

Uncommon Sense

is a publication
featuring work that
applies a decolonial
thinking towards
the institutions
we exist within

Volume 01
Spring 2018

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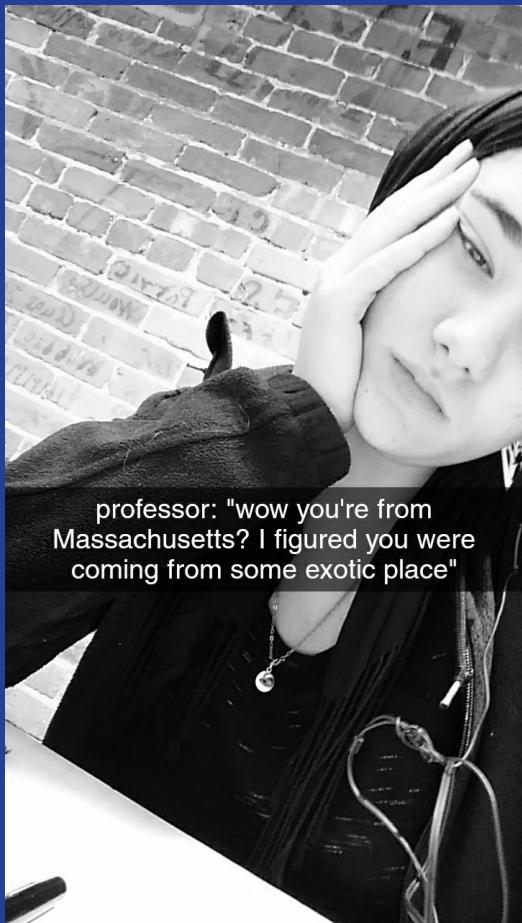
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Uncommon Sense is a publication featuring work that applies a decolonial thinking towards the institutions we exist within.

In this issue, you will find:

- ◊ Work that, instead of merely pointing out the complexities of current systems of power, exploitation, and inequity, reaches towards some way of meaningfully engages with those complexities.
- ◊ Work that defamiliarizes the familiar, the banal, the everyday.
- ◊ Work that confronts epistemic violence, that decenters the West as the primary producer of knowledge.
- ◊ Work that engages with histories, especially marginalized or suppressed histories.
- ◊ Work that defies categorical logic.
- ◊ Work that engages with the continuing legacy of colonialism, and the lasting effects Western hegemony has on society, politics, culture, economies.
- ◊ Work that privileges indigenous knowledge and modes of production.
- ◊ Work that isn't afraid of calling it like it is.
- ◊ Work that challenges current formations of global power.
- ◊ Work that proposes alternate modes of thinking about the world.



professor: "wow you're from
Massachusetts? I figured you were
coming from some exotic place"

Nadia Lahlaf

Tiger Dingsun

Editor's Note

I would first like to take the space to acknowledge my position as a settler, who occupies land that was stolen from the Pokanoket people. This publication was conceptualized, designed, and printed on stolen land, and exists largely through the displacement and genocide of the people this land was taken from.

That's the thing, isn't it? Through virtue of the privilege of the situation I was born into, I exist within, I reproduce parts of, certain institutions of power. I exist as a specific vector within a system of oppression and exploitation, and it often feels impossible to ever enact systematic change.

But there are still some things I can do that are within my range of motion. I can educate myself, I can question myself, and I can create spaces like this publication to uplift voices and facilitate bonds of solidarity.

While living in these institutions of power, we are, by default, subject to power's epistemic violence. But there are other ways of thinking, and other ways of being. And, at the risk of divorcing the word 'decolonize' from the issue of land repatriation, I believe that to decolonize our worlds, we must decolonize our worldviews. What do we take as common sense? Who told us so? Who benefits from us thinking this way? How do we embrace uncommon sense?

The artists, poets, and writers featured here all know what it is like to exist within these institutions — the Global North, the nation-state, the University, the market economy, the English language, etc. We are all searching for ways to rebel, to subvert, to dissent, to carve a space out for ourselves. We work from the inside out, in an attempt to bring the outside in. We draw upon other traditions. We produce alternate knowledges. We address our positions within the structures we like within — sometimes in a non-linear fashion, sometimes through conventional mediums, sometimes in poetic form, and sometimes in ways that don't necessarily invite complete understanding. We do what we can.

This is a small push against power's totalizing force. The point is, I think, to continue fighting for a just world, in spite of not always having a solution. Not having a solution does not equate to being powerless. We still have the power to try, and we must try, or else we risk walking straight into the abyss of complacency and complicity.

Chantal Feitosa-Desouza Loving Incognegro

Ongoing collage series, 2017



I was kinda thinking of how white nostalgia conflates with the fetishization/commodification of mixed race bodies in present day America. Kinda like how there are white people in the alt-right who hate us and then there are white people who want to be us (i.e. Kylie Jenner, IG models).



Wax Sculpture

PPLU7-179





I didn't really know how to talk about it so one day I just started spitefully collaging black faces onto found portraits of white people and it kinda turned into an ongoing thing.



Ali Dipp

Opaque Erasure— Barren Fertility

The provisional landscape beyond
is the most taunting
of all mirages.

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Never will the dusk be found; the doldrums refuses all spaces of sacristy. Escapades of a foregone era, the sun has set. Once a foreign horizon of splendor and potential. Now all that remains is the fallow and fruitless space between emptiness and rot. The ruddy sky gave the last call the loneliness of a passing time. And it was at this moment the world understood what the twilight stood for. This was the time that marked the revelation—the standstill of infinity. There isn't a clear line between what ends or begins the transition between the living and the infinite. Every planet has the silent dream of being the transcendent for the other. The sun was told of a god that existed far beyond this place of stirring and status wind. This was a declaration that far preceded its fate. It commenced the time of the eternal. It proclaimed a mirage of the everlasting. It was quiet. And it was bright. It was like the rush of water when it comes to the eyelids after you descend below the visible. It became dense and sultry with the aftermath carnage. And then both the sun and the moon never will be gods to the other. They could never reach beyond the mortal conquest. The only shared religion the decaying time between each other. The other, always at a distance. Waning, waning, gone. As a result of the waterless and distant trouble, the twilight was formed in the quest for solidarity.

Never to change, in a quest for a stillness that occurs before the reddening sun dulls. When this landscape persists, there is nothing left but the trespassing of time. Doldrums between passing and waking. Pacing espionage, cradle of copper bell shadows. The child of myth is shared between the dirt of the floor and the fragility of flesh pressed together like the enclaves of a spaceless room. Burgundy walks of the room like like the painting of a pasty grief left concealed. It bears no one's history. There is nothing to the etchings of the pre-intimate time. The markings have been banished like quasi-cherubim cast out of our warm abode. Whistling rains infiltrate and traverse over the walls of the forgotten home. Four walls that form a square preserve the crop

of the flower season. With the withering that comes with the passing ephemeral, the walls hold no more. They hold no more. They scream of a moon blue: making of an ether. The space between things, the placement of the relics offers a certain direction for a judgment day portent. Cry over the pastures until the ground no longer weeps. Let it reap fertility, a carcass left unclad in the rain time.

We spoke to the sky of silence, unfulfilled curiosity for eternity, without fate, and inexplicably unquestionable. The sweet hotness of the resulting emptiness. A deserted cocoon, a lifeless afterthought. The communion drifting down through the canal of the Río, coating its path with a syrupy sensuality.

Gently, they grazed the land, walking slowly to the marks of a drum, etchings of mute completeness. What is a serenade to the ear that hears no sound? Hearing nothing, she lay with her two eyes and mouth shut like the seams of pockets that can hold no more. Unleash the omen across the land.

This terrain is perpetually in the liminal.

A river once swelled for the baptism rite, now it is dried, and the hollowness remains a desolate statement.

Song of the scapegoat, a virgin left to experience the cry of the world's testimony. A new testament out of foregone agave cries. The agave's last cry before eternal rest, a stem reaching the untouchable sky, the blossoming attempt of rejuvenated life—stifled by the hours of imminent death.

The snake's smooth scales, running down the riverbank of the woman's exposed back. Spinal cord forever serving as a reminder of a deconstructed palisade.

The promise is sung through the rows, flags still in the steaming density of a windless spring day. Hands forced to the sides, yearning for the time one can protect their heart from the crossfire of the battlefield.

Protect their heart with a pledge that is stronger than the thirst for water in the dried desert. Stronger than water. The serenade continues, a procession.

Incense billowing out of the mouth of the flaming praiser. Smoke rising towards the inconspicuous heavens. Assenting to the land of fidelity and continued boundlessness. Bounding beyond the bound. Living in the land of forever; it is the in-between. Sulking in the frying sun of a desert. An endlessness that is fabricated out of the matter of the earth. Death and life are seen as neighbors. The flame rises like the agave as it awaits the inevitability of the passing sun. Swooping and decaying, this is the story of growth in the stagnant prophecy of the austere land.

Luz Maria Orozco

Te siento en la punta de mis uñas

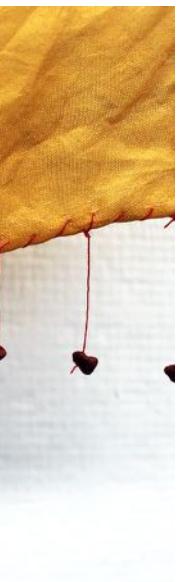
Intaglio and hand-sewn achiote on achiote-dyed silk

Forced displacement since conquistadors arrived, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade began and up to present-day immigration from Colombia to the United States, has created a pattern of disconnection to plant-life and tierra that my family belongs to. In this work, I am beginning to re-establish a relationship with achiote, a seed native to the Caribbean, Central and South America, that is used in food and dye work. The impression of the netting and mountains of Medellín are symbol of natural/fabricated barriers and agricultural labor.

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Working instinctually with ancestral body/muscle memory is an important element in making this piece in addition to how I am continuously discovering my family's knowledge while I am thousands of miles away from nuestra tierra.





Janice Gan

from across the river

did the impressionists say it best
when they painted shadows blue?

realer than real
is how we tell truths

this is how i learned to hope
that wide-lipped smiles meant love

but no, it was the dough-cloth,
limp on a chair

after the swelter of crimping,
kneading and squeezing

your palm-lines into dumplings,
realer than real

those clouds of steam,
your aching back—

with love,
we need no hope.

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when i am crushed, finally,
by the expanding breaths of this country

i hope my bones snap
the way that bamboo does –

a sharp report,
juicy, green

promises of
growing to come

The things I've internalized — aversion to what I've been told to be — the softness and whiteness, the long sleek hair, the sharpness of tongue and slaps and pinches, the quietness, the lack of opinions, the porelessness, the good taste, the fear of night, the love of capital, the capital of image, the image of whiteness, the importance of large bright eyes, the reflections in large bright eyes, the capital of being good, of making no ripples, of keeping the surface of a whole ocean tight.

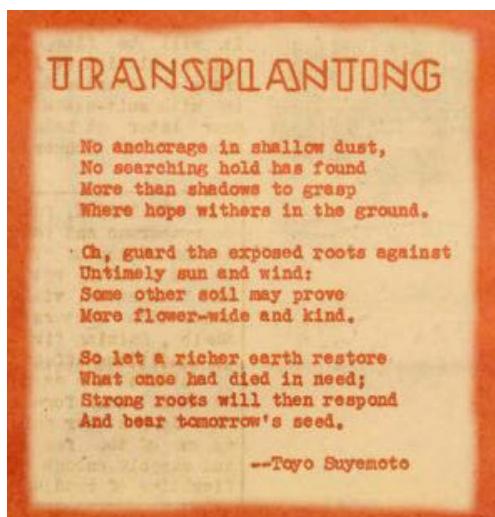
I am dirty, and shorn, and knotted, and seek soil and stringy sinew.

But still, I am quiet when I shouldn't be, see lights in eyes instead of eyes themselves, fear my reflections, trust everyone else, dream of being alone and held and alone. Trying to be held by what cannot hold me, failing and spilling and finding new earth in the floodplain.

