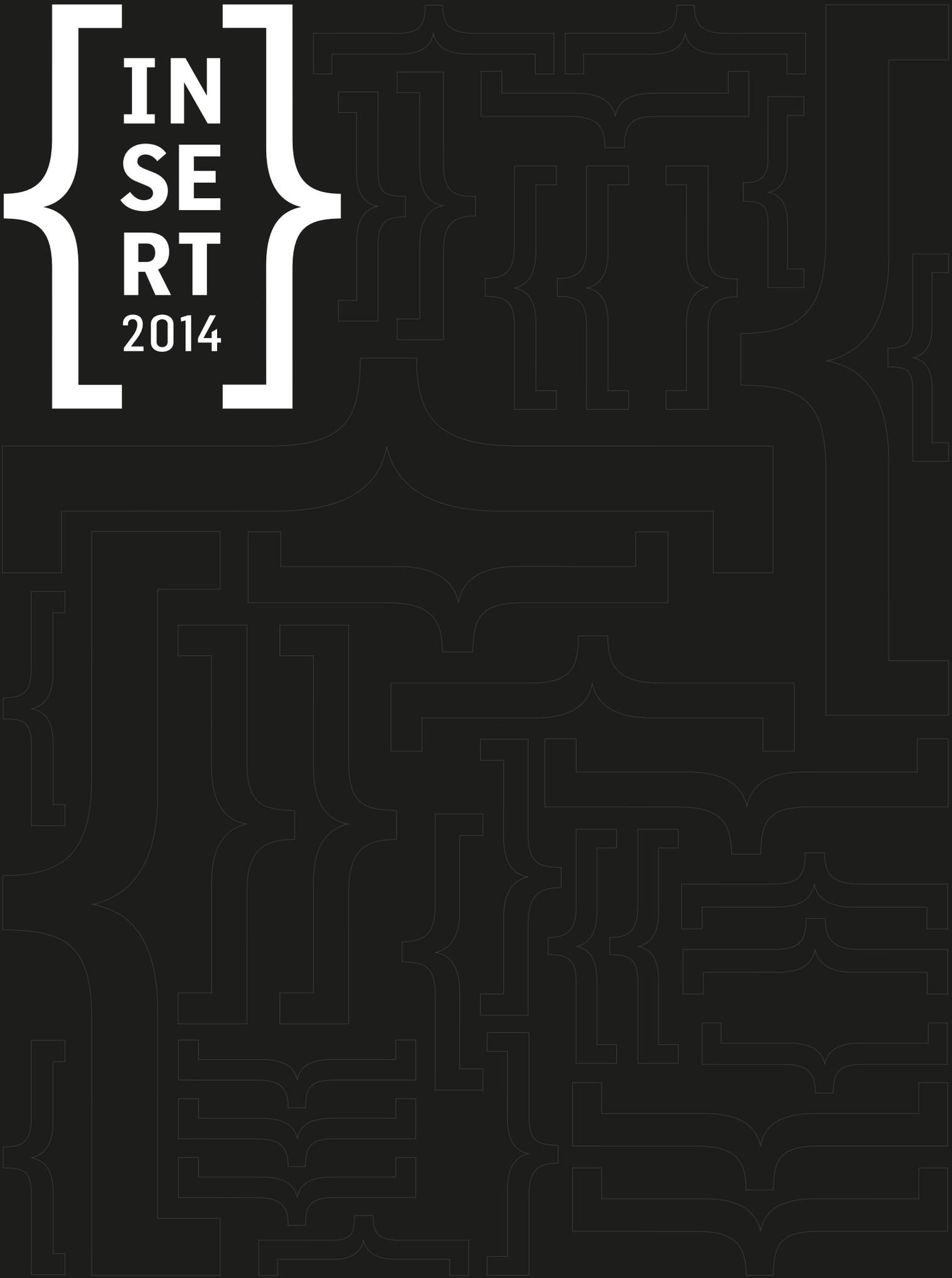


**IN
SE
RT
2014**





It has been a long, fairly labyrinthine journey to INSERT2014. The impulse to put on an international contemporary art exhibition in Delhi began to crystallise towards the end of 2011, when I began to research the idea during visits to India. The obvious goal of the exhibition was to catalyse a dynamic inter-play between different protagonists: emerging, mid-career and established artists, the international art crowd, the city of Delhi, the Indian cultural community. The deeper question we wished INSERT to posit was whether a contemporary art exhibition could have something meaningful to say about the important social issues unfolding in the India of today. Could INSERT explore the role of the artist as interpreter and not only as creator of aesthetic pleasures? To encourage this examination, we have built into the project extensive workshops, discussions, public programming and outreach to universities and schools.

In the fabric of modern-day Indian democracy, one of the most important threads is freedom of expression. Our artistic community, including writers and poets, are the keepers of the flame of this vital freedom; they make sure it burns bright and dances in myriad ways across our land. This is why the Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation considers our artists to be amongst our living national treasures.

INSERT2014 is an experiment and a manifestation of that most human of qualities: play. I wish for those who grace us with their attendance and participation, to come away stimulated, entertained, perhaps provoked, and with more questions than answers. Hopefully, ripples will be set in motion and fan across the city and sweep back again, long after the show has been dismantled and all involved have disbanded.

I take great pleasure in introducing this publication as a document of the depth of artistic expression embedded in INSERT2014, and a record of what took place that month in that year, in the city of Delhi.

Azad Shivdasani
Chairman,
Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation
London, January 7, 2014

INSERT: Draft for an Operating Manual, Score for Choreography, Plan for an Exhibition] Raqs Media Collective

1. ENTER.

Something that could be a stupa, if it were not an UFO, is transfixed in the indecision between lifting off into space and burrowing into the earth's core. This is the way the present, the contemporary, inserts itself between history and hope. It is earthen. It is a house that mimics the sky on the inside and a mound on the outside.

It is capacious, stranded and mysterious.

Is this a reliquary, a time machine, a silo, or an observatory?

Where does it come from? Where is it headed?
What, for now, does it contain? How do we work it? What does it do?

The structure maintains its cryptic stance while yielding what appears to be an improvised operating manual for its occupation, or perhaps these are just suggestions for movement within its architecture.

There are no answers but a door does stand open. There is a parcours.

Welcome.

2. CIRCULATE.

There is a passage, there are two levels, and three concentric rings that open into each other with six gates, then twenty four apertures, and then another four portals. The flower of time divides.

The singular passage of any century.

The four seasons of a year.

The trinity of the past, the present and the future.

The twin faces of midnight and high noon.

The six watches of night.

The twenty four notches of day.

Find your figure of time.

Different circumferences share a common centre; their plural radii find a means to resolve to a point that stands at the cross-roads of competing trajectories.

Should we, for instance, give names to the twenty four portals of the central ring, spreading them open like stations in a book of hours?

Choose your radius.

3. COUNT, AND BE COUNTED.

The Anomalous: that which makes something impossible to classify or to organise into categories of convenience.

The Political: that which breaches the consensus that carries the day, whichever day.

The Immanent: that which lurks just beneath the surface of whatever exists, the secret adversary.

The Prescient: that which folds the future into the fabric of the present.

The Haunting: that which refuses to let the past lie low.

The Spider: that which spins its essence into a web and then goes foraging.

The Vigilant: that which stands alert between episodes of amnesia.

The Mortal: that which dies but refuses to end.

The Enduring: that which continues but knows no beginning.

The Contingent: that which risks itself as wager, every time it appears.

The Donkey: that which stands its ground and bears its load.

The Generative: that which sustains through abundance over and against what it loses through deficit.

The Rocket: that which takes us far, into orbits of our choosing.

The Luminous: that which blazes or glimmers but does not blind.

The Dark: that from which all shadows are mined.

The Weave: that warp and weft of protagonists and witnesses.

The Demolition: that wreck, that debris, that executive order.

4. WANDER.

Evidently, there are many routes in and out of the maze of our time.

Not all of them need go through the toll-gates of greed and cynicism, or the check-points of guilt and rage. We need not be caught forever between the supermarket and the penitentiary, between having to choose between the stroke of the auctioneer's gavel and the whiplash of the petitioner's complaint.

Instead, we could learn to speak in tongues, in other voices: in the whisper of sedition and heresy, in the songs sung in pleasure in spite of injury, in forensic diction and visionary stammer, in measured timbres and ecstatic tones, in echolalia and laughter. Even in silence, and always in poetry.

This calls for wandering. Whoever wanders—listening, reading, thinking, staying true to form and feeling—will stay the course. You could walk through, up or down, and around, this way, and that. Even as busy spiders spin threads for visitors who may lose their way. A staircase along the circumference half spirals inward and upward, making room when necessary, for the invocation, appearance and descent of an avant-garde. Another staircase, skirting the outer wall performs a rear-garde maneuver by leading up to a locked landing, insisting that not every call for ascent will open doors.

There are places to rest and things to read in the labyrinth. There are signs taken for wonders, and wonders disguised as punctuations inserted between signs. There are maps and post-mortems, there is light and darkness, there are life-forms and death-masks, there are incidents and insurgencies, there is bondage and freedom. There is even a beast of burden, should you choose to load it with what you find on your way. There are *aide-mémoires*, there is *déjà-vu*, there is prophecy, there are take-aways and memories.

The Abandon: that willingness to let go, that delight and that dereliction.

The Proposition: that seduction of the present by what it might yet be.

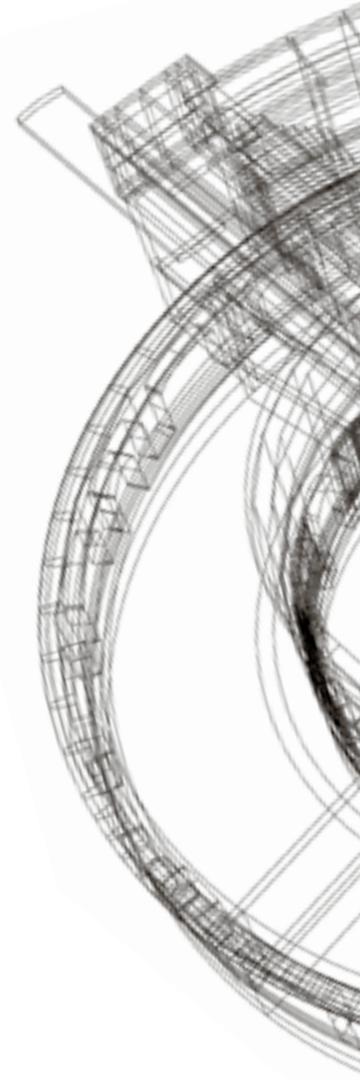
The Wake: that watchful gathering that maintains a vigil even as it remembers.

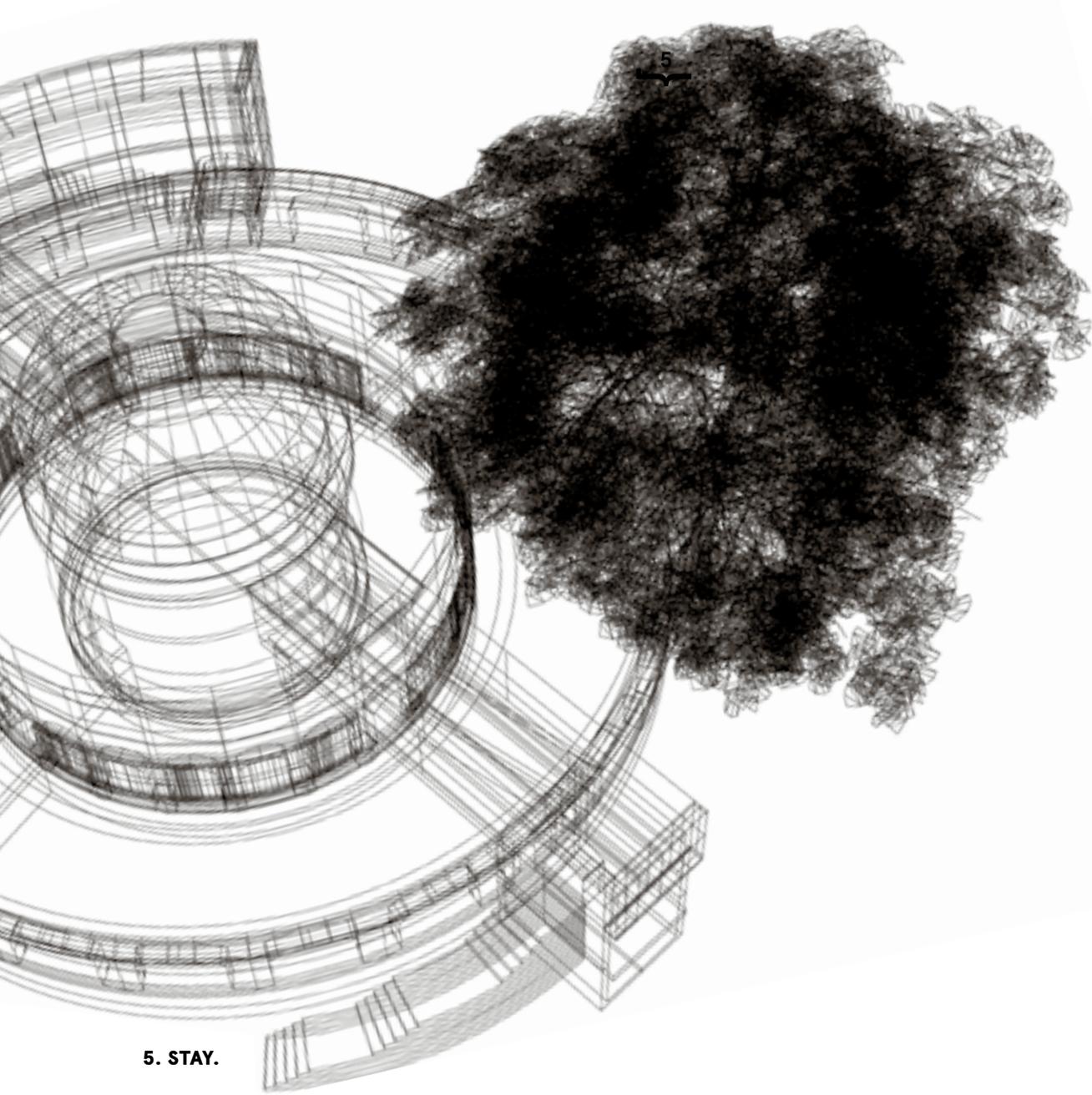
The Bound: that knot, that tightness of alertness and attention that binds the senses to their perils and pleasures.

The Common: that thing between us all, the air we breathe, the street-corner, the agora, the passage.

The Ground: this city, this earth, this time, here, now.

The Model: that which is new, which anticipates, which rehearses, which prepares the ground.





5. STAY.

Every move, be it an advance, a retreat, side-step or a repetition, is laden with its own assorted cargo of 'futures'. Some of these 'futures', or promises, come unstuck and drift away into a temporal limbo, stuck between the tenses like odd bits of floating grammatical anomalies. They are neither 'would be-s', nor 'have been-s', but luminous 'could be-s'. We could call these lapidary anomalies the spectral residues of the anticipation of 'futures' that never quite arrived, and the 'present' that passes us by, without remorse or recrimination. They flirt with mortality and dance with eternity. They are the double-agents, the *namak-haraams* of time.

