’ determination to build an instance of the ‘streets in the air’ premiered in their competition entry for the Golden Lane housing of 1954.” Christopher Woodward, “Who Cares About the Smithsons Anyway?” BD, 22, Apr., 2005.
The imperative force of these headlines provided the authoritative blank slate required to rewrite Robin Hood Gardens into the architectural canon, at the same time erasing the complex history of its reception up until that point. In an ironic twist of fate, its inevitable demolition had the opposite effect of elevating the building to the status of heritage—bypassing debates about the architecture itself.

Bonta’s biomorphic chronology implies an evolutionary progression in our interpretation of architectural canons. However, all natural processes are subject to disturbances that have the ability to create kinks and folds in its internal logic. Robin Hood Gardens found itself precisely in this state of distortion during the 2008 debates—the threat of demolition performed the role of a catalyst, compressing what was as a gradual, and linear process of monument formation into an instantaneous and lateral display of opposing opinions. This rapid leap to notoriety was urged on by a chain of petitions, design competitions, and exhibitions that expanded the building’s field of influence to a wider audience beyond the architectural community to national, and international media outlets like The Guardian, The Observer, and The Financial Times. Within the course of a few weeks this local demolition saga had become a ubiquitous news item. Everyone, it seemed, was talking about Robin Hood Gardens, but the discussions revealed a striking lack of consensus.

At the beginning of 2011, a motley collection of representations of the building appeared interspersed between three articles in BD, all published within the course of a month. The first to appear was a pair of images of architect Sarah Wigglesworth’s proposal for the refurbishment of the dilapidated flats. In them, the original architectural features of Robin Hood Gardens remain lovingly preserved, with subtle improvements to the interiors. The second included renderings of the Blackwall Reach Regeneration from the site’s developers,
Mies in the Basement.

The Ordinary Confronts the Exceptional in the Barcelona Pavilions

Andrés Jaque

The Unaccounted-For Inaccessible Basement

Although not easy to recognise at first sight, this photograph depicts something that is decisively shaping the way most of us view a key item in the modern architectural legacy: the basement of the 1986 reconstruction of the German Pavilion that Mies van der Rohe originally built for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition (Fig. 1). The original 1929 Pavilion just had a foundation, but its 1986 reconstruction included a reinforced concrete underground enclosure, that occupies the Pavilion’s entire footprint. The pieces of broken glass leaning against the concrete wall were originally installed as one of the grey-tinted panes that filter the light as one looks to the southwest from the Pavilion’s main space (although their shade is slightly lighter than in the original glazing brought from Germany in 1929).

In 2010, I was invited to create an installation that was exhibited at the Barcelona Pavilion itself in 2012. The Pavilion is one of the most venerated works of architecture, which means that any intervention within it is read not just as a self-referenced action but also as a way to challenge architecture as a discipline, and as a factual manifesto of an architect’s practice and position. Any transformation of the Pavilion’s image or spatial configuration, even if temporary, inevitably unleashes debates on the way architecture evolves and how its boundaries are transformed. Seeking to avoid any fetishistic or metaphysical approach to the Pavilion, however, I decided to initiate the process involved in designing the installation by first taking stock of the place as it stands now, in its actual materiality. I wanted to make an inventory of the Pavilion’s basic facts on a wholly pragmatic basis: from the standpoint of materials, maintenance and management; to the way the building is preserved and reproduced as a piece of real, everyday architecture; to the forms of habitation into which it has been configured. And so I found myself underground doing something no one had ever attempted to do before: namely, taking pictures of the hitherto unnoticed basement of one of the most photographed architectural icons of Modernity. The Pavilion’s basement is the place where an assortment of derelict items is hidden from the eyes of visitors: red velvet curtains that are beginning to fade, worn-out white leather cushions from the famous Barcelona chairs and stools, broken pieces of travertine that have been replaced by new slabs (Fig. 2, 3).

The concept of transit seems to be the key for understanding the actual way that the Pavilion is constructed. While the building has been characterized many times as something that contains the unchanged legacy of Modernity, it is actually made out of transitory realities. The Pavilion is not a snapshot of a single moment, but instead a blurred photo depicting layers of moving and transitory realities. The Pavilion was a project to bring the Weimar Republic into Barcelona, constructed by German architects, in transit in a foreign city, on their way to moving from one concept of architecture to another, to represent a society starting to gain distance from the post-war in order to become something new. The structure was made of materials that had travelled from Algeria, Italy, and Switzerland; opened by a king about to leave the country for good; and later reconstructed by architects willing to see...
Fig. 2  Fading curtains stored in the basement of the Barcelona Pavilion.

Fig. 3  Fragments of marble stored in the basement of the Barcelona Pavilion.

Fig. 4  Props and equipment for events stored in the basement of the Barcelona Pavilion.
form, composition and precious materiality the Pavilion has been massively documented, its ordinary life has remained an almost totally unstudied reality. This discrepancy explains why the basement has been an unknown entity for twenty-five years. One would normally expect such things as distressed curtains and glass fragments to be either somehow reused or summarily thrown away, and yet the Pavilion’s maintenance staff seem to feel the contradictory need to both preserve and hide this mass of assorted clutter. The unseemliness or impropriety of all these items in their current state of decay is paradoxically accompanied by the countervailing awareness that, although as aging objects they may no longer be fit to respond to the immediate experience of the never-aging Pavilion (or Mies van der Rohe’s sense of propriety, for that matter), they nevertheless retain a measure of value that justifies the effort (rather extraordinary in the case of the heavy travertine slabs) required for their storage and preservation in the basement. It is a game in which all these un-dead, un-discarded fragments of the Pavilion’s original brilliance are hidden from view, allowing everyone to pretend they did not exist, while their continued existence is ensured all the same. These hidden items are the architectural equivalents of the eponymous picture in Oscar Wilde’s Portrait of Dorian Gray. In the eyes of the people in charge of maintaining the building, it is as though the dilapidated pieces of velvet, glass or travertine, by virtue of having once been part of the Pavilion’s material substance, somehow magically retain the structure’s soul: in other words, the essence of Mies van der Rohe’s critical programme. The visible presence of these items on the ground floor would paradoxically jeopardize this programme, as they can no longer fully enact it in the prevention of its condition. Like the portrait in Wilde’s novel, they must be simultaneously hidden and preserved for the sake of what they once ideally represented. The Pavilion’s basement is also the space where a number of other items are stored: mostly spare parts, tools and machines with the power to prevent us from seeing the qualities of objects in and around the building—the purity and transparency of water, the shape of the bushes, the cleanliness of the glazing—as evolving features rather than permanent states (Fig. 4). All the hardware required to manufacture an aesthetics of the unchanging, based on images of a fixed, predictable nature, needs of course to be kept out of sight to hide the evidence that the world does not actually match any of these properties. Likewise, in the basement’s north-west area, the flags of Barcelona, Catalonia, Europe, Germany and Spain are preserved in brown boxes to dispel any association with architectural meaning. The basement both houses the military and political contexts as multiple or controversial. In the central room one can see a number of assorted props and gear (spotlights, pedestals, microphones, etc.) which are employed in events for which the Pavilion is rented on certain occasions, and then which are immediately removed from sight and carefully stored away after the end of the functions.

At one end of the basement, connected to the water filtering system of the Pavilion’s larger pool, is a sink where the staff wash the dishes they use when they dine together around a plastic table. On the wall right above the sink, staff workers have carefully pinned photos, portraits, exhibition flyers and newspaper cut-outs—not so different from the enigmatic and materialised un-built projects. Their shared intimacy and their affective ties gain visibility there in the basement, but leave no trace on the floor above it.

When reconstruction of the Pavilion was in the design stage during the 1980s, a point was reached where a critical decision had to be made. The staff charged with the responsibility of managing the restoration—Cristian Cirici, Fernando Ramos and Ignasi de Sola-Morales—confronted an unavoidable problem: what to make of the basement leading to the building accessible for people with disabilities in accordance with current regulations. Eventually, after a number of alternative schemes were considered, the team of architects decided that the only access to the basement would be via a rather dangerous and uncomfortable sixty-three cm wide spiral staircase. This design choice was enthusiastically supported by the project’sBudget, and made the possibility that the basement would ever be included in tours for visitors to the Pavilion. Arguments were made as to the role possible exhibitions located in the basement; the right to play in helping visitors understand various aspects of the original 1929 Pavilion and its 1986 reconstruction, such as their historical and political context; their underlying technological and constructional materiality; the locations in Algiers, Germany, Egypt, and Italy where the building materials had come from; or even the wealth of documentary resources potentially accruing from the partnership between New York’s MoMA, the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, the Escuela de Arquitectura de Industria and the Escuela de Industria de Barcelona. It is an important point, this applies to people, it also applies to things. You should not have a house full of architecture that has been hidden, full of things that are visible. Architecture selects things and people. Then we see, in good Architecture, when it is empty, people and things that, without being there, are present. If they are not there, it is because their presence has been renounced and good architecture is full of all sorts of renunciations.” De la Sota, A. (1986). Pabellón de Barcelona. Arquitectura 261–63, p. 4.

2. It is interesting to see how this eclipse of the ordinary both in architecture and in its archives constituted a shared sensibility in the 90s among many Spanish architects. For instance, Alejandra de la Sota wrote in 1996: “a scruffy person should not enter Mies’ Barcelona Pavilion. This is important [..]. This applies to people. It also applies to things. You should not have a house full of architecture that has been hidden, full of things that are visible. Architecture selects things and people. Then we see, in good Architecture, when it is empty, people and things that, without being there, are present. If they are not there, it is because their presence has been renounced and good architecture is full of all sorts of renunciations.”

4. With the demolition of the Instituto Nacional de Industria building (a concrete structure located on the east side of the Barcelona Pavilion) an opportunity arose to keep its basement as an interpretation centre connected with the Pavilion’s basement. This possibility was discussed and discarded. Fernando Ramos in conversation with Andrés Jaque. Barcelona, 2012.
The function the basement serves can thus be summarised in the following terms: it is the mechanism whereby the traces and reminders of all the negotiations, experiments, accidents, decisions, evolutions, and compromises that define the Pavilion's enduring presence become visible through time, in nature, across different political contexts and economic schemes—and not only in the way it is used to hide ordinary circumstances, but also in the way it is used to make things visible, creating and sustaining ommission of all that makes it possible if all the negotiations, compromises, technical limitations, ethical and ideological reflections or unaccounted for. Among many other collective realities, when considered, as a sustained endeavour to create new collective awareness, even though the transference process connecting them remains opaque and excluded from scrutiny. The significance of all these issues in the context of contemporary architectural practice needs to be explained further. As is invariably the case, architectural it means to be present in the two-story Pavilion of the 1929 Pavilion shows that its design and materiality were not as pure and coherent as the architects involved in the reconstruction initially thought. They decided to make a distinction between what they called "Mies' ideia" and what they thought had been the result of circumstantial accidents. "Mies' ideia" was what they had to reconstruct, and the other facts were what they had to eliminate in the reconstruction. This criterion was disclosed in an article published by Cirici, Ramos and Solá-Morales in 1983: "If we talk about idea and materialisation, it is because from the study of the project documentation and the interference of ordinary circumstances in shaping the Pavilion, proposes the improbable possibility of the autonomy between ideas and circumstances. This approach also suggests that, during the process of reconstruction, the German Pavilion's value was considered to be that coming from the unmediated translation of Mies' thinking into material architecture. The Pavilion's value was not accounted for as the result of the confrontation of a number of collective projects. Those different in functional terms. Considering the way that visitors relate to the building, it seems to be said that the architecture of the ground floor is designed to make visitors aware of a number of selected realities, people and stories—for example, materials: marble, onyx, velvet, glass; Mies; Minimalism; and Georg Kolbe's Dawn, the sculpture standing in the green pond. This awareness is achieved through the interaction of a number of carefully designed features, ranging from the Pavilion's insinuation to its formal and spatial layout, and the way it is used. In the visitors, something unaccounted for or unaccounted for. 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For me, the ultimate position for an architect is to produce drawings of architecture or ideas without clients. This primal idea of architecture is the engagement of the architect into the city, into the polity. This is the counterpoint of being submissive, being under something. We want to be independent and for that we need to find the situations in which we are interested in working. Our work last year was anchored to the question of territories: about the limit, about the border, about the frontier, about migration, about the body and questions of the body, whether it be individual or collective.

The term integral design is not part of our practice, because we still work on the idea of prototypes: the object is the prototype, the conclusion is the prototype, so is the element of experience.

If we start with this idea of each project as a prototype or test, can you introduce Memories of Tomorrow?
The initial idea for *Memories of Tomorrow* was to think about common elements in our environment. It wasn’t long before we focused on the moment of protest, how government authorities organize and answer to protest. One method is to put up barriers, *barrières Vauban*, that function as elements of informal architecture. We recognized the barriers had a function and then asked how we might transform and modify their meaning.

We started with who is in command, how they work, the design of the objects themselves and how they are placed. Of course it really depends on the organization of the protest, how the groups move, et cetera. It links to the answer you give to this movement and how you control it. These barriers can appear quickly because they are a kind of common object that no one questions. They are a part of, let’s say, the alphabet of the defense of police and government authority. They are part of a world imaginary about our history. Even the word in French is interesting: *barrières Vauban*. Vauban is the architect of Louis XIV, a military architect of defense. We started to think, how can we modify the meaning? Can we transform elements used for control, defense, or pressure, by putting pressure on them to be de-activated from their function? We decided to look at that.
ANN LUI
Who was the client for the garden installation at the Tuileries and Nuit Blanche? What was their response to the work you produced?

DF
The clients for Nuit Blanche and the Tuileries were cultural entities: one was the Art Fair of Paris for the Tuileries Garden, and the second one was the Cultural Institute of Policy of the Paris City Hall.

These kinds of commissions are linked to the economy of art. If I’m going to generalize, art provides a context that you play with where you can produce something unconstrained by viewpoints. The other economy is architecture. We operate in this case with a client and a contract. We usually start with an idea, but we don’t know where it will finish. We can provide something on the costs, we can produce something related to the context or the idea, but we don’t guarantee the final product will totally fit with what is expected. This position is not easy for a client to accept, but it’s also the name of the studio.

Mésarchitecture means I can fail in the commission asked of me. I want to have the right to say at one moment, I’m not able to do it. I don’t know at the beginning. I don’t want to say no, but it is a possibility at the end, to say no. Or for the client to say, no, I don’t accept this kind of proposal for me. So, our studio is a story of laptop papers, drawings, paper projects, but many of these paper projects are real commissions, strangely.

NF
I’m interested in speaking more about the collective body in relation to process. Did the performance aspect of your piece play off the tension of Nuit Blanche, within a social context of the masses at night and, let’s say, unconventional forms of interaction in Paris?

DF
For me, I think of the word negotiation. The proposal was very obvious in the Tuileries Garden and disconnected from the collective body. In the case of Nuit Blanche, it became more operative because we played with the idea of Nuit Blanche itself, with people walking around these barriers, with control, and with the hundreds of people waiting to see the piece. We inverted the barrières Vauban, through a dis-articulation or de-mystification of the elements. They lost function, and at one moment even became contemplative. When you arrived in the room after a queue of one hour—it was about one hour that people had to wait to get in—the elements of control were in front of you. Before the police arrived, there was a moment of confusion, panic. Of course, after two hours people started to know what would happen; there were rumors about
the installation. But the first hour was pure because people didn’t know how to negotiate the situation, if it was real or fake. Was it an aggression? Was it meant to be static?

AL
For our last question, I want to ask about the two titles for the project: both *Memories of Tomorrow* and *Love Songs for Riots*, and the use of the Bizet song. What is the role of romance in this project?

DF
Probably I will make a very simple answer. It’s because I still want to have something naïve in the projects. Something where somebody who is not an academic can get it in two seconds, just out of the appearance. That’s why the title of the first one, *Memories of Tomorrow*, is a bit more complicated, but *Love Songs for Riots* is direct. It’s simple and maybe a bit naïve also, or subversive in a way. Naïveté is—it’s a part of me, as maybe the last way to be a bit free in thinking.

I like pink, I like flowers, I like what I like. I want to tell people: the beginning of freedom is about saying what we like, what fascinates us, even it’s not part of the frame we are expecting from an architect.
Editors' note:

On May 15, 2014, Peter Galison and John May were invited to bring artifacts of "scandal and surveillance" to a 5th floor conference room in MIT’s Stata Center. Galison and May presented their chosen artifacts, which served as a jumping off point, in Part I. The conversation that followed is in Part II.
Galison and May, Part I

Nexus/Global Entry identification card

JOHN MAY:
I’ll begin with my “Nexus/Global Entry” identification card. When I began traveling regularly from Los Angeles for my visiting position in Toronto, I suddenly found myself standing in customs lines twice a week, for long and often very unpredictable waits, which seemed to vary with the number of border patrol agents the United States had decided to employ on any given evening. I would always, out of the corner of my eye, see the Nexus lane businessmen passing through with ease, waiting only the few seconds required for an automated retinal scan at a kiosk. Being a good student of Foucault I was very wary of, and very aware of, the biopolitical implications of lending my retinal biometrics to what I assume is a private contractor that operates the Global Entry and Nexus systems. Of course I quickly relented, and now have the card. So when thinking through privatization, and the concept of privacy more generally, I realized that when I applied for the Nexus card I had participated in a kind of self-privatization.

Facebook Privacy Settings

JM:
The second artifact is really almost comically obvious, but maybe it illustrates my point very clearly, and is therefore useful: the privacy settings on Facebook, which are obviously a hugely contentious subject, and hugely confusing, it would seem, even for adept users. I am not a Facebook user, but I know that one of the most common searches in Google is apparently “How do I change my Facebook privacy settings?”
Nest Thermostat

JM:

Building on these first two, the third artifact is this thermostat—the “Nest Thermostat”—which Google just purchased for over 3 billion dollars. In interviews following that purchase, it was clear that Google’s interest in the Nest was not so much in the thermometry technology of the object itself, which frankly is not terribly sophisticated, and many other companies produce digital thermostats. What they’re interested in is the network, the learning network, of distributive environmental monitoring and management that they see potentially piggybacking on Nest, and the way in which Nest is a kind of opening wedge into a vast but mostly unexplored field of domestic environmental management. Objects like this are obviously very much associated with systems like IBM’s command and control center for Rio de Janeiro, in which a kind of ongoing, “real time” analysis and monitoring of urbanism is being carried out under the auspices of a private contractor for an entire global population. Or another, similar example is Masdar City, by Foster + Partners: the dream of an urbanism that is fully monitored and manipulated and open to seemingly simultaneous intervention. So this first set of three artifacts form a kind of a triad around the concepts of privacy, urbanism, and “real time management.”
ATRAN

J M:
The fourth artifact is a bit different, but still related. I want to think through how we are "becoming private" right now. My sense is that the concept of privacy has undergone a fundamental technical transformation in recent years, and I'm not sure we really know what it means anymore. It means something very different than our previous conception of "private life." What are the contemporary technics of privatization? How do they work? So my fourth artifact is this very early missile guidance system which is called the ATRAN (Alternative Terrain Recognition and Navigation) and it was developed I think by the Goodyear Corporation in the mid 1950s and it was used in a series of early guided surface to surface guided missiles. The ATRAN system seems to be one of the earliest examples of the contemporary concept of "geolocation," which is to say, the idea of an object that knows where it is, independent of us. And what I think is fascinating about ATRAN was that it didn't simply "know where it is" more precisely than we do—because "precision" is not a sensible basis for comparing subjects and objects—but rather that its "geolocation" is founded on a very different sort of epistemological framework. It "knows where it is" according to a kind of probabilistic or statistical knowledge. With this, the idea of being "located" changes in some way. Maybe that's something that we could talk about.\(^1\)

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My final artifact is the Manual of Industrial Camouflage, which was produced by the department of architecture at Pratt, which during the war actually established a camouflage laboratory and set up for many years a kind of graduate research student laboratory that dealt with ideas about patterning and early pattern recognition, aerial perception and aerial visuality. But what I find more interesting is the fact that this entire technical legacy is now largely obsolete because the nature of hiding has changed drastically since that time. So perhaps we can also discuss the question of visibility and invisibility, and the status of vision within this new episteme of secrecy.

For my objects, I began with the provocation of your issue on scandals.
Scandals are often the revelation of secrets. I was interested what secrecy has to do with the scandalous, and this prompted my choice of objects. Let’s start with the idea of censorship in Freud, which, by the middle of World War I, he considered to be one of the central concepts of his whole life’s work. Freud’s first mention of (psychic) censorship began in the early 1890s when he began to think about the blocking of German language printed matter at the Russian border in Tsarist Russia, especially German texts brought into Russia that were defaced with black ink (which the Russians called “caviar”) and papier-mâché overlays.

For Freud, these material excisions became a model for the distortions that occur in our memories and dreams. In the First World War, Vienna had 2,000 censors. They would censor postcards, telegrams, and letters, as well as newspapers. The newspapers would lose fragments or even whole articles, leaving white spaces. Letters and postcards would have black spaces put over them. Freud was terribly affected by this and his whole way of working was in a network that functioned in the postal system. The postal censorship was devastating to him—beyond his work, Freud had two sons at the front, one was wounded and the other almost killed in a barrage. It was really traumatic for him. Papers and letters would disappear. He and his correspondents would fearfully indicate to each other, “I don’t know what we’ve done to offend.” During the war, while Freud was giving a series of lectures, he was quite explicit about the relationship between psychic censorship and postal/newspaper censorship. Public and private blocking worked together. They informed each other. Freud’s understanding of the psyche shaped his interpretation of what was happening during the war and what these censors were doing. Reciprocally, his understanding of the censors and their actions and our response to their actions shaped his idea of internal psychic censorship.

During the war Freud’s envelopes would come back stamped, “Censored in Vienna,” “Censored in Prussia.” If a letter crossed two guarded borders there would be a double censorship. Just then, Freud began to talk about the mind in an increasingly topographic way, but re-territorialized insofar as the territories were not purely spatial, but instead stood for functions of the mind. (Territories of the unconscious, preconscious and conscious, for example.) He would say: bringing a message from the unconscious to the preconscious is like coming to a border with a letter; the censor either lets it through or doesn’t let it through. The messenger then faces another censorship boundary from the preconscious to the conscious. So while censorship troubled Freud a great deal, there was a productive side to the black ink and white spaces. They provoked him to re-think the mind. A correspondent (for example) wrote him, critical of “Frau A” (meaning Austria, but symbolized to evade the real censor); in our dream life we swap out dangerous and upsetting dream thoughts for ones that could pass the psychic censor.

During World War I, there was a dream he had heard about from a colleague which Freud inserted into his 1900 *Interpretation of Dreams*. A patient talked about how she visited a wartime barracks; the patient reported, “Well, what if I were to mumble mumble,” when she came to something that was potentially sexually troubling. Freud said those mumblings, the not quite resolved words, were actually signs of the censor, and the apparent delirium in our dream utterances is in fact the result of excision by the psychic censor. This, Freud argued, was very much like what it was like to read a censored text. So all this is to say that there were indeed concrete aspects of censorship—the scandal of what’s being censored (such as talk of Catherine the Great’s lovers). Those were precisely the scandals, that the border guards patiently inked over. The excision was a form of enforcing a certain kind of secrecy against scandal and de-legitimization. Our private scandals—incestuous, murderous desires—met a similar fate at the hands of our internal censors.

Here's an example of World War I censorship that Freud would certainly have seen from the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* in Vienna. The article, appropriately enough, is called "Censorship", which appeared on the 20th of October, 1916. In fact, one of Einstein's best friends, Friedrich Adler, was a prominent socialist at this time. His father was head of the Socialist Party and a psychiatrist, and Friedrich Adler was a young physicist, colleague, roommate, classmate of Einstein's. Fritz (as he was called) was an International Socialist who aligned himself with Trotsky and Lenin, and not with the loyal oppositional, national-based socialism, not to be confused with National Socialism. On the 20th of October he was getting increasingly incensed. When this article came out, it was the last straw for Fritz Adler. In fact we know what the forbidden article said, because in the archives of the old socialist headquarters in Vienna I found that the uncensored versions of all the newspapers were still there. So you can see what the excised piece was of this article, and what it says is that no one has been successful getting Count Stürgkh, the Prime Minister of Austria, to actually speak about what is happening, his obsession with censorship. The next day Friedrich Adler, Einstein's friend, shot and killed Stürgkh of Austria. Censorship enraged an already uneasy populace—designed to avoid scandal, censorship was a scandal.

So, the issue of censorship has in fact many instances in history been the felt scandal of that repression, leading to major historical upsets. Which is why, in fact, censorship processes are universally censored. You can't talk about what you can't talk about. In fact in many places, including the United States, the rules of censorship are secret—to reveal them would be to disclose what you cared most about sequestering. So in a history of secrecy, I've been interested in how, when eventually the rules of secrets are declassified, you can begin to understand the dynamics of how these decisions are made. I think of this history as an anti-epistemology, a study that reveals a great deal about what, at a given time and place, we think knowledge is.

The objects of caviar and papier-mâché, of black overlay, of withdrawn texts are for me some of the most important—and scandalous objects of our time.

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Rorschach Test

PG:

Another early 20th century object that I find completely riveting is the Rorschach test. In a way, the Rorschach test is a different kind of scandal, it is a kind of pointer-object, always designating and surfacing the ever-present scandal of the unconscious. The scandal of secrets that we keep from ourselves. What we don't know about who we are and why we make the decisions that we do. The unconscious is still upsetting to people and Freud still makes people anxious. The idea that we do things that we're not in control of, that we are not cognizant of, that there's an interpretation to what we forget or which names we omit or that we forget we did something. The idea that there are no or few indifferent actions—pace a cigar being sometimes just a cigar. That was a scandal when it was discussed before, during and after Freud. When the "ink blot test" was introduced in 1921 by Hermann Rorschach, it was very deliberately aimed at finding a way to think about our characteristic modes of perception that would use the unconscious but not
be attached to any particular school of psychological thought. Switzerland has had this problem in every conceivable way; they always want to kind of create a kind of a trading zone between other countries whether it’s architectural theory or currency or banking practices. It’s been a survival necessity to be able to create something that was safe territory. The idea of what one would call random images, whether they were clouds or embers or cracks in the wall, had been for centuries a way of training or testing the imagination. In the late 19th century it became first a parlor game and then a psychological test. When Alfred Binet and others made it into a quantitative examination of the imagination, they asked: How many things can you associate to an inkblot? In a given period of time, how many things could you recognize and announce? You would say, “Cow! Hat! Chair!” and ring a bell every time you could see something. In this way, by the turn of the 20th century, the inkblot test was a measure of the strength of the faculty of imagination in just the same way you might test how many numbers a subject could memorize or how quickly he or she could grasp the features of a map at a single glance (a skill in the late 19th century wanted for military reasons). There were, for the psychologist Binet, ten faculties that you would test. The mind was thought to be an assembly of faculties under the governance of the will. That was a common picture of the self toward the end of the 19th century.

But Rorschach did something dramatically different. He was interested only secondarily in the imagination. He thought of his now eponymous test as a way of characterizing our perceptions. To make this test, he designed a cardboard box with ten mass-fabricated cardboard images known as inkblots. (I should add that the cards are not, in fact, inkblots they are paintings based on inkblots that he made.) You can still buy them. They are still very widely used. They’ve been administered many millions of times. They are used in custody cases, in job placement, less often but still in differential diagnosis in psychiatric hospitals. They are used forensically all the time. The Rorschach test has become a sort of master metaphor that we use, to the point where President Obama can get up and say in front of 350,000,000 million Americans, “I am a Rorschach,” and expect everyone to understand what he means.

The Rorschach starts out as this arcane piece of psychodynamic instrumentation and ends up as a master metaphor teaching us to think of ourselves in a certain way. That is precisely the kind of thing that interests me. The material objects that are caught up in larger issues; this cardboard box that was predicated on a certain change in the notion of the self: from an assembly of faculties to the “iceberg” self, where our conscious self is only a bit above the greatly larger part that remains unconscious. The cards want to know, so to speak, if you emphasize color over form or form over color. Do you focus on white spaces? Do you attend to the whole card or do you fix on little details at the edge? Those sorts of things can be revelatory in their statistical assembly—in characterizing a person’s “experience-type” as he called it. Who Are You?, the cards ask.