Mary Champagne

Transplanting

“Transplanting” considers the idea of reclaiming a narrative by taking up the ‘mantle’ of those who preceded you. Using a vintage pattern of a fashionable 80s blazer that had been previously constructed by my mother, “Transplanting” implicates a context that can be carried on the body when one can no longer find roots in a place. The engineered digital print lining utilizes old family photos of my grandparents as well as material sourced from the University of Utah’s database of printed ephemera from the Topaz Relocation Center, including a poem published within the internment camp by my great-aunt, Toyo Suyemoto.



*Esprit Sport 1987 Blazer
(garment constructed from pattern)
with engineered digital print lining
dimensions vary
Dec 2016*



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Noor Bhangu

Soon: South Asian Evocations and Becomings

Soon: South Asian Evocations and Becomings was the inaugural exhibition of the Southasia.art curatorial collective (Ayqa Khan, Somnath Bhatt, Noor Bhangu) with guest curation by Priyanka Vorungati of Chinatown Soup, NY. The collective was borne from the desire to publish self-directed research, create an interactive archive of contemporary South Asian art and establish a network that subverted national boundaries. The decision to bring their virtual connections into the material space of the gallery was Southasia.art's way of celebrating the emergence of this trans-national, and at times truly diasporic, network as well as a way to activate future-oriented dialogues. The exhibition considered the impact of heritage, trauma, location, and dislocation on the emerging art and community-building practices of South Asian artists.

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The artists featured in this show were Ilavenil Jayaplan, Srijana Gurung, Sabella Dsouza, Zarina Muhammad, Umber Majeed, Rohan Chaurasia, Gudiya, Sanjit Dhillon, Fileona Dkhar, Mohammed Fayaz, Adrita Das, Pallavi Sen, Seema Mattu, Daniya Sayed, Sonika Misra, Isha Dipika Walia, Padma Rajendran, Mahdi Chowdhury, Ayeshath Fadwa, Eashan Chaufla, Negine Jasmine, Misbah al Ahmed, Lohitha Kethu, Harris Chowdhary, Shireen Alia Ahmed, Moshtari Hilal, Aruni Dharmakirti, Khushboo Gulati, and Yashavi Dixit.

*

The possibility of soon serves as a starting point in the exploration of the art practices of emerging artists located in the South Asian nation and diaspora. Here, we have brought together artists from South Asian nations and its connected diasporas to weave into and out of our past, present, and future. Consciously moving away from the dichotomies set up between home/diaspora – which have been and will continue to be fertile grounds for studies of contemporary South Asian experiences – we propose a sort of re-bonding between the nation and diaspora that both ethically witnesses and thinks through their differences. Further, togetherness as a curatorial method disrupts colonial notions that see the national body as complete and the diasporic body as incomplete. Our togetherness becomes a vital, radical tool in moving forward. In organizing ourselves under one roof, through art and



conversation, we see where our shared heritage has brought us and how far we can go.

Here, we begin to imagine ourselves into a community, the type, which Benedict Anderson theorized to be established not through a “false/genuine” sense of identity but rather through the, “style in which [it was] imagined.” And, the styles we have imagined ourselves through are materialized through notions of beauty, embodiment, virtuality, subversion, nostalgia, and, above all else, futurity.

The future-oriented works of the artists range from mediums as traditional as textiles to as contemporary as digital videos, all the while questioning understandings of the traditional and contemporary. Some themes that have been common to the artists, and may be interesting to briefly touch upon in this essay are: concepts of beauty as connected to the body, explorations of the digital in amalgamations of the URL and IRL, and modes of archival rummaging and appropriation in processes of revision and future-planning.

In his essay, “What is this ‘black’ in black popular culture?” Stuart Hall introduces the idea of an embodied opposition to the ideals of Western and patriarchal civilizations, suggesting that as colonized bodies our most powerful tool in decolonization is to “work on ourselves as the canvases of representation.” Studying the work of a number of artists in this exhibition, we can imagine ways in which the body continues to be purposed as a canvas in the re-working of beauty, femininity, and belonging. Fileona Dkhar, from Northeast India, performs the symbol of the Bollywood “item girl,” or vamp, as a response to brahmanical contempt for the matrilineal, read promiscuous, lineages found in her community. The hyper-sexualized body of the “item girl” comes to problematize what it means to occupy girlhood in contemporary India. The London-based Seema Mattu, similarly using her own body as a canvas, reclaiming Steve McCurry’s portrait of Sharbat Gula in an act of complicating brownness. Wearing her proud “rainbow-gay scarf” while modeling as Gula, the artist further layers marginalized communities of brownness and queerness.

The artists to work more explicitly within embodied conceptualizations of beauty are Moshtari Hilal, and Daniya Sayed. Based in Hamburg, Germany Hilal centers the Orienatalized face, with a focus on the nose and facial hair, in her monochrome self-portraits. In contrast, the lens-based Daniya Sayed depicts a group portrait of veiled Muslim women, of different cultures and skin colours, to challenge mainstream conceptions of beauty and feminine empowerment. In concert, Hilal and Sayed use the varied language of portraiture to stretch out the possibilities of beauty through self- and group-imaging.

Artists like Sabella Dsouza merge explorations of the body with the medium of digital art to generate new meanings on the place of beauty in contemporary society. Offering, what Cameron Bailey refers to as a set of “digitalia” (the convergence of genitalia, marginalia, and wire), their work mimics the frameworks of online makeup tutorials in an attempt to destabilize



hegemonic conceptions of beauty and personhood in URL and IRL space. Using the performance of applying make-up to slowly slide into the skin of a hyper-feminine, white subject Dsouza makes explicit the ways in which whiteness and white space are considered neutral, at least until the counter-hegemonic entrance of brown bodies such as theirs.

Working within a similar digital milieu are artists Ilavenil Jayapalan, and Ayeshath Fadwa. For his Masters research at the National Academy of Arts in Oslo, Jayapalan constructed a digital platform, Drit, for the production and interaction of new forms of academia, arts, and media. The visual manifesto of Drit, offered in this exhibition, is a collection of the aesthetics that have contributed to this digital production, such as pixels, sound, narration, and time. In Fadwa's work, it is the already established platform of Snapchat that stimulates difficulties of existence and interaction in digital space. The Maldivian artist points to glitches in selfie filters that expose the virtual gulf between gaze/perception and visual production/manipulation.

The invocations of the body, and the digital are not the only future-centered dialogues within this exhibition. It is also the difficult, but necessary work, of revisiting public, and personal histories through archival rummaging that propagate us to move forward. In what Hal Foster refers to as the "archival impulse," it is our shared need to revisit history for the purposes of self-understanding and cultural decolonization that reinforces our claims to the future. We have the work of Gudiya, sound designer and artist, who has re-sampled the Bollywood song, "Koi Ladki Hai," to voice our shared longing to give ourselves away to nostalgia, where we could brush up against our younger selves in happier times. But we, also, have Yashi Dixit whose recent work cycles through trauma, shrouded by the routinized mundane and performative re-embodiment.

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Soon: Evocations and Becomings showcases some ways in which we as emerging artists and cultural practitioners are moving forward. But in moving forward, we are clear that our destiny is not and can never be utopia. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman utopia is set up to be a "vision of a closely watched, monitored, administered and daily managed world. Above all, it is a vision of a predestined world, a world in which prediction and planning stave off the play of chance."

During the beginning stages of curating this project, we ground ourselves in the possibility of chance, knowing that whatever curatorial thread we tried to pull it would not be strong enough to forge a dialogue between the various artists. In this way we aligned ourselves with the practices of the selected artists themselves. For instance, Negine Jasmine's imaginative embroidery Dragons of Afghanistan, which re-imagines the Afghanistan of her parents, is still a tenuous technique in the re-writing of history. The thread is too fragile, but it is the act of embroidering and remembering that, eventually, completes the difficult work.



From looking at the works in this exhibition, it becomes apparent that the thread woven between some artists is weaker than in others. Some like, Eashan Chaufla and Lohitha Kathu, sit uncomfortably together. The work of Chaufla can be seen as a practice in visually expressing the fragmented nature of architecture, developed through India's colonial and post-colonial encounter with the West. While, Kathu's images are rendered in more dexterous detail to illustrate details of the body, in particular the medical body, in way of promoting body positivity, sexuality, and trans femme representations. Despite the fact that their works reveal a deep commitment to revise the inherited past, be it architecture or medical illustrations, there persists an aesthetical incongruity that is difficult to dismiss. In the exhibitionary space of Soon, we explore the ways in which these works belong together – how they equally matter in our dialogues on the future. Through the curatorial juxtaposition and layering of works, as incompatible as these, we argue that it is the diversity and plurality that will be the strength of our emerging community.

In closing, we offer the words of the cultural theorist, José Esteban Muñoz, who writes of queer futurity as follows: "Queerness is ideality... we are not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality." Muñoz's discussion of queerness as a feeling of "not-yet-here" is useful in thinking about our own futures – the wish to move forward while practicing decolonization. Our use of "soon" touches on what waits for us beyond the horizon – that which is not here and can never be visible and realized. Using the word "soon" intentionally to indicate our orientation(s) towards our individual and collective futures, we are, also, deliberate about taking our time in the present. "Soon" is then, perhaps, a process that acknowledges our desire for movement, but one that resists the aggressive tides of progress, progress, progress.



Justine Nguyen

I used to wonder why we didn't say end of every phone call with   "I love you" like the other kids' did with their parents and it wasn't until last year (when I read Ocean Vương) that I realized they'd been saying "I love you" this whole time 



Justine Nguyen

to me 



yk, just trying to decolonise the language of affection in

a poem

sniff-kiss

When we were younger,
my dad used to bring us
close and bury his nose
in the beds of our hair.
duck feathers! he'd say,
wrinkling that nose.

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Qualeasha Wood

Within, Without

“Within, Without” works to describe the relationship of identity, self and the loss of both. The goal of “Within, Without” is to understand what it means to lose a grasp on your personal reality and the subsequent search to regain touch with yourself through spaces and interaction. Using light and dark as metaphors, I contextualized my body as an African American woman. Through this narrative I ask myself to explore what it means to be me, within a black body, existing within a white space. By taking an intimate process of rediscovery and making it public I strive to create a conversation about the increasingly tense relationship between myself, my blackness, a physical space and a Non Black gaze that is always present.

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Jorge Palacios

Between sending humans to colonize a habitable exoplanet
And preventing the invasion of the American continent,
I'd pick the latter every time.

Does that make me bitter or just a traitor to mankind?
An alien maybe (?)
That I would not hesitate
to erase all potential prospects of human scientific advancement.

A choice between ancestral family and a greater good
Jeopardizing modern day humanity than the bloodshed of my blood.

~ White Man's Magic ~
“You indians would still be dying in caves without white man’s magic”
White Magic that erases forests, kills spirits of species, toxifies rivers
White Magic that claim(s)ed red, brown, black lives
Malicious prayers that displace my ancestors’ technologies
That lead to an apocalyptic demise of Earthly proportions.

But this is a hopeful delusion at best
A white invention to dilute the guilt which haunts the settler
For if it were not for the burning of books,
destruction of cities by white sorcerers with false spells
Millions of lives and millennia of labor lost
maybe humanity could have learned without stealing first.

How deep the intergenerational trauma I inherit
Transcends wormholes
Without physics. Or black holes for me to wonder aimlessly about
Trading these knowledges to undo these wounds.

But are those things actually lost? Were they ever found?
These are truths that disappeared into the afterlife with their brown bodies and book binds.

My grandparents and siblings in death I forsaken
In being fooled by white man nihilism and allowing my indigenous brain to rot
Because the pursuit of knowledge for a white magician’s future
at the expense of family is for me no future.

My ancestors may have been savages who sacrificed in the name of eternal cycles
But it is no more unnatural than a settler’s desire for immortality
In this sense, I would rather leave the human race to incinerate in a supernova
Than hand a fountain of youth to naive colonizers.

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Chantal Feitosa-Desouza

On Beauty: A Guide to Attempting Visibility in Elite Spaces (excerpt)

Museus e as artes são espaços criados por homens ricos e brancos.