Each of these tangents in time is related to every other reality that is potential, and the one that matures into a 'credible' tomorrow, is continually indebted to the others it left behind in its wake. No one 'future' can exhaust all the promises of tomorrow. The renewal of tomorrow requires a return to the aborted and abandoned futures in the past, and the cultivation of a continuous speculation about what else the present could be. Time needs to cut into time, and to fold into time, all the time.

For a breach to happen, there must be continuity.
Every moment must stay, must live before it exits.

6. EXIT. THEN RETURN. THEN ENTER AGAIN.

New Delhi
January 1, 2014

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New Models for Common Ground

**Re-imagining the Question of
Cultural Infrastructure**

An INSERT2014 project

**Open call for speculations from artists,
curators, scholars, writers & poets,
architects, cultural practitioners, activists,
culture researchers, critics, media
practitioners and engaged art enthusiasts
for the re-imagination of spaces and
cultural infrastructure in Delhi.**

Raqs Media Collective invites proposals for the imaginative rethinking of unused public spaces and cultural infrastructure in Delhi. The purpose of this

exercise is to discover the city's potential for being hospitable to an exciting life of culture and contemporary art through the imaginative re-usage and adaptation of existing spaces and infrastructure. This call hopes to act as a provocation for artists and cultural practitioners to discover and propose ideas that can be leveraged, adapted and transformed to lay the foundations for a distinct and dynamic art and culture scene.

From Rabindra Rangshala in the Ridge, to the Dolls Museum at ITO, and the Delhi Public Library opposite Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi is full of spaces that await intervention and innovative usage. This call seeks hypothetical propositions, detailed plans and programmes, precise ideas for intervention as well as poetic invocations of latent and potential possibility for these spaces.

The curatorial intention of this call and project is to find and articulate fresh ways of thinking around a wide selection of spaces, the range of which includes public libraries, auditoriums, and community centers, amongst others. The aim is to inaugurate a rethinking of 'place' in contemporary art as an active presence, and the foregrounding of the poetics of usage as a vital axis of art's inhabitation with life and its potential.

While each such site comes laden with distinct narratives waiting to be considered, our interest is to fuel ideas towards reanimating these spaces and their practices of use beyond the paradigms of historicity, heritage, nostalgia and obsolescence. What interests us is the future life of culture in the city; not a lament over the loss of the past. We are looking for intriguing, varied responses that explore history without

being beholden to it, navigate the tension between the public, private and personal facets of a space, and re-write the rules, protocols and limitations of the way in which the institution makes itself present to the city. The proposals should be experimental, audacious, realistic, yet un-restrained. Contributors are invited to think ambitiously so that a daring set of proposals about how the cultural life of the city may be re-imagined can animate public discussion in an exciting way.

The selected proposals will be invited for further conversation on the possibility of realisation, with India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore, over the coming years.

SUBMISSIONS will feature as one of the axes of the international contemporary art exhibition – INSERT2014 – curated by Raqs Media Collective, and presented by Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation, with support from Goethe Institute, New Delhi, that will open at the Mati Ghar, IGNCA from 31 January, 2014.

The project *New Models for Common Ground* is made possible with the generous support of India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore, India.

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SHANKAR'S INTERNATIONAL DOLLS MUSEUM

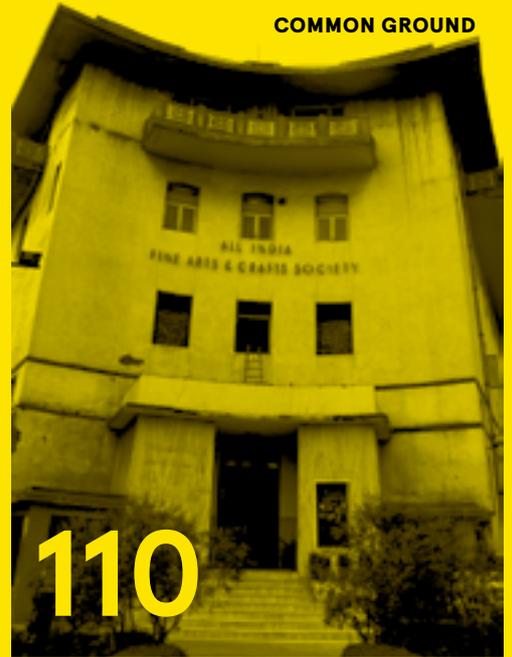
Nehru House, Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi

Set up by renowned political cartoonist, K. Shankar Pillai (1902-1989) and housed within the Children's Book Trust, it has one of the largest collections of costume dolls in the world. Fully functional since 1965, it began with around 1000 dolls, adding another 5000 between 1965 and

1987, with a vast majority received as gifts. Today it has around 6,500 exhibits from almost eighty-five countries. Carefully maintained, the museum hosts educational and outreach activities for its visitors.

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COMMON GROUND



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ALL INDIA FINE ARTS & CRAFTS SOCIETY

1 Rafi Marg, New Delhi

Founded in 1928, it was one of the first approachable and artist-friendly cultural institutions in the country. After 1947, it worked as the liaison office for cultural exchanges with other countries, as at that time India didn't have an official cultural department. Since then, it has expanded its base with camps, exhibitions, theatre events and awards. Currently under renovation, it houses four functional galleries that are let out for exhibitions.

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RABINDRA RANGSHALA

Central Ridge Forest, Near Hanuman Mandir, Karol Bagh, Delhi

In the 1960s, it hosted film screenings, plays and performances. It was also the site of a massively successful Apache Indian concert in June 1993. All activities ceased in 1996, when the Ridge was declared a Reserve Forest, effectively making the Rangshala an "encroachment". It falls under the care of three separate administrative bodies: All India Radio, the Ridge Management Board (headed by the Delhi Chief Secretary) and the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Scarcily big and abandoned, it can seat 8,000 spectators. Its 100 x 68 ft stage can be modified in three different dimensions and the seating capacity can be reduced to 2,000 by cordoning off the flanks.

AKSHARA THEATRE

11 B, Baba Kharak Singh Marg, Rajiv Chowk, New Delhi

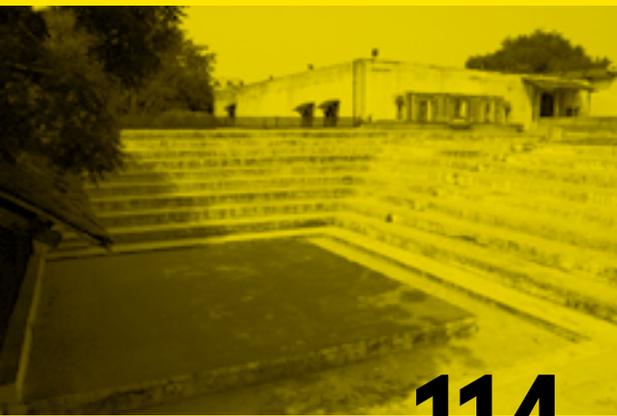


Founded in 1971 by Gopal Sharman, and registered as a society in 1980, Akshara Theatre has been considered important for theatre and performance. Centrally located in Delhi, it has four usable spaces for performances, and also a library, shooting and editing studios with the latest digital equipment, workshops for set design, metal work and stone sculpture, a studio for graphic design and classrooms where performing arts are taught to children and young people. The theatre can also be hired for private events, performances, workshops, etc.

CRAFTS MUSEUM

Bhairon Road, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

Set up over 30 years, starting from 1950s, through the effort of renowned freedom fighter, late Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, it was envisaged as a space for craftsmen from different states for continuation and preservation of traditional arts and crafts. It holds over 35,000 rare and distinctive pieces of painting, embroidery, textiles, and works of clay, stone and wood, which are housed in a building designed between 1975 and 1990 by architect Charles Correa, incorporating traditional architectural vocabulary. The central courtyard of the museum is seen as a shifting space, used by craftsmen as a studio and also for sale of their craftwork. The courtyard is flanked by an open theatre, which remains occasionally used.



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New Models for Common Ground

Re-imagining the Question of Cultural Infrastructure



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DELHI PUBLIC LIBRARY

S.P. Mukherjee Marg, Next to Chandini Chowk Metro Station, Delhi

An autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture, and governed by Delhi Library Board, it started as a small unitary library (UNESCO project, 1951). Currently, it holds a collection of over 14 lakh books in Hindi, English, Urdu, Punjabi and other Indian languages, and representing almost all subjects. It also has a Children's Library section. An interesting facet is its extended network of zonal libraries, branches and sub-branches, community libraries, deposit stations, mobile libraries (vans), Braille library etc., all over Delhi.



PALIKA BAZAAR PARK

Rajiv Chowk, New Delhi

A popular public place, it attracts the vagabond, office worker, college student and compulsive loner alike, becoming a cosmos of urban life and its fullness and diversity.

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HALL OF NATIONS

Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

Hall of Nations is one of the most daring architectural designs realised in Delhi after 1947. Built in 1972 for Asia72, it hosted fairs, celebrations and inaugurations. Of late, it has been accessible to the public mostly at the time of annually held book and trade fairs. Today, the specter of demolition haunts the Hall of Nations.

New Models for Common Ground

Re-imagining the Question of Cultural Infrastructure

B.C. ROY MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S READING ROOM & LIBRARY

Children's Book Trust, Nehru House, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi

Founded in 1967 by the renowned cartoonist, late K. Shankar Pillai, in memory of Dr. B.C. Roy, it is considered the largest library in India that is exclusively for children. It has a collection of 40,000 books on science, history, religion, mythology, literature and fiction, which are organised in three divisions according to the age groups of its readers. Very well maintained, the space stays active with painting, drawing and writing competitions.



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PEAREY LAL BHAWAN ASSOCIATION

Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi

Built over a vast area, it has an auditorium, art gallery and open theatre. Bustling with film screenings, performances, rehearsals and art exhibitions till the 90's, the auditorium has,

in the past few years, been housing course lectures and business meetings. The amphitheatre, which stands separated from the busy main road by a wall, is occasionally used. The venue can host cultural events of any kind, albeit within specific regulations outlined by the association, and with prior permission from Delhi Police Commissioner's office.

TRIVENI KALA SANGAM

205, Tansen Marg, New Delhi

The idea of starting a dance institution in Delhi was raised by Sundari K. Shridharani, a former student of Uday Shankar, in 1949. The arts complex and education centre was designed by Joseph Allen Stein. It contains four art galleries, an outdoor theatre (which is now an open gallery), and an open air sculpture gallery. It runs various arts, music and dance classes.



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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Near Mandi House Circle, Tansen Marg, New Delhi

An institution devoted to environmental education, it opened in 1978, introducing its visitors to natural history,

ecology and environment with examples from nature and aspects of conservation of forest, wildlife, land, water and air. It has a large collection of stuffed animals and birds. Apart from generating awareness through educational programmes, guided tours, film shows, workshops, publications, etc, it has recently begun engaging with present artistic practice, specifically in relation to environment.



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SKIPPER TOWER

22, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi

This disputed and unfinished 14-floor residential building stands alone and silent amongst its busy office neighbours. Its possession currently rests under the Claims Commissioner, by the order of the Supreme Court of India.

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PLUS

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- 113 RAIN SHELTERS, PANCHSHEEL PARK

DAYAL SINGH PUBLIC LIBRARY

1, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi

It was established in 1928 in Lahore, Pakistan, in pursuance of the will of philanthropist and social reformer of 19th Century Punjab, Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia (1848-1898). After the partition in 1947, it was established afresh in Delhi (1954). It hosts a collection of 40,000 documents (books, magazines, newspapers and others) in English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi, of Social Sciences, History, International Relations and Philosophy. It has around 9000 members, with roughly 100 users daily.



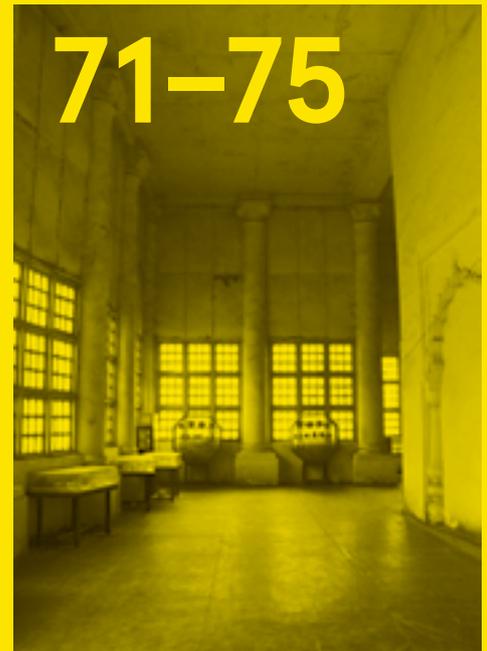
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PARKING AREA, NEHRU PLACE

Nehru Place, New Delhi

A major information technology hub of South Asia, Nehru Place is thronged by thousands of visitors every day. Its main commercial district was built in the early 1980s, and consists of several multi-storied buildings that flank an enormous pedestrian

courtyard, built over an underground parking. The circular top view of this underground parking area makes it quite unique, also because of its central location in the spread-out courtyard.



DARA SHIKOH LIBRARY

Lothian Road, Mori Gate, New Delhi

Located inside the Kashmere Gate campus of Ambedkar University and maintained by the Department of Archaeology, it was built by Shah Jahan's chosen successor, Dara Shikoh, and later used as a residence by the first British Resident of Delhi, Sir David Ochterlony.

The difference between the architectural designs of the interior (Mughal) and exterior (British) can be noticed. The Archaeological Survey of India is supposed to be managing a museum of ancient artifacts in the library, which is not functional at present.

SHRIRAM CENTRE FOR ART AND CULTURE

4 Safdar Hashmi Marg, Mandi House, New Delhi

Run by the Indian National Theatre Trust established in 1958, the present building opened in the early 60's, and was designed by Shiv Nath Prasad with the help of theatre doyen, Ebrahim Alkazi, and under the supervision of industrialist Vinay Bharat Ram of Shriram Group. Its Shankar Lal Murli Dhar Auditorium has been a hub for theatre events, especially national theatre festivals. It is also a popular hangout for theatre and visual artists and art enthusiasts.



Paris, December 1993

INTERVIEW BY
HANS ULRICH OBRIST

*The first part of this interview took place
in Paris in December 1993
and the second part in Mexico City in July 2002.*

HANS ULRICH OBRIST: You said, "Basically I started to make things so that people would have to use them, which means if you want to buy something then you have to use it... It's not meant to be put like a sculpture or like another relic and looked at; and you have to use it. I found that was the best solution to the contradiction in terms of making things and not making things. Or trying to make less "things", but more useful things or more useful relationships." In terms of your idea that "it is not what you see that is important but what takes place between people," when was the first time you set up a temporary kitchen and cooked curry in a museum or gallery setting?

RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA: It was called *Untitled 1989* (...). The first food piece was displayed in a group exhibition at the Scott Hanson Gallery, which no longer exists [*Outside the Clock: Beyond Good & Elvis*, Scott Hanson Gallery, New York, 1989]. Four pedestals were blocking the passage between the entry way and the exhibition space. On these pedestals were displayed various processes of a curry being cooked, i.e., a pedestal for ingredients, a pedestal with curry cooking on a burner, a pedestal with waste products. The visitors could smell the cooking curry as they entered the space; the smell permeated through the gallery. A new pot of curry was cooked once a week. But the curry was not to be eaten.