So if censored texts are my first scandalous object, Rorschach’s ten cards are my second. Inkblots, at least in Rorschach’s hands, have a different kind of scandal associated with them, not the public scandal of Catherine’s religiosity or her lovers, not the scandal of what Stürkh was up to in the censorship system in Vienna, but instead the scandal of outing our interior way of seeing the world.

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The third set of objects I take from a more contemporary situation. Here I’m taking one of the NSA PowerPoint slides that were revealed by Mr. Snowden. The current regime of secrecy and the scandal that it has precipitated is limitless, boundary-less. If you think of secrecy as going from the secrecy and surveillance of propositions and utterances in the First World War, or 1890 through the First World War, and systems of thought like radar, especially nuclear matters during the Second World War and the Cold War where you had whole scientific domains that were dangerous and off-limits for speaking about. Then, when you get to the present, in the post 9/11 era, people begin to say, “Well, symbols can be secret.” Mt. Rushmore can be an object of national concern, the access points and dynamics of it. The downstream danger posed by a dam breaking is not secret but it’s restricted. So it’s not in the old classification system, it’s in this penumbral area of what I’ve called parasecrecy.

From the Snowden revelations, we’ve learned that the NSA (with its British, French, and German allies) has developed a system of worldwide capture where, in the phrase of one of the NSA documents, “there’s no place to hide.” There is no outside. It’s all. There’s no out of surveillance, there’s no outside of being a target. No “hors surveillance.” This particular slide shows the sign-up times for Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, AOL, Apple. The scandal that’s been associated with that has been a different kind of scandal. It’s not just the reaction, which is—at the time we are having this discussion—a major diplomatic breach with Germany and with Europeans more generally. It’s realigned the lines of division in Congress. It’s one of the few things that isn’t Democratic versus Republican, it’s actually confused and conflated the usual cross aisle discussions. Suddenly, the companies, the private sector, are enormously embarrassed, and further, set into a potentially economically dangerous territory where their European competitors could say, “You should sign up with us because we are not the trusted affiliates of the NSA.” So, this has led to a very visible and potentially explosive split between the private sector and data collection by the national security agencies. Different kinds of scandals that have issued from this and a different kind of secrecy. Poindexter, of Nixonian early fame, had proposed this total information awareness system some years ago. Rumsfeld had actually not liked it and gotten rid of it, but in Poindexter’s wildest ambitions he did not have anything like what the NSA actually built up post 9/11.
THE REVELATION OF SECRETS:
PETER GALISON AND JOHN MAY ON
ARTIFACTS OF SURVEILLANCE
PART II
PETER GALISON:
So, those are my three objects. The black ink on paper and its analogs digitally, the idea of the secrets of the self embodied in the Rorschach cards, and these pictorial representations of the unlimited escalation of digital surveillance that has come to be such a set of secrets and scandals in our recent time.

JOHN MAY:
These raise so many issues, but two in particular: In the first place—and this overlaps with some of the artifacts I presented—a chart like this [NSA Powerpoint slide]. As you said, the network that has been built up here is beyond any bureaucrat’s wildest imagination fifty years ago, right? So, to what extent is a certain technical arrangement of secrecy right now radically undercutting the ability of our language to even generate a kind of sensible political field within which we can operate?

In my writing, one of my concerns has been: how do we frame for ourselves a sensible political field? Or how do we develop a kind of political compass within contemporary urbanism, in which our concerns will unavoidably be driven by existential questions—about nature and environment and human survival. How do we even frame a possible politics in a condition in which the technics of information and data seem to be rapidly undercutting and eroding all of the classical categories of politics that were built up over several hundred years—maybe 500 years or more—during the formation of modern democratic reasoning? This has obviously been Latour’s general question, but it can be asked more specifically of urbanism and design.

Related to that, the question of Freud’s censorship and how it (if I can use a slippery metaphor) “mapped onto” his diagram of the unconscious is really quite amazing. It reminds me of the fact that—as you have shown in your own work—in order to imagine the universe as a kind of mechanism early modern science had to first inhabit in a world in which there were clocks. In both cases we can begin to see the way in which the material, technical substrate of lived life makes its way into our deepest intuitions.

I’m wondering now, in our current condition: how do we think about automation? We’re confronted with a technical configuration of censorship in which there is now machine text recognition, and I would assume there are forms of automation and scripting as well—there must be so many documents, I can’t imagine we are redacting by hand anymore.

PG:
No. One of the things that you said, in these comments but also in your presentation of one of your objects, the automated city, reminds me of the ongoing attempt by companies to rethink the whole idea of a censor. There’s one company in particular that has fastened on the idea of streetlamps: there are about two to three billion streetlamps in the world, as it turns out, and you can convert them to LEDs and in a year recover the cost of the conversion. It’s a no-brainer that you would want to do that economically, just for the electricity saved. But in order to do that, you have to get a direct-current converter to convert the alternating current that goes up into the current streetlights. But once you have a DC source in the streetlamp you can attach sensors and link it up into an Internet of lampposts, practically for free.¹

What might these sensors be? I mean a facial or gait recognition camera system, a gunshot recognition sensor, an air quality sensor, something...

that measures the amount of ozone or hydrocarbons, or whatever you want—the cost in many cases is pennies. They're nothing! You know, a cheap digital movie camera costs not that much to begin with but if you take out the power supply it's really nothing. So, what this company wants to do is to wire up these lamps so that now they'll be...

J M:
Networked.

P G:
They'll be networked, for security. So for example, Newark airport is now wired that way. It used to be you could look for a black, egg-looking thing up there that would be watching you, and before that a bulky camera-looking thing with a red light in the front, but unless you would want to theatrically display your surveillance, that's all in the past. I remember there used to be an app that you could download, that would say how to navigate New York without going under a camera.

J M:
Right, or London.

P G:
Now the idea of avoiding location tracking? By 2014, that's just absurd, quaint, antique! There was a Supreme Court case about forbidding police from sticking on GPS devices onto your car to track it, but that owl had flown. Now the police can just track the car from license plate recognition or cellphone triangulation or even the already-installed GPS system that is in an ever-greater number of cars to navigate or to guard against theft.

J M:
Or, so often now people "privatize" themselves by choosing onboard location systems.

P G:
You can use your cellphone—when you look at the traffic report on your GPS those are tracking people's cell phones. So, the debate over sticking a device on a car, when you now see that in a movie it looks like early medieval technology, I say this because it seems like a very concrete instantiation of your interest in the relationship of national security and natural security. Once people start, seems like natural security that's just physical security counter-terrorism and

What does it?
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Stores like Target
credit card when
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Right, or London.
Were we really shocked by the R246 million (US$24 million) upgrade to South African President Jacob Zuma’s Nkandla residence? It was not a new concept. It was not a new architecture. In the “Secure in Comfort” Report by the Public Protector of the Republic of South Africa, Thuli Madonsela investigated the impropriety in the implementation of security measures on President Zuma’s private home. Madonsela found ethical violations on the president’s part with respect to the project: his family benefited from the visitor center, cattle kraal, chicken run, amphitheatre and swimming pool among others, built in the name of security. The president also violated the Executive Ethics Code after failing to contain the cost when the media first reported the then R65 million project in 2009. So-called “Nkandlagate” did not move from the African political norm that says loud and clear:

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Opulence is an acceptable perk for our leaders, a craving, an urge, a right. This duality of extreme wealth against extreme poverty has existed since colonial Africa, a discrepancy that is only increasing. Nkandla itself, where Zuma’s residence is located, has a population of 114,416, an unemployment rate of 43.9% with only 16.7% of the households having piped water and 8.1% with flush toilets. Considering the claims of corruption, exploitation of public funds and a required relocation of neighbouring households at the states expense, the presence of this spectacle in Nkandla is a clear representation of the difference in rights offered to members of the population based on wealth and power.

The built environment provides a canvas to portray the tragic relationship between power and the dying promises of the leaders of the continent. In his book *Architecture and Power in Africa*, architectural historian Nnamdi Elleh poses the following question:

Is it possible to evaluate the urban aspirations of Africa’s postcolonial leaders employing the same paradigms and standards with which we evaluate the urban aspirations of colonialist conquistadors?

Urban planning and design was a vital tool in colonial political and social control, seen in apartheid urban planning. Today, it is the same tool still being used by neo-African leaders. Social housing typologies from the period of imperialism are re-used by our governments. These “clones” are usually located in townships away from the city center, at the periphery, reducing access to economic opportunity because of the distant location paired with public transport systems that are inefficient, expensive and sometimes non-existent. This disempowers a proportion of the population and yet it is still the quickest solution for the state.

Juxtaposed with the clones of apartheid-era architecture, a new typology has emerged in contrast: the African “eco-city.” The third world has become a playground for developers with the creation of utopian eco-cites: Eko Atlantic City (Lagos, Nigeria); Konza Technology City, billed as “Africa's Silicon Valley” (Kenya); and Kigali City Masterplan, by OZ Architects and Surbana Urban Planning Group (Kigali, Rwanda), to only name a few. These developments are usually located in the urban periphery of Africa and promise functional, technologically relevant cities. Kigali Conceptual Master Plan was created by strategic planner Thomas E. Wheelchair as “an exemplary master plan that truly addresses the vision and development needs of an emerging city such as Kigali.” “Eko Atlantic,” according to the city’s sales office, “will enhance the status of Lagos and create a new and stronger financial hub for the whole of West Africa.” Even city masterplanners are explicit about strategies to separate the new cities from the existing. Referring to Amboseli New Town in Kenya deputy director of Metropolitan Planning and Environment, Dan Kiara, stated: “The idea is to disperse the current population from the current city of Nairobi. With fewer people in the city, it will be easier to provide services for those who remain in the capital while establishing new economic...
zones with specific themes.”

Yet while these cities may represent the dreams and ideals of the growing African middle class and reflect economic activity on the continent, they ignore their context. These eco or “smart-cities” promote, sponsor and urge the inequality gap in Africa, with many still living in poverty and informal settlements. The new developments set an urban aspiration of exclusion reminiscent of colonial jurisdiction. Like Zuma’s Nkandla residence, they in fact reveal the skewed distribution of resources in which opulent architectural products can only be enjoyed by an elite few.

Nkandlagate, which caught the attention of the media and public, in fact represented how urbanism in post-democratic Africa exposes the impact of government strategies. These strategies promote economic growth favoring a private sector while disregarding increasing poverty and inequality. Two examples expand on this condition. First, marginalized housing conditions that do not improve on historical injustices are outlined and compared to South African apartheid era housing policies that denied a “non-European” population the right to democracy. Second, the recently constructed Nova Cidade de Kilamba, a housing development in Angola, will be explored to represent trending idealistic developments that disregard the complexities of the continent including urban layout, informal settlements and economic realities. These developments are a deterrent to solving the housing issues in Africa as they promote microeconomies that once again exclude the poor. The peripheries of old and new African cities become an omnipresent, regenerating restrictive zone that deny many rights to the city.

I. South Africa’s Housing Policies

Consider the realm of social housing in South Africa for the evolution of housing policies and schemes to illustrate the current urban problems within the region. Today, a growing population, increasing urbanization rate and low housing delivery rates have attributed to a housing backlog in South Africa that reached 2.1 million units in 2013, a deficit that affected 8 million people. To make up for this backlog, housing structures for fast, easy and inexpensive construction have been constructed by the state with the former Minister of Human Settlements, Mosima Gabriel “Tokyo” Sexwale, acknowledging, “We should admit we started on a wrong foot. These Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses that people are saying are falling [down], not a good job was done there.”

Legislation undergirded these issues. Pre-1994, the National Party, South Africa’s governing party from 1948–1994, did not consider housing a white state problem, although it did claim some responsibility as the social system could not exist without the black working class. In 1924 the Industrial Conciliation Act was passed providing a basis for more orderly conduct in labor relations but only for “skilled” industrial labor, namely


12 Referring to the period under the National Party before the first democratic election on 27 April 1994 in South Africa.

13 “Africans had themselves to blame for their endemic housing crisis because they had been expanding too rapidly without acquiring the resources to satisfy their most pressing needs.” Hedler, P. 1991. “The Housing Crisis.” In Apartheid City in Transition. Contemporary South Africa Debates, by M Swilling, R Humphries and K Schubane (Eds), 197–217. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p 199.
unionized white workers, while excluding the pass-bearing black citizen from being considered an “employee.” Subsequently, this laid a foundation for dual systems in labor relations, white and non-white systems, with a large gap between “skilled” and “unskilled” wages. Housing had to be constructed with the required expertise, in effect increasing rental costs within poor areas where the non-white population resided.

The government had to find a solution to this problem as they could not expect communities to fund or provide housing. In 1959 law was passed for the independence of rural areas, or “homelands,” set aside for the black population. As there was no possibility for a unitary state in South Africa, this independence attracted the black population to their allocated land away from urban areas. The housing supply to the townships where non-whites resided thus decreased because of laws that only considered the black population deemed “permanent” to the city, ignoring the reality of the growing township population.

These townships “mediated the political and social exclusion of African people upon which both national and urban orders depended,” thus they were investigated and developed with intentions of control and surveillance by the state resulting in marginalized low-cost solutions with inadequate qualities on a domestic scale. The concept of the “right to the city” that views the city as inclusionary, reflecting human rights and empowering on a socio-political and cultural level was non-existent in such a scheme.

Of these housing types, the National Building Research Institute (NBRI) developed designs from architect Douglas Calderwood’s 1951 thesis “Native Housing in South Africa,” that explored housing options for “Non-Europeans” (NE) in apartheid South Africa. The NE/51 houses outlined a series of units from the 1951 thesis and identified each type with the corresponding drawing number as it appeared in the document (Fig. 1). The houses met the authority’s low standards and enforced a uniformity by limiting plot sizes and replicating the same typology, leading to streets continuing for up to eight identical units in length (Fig. 2). To contrast, the Non-European housing architectural trends at that time must be considered.

Modernism and later Regionalism prevailed in South Africa as architectural styles offering choice and creative autonomy. Young architects in the country were in the vanguard of an architectural evolution being recognised for their housing developments and consideration of context internationally. However, these projects were limited to a select few. The designs and their locations were inaccessible to the majority.

Apartheid restrictions were extended in 1950, assigning different racial groups into respective residential and business zones. This was followed by the Native Laws that reduced the number of non-whites who were allowed to permanently reside in urban areas, declaring their urban residence a privilege and not a right.

Documentation and revision of urban black housing in the Cape Peninsula revealed poor physical conditions in the sector. Tenants seldom took initiative to alter housing


18 Local training of architects began at Witwatersrand in 1923. This first group of architects made a mark internationally adhering to modernist ideals heralded by Le Corbusier who celebrated them for bringing a new consciousness that fit the new “melting pot” that is the world. After World War II students graduating from Witwatersrand and Pretoria (established 1943) preferred expressionist modernism influenced by the "Brazil Builds" exhibition and publication with the term 'Little Brazil' used to describe buildings in 1950s and 1960s southern Africa. The architecture typically consisted of louvres, brises-soleil and sun-guards. The style evolved to what is termed Regionalism, a variant of modernism that considered local materials, techniques, traditions and climate. Deep recessed or screened windows, shutters, wide eaves, downpipes, verandas, pergolas were implemented. Stephen Sennott, R. 2004. Encyclopedia of 20th Century Architecture. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

19 Group Areas Act No 41.

20 Amendment Act of 1952.

Fig 1.
The NE 51/9 scheme—A standard three bedroom house.
(Calderwood, 1953: 31).

Fig 2.
Row house layout comparison. Case A does not have a communal open space while Case B incorporates green space.
(Calderwood, 1953: 63).
because they could not discern if they were permitted to by authorities that had promised to finish construction at a later stage. The houses they were to finish did not have ceilings, doors, flooring, plastering or kitchen sinks and no electricity with most having external toilets some distance away. There was not great variation in the standard house, but the materials used for construction decreased in quality over the years. This was shown in the rapid aging of the newer homes that took no time to resemble houses that had been built many years before.

By 1975, an increased housing backlog paired with overcrowding resulted in the creation of squatter camps, inhabited by those waiting for housing delivery. Shantytown “self-help” housing reflected the government’s failure to deliver services to an excluded population. This population sought to exist independently outside the imposed legislation that had failed them and was the physical manifestation of claiming rights to the city, rights to have equal access to healthy, secure facilities and economic opportunity. Given this history, one would expect housing schemes today to adequately address a public right to the city post-1994.

Between 1992 and 1994 the National Housing Forum, comprised of private and public organizations, discussed the opportunities that lay in the housing sector for the new government. This process contributed to the drafting of the White Paper in 1994, which sought to: Create viable, integrated settlements where households could access opportunities, infrastructure and services, within which all South Africa’s people would have access on a progressive basis to: a permanent residential structure with secure tenure, ensuring privacy and protection; adequate protection against the elements; and potable water, adequate sanitation facilities including waste disposal and reliable electricity supply.

The Growth Employment and Redistribution Program (GEAR) that followed was as much an economic opportunity to those removed by the previous legislative systems as a construction and development program for state subsidized housing. GEAR sought to deliver quantitative (and not qualitative) solutions, offering large numbers of housing units to members of the public while trying to fulfill promises of one million houses for all by 2003. The effects of this was a post-1994 South African government that produced large quantities of housing on land purchased by an apartheid state with its own ideals of segregation.

Fig. 1
Dr. A. de Froe, 1930s. Photographer unknown.

This form of housing is often described as the most widely practiced form of housing delivery in developing countries. It is a delivery system that comprises action taken by an owner and/or his family with respect to planning, financing and construction of a dwelling, usually occurring spontaneously in informal settlements but can also occur in formal settlements. NBRI. 1987. National Building Research Institute. Low Cost Housing Report, Pretoria: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Referring to the period under the African National Congress after the first democratic election on April 27, 1994 in South Africa.


25 The Minister of Human

26 van Houwelingen


28 Some elements of the apartheid structure, including employment opp.
Hans van Houwelingen (1957) was educated at the Minerva Art Academy in Groningen (Netherlands) and at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. His work comes in the form of interventions in public space that bring to fore the relationship between art, politics and ideology. Most of his works involve a sly commentary on how we create the cultural world of what we might otherwise call "history." As such, they lie at the interface between fiction and fact.

The monograph STIFF Hans van Houwelingen vs. Public Art (Artimo, 2004) offers an overview of his projects and texts and an extensive reflection on his work. The publication Update describes the permanent update of the Lorentzmonument in Arnhem (NL) during the exhibition Sonsbeek 2008. The book Undo (Jap Sam Books 2011) presents nine critical reflections on three recent works. Van Houwelingen lives and works in Amsterdam and most of his art focuses on the politics and culture of that region.

—MARK JARZOMBEK

Fig. 1
Dr. A. de Froe, 1930s. Photographer unknown.
INTRODUCTION

The University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW) commissioned a monument to be erected in 2015 in honor of Prof. Dr. Arie de Froe (1907-1992), a former professor of Physical Anthropology and Genetics at the UvA (Fig. 1). A physical anthropologist, de Froe committed academic fraud, resisting the German occupiers during World War II. Specializing in ethnology and held in high academic esteem by the Nazis, he fraudulently identified Sephardic Jews as non-Jews in order to prevent their deportation during the racial “purification” of the Netherlands. In these circumstances, academic integrity yielded to human morality.

Erecting this monument raises several crucial concerns regarding time and timing. On the one hand, the commemoration of Arie de Froe must stand the test of time; as befits a monument, an attempt is being made to keep the memories of this scholar alive, to save him from oblivion. On the other hand, no timeless paradigm exists to evaluate de Froe’s work, because ethics shift over time. The way we should remember de Froe is not determined by history. On the contrary, his memorialization is inextricably connected to the contemporary discourse on academic integrity. The starting point for this monument is not only the celebration of the individual, the scholar Prof. Dr. A. de Froe, but also the intrinsic academic dilemma he embodies. This posthumous monument will in fact render Prof. Dr. A. de Froe the embodiment of ethical dilemmas in science.

This proposal returns the human bones acquired by physical anthropologists for science during the first half of the 20th century, now resting untapped and stigmatized in the depots of the National Museum of World Cultures, to the university where these remains will again be available for scientific research as a monument in honor of Arie de Froe.¹

¹ This explanatory text was used for the proposal that artist Hans van Houwelingen was commissioned for in 2012 by a jury from the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW). The commission was approved in 2013. Its controversial character necessitates the support of several authorities in order to realize the monument. As of December 2014, support has been provided by: the board of directors of the KNAW; the board of directors of the Academic Medical Centre (AMC); the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD); Prof. Dr. J.W.M. Roebroeks, Archaeologist, Faculty of Archaeology, Human Origins, Leiden University; Prof. Dr. R.H.A. Corbey, Philosopher and Cultural Anthropologist, Faculties of Archaeology and Humanities, Leiden University, Senior University Lecturer in Philosophical Anthropology, Tilburg University; Prof. Dr. L.P.H.M. Buskens, Anthropologist, Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University; Mr. K. van Brakel, chief curator Museum of Worldcultures. The board of directors of the UvA is expected to give final approval to realize the monument in early 2015.

CONTEXT

At the opening of the symposium on Arie de Froe held at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW) in Amsterdam on October 30, 2012, the mayor of Amsterdam stated: “Science, it is your turn now.” Populism has a hold on us, and like politics, art, sport, religion and the courts, academia can no longer elude the magnifying glass of the media and people’s tribunal. This symposium, intended to discuss a fraudulent scholar, was meant to be a countermove. De Froe did not commit fraud, but for a good cause. The introduction of human morality as a criterion for academic integrity is a populist taste of one’s own medicine—the humane aspect diverts the gaze from the system considered to be infallible. Impartialing the deceiver’s motif to the subject of debate leaves the question untouched whether science itself is indeed still reliable. In this respect, there is no better figurehead than Prof. Dr. A. de Froe, who saved the lives of Jews by distorting the racial Nazi doctrines. Everyone sympathizes with his courageous deeds. In 2006, he was posthumously included in the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem and now a monument is to be built in his honor.

The reasons to commemorate de Froe as a Resistance hero are sound, but the act of commissioning a monument in his honor opens to larger questions of scientific ethics. de Froe did indeed commit fraud, but precisely because he did so. The UvA would not choose to erect a monument only to honour his scholarly work.² At the same time, the university does not wish to glorify fraud and de Froe’s academic accomplishments allow the prevention of that perception. Statements written about de Froe and descriptions of him presented during the symposium, including several of his own quotations, testify to this ambivalence. The deception is revealed and optimally minimized. He did indeed act fraudulently, but given the situation at the time we do not like to look at it that way. De Froe will be commemorated with a monument for his work at the expense of science, in service of science.

Posthumously, De Froe shall represent the face of a contemporary dilemma: the Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice of the Association of Universities is increasingly breached and thus is becoming less tenable. Is fictitious science perpetrated in spite of contemporary ethics, or as a result thereof? “Grow accustomed to it,” the mayor said. Indeed,

² Although a respected scientist, Prof. Dr. A. de Froe did not have a high-profile academic career. His fame derived from his resistance during World War II.
in the spotlight of current events, the deontology of science cannot ignore political and tendentious ethics. De Froe personifies the labyrinth where science, ethics and time have become entangled. De Froe's monument will not be bound by linear time but will unfold in a state of "contra-time," where past, present and future run in parallel. It will not cover-up academic dilemmas, but instead place them at center stage as a constant reminder of this tension.

TIMING

In 2010, it was revealed that D. A. Stapel, professor of social psychology at the University of Tilburg had largely manipulated research findings. Co-authors, doctoral committees, and peer reviewers of specialist literature were also accused of negligence. After submitting his PhD dissertation, Stapel was sentenced to 120 hours of community service for having falsified research findings. The levy had broken and media unleashed a flood of critique concerning scientific integrity. Universities revealed and admitted case after case of scientific fraud in an attempt to redeem their tainted reputations. In a short time, a veritable catalogue of instances of misconduct emerged, with the press denouncing perpetrators. Scientific fraud was hot.

The Levett Committee investigating the case came across fifty-five articles and ten book chapters containing fictitious material and expressed strong suspicions of fraud in another ten articles.

4 In 2011, the executive board of the University Medical Centrum St. Radboud (UMC, Nijmegen) announced the resignation of a senior researcher after it had been revealed that his research data could not be verified and that he may have been guilty of academic misconduct. Later that year, the Erasmus Medical Centre (Rotterdam) revealed the academic deception carried out by Prof. D. Poldermans; he and his doctoral candidate had conducted research on the blood levels of patients in order to predict complications during vascular operations. Only a few patients in their research met with the subject criteria, and the data in a number of studies had been falsified or lost. Poldermans was removed from his position because of breaching academic integrity. In 2012, the Erasmus University (Rotterdam) announced it was withdrawing two articles written by Prof. D. Smeesters, this professor of Consumer Behaviour and Society had selectively applied data in order to render the desired, statistically relevant results. Smeesters chose to resign. In 2013 a Belgian biomedical researcher, previously associated with the University of Leiden, was dismissed by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel due to fraudulent research on epilepsy and manipulating animal test results. Simultaneously, the Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC) withdrew two articles presented by a researcher in the Rheumatology Department and dismissed her for manipulating lab results. In 2012 science journalist F. van Kolfschoten published his book titled Ontspoorde wetenschap (Derailed Science) that provides a summary of all instances of scientific fraud committed in Dutch universities since 2005, including associated penalties.

5 At that time: Scientific misconduct in the Netherlands, 5th ed. (The Academic Assessment Committee, 1972), which was used in 2013 by T. Smeesters as the basis for his experiments, was written by F. van Kolfschoten. He pointed out that his research was based on a variety of sources, including plagiarism.

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THE PURCHASE ON MODERNITY

THE TURKISH NATIONAL NARRATIVE AND

OSMAN HAMDI BEY’S

THE TORTOISE TRAINER

Nisa Ari
On December 12, 2004, crowds at the Artam Antik A.Ş. auction in İstanbul watched the price for Osman Hamdi Bey's Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi ("The Tortoise Trainer," 1906, Fig. 1) escalate forty-two times as the Pera Museum and the İstanbul Modern museum grasped at the chance to add this painting to their respective collections. Following a nation-wide banking crisis in 2001, the painting was being sold at auction from the seized collection of the bankrupt İktisat Bank. Despite estimates for the painting to sell at 1.95 million Turkish Lira (TL), the Pera Museum ultimately bought the work for 5 million TL (approximately 3.5 million dollars), the highest price ever paid for any Turkish painting. Both museums wished to possess this exceptional piece from the late-Ottoman era, but were they vying for it for the same reasons?1

The Pera Museum's holdings consist of three permanent collections—Anatolian weights and measures, Kütahya tiles and ceramics, and Orientalist paintings—showcasing highlights of the Anatolian region from before the Ottoman Empire began until its dissolution in 1923. The İstanbul Modern, on the other hand, begins its narrative roughly where the Pera Museum leaves off, focusing on the collection of modern and contemporary Turkish art from after 1923 until the present day. The fierce rivalry in the auction room pointed to an uncertainty within Turkey's national narrative: at what point did Turkey become modern? Did Osman Hamdi's painting belong with the pre-Ottoman era relics and European-style Orientalist paintings from the nineteenth century or among the Republic's pioneering modern and contemporary artworks? And why were Turkey's cultural institutions wrestling with the implications of this narrative in 2004, almost a century after the painting was completed?