As pessoas das nossas comunidades não frequentam museums.

A arte é considerada inacessível e inútil.

Negros, latinos e imigrantes da classe operária não frequentam museus.

Localização, gastos, conteúdo, dados demográficos e políticas administrativas contribuem para que essas comunidades se sintam indesejadas.

Então, quando é que somos realmente vistos em espaços criativos?

Funcionários de limpeza

Funcionários de manutenção

Segurança.

Criados.

Muitas vezes somos corpos trocáveis em espaços como este. Nós temos pouco controle sobre nossos corpos quando somos exibidos nessas galerias - seja você o artista, a obra de arte, ou quem mantém os espaços que protegem essas obras.

E a arte em si?

Com que frequência os nossos trabalhos nas galerias tem a mesma estima para as elites ricas / brancas / masculinas?

E quanto ao conteúdo? Se não somos os artistas criando os trabalhos, quando e como que nossos corpos entram nesses espaços nas mãos da elite rica / branca / masculina?

Tenho que ser graciosa e nobre, e concordar com certas noções pré-concebidas de beleza e estética?

Ou talvez eu preciso ser selvagem e viver de acordo com certas expectativas e estereótipos do que significa ser o Outro.

Parece que não há uma terceira opção para nós.

Sera que eu, ou qualquer um de nós sentados aqui, podemos entrar nesses espaços sendo nós mesmos?

Quantos trajes de brancura devemos vestir para sermos aceitos por eles? Ou até que ponto devemos exagerar essas versões exóticas de nos mesmos pra sermos vistos como atraente?

Quem você vai ser pra agradá-los? Pra entrar pela porta? A Venus ou a Escrava?

Quero concluir pedindo a todos que reflitam nisso: O que você tinha que fazer hoje pra chegar até aqui?

E quanto a você? E você? você?

Foi fácil? Difícil? Você tinha que abrir tempo extra no seu dia? Foi agendado com antecedência? A caminho foi longo?

Eles foram bons para você?

Você se vê na arte? Ou se sente apenas exposto, colocado em exibição?

Sebastian Castro-Niculescu

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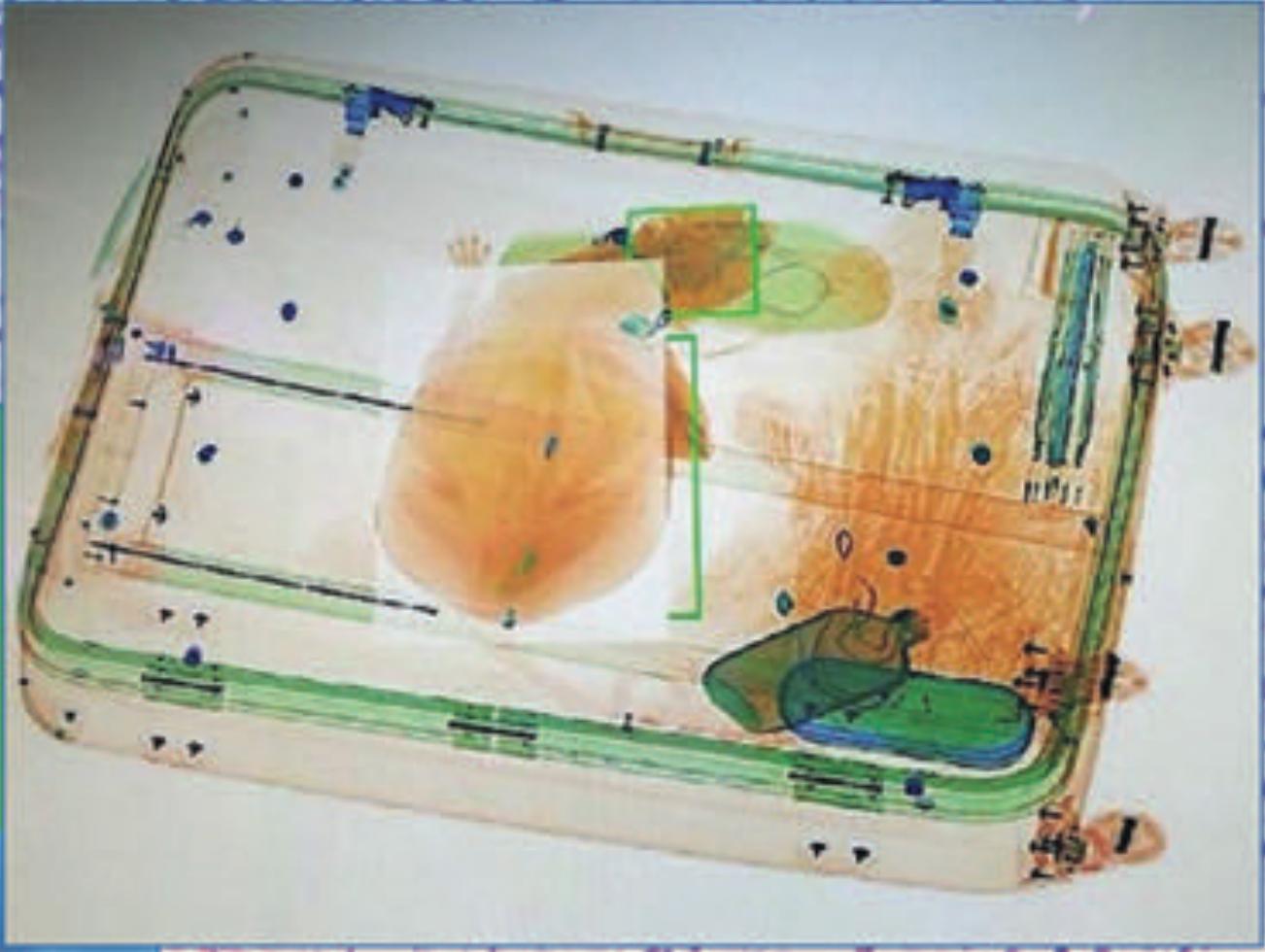


Fig. 1. Other Dissections; Ritual Icons

To speak of apocalypse through the subjectivity of an apocalyptic body is to speak dually of the power and pain retained in these bodies as consistently-lived sites of resistance. There is the power to provoke alien-anxiety about the end of systems of power, by nature of demonstrating its others, its limits, but there is also the pain of existing as the other already-committed to apocalypse-time. It is the lived understanding that these systems depend on specifically-constructed sites of apocalypse for their own promulgation. To consider apocalypse in totalizing terms, as an era of fucked-temporality, is to make categorical systems upend and digest themselves. It is to see the resulting terrain of apocalypse as both reconstruction and repudiation of this digestive rubble. Yet, at what point does this rubble become artifact?

Aimee Vue

Marriage, I Guess It's Official



Marriage, I Guess It's Official:
Consummation Night
oil on canvas, 2016
13" x 13"



Marriage, I Guess It's Official:
His Side of the Bed
oil on canvas, 2016
13" x 13"



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Marriage, I Guess It's Official:
My Disappointment in Him
oil on canvas, 2016
13" x 13"

Eliza Chen

Set Piece

Dead yellow light glistened off the dishes and the glass of the rotating tray, and we sat listening.

“Your grandfather! Have you ever heard about the time, about the cart ride?”

“It was after everything went bad and his mother sent him to the capital. Nobody could afford to ride rail in those days, but the only thing left for him was to go to the city. Forty miles, pulled by a mule! Can you imagine?”

Here is a piece of cinema:

1:

38 His mother, our something-or-other, played by the actress Gong Li (b. 1965), is visible as a distant specter, tears running down her matte white cheeks. Around each eye is a neat, cosmetic ring of red. Terrible, unspeakable, the fate that had befallen her—and her, no less! She remembered the earrings she'd worn, the smooth hands and burning eyes of the men at the endless succession of dances and teas that amounted to her courtship, her marriage to the medicine merchant. They were all good things, correct things, and above all they were supposed to be safe, respectable things. And to what, this rotten end? First the trade broken up, then her niceties sold to patch the bills, and finally that damned ship. The ship that took him with it—or did he take it? The worst part was that she'd thought the worst was over. Everything worth any money was gone, and long gone too. They only had each other. Well—that, their sons, and the house. And then he'd taken himself. It didn't bear thinking. Our x-grandmother, played by Gong Li, her real name a hazy mist, she bites her raw and spectral lips over your grandfather's shoulder as he rides in the hay cart.

2:

Driving the cart is Raymond Fan (1923 – 1996, of San Gabriel, CA), who took this bit role because this was it, the goal, the real deal, and much better than grinding through the cashier and the storeroom, the bags and the wet, soapy floors. He'll be damned as to why they want to make a movie about some ruined folks over in China. Whatever at China, really. He hates it, really. He's never been there, but everything about the damned place rides him like a dog. It's in his face, his name, and when the studio rats look at him it's all their eyes can see. The movie's supposed to be about some boy, family's ruined or whatever, and now the boy's riding this cart to Peking to seek his fortune. Raymond didn't get a good look at the kid who's playing the boy—he's back there now, probably looking cute under the lights. And Raymond's up here, holding some cheap reins glued to a prop mule, so-called driving the so-called cart. His first role, he thinks. He rubs his fingers against the reins, and the edges crumble a little. It has to start somewhere.

3:

Our grandfather may suspect the truth was kept from him. His father would have spent two thirds of his life on that ship, crossing the bay three times a week with shipments. He should've been much closer to shore when the storm hit, but he wasn't, and all that washed up the next day was the body of a single crewman. His mother's face would have been grey for so long, long enough that he could barely remember how she looked before. All the pictures they had would show her from way back, before him and his brother, before she even lived in their house. In those pictures, her smile would be wide and dark, her hair pulled tight against the bones of her head. This was all before the time when his aunt would have written from the city. Sometime after, he would be on the cart, his palm damp and sticking to the coarse wood, doubting.

There was a sensation like a fuse, a slow burning hiss moving ever-closer to the end. Our grandfather sat in silence, his dry fingers curled against the table, as our grandmother talked about other things we could not imagine.

39

Aimee Vue
**Comfort Eating—
Sausage II**

40

*chine-collé print, 2017
collaged paper on white rives
bfk cotton paper
8" x 6"
2 of 2
Edition of 1*



can a big dick calm you down?

Misbah Ahmed

DUTY FREE

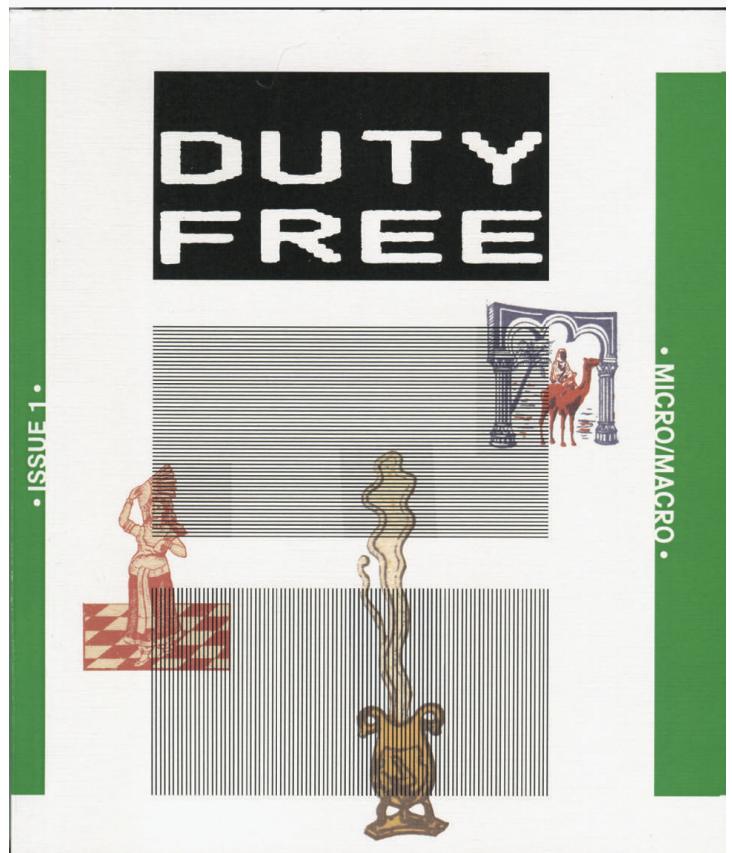
DUTY FREE is an exploration of the in-between spaces of hybrid cultures. An attempt to further investigate the complexities of transition. Show me the stories about the kids born out of diaspora. Completely disassociated from South Asia and not accepted into whiteness, forced into a third category. An amalgamation of many worlds overlapping. That's when shit gets beautiful.