HUO: And when was the first time that you invited "viewers" to share and taste the curry?

RT: It was for *Untitled 1992 (Free)*, in my one-person exhibition at 303 Gallery, New York. All the contents of the gallery, and even the office, were emptied out into the main exhibition space. All doors – to the office, storage rooms, cabinets, toilet, etc. – were removed from their frames to empty spaces and open out hidden spaces. The emptied-out office was then turned into a social/meeting space with two pots of curry (one red, one green) and a pot of rice, to offer the visitors for their lunch. The windows in the office also played a significant role, as inside/outside could be viewed. On display in the office were the ingredients of the meal, plus the remains

from the cooking and eating process (later becoming documentation of the situation at hand). While I had done projects earlier, in which food was cooked, it had been only for an evening, or just for the opening of the exhibition. But here, food was made continuously, through the duration of the exhibition. The gallery office space became a central meeting point and a place to rest for many regular visitors to SoHo. "(Free)" in this particular situation could signify the emptying of context/content from exhibition, to non-exhibit of place/non-place. "(Free)" could also be read as open, or simply as 'no charge' for the situation (free food).

HUO: Very quickly, you also developed more and more complex environments for these encounters. Could you tell me, for instance, about your tearoom at Exit Art in New York in 1993?

RT: It was *Untitled 1993 (The Cure)*, part of a group show called *Fever*. In response to the context of *Fever*, I built a tea tent using material the color of Thai Buddhist monks' robes: golden orange. The dimensions of the tent were made to the specifications of a Japanese tearoom: ten-by-ten-by-ten-feet. The Japanese derived this measurement from a Buddhist scripture – it is the measurement of a room in which Lord Buddha gave sermon to 40,000 monks (mind over matter). Tea plus water plus kettle plus teapots with a table and chair were set up in the tent. The door of the tent faced a window – inside the space, the exhibition was blocked out of view. Tea, being a drink of medicinal quality (and for me with cultural significance) was to become an antidote to the *Fever*, and a space for rest, contemplation, etc.

HUO: Another type of environment like this one is the one that took place this summer at the *Biennale di Venezia, (Aperto 93, 1993)*.

RT: It was *Untitled 1993 (twelve seventy one)*. "Twelve seventy one" because it was the year Marco Polo had set off to the Far East from Venice. The centerpiece to this project is an aluminum canoe – the canoe being an image of Native America – and inside the canoe

are two pots filled with water, which are being boiled – so there is water in the canoe itself. The image of boats with food being cooked in them are drawn from Thailand. And accompanying the canoe are local cafe tables and fold-out stools put out to be used by the visitors to *Aperto*. There are also Cup O’ Noodles in boxes that were shipped in from the U.S. and that were made by a Japanese company in California, and these cups of noodles were left for the visitors to help themselves to, as they are instantly cooked. This situation lasted as long as there were noodles for the viewers to consume (this was not for very long). The remains were left as evidence of the event. I had used Venice as a focus for the piece – a collage of place, mythologies (Marco Polo and the pasta from the Orient), hybrids of culture, tourism. And this also provided a possible place for rest and passage in the context of the exhibition.

Mexico City, ten years later...

HUO: Your exhibition at the Secession (Vienna, 2002) is based on Rudolf Schindler’s house in Los Angeles, built in 1921-1922; your idea was to install a reconstruction of the studio of the Schindler House in the main room of the Secession and use this as a stage for various activities: as a venue for film screenings, concerts, presentations and lectures. Your idea is to animate Schindler’s world of ideas, his concept of inside and outside in relation to the conditions of private and public spaces, but not in a nostalgic way. You are taking it as a frame for your own ideas on relationships and communities, and your characteristic conception of art as an investigation and implementation of “living well”. Do you see it as a station?

RT: I see the idea of the station in the sense of a platform where people have to come together at one point before going off to different, divergent positions again. The station is a place where, while you’re waiting, there could be an insertion of a programme into the station that the people passing through interact with.

HUO: And it’s a contemporary form of relay, like in old times when on a journey, the horses got water and travelers got food.

RT: Exactly. It is a place where you rest, but at the same time you pick up more information. But of course, it’s a different kind of absorption when you’re resting

and getting information than when you’re focusing just for the sake of getting information. But I think what’s interesting about this demonstration is a culmination of different modes of presentation of both art and non-art.

HUO: You spoke about another project of yours designed like a station in Japan.

RT: The show is at the Asahi Beer space [*Untitled 2002 (demo station No.3)*, Sumida Riverside Hall Gallery, Asahi Beer Arts Foundation, 2002]. It’s a space which is programmed; there is a list of people who come and use the space [...] I think there are also possibilities for things to happen when there is nothing happening, so that other people can come in and actually take it over and use it.

HUO: A bit like in your Whitney installation when there was nothing; you just set up musical instruments, inviting museum-goers to make impromptu jam sessions (1995 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York).

RT: Exactly. People who know that it’s there can come and use it because they know that it is there. But I think that is a way to have both possibilities of presentation, so that it is static at the same time as being active.

HUO: And an acceleration and a slowness, a new slowness.

RT: A new slowness. That’s a good idea. There has always been a discussion about speed, but there’s a speed at which you can think and a speed at which you cannot. I like the idea of always moving and thinking, not always just moving. It could be in just one place.

[...]

RT: People say to me, “Why don’t you just get an American passport?”

HUO: What is your passport?

RT: Thai. And to them I would say, it would be a lot easier for me to travel but it would also mean that I would no longer recognise the fact that I have to struggle to move around. I would rather struggle to move around, to a point where I also don’t feel I need to be anywhere. If there is a wall there, obviously there will always be people behind that wall who want me to go. But those people are going to have to recognise the fact that there is a wall and they’re going to have to deal with that.

HUO: So you have a lot of trouble at customs?

RT: Yes, generally. Every two years I have to get a new visa to be in Germany, which gives me some freedom around Europe. But I can’t go to England today – I have to go and get a visa. I can’t go to Tokyo instantly, or to America. It’s collapsing. Places that used to be free are now demanding more. It’s like Scandinavia, which used to be a much more open and free place, but now you have to have a visa to go there...

HUO: Obviously, there is a link between this “geo-political” situation and the way you are developing projects of stations. Where did this idea of the station come from? Because you haven’t used the term until recently...

RT: No, it is recent, and it came from the magazine [*oVER Magazine*]. The idea of the magazine was that it was a publishing station [*Namdee Publishing Station*, Bangkok]. I was very interested in the idea of publishing as an activity. I think publishing is a future activity, which can connect this kind of thinking to a bigger field and other structures. Publishing can be many things; it can be an object, a text, sound...

HUO: Broadcasting, like you do through the *oVER Channel*...

RT: Yes, so I wanted to move my idea of activity to publishing, and not just as an individual, but as a collective.

HUO: And where did the name *Namdee* come from?

RT: I think there was a Surrealist or Dadaist magazine called *Spleen*, and *Namdee* is Thai for spleen. But it also plays on itself because it means “clean water”. Clean water is a calming thing for Thai people, and of course, it is a place that gathers and then disperses.

HUO: And the *Station* still exists in Bangkok?

RT: Yes, the office is there. Then I was trying to use that idea of the station to move it around in relation to the magazine. The other side of the coin that I’m working on is the idea of demonstration. Even though there’s this sense of “no future”, there is a great deal of activism going on.

HUO: Not in the art world.

RT: Not in the art world, but elsewhere. And I think I’m trying to recognise that. I’ve been collecting images of lots of demonstrations.



OCCUPY WALL STREET

Images from Rirkrit Tiravanija's archive, collected from a variety of online sources, including the National Journal, LA Progressive, Reuters, AP Images, The Baltimore Sun



UNTITLED 2010

(WHO IS AFRAID OF RED, YELLOW AND GREEN)
Images from Thailand's first historical student demonstrations in 1973 and 1976 were rendered large on the walls by local Thai artists. The artists continually added to the mural with images from the protest for the duration of one month, until the wall was covered. These drawings were united with Rirkrit's signature culinary work carried out on a steel paneled floor that recorded the footprints of visitors. Three different curries were cooked and served – red, yellow and green.

UNTITLED 2011 (POLICE THE POLICE)

The installation evolved out of an ongoing series of "Demonstration" drawings, works that were sourced from photographs of demonstrations or protests, published in the International Herald Tribune. Art students from Thailand and San Francisco initially spent two weeks reproducing images on the walls of the art cave on fresh ground, as well as layering image over image. Over the next two years, the students came back periodically to add further demonstration drawings to the wall, obscuring some of the original drawings and making other areas illegible. The process was intended to continue until the wall's surface became completely black.





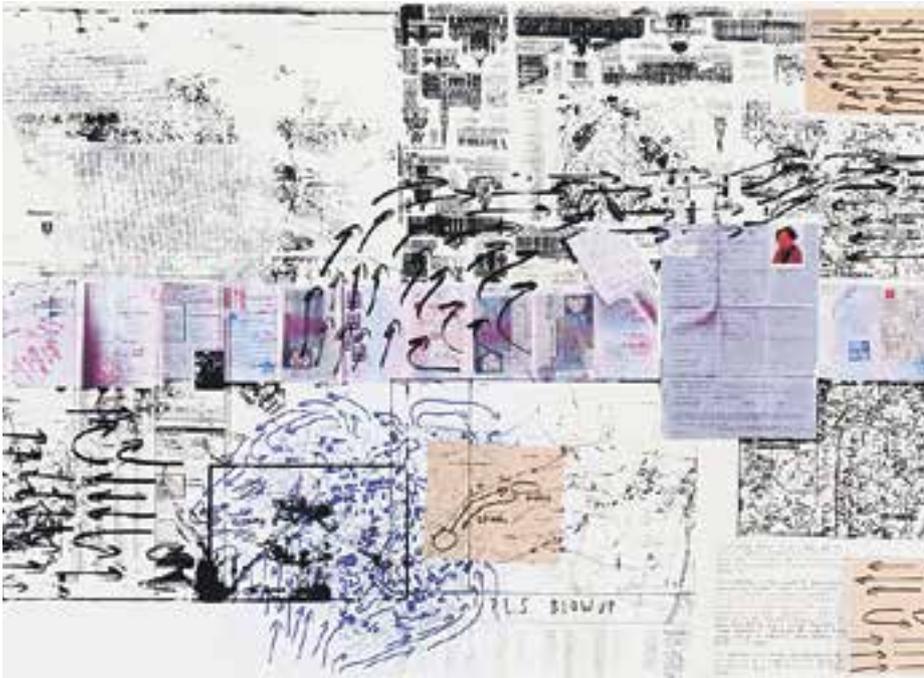
UNTITLED 2010 (ASILE FLOTTANT)

In Thailand, monks predict that their country's fate lies in water – flooding will destroy their homeland. Cities in the north whose names begin with either “Chiang” or “Lam” will be spared; all the others will be ravaged by the deluge. For his fourth solo show at Galerie Chantal Crousel, Asile Flottant, Tiravanija constructed a sketch of Le Corbusier’s boat of the same name and inserted a section of it into the gallery. Le Corbusier’s barge was designed for the Salvation Army, literally as a floating asylum meant to provide temporary overnight shelter for vagrants wandering the streets of Paris. Tiravanija’s barge, constructed in Chiang Mai, Thailand, served as a pavilion that housed both political t-shirts designed by the artist, and others that have been collected from all over the world. Visitors to the gallery could enter the pavilion and experience the rehabilitation project designed by Le Corbusier in half scale proportion to the original. Alongside the barge were a new suite of T-shirt Demonstration Drawings, made from images taken from the press where demonstrators wearing t-shirts bearing political slogans represent dissent. Part of the proceeds from the drawings benefits The Land Foundation in the village of Sampatong, Thailand.



UNTITLED 2011 (T-SHIRT, NO T-SHIRT)

A t-shirt factory, part of Tiravanija’s solo show, Fear Eats the Soul, at Gavin Brown Enterprise, New York. Taking its title from the Fassbinder film Ali – Fear Eats the Soul, a story of love bridging the existential divide, the show also featured a soup kitchen.



HUO: You have constituted an archive?

RT: Yes, it's in Bangkok. A young artist is making drawings of them. It's the way he survives – it's like a job for him. And that's also part of the Station, to connect people from outside to people there, to create an economic exchange structure. And it's particularly interesting to do so in Thailand, because there are of course lots of people going into art school trying to become artists, but there is absolutely no structure for artists.

HUO: But there is the project of having a private museum there.

RT: Well, I've been talking with this man literally for four years.

[...]

HUO: Can you tell me about your large-scale collaborative and transdisciplinary project *The Land*?

RT: First, I would say that it's not my land. It's just "The Land" itself.

HUO: When was the project initiated, and who owns "The Land"?

RT: It was in 1998. "The Land" was the merging of ideas by different artists to cultivate a place of, and for, social engagement. It's been acquired in the name of artists who live in Chiang Mai. We purchased this plot of land, in the village of Sanpatong, near Chiang Mai, and we've been trying to find a way to turn it into a collective and to have the property owned

by no one in particular. But really, that's one of the hardest things to do in Thailand. We cannot be a foundation. "The Land" is not a property.

HUO: But to what extent would you define it as a project?

RT: We don't want to have to deal with it as a presentation to the art structures, because I think it should be neutral; this is also one of the reasons why it's not about property. It was started without the concept of ownership and is cultivated using traditional Thai farming techniques. In the middle of "The Land" are two working rice fields, monitored by a group of students from the University of Chiang Mai and a local village. The harvest is shared by all the participants, and some local families suffering from the AIDS epidemic.

HUO: Though initiated not solely as structures to be designed, built, and used by artists, most of the architectural projects on "The Land" to date are being developed by artists, no?

RT: A gardener's house was built by Kamin [Lerdchaiprasert], and the collaborative Superflex developed a system for the production of biogas. There is no electricity or water, as it would be problematic in terms of land development in the area. Superflex have made experimentations to use natural renewable resources as alternative sources for electricity and gas.

HUO: "Supergas."

RT: Exactly. Superflex is using "The Land" as a lab for the development of a biogas system. The gas produced will be used for stoves in the kitchen, as well as lamps for light.

HUO: And what is your own architectural contribution to "The Land"?

RT: I designed a house based on "the three spheres of needs": the lower floor is a communal space with a fireplace; it's the place of accommodation, gathering and exchanges; the second floor is for reading, meditation and reflection on the exchanges; the top floor, for sleep.

HUO: "The Land" is something of a "massive-scale artist-run space" in which artists of all kinds are offered the chance to exceed the boundaries of their discipline, to construct works they may not have otherwise imagined, and to allow these works to be developed and experienced in an atypical way. Who are the other artists involved in the project?

RT: Tobias [Rehberger], Alicia [Framis], and Karl [Holmqvist] have worked on housing structures, Philippe and Francois are making plans for a central activity hall that will function as a biotechnology-driven hyper-plug. Their *Plug in Station* uses nature to produce the interface: it will make use of a satellite downlink and an elephant will generate the necessary power. And then [Peter] Fischli and [David] Weiss's project is a small office building for Chiang Mai, and Atelier van Lieshout developed a toilet system, Arthur Meyer constructed a system for harnessing solar power, Prachya Phintong put in place a programme for fish farming and a water library, Mit Jai In develops tree plants to be later turned into baskets.