By engaging in an aggressive and public bidding war, both museums confirmed The Tortoise Trainer's status as a national treasure of Turkish painting, as something akin to "the Turkish Mona Lisa."2 However, its ultimate inclusion as a highlight in the Pera Museum's collection of largely European Orientalist paintings weakened this widely held myth and pointed to an ironic imperfection: The Tortoise Trainer's prestige as a pinnacle of Turkish art is both augmented and eclipsed by its status as a work of art mired in the European signs and signifiers of Orientalist artistic practice. Similarly, the painting's creator, Osman Hamdi (1842-1910), had made a considerable impact in the Empire during his lifetime, mainly due to his administrative roles as founder of the Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi (School of Fine Arts) in 1882 and as director of the Müze-i Hümayun (Imperial Museum), beginning in 1887.3 However, as an artist, his acclaim came from the West. Osman Hamdi shaped his painting techniques with the French Orientalist painters Gustave Boulanger and possibly Jean-Léon Gérôme at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and produced his paintings primarily for European markets.4

The fate of The Tortoise Trainer and the reputation of its creator closely mirror the uncertainty regarding the West's role in shaping the modern Turkish republic and, by association, the changing image and status of the late Ottoman past in the Turkish national narrative. Whether during the Ottoman Empire's demise and its rapid rebirth as the Turkish Republic in 1923, or, beginning in 2002, with the Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s conservative reengagement with Turkey’s Ottoman heritage—from the late Ottoman era until today—modernism in Turkey continues to negotiate how both "European-ness" and "Ottoman-ness" define and undermine its "Turkish-ness." This essay argues that The Tortoise Trainer's trajectory exposes profound shifts in historical assessments of the final days of the Ottoman Empire—most recently in its transformation from the "sick man of Europe," to an Empire actively engaged with modern technologies and new ideologies.5

1 I would like to acknowledge Naşit Ari for his assistance with translating Ottoman Turkish phrases. All Turkish language translations provided are my own.


3 For more on Osman Hamdi’s biography, see Wendy M.K. Shaw, Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (London & New York: Tauris, 2011).

4 Historians often assume that Osman Hamdi trained with Jean-Léon Gérôme. However, as has been emphasized by Vasıf Kortun in a 1987 article, Osman Hamdi’s name cannot be found on any student lists from the painting studio of Gérôme. Kortun acknowledges the possibility of the two men intersecting, but Osman Hamdi’s position as Gérôme’s student cannot be confirmed. Vasıf Kortun, “Osman Hamdi Üzerine Yeni Notlar,” [“New Notes on Osman Hamdi”] Tarih ve Toplum 41 (May 1987): 25–26.

I. UNEVEN CURRENCY

Osman Hamdi completed *The Tortoise Trainer* in 1906.6 Painted four years before his death in 1910, the 87 x 47 inch elongated canvas depicts a figure, standing slightly bent beneath a blue and gold tiled archway, overlooking a window. Osman Hamdi painted his own likeness as the tortoise trainer, thus removing the standard three-piece suit he would wear daily to the office and stepping into the cotton draping of a mystical Sufi dervis.7 He is clad in a flowing red garment, with an *araqiyya* headpiece atop his pate, and yellow-dyed goatskin slippers, which cradle his dry and cracked heels.8 A *nakkar*, or small kettle drum, hangs down on his back, giving him the same shelled silhouette of the five tortoises, who munch on shreds of lettuce scattered at his feet. He is wearing a sash, wrapped around it. “The Tortoise Trainer,” accessed November 20, 2013, http://en.paraguzeli.org.tr/Artwork/The-Tortoise-Trainer/2216.

Abdülmahmid’s ascension to power came amidst debates concerning the religious validity of a constitutional government. His desire to institute the Empire from Christian incursion by encouraging a pan-Islamic policy to provide a unifying force that would both imitate and rival the nationalist movements developing in Europe.9 However, the Empire simultaneously opened its doors to European material culture and modernization beginning with the period of reform initiated by the Tanzimat laws under the earlier Sultan Abdülmecid in 1839, and through the acquisition of European inventions, such as the railroad and

10 *Tanzimat* can be literally translated as “reformations,” but it is often loosely translated as “modernizing” or “westernizing.” The Tanzimat reforms began in 1839 as an effort by the foreign minister, Mustafa Reşit Paşa, to make changes that would bring the *Empire* closer to “Western Civilization” and create easier lines of communication to Europe on economic, political, and cultural lines. For examples of Tanzimat reforms in government organization and the development of new laws, see the writers “Introduction” and “The Dialectic of Law and Infringement.”


14 Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” 769. Ersoy extends Makdisi’s fundumental observation by arguing how this anxious manifested in the cultural practices of the elite, resulting in a “rushed Orientalist urge among certain men of the Tanzimat to salvage, collect, and display objects, costumes, and paraphernalia dating back to the pre-Tanzimat periods.” Ahmet Ersoy, “Ottoman Hamid Bey and the Historiophile Orientalist Sense of the Past in Late Ottoman Culture,” in The Poetics

Photography.10 Furthermore, the Empire’s participation in the Crimean War (1853–56) incurred high costs and impelled the Empire to take its first official foreign loan in 1854.11 Abdulhamid consolidated his power with autocratic zeal and used Islam as a political tool, all the while stitching his Empire to Europe in new ways, both ideologically and financially. Osman Hamdi’s tortoise trainer, caught somewhere between a nostalgia for the past and a yearning for change as he gazes out the window of the deteriorating mosque, reflects this unstable climate.

Art historians have aptly noted the correspondence of Osman Hamdi’s artistic practice to the French Orientalists’ repetitive use of anachronistic objects and photographic mock-ups, alongside their penchant for realism. Osman Hamdi, however, presents a challenge to Linda Nochlin’s vigorous argument that the techniques of Orientalist painting must be read as perpetuating the West’s negative vision of the Orient.12 Although Osman Hamdi lived in Europe, he was never natively European, and the heart of the Ottoman Empire, in present-day Turkey, never was colonized.

As a result, scholars, such as Ussama Makdisi and Ahmet Ersoy have conjured the term “Ottoman Orientalism” in order to describe how the attitudes of Orientalism were taken by an elite group of Ottomans, such as Osman Hamdi, in the late nineteenth century.13 According to Makdisi, the *Tanzimat* laws, “created a notion of the modern pre-modern within the empire in a manner akin to the way European colonial administrators represented their colonial subjects.”14

Nineteenth-century Ottoman nostalgia operated as a way to access a refined notion of a desirable and distant Ottoman-Islamic past in order to both bolster the image of a distinguished past and underscore the transformations occurring in the modern present. Thus, Orientalism, which explicitly acknowledged the West as the beacon of progress and the East as the home of backwardness, came to be one of the defining facets of Ottoman modernity.

Reading *The Tortoise Trainer* as an autobiographical state-
ment, as the curators at the Pera Museum currently do, the meaning of the piece can be connected to Osman Hamdi's role as an arts administrator, as a treatise about the struggle to teach the importance of the arts to the "laggardly" constituents of the Empire: "The dervish is to train these thick-shelled, laggardly tortoises not by using force, but rather by playing the ney and nakkare, namely through art."\(^{15}\)

The Tortoise Trainer originally garnered little attention in the Ottoman Empire. Bypassing any public display in Istanbul, the painting travelled northwest for its debut in the 1906 Paris Salon as L’homme aux tortues ("Man with Tortoises") and, in the following year, it journeyed farther north for an exhibition in Berlin in 1907.\(^{16}\) Such an itinerary was typical for works by Osman Hamdi, which were either exhibited abroad or never displayed at all.\(^{17}\) When the painting was shown to audiences in Europe, it did not generate any documented critical or popular response and failed to sell during exhibition. Thus, in the early twentieth century, the sensation of the Turkish art market in 2004 passed quietly into the hands of Osman Hamdi's daughter, stirring up little controversy as it went.\(^{18}\)

The Tortoise Trainer did not appear publically in the Ottoman Empire until 1912, two years after the painter's death, when it was reproduced in black and white in the eleventh issue of Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi ("Journal for the Society of Ottoman Painters")—an issue expressly devoted to Osman Hamdi.\(^{19}\) The editors of the journal, who were mostly teachers at the Fine Arts Academy, explained their desire to generate a demand for the arts within the Empire. To that end, Osman Hamdi became their tragic hero, the martyr who fought for the proliferation of the arts, only to go unnoticed as an artist himself: 

Unfortunately, in our lands painting has no currency, demand, or market... Each of the late Hamdi Bey works presented in this issue... adorns a royal palace or European museum, while the only memory of Hamdi Bey in his own land consists of a silent tomb.\(^{20}\)

\(^{15}\) "The Tortoise Trainer," para Müzesi website. This interpretation on the Para Museum website is perhaps culled from remarks on the painting by Wendy Shaw in Possessors and Possessed, 124. Edhem Eldem uncovers further inspiration for the painting from a print in a French travel magazine depicting a Japanese practice of tortoise training. Eldem, "Ressamlar, Kaplumbağalar, Tarihçiler..."

\(^{16}\) Shaw, Ottoman Painting, 72.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 66.

\(^{18}\) There are two early references to The Tortoise Trainer made by non-Ottomans. In 1911, an American named Lucy Garnett mentions "The Tortoise Charmer" as one of Osman Hamdi's most successful paintings, in a brief obituary-like paragraph on the artist. Adolphe Thalasso also mentions the painting by name in his 1911 text, entitled Art of the Ottomans: Turkish Painters, Lucy Mary Jane Garnett, Turkey of the Ottomans (New York: Scribner's, 1911), 256. Adolphe Thalasso. Osmanlı Sanatçı: TürkİYE'nin Ressamları, vol. 1, Kültür A. Ş. Sanat Dizisi; (Ankara; A. Yıldız; İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2008).

\(^{19}\) The editors of the journal dedicated the issue to the legacy of their "past master, the late, honourable Hamdi Bey" and in addition to the article, reproduced a series of eight of his paintings at the back of the issue. The issue included the reproduction of The Tortoise Trainer, or as it was captioned in this printing, as Kaplanbağa Mürekbesi, "The Tortoise Nanny." The caption also read, "From the collection of the generous Lady Leyla." Leyla was one of Osman Hamdi's daughters residing in Istanbul, Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi, 25 March 1912 Issue, Reprinted in Yaprak Zihnioğlu, Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi, 1911-1914: Güncel, lệştirilmiş Başım, 1. basım... vol. 13, Sanafdant Sânçler Dizisi; 13 (İstanbul: Kitaş Yayınevi, 2007).

\(^{20}\) Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi, 25 March 1912 Issue.
its own form of expression in the twentieth century by combining modern trends in European art with seemingly trans-historic Turkish traditions that he concocted. To be a specifically “Turkish” artist and create work that speaks in an authentic Turkish voice, Berk insisted that the artist must neither harbor too great an attachment to the “school of Moslem Art” or the “École de Paris.”

These admissions reveal some of the reasons why Berk omitted Osman Hamdi from the pantheon of modern Turkish painters, despite beginning his survey with artists who painted as early as 1900. Osman Hamdi was indeed attached to the École in Paris and his artistic genius was assimilated into European contexts, since his canvases were never displayed in the Ottoman realm. In a separate text, Berk accused Osman Hamdi for staying in the shadow of Gérôme, for confining himself to more traditionally “near Eastern” subjects, and for failing to create a style of his own. Furthermore, Osman Hamdi continually depicted Islamic rituals, objects, and attire in his works. For Berk, Turkish art had its own genius and character, which was neither recognizable as Ottoman-Islamic, nor purely attached to European art modes. Osman Hamdi could not be a spokesperson for this type of image in 1954. Osman Hamdi’s paintings, like the Ottoman Empire and its apprehensive engagements with Europeanization, were severed from the story of how Turkey became modern.
ON ART STORAGE AND TAX EVASION

JORDAN CARVER

The Geneva Freeport sits just outside the southwest corner of the Geneva city boundary. The collections of drab industrial buildings form a privately run, government-endorsed storage and logistics center closely linked to international railway lines and the Geneva airport (Fig. 1). Like many of the world’s storage facilities located in free port areas it serves as a tax-free, duty-free space for holding, transporting, and exchanging goods and materials. The free port is a common spatial condition, a place where import and export laws are adjusted to make the manufacturing and transfer of goods as smooth as possible.

In contrast to the traditional free port or zone — spaces where raw commodities, or manufactured goods are quickly processed and distributed to consumers — the Geneva Freeport specializes in the storage and transfer of luxury goods and artwork. In doing so, it has drawn some of the world’s largest and most prestigious collections from private collectors and major public institutions. The Geneva Freeport is just one node in the dense thicket of offshore finance, neatly aligning the world’s network of tax havens with international art collecting and global logistics.

More importantly, the use of free ports and tax loopholes calls into question one of the iconic means of cultural production: wealthy patrons donating art and financial support to public institutions. At the very least, entering artwork into the complex networks of international shipping firmly registers collecting as a business practice. At worst, it deprives state-funded institutions from tax revenues and reinforces a privileged status to an elite cadre of global art collectors.

In pursuit of specific details on how the free port operates, the author presented himself as an American art collector looking for storage in Europe. The interview was recorded in 2012. Captured on tape is an associate from Natural LeCoultre, a prominent Geneva based art, storage, and transport company with an outpost in Singapore and a new facility under construction in Luxembourg.

Both tax havenry and art collecting are notoriously opaque business practices. As such, this interview was not conducted as an exposé on a particularly restricted niche of global culture, and more as a simple information gathering exercise on the logistics of one small, yet important, facet of international art collecting.

This research was conducted as part of Collecting Architecture Territories, an initiative of Columbia University GSAPP.
NATURAL LE COULTRE: Bonjour.

JORDAN CARVER: Bon, please.

Hello, please.

Hi, my name is Jordan Carver; I believe one of my associates talked to you a couple months ago about some art storage.

Yes.

I don't know if you recall, he called from New York and we tried to set out a time to come to Geneva and it didn't quite work out, my schedule got really busy. But, I did want to call and talk to you again and get some more of the details. I spoke with him and it seemed a little unclear so I wanted to call and speak with you myself. Do you have a couple minutes to go over some of the details?

Yes, yes. No worries.

So I had my assistant do some research for me. They came back, and we discussed everything they came up with regarding different storage facilities in Europe and Asia, and they couldn't quite give me any direct answers, which is why I'm calling you myself. So what I'm looking for is storage facilities for different artwork as my collecting practice increases both in Asia and in Europe.
Okay, so we can provide that, no worries.

Okay, good. Maybe you can just explain to me — you have facilities in Geneva and Singapore, correct?

Exactly, yes. It is free port, it’s not bonded warehouse. It’s different.

Can you explain that difference to me?

If you have paintings coming into the bonded warehouse — it comes under the name of an owner and also a value, both cannot be changed. Okay? It has to go out of the bonded warehouse with the same value to the same consignee.

The difference is at the free port you can do sales. If you import a painting, I don’t know, at one million into the free port by Mr. X and Mr. X sells it to Mr. Y for one million-two hundred US dollars, there is no problem for customs. There is no VAT, there are no duties or taxes. It’s, how can I say, a no man’s land but, based in Switzerland. It’s a bit complicated [laughs], but do you understand the difference?

Yeah, I think so. So I’m not going to have to pay any excise taxes or any capital gains taxes?
No question on VAT, nothing. In the bonded warehouse, if you import something into the warehouse, you have to guarantee the amount of VAT on the total value of the painting. So, in the free port, there isn’t any charges, any taxes like that.

That would just be for selling artwork within the free port?

You can sell it or you can have an individual room to store your paintings without any guarantee on VAT. There are no duties, no taxes. If you only want to store paintings, as soon as you are into the free port, there are no more taxes. There are only storage charges and, if you want, insurance charges. No taxes, no duties, no nothing.

What would those storage fees be?

All depends on the size of items you would like to store. And it all depends on the total number of paintings that you would like to store. Paintings, or sculpture, or whatever. Because sometimes if you have, like, one hundred paintings it’s better to rent an individual room, it’s cheaper.

So you have the storage capacity to hold large parts of a collection, not just single paintings and sculptures or single works?
Yes, of course. We have two hundred square meter storage rooms — individual rooms. Let me see about the space we have left because I know that the small individual rooms are practically all rented. But that depends — how many paintings, approximately, will you have?

I'm not sure at this moment. I have storage facilities in London and New York so one of the questions would be whether I should move works into Geneva or Singapore or if this would be for new acquisitions?

If you store in two different locations, it will be more expensive. If you rent, for example, only one individual room in Singapore — if you rent, like, a one hundred square meter individual room for your paintings — and if you buy some [new artwork] (and if there is space available in your individual room), all your paintings can be stored in your individual room with no extra charges. You will be charged only for an individual room, of one hundred square meters for example, and that's it.

Okay. Can you explain the benefits for using Singapore or Geneva, which one might be better?
The Geneva Freeport is a little bit older. But, it's located in Europe. So if you have many clients, or if you buy many things during the auctions in Europe, the cost of the transport will be less expensive. If you do a lot of buying in Asia, it's better to have your storage in Singapore for the same reason.

No, no, it's the same. It's exactly the same. The Singapore Freeport is very new.

Practically. Have you seen the video on the Internet?

Okay. But there's no tax benefit or financial benefit —

It looks almost like a museum.  

Designed by the Geneva based architects Atelier D'Architecture 3MB3, the Singapore Freeport does indeed look similar to a museum. While all museums operate within several registers, the free port occupies a unique space where artwork, production, and distribution within the networks of global finance have been collapsed onto each other. If, as Antonio Negri posits, the reading of art production as commoditized goods within a totalized capital system is no longer avant-garde or "shocking," then it opens up new avenues to understand current art production and market practices. (Negri, Antonio. Multitude. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011. p. 5) The spatial manifestation of these networks, both as museum-like typologies and territorial designations, begins to map (literally and figuratively) the contemporary process of artistic production and distribution. Artwork can no longer be thought of as commodity or even financial instrument, but as a system of logistics and information seamlessly projected onto the network of globalized capital. In architectural terms, the Singapore Freeport marks the end trajectory Hal Foster describes as "minimalist museums." For Foster, the proliferation of industrial manufacturing sites-cum-contemporary art museums marks a re-appropriation of the minimalist aesthetic of industrial production. Minimalism, as an artistic movement, adopted the techniques of industrial production, so it is only appropriate that with the decline of industry, those facilities were adapted as white cubes for contemporary art museums. (Foster, Hal. "Minimalist Museums." The Art-Architecture Complex. New York: Verso, 2011. Print. 117) But with the free port, the gallery and museum space is completely analogous to the >>>
Editors' note:
Revised Pantheon is a project by fala atelier, an architecture practice based in Porto, Portugal. It was originally developed for the 2012 Japanese idea competition Circos International Architecture Competition, for the theme: "Big is GREAT. Small is BEAUTIFUL." Revised Pantheon was awarded Second Place and an Honorable Mention. Afterward, it was published on online architectural platforms including Designboom and Atlantic Cities where it provoked discussion in the comment boards. The project was deemed "fundamentally anti-urban," "anti-environmental," "a massive grave," and the images causing one reader to have "[their] stomach cramp painfully, fill[ing] [them] with claustrophobia." Oppositions, however, had begot the original design concept. "We could not do a 'normal' project," wrote Magalhães in an email to us. "There were several dichotomies at stake. The perimeter of the plaza vs the square. The chaos vs the rule. The lack of shadow vs the roof. The whole project was somehow unbalanced and in equilibrium."
The Geneva Freeport is a little bit older. But, it's located in Europe. So if you have many clients, or if you buy many things during the auctions in Europe, the cost of the transport will be less expensive. If you do a lot of buying in Asia, it's better to have your storage in Singapore for the same reason.

Okay. But there's no tax benefit or financial benefit —

No, no, it's the same. It's exactly the same. The Singapore Freeport is very new.

It looks almost like a museum.
Fig. 1
Geneva Freeport

Fig. 2
Singapore Freeport
with Ron Arad sculpture,
*Cage sans Frontières*
Yes, I've been there for the opening. We were dining in the middle of the Ron Arad sculpture — that was just crazy. But yes, Geneva and Singapore free ports have 99% the same laws. No duties, no taxes. At all. But the Singapore [Freeport] is less old than Geneva. And the security level also is a bit higher in Singapore.

Can you maybe explain that a little more? That goes into one of my other question on access. How do I access the facility? Or, would I just arrange transport in and out for the works with you? Do I actually get access to the facility?

So if you would like to rent an individual room, you will have to sign a contract for a minimum of three years.

It is like an apartment. And you will have to tell us who is able to have access to the paintings stored in your warehouse. Nobody else. If someone calls, even if it's from the same company, but doesn't have the right to access a painting in the warehouse, we cannot help him. We cannot let him in. We cannot do anything for him.

Okay.
It's only after the client says okay this guy, this guy, this guy can come to see the paintings that they are able to have access to the paintings. But if we don't have the names of these people, we cannot even say, "Yes, we have this painting in the warehouse." We are not able to say that.

Is that part of Swiss banking law?

Not really, no. But it's professional secrets. If someone calls and says, "Yeah I heard that you have, for example, Picasso, or [inaudible] is in your warehouse, is that right?" We cannot say anything. Nothing. We are not able to answer. We just hang up the phone, "Ciao." If we don't have a request from the Swiss government or Swiss customs, nobody can know what is in your storage room.

Do I have to register the artworks with the Swiss government?

No, nothing. Nothing, nothing, nothing.

But the Swiss government can ask to know what's inside the storage facility?
If they presume that it's maybe a stolen work, the customs will go and check the work. If for any reason the government would like to know, yes they are able to check our inventories, our computer system and then maybe to see the works.

Okay, but you don't actually inform them — ?

No, no. To enter into the free port is like a customs zone. So everything that gets into the free port will need to have a value, at least. You need to have the value of the paintings, the shipper and the consignee. But you can use an offshore company to protect your name and so on, no problem. Or, we also have a fiduciary service that might be helpful for you in that our company sends the painting or the collection to the free port. No names appear on the Swiss side.

You mentioned offshore shipping companies — that would be to protect my name and the name of the work.

For confidentiality.

Is that 100% legal?

100%, yes.

Do you have the names of offshore shipping companies that could be helpful?
We have a fiduciary service here.

Yes, yes, yes. Many clients use offshore companies to protect their name because they don’t want people to know they have a painting or they don’t want the name to appear — for confidentiality. But you can ship with a company based in Hong Kong, an item that is physically in Geneva. You can ship from Geneva to Paris with a shipper, that on paperwork, is located in Hong Kong. That’s normal.

Yep. If you would like to use our fiduciary service, you would have to come personally and physically to Geneva to open a file at the fiduciary. It’s for the law against laundering money.

Exactly, yes. So we open a file, it’s all checked, it’s all, how can I say, square [laughs]. That’s no problem at all.

That’s normal you say?

Yes, tax evasion and laundering.

Because there was a law passed two years ago, a Swiss and US agreement about sharing information, I would imagine that’s applicable. What benefit would I get from doing fiduciary services with you?
Just if you don't want your name to appear as the legal owner of the work.

Exactly. Or if you buy at Christie's or Sotheby's, the name of the fiduciary will appear as the buyer.

Nobody knows who is behind it. 80% of the persons are doing that.10

Oh yes.

Oh, okay.

80% of your clients?

Oh, okay. Have you had any cases of stolen art or other problems within your facilities?

Like how?

I read a couple years ago about – I don't know if it was your facility, or another free port facility – stolen antiquities from Egypt coming through Switzerland.11


I personally don't have any antiquities.

It's very sensitive at the moment because of what happened in North Africa.\(^\text{12}\) There are many, many, items from museums that disappeared. Customs everywhere are watching that very closely.

This really helps. I really appreciate you taking the time to talk this over. Maybe in the next couple weeks I can give you a call. I'm still trying to figure out my schedule and see when I can get out to Geneva. But hopefully it will be soon. The summer art festivals are about to start, so I'll be over there at some point.

Okay, no worries, just keep me posted. Until you give me a call, no worries. We can arrange something and discuss quietly between four eyes.\(^\text{13}\)

If you want to see the different possibilities, if you want to use an offshore company, the fiduciary service, or not. No worries at all.

Great, thank you, I really appreciate it.
its own form of expression in the twentieth combining modern trends in European art trans-historic Turkish traditions that he or not. No worries at all.

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Ari

Çelik argued

-Çelik, ed. Jill Beaulieu


For instance, Zeynep Çelik introduced

in

Osman Hamdi was indeed

Islamic rituals, objects, and attire in his works. For Berk, Turkish art had its own genius and character, which

Hamdi's paintings, like the Ottoman Empire and its

of Gérôme, for confining himself to more traditionally

assimilated into European contexts, since his canvases were

omitted Osman Hamdi from the pantheon of modern

text, Berk accused Osman Hamdi for staying in the shadow

be a specifically "Turkish" artist and create work that speaks

severed from the story of how Turkey became modern.

I can give you a call. I'm still trying to figure out

time to talk this over. Maybe in the next couple weeks

This really helps. I really appreciate you taking the

"near Eastern" subjects, and for failing to create a style of his

were neither recognizable as Ottoman-Islamic, nor purely

Hamdi by name, but only

in reference to his position as

the director of the Fine Arts


Turkish Press, Broadcasting

Modern Painting

and Sculpture in Turkey

Nurullah Berk,

22

Academy.

Nurullah Berk as quoted in İpek

Duben, "Osman Hamdi ve


Vasif Kortun, in a heated

response to Duben, drew ample comparisons between Osman

Hamami and European Orientalists: "Just like the European

Orientalists, Osman Hamami also assembled Arabic costumes

with Ottoman chinaware and wooden Seljuk gates.... Like

the other Orientalists, by using photographs in his process,

he engendered an ahistorical and artificial depiction of the

EAST. [...] Osman Hamami's 'reformed Orientalism' is not

at the level to insult Orientalism." Kortun, "Osman Hamami

Üzerine Yeni Notlar."

27

Zeynep Çelik, "Speaking back

to the Orientalist Discourse." in Orientalism's Interlocutors:

Painting, Architecture, Photography, ed. Jill Beaulieu

and Mary Roberts (Durham

(USA): Duke University Press,


However tangential The Tortoise Trainer was to discussions of Turkish painting in the first half of the twentieth century, Turkish art historians and wealthy collectors displayed a surge of interest in Osman Hamdi's paintings beginning in the 1980s—due to intellectual and politico-economic developments in Turkey's rapidly shifting cultural topography. The 1980 military coup, which was only the most recent in a series of government takeovers by the staunchly Kemalist military, also prompted a rethinking of the foundations of the republic as it exposed the extent to which the promised democratic ideals of Kemalism had yet to take hold.

The publication of Edward Said's book Orientalism in 1978 and Linda Nochlin's essay, "The Imaginary Orient" in 1983 prompted a sea change in the ways academics across a variety of disciplines interpreted relationships between "the Occident" and "the Orient." Said and Nochlin's widely-read texts stimulated a revival of Osman Hamdi in art historical literature, as he was a rare (and the most prominent) "Ottoman Orientalist" painter of the late nineteenth century and his work was enigmatic within the framework Said and Nochlin provided. Despite his training in how to paint in the academic realist style of the French Orientalist school, scholars debated his categorization as an Orientalist painter, since he himself hailed from the Orient. In an essay from 1987, İpek Duben asked the question seemingly on everybody's mind: "Was Osman Hamdi a real Orientalist?"25

Despite few outspoken voices suggesting that Osman Hamdi's practice directly emulated the French style, most historians insisted on Osman Hamdi's difference, on his subversion of the Orientalist purview that so plagued his European masters.26 For instance, Zeynep Çelik introduced Osman Hamdi as an example of a "historically repressed voice" who complicated the idea of Orientalist painting as presenting a wayward or backward Orient.27 Çelik argued

II. INTEREST RISING

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that Osman Hamdi chose to depict fully-clothed models, rather than fantasies of irate despots or nude harem girls, often positioned his models as active rather than passive agents, and presented Islam as a religion which encouraged doubt and intellectual debate. For example, in *İki Müzisyen Kız* (“Two Musician Girls,” 1880), Osman Hamdi transformed the typically half-naked, lackadaisical odalisques of Orientalist paintings into two young women engaged in a music lesson. Çelik thus concludes that Osman Hamdi’s scenes from the Orient, “provide acute and persistent critiques of mainstream Orientalist paintings.”

In her words, Osman Hamdi resists the dominant interpretation of Orientalist painting and “speaks back” to Orientalist discourse.

Comparing Çelik’s image of a strong-willed, resilient Osman Hamdi to the reassessments of the late Ottoman Empire from noted historian Selim Deringil, reveals how closely the narratives of Osman Hamdi and Turkish modernism come together toward the end of the twentieth century. Assessing Kemalist characterizations of the late Ottoman Empire as a failed attempt at modernization, or worse, as entirely deaf to the changes in Western Europe, Deringil provided an insightful summation of Abdülhamid’s Empire. In his argument, the administrators in the late Ottoman period were curious about European models of modernization, but isolated by their desire to remain an Empire, both powerful and frail:

> It is my contention that the Hamidian period represents a critical point in time when, contrary to the standard view that the Ottoman Empire closed in on itself during this period, the only Muslim world empire did in fact succeed in joining the modern community of nations, albeit as a grudgingly accepted poor relation.