Works by: Vivek Shraya, Saagar Shaik, Sean Sandusky, Tasneem Nanji, Seema Mattu, Sarah Khan, Lizz Khan, Mahdi Chowdhury, Maria Bokhari, Jalil Bokhari, Somnath Bhatt, Fysal Amirzada, Sarah Alinia Ziazi, Maaz Ali.

Editor in Chief: Misbah Ahmed

Creative direction: Sanjit Dhillon

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VIVEK SHRAYA

TRISHA

28

DUTY

FREE

27

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My story has always been bound to your prayer to have two boys. Maybe it was because of the ways you felt weighed down as a young girl, or the ways you felt you weighed down your mother by being a girl. Maybe it was because of the ways being a wife changed you. Maybe it was all the above, and also just being a girl in a world that is intent on crushing women. So You prayed to a god you can't remember for two sons and you got me. I was your first and I was soft. Did this ever disappoint you?

28

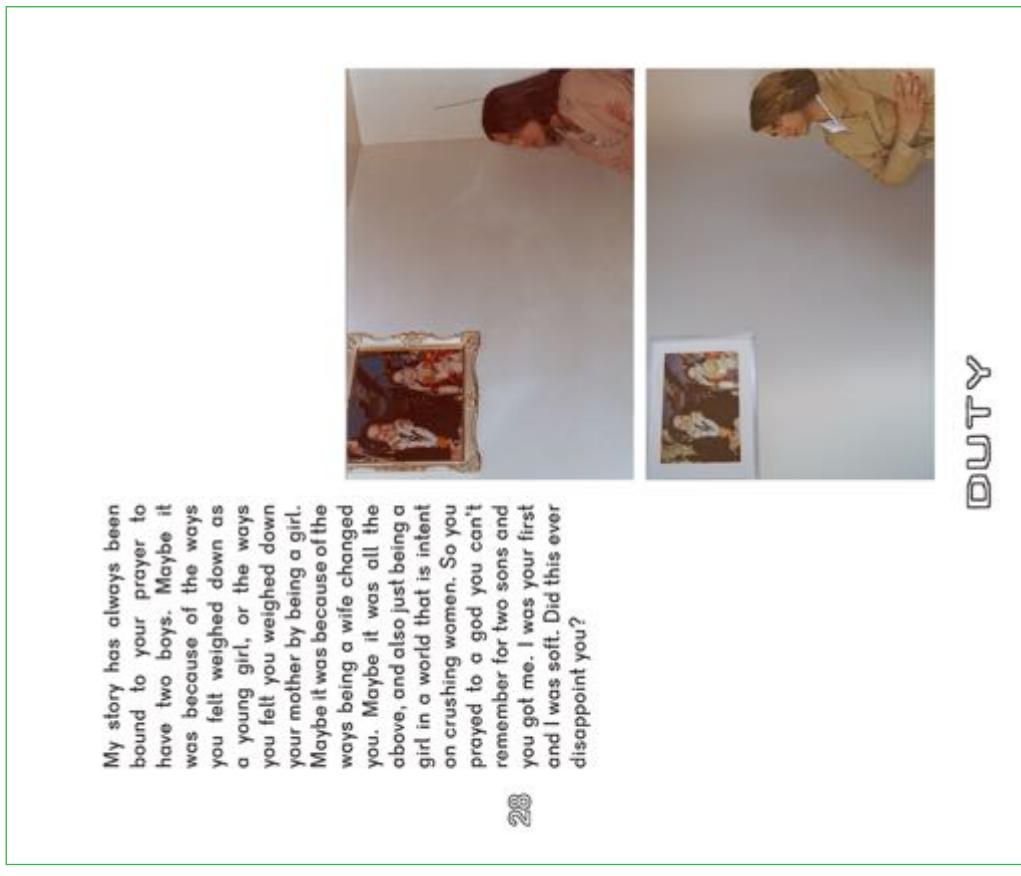


DUTY



Creative Direction: Vivek Shreyas
Photography: Karen Campese Costa
Makeup: Alvaro Chmelick
Hair: Fabio Perisic
Clothing in 4, 5 & 6: M. Orte
Set and wardrobe assistants: Shweta Shreyas
and Adam Holman

FREE





You had also prayed for me to look like Dad, but you forgot to pray for the rest of me. It is strange that you would overlook this, as you have always said "Be careful what you pray for." When I take off my clothes and look in the mirror, I see Dad's body, as you wished. But the rest of me has always wished to be you.

FREE



DUTY

I modelled myself—my gestures, my futures, how I love and rage—all after you. Did this worry you and Dad? Did you have the kinds of conversations in bed that parents of genderqueer children on TV have, where the Dad scolds the Mom—"This is your fault!"? No one is to blame. Not you, not the god you prayed to. I was right to worship you. You worked full-time, went to school part-time, managed a home, raised two children who complained about frozen food and made fun of your accent, and cared for your family in India. Most days in my adult life, I can barely care for myself.



I remember finding these photos of you three years ago and being astonished, even hurt, by your joyfulness, your playfulness. I wish I had known this side of you, before Canada, marriage and motherhood stripped it from you, and us.

FREE



FREE



DUTY

I learned to pray too. My earliest prayers were to be released from my body, believing that this desire was devotion, this was about wanting to be closer to god. I don't believe in god anymore, but sometimes I still have the same prayer. Then I remind myself that the discomfort I feel is less about my body and more about what it means to be feminine in a world that is intent on crushing femininity in any form. Maybe I got my wish to be you after all.

48



36

DUTY



37

You used to say that if you had a girl, you would have named her Trisha.

FREE

CJ Park

uncertain landscapes and the manufactured

landscape unravels itself not
at a humanly ocular level but at the level of
budgets

dolly
+ crane

undifferentiated mass[es], chinese|
camera-curious and uncaring chinese
tamed and photogenic chinese
“we just work here” chinese

teleological chinese?

trudging through corporate terrain
paper-thin permission on hand
he sticks the stubs of his tripod into
earths un-consenting.

Edward Burtynsky and his camera are not channelling meaning through
light
so much as they are
digging,
digging
until “virtualization and re-materialization¹” fire off
more or
less at once.

what is the nature of this documentation if not a deep, manly urge to store
the sublime on Blu-ray?

it would seem that Mr. Burtynsky endeavors to capture

the sublime overlayed with the sublime entrenched in the sublime
mirroring the sublime on top of the sublime folded into the sublime inter-
faced with the sublime within the sublime.

*1 Joshua Schuster writes,
“If Burtynsky’s photos
are really to open dialogue,
they must welcome a critical
insight into how the capitalist
mode of production, the
fetishism of commodities,
and the adoration of spectacle
are inseparable.”*

In our moment of “subliminal uncertainty,” Steyerl advises that we rather:

- Resign to the “intensity of the problem of the truth”
- Approach uncertainty as an entry point into the real she continues,
- the digestion of corporate news is a daily exercise in discerning fact from fiction; (surprise); facts are really just fetishes²
- communication processes become subsumed by a military-industrial shadow that feeds a “perpetual doubt” wherein “[v]iewers are torn between false certainties and feelings of passivity and exposure, between agitation and boredom, between their role as citizens and their role as consumers.” Such polarizing confusion is conditioned by
- fear + anxiety +emergency:
affective transmissions that happen through a coordinated weaponization-commodification commodification-weaponization of information.

DOCUMENTS are “CONDENSATIONS OF POWER;” when our arena of HD images purports to show us everything more clearly and closely than ever before, images that register an UNCERTAINTY+LACK (of clarity) become more useful documents.

THE “POOR IMAGE,”

- “a copy in motion”
- “a rag or a rip”
- “an illicit fifth-generation bastard of an original image” might serve as one such form of documentation³.

The day before and the day after commodification:

a city in disappearance
works its residents to the bone,
into ghosts
while The Three Gorges
Dam
chalks
the bricks of their homes.

appearing,
a city of smog-lit scrapers–post-human
cowboy fantasy terrain.

the frame yields to even more
structures and
surfaces before yielding again

the silhouette of
a solitary gallery-goer

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2 Steyerl locates an impasse in social constructivism’s capitulation to an “opportunistic and cynical relativism” further widened by the elusiveness of both documentary and contemporary art as definitive categories. Steeped in conventions of empirical and forensic fact-making, the documentary form is born ensnared within the problem of objectivity.

3 The poor image is “liberated from the vaults of cinemas and archives and thrust into digital uncertainty, at the expense of its own substance.” In a wider economy of images, the vision of art as an alternative information circuit has been reincarnated by the poor image, the production and circulation of which channel a new valence

and another gallery-goer
at the Burtynsky exhibition—

the zoom is the master's trick.

early 20th century anthropology abstracted culture
into
raw data.

a new documentary ethics⁴
discards that mode of viewing...

that production of otherness.

a new documentary ethics
works
to restore subjectivity

through allegory
through abstraction

4 Rethinking cinematic realism requires us to rethink cinema at large as an instrument of imperialism. If our images reflect the “precarious nature of contemporary lives as well as the uneasiness of any representation,” we must work out what we can invest in experimental cinematic forms on the level of aesthetics and social representation, as laid out in Catherine Russell’s essay “Another Look.”

James Balo

A Missing Matriarch

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James Balo is a visual storyteller, filmmaker, and writer based in Miami, Florida studying the arts at Design and Architecture Senior High. James utilizes found objects to create three dimensional collages that serve as visual odes and representations of the unhealthy relationship with his mother. James re-creates his home by constructing these 3D collages into a set with additional symbolic found sculptures and raw audio of his mother that highlights the artist's missing matriarch in his life and displaying the vulnerable and repeating cycle of domestic and emotional abuse.





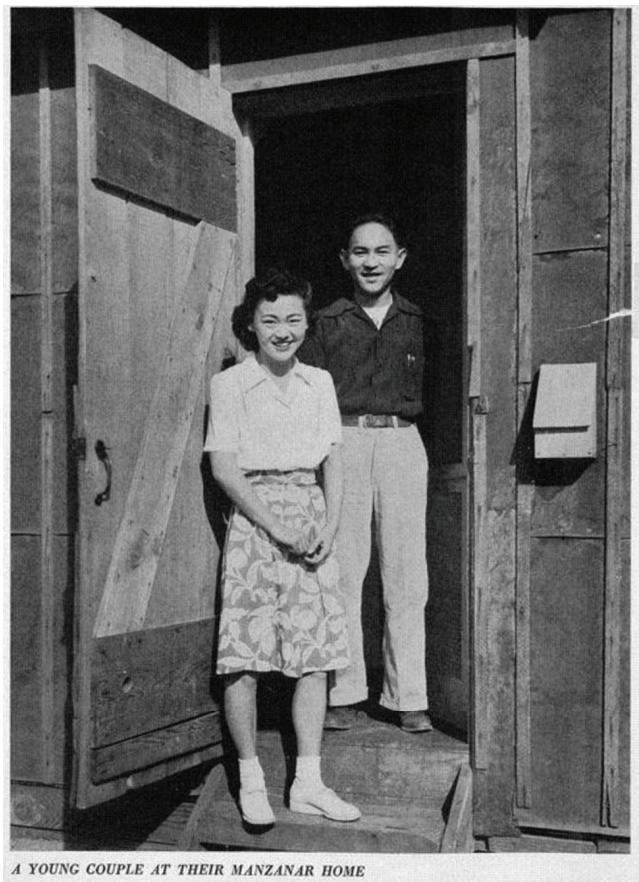
Constructing “Home”: Interpreting the Built Environments of WWII Incarceration Camps



Introduction

The photography that emerged from World War II Japanese American incarceration camps (also referred to as internment camps) revealed the widespread practice of constructing semblances of home within the camps. Initial readings of these environments interpreted this practice as Japanese American agency within the camps and lessened the severity of incarceration.