HUO: Are people already coming to visit "The Land" for reasons other than because they have been invited to participate in the project?

RT: A lot of people are visiting it and have been staying there, even though it's not quite ready.

HUO: So it's already functioning as a station...

Detail from
UNTITLED 2008-2011 (THE MAP
OF THE LAND OF FEELING) I-III

Icarus 13: The First Journey to the Sun

Icarus 13 is a pioneer project in Africa that gives wings to our knowledge, creativity and imagination by making use of new technologies and the appropriate tools for building a spacecraft. The mission's purpose is to land on the largest of all stars – the Sun. The dream once attempted by Icarus, so Greek mythology tells, will now become possible. We shall travel by night.

By the mid-twentieth century, Neil Armstrong had stepped on the Moon (or a moon somewhere in Hollywood). Forty years later, Mars seems closer than ever and, consequently, our dreams grow wilder and more daring. The purpose now would be to apply our knowledge of astronomy and physics to improving the future of our planet. A thorough investigation of the Sun would bring us a better understanding of the inconstant pulse of human beings and the means to better protect the Earth's ecosystem.

As a ball of fire, this odyssey to the Sun has needed imagination for its fuel. Our dream is achievable as long we stay for the period in which the Sun cools down for eight hours, allowing enough time to explore its surface before dawn. In this exploration, we will attempt to collect substances from the Sun's surface so we can have a bit of the Sun on Earth.

On Earth, we invited a number of scientists on this mission to conquer space for the first time in African history. Aiming towards that achievement, a new organisation – both state and privately sponsored – has been created.

This project is based in Luanda, Angola, where the foundations for *Icarus 13* were built. It is an 1,800 square meter base at the city's seafront that employs seventy workers, artists and engineers among the most prominent. The spaceship was built with a mix of steel and a covering of diamonds, and at its heart is a system

based on a catalyst called "SnowBall", which transforms heat into cold in unmeasured speed. The spaceship is powered by solar energy, which gives *Icarus 13* total autonomy in orbit.

The flight crew is composed of two astronauts and two beautiful air stewards who were trained – one year before the launch – in the desert of Namibe, where a base for the spaceship crew is located. They have been exposed to high temperatures inside a machine called "Sahara", developed especially for this project in order to equip the human being with a high tolerance for extreme temperatures. A special suit was also developed based on the same SnowBall technology. It is called the "CoolSuit" and it is equipped with tanks filled with Budweiser that gives them support in the heat of the odyssey.

The experimental launch of *Icarus 13* happened after two years of hard work and deep investigation. The launch occurred at 6:00 pm on May 25, 2006. It was a moment of great tension, but every problem was sorted out and we finally had Icarus flying

towards the Sun. The spaceship reached the Sun after fifteen days of traveling the 149.5 million kilometer distance, with the crew onshore working for fourteen hours a day towards a dream that was closer than ever. At 10:00 pm the spaceship landed on the photo-sphere of the Sun. The investigation of the Sun's surface took five hours and particles from the photosphere were collected, for observation in our laboratory. According to the astronauts' description, the Sun has the most beautiful night.

This first mission accomplished, we plan to launch the first solar tourist flight within five years; duly equipped with ultraviolet sun block and sunglasses that are dark enough. The profits from the first solar tourist journey will support the continuation of our scientific investigation into discovering more about the Sun and its effects on Planet Earth.

To be continued...

Africa Aims for the] Final Frontier

BY
AMAN SETHI

The space shuttle *Icarus 13*, with its slender spires and massive flared base, is parked by the seafront a few blocks from downtown Luanda, the capital of Angola.

But the shuttle will never leave the oil-rich west African country for the weightless serenity of space – *Icarus 13* is not really a space ship, it is a mausoleum, an art project, a constructivist gesture in concrete.

“My idea for *Icarus 13* has a lot to do with the idea of celebration, but at the same time, the failure of many post-independent African nations,” wrote Kiluanji Kia Henda, the Angolan artist behind *Icarus 13*, in an e-mail.

Mr. Kia Henda took photographs of iconic buildings around Luanda and recast them as components of an utterly imaginary pan-African space mission: an abandoned building was photographed to look like an astronomy observatory; the Soviet-funded mausoleum of Antonio Agostinho Neto, Angola’s first President and Kremlin ally, became *Icarus 13* – a spaceship that would take an all-African crew on a fantastical journey to the sun.

“The misery of many African societies forces us to be submitted to the present and basic issues,” said Mr. Kia Henda. “For me it is also important to find a new approach on the reading of African contemporary creation.”

Last week, a gathering of Communication Ministers in Khartoum considered a proposal not dissimilar from Mr. Kia Henda’s art: if realised, AfriSpace will be a pan-African space agency committed to “promote, for exclusively peaceful purposes, cooperation among African states in space research.”

The announcement triggered a wave of chatter on social networks with many, predominantly western, commentators implying that African governments could better serve their citizens by investing in anti-poverty measures. Yet, much like Mr. Kia Henda’s art, the continent’s policymakers believe they must think

beyond the immediacy of the present and support transformational technology.

“A pan-African space programme that is well aligned to bring immense benefit to the needs of the continent will have significant economic impact,” said Vanashree Maharaj, spokesperson for the South African National Space Agency (Sansa), adding that countries too poor to invest in space technologies would benefit from access to satellite data to improve environmental resource and disaster management, and could contribute to scientific knowledge.

Apart from the absence of the sort of detailed geological and climatic data that satellites could provide, African nations are also hamstrung by some of the world’s most expensive yet rudimentary telecommunication infrastructure.

At present, the entire continent has less bandwidth than Norway; almost all of which comes from 20-odd communication satellites, positioned over Africa, that are owned by non-African companies. “Space technologies...provide commercial opportunities and strategic advantages for a tiny minority of countries controlling them,” claims an AfriSpace working paper.

Space technologies can be divided into the rocket science needed to put a satellite in space, and the earth station know-how necessary to make full use of the satellite once it is in orbit.

“No African nation has the ability to launch a satellite even though Africa has a massive advantage having land on the equator, meaning lower costs for getting into orbit,” said Brad Inggs, CEO of Orbital Horizon, a South African company investing in commercial space flight and space advocacy. Launching from equatorial sites, Mr. Inggs said, could result in fuel savings of up to 25 per cent when compared to launch-pads further north. Mr. Inggs incidentally, has challenged the AU’s use of the term AfriSpace, insisting this “is a violation of copyright and IP law”. He said the name AfriSpace has been in operation with Orbital Horizon/African

FROM
The Hindu, September 14, 2012
<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/africa-aims-for-the-final-frontier/article3893625.ece>



Space Institute “since early 2009, before any mention of it by the AU”.

At present, countries like Ghana, South Africa, and Nigeria are investing in ground stations rather than rockets. While Ghana has set up the Ghana Space and Technology Centre that hopes to become a regional focal point for remote sensing, meteorological and communication technologies, Nigeria launched three satellites last year. The NigComSat-1R communication satellite was built with Chinese support, while a British company built the NigeriaSat-2 and NigeriaSat-X imaging satellites. All three were launched from foreign launch pads.

Rather than each country investing in its own programmes, Michael Afful, spokesperson for Ghana’s Space Generation Advisory Council, believes that a pan-African approach “will allow for the sharing of risks and costs and ensure the availability of skilled and sufficient human resources. It will also ensure a critical size of geographical area and population required... for some space applications.”

Yet, the greatest obstacles to AfriSpace could be political and institutional rather than technological, says Chandrashekar

Srinivasan who worked at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at a time when many questioned the premise of a developing country like India investing in space research.

“A number of detailed cost benefit studies have indicated that the benefits of the [Indian space] programme far outweigh the costs,” said Prof. Chandrashekar, now a Professor of Corporate Strategy and Policy at the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore. “Africa as a whole is a viable entity for a space programme, [but] it is difficult to get a group of countries at different stages of development and with different capabilities and internal needs to work together.”

While a lot of the technology can now be bought off the shelf rather than built from scratch, Prof. Chandrashekar believes the interface between technology and good governance is the most critical infrastructure. “This aspect is pretty bad even in India today,” he said.

If it is to succeed, AfriSpace must build institutions to leverage scientific infrastructure into development gains, or metaphorically risk becoming a mausoleum like *Icarus 13*.

Two things are vital: the ability to write and know one’s history, and the ability to plan one’s own future. By not obeying a temporal rule, I create the possibility for a utopian future to be projected, so that it may sometimes interfere with the legacy of the past.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, in an interview with Ligia Afonso, originally published in Henda’s catalog of BES Photo 2011, a co-edition: Banco Espírito Santo/Museu Colecção Berardo, Lisbon, 2011.

Where is Everybody?]

FILIPA RAMOS
asks
TOMÁS SARACENO

WHAT IS SPACE?

What I ask myself is, what is there before space, and time? And what is that moment of singularity when everything came into being, that quantum foam which is a bubbling and sparkling space? On YouTube, there are some videos that show what happens when you put corn flour on a speaker; it's incredible, the flour assumes strange forms with the vibration of sound—similar to Paul Davie's drawing that I used for *On Space Time Foam* at HangarBicocca (2012)—it creates spheres that seethe and break like membranes. I conceive space as a tympanum, a membrane that allows you to listen because it vibrates. The universe could be a membrane, somehow close to what we had at that show: multiple layers of membranes vibrating, like one-dimensional, flat universes. If one layer touches another, they make space and time collapse and form a black hole. String theoreticians have speculated that the Big Bang—the origin of our known cosmos—emerged from two gigantic membranes that crashed into one another, sparking the expansion of space and matter.

WHAT IS WEIGHT?

In an astrophysical context I would call it mass, which is what wraps and shapes space and time. Mass is always relative. When you do a parabolic flight, the plane remains in free fall and you weigh nothing! According to Einstein, in the same way that a large ball placed on an elasticated cloth stretches the fabric and causes it to sag, so planets and stars warp space-time. A marble moving along a cloth will be drawn towards the ball, as the Earth is to the Sun, but not fall into it as long as it keeps moving. That is what was happening at HangarBicocca: if a very big person entered, the membrane sank. If there were five persons very close together, it was not easy for them to get out of there because their weight pushed them down, which is a sort of sociological black hole. So I am trying to weave cosmic and sociological waves with the help of the concept of proxemics as developed by the anthropologist Edward T. Hall.

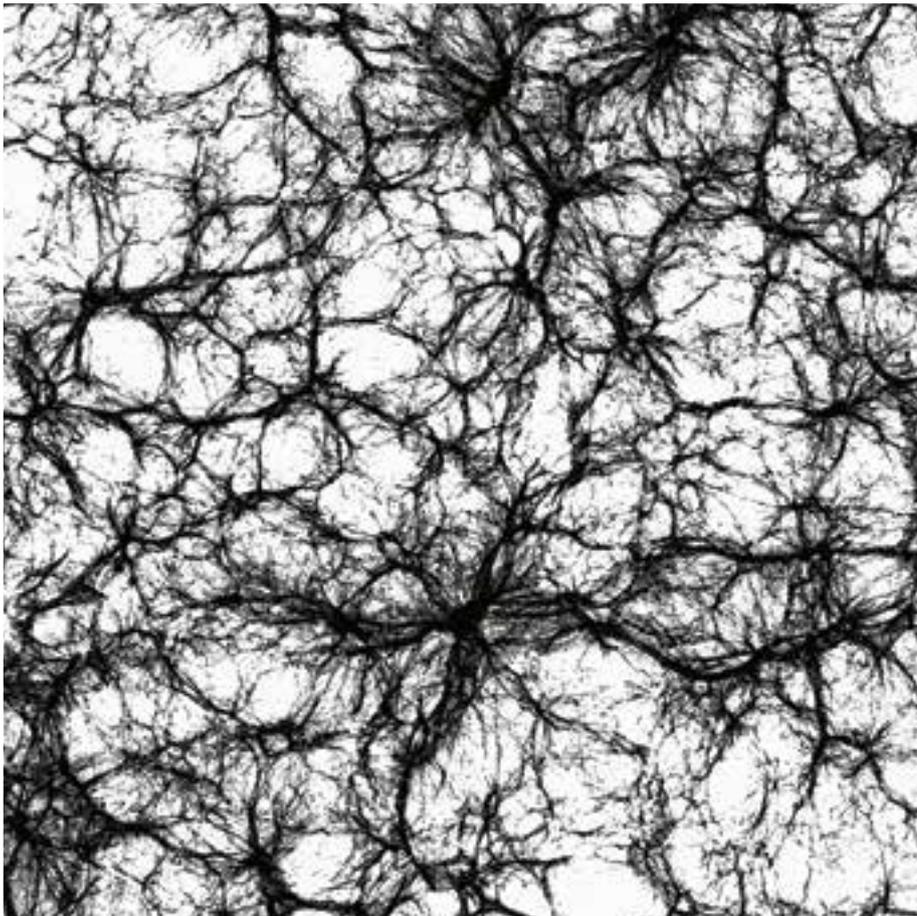
WHAT IS GRAVITY?

To continue with proxemics, imagine a room full of people where suddenly one of them receives a very

important nomination. From that moment onwards, the distance that you had talking with him grows and space is formed between you and him. That is what proxemics does: it analyses how space is conditioned and measured according to our knowledge and cultural background. *On Space Time Foam* included a physical demonstration of how individuals form space by relating to each other. Remember this is a lasagne-like structure, with no space between its sheets. When you go in, the weight of your body forms space by stretching and opening the material as you transit. It is difficult to picture a more co-related and co-dependent space than that one! Up there, any of my movements will condition yours and those of everybody else.

WHAT IS RHYTHM?

It's when something sounds good, even when you don't know what it is. It's what happens in poetry, when you read something and it has a good cadence. It is about alternation and repetition, marked by the regulated succession of opposite elements, the dynamics of the strong and weak beat, the played sound and the inaudible but implied pause, the long and short note. The Fermi paradox illustrates the contradiction between the high probability of the existence of life in outer space and our lack of contact with it. Enrico Fermi is famous for exclaiming: "Where is everybody?" inquiring about the whereabouts of everyone in the universe. Perhaps we have never managed to have any contact with anyone because we never managed to play a unison musical piece. I have been talking with Bruno Latour about collaborating in a project for a theatre play he is doing in Toulon. I thought of transforming all the nets and spheres of the Venice Biennale work, *Galaxy Forming Along Filaments, Like Droplets Along the Strands of a Spider's Web*, in strings, in a huge collective instrument ready to be played. Let us invent an instrument that all the humans on the planet can play at the same time, so that when you play one string it reverberates in all the other strings. That will tune us all. When we are able to produce a harmony as a species then maybe somebody else will hear us. It is like what was happening at the HangarBicocca; I am trying to make people engage and tune with each other.



COSMIC FILAMENTS
2013

WHAT IS DISPLACEMENT?