Indeed, the late Ottoman Empire eventually broke into several nation states, giving way to European ideals of political organization. Thus, the late Ottoman government, according to Deringil, should not be shunned as a sickly regime that prevented political progress or resisted cultural and scientific modernization.

In his book-length study, Deringil explained that despite the Islamic conservatism and political rigidity of Abdülhamid’s reign, the winds of change sweeping back and forth across the European continent included the late Ottoman Empire, and the post-Enlightenment humanist desire to create and acquire knowledge touched Ottoman administrators and subjects as well. Sibel Bozdoğan’s reading of Osman Hamdi’s paintings, akin to Çelik’s interpretation, echoed Deringil’s approach to the late Ottoman period:

In the paintings that he [Osman Hamdi] did in the 1890s and early 1900s, we find depicted a different, rational, and dynamic East where people—including women—stood tall, read books, debated, traveled about, and engaged in productive activities: in other words a Muslim society that was in search of knowledge, science, and progress.

In Osman Hamdi’s paintings, like *The Tortoise Trainer* or *Two Musician Girls*, Bozdoğan saw “knowledge, science, and progress,” the central tenets of the European enlightenment. According to Bozdoğan and Deringil respectively, Osman Hamdi and the Ottoman Empire did not merely parrot European ideals at a time when their own political currency was waning, but rather used their associations with Europe to maximum advantage, modernizing alongside the countries that surrounded them.

This renegotiation of the Ottoman past, emphasized in historical literature and paralleled in the ardent art historical appraisals of Osman Hamdi’s paintings, coincided with drastic changes in Turkey’s political and economic outlook. In 1980, Turkey could no longer remain aloof from the international market or the pressing need for cultural and touristic exchange. Spurred on by economic problems with the internally-oriented development model it had subscribed to for years and the rising economic success of
South East Asian countries, Turkish state elites intervened by rapidly instituting liberal economic practices and advancing a notion of Turkish capitalism. Liberalization of the economy often leads to a liberalization of society, and Istanbul’s urban, cultural, and tourism centers experienced an equally proportionate jolt of activity. The government passed the “Law for the Encouragement of Tourism” in 1982, the International Istanbul Biennial launched in 1987, and a large-scale market for the sale of artwork within Turkey also emerged in this period—evidenced, for example, by the 1981 opening of the Artam Antik A.Ş. auction house (where The Tortoise Trainer was later sold). 34

Eager to contribute to the cultural sector and perhaps, even more importantly, to leave a lasting public legacy, Turkey’s aging first generation of industrialists provided the seed money for Istanbul’s museum boom in the early 2000s. The two museums fighting for The Tortoise Trainers in the November 2004 auction are a part of this history: the Istanbul Modern, whose permanent collection of republican era painting and sculpture came from the collections of Bülent and Oya Eczacbaşı opened in December 2004, and the Pera Museum, established by Suna and İnan Koç, debuted in June 2005. Even before their grand openings, the Istanbul Modern and the Pera Museum had clear directives to make sure an Osman Hamdi painting would be on display for their very first visitors. Building institutions to display Turkey’s artistic past called for a reinterpretation of the Ottoman past as the museum owners and the curatorial staff worked to put together collections which would form the scenario by exhibiting the state’s hands for an interim period, they attempted to draw some “public benefit” from the scenario by exhibiting the painting at the Atlas Passage Istanbul State Fine Arts Gallery in 2003. “Aksoy koleksiyonu satışta,” [“Aksoy’s Collection on Sale”] Radikal – Internet Baskı, October 1, 2004.

The economic crisis also led to major changes in the
political landscape, as the AKP, the center-right conservative party with Islamic roots, found its way into the political spotlight in 2002.\textsuperscript{41} Along with the AKP’s grassroots initiatives within central and eastern Anatolia, and despite its supposed incompatibility with the secular Kemalist ideology, the AKP enjoyed a comfortable majority in the vote in 2002. With successive victories in the 2007 and 2011 elections, the AKP continues to champion a “Turkish Islamic” identity, strongly linked to its Ottoman heritage, even laying claim to continuing “Ottoman liberalism,” rather than neo-liberalism, in its economic policies.\textsuperscript{42}

Cultural initiatives funded by the AKP, such as the opening of the 1453 Panorama Museum to commemorate the siege of Constantinople by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II, speak to the party’s rhetorical emphasis on propelling the greatness of the Ottoman past into the present.\textsuperscript{43} In creating this linearity between Ottoman times and modern times, AKP politicians also seek to refute the close associations with Europe promoted during the Kemalist period. The success of such enterprises may be questioned, however, as the recent “Gezi park protests” attest.\textsuperscript{44} In cutting to the core of much anxiety over AKP power, sociologist Yıldız Atasoy states the main issue: “At stake here is the transformation of the Kemalist state, “ which, as previously discussed, positioned it-

41 The AKP virtually wiped out the three parties that had previously shared power, as the electorate attributed the responsibility for the economy’s mismanage- ment. Ziya Öniş, “The Triumph of Conservative Globalism: The Political Economy of the AKP Era,” Turkish Studies 13, no. 2 (2012): 13.

42 Yıldız Atasoy, İslam’ın Marriage with Neoliberalism: State Trans- formation in Turkey (Basing- sloke [England]: New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 34, 70, Atasoy discusses “Ottoman liberalism,” in chapter 2, entitled “The Allure of the West.” He analyzes the Turkish-Islamic remaking of the state in chapter 3, entitled “Turkish Islam: Unthinking Kemalism?”


45 Atasoy, Islam’s Marriage with Neoliberalism, 9.

“use what was beautiful about the Empire today,”\textsuperscript{46} one might also recall historian Selim Deringil’s optimistic words about the late Ottoman Empire under Abdülhamid, as a critical period when the Empire opened up to the “modern community of nations.”\textsuperscript{47} Although revisionist academic engagements with the Ottoman past and popular and political Ottomania exist in separate registers, they reflect a broader cultural tendency of the past several decades. Seeing the late Ottoman Empire as a time of active engage- ment with modern technologies and ideologies coming from Europe, such as the implementation of railroads and the invention of quasi-nationalist traditions, accounts (at least in part) for the bidding war that escalated between the Istanbul Modern Museum and the Pera Museum in 2004. The classification of the late Ottoman era and its associated artwork could no longer be squeezed convincingly into a “pre-modern” category.

The auction, where the sale of Osman Hamdi’s The Tortoise Trainer to the Pera Museum affirmed its status as the highest-priced and thus (in some circles), most highly valued Turkish painting in history, was the moment when the canvas was transformed from an intriguing painting to a fetishized commodity. The anthropologist Igor Kopytoff advises that while engaging in creating a culturally informed economic biography of an object, one must interrogate moments of change: “Such shifts and differences in whether and when a thing is a commodity reveal a moral economy that stands behind the objective economy of visible transactions.”\textsuperscript{48}

What was the “moral economy,” or set of beliefs that were being valued and challenged during the 2004 sale of The Tortoise Trainer? Perhaps the bruised ego and broken trajectory of Erol Aksoy and the entrepreneurial capitalists, who had believed in European neo-liberalism and had acquired great financial and cultural capital, reflected the moral economy. Or, the moral economy could be seen through the elite intellectuals of the 1980s and 90s who
revisited the roots of Turkish modernism in order to challenge the dominant ideology of Kemalism fed to them by their parent’s generation, convinced there was more to be learned from their expunged Ottoman ancestors. The moral economy could have also been transmitted through the values of a new political faction with an Islamic face, setting out to prove its effectiveness in transforming Turkey into a global economic force while allowing for the rise of a Turkish Islamic identity that had been repressed since Atatürk’s founding of a decidedly secular Turkish Republic. This moral economy probably encompassed many more things, as well.

Tunneling through the history of events leading to the sale of *The Tortoise Trainer* uncovers the highly fragmented nature of the modern Turkish identity and its attitudes toward its Ottoman past and the West in its formation, both at the moment of the painting’s creation in 1906 and the moment of its sale in 2004—then and now. Daniel Miller, in his dense treatise on materiality, perhaps encapsulates the effect of an artwork’s value most succinctly: “The more we come to believe that art is actually transcendent, the more its material form is worth in dollars.”

The sale of the painting for such a large sum reveals how *The Tortoise Trainer* continues to accrue value even as it may transcend understanding. Furthermore, the sale exposed, proportionally, how high the current stakes are for the remaking of the place of late Ottoman and European modernity in the Turkish national narrative.

POSTSCRIPT

The historic sale has yet to wane in the public consciousness. On November 27, 2011, the news source *İşte İnsan* (“Working People”) released an article on the eve of the auction of another Osman Hamdi painting, *Huzur* (“Peace,” 1904). The article’s author, Burçak Güven, provides a list of the most famous art collectors in Turkey and the likelihood of each to walk away from the auction victorious. *İşte İnsan* is a business journal, reporting on financial transactions, after all, and Osman Hamdi paintings, it seems, are commodities for the Turkish art collector, necessities if one is to be taken seriously in the trade. Despite Osman Hamdi’s initial popularity in European markets, the long list of collectors she supplies, notably, is only composed of Turks. “Who could be the new owner of an Osman Hamdi?” she asks. For example, “Murat Ulker, a well-known name in the exchange of modern Turkish art... with a collection valued at approximately 100 million dollars, is not yet the owner of an Osman Hamdi.” She even muses about the chances of the previously defeated Eczacıbaşı family and their Istanbul Modern Museum, hoping that “maybe this time they’ll pull it off.”

The article illuminates the posthumous effect of the 2004 auction: in Turkey, one no longer owns a particular Osman Hamdi painting, one simply owns “an Osman Hamdi.” As a tangible site for the playing out of competing narratives about the role of Ottoman westernization in modern developments between the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic, *The Tortoise Trainer* journeyed from accruing little notice in the Ottoman Empire in its early life to amassing a high-priced, celebrity status in Turkey in its later years, largely due to the shifts in the economic and political fabric of Turkey since 1980. The mystical dervish at the center of *The Tortoise Trainer*, a fictionalized Osman Hamdi, stirred up a century-long conversation. Where will the dervish go next?
in the spotlight of current events, science cannot ignore politics. De Froe personifies the idea that time and history have consequences, and he will not be bound by linear time or the state of “contra-time,” which runs in parallel. It will instead place them as a reminder of this tension.

**TIMING**

In 2010, it was revealed that University of Amsterdam had manipulated data in a number of studies. This led to the resignation of a senior academic, Prof. D. Poldermans, who had conducted research on the blood levels of patients in order to predict complications during vascular surgery. Prof. D. Poldermans had been found to have misled his doctoral candidate about the data in a number of studies, which had been falsified or lost. Poldermans was removed from the University of Amsterdam and his research data could not be verified and that he may have been guilty of academic misconduct.

In 2011, the executive board of the University of Amsterdam announced the resignation of a senior academic, Prof. D. Poldermans, who had conducted research on the blood levels of patients in order to predict complications during vascular surgery. Prof. D. Poldermans had been found to have misled his doctoral candidate about the data in a number of studies, which had been falsified or lost. Poldermans was removed from the University of Amsterdam and his research data could not be verified and that he may have been guilty of academic misconduct.

In 2012, science journalist F. van Kolfschoten (LUMC) withdrew two articles presented by a researcher in the Rheumatology Department and the Leiden University Medical Centre (Rotterdam) announced it was withdrawing two articles written by Prof. D. Smeesters. The Levelt Committee investigating the case came across fifty-five articles and ten book chapters containing fictitious material and expressed strong suspicions of fraud in another ten articles.

The Tortoise Trainer: a fictionalized Osman Hamdi's life to amassing a high-priced, celebrity status in Turkey in its later years, largely due to the shifts in the economic and political fabric of Turkey since 1980. The mystical dervish at the center of this tension.

At that time research on genetics and racial purity was a common academic practice. Scientifically it is not easy to determine the exact difference between the ideas of the Nazis and other oriented eugenics, to indicate the difference between respectable science and ideological denial, or a transition from one to the other. (Stephan Snelders, Gerwina 20/2007. Op weg naar een ‘germaansche’ volksgezondheid. Nationaal-socialisme, erfelijkheidselekt en eugenetica in Nederland 1940-1945.) On behalf of the Dutch government, for instance, de Froe collaborated with the Instituut voor sociaal onderzoek van het Nederlandse volk (Institute for social research on the Dutch people) for ethnological research aimed at determining which human species should be chosen to populate the future generations of the then new uninhabited IJsselmeer Polders.

5

Die Anthropologie der sogenannten portugiesischen Juden in den Niederlanden, published 1943 by the Institute of Anatomy and Embryology, Amsterdam University.

6

Jaques Presser, from an undated interview with Arie de Froe. Archive of the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD) Amsterdam.

7
Many insisted on their non-Jewish status, but were nevertheless deported, once classified as sub-humans in the *Rassisches Untermenschentum*.

De Froe evaded the academic code of conduct because ethics had changed in the context of the German occupation. If the enemy does not observe any ethical code, why should a scholar do so? Which moral appeal does society make to scholars if that change comes from within, if the cause is implied in its own cultural, economic and political dynamics? Should they be as bothered with society as de Froe was? How must they comply with an academic monopoly on ethics if society dictates different rules of conduct? These delicate issues determine who is given a statue and who is put in the pillory. Here statue and pillory are the same, revealing the constant anxiety that defines the relationship between science, ethics and time. The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice of the Association of Universities is not static. Time and again it addresses the question: Which science suits which society?

**PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

How does de Froe fit into our society and how do we fit into his? A physical anthropologist, he was at home in an environment dominated by German researchers, in a context of Social Darwinism, and in an ambience of *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) and *Volksempfinden* (Popular sentiment). In the mid-twentieth century, ethnology, including anthropometry and craniometry—a technique applied to measure bodies, bones and skulls—was considered a “hard” science. Objective findings with regard to human variations were however widely deployed in political interventions relating to eugenics and scientific racism. Colonial history and Nazi ideology definitively defiled ethnology in a political sense, providing proof as well as justification for distinguishing between civilized whites and primitive savages, or between *Uber- and Untermensch*.

Today, obscured by contemporary morals, it is almost impossible to view ethnology without a political dimension. Moreover, it is not acceptable at present to praise de Froe’s skill as an ethnologist beyond what it meant to the Resistance. On the other hand, his act of fraud sits well with contemporary mores. He did then what we applaud today: the sabotage of German racism. This bestows contemporary legitimacy on a historic case of scientific fraud, providing ethnology an acceptable position while turning de Froe into a modern hero. Looking back, de Froe’s heroic, anti-racist image derives from a scientific practice today considered to be racist. De Froe resisted Nazi politics, but not the Nazi view on ethnology and race. In 1951, de Froe wrote: “The assumption that we manipulated data is naive. We were faced with an opponent that could apply and did apply a far more powerful anthropological apparatus than we had at our disposal. Apparently, it is less easy to assume that the truth may sometimes be beneficial. Well then, we took full advantage of the truth wherever it lent itself to our desired conclusion. The report was accepted, as were its conclusions. The Germans were convinced.”

**THE PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY COLLECTION**

Dr. Arie de Froe officiated as the Professor of Physical Anthropology and Human Genetics at UvA until 1977, and served as Rector Magnificus for the last four years of his career. Between 1915 and 1964, this branch of science at UvA has in various ways been correlated with the collection of physical anthropological artifacts kept at the Colonial Institute, from 1949 named the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (KIT) and renamed in 2014 as the National Museum of World Cultures.

In 1915, Dr. J.P. Kleiweg de Zwaan (1875-1971), occupying an endowed chair at UvA, was in charge of the Physical Anthropology Sub-department in the Colonial Institute established in 1910. His assistant in the Colonial Institute, Dr. A.J. van Bork-Feltkamp (1893-1970), also a physical anthropologist, obtained her PhD at the UvA in 1930 with a thesis on the anatomy of sixty Chinese preserved brains belonging to UvA’s collection. In 1947, Kleiweg de Zwaan was succeeded by R.A.M. Bergman (1899-1967), who was appointed a professor occupying an endowed chair in Tropical Anthropology at UvA in 1950. At that time evolutionary theories comparing “primordial” man to contemporary cultures had become passé. The
German *Völkerkunde* had unobtrusively been discredited after World War II to the benefit of the American school of cultural anthropology. The heyday of pre-war physical anthropology had come and gone. The KIT thus became alienated from the Physical Anthropology Collection. Nonetheless, incoming artifacts enhanced the collection of human materials up until 1964. Bergman’s successor in 1962 was Dr. J. van Baal (1909–1992), the former Governor of Dutch New Guinea who, from 1965 on, had served as a professor of cultural anthropology at UvA and later at the University of Utrecht. Van Baal showed little interest in “all that skull business” wishing the museum to be attuned to the modern world. Once the Physical Anthropology Department had become defunct in 1964, the systematic collection of human remains was discontinued. Acquired between 1926 and 1969, it contained more than 1,900 bone fragments, skulls, plaster casts and instruments.

In 1973, it was decided to move the collection to the Museum Vrolik, a part of the Anatomy and Embryology department in the UvA Faculty of Medicine. Museum Vrolik refused to convert the long-term loan into a donation and in 2002 the loan was terminated on the grounds that the artifacts “had little to no scientific value” with regard to the future of the museum.

The Physical Anthropology Collection was soon returned to the depot of the KIT, in the midst of an intense ethical discussion on the status of human remains in public museum collections. After scientific interest in such items had waned during the 1960s, the postcolonial criticism of procuring it at all intensified. Increasingly, the members of ethnic groups preferred to be in charge of their own heritage as well as of the restoration of their oppressed or lost cultural identity. The KIT was burdened with the responsibility of a collection deemed scientifically useless and ethically irresponsible. How and where might one find a suitable final resting place for these objects?

In 2005, a new inventory of the collection was compiled. In addition, it was reorganized and documented. The existing documentation was outdated due to incorrect organization, remarkable combinations, and missing collection numbers. The relationship between objects (ranging from a mummified Peruvian hand to Amsterdam fetuses) was unclear. The collection consisted mainly of donations to the Physical Anthropology Department regardless of the source and cultural or historic context. Despite difficulties the inventory was completed in 2005 when the Physical Anthropology Collection was categorized and divided into labeled boxes on shelves, ready to be moved elsewhere (Fig. 2).

The museum devised several organizations in order to facilitate partial selections to be considered for donation to various institutions, repatriation or disposal. Despite careful planning, all options were still subject to complex, sensitive and sometimes paradoxical conditions and possible consequences. Ten years later, these items have not left the depot due to the absence of a tenable ethical program concerning their removal. As with de Froe’s scientific practice, it is impossible to judge this collection without being confronted by conflicting moral perspectives from the past, present and future. Sooner or later, every argument meets with a counter-argument. The museum must find a scientifically responsible model in order to facilitate the distribution of the collection. The nature of science does not provide a suitable model.

Art, however, can provide such a model. The nature of art presents a reality of incompatible contradictions. If the Physical Anthropology Collection were a work of art, its intrinsic conflict would constitute its beauty. However, the collection is not a work of art but the collective heritage of the UvA and the KIT. Albeit the university has an opportunity to once again render this collection scientifically relevant on the platform of art. Not a platform from which to view a different reality, but to view the contours of science through the eyes of World Cultures, 2013.

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of art. Artistic methodology casts a different view on this collection providing it with a method of reflection that does not exist in other disciplines. A system perceived as infallible by definition cannot incorporate its own flaws, but art can. Academe has no code of conduct governing the infringement of the code of conduct, just as no code of conduct governs the perpetration of fraud. However, the intrinsic obstacles of scientific ethics can exist next to one another on the platform of art, openly and with impunity. The monument, therefore, is the proper artistic medium. Moreover, Arie de Froe is the proper personification of these dilemmas. The Physical Anthropology Collection is the tangible material that connects de Froe with this monument.

A large collection of human bones and skulls acquired for scientific purposes by physical anthropologists during the first half of the twentieth century now lies idle and stigmatized in the depot of the KIT. The proposal is to once again move this collection to the university and put it at the service of science—as monument in honor of Dr. Arie de Froe. The monument will consist of galvanized steel boxes reading: MONUMENT TO PROF. DR. A. DE FROE 1907–1992 (Fig. 3). They contain all parts of the collection, exactly as organized and registered between 2003 and 2005 with the registration codes perforated on the side. For example: CAT 1 / SERIES 645. The cardboard boxes that currently contain remains will be placed in the steel boxes, partially visible through the perforated letters. All steel boxes, complete with lock and key, can be stacked like bricks in various configurations depending on the situation and location (Fig. 4). Together they make up the monument, an amorphous design chosen purposely in order to allow time to play its role—it can always be varied. The monument anticipates a possible future in which, for example, parts may be requested for repatriation. Specific boxes can be taken from the monument and moved elsewhere. Or parts of the collection may temporarily serve research purposes once again. Unlike a traditional monument, the memorial of de Froe may even travel. The spacious central entrance in Building C of the new university building in the Roeterstraat in Amsterdam, which opens in 2015, is the preferred home base.

Fig. 3
Design for a galvanized steel box to hold the Physical Anthropology Collection.

Fig. 4
Monument in Commemoration of Prof. Dr. A. de Froe, 1907–1992, consisting of lockable galvanized steel boxes that store the Physical Anthropology Collection and can be stacked in various ways.
This form of housing is often described as the most widely practiced form of housing delivery in developing countries. It is a delivery system that comprises action taken by an owner and/or his family with respect to planning, financing and construction of a dwelling, usually occurring spontaneously in informal settlements but can also occur in formal settlements. NBRI. 1987. National Building Research Institute. Low Cost Housing Report, Pretoria. Courcil for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Referring to the period under the African National Congress after the first democratic election on April 27, 1994, in which all South Africa’s people will have access on a progressive basis to: A permanent residential structure with secure tenure, ensuring privacy and providing adequate protection against the elements; and potable water, adequate sanitary facilities including waste disposal and domestic electricity supply. 24

The Growth Employment and Redistribution Program (GEAR) that followed was set to run as the macroeconomic scheme redistributing economic opportunity to those disadvantaged by the previous legislative system. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) for state subsidized housing sought to fulfill this through delivering quantitative (and not qualitative) solutions, offering large numbers of housing units to meet the basic need of the public while trying to fulfill promises of one million houses in five years and affordable homes for all by 2003. 25 The effects of this was a post-1994 South African government that produced large quantities of housing on land purchased by an apartheid state with its own ideals of segregation.

Pertaining to problems with RDP housing, the National Department of Housing 26 noted, “Housing delivery has had a limited impact on poverty alleviation and houses have not become the financial, social and economic assets as envisioned in the early 1990s.” 27 Other problems manifested through the high cost of the housing (because of a high unemployment rate) and the relinquishing of housing structures. 28 The Minister of Human...
Settlements set aside a budget to go back and repair inadequately built RDP structures.

The White Paper advocated for community involvement within housing delivery. In 1998 the People’s Housing Process (PHP) was employed, existing with other schemes already undertaken. The PHP scheme required financial or labor contribution from the potential homeowners. Although the prospective homeowners could take part in the building of the home as a “self-help” initiative, their input was not included in the urban scheme—the location of the structure and the urban pattern of area—and the actual load of housing delivery relied heavily on the poor. Housing numbers built throughout this process sharply decreased by 2007.

The Breaking New Ground Policy (2004) included a program specifically devoted to the upgrading of informal settlements with a target to eradicate all informal settlements in the country by 2014. It also acknowledged the need to have a qualitative approach to housing in the face of a growing housing backlog exploring sustainable technologies as well as delivering on the right to the city by giving people different housing types and a choice of location. Despite this ambition, the N2 Gateway pilot project received negative reviews of poor design and material finishes. Further, it brought on matters of illegal evictions and occupations: the Symphony Way Pavement Dwellers were forcibly evicted from the N2 Gateway houses after the illegal approval of occupation by Councillor Frank Martin. The eviction deemed them squatters and forced them to move to a notorious temporary relo-

cation area in Delft, Cape Town nicknamed Blikkiesdorp (Fig. 3, 4).

Poor delivery in the realm of social housing was exemplified by the uproar and protests resulting from the installation of 1,316 unenclosed toilets in the informal settlement of Makhaza, Cape Town in 2011. The government has not denied the difficulties it faces in confronting the housing problems of the country. Tokyo Sexwale has stated, “South Africa is dealing with a Haiti-like situation every day,” comparing the informal settlements in the country to post-earthquake conditions in Haiti 2010. These South African settlements have endured fires, floods and disease, and have increased from 300 settlements in 1994 to more than 2,600 settlements in 2010.

The deconstruction of physical and psychological inheritance within the housing sphere is a difficult undertaking. The issues of land acquisition, poor service delivery and sanitation, and the use of hoary housing models that do not provide adequate solutions riddle a continent that suffers from inherited colonial lay-outs and an apparent inability to escape their re-use. Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana, Uganda, Guinea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, only to name a few, experience housing delivery shortages, backlogs, and a large population of slum dwellers. These countries seek policy after policy in a trial-and-error process to address housing issues similar to those in South Africa but cannot escape the mass-cloning effect of housing typologies from a colonial era. Despite high economic growth rates exhibited by some in recent

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29 The former Minister of Housing, Sankie Mathembe Mahanyele stated: “Our noble intentions of providing basic shelter to the poor have also promoted total dependency on the state.... Savings and sweat equity contributions by prospective homeowners, which have not been encouraged enough, are now the central thrust of our subsidization programme.” Ministry of Housing. April 2002. “Budget Speech By Housing Minister Sankie Mathembi-Mahanyele to the National Assembly.” in “The Urban Sector Network’s Experience.” Built Environment Support Group.


31 Blikkiesdorp is Afrikaans for “Tin Can Town”.


34 Ibid.
Fig 3.
A view of metal shacks in Blikkiesdorp, Cape Town.
Photograph Mads Nørgaard.

Fig 4.
A view of toilets in Blikkiesdorp, Cape Town.
Photograph Mads Nørgaard.
years, the deficiencies highlighted above reveal macroeconomic policy gaps and a disproportionate focus in addressing poverty.\textsuperscript{35} Government approval of personal as well as private sector development is opulent in the face of a neglected poor.

II. Nova Cidade de Kilamba, Angola

Consider the Angolan context: Twenty to thirty thousand people are estimated to have been evicted from their homes between 2002 and 2006 from informal settlements on the outskirts of Luanda for the “beautification” of the area and to make room for new development.\textsuperscript{36} Kilamba Kiaxi, or the Nova Cidade de Kilamba (New City of Kilamba) is a new housing development that can accommodate five hundred thousand people yet very few can afford it, resulting in poor property sales. 65.8% of the urban population of Angola lived in slums in 2009.\textsuperscript{37} The US$3.5 billion project built through Chinese-Angolan economic ties is a mixed-use satellite town consisting of 750 eight-storey residential apartment buildings, a dozen schools and over a hundred retail units.\textsuperscript{38}

Angola possesses 8% of the world’s oil reserves and provides 15% of China’s oil imports.\textsuperscript{39} China began its involvement with Angolan infrastructure finance in 1992 following the end of the Angolan Civil War with rail and power structural restoration. In 2004 a line of credit with the Export and Import Bank of China (China Exim Bank) that promotes foreign trade, allowed an initial deal of US$2 billion given out in two equal installments between 2004 and 2006 in return for 10,000 barrels of Angolan crude oil per day for seventeen years. This deal came with a public tender agreement, giving 70% of construction and civil engineering contracts to state-approved and state-owned companies.\textsuperscript{40} Such resource-backed financing is dubbed “Angola mode”. In 2007 another US$2 billion loan through China Exim Bank was approved while in 2006 Angola agreed to a loan with the China International Fund for infrastructural development.\textsuperscript{41} Cidade de Kilamba was built by the China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC), although the scheme is believed to have been conceived by the China International Fund.\textsuperscript{42}

The project was also set to partially fulfill Angolan Presidents Jose Eduardo dos Santos’ pledge to provide a million new houses. With massive stress on infrastructure within Luanda (over population in the city combined with damaged infrastructure following the Angolan Civil War), construction had to be considered outside the city. Cidade de Kilamba is orthogonally planned, similar to the colonial modernism deployed in 1950s Luanda. The new city was built over three years, grouping repetitively multi-colored blocks to allow for rational infrastructural construction of water supply, power and treatment plants. However, initial prices of units in the development—between $125,000 and $200,000\textsuperscript{43}—did not consider the social context of the African country, leaving the development largely unoccupied after the project’s first release in 2011.\textsuperscript{45} In
2013, subsidized apartment costs dropped between $70,000 and $190,000, allowing the ghost town to fill up.  