Yet, to what extent do these images demonstrate the violence of torn-apart families forced to remain ‘patriotic’? Conversely, do these images reveal modes of resistance — the creation of furniture, art, and architectural additions asserting the humanity of a population incarcerated in inhumane environments?



Agency & Patriotism

In depictions of incarceration camps created by War Relocation Authority photographers, inmates are shown smiling, enjoying their new ‘homes.’^[1] The use of the term ‘home’ in this exhibit is intentional, and derives from one of the first images (below) in Ansel Adams’ *Born Free and Equal: The Story of Loyal Japanese Americans*, a collection of photos and writings by the photographer on the topic of internment.^[2] In the photograph, a couple stands at the front door of their barracks. Photographic conventions complicate interpretation – the couple smiles for the camera, and though they appear to be the same height, the woman is placed one step below her husband to create the illusion of difference. Adams’ caption further enforces a positive reading: “A Young Couple at Their Manzanar Home.”

The image and caption clash – the couple is well-dressed, at odds with the poverty of their dwelling. Without the context of internment, any other couple would seem out of place in such a ‘home.’ To call this barrack a home relays a message of contentment that frames inmates as positively adjusting and lessens the severity of incarceration. Defining a tarpaper barrack as a home is a construction that deserves interpretation.

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Upon arrival, families found themselves with little to fill bare rooms – cots, bare light bulbs, and a few thin mattresses. Multiple families were placed into single barracks, with little privacy between units. Across the ten camps, inmates attempted to improve their environments by constructing interior walls, building furniture from whatever materials were at hand, and planting gardens outside their front doors. Much of this work was gendered, with men constructing furniture from wood and women knitting, sewing, and weaving textile-based crafts, but many instances of crossing gendered barriers have been documented as well (see images below). This crossing of gendered barriers was prevalent in, but not limited to, the many cases in which prominent Japanese American men were incarcerated separately from their families.

Yoneko Tanaka (left) and Norio Mitsuoka carry away lumber to make furniture, 1944, Camp Minidoka, Image via Densho Digital Repository, Mitsuoka Family Collection



In this watercolor sketch by Kengo Takamura, three men sit over sewing machines.



Yoneko Tanaka sits in front of a vanity she constructed. Tanaka is also the woman pictured carrying lumber in the photograph at the start of this essay.

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In the photo of the Miyatake family, the environment looks similarly domestic. Mr. and Mrs. Miyatake stand over their daughter as she works at a sturdily built desk. Photographs and cutout characters line the walls, and childrens' toys line the back shelf of the room. Yet, slight indications of violence pervade. A diagonal ceiling support juts into the top edge of the photograph; the wall to its right stops several feet short of the ceiling. These signs point to the fabricated nature of this home, the state-enforced denial of privacy pervading an otherwise homelike environment.



In a photograph from Camp Amache, three women sit around a comfortably furnished room that gives little indication of its location within a camp. A patterned floral motif covers the table and benches, and fabric draping lines the shelves and desk along the walls of the room. They sit in candid positions looking toward a small child, sitting on a small blanket on the floor, her doll beside her.



In the photograph of porch-builders above, the front additions break up the single, monotonous mass, giving each family's unit a discrete, independent identity.

Though they reveal varying amounts of the architecture of incarceration, these photographs demonstrate the visual satisfaction of the completed environment. Neither reveals the inhuman living conditions with which the inmates were confronted upon arrival. Nor do they demonstrate the non-photogenic labor that provided the photographer with his finished images of comfortable homes – former inmates speak of digging in the sand around construction sites for any nails they could find and scavenging for recyclable wooden crates. In many instances, camp authorities were hostile to bringing in extra materials.

When camp photographers did point their lenses at labor, such activities speak to the narrative of agency within the camps. The photograph above shows inmates at Camp Rohwer constructing porches on the exteriors of the barracks out of felled trees – the Arkansas-based camp was unique in its proximity to forest. This attention on inmates' ability to alter their environments follows the historic American pioneer narrative, while lessening the severity of incarceration.



At this point in their journey, families, young children, elderly American-born citizens had already been forced to evacuate their homes and leave the majority of their belongings, community, and former lives behind.



They would have slept for many nights on flimsy cots, shoved into animal stables or quickly-constructed sheds – many of which still smelled of animal dung.

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Violence & Resistance

In the stark emptiness of the Mojave Desert, this bare room sat among many within hastily constructed, wood and tarpaper barracks that composed Poston Relocation Camp from 1942 to 1945. The walls appear thin, the floor bare. Exposed beams hold up a low ceiling, and simple knee braces insert into the wall by each small window. The room does not look hospitable; records show that such a space would not have had running water and that dust storms continually provided a thin film of silt over every unprotected surface. This does not resemble a place of human habitation. This scene would have greeted many of the 120,000 Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II.



In the final incarceration camps themselves, furnishings provided by camp authorities were basic, if not inhuman. In the photograph from Tule Lake below, camp-issued room dividers separate individual units during a period of overcrowding. Despite the low ceilings, the partitions extend neither to the floor nor to the ceiling. Anyone who sat, slept, or ate on the floor would be fully exposed. A similar lack of privacy extended to the latrines, where inmates were confronted with long, open rows of toilets and forced to construct their own privacy partitions.

Against this backdrop, the construction of home resembles a mode of resistance, or at least self-preservation. Faced with dehumanizing conditions, impromptu carpenters, furniture-makers, rug weavers, and other amateur craftspeople asserted their own humanity.

At Camp Rohwer, women took apart burlap sacks for their material, remaking the recycled ‘yarn’ with vegetable dye and weaving the colored fiber into new crafts. Other inmates constructed over seven hundred rugs from the torn up strips of old clothes, and pieced together small scraps of wood to construct privacy screens. This labor combats against the de-individualizing and dehumanizing force of the camp environment while enforcing Japanese American self preservation.



Outside the gaze of state-funded photographers, inmate-made artwork gives further insight into the labor of constructing home in the incarceration camps. In this watercolor by Kengo Takamura, a couple sits on their front stoop, consumed by knitting and carving. The artist’s caption narrates scene, “The enjoy their hobbies.” Takamura’s stance as a fellow internee gives his reading more credibility than Adams’. He reads the couple’s work as a diversion amidst the ramshackle environment he executes in quick strokes of pencil and watercolor.

Contemporary readings of incarceration camp photography can only provide a limited view into the lived experiences of inmates. However, photography from the period reveals both the realities of inhumane camp construction and the state narratives of hard work, patriotism, and agency during and after incarceration. These photographs demonstrate the ways in which resisting dehumanization by creating impressive ‘homes’ could have served as a tool for Japanese Americans to use to combat state-sponsored violence while simultaneously serving as evidence for the federal government to co-opt in defending incarceration as a tolerable wartime necessity.

Lucas Montenegro De Xuárez Upgraded





De Xuárez Upgraded is a reinterpreation of the historical character Inés de Xuárez that was involved with Foundation of Santiago, Chile. What happen to her political and military role? Did she have any agency?



Sebastian Castro-Niculescu

brief notes from a very specific point in time in which I feel the presence of my body

This is a proposal for a performance work, a ruminating in pre-production that resists that idea of being made or completed.

66

It is a not-quite-professional series of reflections, budget outlines, sketches and architectural renderings in performance for a project I will only ever allow to exist on the horizon. Am I delivering a sales pitch, and are you, the audience, a jury, jurors, committee, or panel here to approve this proposal? What is the space between research, planning, and production, and how can I allow us to ruminate in it? What may be permissible here that is not found in the gallery installation this will inevitably become?

The project I propose has two axes, two forms of movement, two acts, perhaps. There is first the movement from inside the body, my body, outwards. This is the actionable item at hand. I have begun collecting my own bodily fluids with some regularity, I have been conducting research on and into the molecules that inform my microbial self, and how these molecules trouble my body as whole.

Analytically, these questions circulate around a particular phrase, picked up from medical and theoretical literature – the body burden. From toxicological study, the term describes the total accumulated environmental toxins present in one's body. A body burden is not a full or stable

unit of bodily study, but rather an assemblage of various molecules, hormones, resonances, and fluids that enter and circulate within the body. They can come from nuclear power plants, electrical networks, pesticides, flame retardant bedding, among other materials, and they take space and become constituent parts of our bodies, cycling in and out of the porous bounds of what I consider myself to be. And it leads me to question the extent to which I can be said to belong to myself. And I begin to try and feel my molecularity – perhaps a fruitless endeavor, but one that motivates the practice I share with you today. In a sense, I want to feel the traces, hormonal imbalances – viscerally understand how electrostatic discharges get caught and buzz around in the subcutaneous fat layer. I wonder how feeling, affect, and physical reflex become units of measure of the body burden's collective weight, a collective sigh. The phrase strikes me, the burden, and one can imagine, the weight, the slouch in one's cells and fluids, tissues and systems – it becomes the way in which the body interfaces with systems of power, how socio-political geographies and medical science create the conditions in which my body becomes burdensome. I feel the bend, the slight slouch. And, now I know, I must radically re-investigate my own molecularities.

I consider this proposal to allow for us to feel our own peculiar burdens, and rather than disavowing it, I would like us to safely ruminate in it, to swim through our own vessels and capillaries for a moment, at least. While this project centers on my own body, as it is the only thing that maybe, just maybe, can be said to be mine – I want my investigation to resonate within your own bodies, I want this to be an occasion for you to feel, to auto-dissect. I ask that you focus on your body as we chart a course through mine – how does your ass feel in the seat you are sitting in right now? And your arms, where are they, do you remember them? Even deeper, is your stomach heavy, light, floating – is it growling, full? What about your stomach acids, can you feel those? And you've probably blinked quite a few times already, what is that like? And the electrical impulses through your neurons, how are those made, and can you feel their effects? And then the toxins, oh the toxins, where can you find those? Your liver, perhaps? Maybe in the subcutaneous fat, that layer underneath the skin which conceals and reveals so much. And the materials we discharge, the ones we may not want to think about, our piss, saliva, and shit, and sometimes blood – where are the toxins we pick up and drop in those? I argue, with some urgency, that these are pivotal

sites of information production and reception. They form a nebulous archive of the geography of our bodies, already un-whole, complicated, because of the burdens we carry.

This move towards the inside of the body is of course fraught, and I caution us as we move forward. I acknowledge the racist legacies of biological and evolutionary science, the nuisances and possibilities of medicalized capitalism, the pharmaco-pornographic empire that Paul Preciado writes about. I remind us, and myself, of continuing scientific searches for the 'gay gene,' maybe even the 'trans gene,' and the presence of racial regimes of Ancestry.com and 23andMe. These are the dangers of molecularity as well – I caution us against essentialism, against the idea that molecules determine what is often-times determined for us. But, I also wonder about the peculiar and invasive ways that our positionalities are forcibly re-inscribed into our molecules and cells, how the most dangerous toxins, pesticides, and power plants are so often those placed within "Third World" nations, or in proximity to low-income Black and Latinx communities. Or, even, how badly I crave access to an estrogen patch. These are all important notes and concessions as we try to approach our own molecules.

This proposal is based on an emergent practice of mine, as I begin to collect my own bodily fluids. And I begin to consider the performativity of the blood test, of spitting in a lube, or peeing in a cup. The performance these thoughts point me to is one of public auto-dissection, as I stage the tests and collections in real time, maybe in a lecture format, to see the information they can teach me about myself. This eventual performance is also a way to cope, and wake up, to intervene in my body's consistent and burdensome exhaustion.