Stephen Hawking tells a beautiful story for understanding displacement. He recounts how “a few years ago the city council of Monza barred pet owners from keeping goldfish in curved fishbowls”, explaining that it is cruel to keep fish in a bowl because the curved sides give the fish a distorted view of reality. Aside from the measure’s significance to the poor goldfish, the story raises an interesting philosophical question: How do we know that the reality we perceive is true? The goldfish is seeing a version of reality that is different from ours, but can we be sure it is any less real? For all we know, we too may spend our entire lives staring out at the world through a distorting lens. Displacement is like being a fish inside a bowl.

WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE?

Do you know that most spiders are blind? They perceive the world through vibrations. They also do something called ballooning: they hang from a tree and when the wind is strong enough they take off! They can travel very long distances and cross entire continents. It must be amazing, to be blind and to fly above the sea on a balloon! I like to think of architecture as a computer system, as the composition of a poem. Architecture not only as building houses but also as a way of organising and understanding something that is not exclusively related to humans.

WHAT IS UTOPIA?

It is a constant necessity. It can also be another dimension, as when you sleep, which is also a necessity because everyone needs to sleep. You spend one third of your life in another dimension, dreaming. Sometimes you wake up and had an awful nightmare, but others you had a beautiful dream that you want to follow. When you are awake you have to make sure that you have the necessary persistence and resistance to make it happen.

WHAT IS DESIRE?

The mother of the skydiver Felix Baumgartner published a drawing of his, done when he was five, in which he depicted himself jumping with a parachute. He had a huge desire and he managed to fulfil it! That shows how you can commit yourself to your dreams and do it, even in an unconscious way. We thought it would be fantastic if after showing *On Space Time Foam*, it became a floating biosphere above the Maldives. Since I am the inaugural Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST), maybe together with them and Pirelli, we can make flying cities take off once more.

FROM Domus, Issue no. 962, October 2012, Italy
<http://www.domusweb.it/en/interviews/2012/10/29/where-is-everybody-.html>

Weaving Webs

TINA DI CARLO
speaks with
TOMÁS SARACENO

TINA DI CARLO: Why do you like bubbles?

TOMÁS SARACENO: (Smile) You know I like sparkling water.

TDC: Yes, me too. Effervescent. My favourite.

TS: Do you know Barth?

TDC: Roland Barthes?

TS: No, Friedrich Barth, on spiders. *A Spider's World: Senses and Behaviour*. Do you know there's a spider that spins a web and leaves a bubble at the same time? Do you know it's a spider's world? Do you know what Borges says?

TDC: Do you like Borges? What does he say?

TS: I have an ambivalent relationship with him. He had a series of stories that he would tell. Do you know that he became progressively blind, that somehow it seems this blindness enabled the fictional materialism, the tales, labyrinths, fictions he would create and weave?

Do you know there's a spider that has a bubble-spinning web? Or that there's a spider that can travel from Africa to Europe along its web? This is quite different from us, or from birds. Birds have wings to fly, and we have legs to walk.

There are some spiders that are meant to be alone, and others that are meant to be in a collective. There are only a few that spin their webs together.

[The artists] Thomas and Helke Bayrle let a spider web in their house sit for years. They wrote to me, "...Helke found an image of the spider-network of an old H18 from 1994 – It grew in our living room – for 15 years – and it was an enormous spider cooperation (about 1:50 x 1:50 cm) – till – one day it completely fell down... that's life ..."

TDC: [Buckminster Fuller] is one of your heroes. Why?

TS: He makes biospheres.

TDC: A biosphere, meaning a self-sufficient or closed self-regulating system or the global sum of all ecosystems? It reminds

me of a quote from your exhibition at the Walker: "Saraceno is treating the gallery space as a biosphere, where works installed in close proximity sometimes connect through a network of cords and ropes to offer a concrete picture of what the world would look like if he was to design it."

TS: I have other heroes too. You know the guy who does the mirrors, Dan Graham? I think he's smart, super smart. He talks about a psychology of science.

TDC: So what about Argentina? You are from Argentina, correct?

TS: You know, I think this idea of a nationality is a myth, or totally ridiculous. You ask me where I was born, and I say Argentina, but it doesn't mean anything. I was in Argentina for ten years, then ten years in Italy, ten years again in Argentina, and have now been in Germany for ten years.

TDC: So does it make you feel like you aren't from anywhere? You have bits of you that are each. The danger is that you drift, never feel settled. Bourriaud talks about this new generation of artists as radicants. It is nomadic.

TS: Most people travel a lot but they haven't actually lived in different places. It is different.

TDC: Like a series of enrooting or entanglements that suddenly, and sometimes reluctantly, you must rip up, like roots? I keep thinking about tillandsia – the rootless plant that gains all its sustenance through its leaves and air – that you incorporated into your *Airport City...* Daniel Birnbaum's title to the 2008 Biennale was called *Making Worlds*. And one of your earlier works shown in the São Paulo Biennale is called *How to Live Together*. So the first questions that come to mind are: What sort of worlds do you make? How does your work propose that we live together?

TS: Here I give you something. [An abstract from the chapters of *Where is Everybody?* by Stephen Webb.]

Where is Everybody?

*They Are Here They Were Here and Left
Evidence of Their Presence
They Exist and They are us – We Are all
Aliens
The Zoo Scenario
The Planetarium Hypothesis
They Exist But Have Not Yet Communicated
The Stars are Far Away*

*They Have Not Had Time to Reach Us
Bracewell – on Neumann Probes
We Are Solar Chauvinist
They Stay at Home
... and Surf the Net
They Are Signalling But We Do Not Know
How to Listen
They Are Signalling But We Do Not Know at
Which Frequency to Listen
Our Search Strategy Is Wrong
The Signal Is Already There in the Data
We Have Not Listened Long Enough
Everyone is Listening, No One Is
Transmitting
Berserker
They Have No Desire to Communicate
They Develop a Different Mathematics
They Are Calling But We Do Not Recognise
the Signal
They are Somewhere But the Universe Is
Stranger Than We Imagine
A Choice of Catastrophes
They Hit the Singularity
Cloudy Skies Are Common
Infinitely Many ETC's Exist But Only within
Our Particle Horizon: Us.*

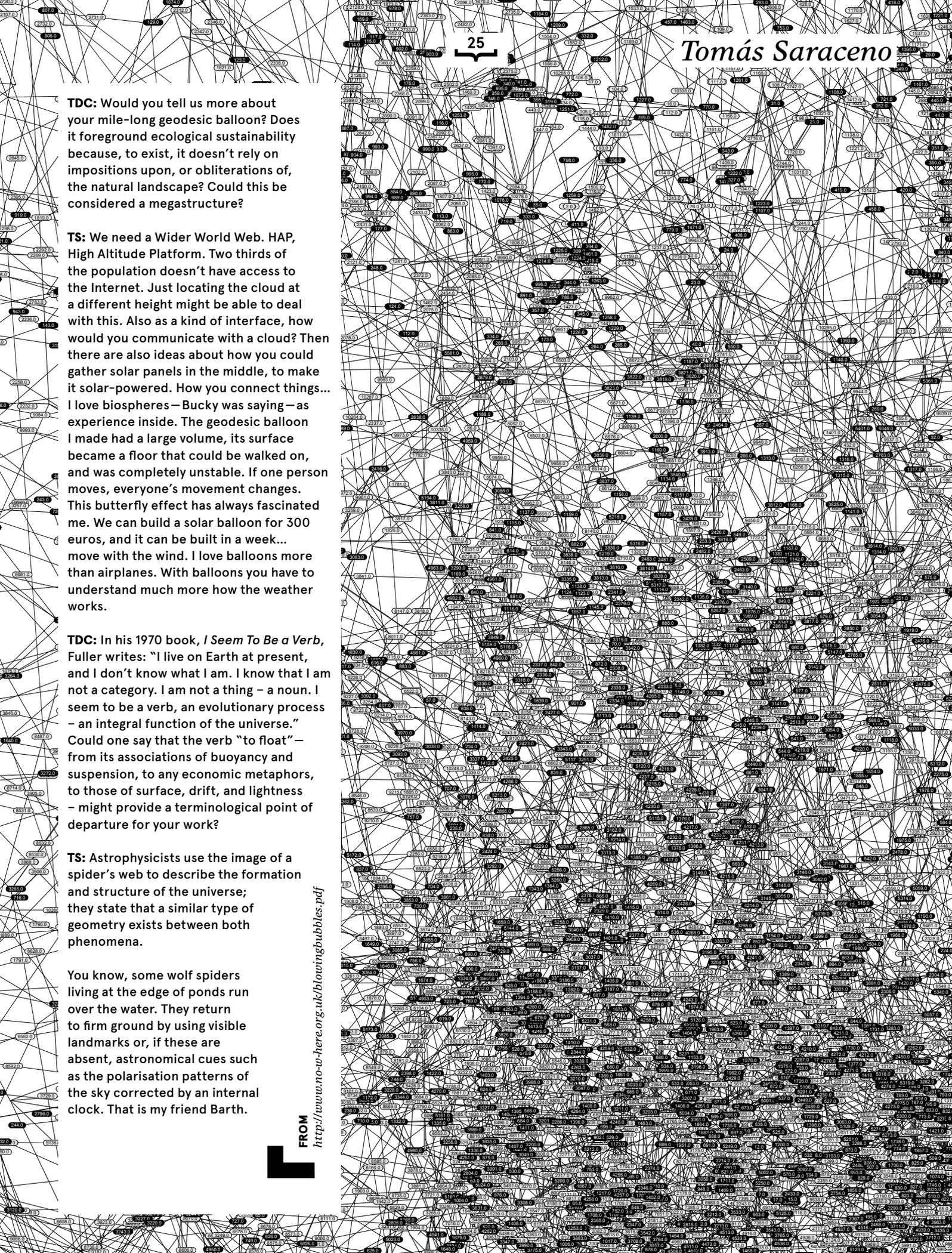
TDC: Would you call yourself a futurist?

TS: *They Do Not Exist*

*The Universe is Here for Us
Life Can Have Emerged Only Recently
Planetary Systems Are Rare
We Are the First
Rocky Planets Are Rare
Continuously Habitable Zones Are Narrow
Jupiters Are Rare
Earth Has an Optimal "Pump of Evolution"
The Galaxy Is a Dangerous Place
A Planetary System Is a Dangerous Place
Earth's System of Plate Tectonics Is Unique
The Moon Is Unique
Life's Genesis Is Rare
The Prokaryote Eukaryote Transition is
Rare
Tool-making Species Are Rare
Technological Progress Is not Inevitable*

TDC: Can you speak about the physicist Fritjof Capra? I stumbled upon this quote: "Throughout the living world, we find systems nesting within other systems. And living systems also include communities of organisms. These may be social systems – a family, a school, a village – or ecosystems."

TS: Biological systems exchange molecules through networks of chemical reactions; social systems exchange information and ideas in networks of communication. Thus, biological networks operate in the realm of matter, whereas social networks operate in the realm of meaning.



25

TDC: Would you tell us more about your mile-long geodesic balloon? Does it foreground ecological sustainability because, to exist, it doesn't rely on impositions upon, or obliterations of, the natural landscape? Could this be considered a megastructure?

TS: We need a Wider World Web. HAP, High Altitude Platform. Two thirds of the population doesn't have access to the Internet. Just locating the cloud at a different height might be able to deal with this. Also as a kind of interface, how would you communicate with a cloud? Then there are also ideas about how you could gather solar panels in the middle, to make it solar-powered. How you connect things... I love biospheres – Bucky was saying – as experience inside. The geodesic balloon I made had a large volume, its surface became a floor that could be walked on, and was completely unstable. If one person moves, everyone's movement changes. This butterfly effect has always fascinated me. We can build a solar balloon for 300 euros, and it can be built in a week... move with the wind. I love balloons more than airplanes. With balloons you have to understand much more how the weather works.

TDC: In his 1970 book, *I Seem To Be a Verb*, Fuller writes: "I live on Earth at present, and I don't know what I am. I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing – a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process – an integral function of the universe." Could one say that the verb "to float" – from its associations of buoyancy and suspension, to any economic metaphors, to those of surface, drift, and lightness – might provide a terminological point of departure for your work?

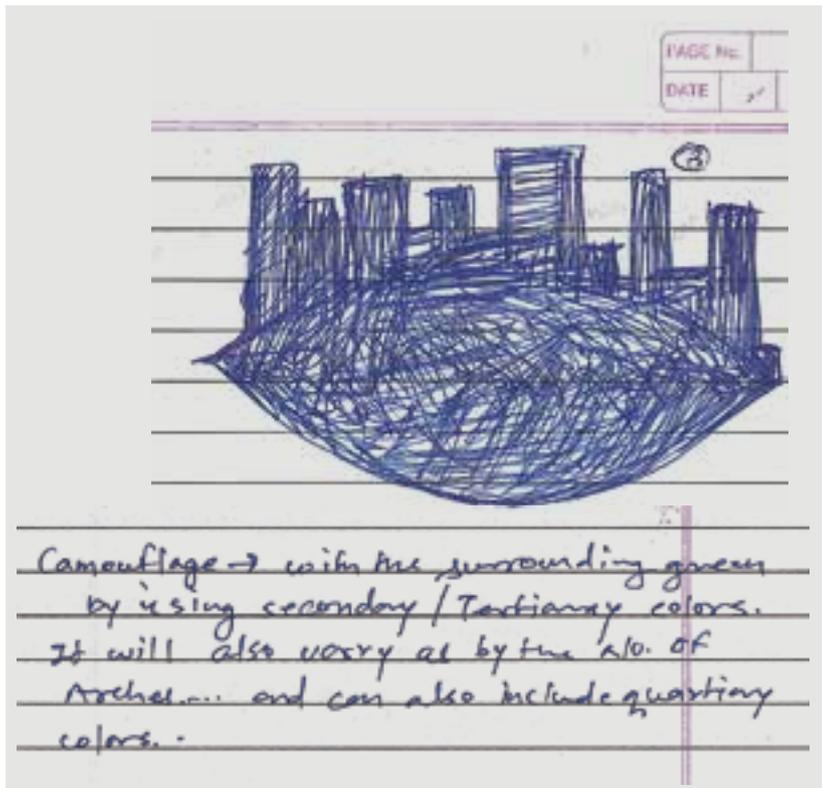
TS: Astrophysicists use the image of a spider's web to describe the formation and structure of the universe; they state that a similar type of geometry exists between both phenomena.

You know, some wolf spiders living at the edge of ponds run over the water. They return to firm ground by using visible landmarks or, if these are absent, astronomical cues such as the polarisation patterns of the sky corrected by an internal clock. That is my friend Barth.

FROM <http://www.no-to-here.org.uk/blowingbubbles.pdf>



Of Spaceships, Second Citizens, and Things Made in Mud



appropriation of the structure. Paint is visually very basic and, yet, it's a strong medium and is practical.

SUMESH SHARMA: Mati Ghar, though they tried making it in a way so as to not disturb the surroundings, they've failed in doing this. And another thing...

ZASHA: Okay, but Sumesh, why do you want to camouflage it?

SUMESH: The idea of the Sanchi Stupa was taken up by the Indian state. Look at Rashtrapati Bhavan, our parliament building, in which they use the styles of the Buddhist Stupa and the Mughal Mosque. You know, former architectural styles. And in Lucknow what's most important is that no matter what Mayawati makes, it's always with this dome. Why is it so important? It's as if an architectural language has come within their grasp for Dalits – the Rashtrapati-Buddhist-Stupa-esque dome! Just think about it – in the middle of such a big building, they made something called 'Made in Mud'. In the village, who has mud-houses? Those who've been asked to leave the village, those who exist on its fringes. It's an unwanted space. *Pucca ghar* – a house made of bricks and cement – confirms you are from a higher class. Everyone will say, now we've moved up, "*Humara ab pucca ghar ho gaya*".