Along with this development, many other countries have put forward heavily marketed and rendered promises of new cities: Kigali in Rwanda has a proposal of New Kigali, Hope City in Accra Ghana, Konza City in Kenya, King City in Ghana, Eko Atlantic in Nigeria, Tatu City in Kenya, La Cite du Fleuve in Democratic Republic of Congo and Kigamboni in Tanzania only to name a few. Foreign developers and designers are largely responsible for these new urban and architectural proposals. They are the new trend, operating as large gated communities that provide an escape from the existing urban condition of inadequate infrastructure, tapping into a global network of smart-cities.

“In South Africa, housing policy should translate the transformative project of the Constitution into concrete mechanisms that lead to a more equal society,” wrote South African academic Marie Huchzermeyer. In the end, Nkandlagate only represents a broader trend of using typologies that marginalize and exclude rather than promoting the development of experimental, contemporary and progressive ideas that do not limit construction to the same materials, the same area, and the same indignity. Architectural, urban and socio-political explorations by the state to address these issues could create “liberty, freedom and the benefit of the city life for all,” ideals implied by the concept of the right to the city that extend to mobility, adequate housing and sanitation. Such explorations may offer more sustainable and relevant typologies that are a representation of the current democracy.

The African housing sector is a difficult problem to tackle, proven so by years of policies, promises and structural prototypes. Today, African leaders commonly promote utopian developments as poverty-alleviating and viable to portray an acceptable current image of forward thinking, using the projects as evidence of the economic growth they strive for. This portrays the idea that upon failing to deal with the real issues of informal settlements and housing development the next best thing is to ignore them and, in their place, put “what should be there” in the eyes of the elite. It leaves citizens in informal settlements as orphans in the city, denying them their rights. An ironic repetition occurs at the cost of a large poor population, leaving them inapposite in the new plan for Africa. The eco-city projects along with their individual ventures are usually excused as being privately funded to relinquish the responsibility of providing equal access to resources or consideration of a larger population because the alternative—acceptance of using public funds—would knowingly deny people the social colonial swansong they were promised to hear.

Ibid.


that measures the amount of ozone or hydrocarbons, or whatever you want—the cost in many cases is pennies. They're nothing! You know, a cheap digital movie camera costs not that much to begin with but if you take out the power supply it's really nothing. So, what this company wants to do is to wire up these lamps so that now they'll be...

J M:
Networked.

P G:
They'll be networked, for security. So for example, Newark airport is now wired that way. It used to be you could look for a black, egg-looking thing here that would be watching you, and before that a bulky camera-thing with a red light in the front, but unless you would want to display your surveillance, that's all in the past. I remember an app that you could download, that would say how to New York without going under a camera.

J M:
That’s London.

PG:
Now the other thing is in 2014, that's just absurd, quaint, a thing that people were promised about forbidding police from sticking on GPS devices onto your car to track it, but that owl had flown. They were promised plate recognition or cellphone triangulation or even the already-installed GPS system that is in an ever-greater number of cars to navigate or to guard against theft.

PG:
GPS those are tracking people's device on a car, when you now see eval technology, I say this because of your interest in the relation of using public funds to relinquish the responsibility of providing equal access to resources or the alternative—acceptance of using public funds would knowingly deny people the social colonial swansong they were promised to hear.

Galison and May, Part II

You can use your cellphone—
Stores like Target link that physical movement data to your loyalty or credit card when you buy something. Then they have a name, address, bank information, and much else. And then you leave the store and now you're tracked in other ways. In a way, the private sector is far in advance of the government.

J M:
Right, and I think what's interesting about the Snowden affair is that it represents this pivot point between, say, the work that you were trying to uncover in your secrecy documentary, and what will inevitably replace that older paradigm of secret paperwork. It seemed that within the public realm, the outcry regarding the NSA was almost entirely directed at governmental intervention. Yet probably many of the same individuals who were voicing outrage are, in the very same moment, disseminating enormous amounts of private information automatically in the products they buy, in purchases they make, in objects they carry around. In his lectures on security and territory, Foucault talks about the establishment of the modern urban planning mindset. One of the characteristics is the “poly-functional” of urban elements. So the boulevard, as an urban concept, will not just be well lit. It will not just lead from the exterior of the city to the interior. It will not simply link up market spaces with governmental spaces. It will also—and this is the crucial added dimension—be wide enough to be foreclose the possibility of the barricade.

In this new territory of automated processes, I wonder if the development of a coherent politics wouldn't have to involve considerations of the status of vision and the visible field. One of the questions the camouflaging manual raises is, if industrial camouflaging wanted to render invisible the visible, how now does one become invisible within the invisible?

PG:
So the lamp post case is interesting in part because it relates to something you were talking about with the Nest thermostats, because, as you rightly point out, it's not just that Google suddenly developed an abiding interest in thermometry.
Searching for things. I remember six to eight months ago there was a bomb explosion at LAX. The radio said, “it’s a carbon dioxide bomb.” And I thought, carbon dioxide bomb? I thought of some kind of nitrates, I had no idea what carbon dioxide, which is non-explosive, could do in a bomb. So I started to do what I always do in such cases and type into Google, “Carbon dioxide bomb” and then I thought, “Maybe not.” I’ve read all these cases where typing in “bomb” leads to bad consequences. So I can show you some terms that we know from the Snowden revelations are trigger terms. Terms that will put you under alert.

Terms that find their way into what’s called “meta-data.”

They’ll pull out that information and if it correlates with something else, you’ll be investigated further. Maybe automatically, maybe by hand. But that moment of self-censorship. It turns out that a carbon dioxide bomb is not high tech—it’s putting dry ice in a bottle and you know it’ll blow up. But it’s a stupid bomb. Though it can be dangerous if you get hit by shrapnel, compared with “real” explosive bombs, it doesn’t do very much damage. But what interested me was my self-censorship. Thinking, “This will be part of my permanent record that I was looking for bomb information in the wake of a terrorist attack using this kind of bomb.”

But that thought, that momentary hesitation, if that becomes more prevalent—if that becomes part of our daily life—you’re in a physical store and you stop in front of this or that shelf of books. Or you stop in a left-wing or right-wing bookstore, a gay bookstore, or a religious bookstore, but now your cellphone has lodged that address somewhere permanently. Someone twenty years from now can check and say, “Well, you know, you did stop by for twenty minutes in this store. What exactly were you doing there on May 15, 2014?”

I’ve been thinking about the analog of utterance self-censorship today. How does that form a kind of archival censorship? The ubiquity of our texts and Skype conversations… Did you see that GCHQ [Government Communications Headquarters, the British equivalent of NSA] was monitoring Skype for a while and maybe still are? They discovered that some not trivial fraction of video Skypes are intimate, sexual. So governments looking in the bedroom becomes more than metaphorical—GCHQ reportedly snapped images from online video chats from millions of
in nothing more than the highly encrypted. If they see something with a
highly sophisticated encryption algorithm, it becomes especially interest-
ing. It reminds me of John Dillinger, the Elliot Ness era gangster. Dillinger
acid burned off his fingerprints, and he made the FBI's job a lot easier.
They would say, "Oh look, a finger print with acid burns on the fingers!
That's Dillinger!" And I think that there's a way in which governments
have learned to push people. If they take extraordinary measure to hide,
the act of hiding itself becomes suspicious activity—many governments
automatically flag Tor-encrypted communication. And let's be clear and
unromantic: Tor does conceal some dark sites that market drugs, arms,
and human trafficking.

We're in a world where there's a kind of swirl and anxiety, and I think one
of Freud's great insights back in World War I was that self-restraint has a
kind of radiative effect beyond the specific things you look for. In China,
the Chinese government will block off text messages with references to
the numbers that are associated with the dates of Tiananmen Square. So if
thinking becomes slightly encoded, that becomes a symbol for something
and they pull it out. I think that when you're in a world where informa-
tion is being grabbed and signaled and alerts are being set up, you create
a safety zone around it.

What is that safety zone going to look like in the world of archival,
no-place-to-hide, surveillance? What will we do to ourselves, in a way?
Forget what the NSA does. Maybe no one will ever be arrested for inno-
cently looking up carbon dioxide bomb. But in the meantime, what will
it do to us?

JM:
Pushing back into some of your previous work: You've recently suggested
that images are now participating directly in interventions, and that we
are moving from a technical paradigm of representation to a kind of direct
and immediate "presentation"—and an equivalent shift from something
like "history" to the concept of the archive. This seems to mark a severe
break with the historical mirror that you had set up in your work with
Lorraine Daston, Objectivity. The questions of objectivity that you raise
in that book are not merely about the representation of nature but are also
about political representation. Returning to Georg Simmel's work on "The
Stranger"—the early metropolitan stranger—he points to a very interest-
ing transformation that takes place in the early metropolis. He says: if you
look at pre-metropolitan life, the best judge of community affairs was the
"wiseman," who best knew the intimate secrets of the clan or community.

PG:
Europeans have a "Right to be Forgotten"—they want to push Google to
erase all that search data, all that false, embarrassing, hurtful junk on the
web. We'll see what happens. (Europeans have a lot of things they would
like to forget.) So I think there is of course a danger when you try to hide
something. You also make yourself more visible. The NSA is interested
users. Dutifully, the spooks reported that 3–11% of the images contained
"undesirable nudity." (One wonders what GCHQ would judge to be desir-
able nudity, but maybe we don't want to know.) The NSA, for its part, has
an analogue category to Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Human Intelli-
gence (HUMINT) that goes by the name of LOVEINT (analysts using the
system to snoop on lovers, rivals, and spouses).

JM:
Isn't the analog something like a proxy server or VPN or IP mask? One
of the most popular ones is "HMA Pro VPN," which stands for "Hide My
Ass"—which is a kind of guerilla start-up company that began developing
methods of routing internet activity through "anonymous" servers. So this
is maybe the corollary to the "utterance self censorship," what you called
"archival self-censorship." These new masks acknowledge that something
or someone is holding on to all this data, archiving it.

PG:
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2 "Optic Nerve: Millions of Yahoo Webcam Images Intercepted by
GCHQ," http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/27/gchq-nsa-

3 Peter Galison quoted in "The Lives of Images: Peter Galison in

4 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, Objectivity (New York: Zone
footage is all available. So while NSA offers a salient point of reference in our discussions, it is crucial to remember that the fabric of urban life, commercial interactions, policing, and justice are all part of our archived and mined world.

J M:
There is a massive project of trying to format those disparate data sets so they can speak to each other.

PG:
Often when I travel, I talk to the person sitting next to me, I’m curious about what they do. And a lot of the people I meet on the airplanes are people basically leveling and making commensurate databases. That’s what they do! It’s a big business, making this data commensurate.

J M:
So what would it look like to think about images “objectively” after objectivity? Or is that simply no longer a sensible question?

PG:
I think that your question leads in several really interesting directions. One is about political representation and what the presentational mode is in its political dimension. In the image domain of the sciences, we are often faced with a new relation to scientific images. Not “Does my picture mimic reality?”—the sort of bilayer epistemology with which we are familiar. No longer are images only about this question of matching: —“I have a representation of nature and I want it to fit hand and glove with the underlying natural, stable thing”—a phenomenon-noumenal relationship (in neoKantian language). Einstein thought that way. If nature is symmetric, our equations should be symmetric. Not every scientist thinks that way. Henri Poincaré didn’t. He had no truck with a kind of representational picture. He thought science was for us to get around the world in the best possible way. So he never worried about how much choice God had at the beginning of the universe—God never occurs in Poincaré’s voluminous writings. For Einstein, God did, though not as a Zeus-like anthropomorphic figure intervening in human affairs. But rather as a principle of order that preexisted and will post-exist our species’ life. For Einstein, that match between the underlying order and our picture of it was crucial.

Fast-forward to early metropolitan life, and suddenly we find the idea of an objective or neutral juridical paradigm, in which the best judge or jury has little or no knowledge of the specific issue or community. Fast-forward to early metropolitan life, and suddenly we find the idea of an objective or neutral juridical paradigm, in which the best judge or jury has little or no knowledge of the specific issue or community.5

What happens to this notion of political objectivity within the technics of pure real-time presentation? What happens to political representation in a technical paradigm of pure presentation and intervention, of real-time intervention in these kinds of networks? How do we even think through that? Because to my mind this is essentially a question of urbanism.

PG:
We could ask: What happens when Walter Benjamin’s flâneur becomes an automatically registered “suspicious loitering”? 6 This is, in fact, a funded project in Europe under the name “Samurai”—a new kind of pre-crime detector. Objectivity turned upside down and backwards: the representation of justice, from what you were just saying, as blindfolded. To see particularity as a bias is to upend our image of 18th century blind justice, weighing with a scale. What happens when Lady Justice is not only un-blindfolded but is provided with an all-seeing Utah or Cheltenham server farm at her fingertips? Massive archives are not just centrally used for local law enforcement, they can’t tap into the NSA repository, but increasingly police are using keyboards more than shoe leather. Information from GPS and phone data to financial transactions and surveillance

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only game in town. Instead, the questions are increasingly ones of engineering: new algorithms, new material and virtual structures. This shift is recent enough that fifteen or twenty years ago many physicists would say of many problems in nanoscience, “That’s not physics.” Nobody says that anymore. Half the department is doing things that go under different descriptions as “biology,” “biophysics,” “nanoscience” or related areas—work that might be found in the engineering school, nanoscience center, biology department, or chemistry department. You can think it’s good or it’s bad, that it’s useful, that it’s commercial. But the question isn’t, “Is it real?”

JM: And it’s not that they’ve taken one side of that argument or another. They’ve just ended it. I think that this sense of a kind of saturating of engineering, where the scientific and engineering have wound around each other to the point where drawing and bright line separation just isn’t interesting to people anymore. It’s part of what has precipitated this shift in many domains—not every domain—but in many domains towards this presentation mode of image functioning.

Images are useful when you try to make something or present something, the way an architect presents a model. It’s a presentation, “You should like my proposal for this neighborhood. Here it is in “the model,” or “your building,” or “your house.” For scientists, the cover of *Science* magazine for example fluctuates between a presentation in almost a venture capital sense—“You should be interested in and fund this kind of work”—and the pictorial traditional epistemic and with an aesthetic component. It’s partially why I think there’s been such lowering of the boundary walls between artistic production and scientific engineering. When you’re making things, you’re in a domain where terms like “design” cover both. I recently asked a French colleague: how would you use the term “design” in French? And she said, “design.” This multivalent term flies as easily in architecture schools, art schools, as it does in engineering schools. It floats in a world of the built universe that functions in all these areas. The aesthetic does not seem like the enemy of the practical in the way that, in 1880, or 1930, you might have said, well that’s “Art,” that’s not “Science.” And design crosses that boundary in a way that obscures the boundary and makes it irrelevant.

One of the most frustrating aspects of the fields of architecture and
I’ve been working a lot on nuclear lands, which have put huge pressure on concepts like “wilderness” and “biodiversity” and other categories we thought we understood. These lands are so huge that they have begun to shape our views about our relationship to nature. The most radioactive site in the United States is the Savannah River Nuclear Weapons Complex in South Carolina. With my co-director Robb Moss, we’ve been filming there. It’s enormous, over 300 square miles, almost fifteen times the size of Manhattan. Though it produced about a third of all the plutonium ever made by the United States, it is also the home of the Savannah River Ecological Laboratory founded by Eugene Odum. Odum and his brother Howard wrote the standard textbooks on cybernetically-inflected systems biology, and indeed helped create the discipline of ecology. Because radioactive isotopes could be tracked, you could see the flow of these materials as they moved up the food chain. You could determine who ate whom, from plants and snakes up through radioactive turtles and alligators. In fact, the biologists there often note that because people cannot go there, the area has become the most biodiverse place in the United States. If you look at it in Google Earth, you can see, from space, the boundary of the site by its greenness. So what is this site? What are these sorts of spaces? The biologists say that the radioactivity is protecting the site. Radioactivity is what’s responsible for making the alligators there survive and thrive. Maybe for the wrong reason (they say) but it has. So is that site natural? Is it unnatural? Is it built? Our older vocabulary is inadequate to the day. That interests me a lot. We have this American notion of wilderness, which no one else shares. It does not translate into French or German or Italian—and now, up against this “waste-wilderness” as I’d like to call it, we are banging against the edge of our experience and our concepts.

From the get-go, “wilderness” was a complex idea. It was a revolt against the overly commercialized entertainment of the National Parks. Of course the word itself has ancient, even biblical origins, but it has come to signify something different—a kind of land without us, with all its primeval associations. In one of his justly famous essays, William Cronon, the environmental historian, challenged the very idea of such non-human purity. That article, “The Problem with Wilderness,” challenged the politics of such idealized purity—and urged us to recognize that land is always already interacting with people, and that failing to recognize that leads to bad things for the people who do live there (should they be driven away to “preserve” the land?) and for the land itself.

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we start to think through what that term really means? How do we cultivate a conceptual framework that is somehow post-natural without tumbling back towards older metaphysical conceptions that clearly cannot wrap themselves around our contemporary conditions? It could be such a rich and expansive project, if only we'd take it up with patience and sincerity.

Or think of Olmsted who ploughed, sculpted and built his way to naturalness in Central Park. Indeed, English gardens in general are a confected nature. It's not as if this is news, much less bad news, but we have sustained a troubling picture of Nature as if it were on a scale from purity on one side to defilement on the other. I've been interested in what it means to take these “contradictory” nuclear lands, and address them as they are, not as destroyed or sanctified, but as both at once.

The Savannah River Site simply does not resemble the blasted devastation of central Hiroshima the day after the blast. Nor is it some kind primeval nature, with the romantic excess such language brings to mind. No, waste-wilderness is something else. It is a new kind of thing. Now we have the experience of a nuclear test site the size of Rhode Island. These lands, when we encounter them in the future, already are and may become at ever-larger scales, our most intense experience of biodiversity. If that becomes not just the view of biologists but our collective understanding of the most natural nature, then we may leave behind talk of “ironic nature parks” and simply confront a new kind of relation to the world. Maybe the very idea of Nature will come to be seen as obsolete, the imagination of a long-ago time.

JM:
One thing that troubles me is that—and I'm aware that this will seem like a somewhat nostalgic picture of previous conditions, but bear with me—it seems that in previous epistemic conditions, perhaps only fleetingly, there existed a parallel philosophical project that questioned and interrogated the subtle resonances between knowledge claims and lived life; not in the specificity of those claims, but below that, in their delicate substratum, in their assumptions and beliefs about reality. (Take, for example, the debates around Positivism in the 19th century.) What troubles me today is that there doesn't seem to be a counterbalance in any particular way, and I think this absence is directly related to the technics of presentation, which seem to foreclose or obscure those kinds of questions. Nevertheless, I wonder if this vacuum provides an opportunity for something like the philosophy of design to become a very rich arena of philosophical investigation? Maybe philosophies of language, philosophies of life, etc.—maybe those images of thought have lost their purchase because their classical questions don't seem to inflect on contemporary conditions like those we've been discussing.

I think it's a very important question for schools of design. If the concept of design can be applied to everything from building to babies, how do
the installation. But the first hour was pure because people didn't know how to negotiate the situation, if it was real or fake. Was it an aggression? Was it meant to be static?

AL
For our last question, I want to ask about the two titles for the project: both Memories of Tomorrow and Love Songs for Riots, and the use of the Bizet song. What is the role of romance in this project?

DF
Probably I will make a very simple answer. It's because I still want to have something naïve in the projects. Something where someone not an academic can get it in two of the appearance. That's why the first one, Memories of Tomorrow is a bit complicated, but Love Songs for Riots is simple and maybe a little bit subversive in a way. I like that, maybe the last way I like. I want freedom is about what fascinates us, we are expecting
Love Songs for Riots
2013 (Performance)
The 1929 Pavilion is designed to make visitors aware of a collective experience, when considered, were mainly expressed in the shop-discussions as problematic facts that prevented Mies’ genius from fully developing. From my point of view, the story could be explained in a different way. Both pavilions might be seen as collective arenas in which a number of sensitivities, interests, and projections were confronted and experimented with. From this perspective, the conflicts between the preconceived ideas and the way they were realized—like the lack of time the fair authorities imposed in 1929, economical limitations, ideological conflicts or technical decoupling—are actually what would need to be considered as the authentic outcome of the two collective constructions.

The Pavilion as Social Construction.

Collective Awareness vs. Shared Non-Calculability

The function the basement serves can thus be summarized in the following terms: it is the mechanism whereby the traces and reminders of all the negotiations, experiments, accidents, discussions, evolutions, and compromises that define the Pavilion’s enduring existence—through time, in nature, across different political contexts and varying economic schemes—are hidden from visitors and effectively rendered invisible; the Pavilion’s basement, in other words, is the place where the evidence left behind by an important number of micro-stories about the building’s existence, preservation, and performance are black-boxed.

The Pavilion’s “Mies experience,” as it is reproduced daily, seems not to be possible if all the negotiations, compromises, experiments, and assemblies that outline the building’s wider social footprint did not remain unaccountable, beyond scrutiny. Immersion in this experience therefore seems to require the sustained omission of all that makes it possible in the first place. From this perspective, the architectural programmes enacted by the Pavilion’s ground floor (the Pavilion proper as visitors see it) and its basement could not be more different in functional terms.

Considering the way that visitors relate to the building, it can be said that the architecture of the ground floor is designed to make visitors aware of a number of selected realities, people and stories—for example, materials: marble, onyx, velvet, glass; Mies; Minimalism; and Georg Kolbe’s Dawn, the sculpture standing in the green pond. This awareness is achieved through the interaction of a number of carefully designed features that lead the visitors to the formal and spatial layout, and its connection with the city. The base-ment, in the way it is used to hide ordinary facts from visitors’ sight, generates unawareness in the visitors, something we might call shared non-calculability.

Managing collective awareness, making things visible, creating and challenging hierarchies, black-boxing or setting obligatory passage points through sections of reality, are tasks we normally assign to the domain of politics. Upon closer scrutiny, however, many of these practices are observed in connection with contraptions, technical systems and devices—in this case, spiral staircases, concrete walls, sinks, filter systems, brown boxes with flags in them, etc.—which, to a great extent, could be identified as architectural in nature. Architecture tends to be understood as a sustained endeavour to create new realities from the very beginning, from the construction work on.

What does it mean to be an inhabitant of the two-story Pavilion? What can we learn from the encounter between both floors?

The significance of all these issues in the context of contemporary architectural practice needs to be explained further. As is invariably the case, architectural
formulations elicit responses, trigger dissent, cause unpredictable effects, confront and negotiate with unforeseen facts, and then evolve into completely different end-results once they are put into practice—all of which requires analysis, as an explicit manifestation of the complexity that defines a society. When questioned on how the everyday needs of the Pavilion staff were taken into account when its reconstruction was designed and implemented—where, for instance, could they leave their clothes or have lunch?—one of the architects involved in the process admitted: “these concerns did not arise until much later; we did not consider these issues when we were reconstructing... [the Pavilion.]”

A staff worker explained: “Working here is really tough sometimes. For instance, there is no heating or air conditioning, as there would be no way to conceal the equipment. So in the winter the place is freezing cold, and then in the summertime it becomes an oven. But I’m very much aware of how privileged I am. I still remember the first day I worked here and I got to see the sunset over the city for the first time. The whole Pavilion became an observatory.”

Another former employee added: “Many times, after a difficult day, being there [in the Pavilion’s central space] made me feel relaxed. I experienced things remaining as they were, and even though I might have had an awful day full of arguments, there were still places where one could get in touch with life’s essence.”

It would seem, therefore, that it is not the visitors but the staff who truly appreciate the complexity of the Pavilion’s twofold structure. Only they can see both aspects of the building and experience them both as opposing yet interconnected realities. Only they can experience the Pavilion’s architecture as the inhabitable controversy between two ways of socialising daily life. The first is an autonomous, self-referential architecture based on the permanence of essences, framed within apparently unchanging notions, disconnected from conflict and contingencies, fixed in its precious materiality, aimed at excellence, presenting itself as a universal and self-consistent architecture. This approach, however, would not be viable without the support of everything that falls under the rubric of the contingent. For on the other side of the dichotomy there is another way of socialising daily life based on contingency and mutability; a different approach where inconsistency and multiversality—often resulting from a chain of events—have a part to play, and components are opportunistically assembled according to availability rather than suitability. This second architecture is composed of fragments in dispute, which are bounded only by the way they interact in daily life. It is only in this ordinary interaction that their functional or critical ensemble may be perceived.
PHANTOM MIES AS RENDERED SOCIETY
The imperative force of these headlines provided the authoritative blank slate required to rewrite Robin Hood Gardens into the architectural canon, at the same time erasing the complex history of its reception up until that point. In an ironic twist of fate, its inevitable demolition had the opposite effect of elevating the building to the status of heritage—bypassing debates about the architecture itself.

Bonta’s biomorphic chronology implies an evolutionary progression in our interpretation of architectural canons. However, all natural processes are subject to disturbances that have the ability to create kinks and folds in its internal logic. Robin Hood Gardens found itself precisely in this state of distortion during the debates—the threat of demolition performed the role of a catalyst, compressing what was as a gradual, and linear process of monument formation into an instantaneous and lateral display of opposing opinions. The notoriety was urged on by a chain of petitions, design competitions, and exhibitions that expanded the building’s field of influence far beyond the architectural community to national, and international media outlets like The Guardian, The Observer, and The Financial Times. Within the course of a few weeks this local demolition saga had become a news item. Everyone, it seemed, was talking about Robin Hood Gardens, but the discussions revealed a striking lack of consensus.

At the beginning of 2011, a motley collection of representations of the building appeared interspersed between three articles in BD, all published within the course of a month. The first to appear was a pair of images of architect Sarah Wigglesworth’s proposal for the refurbishment of the dilapidated flats. In them, the original architectural features of Robin Hood Gardens remain lovingly preserved, with subtle improvements to the interiors. The second included renderings of the Blackwall Reach Regeneration from the site’s developers.
Fig. 4 Robin Hood Gardens the year of its completion in 1972, showing the original doors. Photograph Alison and Peter Smithson.

Fig. 5 Robin Hood Gardens, 2009. Photograph Ioana Marinescu.

Fig. 6 Robin Hood Gardens, 2009. Photograph Ioana Marinescu.
Swan Housing and Countryside Properties and their architects Aedas. The scheme unveiled a series of glossy mid-rise towers around a well-maintained lawn—an antidote to the Smithsons’ design. The final article was a book review on a recent case study published by the Twentieth Century Society, which features two sets of contrasting representations of the building: first, the Smithsons’ chromatic original images from 1972 brimming with the life of the inhabitants (Fig. 3, 4) and next to it, a set of desolate, self-pitying black and white photographs commissioned in 2009 (Fig. 5, 6). This unlikely sequence of eerie apparitions began to take on the air of a eulogy. The articles were titled respectively “Robin Hood Gardens Remodelled,” “Designs to Replace Robin Hood Gardens Revealed,” and “Robin Hood Gardens Re-Visions.” The headlines suggested a departure from linear chronology in favor of a kind of temporal overlap, whereby projections of renovation, demolition, and a kind of premature memorialization were taking place simultaneously, unconcerned with the building’s physical presence. The threatened status of Robin Hood Gardens can be interpreted as an enabling vacuum for precisely this type of temporal collapse, within which each representation of the building is elevated to the status of a mythical present, and the building itself is split into multiple copies—each standing in for a different subjective agenda.