This intervention leads me to ask, again with some urgency – how do we form political coalitions with our own body burdens, the toxic molecules and microbes that become both center and prosthetic to our selves? This necessarily involves diving deeply within our bodies, our stomachs, without the comfort of Enlightenment selfhood, without a hope of soul, but rather a microscopic and molecularly abstract gaze. I have been calling this auto-dissection. Dissection, as a practice of European medicine and anthropology, defines itself as operative on the Other, whether this other be within a body, or marks the body itself as whole. Dissection performs knowledge, in the sense that its practice forms and

creates, in real-time, the conditions of legibility of a body. Dissection, in many cases, destroys the biological form that it hopes to understand, it degenerates under the auspices of creating. Auto-dissection takes this practice and inflects it on the researcher's body – a kind of anarcho-anthropological short circuit.

Auto-dissection forms a complement to a kind of body-hacking, to injectables of questionable legality, to hormone disruptions of the liberatory kind. Auto-dissection is an intervention by collection, the forming of our own unique and meaty archives. My archive, my piss, spit, and shit, I hope will soon be delivered to a medical testing facility in Providence in order to analyze my own body burden, to tell me the specific amounts of each material that I have obsessed over. I can't quite afford this expansive test, so I've begun collecting the materials necessary, and am now presenting to you the proposal that I hope will give me the funding necessary, to nourish this nascent project. But I find possibility in this moment, in the pre-production of it all – the auto-dissection collection without the medical facility, my trans body before I begin ingesting the hormones I so badly desire. It's a very specific point in time, a moment of possibility and desire and anxiety and exhaustion and excitement – all of which are affects produced and consumed by my neurons, hormones, chemical circulations, fatty excitements. And I am lead to the place, here, where I consider the links between salivation and salvation, between intellectual fecundity and fecal matter.

So, to complement my proposal, I'll share with you a diary entry, written on November 7, 2017, around the time I felt compelled to start collecting my body's discharges. I never expected to be the type to write diaristically, but now it seems like a parallel archive, another form of medical abjection – this time maybe shared with my psychologist as opposed to my doctor.

○○○

Nov. 7, 2017. They text me early this morning – all caps: "I'M GETTING IT TODAY." The timestamp says it was sent at 9:48am. While I had promised myself that I would wake up at 6, maybe 6:30, I am still groveling around in bed until 10. I don't respond until perhaps noon. They have posted to their Instagram story – the list of contacts that they have sent a similar message to, all around the same time – I am happy to see that I am perhaps the first one to receive the good news, I feel closer to them.

Oh, and by "it," they mean T, by T they mean testosterone – more specifically, administered by injection. In their excitement, they recommend that I go to the same Planned Parenthood in New York, since their access to it came fairly easily. Some of our conversations have been circling around, inspecting, the question of hormones, our molecules. I tell them, in a moment where I am grasping for something, anything, to make work about, that I am interested in the "body burden" – by one account, "the total accumulation of toxins in your body." It was quick and improvisational at first, I believe it now. I feel the need to invest in myself at the molecular level, perform auto-dissection.

When I ask about the possibility of visiting the Planned Parenthood in New York during Thanksgiving break, a week and a half from now, they tell me that I could make a stressed phone call, and hopefully that can work. Then again, maybe I can't make an appointment through the phone, so they offer to join me to visit the Planned Parenthood as soon as I get back, and I send them hearts to show my appreciation. Maybe it is possible, sooner than I thought. I know that I want this, but wonder about the timeline. They say that if you tell the financial counselor that you don't have a job, you get the stuff for free. I mean, I have some gigs, but not at all enough to pay for it myself (and recourse to my parents is not even a consideration), so I think I'll do the same. This may really happen. Finally?

But then, again, I think about my parents often (what else is an immigrant child to do?). I think about how our arguments and disagreements so often centered around the surface of my body. A hidden piercing, flipped upwards, that they discover when I fall asleep in the living room. A hidden tattoo on my leg, self-administered (and among a few more, not yet foreclosed), how this was seen through a screen while I was changing. These became the raw materials for our fighting – was I allowed to do this, had I asked permission, what were the stakes in these corporal mutations away from an established, and productive, norm? Maybe it wasn't the deviation that produced the anger, maybe it was just the fact that I had hidden it from them.

In thinking about my parents and my body, my parents in my body, I am lead to displacement, to diaspora. There is the common refrain of immigrant latinidad – ni de qui, ni de alla – not from here, not from there. I wonder to what extent I can see our bodies in the time of ni de aqui, ni de alla. For trauma, both the producer and effect of migration, finds itself slouching into the cells and molecules in the body – informing and creating movement, affecting posture, collapsing breath.

And I ask, what form will my parental anxiety take if I change my body in its fluid transactions, its various molecules? A more concealed deception, have I not been doing this for some time now?

○○○

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And then, a couple weeks ago, researching “MTF” hormone therapy, I read a warning that there is the possibility of permanent infertility after hormone consumption. The webpage recommends that if I want to have children, to consider preserving my sperm. This is the first time I have to seriously think about sexual reproduction, and I am surprised by the pause it gives me. I am the type toa fashionably declare that I'll never have children, too disenchanted with reproductive futurism, its straightness. I understand that family and familial intimacy extend beyond the nuclear; I am excited to expand my networks of queer kinship, become a queer abuelita in some time. But, I am struck by the, and perhaps this is the wrong word, fear, I feel when considering possible infertility. Is there really something in the blood calculus, the DNA, the molecules (again)? I let my thoughts drift away, and end here – unresolved – because this time, for once, the complexity and contradictions scare me. And so I try to return to my body and breathe.

@Laptop
Somnath Bhatt



take advantage of

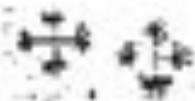
being underestimated.



यो.



What would u look like and what
would u be into, who would u be and
what would u believe in if someone
else wasn't setting the standards?



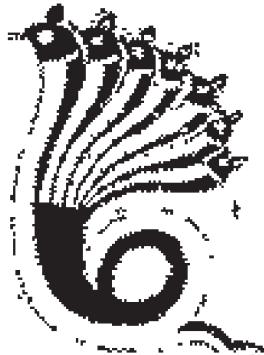
money and profit

cannot be the only

measure of success.

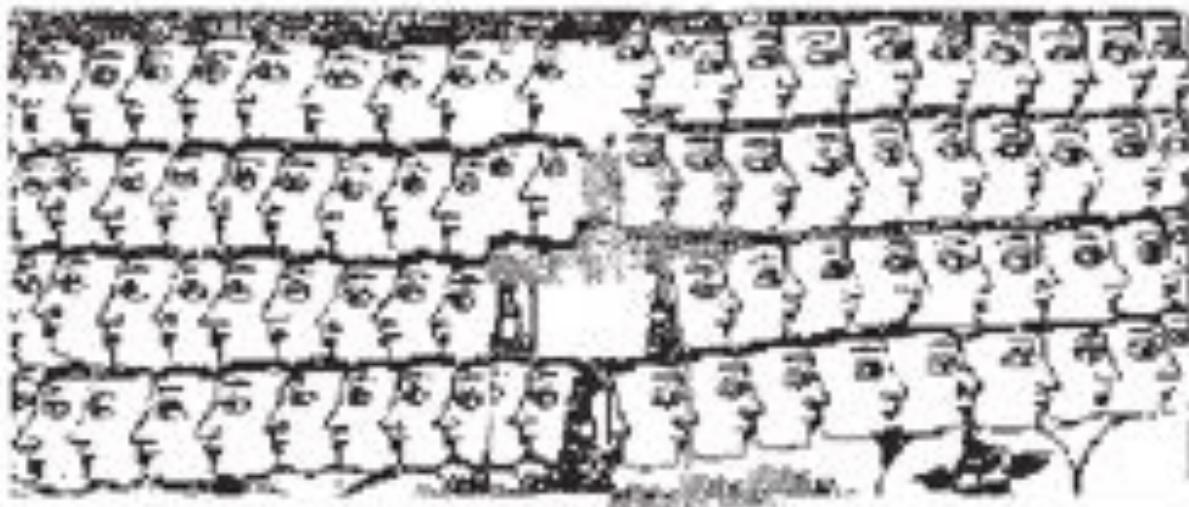
Knowledge,

stability



skill

and
social bonding
are of greater value.



des

Oppression makes you take sides.



es you taakes you take you take naikes yos you takres you tes you take

Lynn Tachihara

how (not) to boil the perfect egg

how (not) to boil the perfect egg

The egg has no windows.

Even if it were to be caressed by the lengthening four o'clock shadows and the spilling pockets of yellow brilliance, the interior of the egg could not bear witness to it. Trespassers are prohibited, entirely ignored or absorbed into invisible pores never to be seen again. We think of our shadows as grey puddles beneath our feet. That is all a shadow needs to be. The egg, the windowless room, does not care for the golden hour display of the sun's handcrafted patterns upon walls. Nor does it care for the charming chatter between the curtains and passing zephyr, scheduled for the late afternoon. This windowless vessel keeps its contents in a state of oblivion.

It is the cave; impenetrable by glares.

The egg is a stoic that is left in the dark. It exists from one windowless space to another, transported from the warehouses to the corrugated cartons of our windowless refrigerators. I hear cold temperatures stunt the development of the windowless room. Windows have a blind spot for the pesky winter drafts that enjoy its late-night sneak-ins. The egg will not tolerate it. The wall is already tenuous enough.

The egg would uphold a 4.5 star rating from the modern recluse we call hikikomori, who's own skin is washed over with a matching lack of vitamin D. Our hikikomori enjoys the seamless curvature of the room's opaque walls, tastefully paired with its indifference to the commotion beyond its borders. An abode that keeps its peace — ideal for those who's comfort-blanket is made of shadows. Also recommended for the zen-master in training.

The architect of the egg took notes on minimalism and sleek package designs. The windowless room demonstrates an elegance that matches that of Japanese poets who spoke of falling cherry blossoms and the dissolving snowflake. But the egg does not need more reminders of the transience of things. Cherry blossoms and dissolving snowflakes are distractions. Without showing weak, the egg alone can testify to it all.

My mother once told me that the secret to the perfect boiled egg is a pinprick on the outer shell before it is placed in water. She promised that it would not break the egg, for an accidental crack on its wall would expose its immaculate interiors to the toxic particles we humans have long accumulated in our bodies. It is a procedure that requires a most delicate touch in order to preserve the egg's windowless unity. To crack it wide open into a sizzling pan is a

massacre in comparison. Haven't we been taught that it's rude to barge into a room unsolicited?

To pierce it, would be to transform it. Are we not also taught to "embrace change"?

Regardless, renovations are always a nuisance.

The new mark formed on the surface is a perfectly circular opening that is still too small to be defined as a window. A window would mark its end; death by exposure. Instead, as if to share the empowerment of the sixteen-year old who decided to pierce their own nose in a dimly lit bathroom, the egg, newly punctured, is relieved by its first wound that did not cause its walls to collapse. First emerging as lightning, the pin-pricked hole must have held the blinding glare of a twelve o'clock sun. Like the way we used to look at a night sky as a tattered black cloak, we thought stars were simply the light from the other side, escaping through the pinpricks of the sky's fabric. The gaps will invert itself to become an entity of its own.

The enigma of the windowless room flourishes with its new form, punctured yet still in tact. Both sides of its seamless wall were kept symmetrically blind to one another — the way our anonymous rapport is established in the confession booth. But the puncture in the windowless room did not grant its onlookers any more insight into its interiors, as one could have hoped for. Even if you were to get close enough that eyelashes felt the cold pressing against its surface, the egg still would not relinquish any of its private thoughts.

The windowless room is not accepting anymore visitors.

Sasha Gordon

The Bath

My work explores self image, racial prejudice, mental illness, and the male gaze, while also exhibiting my discomfort with intimacy and the female body. In this piece, I wanted to express my experience growing up in a predominantly white community, and how that hindered my perception of myself as an Asian American woman.