Notes towards
EXISTING CAMOUFLAGE
Yogesh Barve, 2014

YOGESH BARVE: Initially I had three proposals for Mati Ghar. Zasha, this is what I was showing you.

ZASHA COLAH: Yes... what is the last idea?

YOGESH: Camouflaging the structure. The structure itself was built as something that would be close to nature and other aspects of life. The idea is to merge the structure with the background and, at the same time, to draw attention towards it, just like a chameleon. Also, as the structure is built with natural elements, why not make it visually like nature, a forest? Painting on the structure will be a nice

PRABHAKAR PACHPUTE: Yes.

ZASHA: So then why camouflage it?

SUMESH: In the sense that the idea of this kind of movement, whether social... Think about Yogesh's own previous work, where he hung drapes made of sheets of yellow notebook paper from the walls... There's this idea of equality – a presumed equality – that exists within many places. Even within the Constitution...

ZASHA: Why does it have to be camouflaged and merged with the background?



EXISTING CAMOUFLAGE
Yogesh Barve, 2014

SUMESH: It's not camouflaging per se. Here camouflaging makes it more visible. By camouflaging, you're speaking more about it. It's not camouflaging to merge, it's camouflaging for bringing it out. The structure almost has an ugliness that makes you ignore it.

ZASHA: So the reason for camouflaging is an aesthetic one?

SUMESH: But what's been done there already is an application of aesthetic reason – based on differentiating it from others around it—to make a monument towards “equality”... What does this “equality” want? Where does this kind of differentiation end? When can someone be said to have equality?

The differentiation based on colour, on the kind of house you have... It's only when this differentiation ends that equality begins.

ZASHA: So we disguise the fact of the *mitti*, that it's made of mud?

SUMESH: In India the mud house is seen as the idea of... actually it's in Bihar. In Bihar, *mitti ka ghar* is a house of someone who comes from the lower caste. Mud houses exist outside the village. You don't have mud houses within the...

NIKHIL RAUNAK: Main town...

SUMESH: Yes, there are no mud houses within the main town. But these architects were looking at “*mitti ka ghar*” in a different manner altogether. They were looking at it as sustainable architecture. And they were

also making this mud thing so that it doesn't disturb the environment. So that it becomes a part of the landscape. But the Parliament House is supposed to be on a hill – Raisana Hill. There's just this way of thinking in India where you must build up your house to a certain floor!

ZASHA: But can we relate this to other things as well – the idea of time, the idea of comets? Or even as a spaceship?

SUMESH: I agree...

ZASHA: It can have several meanings. The *Mati Ghar* can also have a Buddhist/political reference. We can layer this.

SUMESH: In Taregana, in Bihar, people from all over India, for many years, go to see stars. Tare-gana, *tara ginne ke liye*, counting the stars.

PRABHAKAR: Hm.

SUMESH: There's an observatory there, which has a similar structure. And it's also similar to Maharaja Jai Singh's 'Jantar Mantar' in Jaipur.

NIKHIL: A very similar design.

SUMESH: So you see, the brahmin artists work within this space in Bihar and make it, and if you look at their houses, they are *pucca*. You can know just by looking, who's doing all this work.

ZASHA: And around *Mati Ghar* is the white-painted IGNCA...

Our proposal for Insert2014 delves into the etymology of 'Mati Ghar'. A mud-house, a maati-ghar, is often the name of a temporary structure in villages across rural India, as an extension of an existing house. Its poverty is apparent, it is always the lesser house compared with the brick and cemented one. Mati Ghar exists within the grounds of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, an expansive institution and building for exhibitions and cultural research. Our proposal, then, is for a misreading of the architectural originality of the structure – its innovative sun-dried blocks of earth placed in ratios intended to imply the infinity of time, ventilated by a network of underground tunnels. [ZC]

SUMESH: [Showing photographs] You see, here's a *pucca ghar*, and then this *pucca ghar* again, and now it's the dalit neighbourhood, and the *mitti ka ghar*... This here, see? It's amazing, huh?

AMOL PATIL: Mine too, it's the same, like this... Just a little different, because we renovated and changed it a bit. Because it was going to collapse!

ZASHA: The quality of light in your film is really nice; you can tell the house is made of mud...

YOGESH: In Assam too it's like this.

ZASHA: In the different themes that we were playing with, one thread was Kapila Vatsyayan's time conference. It would be interesting if Raqs could get hold of the catalogue. Thankfully, a book was published with all the papers that were presented in the conference. This building was established for that conference. They had said it's almost like a spaceship.

YOGESH: With some imagination, it could be seen like that, the way it's designed.

ZASHA: So we have this idea of Time. But, also, this spaceship idea, and this idea of the second home, temporary home or lesser home. The Mati Ghar is not the IGNC; it's temporary. We're relating it politically to the idea of 'second citizen'. Then we were thinking, if this idea of space and time, and this idea of people who politically feel second class... Afrofuturism and Kemi Basseni's way of dealing with it—the idea of looking at colonisation from the point of view of outer space—could be an interesting inclusion.

SUMESH: Yes.

ZASHA: In the north-east, many years ago, there was a young collective. We showed them at Clark House once. They used to call themselves the Naga Jedi, based on Star Wars. They made these really hilarious films, take-offs on the Jedi, with light sabers and flying spaceships, spoofing *Star Wars*, but talking about their own Naga culture.

NIKHIL: So if there are, say, eleven invitees, including Clark House, how is the exhibition space being thought? Are we all going to get separate spaces? Are there going to be sections? Or is it going to be one mix?

ZASHA: I think a mix... What Raqs suggested was to treat our works like a constellation. So everything is related to everything, and everything is talking to everything; change in one changes the other. Which is why they want us to communicate more from now on. They seem to really want a dialogue. That's why they're trying to get ideas from us early on, and

then we can start making it into a dialogue. They're also experimenting with their format.

SUMESH: Perhaps an aesthetic could somehow join us as one, though of course not at the cost of anyone's individuality.

PRABHAKAR: *Main wo cracks ke sath kuch karana chahata hoon.* I want to work with cracks. I will use clay... wet clay, which is used in clay modelling. *Aur usko surface banake uske upar draw karoon.* [Drawings on a surface of wet clay.] *Kyon ki mere ko ephemeral karane ka hai. Aur jab wo pura dry ho jayega fir usme dheere-dheere cracks aayenge.* [Because I want to make it ephemeral. When the clay dries, cracks will start appearing.]

SUMESH: That's a good idea!

PRABHAKAR: *Aur wo ek surface ko jab piche se dheere-dheere cheej niche girega* [When the first layer slowly falls off]... then we will see the next surface.

NIKHIL: *Acha, next layer. Sookhta jayega to papdi niche girte jayega.* [It will dry, flake, and fall to the ground.]

PRABHAKAR: And then, a next surface.

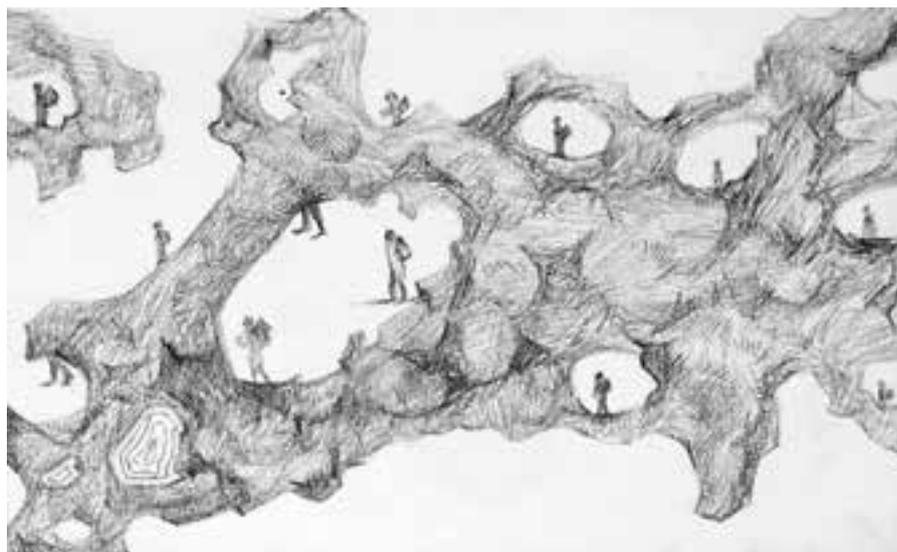
SUMESH: On the wall inside!

PRABHAKAR: I think wall will be nice...

ZASHA: Wall will be nice...

Voice from background: Wall will be nice.

Prabhakar Pachpute uses wall drawings in charcoal to narrate the untold history



WANTED/UNWANTED MOVE
Prabhakar Pachpute, 2014

of coalminers who tunnel beneath the surface of his village Sasti, in Chandrapur. Prabhakar studied sculpture, but was dismayed to see that even though the miners' tragedy in Chile got media attention, in India, a similar tragedy in his village during the same time went undiscussed. He began sculpting maquettes of miners in terracotta, and using wall-drawings, recreated an animated sculptural experience of a coalmine. Mati Ghar reminded him of a large terracotta sculpture. On one of its inner curved walls he will draw images of his destroyed home, which he shall cover with a mixture of clay and cowdung to create a flat surface often used for wall-drawings in villages. And on this surface, a drawing that depicts the Sasti Coalmine, which has displaced his family home. As the clay dries, cracks, and chips off through the duration of the exhibition, it will reveal the drawing beneath. [SS]

RUPALI PATIL: You've seen the wooden pieces I brought from Kolkata. They're actually made by a tribal community. And tribal houses are also made of mitti.

ZASHA: Yes.

RUPALI: So, I'm trying to make a connection between the two ideas.

Rupali Patil draws graffiti on a corrugated metal sheet, used for temporary housing, commenting on a nexus of the state with private interests in allocation of land resources within cities. Her graffiti underlines the violence used to evict temporary settlements, sharing similarities with the violence used to free up mineral resources to produce the corrugated steel. [SS]

AMOL: Poonam, why do you want to use chairs?

POONAM JAIN: Chairs almost represent people.

AMOL: How?

POONAM: Like, when many chairs are placed at one place, it is meant for people, a group of people. And since they will be covered with, or made with, mirrors, the movement of the viewer will create movement on the surface of the chairs. It will look like life. The movement on the surface of the mirror is an illusion, just like a movie screen and film is virtual.



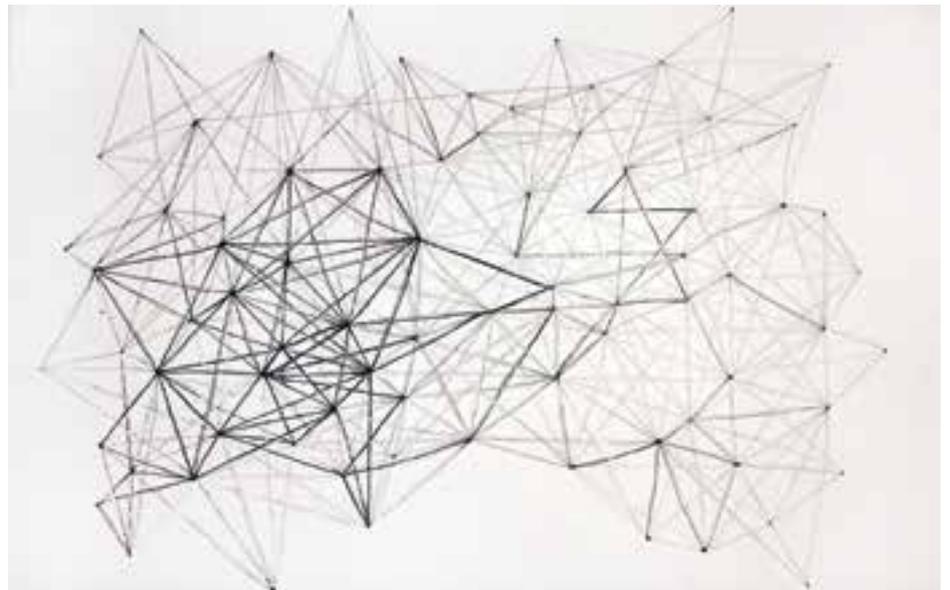
ERROR
Rupali Patil, 2014

AMOL: You were talking about the conference that had happened before at Mati Ghar, which was the reason why Mati Ghar was constructed.

POONAM: Yes, true. I thought of a group of people, a bunch of illusionary characters in Mati Ghar. It's quite funny that I felt scared when standing below one of the domes, because of the echoes, and I literally ran out from there. This kind of illusion is rare to experience in Bombay, where we are crowded with people all the time. There's no way to think

ZASHA: That's a nice way to think of art-making in general. It's a small coincidence, but *Dreams* was made around the same time as the making of this building: 1990.

Poonam Jain reflects on an inherited philosophy, one that often presumes a certain constant of infinity. It informs her that the world is made up of infinite independent souls, each acting as atoms in a system that aggregates. This aggregation is seen in her practice as an artist, such as when she counts, listing each number until infinity, a number she never reaches, in a red book often



or hope for more people – one always feels, the lesser the people the better. However, this kind of architecture seemed more like a monument to me, contradicting its name. So, to get back to what I was saying, this illusion of sound, which made me think someone else is around, almost ghost-like people, sort of reminds me of *Dreams* by Akiro Kurusawa.

used by her community to keep accounts. Each work is detailed and precarious, such as Graveyards of Utopias, where she builds a swing made up of ear buds stuck together with resin. It takes on an architectural vocabulary and seeks to critique urban

GRAVEYARDS OF UTOPIAS
Working drawing
Poonam Jain, 2014

existences that are dictated by the constant networks we create during our life. Each soul, in this infinite world, struggles towards liberation, a utopia forgotten by Jainas, who find reasons to question and dissuade the freedoms of a young woman. [SS]

SACHIN BONDE: I have a question, obviously, you've considered it: are you doing it inside or outside? Look for good light within the space because otherwise the reflections won't be right.

POONAM: True.

YOGESH: What do you think of mirror, in the sense of material?

POONAM: It's the illusionary character of mirror. Like film, it is virtual.

YOGESH: But virtual is a different thing; virtual is something that does not exist or exists in a different dimension.

POONAM: True, but I mean virtual in the sense that it does not exist as material. It's all a mind game. There was something very interesting that I read about mirrors in Brian Clegg's *The Universe Inside You*: 'When you see reflections in a mirror, our brain tries to turn the reflection into you. It makes a fairly close match of it, rotates you through 180 degrees, and moves you back into the mirror. This half-turn flips left to right. But the key thing to realise is that it is not the mirror, it is your brain trying to interpret the signals it receives from the mirror'.

YOGESH: Films, words and other things actually exist. I don't think they are virtual. I think it's the 'experience' that's virtual!

POONAM: I agree, but with films, it is the image in motion, and that is what our eyes and brain perceive. What is interesting to me is that when I try to relate film to a mirror, I find there is no time limit to a mirror. A person looks at a mirror, a film is screened for him.