Bonta places great emphasis on the significance of expert opinions in interpretive work. His definition of canon formation is grounded within an ongoing internal dialogue between architects, critics, and architectural historians until they reach an agreement—an official version of the truth from which rumors reverberate in the form of publications, exhibitions, and other mediums of commemoration that cement the building’s position within the architectural canon. However his analysis is largely bound within the disciplinary confines of an architectural audience. When applied to public housing, the limited number of key players within his chain of production begins to fall short of the complexities of a project with a much broader public. The media outbreak around Robin Hood Gardens performed a democratizing role in overriding this process of consensus by opening the building up to a plethora of possible, and often conflicting interpretations from both inside and outside of the architectural community. The state of emergency created by the demolition threats introduced a cause for contention that separated opinions into two distinct courts of “For” and “Against,” yielding not one, but two monuments. The first was a saintly image erected by the architectural community of Robin Hood Gardens as a cult idol standing in both for the Smithsons’ complete body of work, as well as for the larger significance of neglected twentieth century British architecture. Looming over it was a much darker doppelgänger, created by the Tower Hamlets Council and its developers, that stood in for the failures of public housing—“ill-planned to a point of being inhuman,” a blight on the urban fabric doused in the dated rhetoric of the 1960s. Each side peddled its own agenda within which the building was cast interchangeably as both subject and context. On the one hand it served as the isolated protagonist within an overlooked historical context. On the other, an outdated backdrop for a dissatisfied society of users and owners that have outgrown the socio-economic conditions of its construction. While there is a clear chasm between the conversations, what the two sides have in common is the way in which they employ the same rhetoric of architectural merit to coerce Robin Hood Gardens into opposing stereotypes on their own terms, with convenient omissions. The architects and preservationists overlooked the building’s initial reception within the discipline as a latecomer of utopian Modernism. The atmosphere of doom that surrounds Brutalist housing projects had already begun at the time of Robin Hood Gardens’ completion, which occurred only months after the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe began in 1972, which Charles Jencks famously coined as the death of Modernism. Similarly, the developers, in their condemnation of postwar housing as inherently inhospitable,
seem to have forgotten that Robin Hood Gardens once represented a successful example of the Greater London Council’s progressive design agenda, which was conceived in opposition to the majority of government-built high-rises that were being erected around the country at the time. Curiously enough, the two opposing arguments referenced the same architectural typology: the Smithsons’ iconic “streets in the sky.” They were described simultaneously as airy corridors fostering the growth of communal identity and as crime-ridden alleyways that degraded the character of the neighborhood. This pair of irreconcilable contradictions highlighted the power of the media to amplify the effects of rhetoric. Within this pressure chamber of skillfully manipulated truths, the uncertain reputation of Robin Hood Gardens flickered back and forth between its physical container and the semantically contained.

The inconsistency of these statements indicated that a work of architecture cannot be independently expressive. “When a work departs from culturally established patterns,” Bonta suggests, “it always requires a collective effort of clarification,” 20—the relationship between form and meaning, between design work and interpretive work is in need of perpetual realignment. The threat of demolition on Robin Hood Gardens had two effects on Bonta’s model: both a temporal acceleration in quantitative terms, as well as a polarization of opinions in qualitative terms. It took what was a complex array of dissonant discussions around social housing policy and the role of the state in large scale urban planning projects and crystallized it into a solitary event personified by an infamous piece of architecture. With an induced sense of urgency, the chain of media representations around Robin Hood Gardens dramatized the unfolding of events and gave the building a false sense of agency. At the same time, the reduction of larger social and economic discussions around the failures of the welfare state into proxy arguments about architectural quality begins to reveal the low stakes of purely architectural debates. The imminent demolition of the building is no longer its biggest threat; architecture’s inherent muteness serves as another kind of affront to the physical fabric of the building. Operating as a malleable symbol for shifting authorities, the architecture is silenced into mere iconography—a semantic tool for illustrating someone else’s point.

In 1970, at the time of Robin Hood Gardens’ construction, the Smithsons expressed their views on the architect’s social obligations in a documentary for the BBC titled “The Smithsons on Housing.” Speaking to the problem of vandalism, Peter Smithson remarked that “motives behind housing are often political, but the architect cannot get involved: his obligation is to build so that the thing outlives first intentions and serves subsequent generations.” Even though Robin Hood Gardens failed to resist the effects of vandalism in the years to come, his notion of the architect as apolitical speaks to the pliancy of his architecture as a neutral emblem capable of serving multiple interpretations, even multiple regimes of power. The 2008 debates illustrated, above all else, that the question of endurance has little to do with the physical quality of the building. It rests instead on an unpredictable process of interpretation beyond the architect’s control, beyond discussions about architecture alone. Within shifting social and political climates, the physical shell of Robin Hood Gardens is no more than a concrete marionette within a scene of dispute, given the daunting responsibility of having to personify both sides.

Whether the formation of monuments rest on piles of stones or a proliferation of words, ultimately it cannot escape the fleeting currents of the media—what is revered one day is quickly forgotten the next, replaced by a more convenient example. In the end, the brute force of concrete is survived by a softer side of the Brutalist approach: the notion of objects “as found,” where works of architecture are perceived as symbolic habitats capable of housing multiple realities. Perhaps the recent history of Robin Hood Gardens is better summed up with the words of Alison Smithson, speaking in the same BBC documentary on her initial reactions upon arrival at the building site: “anything and everything can be raised by association to become the poetry of the ordinary.”


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LEPIDUS I understand: you probably heard that some ancient tomes were in the sewer, and so you descended into it because you are so dedicated to collecting books.

LIBRIPETA Your limpid thought Lepidus, always did lack the salt of wit.

LEPIDUS Insults of this kind do not please us uneducated ones whom you publicly call 'demented' and 'insipid'. Nonetheless, tell me about the sewer-wisdom of yours.

LIBRIPETA You want to hear?

LEPIDUS There you have it! Since you consider our whole age unable to speak for itself and wish yourself to be regarded as a philosopher, you can't neglect this opportunity for recognition. I know you will fulfill your philosopher's duty by recounting your dream.

LIBRIPETA I wish my talents would suffice to pursue this matter! For I want to describe all the other things, but especially that river which is located at the entrance of the land and which is by far the most remarkable of all the things I could tell or even conceive.

LEPIDUS Was it perhaps some dark river like Lethe? Or did it flow with the Stygian waters?
LIBRIPETA No it was nothing like that. The incredible thing was the sight of countless faces rolling along in its waters. Some were pale visages of unhappy invalids, others were jovial and pleasantly ruddy. Some others were emaciated and wrinkled, or had deformed eyes, noses, mouths, teeth, hair or chins. It was a vision of horror, stupefaction and monstrosity! But do you know by what remarkable method I used to cross the river! I had to roll up into a compact ball and tumble across, just as a stone rolls down a steep hill.

LEPIDUS Ridiculous.

LIBRIPETA Don’t say it’s ridiculous. It is really dangerous. For some of the visages are quite sharp. If I myself, accustomed as I am to struggling and contending with men by assailing them with my very teeth, did not have a thick skin—from all the bites I’ve received—you would now see me totally lacerated. After I crossed the river unscathed, I thanked the gods above.

LEPIDUS You must have a thick skin indeed if no teeth can injure you. But what happened when you crossed the river?

LIBRIPETA That’s a very long story fit for a treatise. In that place there is a valley where lost things are kept.

LEPIDUS Oh, were the wasted hours of man’s lives kept there also? How many of your years did you recognize? Tell me.

LIBRIPETA It was all there. And what you will find most remarkable, I even came across a not inconsiderable part of my own brain, which a little woman whom I once loved had knocked out of me. If it were permitted (one is not allowed to remove anything from there) I would have refilled the right half of my head which is now just empty and void.

LEPIDUS Take care that you don’t regard as empty what is replete with madness! What happened then? Are the lost liberal arts and ancient works of Latin literature lying about in that place?

LIBRIPETA They’re also, as I said. There you will find anything that has been lost. Indeed, in the middle of the valley are all the ancient tyrants of mankind: authority, charity, love, riches, and all things of this sort which never turn up again once they are lost.
LEPIDUS How did you distinguish charity from the rest since in your whole life you have never shown it toward anyone and you have never regarded anything given to you by a charitable soul as an act of charity?

LIBRIPETA I wouldn’t have recognized anything, since almost everything there was different from what I would have imagined, if not for the custodians of the place who informed me about such matters.

LEPIDUS How’s that?

LIBRIPETA Well, in the middle of the valley they were all heaped up in a pile, and if you were to see this pile you would disdain it.

LEPIDUS Really?

LIBRIPETA Yes, there are great bags of free speech, lies and the sound of flutes and horns. Next to these are charitable acts and these take the form of gold and silver hooks. Then, there are certain lead wings, which are said to be human authority. Next, there are manacles and chains that burn, and these are said to be love. Then, in the dust the names of countless citizens are written with a stylus: these they say are riches. Finally, to make a long story short, you will find any conceivable thing there—except stupidity.

LEPIDUS Well my good man. I am now ready to confess that your journey is suitable for a philosophical treatise.

LIBRIPETA So, do you wish to hear the rest?

LEPIDUS Yes please tell me. For although you reek, I enjoy listening to you. Continue your story.

LIBRIPETA I will. Nearby a very tall mountain rises out of the plain. From this mountain they say all sorts of desirable and longed-for things boil as though from a cauldron. Around the mountain itself belches forth from its summit now this object, now that. These things then chance to roll down one side or the other. But I was not at all pleased by the sight of these things. Through some negligence or satiety or boredom with so many things that were appearing left and right I let many things of this sort pass without notice. At length I came to a place not far from the mountain, where a very swift stream ran. This stream, they say, grew out of the tears of mourners and wretched human beings I cannot easily tell you with what amusement I crossed this stream. For certain old women were condemned to transport men
across. While they were alive they were proud and haughty young maidens, but in old age they were superstitious and evil crones. You will laugh when I tell you how I came across.

LEPIDUS More! I want nothing but to laugh and to hear anything pertaining to this journey of yours.

LIBRIPETA I will humor you then. There are those old women reclining in the nude on the shore. You fix your knees in the cavity of their groins, take hold of their ears, and with the old woman below, you direct your vessel wherever you wish using her head as a rudder. She paddles with her heels and hands.

LEPIDUS If anyone is deserving of a shipwreck, it’s you. Tell me: did you go under again and again or not?

LIBRIPETA Not at all. To understand why, you should know an interesting fact that I learned in the midst of my philosophical studies. The lungs inside make it possible for swimmers to stay above water. A scrofulous woman has two sets of lungs, one in her kidney and another in her privates. In addition the fact that women’s heads are completely empty contributes greatly to their ability to stay afloat. Do you understand now?

LEPIDUS If you have any sense you will go right back into the sewer. With this journey you have contributed more to philosophy than you have in your entire career, more than your great library could—the one you keep under lock and key. But answer me this: Is it really safe to entrust yourself in such ridiculous circumstances to the constancy and trustworthiness of a woman?

LIBRIPETA As a matter of fact, this voyage was quite safe and convenient for me. My old flame immediately presented herself and smiled a toothless grin at me. You would have admired her diligence in the way she steered me with utter reliability. I thanked her kindly and as soon as I set foot on the opposite shore I saw green meadows where, instead of turf and blades of grass, men’s hair and beards, women’s glowing locks, and the fur of animals, and even lion’s manes grew up. In fact, you could see nothing in this field other than hair of this sort! Great Gods! How many dreamers I saw there! All of them digging up some sort of roots which they eat though they seem neither wise nor well-informed to do so. I spent much time there, but then a
great mass of lice flew up from the field and nearly ate me alive. My only salvation lay in finding an escape. And so I took to my heals and found my escape, raving as I was from experiences in such a place, where it was offered: the fates provided this sewer to me.

LEPIDUS Get going then, and take a bath, and I will return to those friends of mine whom you call insane and uncouth.

Fig. 1 Robert Smithson. The Fountain Monument – Side View from the Monuments of Passaic, 1967.

Fig. 2 Robert Smithson. The Fountain Monument – Bird’s Eye View from the Monuments of Passaic, 1967.
ma" spurred a wildly heterogeneous coalition, though few artists joined because political art had long been associated with service to the state. But vegetarians, feminists, alternative educators, students of architecture, new media activists, leftists, nationalists, and neighbors came together "For ‘Lithuania’" to create the Pro-Test Lab.

The clever name contains protest in the double sense of inclusion and control. The Lab’s activities would be experiments in art-making. Events in public spaces throughout the city included private screenings of sometimes pirated films, rock and folk concerts, milk bars, masquerades, all of which produced almost daily interruptions of neo-liberal business. There were more than sixty events in the first half of 2005, a barrage that worried the new owners of “Lietuva” enough to resell the property to “Paradise Apartments,” a front for Lithuanian and Russian investors.

The movement started modestly inside the movie house. Gediminas and Nomeda proposed to interview patrons of the final International Film Festival and to produce a documentary called *Cinema Spring* in reference to the Prague Spring of 1968. The cinema staff gave more than permission; they invited the collective to occupy the ticket office that would become headquarters. The challenge became how to “curate” the explosive differences among pro-testers who had huddled in the cinema to shelter particular partisan positions. The solution was to promote a variety of activities that kept the Lab clear of any one ideology. It is a strategy that comes instructively close to the model of autonomous collectives that developed in ACT UP.\(^9\) In April 9, 2005, the mix thickened when the Pro-Test Lab convened a public meeting to change its mission from defending the cinema, “For ‘Lietuva’,” to recuperating the country, “For Lietuva without Quotation Marks.” The two hundred attendees represented new groups: anarchists, members of the Green Party, true Social Democrats (“the losers”), a good number of heritage experts, passersby, and strangers. The citizens’ movement was founded at that meeting.

Among the numerous happenings of this newly national movement was *America Will Help Us!* (June 2, 2005). It was a photo op of a crowd wearing President Bush masks and eating popcorn. Bush had visited Lithuania in 2002 and famously declared that “from now on any enemy of Lithuania is an enemy of the U.S.” The backdrop for the photo was a huge poster of the quote in the style of George Maciunas—"A loose collective of mostly arts activists who fought the AIDS epidemic," see in *The Work of Art in the World*, Doris Sommer, pp. 61. --
the Lithuanian-born founder of Fluxus, New York’s playful art movement meant to embarrass bourgeois culture. Had the event been a political demonstration it would have required permission and suffered delays or denials. But as an art project, America Will Help Us! and other contentious displays of dissent passed under the legal radar though all the media outlets picked it up.

Another successful event was Fashion Collection for Work and Rebellion (July 12, 2005). A well-known designer and several glamorous models turned the cinema’s rooftop into a catwalk and made the show irresistible to the media. It covered the front pages of the newspapers, including Business News. This was the last straw for the already harassed VIP developer. Wasn’t it enough that a sweet deal with the city had just gone sour and cost him a fortune? Or that the cinema’s plaza had hosted a Monopoly-like game called VIP Market where architecture students displayed scale models of churches, parks, and an opera house, with offers to turn them into garages, shops, or apartments? (An Internet version in 2007 would invite players to “develop” the city as one of four characters—the corrupt mayor, a gas tycoon, a local gangster, a vamp. The trick at the end of the game is that no matter how high a player scores, the Pro-Test Lab destroys the profits.) Now the mogul’s own friends and allies were humiliating him with enthusiasm for subversive fashion. (Anarchists tried to undercut the Lab’s victory with objections to “collaborating with spectacle.”)

The Lab also experimented with a TV talk show to get politicians, architects, human rights activists, and city planners to talk about public space. One show featured the architect of the cinema’s replacement building. Another brought in lawyers for the developers. The show also reported on the disastrous gentrification of Oslo as a warning to Vilnius. The cumulative effect was to ground the concept of public space into a concrete demand. Therefore, frustration escalated when the cinema closed in September 2005 to be immediately sold to Paradise Apartments. Citizens’ voices had not been heard, so Vilma invited everyone to bring out their dogs and make more noise. Dogs Barking Will Not Disturb the Clouds is a Lithuanian folk saying about purposeless complaining. On the square in front of the condemned building, the dogs created a media success, and also disagreement with activists who objected to the post-protest message.

Vilma was the Pro-Test Lab’s electronic afterlife. One powerful connection that it brokered was an invitation for Gediminas and Nomeda to speak on the state-owned radio station. This got journalist Rasa Kalinauskaite fired; she then joined a private TV show and developed her new pas-

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10 In 1963, Maciunas composed the first Fluxus Manifesto “to purge the world of bourgeois sickness.”
sion for heritage. Becoming the Lab’s lead spokesperson, Rasa also founded Lithuania’s Alternative Heritage Commission to hold government accountable to the law.

By the end of 2005 Paradise Apartments hired media monitors to track the artists’ activities. And when another heritage expert spoke on national radio about abuses committed by the developers—collapsed buildings, illegal elimination of a playground—the monitors provided “evidence” of libel. From late 2005 to the present, the company has tried to have the artists’ accounts arrested, and in 2008 it sued the heritage expert for damages. No lawyer would defend her, but an artist stepped in as happened in ACT UP. Musician Tomas Bakucionis was only a law student then. He had gotten interested in the law while drafting a 2006 Pro-Test Lab petition to the national government demanding responses to a series of municipal abuses regarding public space and zoning. A year and a half went by and, astoundingly, the government found four of the seven petition points legitimate. This was a real victory. One of the points was to explore the establishment of a Public Space Committee in the Ministry of Culture, though municipal lawyers had argued that the term was bogus because property was private by definition.

A series of suits and countersuits forced Gediminas and Nomeda to investigate their civil rights. They discovered the International Aarhus Convention which explicitly guarantees the right of citizens to participate in decisions about environmental use. This right was a surprise to Lithuania, though the country had signed the convention, translated from a mistranslated Russian version. For example, “environment” turned into “nature;” “transparency” became “publicity;” “sustainable” translated as “balanced.” The document had never been cited in Lithuanian courts and the artists’ case depended on approval of their fresh translation, which finally came in January 2009. The developers retaliated with a civil suit to demand compensation for compounded losses, alleging that the Lab experimented with public resources, including the very courts that were judging their pranks. But the artists assured the authorities that they were following the law to the letter, an innovation in Lithuania that evidently had a defamiliarizing effect.

endeavor to be abolitionist institutions that are wrong. Despite being embedded in disparate ideologies ourselves, we must approach history—through writing, activism, and art—with an abolitionist commitment to continuing the fight.

Can we move on while looking backward? We're stuck in this wretched impasse: the past hovers behind and the future in front. I want to be stuck, and I don't want to be stuck. It's infuriating. Instead of moving on, we need to look backward to contemplate how history affects us in vital ways now—what theorist Heather Love calls "feeling backward."

In the gay progress narrative, feeling backward rouses too many ugly and negative emotions to be comfortable. Today most gays don't like to feel backward to times when they weren't as powerful or rich or healthy. It's far easier to talk about pride than shame, despair, or loneliness.

The first time I heard of a Boston marriage was in high school. Some Boston-based LGBT history or rights organization randomly sent two copies of a glossy coffee-table book about Massachusetts' fight for marriage equality to my high school's Gay-Straight Alliance. On the cover there were two white gay men kissing in front of the Statehouse, showing off their wedding rings like idiots. The book traced the fight for marriage back to the Boston marriage, vividly chronicling in photographs gay and lesbian couples from the past hundred years.

Bullshit. The Boston marriage—a very queer partnership—was by no means the forebear to today's normative model of gay marriage. It was outstanding precisely because it wasn't a marriage.

Naturally, the book came to a halt in 2004 with Massachusetts' legalization of gay marriage: white middle-class cisgender gay men and lesbians were basically just as privileged as their straight counterparts. After all, with the exception of gay adoption and military service, and perhaps participation at Sochi, there wasn't anything left for them to fight for.

What nerve the organization had to gift these books to us, the awkward queer kids. Were we supposed to look at the pictures of the happy white couples and share in their happiness, imagining that one day we too could be happy? That "it gets better"?

We didn't give a fuck about marriage. Did gay marriage make us feel safer and more accepted in or outside of school? When people want to talk about how progressive Boston is, the first thing they say is that Massachusetts was the first state to legalize gay marriage. But why should gay freedoms constitute a barometer of forward movement?

I moved back here the same weekend as Boston Pride, two months after the Marathon bombings. The celebrations coincided with my high school friend Liv's funeral. I got off the bus from Canada with my big duffel bags and headed directly to the candlelight vigil in Copley Square. It was touching to see familiar faces of old friends and local activists and to mourn together.

I can't stop watching Liv's YouTube poetry from years ago, the video where he says, "a strong woman once told me, there needs to be more of us. Strong women who stay and fight, who don't get hit, stuck to the pavement."
I can’t believe this is exactly what happened to him. Despite everything he did and went through. It was tough and terrifying in high school, but he was still brave and grounded and true to himself. It didn’t get better, but he got stronger. He became an important trans activist.

The banality of a bike accident.

Sometimes I get furious about forms of social injustice in Boston. I tend to romanticize political movements of bygone eras. Yet I know that many activists like Liv (particularly people of color, immigrants, women, and queers) are working hard to make life in Boston less grueling.

Liv belongs to a long lineage of strong Bostonians who stay and fight.

And, yes, there needs to be more of them.

Mostly based in Boston, the James family was exceptionally intelligent and well-off. Whereas Henry’s father was a prominent theologian, his older brother William was a leading psychologist at Harvard. Out of the five James siblings, there was only one female, Alice, who was also the youngest. Though likely just as gifted a writer as her older brothers, like Shakespeare’s non-existent sister imagined by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own*, she was conditioned by her family not to thrive because of her sex. Pathologized, medicalized, and locked up by her male family members from an early age, Alice developed a slew of bizarre mental and physical illnesses. Dead at forty-three.

Another woman condemned to a life of diary-writing in bed. And she wrote brilliantly.

Whereas William was lauded for his groundbreaking academic work on *feeling*, Henry is traditionally recognized as one of the first novelists to explore in depth the psychology of characters. Especially his females like Isabel Archer, Daisy Miller, as well as the suffragists Olive and Verena.

Through their now canonical writings about—of all things—emotion, the James brothers established themselves as great men of letters while their sad little sister withered away under the covers.

Susan Sontag wrote a play called *Alice in Bed* about Alice James’ tragic life. In one dreamlike scene inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*, the protagonist attends a mad tea party with the other late Massachusetts female writers Emily Dickinson and Margaret Fuller.

Though a sharply innovative poet, Dickinson was barely able to publish anything during her lifetime. She became the quintessential spinster, never leaving her homestead so as to take charge of domestic operations and furtively labor away on her poetry. The other guest, Margaret Fuller, was a Bostonian writer and activist who published the foundational feminist text *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* in 1845. Also the first woman to have access to the libraries at Harvard.

In the play’s postscript, Sontag mentions, “I think I have been preparing to write *Alice in Bed* all my life.”

After all, she was a Boston housewife at one point too before her rise to celebrity. Obviously her
icy intelligence and glamour were always unrivaled, but Sontag lived in Philip Rieff’s shadow during their marriage. Though she was an avid diarist herself, one of the only periods from when we lack her journals is 1951–1952, right after she married Rieff at seventeen when she graduated from the University of Chicago.

A single despondent entry from 1951 reads: “I marry Philip with full consciousness + fear of my will toward self-destructiveness.”

They moved to Cambridge so that he could take a position at Brandeis. Baby David was born in 1952, the same year Sontag had to take the train all the way to the University of Connecticut to teach undergraduate writing courses. She was eighteen, probably the same age as her students. She started doctoral studies in philosophy at Harvard the following year. On top of that, she researched for and essentially co-authored Rieff’s first book, for which she never received due credit.

The marriage grew unbearable. An entry from 1956: “Whoever invented marriage was an ingenious tormentor. It is an institution committed to the dulling of the feelings.”

A year later Sontag took off for a better life to Oxford, Paris, and New York. She started dating women again and never came back to Boston.

Why do all the queer feminists ditch Boston for New York?

Adrienne Rich moved her three kids and Harvard professor husband there to get involved in radical politics in 1966. They divorced in 1970; he shot himself in the woods but she continued to flourish, falling in love with Jamaican novelist Michelle Cliff.

Eileen Myles left in 1974. Her Twitter suggests she comes back to take her mother to the movies every now and then.

Nan Goldin beat it there in 1978. I’m pretty sure she only returned to Boston for rehab.

Maybe “Boston Strong” is more like an imperative. As in, a Bostonian should be strong.

But here’s the thing: the strong Bostonian is always a scandal.

In my graduate studies, I’m supposed to concentrate on the global, the theoretical, the big picture.

It’s true, my new infatuation is cringeworthy. My apartment should be cluttered with books by Louis Althusser, not Louisa May Alcott.

But who knew that Alcott too was probably queer?

Most people compare Alcott to her astute heroine Jo March from Little Women. Jo was such a tomboy; everybody thought she was a lesbian. But then she grew up, married the old German professor, had kids. She became so depressingly maternal and boring. Unlike Jo, Alcott never married, focusing instead on her career. From a young age she took to writing to support her family.
Their financial situation was actually much worse than the March’s.

In 1942 Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine Stern were leafing through Alcott’s papers in Harvard’s Houghton Library when they discovered that in the mid-1860s she used the pen name A.M. Barnard to publish several sensational queer texts about sadomasochism, transvestitism, drugs, and feminism.

In an interview Alcott even stated, “I am more than half-persuaded that I am a man’s soul put by some freak of nature into a woman’s body… because I have fallen in love with so many pretty girls and never once the least bit with any man.”

To out Alcott, Rostenberg and Stern likely had to stay in the closet themselves to be taken seriously. Or so it seems to me. The two women were partners and housemates for over sixty years. According to Rostenberg’s obituary, “They disavowed any lesbian relationships… but expressed a ‘deep, deep love’ as friends, scholars, business partners and rare book sleuths.”

Regardless, it was the perfect Boston marriage.

In Eileen Myles’ “An American Poem,” she talks about her upbringing in Boston, famously declaring that she is a Kennedy—a fact she claims to have kept secret her whole life. To escape the fate of her renowned family, she moves to New York and becomes both a lesbian and a poet. By professing to be a Kennedy, Myles can use her privilege to attend to the urgent social and political issues of her day.

This is all make-believe, though it might as well be true. To be honest, Myles kind of does look like a Kennedy. But the whole point is there’s no such thing as Eileen Myles. Eileen Myles is a Myth. This poem is the first in her aptly-named collection Not Me.

The poet concludes that not only is she a Kennedy, but we’re all Kennedys. “And I am your President,” she playfully adds.

If writing allows Myles to be a Kennedy or the President, then I can be a Bostonian.

A lesson from literature and history should be a wake-up call for all of us, especially myself:

We must be our own Bostonians.


Eileen Myles, Not Me (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 17.

I self-consciously import this concluding thought from “we must be our own heroines” in Kate Zambreno, Heroines (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012), 297. Heroines inspired this piece; I respond with admiration and friction.
inseparable from the space of the deepest fantasies. The camera is connected to that which cannot normally show itself, the “fantasies of an impossible daily life.”

The depth of this clandestine engagement starts to manifest itself in the “Ritratti ambientati,” photographic portraits in carefully staged ambiances in Casa Miller, and published in Occhio magico n. 4, 1945, and in Message from the Darkroom. In these pictures, the figure of the woman emerges as the central element in the composition, a figure that Mollino argues in Message from the Darkroom only exists for the camera.

The women in these staged portraits are all women Mollino knew, clients such as Ada Minola, or Lina Suwarowski, his presumed girlfriend at the time, but the women don’t appear as themselves. They are figures in a fantasy, leading actresses in a film. The style is that of Hollywood publicity shots. The lighting on the subject is always immaculate and the gleaming and flowing hair becomes the protagonist, as in “Scalp,” the cover of the first issue of Occhio magico where platinum blond locks flow over a golden skin. The body doesn’t appear very often and when it is, it is always sheathed: Bodies without limbs are sheathed in a sari that transforms it into an object, an architectural element, sexualized through juxtaposition with other objects. Where the enigmatic figure is. One imagines the enigmatic figure is never simply in the space, the space becomes an object that becomes itself a fantasized stage portraits.

It is not by chance that Mollino called one of the stage portraits in Casa Miller “F. M.” (Fig. 5). “F. M.” was the same woman in many other portraits, in the threshold of a closed door, bare ass, the branding, is the irresistible focal point. We don’t see the face, becoming the protagonist, as in “Scalp,” the cover of Occhio magico where platinum blond locks flow over a golden skin. The body doesn’t appear very often and when it is, it is always sheathed: Bodies without limbs are sheathed in a sari that transforms it into an object, an architectural element, sexualized through juxtaposition with other objects. Where the enigmatic figure is. One imagines the enigmatic figure is never simply in the space, the space becomes an object that becomes itself a fantasized stage portraits.