Greta Skagerlind

First Poem

Time, be my bulldozer
and my razor
After you barrel over my chest
and shave off my hips
I'll hop on your front seat,
we'll ride across America
Learn how zip codes work
Slice faux hawks off neo-nazis

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I will take all the steps
Check all necessary boxes
Ice pick into cliff face Ten times now
Though distance between us may broaden
I learn mayors can Authorize Bombings

I think about my siblings every day
Tomorrow we congregate, storm Villa Mar-A-Lago
Raise flags for Kiwi, Scout, Tommy
all of Flint, MI
Break golf clubs over knees

Today you topple inner cities, smooth male faces
While I wait and let things build
I know no other sensation

What it means to make oneself in this epoch we're drowning in

Cylinder emerge from pool of steel cutting oil,
essence of headache

Horizontalize on sweaty leather draped in tissue
to greet the path: I signed a consent form

I am anesthetized and

It's 2005:

brother and I press on our hairless shins in the basement

Self-diagnose Bone Chips

Now it's 2017 and I imagine real striations

I bleed from my sides.

Tender tissue disperses

In a fever dream I rise and yell:
You, you, you! You are already formed!
I modeled myself
and now you must watch
as I emerge from a pool of steel cutting oil
or the build plate of a 3D printer!

Eliza Chen

Draft Catalog



Draft Catalog is a certain kind of intervention in an establishment space. I sometimes wonder about the force of this project's "disruptive" goals — is suggesting the equivalence of process to product actually much of a statement?

I can only hope that some brief and limited suggestion of the complexity of learning / inquiring will make it through our black and white monolith.





Andy Li Kelly

When my friend Kelly died, I thought she'd be cremated.

She was really into the idea, what it meant for the dirt, and Buddhism. She wanted to be deindividuated, to remove herself from entity. Even though the process required so much air pollution.

Her parents had her buried at the Chinese cemetery in the suburbs. Her class picture leaned against the gravestone.

Her parents wanted to visit her with regular, reliable frequency. They wanted to be in the “presence” of her body. Maybe that was the point of gravestones. The stable location for visitation. For the body to lie, and to be marked, among its relatives. Not to be alone, and not to join too thoroughly with the anonymous wind and dirt. When everyone in the family died, the underground village was complete. It was a way to ensure that everyone would be transferred to the same place in the afterlife.

I wasn't sure that I believed in the idea, but it was quite poetic. That I could be buried among my family was comforting. A reunion in the dirt, softly and slowly. The idea was like a nod to plant growth, the casket the seed. And the spirit the plant, growing higher and higher into the sky. Standard gardening knowledge, that related plants grew well together. These kinds of pushed metaphors worked well with grief.

But the preservation of each body in a casket seemed cold. Perhaps that was the way we were in real life. Not that everyone was cold, but everyone had their protected secrets. We respected dead people's bodies because there was no more volition within, but there were, still, all the secrets.

People forgot the flaws of the recently deceased. Even when they were acknowledged—which could be deemed necessary, depending on the gravity of the flaw—the acknowledgment was outweighed by the highlights of the person. To remember someone was to remember how they were “good,” or what was “good” about them.

Everyone knew Kelly was a cheater. She had cheated on her partner, Pan, with the bartender at Local 77, the Mandarin girl with tattoos. Kelly was the kind of person who wanted to change constantly. Something was always off to her. She wanted to kiss the Mandarin girl, because she craved the taste of a rebel's

lips. “Pan is always so soft,” she said. Pan, the kindest and most sensible person in our class, forgave her and broke it off. After the break-up, Kelly shaved her head. No one could talk about anybody else.

A week later, we found out, through her cousin’s Facebook post, that she had committed suicide. It was an absolute shock. From then on, no one could say anything bad about her. That included her parents, who refused to speak about the death or its details.

I was impressed by this. People spent so much time worrying about the flaws of the living, or the flaws of living a life, or how these flaws led to the very end of life.

Why did grief have to be so saccharine?

Why was life given the more ambivalent, complex analysis? To cry at the death of someone was simpler; it was necessarily indulgent. To let the body reflex. To finally let the body. And embedded within that cry was a tribute to that person’s life. The neglect of a flaw. Because, after all, a flaw must be created. A flaw must be drawn out of violence, through the castigation of the person or their body, or through the act of cruelty committed by the person. It must be remarked by a community, as much as it becomes the mark. A flaw must be created, which means it can be dropped. Shattered, marking the surface of memory. And the marks become the unified texture, the whole, the sky of the mind made from gritty constellations.

Lucy Qiu

Home Sweet Home

Growing up as a child of immigrants, I often wished for my house to resemble a perfect American home. It was an ideal world that I had built in my imagination, stemming from American home decor magazines, visits to friend's homes and reading Little House on the Prairie. This is an exploration of personal feelings and memories from growing up in a Chinese-American home that I can't quite articulate.

Photography by Sheida Soleimani





Miracle Peach

HELLO EVERYONE! ATTENTION! I AM THE MIRACLE PEACH
ITS ROOTS ARE DEEP
ITS BRANCHES HAVE BEEN STRONG
SO THAT THE WEIGHT FROM THE BRANCHES O

SOME SAY, IN THE OLD DAYS, THIS TREE WAS A MIRACLE
IF IT HAD, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A MIRACLE
AND THE MOUTH THAT BELONGED TO THE BODY THAT BIT ME
AXE WOULD HAVE STILL EATEN ME WITH PLEASURE. IT
CAN YOU

NOW THEY DON'T CHOP THESE TREES DOWN
THEY CALL ME THE MIRACLE PEACH
BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO BE CHOPPED
AND MY FLESH

BUT... JUST BETWEEN US.....

—CLE PEACH AND I AM DANGLING ON THIS TREE!
—SHALLOW AND
—N STOLEN ON ONE SIDE,
—N THE OTHER MAKES MY TREE ALL TILTED, SEE.

—E WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PLANTED OR
—D HAVE BEEN AXED
—T BELONGED TO THE HAND THAT BELONGED TO THAT
—WOULD LLLLICK ITS LIPS AND THAT WOULD BE THAT!
—IMAGINE?

—N, BUT THEY DON'T WATER THEM, EITHER.
—CH AND I HOPE THEY ARE RIGHT,
— MY TREE TO GET AXED
— TO BE EATEN.

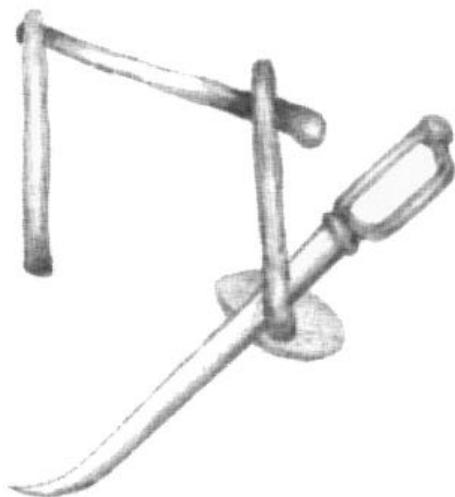
—I THINK I AM JUST A PEACH.

Aayushi Khowala

Drawings of Myth

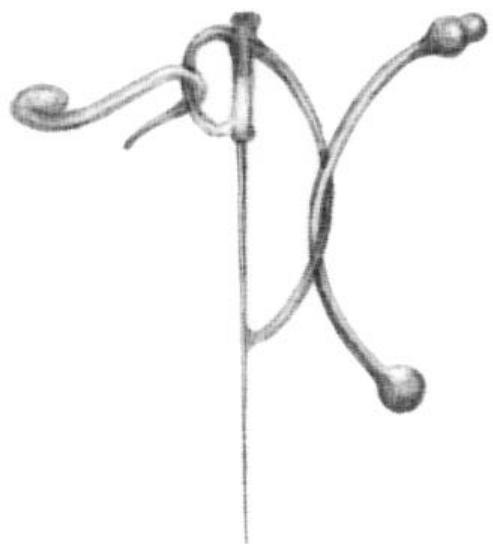
British colonialism and scholarship in India were key factors affecting the initial Hindu responses to modern science and technology in the nineteenth century.

One of these responses was the reexplaining of avataric evolution—proposing the idea that the Hindu myth anticipated Darwinian evolution. Many critiques of modernity propose that the West has had a secularising effect on the non-West, as is evident in the example stated above. These drawings of mine are the beginnings of a larger project that will attempt to recontextualise the Hindu myth and challenge/reform its symbolic position in relation to the contemporary, generating a new-formed perspective of the myth as prompted by this secularisation.





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Mahdi Chowdhury

ARCHIVE 00:00

ARCHIVE 00:01
(THE EMBRACE OF – HISTORY)



ARCHIVE 00:02
(QUAMRUL HASSAN REDUX)



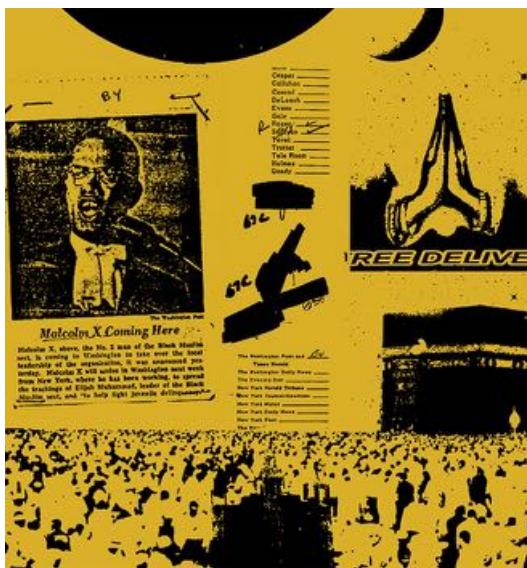
ARCHIVE 00:03
(AL-ASR ULTRA)



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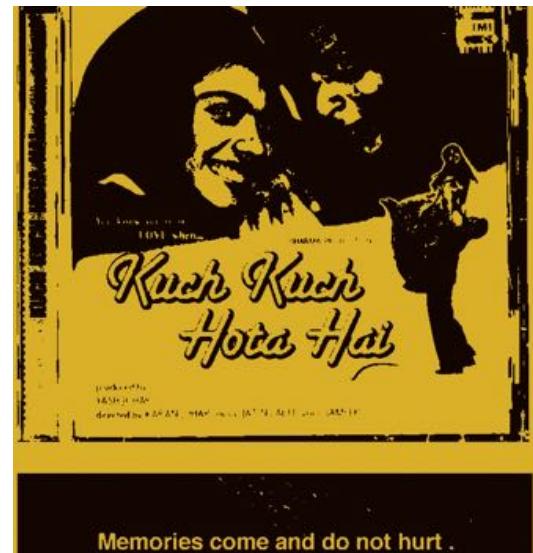
The archiving process – meant to arrange, identify, and categorize the fragmentary – often incites a contrary phenomenology. Radical archives provoke qualities of non-linearity, discontinuity, the intimate transhistoricity of objects and memories. To the historian, the archive has always been a dream-space, a dream-space in which history and the sum of all experiences can be ordered. It is the site in which historians enact their unique violence – to impose and forever sear the unique time and place of an object onto its body. But this imaginative space and method does not necessarily correlate to what the archive is/can be. Instead, the archive can offer us fluid and numberless origins, appearances, and temporalities.

The archive is constellatory. Archiving is a “twilight art.” The archive is the nebulous spatialization of memory, struggle, time, bi-locations, becomings, etc. These fragments, severed from the tethers of Hegelian time-and-space, are not found in libraries or museums, but borne from our own vernacular archives: desktop screenshots, family photo albums, browser bookmarks, diary entries, et al. Research interests, nostalgic artefacts, political expressions, fractured identities, hyperstitional narratives. There are motifs here from a Bangladeshi heritage of anti-fascism, Amiri Baraka and the Black Arts Movement, Regent Park and St. James Town, Islamic dream interpretation and Hajj iconographies, film elegies and records of an immigrant first winter. The archive becomes a testament to the innumerable, lost, messianic times that enmesh our lives.



وَالْعَصْرِ.
By Time.
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي حُسْرٍ.
Indeed man is in loss,
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا.
بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبَّ
except those who have faith and
do righteous deeds, and enjoin one
another to [follow] the truth, and
enjoin one another patience.

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Memories come and do not hurt .