YOGESH: Do you think sound can push this experience?

POONAM: Perhaps yes, but the dream-like space, memory of information, where people see themselves on multiple surfaces, is what's more interesting for me now.

ZASHA: Also, the work would change from different angles and different heights.

POONAM: I like the ditch-space that we noticed at Mati Ghar from the tiny window

on the upper level, between the two circular walls. The mirrors on the floor of the ditch would reflect the sky, to sort of, seem like pure water, a stream.

AMOL: I've got a bed. I have to see how it would work mechanically.

ZASHA: Do you think it can work for one month?

AMOL: I guess so.

POONAM: And what's the other idea?

AMOL: My house got renovated in my village. I'll take a piece of wood from this house, which has *deemak*, termites, and will put it in an acrylic box. This acrylic box will have a microphone inside, and people will be able to hear the sound of termites eating away at the wood with earphones.

One of the arches in the façade of Mati Ghar frames a door, which leads to a room underneath a flight of stairs. Amol Patil has encountered many such spaces, especially in the chawls of Bombay. Each window or balcony in a chawl houses a family unit, most of them migrants to the city. They inhabit spaces that measure up to 100 square feet. Each family brings with it a certain memory of traditions that it tries to resurrect in the city; unattended spaces such as those under stairs become shrines, tailors set up shops, men congregate around a shop underneath the steps for a smoke, others are converted into mobile repair units that also sell pirated movies. Amol comes from a family of Povada performers – nomadic dalit bards from the Konkan, eight hours from Bombay. His father, a sanitation worker, became a popular avant-garde playwright in the 1980s through plays he conceived using the histories of migration and labour movements in the city. Contest of Illusionists is a re-enactment of a drumming piece played by a father-son duo from Amol's village, Lanja, where the father recedes, letting himself be defeated on purpose, so as to ensure the traditions continue through his son. Amol similarly calls out to the cultural elite to concede space in a city where space is precious. Commisur depicts a swaying wooden bed, cramped spaces in Bombay and the proximity between homes, that leave little room for privacy. Thus off the broad boulevards of New Delhi, Amol creates a space using 112 square feet that is reminiscent of life that has always informed his practice. [SS]

ZASHA: Nikhil, why were you interested in the façade? You said there was a story?

NIKHIL: Well, a friend and I had decided to spend some weekends at a common friend's home in the Govandi slum. My friend who lives in the slum was always conscious about how he was dressed, but the other friend and I never worried about it. For instance, the first day we met him, he was wearing ironed, creased shirt and jeans, and sandals that he had cleaned to a shine the previous night. I asked: 'Why so much? Who really sees all this?' He gently replied, 'Everyone'.

CONTEST OF THE
ILLUSIONISTS
Amol Patil, 2014



Working drawing
SOUNDS OF ANXIETY
Amol Patil, 2014



ZASHA: It's not an easy correlation, though. It's potentially dangerous. People are not their exteriors.

NIKHIL: Does a façade ever represent anything? A guy in Dharavi slum, who owns a leather shop, earns more than a person who lives in a posh building. I was thinking, is it really possible to relate these two things?

ZASHA: This is true of Clark House too. Clark House is a beautiful 108 year-old building, and then we have the Rent Act. This is a maverick situation in Bombay. It's rent-anomalous.

NIKHIL: Exactly! If you see constructions in Dockyard Road, they're 100 year-old buildings – Gothic structures. But inside, everyone lives in a chawl system with shared toilets.

ZASHA: You mean the style of architecture has been adapted to the chawl?

NIKHIL: Yes. For example, a friend of mine lives in a 100 plus year-old building, designed as a storage house for exported goods, and constructed with beautiful pillars, in gothic-style architecture. With time, this entire building began to be used by families to live in small rooms. So there's a building, which was built by the church, then used by Wibbs Bread Company, and now has workers living in it. I was looking at how the architecture and the purpose for which a building is made, change with time. People living in those constructions change these things. Does the architectural design reflect something, or does it change the lifestyle of the people who live in it?

Our curatorial intention pursues Mati Ghar's identity as a secondary structure, a second citizen. It allows us to ask about the insecure faltering of second citizenship, the psychology of an insecure culture, always looking over its shoulder, or grounding itself zealously within nationalist constructions. Who are the second citizens of contemporary India? But the pursuit is aesthetic, as much as social, and has to do perhaps with the Polish burlesque genius Witold Gombrowicz's obsession with the philosophy of form; especially displays of nationality as form, as a mask that gets stuck – Polish, East-European, as forms or even an aesthetics of habit, a façade, a face he believed to be always looking over its shoulder at those so-seeming first worlds. 'Isn't man, therefore, in his private reality, something childish and always beneath his own awareness?' – Witold Gombrowicz was publishing monthly instalments of his

'Diary' (Dziennik) in Buenos Aires, in 1953, while in exile. In our most recent exhibitions, we gave place to instances of collective imagination of second citizens, highlighting artists working collectively. The complexity of the second citizen, and hence in our curatorial short-hand, Gombrowicz's 'Diary', pushes us to look from the idea of collective imagination, to a related fiction of collectively-endowed reality, which institutions have a habit of fixing. We critique this. The works we propose are 'unfixings' of Mati Ghar. Each is individually conceived at the interface of the artist's personality and reality, yet most will only be executable collaboratively. [ZC]

ZASHA: All the other proposals are so visual, and tactile. Yours is a counter-point.

NIKHIL: In the push-pin work, I'm just going to put a pin on the wall and a statement next to it will say, 'Artist was supposed to display a work exactly where the red pin is. He forgot while in the process of creating other works'. The title of this work is the full Oxford dictionary entry on the word 'Possibility'. The statement and title are going to be framed, tiny in size, and the statement is typewritten on paper.

ZASHA: The work seems to be constantly deferring something, postponing something.

NIKHIL: Yes, and it will always.

POONAM: Nik, can this work be anywhere? As in, in any show? Any specific reason for this one being in *Insert*?

NIKHIL: No I don't think this work can be anywhere else... for now...

POONAM: Right now is a good point. I mean, in the sense of time.

NIKHIL: Well look at it this way... In this show, we're all trying to question the existence or the real meaning or purpose of Mati Ghar.

ZASHA: I'm really intrigued by the balance. A tiny blue pin can...

NIKHIL: No, red pin.

ZASHA: Why is the pin red?

NIKHIL: Because that's the colour many people put on their work when they sell it. It kind of symbolises that a work is sold.

ZASHA: That's interesting satirical vocabulary.

Nikhil Raunak was instrumental in the formation of a collective of young artists, Shunya, in Bombay. The collective explored the possibilities of participation in an art scene that closed doors through an architecture of discrimination, based on parameters that were as varied as language, class and medium. Mati

POSSIBILITY (n.): A THING THAT MAY HAPPEN OR BE THE CASE
Nikhil Raunak, 2014



Ghar was not an intended art space, nor is it seen as an infrastructural possibility for international exhibition making, relegated more to a use for an exhibition of folk arts. Nikhil's work proposes the possibility of an artwork that could be exhibited on the wall, and reflects on his commitment to a movement of vernacular equality within contemporary art, critiquing its inability at accessibility. [SS]

ZASHA: Sumesh, you've talked about fixed architecture within Delhi. When one thinks about cultural infrastructure, what about failed planning projects? That's why Yogesh and Amol's works are interesting to put together. Camouflage or invisibility is interesting. This whole idea of constantly building cultural infrastructure, when there's no money for art and for the maintenance of that infrastructure, when eventually it's all abandoned... That we need a different kind of intangible infrastructure could be a nice comment to *Insert*. That there's too much cultural infrastructure already, and that more doesn't need to be made. Rather, let's say that we need a different kind of adaptation...

SUMESH: Adaptation!

ZASHA: Of old spaces.

SUMESH: *Matlab ki, jaise jab ek mutant banate ho na, kisi jaanwar ka DNA kisi doosre jaanwar me daal kar. To jab mix karoge, to jis me DNA dala woh mutant ho jayega.* [It's like inserting the DNA of one animal into another, which gives rise to a mutant.]

SACHIN: What comes to mind is a motion-sculpture, like a potter's wheel. Think of a DNA structure, made of clay, on top of the potter's wheel.

POONAM: What is a potter's wheel conveying?

SACHIN: Think of the whirlpool, mixer, rotation, current. If the Mati Ghar were upside down, and we threw a coin into it, it would fall in the centre.

SUMESH: Your observation is so precise. I have found in your practice an investigation into archaeological objects, that you then re-appropriate to comment on the politics of the contemporary, sharply critiquing the nihilism of narratives that are associated with political parties harping on the return of a golden age, a return to a central, defining axis.

SACHIN: If you take it philosophically, *murtha* (living) and *amurtha* (non living) – basically, anything – has an axis point. Like if you have a question in your head, it circulates in your head, and becomes your axis point. We are all axis points.

YOGESH: Someone asked the Dalai Lama, "Where is the central point of the earth?" He said, "The place where you stand is the central point."

The keshan is a woolen sarong, wrapped and draped like a dress, skirt or shawl, worn by men and women in the Naga hills of Manipur. Zamthingla Ruivah's Luingamla Keshan is an elegy for a friend in the form of a luminous red shawl. The patterns were conceived and re-worked over four years to tell of an event of brutality, the joyful spirit of the young girl, and the path to justice. The shawl's designs appear geometric. Yet, it has a narrative of heroic proportions as in a classical History Painting, as well as a modernist condensation of the grand narrative into insect metaphors. What is justice when it is represented by a butterfly's wings? The shawl enters living culture, and its story is passed down through community memory and song. Zamthingla's work offers a pathway to something new: whether in the future of abstraction, semiotics, overturning and reinventing the implications of collaboration, or the possibilities of political art. [SS]

No Fixed] Srinivas Aditya Mopidevi

Postal Address

It was over a year ago that I was asked by Raqs Media Collective to explore the infrastructural landscape of Delhi's latent cultural present, with a new set of questions emerging from the expansive field of contemporary art. The premise was to ask: How do certain places fall off, or even disappear from, the cultural imaginary of the city? And what are the conceptual, procedural and material transitions one can facilitate to re-think and re-imagine their lives today, beyond the frames of heritage and obsolescence?

Being a relatively new migrant to this city of immigrants, and to its cultural alignment, this encounter was an opportunity for me to (re) discover the city through the annotations of Raqs, as well as other colleagues and collaborators, and to share their affinities with its urban memory.

The working idea was to conceptualise a curatorial axis involving spaces as diverse as Delhi Public Library, All India Fine Arts & Crafts Association, Shankar's Dolls Museum, Pearey Lal Bhawan, among others that played a prominent role in shaping and serving the cultural needs of Delhi's public during the second half of the twentieth century. This axis was directed at triggering an imaginative cluster of claims over the city's contemporary topography, and for thinking beyond the binary of what may be realisable, or not, on site.

Over time, a range of experiences enriched this encounter. A very young annotator/reader who walked me through the children's section of the Delhi Public Library asked me about my familiarity with children's literature, curiously probing my intentions for researching the library. My enthusiasm in visiting Pearey Lal Bhawan Association, a prominent performance venue until the early 90's, grew obliquely after learning about its current popularity as a venue for accountancy classes for college youth, and by large-scale businesses for meetings. This cultural complex, which technically functions as a trust, also houses offices of real estate builders within its premises.

Some of the places – incidentally the abandoned ones, such as 22, Barakhambha Road (Skipper Tower), a city landmark, and Rabindra Rangshala, tucked away in the Central Ridge forest – turned out to be entangled in a mesh of legal dispute and confused regulations over ownership and wild life encroachment. Initially, my physical access to these sites was verbally barricaded by concerned authorities and local police, who spun yarns of mystery and rumour around them. Repeated requests to Sangeet Natak Akademi (National Academy of Museum,

Dance & Drama) for accessing the open-air Rangshala, with a seating capacity larger than the Colosseum in Rome, were either left unanswered or addressed only through the language of security.

A diversity of such encounters slowly configured an expansive index of memory, familiarity and rumour, rearranging existing points of approach towards the fabric of the city and the infrastructure of its everyday life.

This opening up is also a facilitation of the idea of duration, a method that can transform the relationship one has with a place, into an inhabitation envisioning a range of artistic, architectural, curatorial and poetic intimacies. It intensifies the drive for inventing modes of articulation for these otherwise dormant places, allowing them to be seen and thought not as mere memoirs of a latent present, but as sites that can fuel new possibilities of an imaginary future.

In a conversation with me around the material unfolding of public infrastructure, architectural historian Venugopal Maddipati observed, "In conventional architectural terms, a site has always been understood as the process through which an unnamed open space is sent to a destination called the named place. This means that site is seen as an in-between journey through which point A (origin) reaches point B (destination)."

As we continued to discuss that afternoon, an inversion of this logic would mean seeing a site as an ongoing process of re-thinking and even renaming places, and with destinations that are unknown and boundaries that are porous. It also implies sliding away from a sense of permanence that a place inhabits, and towards flexible forms of being in the world.

Working with duration procedurally facilitates a *place* to translate into a *site*. Place-ness then becomes dispersed out of its institutional frames of regulation, and enters a fluid and speculative terrain, proposing new perspectives for making sense of the city and its cultural landscape.

These new models of engaging with the city foresee a common ground, where a variety of impulses can work together, proposing points of transition, speculation and re-imagination. Our call for a common ground however, is not a destination that has a fixed postal address, but is, rather, an intangible horizon that constantly rearticulates its stakes in the present that we live in, and a future that is yet to arrive.

Demarcating a Grey Zone

Spaces can open us up to logics that escape the 'plan'. For instance, the Rabindra Rangshala, as it stands

today, seems reminiscent of parts of the wild zones outside the Purana Qila of the late 70's – before it was done in by landscaping and made 'safe'. My proposal is for a recovery of unknown/unknowable logics under the broad idea of what we can call "Recovering Spaces from the Ruins of Modernity: Peopling via Transformation, Occupation, Appropriation".

Let's think about practices of appropriation, where, say, policing breaks down because of attempts at territorial control by conflicting institutions. One set of practices, real and metaphoric, could aim to rework the borders—the lines of institutional control—and the demarcation of a grey zone. For instance, it was reported that trade practices along the India-Pakistan borders created a 200 meter "no military zone" and, at one point, even a barter system. A variant of this also happened with Chinese trade in Sikkim, at the Nathula Pass.

Consider another set of practices: Individuals and groups walking with a bag of lime and sprinkling it as they walk, so as to have their footsteps marked in lime. Over time, tracing multiple sets of footprints, new consolidations would mark new territorial connections.

A place like Rabindra Rangshala seeks reflections of its larger environs. I propose simultaneous events in various sites, whose created/shaped logics link to the Rangshala, but also involve Delhi Public Library, Pearey Lal Bhawan Association, and Triveni Kala Sangam. Such a simultaneous occupation can break the sequential and linear logic of the 'plan'.

This also links back to my (failed) idea, with which I, as part of a group, competed for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts competition (in which Ralph Learner won) in 1985. The idea we had submitted was to visualise not one building, but a series of interconnected spaces for theater and the arts, so that through an upgrading of facilities in all these spaces, resources would spread across the city.