The design was completed in 1968 but never really inhabited. Mollino never told even his closest friends about its existence. The surrealist details of the house are more complex, the itineraries more labyrinthine, the eroticism more explicit, the photographs more secret. Mollino had no intention to publish the images, assembling them instead into albums, like family pictures, for his private viewing. Only a few of them were turned into greeting cards for his closest friends, such as “Epifania, 1961,” and “A Dragon to take for walks” (1964). The glamour and precision of Hollywood cinema give way to an erotic, almost sense of amateur porn. Instead of the 43 carefully chosen images of Casa Miller, more than 2000 Polaroid photos were found in Casa Mollino at his death. These images were not meant to be published but to accompany him to his afterlife, in a kind of “book of the dead.” In 1973, three months before his death, Mollino wrote:

> I am preparing, like the Chinese of rank who in life adorns his own mausoleum, a corridor of my house to be a twilit avenue where the photographs and many other mementos of life shall follow in sequence: all beautiful, or almost.

It is precisely in this tiled corridor where most of the photographs are taken in Casa Mollino. The tomb is of course the ultimate house, the home of the dead. Mollino was fascinated with the tomb of Kha, an ancient Egyptian architect who designed his own tomb, now in the Museum of Turin. Like the Egyptians, Mollino wanted to sail away...
Fig. 4

Fig. 5
Photograph taken by Mollino in his apartment, c. 1948.
with his personal treasures and prepared a bed in the shape of a boat, resting on a marine blue carpet. One of the walls is covered with butterflies, symbols of life after death. Mollino expected the women to accompany him to his afterlife.

Around the same time he started working on the interior in Via Napione, Mollino acquired a Polaroid camera and promptly abandoned traditional cameras. With the move from the Leica to the Polaroid, there is no longer the endless labor in a dark room. The images are still manipulated, with Mollino crudely altering body shape and pubic hair—scratching, tinting, incising (Fig. 6).

The model for Mollino's Polaroid scenarios is no longer Man Ray and surrealism but the spreads in *Playboy* magazine. If in the 1930s Mollino bought the whole run of *Minotaure*, in the 1950s he bought *Playboy*. He turned the fantasy of the girl next door into a darker fantasy of the encounter with a stranger.

But Mollino is not a playboy. The ever more explicit images are not about seduction at all. While the models for the photographs of Casa Miller were women that Mollino knew well, in the secret houses of the 1960s, Mollino was interested in women he had never seen before and will never see again. He cruised the streets and clubs of Turin looking for the appropriate model among prostitutes and then retired to his apartment. Mollino's chauffeur in a rented limo would approach the chosen woman with the excuse that the client was an important figure that needed to protect his privacy, and offered a large amount of money for the encounter. The women were also given a large tip to give to the governess in Via Napione who will take care of undressing them and dressing them up in the props carefully designed or chosen by Mollino: the shoes, clothes and expensive lingerie by the Swish company Sangallo.

The way Mollino orchestrates his encounters echoes Anaïs Nin's 1940s erotic tale "The Veiled Woman." In this story, a man is in a bar and sees a stylish couple dressed all in black, a veil covering the woman's face. The woman leaves the bar and her companion comes up to the first man and tells him that he is completely dominated by the caprices of a woman who is only interested in a man she has never seen before and will never see again. He offers to pay him fifty dollars to satisfy the desires of the woman. He accepts and they get into a taxi where he agrees to be blindfolded and they eventually arrive at a house with all white walls, ceiling, and carpets and with so many mirrored walls that he loses all sense of perspective, seeing
Fig. 7  Mollino photographing Casa Devalle, 1939–40.
Fig. 8  Carlo Mollino in his studio, between 1963 and 1973.
only infinite repetitions of himself making passionate love to the woman. For months he is haunted by the memory of this extraordinary experience that he can never repeat until one evening he meets a man at a bar who tells him a story: Several months before, an elegantly dressed man had approached him in a bar and offered, for a fee of a hundred dollars, to let him see a magnificent love scene. When the first man asks him to describe the scene, he recognizes it as the very one in which he had participated."

Unlike the men in this story, Mollino is both participant and observer in the scene. He is the voyeur of a scene of his own making. A scene he has dreamed of before and tries to painstakingly reconstruct, down to the last detail, designing the shoes, the transparent skirts, the lingerie, the gloves...all the necessary props. It is not by chance that we sometimes see Mollino reflected in the mirror taking the photograph; the voyeur superimposed on the scene itself (Fig. 7, 8).

The last journey
They say that Mollino died without any friends and that the funeral was attended only by prostitutes. Did they love him? These women who have seen him only once and only to let themselves be dressed and undressed, photographed in a mysterious interior of exotic chairs, animal furs, mirrors and reflected surfaces? Are they like the character in Anaïs Nin’s story, forever haunted by an experience they can never repeat, the experience of an evening in which a gentleman had approached them and offered them a large amount of money to satisfy the desires of another gentleman who will only be interested in seeing them once, not to make love but to photograph them, to make love with them with a prosthesis with its own sentiments.

Or were they simply getting paid to take part in Mollino’s ultimate performance, the carefully staged funeral, with professional mourners dressed in outfits designed or chosen by Mollino.

Fortunately, as with everything about Mollino, we will never know.

1 A version of this article was first published in Carlo Mollino: Maniera Moderna. Köln: Walther König, 2011.

2 "We are about to take our degrees," The Architects Wake, 8 April, Year IX of the Fascist Era, Turin, 1931. Reprinted in Giovanni Brino, Carlo Mollino: Architecture as Autobiography (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), p. 11.


6 Carlo Mollino, Message from the Darkroom, p. 68.

7 "In place of a large window overlooking Via Talucchi he puts a non-existent terrace, an entire bathroom is moved from the right to the left of the living-room... The staircase is altered wholly to the advantage of a never executed entrance..." Carlo Mollino: La Casa Miller ritrovata", in Domus 721, 1990.

8 "I know for certain, however, that there are genuinely poetic photographs on fragile sheets of paper... like old masters or other canonic forms of art, they place us in the domain of the inexpressible, be they personal documents or fantasies of an impossible daily life." (1949) Message, p. 98.

9 The Olivetti factory was in Ivrea, a town in the province of Turin, and the Lexicon had been introduced in 1948. Mollino will not have missed the advertisements stressing the smooth, curvaceous body of the machine and its fleshy beige color, which he associates with the naked body of the woman. For more on Olivetti see Ann-Marie Brennan’s dissertation “Olivetti: A Working Model of Utopia,” Princeton University, 2011.


This conglomeration of religious symbolism and pop culture, current events and celebrities, was one reason viewers would stop and linger as long as they did. Also mimicking Corita's distinctive serigraph aesthetic, quotes overlapped each other and wrapped around the sides of boxes, requiring attention and interaction from viewers. Each excerpt could be related to the theme or to other images and the associations took the installation's theme and implications off in myriad directions.

The pieces must have been finished by mid-November, because they served as the backdrop for two campus plays before being numbered, collapsed and shipped to New York for the display crew to re-form and install. Myers and McGowan followed their pieces, arriving in New York on December 7th. Corita was not with them, having left on her annual cross-country tour of speaking engagements and gallery exhibitions, but the women that was recording the entire story from the creation of the boxes in the classroom to the unveiling of the completed exhibition.

The women examined the exhibition on December 8th (fittingly, the day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception), and the window shades were finally lifted to reveal it on December 9th at 7:30pm (Fig. 2). The next day Myers and McGowan were photographed.
and interviewed in front of the windows, and they were able to watch themselves on the "6 o’clock news."

The shades were brought down that evening because of the IBM December 12th broadcast of the attempted Gemini 6A launch. The launch was aborted after a technical glitch. The second attempt, on December 15th, was successful, and saw the first space rendezvous between two crewed spacecrafts. This temporary closure had been scheduled, although it ended up taking longer than planned, but it was also capitalized on as an opportunity to change some components of the IHC installation before the curtain was re-raised.

This seemingly expedient choice was the kindling of the controversy. When the exhibition was re-opened, observant viewers and reporters noticed multiple differences: material had been changed, removed, and added. The changes most often mentioned were the deletion of two quotes: Pope Paul VI’s “never, never again, war” declaration to the United Nations and Dag Hammarskjöld’s “the greatest prayer of man is not for victory but for peace” (itself a quotation of a Swedish poet). The removal of such peaceful statements seemed downright suspicious, and the reporters’ resulting conjecture was that IBM was afraid of being linked to the Vietnam War protests. When interviewed, Bob Monahan, the IBM design coordinator in charge of the show, described the “rearranging and deleting of the material that looked like placard pickets carried in those marches,” contributing to this perception. Another very noticeable change was the cramped addition of “to men of good will –Luke” to the dominating boxes that spelled out “Peace on Earth.” Even if a viewer had not seen the exhibition before the changes, the citation was obviously an addendum, and an aesthetically unappealing one. Monahan explained these changes, as well as the addition of huge panels in each window explaining the connection of the theme to the Christmas story (Fig. 3): “the art work in the exhibit is quite far out, and there were no crèches or Santa Clauses or holly—the sort of thing people associate with Christmas.” By extrapolation, IBM wanted to make sure the exhibition only referenced “peace” in a biblical sense, which for some of the faithful, although not the students and nuns of IHC, would not necessarily translate to advocacy of political peace on earth.

Articles about the controversy that told this story of events continued into January 1966. Meanwhile, Corita, Myers, and McGowan futilely tried to neutralize the general perception. They were interviewed several times and described the “censorship charge” as “fuss” and that they had made the changes “without protest.” A quote by McGowan made the rounds: “It was supposed we throw those quotes out because the IBM people thought they were used out of context and we might all be identified with the anti-Viet Nam demonstrators.”

The uproar about the exhibit’s changes did not prevent it from being popular with the public and prominently featured in the media. Almost every newspaper article called it “avant garde” (an aesthetic translation of Monahan’s more colloquial “far out”) and at least one reporter noted its proximity to Fifth Avenue’s distinct version of Christmas window displays.

Many were impressed by Corita’s statement that “the shapes of ads and billboards” included in the installation “are today’s forms.” Lost in the clamor of the exhibition’s popularity and its controversy were a number of more mundane reasons for the changes that were made. One problem was simply technical: the display was damaged. The boxes had been created in November in Southern California, where the temperature stays moderate even in late fall, and the layouts had been glued on using regular art store glue; the art department could not afford professional or archival quality supplies. When the boxes were unpacked and installed in New York that December the temperature was hov-

17 Myers, interview. The speaking tours Corita did, previously with Sister Magdalen Mary, were a way to finance their trips to the East Coast.
19 Krebs, “Peace on Earth.”
21 Krebs, “Peace on Earth.”
23 Cunningham, “Nun Startles N.Y.”
erating around freezing and some of the faces warped and rippled, aggravated by Corita’s approved method of pasting around the edges only and not in the middle of the page. There was nothing to be done except change the damaged boxes. Although Myers and McGowan did not have materials to start the process from scratch they had preparedly brought extra layouts with them and so replaced the distorted ones. This material complication might be the reason behind the removal of Hammarskjöld’s quote, since it was not otherwise problematic.

The second reason that some parts of the installation were changed harkens back to the contract Corita drew up with IBM, and may display some corporate unease. Although there is no known explanation for how it happened, some quotations from men other than the agreed-upon five had found their way onto the boxes. Pope Paul VI was the current pope, and no matter how relevant or important his famous declaration about peace was, IBM did not want it to be part of the exhibit, especially in the era of the Second Vatican Council and distinct rumblings within the Roman Catholic Church. The addition of the explanatory panels and the citation for the phrase “Peace on Earth” were IBM’s capitulation to political unrest, but the quotation changes were borne out of both material needs and contractual legalism. Some newspaper articles claimed that there had been objections by IBM employees and passersby, although it seems unlikely that anything could have been reported in the short time the installation was visible before its first closure. Higher IBM officials repeatedly refused to comment on the rumor that the chairman of the board, Thomas Watson, Jr., had himself protested. IBM was not strong-arming the artists into a less radical message; they were insisting on adherence to Corita’s contractual promise to limit the exhibition to the words of those few statesmen. IBM certainly had PR reasons for wanting to restrict the figures represented, but the changes to Peace on Earth were not only the sudden recoiling from controversy the media made them out to be.

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24 Myers, interview.
25 In her journals of Corita’s classes from 1967 and 1968, Marie Vincent Brothers wrote detailed instructions of how students were to paste: “Get the smallest opening possible in the Elmer’s or Wilhold bottle. Squeeze and hold loosely getting a tiny fine but broken line of glue on the very edge of the picture. Place the picture carefully, cover it with a piece of plain white paper and rub out all air bubbles. Pasted pictures should be absolutely smooth with no paste bumps or wrinkles.” “ART 101,” 27 June 1967. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
26 Krebs, “Peace on Earth.”
There is evidence that both IHC and IBM were aware of the narrative that was forming, and had some control over it. An unsigned letter or memo in the archives of the Corita Art Center explains that as news of the changes spread west, Los Angeles Times reporter Dave Felton asked IHC if the exhibition had been “pulled” an hour after installation, as he had heard. 27 IHC called IBM to check; because Corita had not made it to New York, so the two students were handling everything themselves and had seemingly not officially notified the school of the snafus. Dick Anthony, a Senior Information Representative at IBM, explained that the curtains had been pulled for the Gemini rendezvous, and the postponement of the Gemini 6A launch had delayed the reopening of the exhibition. An intriguing insight into the PR machinations of the two institutions is buried in the memo [sic all]:

Possibly concerned about making sure the exhibition seemed professional, and possibly protecting the students, Anthony advocated keeping the material problems with the installations quiet, knowing that the story of the boxes being “anti-war” had already begun. 29 The dramatic story of controversy remained appealing for obvious reasons. One example of a fanciful telling of the story: “When gawkers stormed inside asking, ‘When are you guys going to start burning your draft cards?’ I.B.M. officials dashed out to discover that quotes chosen by the sweet little nun were veritable hornets stinging their ‘Peace on Earth’ display.” 30

The narrative of a corporate entity reining in an unruly peace-loving nun and her Catholic schoolgirls was compelling, and the perception of IHC as a revolutionary school was not altogether false. The community was progressive and activist in its politics, although not radically so. The school was not anarchic or did not direct its criticism toward the United States government or capitalism as much as against more general injustices such as violence and poverty. Corita considered corporate sponsorship to be a powerful venue for the communication of redemptive messages, and continued to work on business commissions throughout her life.

There is no indication that Corita or the students had intended the piece to be incendiary. Even when questioned about the exhibition, she often replied that it ”just goes to show the power of words […] I didn’t think the messages were that strong, but apparently they are,” 31 choosing to speak about language instead of clarifying the exhibition’s stance. Instead, she saw the opportunity as an aesthetically didactic one, a chance to counteract what she called the “undemanding” exhibits of “snow and holly” omnipresent during the holiday season. In interviews about the piece she focused on its communal and social function, explaining, “This exhibit is of today—old English lettering and the language of the past is unnecessary. […]P)eace on earth may be a tired phrase for many people. We think we have made it fresh and new again.” 32

The cardboard boxes were meant to transport the school’s environment and its commensurate paradigm to the busy streets and commercial center of Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue (Fig. 5). And, the

27 Document found in Envelope 9, Archives, Corita Art Center, Los Angeles, California. Probably written 14 December, 1965.
28 Unsigned memo. Envelope 9, Archives, Corita Art Center, Los Angeles, California.
29 The IBM employees in charge of the exhibit became close with the students; when Myers got very ill, she stayed with Bob Monahan and his wife, who nursed her. Myers, interview.
30 Cunningham, “Nun Startles N.Y.”
31 Krebs, “Peace on Earth.”
32 Cunningham, “Nun Startles N.Y.”
Although some articles mentioned the Gemini launch, these other reasons—the material damage and the contractual obligations—were not mentioned in the newspaper and magazine stories, and the sensationalized version has passed down through the small canon of Corita literature. In the catalogue for the 1980 Corita retrospective at the DeCordova Museum, Paul LaPorte wrote that the unusual lettering of the words “Peace on Earth” “gave them such an unexpected actuality that it caused the protest of some passers by.” 33 Julie Ault, who authored the only major text on Corita for many years, explains that the “avant-garde exhibit […] was abruptly closed by the company until modifications were made” and even the most recent publication, the Skidmore Museum exhibition catalogue, only claims “Peace on Earth upset some New Yorkers who saw it as an anti-Vietnam War demonstration, rather than a Christmas window.” 34 And so the story is explained as another manifestation of corporate-political tensions in a tumultuous decade. While at least one IBM employee did seem somewhat concerned about the implications of a “Peace on Earth” theme not clearly rooted in the Christmas story, there is more first-hand evidence that the story of censorship was blown out of proportion by the media.

Beyond being an example of the fate of much of Corita and IHC’s artwork—the more scandalous the more known—the Peace on Earth commission provides an example of the larger dynamics of scandal as they impacted the IHC community. The school found itself in the middle of the church’s recalibration when the conservative Cardinal McIntyre of the Los Angeles archdiocese expressed his disapproval of the school’s unorthodox policies and progressive nuns, as well as the changes they proposed under the Second Vatican’s review and reform policy. 35

The school’s fame had spread, especially through exhibitions such as Peace on Earth and articles on Corita and her students, and its growing visibility and influence could only have added to Cardinal McIntyre’s frustration. Eventually the very public conflict became irresolvable, and in 1970 he presented the entire Immaculate Heart Community with an ultimatum—comply or leave. 36 As many as ninety percent of the order chose dispensation from their vows.

But Corita had already left IHC. A few years after Peace on Earth, in 1968, she went on sabbatical to Boston and decided to stay, suffering exhaustion after years of overwork and the stress of the public feuds with McIntyre. Her fame, which had brought the school, its art department, and its students opportunities and a national stage, had also disrupted her presence as a teacher and limited her time as an artist. This double bind of Corita’s fame mirrors the story this paper has told about Peace on Earth. The controversy of the exhibition, as artificial as it was, secured its afterlife in archives and memory, while it obscured the art itself. 37 Similarly, the school’s unorthodox theology and progressive activism brought it visibility and fame, but threatened the Roman Catholic hierarchy and ultimately destabilized the IHM order. This paradox of “scandal” was especially salient for a group of artists who because of their age, gender, and institutional affiliation have been vulnerable to the narratives we tell.

33 Paul LaPorte was an art history professor at IHC. In Bill Bagnall, Corita (Lincoln, Massachusetts: DeCordova Museum, 1980: unpaginated. Ault, Come Alive!, 41–42.


35 For full tellings of this story, see Mark Massa, “The Dangers of History” in The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Anita Caspary, Witness to Integrity: The Crisis of the Immaculate Heart Community of California (Liturgical Press, 2003). There is a need to explore this issue of scandal and nuns further through a feminist lens, including the peculiar appeal of “scandalous” women religious, as opposed to men.


37 It has not escaped my attention that this paper could be read as perpetuating that dynamic, by focusing on the installation’s reception history instead of its formal and material existence. As far as I or anyone I spoke to knows, the cardboard boxes are not extant.
Her response to Mies, that “even by deleting the questions of the natural longings of human beings for a hereafter,” Schrödinger “still offers to man the very considerable dignity of the observer of life,” is of no use to the architect. The difference in their views strikes her as remarkable, and she writes, “I was struck with the force of Mies’ preoccupation with death and it lent a mystic context even to the project of the house by the river, and an indefinable dimension to the personality of Mies.” The house begins to take on its poetic and transcendent potential.

The final rift between the client and architect, according to Farnsworth’s memoirs, is logistical. It occurs when Farnsworth feels that a young man from Mies’ office is bothering construction unnecessarily, thus delaying their progress. From this moment forward, her memoirs reflect that Farnsworth is suspicious of the architect and his intentions. Thus, when expenses for the Fox River project are anticipated, she takes action: she is unable to underwrite any of the Fox River project.

It seems that the only communication that Farnsworth has with Mies is in a form of requests for the payment of expenses. It does not occur in writing or by word of mouth, and I felt that a rupture of friendship between us and therefore made refusal to authorize further expenses should not involve a further expenses in connection with the Fox River project.

Instead of choosing to be a wife and mother, Farnsworth chose to be a physician and academic—a choice that put her at odds with societal expectations of women in the 1940s and 1950s. Her experimental efforts at Northwestern University yielded groundbreaking advances against the kidney disease nephritis. Despite a challenging and prodigious career that deeply engaged her, Farnsworth expressed discomfort: she was quite aware that she existed on the outside of society, while thoroughly questioning the very mores to which she was expected to conform. Her relationship with Mies could also be interpreted this way: she sought an intellectual equal rather than a romantic partner, and was disillusioned; “Perhaps it was never a friend and a collaborator, so to speak, that he wanted,” she writes, “but a dupe and a victim.”

Farnsworth does not only recognize this societal discomfort in herself, but in the patients under her care. She blames this on a cultural zeitgeist of fear that, she writes, “…has come to dominate each human heart, namely, the fear of ostracism, the dread of non-conformity…” In her memoirs, she consoles a patient named John with these words as they stand at her office window:

I suppose you think of all those people down there as normal hence right, and of yourself as abnormal and wrong… But we only see the tops of their heads and their feet, not their suffering or their lost hopes.
Fig. 2
Farnsworth House, view of southwest corner revealing aluminum screens, terrace and stairs. Undated.
Fig. 3
Farnsworth House, looking northwest from the interior of screened-in porch, furnished by Farnsworth. Undated.

Fig. 4
Farnsworth House, looking north from the interior of screened-in porch, furnished by Farnsworth. Undated.
Fig. 5
Farnsworth House, south façade and terrace. Undated.

Fig. 6
Farnsworth House, exterior, view of south façade and east end of terrace with Farnsworth’s sculptures. Undated.
And as for this normal that we hear so much about and think so highly of—what do you suppose it amounts to? Isn’t it just a rather restricted, superficial zone, arbitrarily and cheaply defined, running through the middle of our collective body, from which strong and deep feelings and creative original ideas are excluded? Remember that our American climate of national optimism and self-righteousness has, until recent years, bred us to the normalcy of the happy ending to everything in spite of all evidence to the contrary. 38

For Farnsworth, the glass house is—perhaps always was, even in its nascent stages—evidence to the contrary (Fig. 1).

I have often thought of the eerie solitude in which I continued that routine drive westward to the glass house on the river. Surely all the rest of the throng had equally uncompromising reasons for going west: wives, kiddies, lawns to be mowed, weeds to be pulled…Hands still clutching the wheel, eyes intent upon the south horizon, were they still advancing in their long lines? 39

For someone who, we speculate, would have believed that any endings or beginnings—happy or otherwise—are simply narrative constructions that do not reflect the way events unfold in life, Farnsworth maintained an impressive and lifelong commitment to producing art. This was true during her tenure in the house from 1951-1971, where she authored poems and art-directed photographs that provide an immediate translation of her relationship with the glass house. 40

In her photographs, Farnsworth presents a striking portrait of the house: it emerges from a dense forest, as it would have appeared to those who sought it out in the years that she dwelled there (Fig. 2). Viewed under these circumstances, it is nearly opaque: the porch is enclosed with aluminum screens to protect against river-borne mosquitoes, and planters line its edges. (Fig. 3, 4) Wild and exuberant foliage tangles around the iconic steel I-beams, and spider webs nestle in their flanges (Fig. 5). The glass walls alternate between transparency and reflecting the trees surrounding them, and branches and leaves litter the travertine terrace. (Fig. 6) These photographs illustrate Farnsworth’s argument against what she describes as the “violent” dislocation of nature in the late 1950s: “…something has happened to nature…she has become secularized, even domesticated. Today, she rubs her muzzle on the window-pane.” 41 Here, nature is anything but domestic; where the house begins and where nature ends is a line too buried to comprehend. Photographs taken from within evidence the same ambiguity. The interior world of the house is reflected in the glass so that furniture seems to hover spectrally in the field beyond the house. And do we see a reflection of the south façade in the glass of the west façade, or is the wall that appears to continue westward, eventually fading into the trees, actually the infamous addition of aluminum screens to the porch? (Fig. 7).

One thing is certain: this is not Mies’ beinahe nichts. It is instead the world that Farnsworth, a physician, researcher, poet and violinist, sought—a world beyond the clarity of facts. “When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset,” she quotes Alfred North Whitehead in an essay for the Northwestern TriQuarterly. 42 It is the poet’s responsibility, she argues, to return to us the radiance of sunsets—to reach for what is elusive, to manifest beauty. 43 Farnsworth

38 Ibid., Chap. 14, unpag.
39 Ibid., Chap. 11, unpag.
40 These photographs exist only in Dr. Farnsworth’s archive at the Newberry. The back of each photograph is stamped with “Gorman Child Photography, Plano, Illinois, Photo by Gorman.” Given the unusual perspective of the photographs, they were at least art directed by Dr. Farnsworth, who writes in her unpublished memoirs that “[c]oached by Harry Callahan, I was a discrete photographer at that time.”
41 Ibid., 8.
42 Ibid., 8.
43 Farnsworth was not only a published poet, but the translator of two volumes of poetry—Salvatore Quasimodo, To Give and to Have (1969) and Eugenio Montale, Provisional Conclusions: A Selection of the Poetry of Eugenio Montale (1970), both through Henry Regnery Publishing, Chicago.
herself sought to participate in the production of beauty in various forms throughout her life: playing violin, and writing and translating poetry. "The purpose of poetry at this time," she continues, "...is unquestionably the constant redefinition of beauty..." 44

Farnsworth’s poems contribute to this redefinition of beauty—and in them, the loss of and isolation from what she seeks is much more palpable than in the photographs. 45 The glass house appears in these works, but the poems do not focus on describing it, or on the problems that ensue in its realization, nor is the architect mentioned. Rather, the poems meditate upon the transitory events that the house engenders—and the house is no neutral mediator. When a bird strikes the pane of glass near her bed early one morning, its interaction with the house transforms it into a symbol of loss: “The splintered feathers agonize in vain. / The moments pass / And in the grass / Below, there lies / My hope, and dies.” (Fig. 8). In Farnsworth’s poems, the glass house is mutable and thus unpredictable; its glass walls are not transparent, but “luminous.” As such, they do not connect the inhabitant to the world surrounding her—“I could not see...”—as might be expected, but rather leave her “Secluded by reflection,” and “Windowed by solitary calls”—calls that might be coming from within the house, or without (Fig. 9). In these poems, Farnsworth occupies the pronoun I, giving no evidence of her physicality or her gender, but waiting, as she writes in “Portrait of an Addict Soul,” waiting, and waiting for an unspecified beauty, “lain supine / Upon my cell’s floor, below / The window’s sky. / In my own sensorium...” The beauty that she seeks to define does not come, though she maintains a “limitless desire.” Its absence is felt in the deep melancholy that pervades her poems, and in the references to the loss of love—not the loss of romantic love, but the loss of a vision or a creation that required love to sponsor it as she writes in her unpublished poem.

44 Edith B. Farnsworth, “The Poet and the Leopards,” *Northwestern TriQuarterly* (Fall 1960), 6–12, quote is on p. 7.

45 Much of Farnsworth’s poetry remained unpublished, outside of three small selections that were published in the *Northwestern Triquarterly.*
Edith B. Farnsworth

Artifact

The dawn was close this morning when I woke
To hear some flying creature strike the pane
Of glass beside my bed—strike and flutter
For a moment, strike and beat
Bewildered wings upon the glass.

There was no light.
It was not day, or night.
I could not see the wounded flying thing.
But I could hear the fluttering, breaking wing
Beating its unset out upon my pane
Of glass. Why does it not recoil, or die?
Why does it try
The cold smooth artifact to pass,
Why does it beat upon the glass?

The unseen wings are slipping down the pane;
The splintered feathers agonize in vain.
The moments pass
And in the grass
Below, there lies
My hope, and dies.

Fig. 8

The Quality is Lent

Ethereal images suffuse
The flowing water,
Attains a liquid version.

Watery images diffuse
Appearance bright
Of white cloud immersion.

The quality of light is bent
A wave-like incision
--Image continuous.