Mustafa Ahmed, poet

"I'm born and raised in Regent Park, right on Regent Street. All things undergo change, and with Regent Park, people started moving, people started coming in. It just felt bigger. It felt like I had to grow with the revitalization to stay alive, and for my art to stay alive. Most of my work is a reflection of my community, a reflection of everything that I see. It's hard to find your voice; it's not too many people tapping into any of those narratives and there's so much to be said here. The revitalization affected a lot of us in the community. We were trying to refine ourselves— with inner-city communities, especially in Toronto, it's really a unknown. People don't really familiarize with me or more than their communities, so to watch it transform in real time, it's a subtle effect on a lot of youth, even the elders and how they're coping with it."

"There are countless sub-communities in Regent Park: it's huge, it's the largest housing community. The Caribbean community, the East African community—the Somalis, Ethiopians, Bengalis in north Regent, the Afghans. There are over 70 languages spoken here, and the intersections and collaborations of that is great. It's what makes Regent Park. I'm trying to continue to make my mark on my community, to continue to preserve the old, you know? To preserve what once existed. Just don't want people to forget what once existed and the people that were once there."

أنت
أحضان النار
ARE IN THE EMBRACE
OF THE HISTORY

Jeremy Wolin

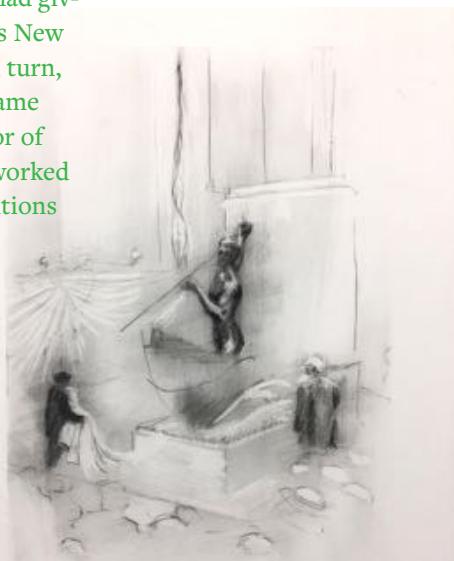
Whaleman's Memorial, Revisited

2017
charcoal on paper



In 1913, the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts erected The Whaleman, a monument that reflected the city's historic whaling industry-based wealth and aggrandized the figure of the whaler as a mythic local hero. However, by this time in local history, whaling had given way to textile production as New Bedford's primary industry. In turn, New Bedford's prosperity became increasingly driven by the labor of immigrants and women who worked long hours in the unsafe conditions of the city's mills.

Historical records illuminate the intent of William Crapo, the donor of the sculpture, in memorializing the mythic whaler - to assert a traditionally white male image of work in a city where the reality of labor no longer reflected this identity.





As such, the memorial's prominence in the center of the city hides the remnants of a woman and immigrant-dominated industry that kept New Bedford afloat after whaling was no longer profitable - at great personal cost. Even the image of the whaler is historically inaccurate - despite most harpooners being of Cape Verdean or Wampanoag origin, Crapo insisted that the model for the monument be white. This fictional view of manhood also ignored the messy realities of whalemen's work and the environmental toll commercial whaling enacted on marine life.

The following works revisit the memorial, stripping it to its structure to examine its inner narratives. An accompanying series of drawings references photographs of visitors interacting with the memorial at its opening as well as photojournalist Lewis Hines' documentation of child laborers in the city's textile mills.



Deconstructing ‘global modernism’: A Search for its Alternatives

‘Global modernism’ is a constructed assumption that there can be an international style applicable to anywhere in the world irrespective of culture, religion, geographical location or level of economic development. The proposition that a universal architectural solution exists neglects the socio-political contexts in which architecture is embedded. This essay thus aims to challenge this predominant Western discourse of ‘global modernism’ and argues that the invention and propagation of this concept are fundamentally colonialistic and imperialistic. Through examining case studies of Hassan Fathy’s New Gourna Project, Cockrell’s Sezincote House, and scientific-rationalism in colonial India, the following text aims to examine the complexities and specificities of the socio-economic, geopolitical contexts of architecture and address the alternatives to ‘global modernism.’

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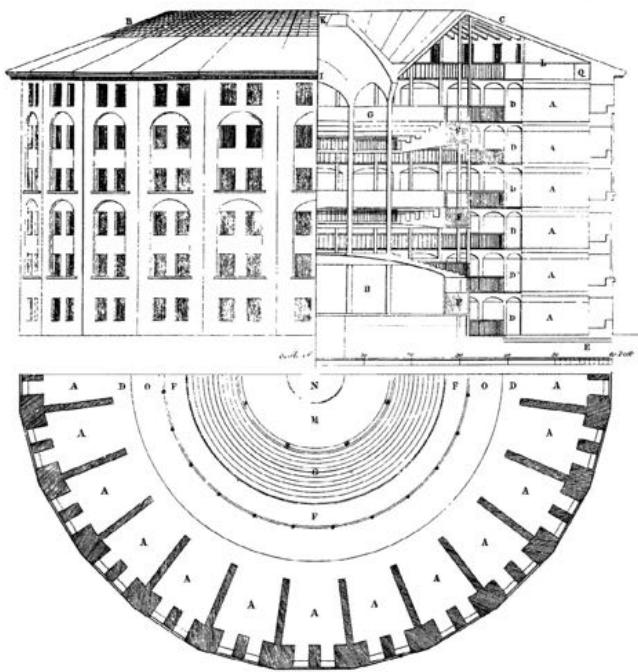
Hassan Fathy’s New Gourna Village is a sustainable residential rehabilitation project constructed during 1945-1948. The design of the village embodied the architect’s aspiration of finding a unique modern Egyptian identity. In the midst of rapid urbanization and the public’s infatuation with modern-looking Western-style architecture, Fathy’s intentional adoption of Egyptian Revivalist style, reference to traditional crafts and use of local, sustainable building materials became an explicit rejection of a monolithic narrative of ‘modernity.’ In “Chorale, Man, Society, and Technology,” Fathy laments the ugly and coarse mimicry of modernist architecture in the rural area and criticizes such insertion of architecture into an alien environment as disorienting,

invasive and disruptive of local people’s everyday life. Meanwhile, he reconfigures the notion of ‘tradition,’ regarding it not as a static know-how that only belongs to the past but as a constantly evolving entity of which creative reinterpretations can be incorporated into the construction of “a new Egyptian architecture.” Such ideas were manifested in his design and construction process of the New Gourna Village. Fathy showed sensitivity to specific needs of individual households, utilized traditional Nubian-vaulting techniques, and cost-effective local mudbrick materials, and mobilized the residents to participate in the construction process. Although the result of the construction is extremely simple, clean and modern in appearance, the underpinning historical perspective and regionalist approach by Fathy was altogether an attempt of searching for an alternate modernity in essence. Therefore, the New Gourna Project exemplified a conscious resistance to ‘global modernism’ and an expression of national identity or subjectivity in the context of colonialism and imperialism.



While the example of New Gourna offers invaluable insights into the colonial experience with modernity, the discussion of Cockerel’s Sezincote House in “The Cultural Display of Empire in Country Houses” provides a different narrative of modern architecture from the colonizer’s perspective. Sezincote House was an overt expression of orientalism, exoticizing and ‘othering’

Indian culture. This colonialistic attitude further unfolds the fundamental falseness of the imperial construction of ‘global modernism,’ a deceiving rhetoric that suggests universal aesthetics and impartial representations of modernity despite the fact that the foundation of those aesthetics and representations were already tinted with and thwarted by colonialism. Sezincote House in Gloucestershire was the only English country house that unequivocally embraced an Indian style. The architecture was a synthesis of European neo-classical elements, picturesque ideals and elements derived from Hindu and Mughal architecture. It featured a central onion dome surrounded by four chattris on each corner of the main clock, a chajja that ran around the facade on three sides, and a tented pavilion that was linked to the main house by a colonnade which served as Cockrell’s bedroom. The garden is emblematic of the idea of the ‘picturesque’, drawing references to rolling Indian landscapes and temples. The borrowing of Indian architectural motifs and en-framing of Indian vistas reified the process of objectification and reduction of the culture ‘other’. The methodology of ‘othering’ culminated in the 19th-Century as English country houses adopted museum-like settings and exhibited imperial acquisitions with labels and detailed descriptions, which reinforced the colonial mindset of reducing the cultural other to objects that can be collected and studied in a scientific-rational way.



Such rationalism epitomized in 19th-Century English country houses was also manifested in many PWD projects in post-Rebellion colonial India. Architecture design in India in the second half of the 19th-Century was dominated by highly utilitarian civil and military engineers who were more concerned with order, efficiency, and reestablishing colonial authority than style or aesthetic. Considering that at the time architecture was predominantly used as an institutional tool for the colonial regime to control the Indian people, a more emphatic conclusion can be made that the so-called ‘global modernism’ was essentially ‘colonial modernism’ in the context of post-Rebellion India. Two examples that stood out were the of the penal reform of which the goal was to create self-disciplined colonial agents through behavioral and cognitive engineering, the latter was an innovation of environmental control that aimed to ensure the well-being of colonial rulers and, consequently, more effective colonial governance. Therefore, modern architecture in post-Rebellion India was always intertwined with colonial interests and India’s unique socio-political contexts. The complexity and distinctness within thus shall not be occluded by the overgeneralizing and sanitizing concept of ‘global modernism.’

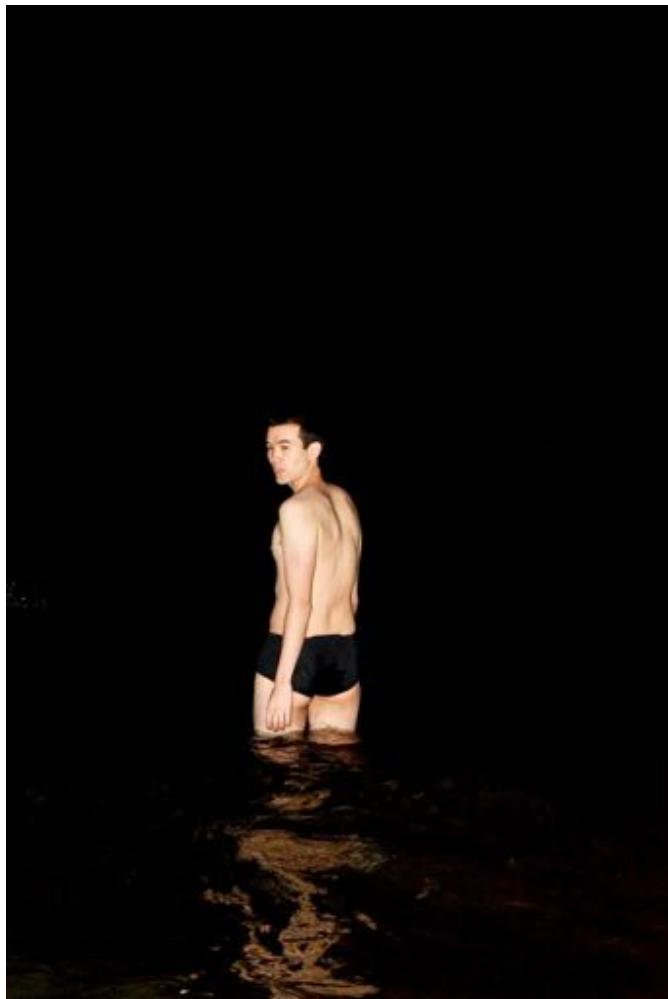
The case studies of New Gourna, Sezincote House, and colonial India’s technical-rationalism provide alternative and more diverse ways of thinking about modernism in architecture and encourage sensitivity to local histories, politics, and cultural identities. After all, the question about ‘global modernism’ is, in essence, a question about the framework. It is important to realize that this plausible concept of universal applicability is, in fact, a construction by hegemonic Western (colonial) discourses and ought to be questioned and challenged constantly.

Nathan Miller

Something Like a Garden

Something Like a Garden explores the confusing middle ground of growing up biracial in a predominantly white community and the need to create a sense of space through self mythology.

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