Warm-brown timbered flesh is bent
--In shadow shivering--
Sleep fibers unwind

Sky reflection interface,
Oracle and dove
Pierce the above-bounded shade.

Silence on mirrored interface
Reflects the limpid notes,
Resounds in sun-lit glass.

Within these luminous walls,
Secluded by reflection,
Windowed by solitary calls

Fig. 9
“With the Leaves”: “November is hardly a month for birth: / The
breath of love is too long cold / And the dawn comes late….Hardly
can I lure the dream / Back to its birth in the creating soul.”

In her photographs and poems, Farnsworth mourns the
elusiveness of her initial impulse upon visiting the site: to create a
significant and meaningful work of architecture that both resonated
with her own desires for finding a place in a world that defined
her as simply “Edith B. Farnsworth, An Unmarried Woman,” and
which had broader, cultural appeal—in other words, beauty. 46
That she fails at this, and finds the house uncomfortable, and that
its fame burdens her with constant weekend visits, with waking to
“skirts fluttering behind trees,” and visitors who “thumbed their way
tirelessly aboard my distress” reveals a narrative far more complex
than heartbreak over the loss of a rumored lover—it is heartbreak
over what is unattainable in any permanence. 47 The radiance of the
sunset is, after all, a fleeting beauty. “Human beings have always
needed to transcend their immediate experience,” she writes,
“[b]ut how is the transcending to be done?” 48
And perhaps here, Farnsworth reveals the
ultimate architectural scandal, the one we
know to be true: that our transcendence
will require far more than glass, steel, and
travertine.

46 In a Deed of Gift dated
March 1, 1968, Farnsworth
deeds to the Department
of Conservation of the state
of Illinois strips of land near
a proposed roadway improve-
ment, “so as to preserve and
permit archeological explo-
ration of the above site which
is connected with early Indian
History…” Typed in next
to the phrase “The Grantor”
is simply (and insultingly)
“Edith B. Farnsworth, An
Unmarried Woman.”

47 Edith Farnsworth,

48 Edith B. Farnsworth,
“The Poet and the Leopards,”
Northwestern TriQuarterly (Fall
1960), 6–12, quote is on p. 6.
With the Leaves: "November is hardly a month for birth: / The breath of love is too long cold / And the dawn comes late.…Hardly can I lure the dream / Back to its birth in the creating soul."

With her own desires for finding a place in a world that defined which had broader, cultural appeal—in other words, beauty. That she fails at this, and finds the house uncomfortable, and that its fame burdens her with constant weekend visits, with waking to tirelessly aboard my distress" reveals a narrative far more complex.

The radiance of the sunset is, after all, a fleeting beauty. "Human beings have always needed to transcend their immediate experience," she writes, and perhaps here, Farnsworth reveals the travertine.

21 Nonetheless, nor was Klein attempting to systematically decipher and undermine such popular entertainment, as Roland Barthes, for instance, in his famous essay on striptease, which was first published in 1955, and in his cultural criticism in general. Instead of feeling compelled to either celebrate or critique popular culture, to take, that is, a position either for or against, Klein regarded popular culture, without compunctions, without concerns, as an obvious, preexisting resource for modern art—rather than as a newly emergent threat to it, or a potential source of, combined with its roots, made it, as for Picasso the magician or Dali the clown, a mode competition. Midcentury striptease was a revival of nineteenth-century burlesque. Its fashionableness, its contemporaneity of showmanship to be engaged and exploited as part of a much larger artistic project that Klein had been pursuing, arduously, throughout the late 1950s, against the material, visual art object and for what Klein was calling the immaterial. Describing his earliest artistic epiphany in retrospect, Klein wrote in 1960: "Painting is no longer for me a function of the eye. My works are only the ashes of my art."
By 1960, Klein had already managed, remarkably, to convince art collectors to throw gold (their money) into the Seine in exchange for Immaterial Pictorial Sensitivity Zones, which were nothing, no discrete thing materially but space, while being consequently everything else beyond the physical. From the perspective of the art world at the debut, what Klein proposed was Biblical scandal, leading its precious class of patrons astray, still further away from the hallowed art object.

At the debut, Klein took on the role of the master of ceremonies and compère, both in the original Catholic ritual and liturgical sense of the term and as a contemporary Parisian entertainer. The guests invited to the soirée were seated in rows, organized for maximum capacity and oriented toward a stage, as if in a miniature music hall or a formal cabaret, or as in the nave of a church, with the attention of the audience focused upon the altar ahead. Low benches, which were normally only furniture in the bare gallery space, served as dividers—a de facto altar rail—demarcating and distinguishing the audience, sitting in darkness, and a brightly glowing makeshift stage, or sacred space. Spotlights illuminated the set from above, whose parameters were fixed on the floor and rear wall by large, white sheets of paper that, through their size, color and blankness relative to the overly crowded room, in turn reflected and magnified the lights’ visual impact. This arrangement was at once merely elementary scenic design, relying pragmatically upon the most basic of materials, and yet it physically produced, between the ceiling, floor, wall and audience, the undeniable perceptual effect of an otherworldly aura. It would be precisely the tension between fashionable entertainment and spiritual transcendence that would transfix the audience, as well as the fact that at the moment that the performance started, so did the filming and photography in all directions, including their own. As in the best kind of Parisian spectacle, the audience also felt themselves to be on show. At the debut, the audience members were throughout registering each other’s constantly changing and often audible reactions, which were thus not only mutually informing but also constituting part of the performance itself. 25

A few inches from the backdrop of the rear wall, similarly unornamented white pedestals of slightly varying heights and widths were positioned in a straight line. They were deliberately placed almost against the wall, and so appeared as sacrificial altars—rendering the backdrop behind them an altarpiece in the midst of creation. And yet they also recalled magician’s props or boxes, given firstly the presence of female assistants, secondly, Klein’s dramatic arm and hand gestures, as if he were holding a magic wand or conductor’s baton, and, thirdly, his costume. Klein presented himself at the debut in white-tie dress, wearing a black tuxedo with white gloves, a white winged collar and white bow tie. Around his neck, he also wore his cross of Saint Sebastian, the knightly order to which he belonged, a key connection that Klein would mention at the debut as proof of his moral and spiritual credibility and authority. Given the organization of the event and his role, the full evening dress made Klein comparable to a fashionable American magician like Channing Pollock, who performed for celebrities and royals, but also to a comic French magician like Mac Ronay, who wore an oversized and ill-fitting tuxedo and hobbled around onstage like Charlie Chaplin’s Tramp. 26 Exaggerating the Tramp’s calamitous social descent, Mac Ronay would pin, as part of his costume, a knight’s insignia on his left breast. At the debut, Klein’s cross would likewise serve at once as a mark of social status, ingratiating him with the beau monde present, and equally as a prop: for a joke on Mathieu. Klein typically only wore his full knightly regalia for official gatherings of the Knights of the Order of Saint Sebastian. The partial exception that he made for the debut parodied Mathieu, ever the flamboyant dresser, appearing that evening also in a lace jabot, but often in more elaborate costume for his own gallery openings or performances of painting. Only two years earlier, Mathieu had held an exhibition of his paintings at the same Galerie internationale d’art contemporain, commemorating the 840th anniversary of the Foundation of the Order of the Templars. 27 This exhibition functioned, simultaneously, as a celebration of the inauguration of the Galerie internationale d’art contemporain itself. The gallery then as an institution had announced its arrival on the Parisian scene with Mathieu, then France’s most exciting and controversial painter, who was thus identified with the gallery. Although Mathieu had never performed his painting for a live audience at this gallery, producing his paintings instead shortly before the exhibitions, those at the debut, especially the gallery’s most devoted patrons, would have recognized Klein’s sarcastic allusions to Mathieu and perhaps even sensed that the future direction of the gallery, if not of the art world at large, may be at stake in the debut. Certainly, it was being challenged from within its walls.

26 Klein cultivated such comparisons, which were based upon childhood obsessions that persisted into adulthood and that occasionally found, with much effort and luck, splendid fulfillment—for instance, when Klein did join the Order of Saint Sebastian, or manipulated photographs to show that he could fly, disappear into light or conjure it in his palm. McEvilley documents Klein’s early obsessions with Mandrake the Magician and the knights of the Holy Grail, finding ample evidence for their surprisingly strong and unembarrassed continuity among the witness accounts of his family, friends and collaborators. See McEvilley, Yves the Provocateur: Yves Klein and Twentieth-Century Art.

27 On this exhibition and Mathieu’s larger project, see work cited in footnote 6.
Klein’s show began with music. Appropriately sited against the wall, as in a choir, were the vocal and musical instrumentalists, nine in total, who, at Klein’s imperious, conductorial signal, began to perform his Monotone Symphony, which consisted of twenty minutes of one continuous note. 28 It was monastic in its austerity. Once the music had begun, the three women entered the gallery space, carrying pails of paint, and began what the journalist called ‘leur lent ballet du seau au mur.’ 29 This was, on one hand, song-and-dance entertainment, and yet so bare, in the total simplicity of the music and the nakedness of the women, and so extraordinary that it left the audience members astounded: Nothing like this could be seen anywhere in Paris, not in Montmartre, not in Montparnasse, much less near the Louvre (where the gallery was), for the simple reason that it was illegal in France to put on such a show of naked people in movement. Striptease, since the opening of Bernardin’s nightclub Crazy Horse in the early fifties, had made burlesque trendy again and even mainstream, Brigitte Bardot, for example, performing one herself in the film Mademoiselle Striptease of 1956. 30 In striptease, however, which adhered to the law, a woman would dance until only her very last, hardly visible undergarments remained and then stop, after which the curtain would close. The combination of total nudity and movement, especially in public, was illegal. 31 It was forbidden by Article 350 of the old French penal code, in effect during the debut, condemning the crime of “l’outrage public à la pudeur” (public indecency), which was punishable by imprisonment and a fine. 32 The only place where total nudity in public was effectively allowed—although there the assumption was that the person would remain stationary—was in national art schools or artist’s private studios, so that art students and artists could directly observe the human form. 33 The debut performance of the Anthropometries broke the law, and Klein could have been reported to the Prefecture of Police of Paris, although he was not. Had Klein been, he surely would have offered the explanation that he did to those present at the debut immediately after the conclusion of the performance: that, as the journalist of L’Express recorded it, mentioning also that Klein was smiling as he spoke, the audience members had been guests in his studio and surprised him at work. 34 As the artist’s studio was in general being opened up to photography and film and collapsing increasingly with the exhibition space of the gallery, it would not have been an unreasonable claim. Klein was nevertheless exploiting the exceptionality and sacredness with which modern secular society regarded the artist’s studio. 35 In its worship of individual talent, or genius—the endpoint of Renaissance humanism—society had replaced religion with art, a new, neo-pagan idolatry of man and especially of mannemade creations of female flesh, which were most problematic from a Christian perspective. In a paradox that had already reached its apogee, with the French Salon-style nudes of the late nineteenth century, these female nues, even if ostensibly erotic and exciting, had become very uninspiring and banal indeed, and only more so in an age of mainstream, middle-class striptease. At the debut, the nudes would serve as decoy: the most obvious incarnation of base visual pleasure, whose enjoyment would forestall the recognition and contemplation of the true art. Klein was abetted by the fact that the social set present would never have admitted such a pleasure, even if they had experienced it, or, conversely, still less, any shock or prudery.

28 While Klein’s symphony in principle calls for 20 minutes of silence to follow the 20 minutes of music, accounts vary as to whether there was silence following the music at the debut. Contemporary accounts do not mention any silence. On the event, Klein writes of “an ‘after-silence’ after all sounds had ended in each of us who were present at that manifestation.” This silence, however, seems to have been speculative, individual and internal, rather than a coordinated part of the performance experienced as a group. Klein, “Truth becomes reality,” 187.


30 For a contemporary interpretation of Bardot’s influence as liberatory for women, see Simone de Beauvoir, Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome (New York: Arno Press, 1972). (First published in 1959.) It should be mentioned here that striptease, even by as keen a critic as Barthes, was not perceived from the feminist perspective that it is today. The question of gender, or the objectification of female bodies for the male gaze, was not problematized. Although Barthes did note that the practice objectified women, his interest was elsewhere. See Barthes, “Striptease,” 84–87.


35 For a different set of reactions to the same problem in the United States, see Caroline A. Jones, Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).


37 Ibid.

Religious rhetoric reigned in the performance, experientially, explicitly in Klein’s speech and metaphorically, in an atmosphere saturated with symbolism. While it did not survive as clearly as Klein’s showmanship in the visual reproductions of the event, the journalist from L’Express recorded his impressions, as well as Klein’s words, in direct quotations of such detail that one imagines that he was taking notes as Klein spoke. Referring to the gallery space as “l’île chuchotée d’âmes,” “La Terre Promise,” the writer observed, even before the performance began, “une espèce de silence qui était déjà un silence d’égale.” 38 Afterwards, the audience awoke from it, as if from a trance, themselves reaching toward religion for the vocabulary to explain what had happened: “Les gens paraissaient émerger d’un songe. Ils se secouaient. Il y eut des mots froissés: rituel, cérémonial, messe.” 37 When the women appeared, despite the gasps heard around the room, their nudity, according to the writer,
apparue naturelle, sainte, innocente: "On eût dit trois bonnes d’auberge malicieux déshabillées par la foudre au moment où elles allaient laver les planchers—et qui ne se sont encore apercues de rien." 38 This contrasted with the worldly nakedness of the society women, whose formal dress made them look naked, the writer describing: ‘dames exposant toute la vaste peau qu’il faut pour qu’on puisse les dire très habillées.’ 39 Klein himself employed the terminology of religion to discuss the female models and body parts engaged as “outils de chair.”

The journalist then quoted Klein directly, including his gestures: 

Mais attention: j’ai bien dit la chair, vous avez pu remarquer que jamais les mains ni les pieds ne sont intervenus (c’est vrai, j’avais remarqué), les mains et les pieds pensent, ce n’est pas de la chair. La chair (geste de Klein) c’est ça! Vous savez aussi le sourire (gentil sourire) que j’appartiens à un ordre de chevalerie relevant de la chrétienté occidentale. En Bien l’œil sourire devient un charmant sourire d’excuse, geste vers le muri je crois à la résurrection de la chair. 41

Klein invoked Christian theology, employing his membership in an order of Knights in order to insist upon the authenticity of his faith, but he produced instead an esoteric initiation rite. Instead of hanging a crucifix with the male nude body of Jesus over the altar as in a church, Klein, acting nevertheless as a priest administering a mass, introduced three nude women into the sacred altar space. Their number was suggestive of the Trinity but also, because of their gender, youth, beauty and movement, the three graces of Greek mythology. Had there been one nude or four, the bodies would not have been made metaphorical and become divine. Within the traditions of painting, this was at once history painting, lofty in its religious and mythological subject matter, and yet belonged also to the always polemical genre of the nude. It also constituted a tableau vivant, which was a genre often used to morally and legally justify especially early burlesque, in which, however, there could legally be no movement. The selection and choreography of these bodies, which Klein chose for their similarly ideal sizes and shapes, must have presented the same challenge as the composition of such bodies in painting and sculpture for countless other artists in the Western tradition, or, it must be mentioned, for showmen of erotic entertainment, like Bernardin. At the debut, the female models moved fluently, with careful, coordinated and yet independent actions in a kind of dance that Klein had developed beforehand. While two of the “living paintbrushes” pressed themselves against the wall, Elena Palumbo-Mosca, a professional dancer, was tasked with creating a “monochrome,” the modernist form for which Klein was known, on the floor. 42 Because the actions were not improvised and were, on the contrary, heavily rehearsed, they had acquired the formalized and fixed quality of ritual. Whereas a priest would have performed the sacrament of the Eucharist, consecrating the bread and the wine, Klein displayed in life, making no demands upon the imagination, not a mutilated, crucified figure of Christ, but female flesh itself, healthy and perfect and covered in ultramarine blue paint, historically, the most precious pigment after gold. 43 Klein’s audience did not have to believe, as he declared that he did, in the resurrection of the flesh, for he had accomplished it, otherwise. Klein was using his signature color, which he had patented as International Klein Blue, but, in the context of the Anthropometries, the color also functioned as it had conventionally, from the Byzantine icon onward, as the blue mantle of the Virgin Mary, as a kind of clothing for the body.

At the debut, Klein was making icons, just as the first Christian icons had been made, according to the legends: as firsthand impressions of divine figures, the very procedure that had justified image-making in early Christianity, despite the fact that the Ten Commandments and the New Testament had expressly forbidden it as idolatry. Nan Rosenthal made the fundamental observation that the Anthropometries, in addition to some of Klein’s other works, constitute icon and index, noting also that Klein’s term for related works, “anthropométrie suaire,” recalls the imprint of Christ’s face on the Veil of Veronica. 44 The Veil of Veronica is just one example of a class of sacred images, called acheiropoieta, which were miraculously made without human hands. These were created either directly by saints or angels, or, indirectly, through physical impressions. Through his invention of the “living paintbrushes,” Klein was producing modern-day acheiropoieta, which he ironically called Anthropometries—as if he were applying the current techniques of anthropology, only not to primitive or exotic population groups, but rather, quite absurdly, to deities, or, ordinary European women. Klein was claiming to represent the world more truthfully than any modern social scientific method, which depended upon purely mechanical and statistical mathematical measurements. As with the first generation of abstract artists, like Kandinsky, Malevich, and Mondrian, mysticism informed Klein’s artistic project and led him to reject representation in the quest for a higher, deeper reality. Klein’s paintings, as he wrote, “only ashes of this art,” were to be viewed like religious icons, not, that is, as objects of adulation in themselves, but rather as mere traces, suggestions or indications of a wholly other realm, or, at most, as special sites upon which the conceptual, the ideational could exceptionally rest inside the material world. 45 "With this rather technical..."
demonstration I wanted to, above all," wrote Klein on the debut, "tear away the veil from the temple of the studio." 46 "The shreds," Klein continued, "of this torn veil of the temple/studio provides me with miraculous shrouds. All is useful to me." 47 By 1960, when abstract painting was already in deep crisis in France, Klein was seeking to destroy lowly art-object making, or at least displace it from its position of paramount importance, as it was similarly restricted to the world of appearances, in favor of another kind of more spiritual and cerebral immaterial or Conceptual art, which had not yet coalesced. 48 Witness accounts independently testify that the audience at the debut was upset after the performance, which supports the idea that the Baudelairean imperative to "épater le bourgeois" was upheld. 49 But the debut was much more than offensive.

It was dangerous, scandalous in the original Biblical sense: Klein was persuading the patrons and critics of the art world that modern art, as it stood, was idolatry: A vapid and mistaken visual delight, as his provocative equation of contemporary action painting with pedestrian nightclub entertainment contended. What Klein was offering instead was a truer, more spiritually and intellectually fulfilling art.
onto his sickbed.”

17 Walden complained about this “unprecedented oppression of an artist.” In the dramatization of Loos’s illness, we see a clear example of both the influence that the theatre world exerted on the Michaelerplatz story and the role that the print media played in fuelling the controversy. The figure of the suffering hero — alone against institutions of political and cultural power — was a typical character on the Viennese stages of the turn of the century.

The nemesis of the architect-hero was the city council, the powerhouse of the municipal government. In fact, as soon as the scaffolding of the Michaelerplatz building were removed, the city council cried scandal and decided to suspend the building permit. Representative Karl Rykl demanded that the permit for what he called a “monstrosity of a building” (scheusal von einem wohnhaus) be delayed until the façade was redesigned according to the Viennese traditional style.

18 Shortly after, representative Hans Schneider did a sketch over Loos’s elevation, requesting a set of revisions for the façade. At the beginning of the controversy, the position of the municipal authorities was strongly supported by the press: the tabloid Die Neue Zeitung, for example, published an article which demanded “most energetically that the building office put an end to such work, before the whole city is shot to hell.” Such a bold, polemic tone was not unusual in the print media of fin-de-siècle Vienna: a style of journalism based on a satirical attitude and a spectacularly aggressive criticism was emerging and most writers (Loos included) were attracted by it.

20 In the dramatization of Loos’s controversy, Loos is not the only figure “moving” from a theatrical play stage to the city pia. The “blindness” of the members of the Michaelerplatz commission is the same as an old, nearly blind man: his blindness prevents him from seeing the “genius” of Loos’s design, which he criticized without understanding. When he died in 1910 — right in the middle of the controversy — his place was taken by Josef Neumayer, another member of the old guard, who was almost completely deaf: because of his deafness, he was not able to hear Loos’s arguments, which he rejected without comprehending their meaning.

22 The censorship of the municipal authorities was instrumental in creating Loos’s heroic narrative: “I have been censured, censured by the police, just like Frank Wedekind and Arnold Schoenberg.” Censorship was the reaction that Loos hoped to provoke. As Kraus wrote, “scandal begins when the police put a stop to it.” The suppressive intervention of the city council allowed Loos to compare himself to several distinguished artists persecuted by the political authorities and to attract the attention of the public opinion.

24 In fact, the controversy of the Michaelerplatz building was not something that exploded against Loos’s will: on the contrary, the architect made an effort to provoke it. Wishing to fan the flames of controversy, Loos used Karl Rykl’s epithet “a monstrosity of a building” as the motto of the public lecture that he delivered at the end of 1911. In addition to that, he had a thousand posters with the motto printed and distributed to the Viennese citizens. The goal was to publicize the fight between the artist and the authorities, between the protagonist of the play and his obtuse opponents.

The choice of words was not random: in 1907, two years before the Michaelerplatz commission, Loos wrote a critique of a building on Karntner Strasse for the newspaper Fremden-Blatt, describing it as a “monstrosity.” Hence, the language of controversy was already part of Loos’s repertoire. He knew which words to use in order to attract attention and inflame public discussion. For example, since the public lectures that he had given in 1909 were poorly attended, he came up with a new speech in 1910 designed to provoke the Viennese audience: “Ornament and Crime.” As noted by Christopher Long, from the...
incendiary title to the references to primitive Papuans tattooing themselves and eating their enemies — everything was designed to shock. Likewise, the link he made between criminality and several modern architects (Olbrich, Hoffmann, Eckmann) was intentionally provocative. When he presented the same lecture in Berlin two months later, the German press accused him of being a fanatic. He replied with a brief statement published by the satiric magazine Der Ulk: “There will come a day when incarceration in a jail cell decorated by court wallpaperer Eduard Schulz or Professor Van de Velde will be considered a more severe sentence.”

“Monstrosity” was not the only epithet assigned to the Michaelerplatz building. During the course of the controversy, the Viennese newspapers and magazines invented many other epithets designed to arouse the interest of the public: grain elevator, dung crate, house without eyebrows, factory building, prison, matchbox, chopped-up crate and dresser-drawer building, among others. The use of epithets transformed the building into a character with an active role in the play. The numerous

26 Long, Looshaus, 83.
Translated by Christopher Long in The Looshaus.
cartoons and caricatures of the building that appeared in the press emphasized the theatrical nature of the controversy. The tabloid *Die Neue Zeitung* published a cartoon (deliberately simplified) showing how the building would look when completed, under the headline “The dung crate on the Michaelerplatz.”

*Illustriites Wiener Extrablatt* published a cartoon under the caption “Away with Architecture,” showing Loos staring at an open sewer gate, implying that it was the source of his inspiration for the façade (Fig. 3). *Der Morgen* ran a cartoon showing the Baroque architect Fischer von Erlach standing before the building and proclaiming: “What a shame I was not aware of this style, otherwise I would not have despoiled the square with all my stupid ornament” (Fig. 4).

The magazine *Kikeriki* poked fun at Loos with a satirical cartoon that read: “The Looshaus by itself would be quite beautiful. It is just that the Imperial palace does not fit very well: so, away with the palace.” These cartoons functioned as the *bozzetti* of a theatrical scenography: the building constituted the backdrop of the scene, Michaelerplatz was the stage, the captions provided the script, and the caricatured subjects were the actors, represented in the act of pronouncing their lines in front of an audience — namely the readers of the newspapers.

Loos understood very well the importance of the media and, on more than one occasion, used the press to manipulate public opinion. For example, when the first critiques started to appear in the newspapers, he supplied drawings of the other competition entries to the press, apparently hoping to illustrate the qualitative difference between his design and the other proposals. These projects, designed by rather mediocre architects, were published by *Der Morgen* under the headline “Stylistic distress.” Moreover, in the last months

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34 “Baustiljammer,” *Der Morgen*, December 11, 1911.
of the controversy. Loos used the media to build consensus on his final design. When the city council rejected his proposal, he developed a revised design, characterized by the presence of bronze window boxes in the façade: however, before submitting it to the authorities, Loos circulated it to the print media in order to test their response. After the most influential newspapers rendered a positive verdict, Loos presented the project to the city council, which no longer had the strength to oppose it. Interestingly, Loos drew the sketch of the revised façade on a photograph of the building taken from the same angle and with the same framing of the picture that most newspapers published. The relationship between the architect and the press was therefore very intricate: Loos managed to manipulate the press and — at the same time — was influenced by it.

In conclusion, the narrative modes and the dialogic patterns of the Michaelerplatz controversy derived from the theatre world and — through the print media — infiltrated the realm of architecture, opening the discipline to a broad public debate. The theatricality of Loos's architecture, however, went beyond the composition of volumes, forms and spaces: the Michaelerplatz controversy reveals that the entire process leading to the design and construction of Loos's architecture had a theatrical connotation. Not only the building was conceived as a theatrical scenography, but also the Viennese population was regarded as a theatrical audience and the characters of those involved in the controversy were developed with the same degree of care as the characters of theatrical actors. The parallel development of the theatre and the press — emphasized by the emergence of new theatrical and journalistic genres — set the foundations for a new mode of story-telling and a new form of public interaction in the city. What defined the stories that both playwrights and journalists were constructing in this period was the emphasis on shock, provocation and controversy. This new narrative genre — the scandal genre — rapidly influenced the way in which people looked at and talked about architecture. Loos understood very well these dynamics and — through the staging of the Michaelerplatz controversy — managed to ride the wave of the scandal genre, instead of being crushed by it. In fact, after two years of incandescent discussion, his design was approved by the city council without any substantial changes. Loos's convincing performance in the role of the "martyr for the modernist cause" allowed for a rather scandalous architecture to be built in the heart of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

35 Long, The Looshaus, 133.

In this article, Colomina discusses the theatricality of Loos's architecture in relation to the interiors of the Moller and Müller houses.
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Austin+Mergold (A+M) have been working together since 2008. A+M come from very different backgrounds; Jason Austin grew up in rural Central Pennsylvania, and Aleksandr Mergold in a two-thousand year old city in Central Asia. Jason gravitated to landscape and Aleksandr to design and visual storytelling. Architecture—practice and education—is their common [play]ground.

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Fala Atelier is an architecture practice based in Porto founded by Filipe Magalhães and Ana Luisa Soares. Filipe (Porto, 1987) graduated in architecture at Faculdade de Arquitectura do Porto and at Fakulteta za arhitekturo in Ljubljana; wrote the thesis “between the abstract and the figurative” and has worked with Harry Gugger in Basel and SANAA and Sou Fujimoto in Tokyo. Ana Luisa (Porto, 1988) graduated in architecture at Faculdade de Arquitectura do Porto and at Tokyo University; wrote the thesis “the matter of ideas” and has worked with Harry Gugger in Basel and Toyo Ito in Tokyo.

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Nomeda Urbonas and Gediminas Urbonas are artists, educators, and co-founders of Urbonas Studio—an interdisciplinary research program that advocates for the reclamation of public culture in the face of overwhelming privatization, stimulating cultural and political imagination as tools for social change. Gediminas Urbonas is Associate Professor at the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology and Nomeda Urbonas is ACT Fellow and PhD candidate at NTNU, Norway.

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Thresholds 43

Scandalous

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Amputated body parts

Scientific Fraud
Was Hot

reading madly to make sense of my role as a political subject

an urban aspiration of exclusion

become interchangeable

at what point did Turkey become modern?

Identity and the City
It's important to ask oneself what Mies van der Rohe would have done.

"Are there a bunch of rocks on the far side of the moon that spell out the letter M?"

Mr. X sells it to Mr. Y for one hundred two million dollars.

Was it an aggression?
No, nothing.

Nothing, nothing.
the funeral was attended only by prostitutes.

Did they love him?

but we're all Kennedys