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Jantar Mantar Road

ROAD

0.45 kilometers long, police barricades on both sides, Jantar Mantar Road doesn't seem like a route joining two places. Officially declared as the venue to stage protests in the city, it has slowly transformed into a pilgrimage site for protesters from all over India. It's considered suitable because of its proximity to the Parliament, and so one would assume the voice of protest can find a hearing. The site oscillates between 'freedom of speech' and 'power over speech'. This Road becomes congested during the Parliament seasons: Budget session (February to May), Monsoon session (July to September) and Winter session (November to December).

The Road holds the hopes and dreams of many. Retrieving – and guarding – the night, I propose its modification into an astronomical site/observatory, by re-arranging it with telescopes and other astronomer's instruments, so protesters can see celestial objects such as moons, planets, stars, nebulae and galaxies, and collectively contemplate the night sky.

There's an old saying in Orissa, that the temple area is bad for habitation because it's surrounded by thousands of unfulfilled desires. Road echoes with the not-yet-fulfilled demands and struggles of millions. By transforming it into an astronomical observatory, I propose to extend the narrative of faith, dreams and hope. Looking at phenomena that originate outside the atmosphere of the Earth can introduce another space for release into the life of a protester.

Since by a recent order, protests have to be restricted to seven hours, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., hundreds of protesters, who used to spend day and night on Road, must now clear out by 4 p.m., then reassemble again the next day. One assumes they manage to find shelter for the night elsewhere. By bringing the night to Road, my proposal is to reclaim and guard the night for all protesters.

Paribartana Mohanty is a New Delhi-based artist who works with video, performance and painting. Recipient of FICA Emerging Artist Award (2010), and City as Studio/Sarai-CSDS Fellowship (2010), he has participated in a number of group shows, residencies and art fairs. His recent solo exhibition was *Kino is the Name of a Forest*, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi. He's a 2014 recipient of the International Creator Residency, Tokyo. He is also part of the WALA collective, which engages in public, community and site specific art. paribartana@yahoo.co.in



Akshata Naik +
 Barnet Alex Varghese +
 Jithinlal +
 Teja Gavankar +
 Venkataraman Divakar +
 Vibin George

Skipper Tower

Anthill, or the Ministry of Possibilities

INTENTION

To occupy and develop Skipper Tower to satisfy the real needs and wants of people.

The structure of Skipper Tower resembles the family palace of the capitalist maharaja of our times – Ambani’s “Antilia” in Mumbai. Our proposal is to re-use the dilapidated structure of Skipper Tower through play, events and acts, and develop it into a site where future possibilities are realised.

PROPOSAL

To develop a ministry of possibilities, that ushers in a collective future.

- *Restructure the existing architecture similar to that of an anthill that houses thousands of ants.*

- *Create a participatory situation where multiple activities can happen.*

- *Divide the entire structure into levels and create maze-like structures and engage viewers as participants in a game.*

- *Entry for each level based merit, and on points scored at each level.*

- *VIP passes for people with lower incomes. (They can access each and every part of the building and participate in all activities.) For others, there are spaces that they can never reach, however meritorious they may be.*

- *Games designed to bring suppressed issues of caste, class and gender to the fore.*

- *Intervene in the architecture such that there are certain spaces that all can physically reach and see, certain spaces which cannot be reached physically but can be seen, spaces that can be reached but not seen, spaces which can be perceived only through touch and smell.*

- *The space can be used as temporary shelter by the shelterless of Delhi.*

- *Organise skill development workshops so that the art community, and people in general, can engage and interact with each other.*

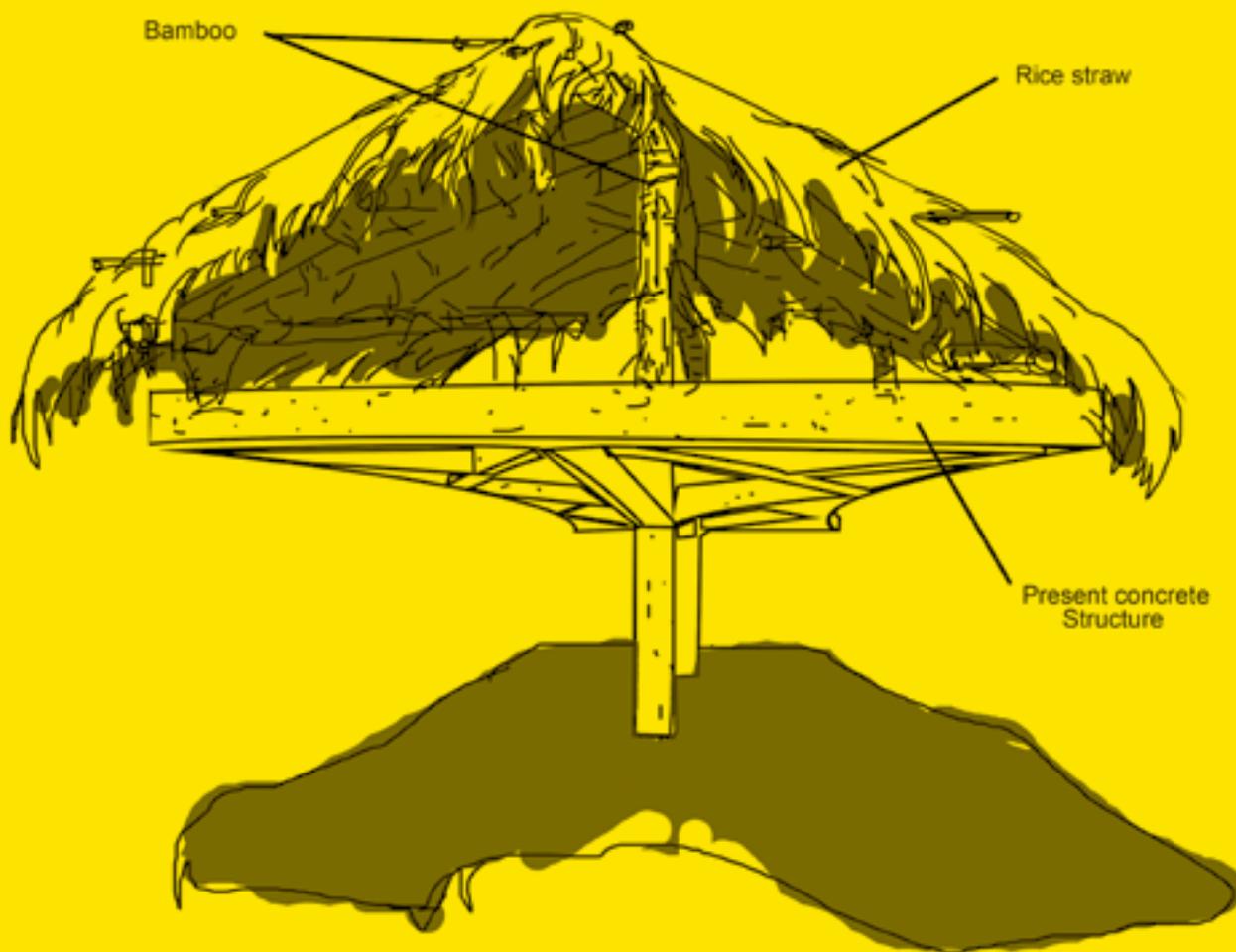
- *Project duration: 2 years, but could be extended.*

A proposal for occupying The Great Indian Super Structure – Skipper Tower, Barakhambha Road

Akshata N (Mumbai), **Barnet Alex Varghese** (Delhi), **Jithinlal** (Palakkad, Kerala), **Teja M Gavankar** (Mumbai) and **Vibin George** (Ernakulum, Kerala) are currently students at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda/Vadodara, Gujarat. **V Divakar** did his Masters in Fine Arts (Art Criticism), from MS University, Baroda. He is editor, *The Baroda Pamphlet*, a bi-monthly on art and culture.
 akshatpn@aol.com, barnetalexvarghese@gmail.com, jithinred@gmail.com, tejagavankar11@gmail.com, vibinnavi@gmail.com

This is one possibility out of many, through which one can occupy spaces and sites, and redefine and redistribute them, at least temporarily.

When realised, Anthill will give opportunities to artists and cultural practitioners to show works and engage with people without inhibitions, for at least two years, bringing forth newer possibilities for visualising the world.



Samarjeet Behera completed his BFA (Painting) from Government College of Art and Crafts, Khallikote, Ganjam, 2009, and MFA (Painting) from University of Hyderabad, 2013. He participated in *Kochi Muziris Biennale*, 2012-13. His group exhibitions include *Artnexxt*, and *United Art Fair 2013*, New Delhi. He lives in Hyderabad and is associated with *The Creative India Public Art Intensive*. beherasamarjeet@gmail.com

Triveni Kala Sangam

Like the Roof of a Home

The photograph of the open terrace at Triveni Kala Sangam brought to mind something I witnessed recently – the loss of homes in Odisha following cyclone Phailin and the vision of people suffering in the heavy rains with no bed to rest on. By creating a cover over this structure with rice straw and bamboo, like the roofs of homes in my village, I would like to bring to view this very fine and minute craftsmanship, which has its own engineering.



A performance from ITO to Mati Ghar

To the Black Sun



A question mark hangs over our status as a democracy. I propose a performance through which the uncertain past and unreliable present of this blackening sun may be expressed. All the places in Delhi through which thousands of people pass as part of their daily journeys, are potential sites for this performance.

My inspiration is the ritual performance during the Chhatt festival in my hometown, Patna. I've seen my father perform it hundreds of times. In this deeply spiritual performance, he prostrates before the sun, rises up and joins his hands in prayer, and then prostrates again. He starts from our house at sunrise, moving along in this manner until he reaches the river, where he takes a ritual bath at sunset. He pays obeisance to the sun, the source of life.

When I contemplate this ritual performance, the reality of our contemporary life stares back at me. I see a rapidly blackening sun. Layering my body with mud and images of critical events that have threatened this democracy in the last three decades, I will travel—in the manner that my father does each year—from the busy ITO intersection, moving along the Yamuna, via the Tilak Bridge, on to Pragati Maidan, Mandi House, Shastri Bhavan, India Gate, continuing on Parliament Street, till I reach Mati Ghar. The performance may last six, eight or twelve hours, for a day, a week, a month, or years.

Naresh Kumar did his Bachelors in Fine Arts (Painting) from College of Arts & Crafts, Patna University. He received the 'Young Artist Scholarship' from the Government of India, Ministry of Culture, in 2011. He has exhibited in a number of group shows and has an upcoming solo show at Clark House, Bombay, curated by Zasha Colah and Sumesh Sharma. naresh.artstudio@gmail.com

Thoughts on *Hanging Piece*

1993 was one of the most volatile in the history of South Africa. A period of transition, it was punctuated

every extreme, every ideology and every political persuasion, all believed they stood a chance. All hell broke loose as the country attempted to grapple with the birth of democracy on a soil that for so many generations had been stained with blood and our imaginations clouded by psychological warfare.

Belonging to the wrong political party, and being in the wrong place, at the wrong time was reason enough to be killed. On 19 July 1993, gunmen wielding AK47s stopped a minibus in the early hours of the morning, demanding to see each person's political party cards. The gunmen were from the African National Congress (ANC) party and, in roadside executions, eliminated every member of the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). That very day, I joined both the ANC and IFP and, over the next six months, infiltrated and joined every single serious political party, from the neo-nazi Afrikaaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) to the black consciousness Pan African Congress (PAC) whose motto "one settler one bullet" should, in theory, have been reason to have me executed. It would take me another six months to complete the performative work *Untitled (ANC, AVF, AWB, CP, DP, IFP, NP, PAC, SACP)* that, by its nature, was impossible to document.

Across the country, violence flared up as the AWB planted car bombs in busy city centres. The IFP threw members of the ANC off trains commuting between Soweto and Johannesburg. On 28 March 1993, Nelson Mandela instructed his supporters to use force, if necessary, to defend the ANC headquarters against a protest of 20,000 IFP members, killing 19 people. On 10 April 1993, Communist leader Chris Hanu was murdered in front of his home by renegade Polish immigrant Janusz Walus. This was the context in which I made *Hanging Piece*, in a country being ripped to pieces, and in which peace was hanging in the balance. The work was originally



by the fears and hopes of a country in transformation, a moment of intense anticipation. Apartheid, and its constitution, had officially been disbanded in February 1990, but until the results of the first democratic election in April 1994 were in, nothing was certain. The old National Party, the architects of Apartheid, believed that they could change their spots and even get re-elected to lead the Post-Apartheid government, and so made no attempt to lead the country for fear that their actions might later be held against them. In the wings, political parties from

produced for an exhibition in Durban, a popular holiday city by the warm Indian Ocean. Growing up, my dysfunctional working class family would join thousands of other white South Africans every year on their 600 kilometre pilgrimage to Durban for Christmas and Easter holidays. It was the playground of endless sandy beaches, fun fairs, candy floss and the veritable stick candy. Durban's South Beach was world-famous for its waves and attracted the world's best surfers from across the globe in their search for the perfect wave.

This was however, a pleasure reserved for "Whites Only" and the police were never far away to ensure no breach of any laws upon their sacred white sands. Even as a child, I found it rather ironic that black people were denied access to the very same beaches where the most racist white people would spend hours trying to darken the colour of their skin. The laws of race were as strict as the laws of decency, for that was the backbone of the Christian Fascism known as Apartheid. I vividly remember the police handcuffing topless German tourists on the beach with as much passion as they did black South Africans protesting their right to enjoy the same sand, sun and ocean as their white countrymen.

Once through the towering Drakensberg Mountains, the N3 freeway between Johannesburg and Durban opens up and winds its way through the beautiful green hills and valleys of the former Zulu empire. It was here that militant, young, anti-Apartheid freedom fighters would suspend rocks and bricks from bridges in the dark of night, hanging them at the level of windscreens of the speeding cars. It was a very effective weapon, given that drivers would inevitably speed up in anticipation of that last stretch of road before holiday bliss. A piece of string and a twenty cent brick were as effective weapons in the fight for freedom as the state's million dollar military, tanks and jets.

Reflecting on the American dominance in late twentieth century art history, woven together with the socio-political realities confronting South Africa, I had been working with brick as a motif since 1988, in works like *Brick*, *Title Withheld (Brick)*, *2 Objects Suspended*, *Hung*, *Suspended*, and *Title Withheld (Vitrine)*. In itself, the clay brick is nothing more than fired earth, and yet, at the same time, it is charged with connotation, allusion and symbolism. In a museum or gallery it obviously quoted Carl Andre, but at the same time, it was also a powerful political symbol representing the aspirations of millions of homeless black South Africans living in shantytown shacks that would blow down with every storm. In the hands of a young militant, a brick was a missile to be thrown in the face of the white establishment, whereas in a gallery or museum it was an icon of the avant-garde. The complex and contradictory cultural, social and political connotations of the brick were well illustrated by a full page newspaper advertisement that the old National Party ran that year, in which two bricks were reproduced, one broken, the other not, asking the question, "Are you a builder or a breaker?"

The bricks of *Hanging Piece* are suspended at regular intervals throughout the installation, caught in motion, midway between heaven and hell, a shoulder's width apart. They are pregnant with anticipation, neither builders nor breakers, neither weapons nor walls, frozen in their fall. The red ropes they hang from are like the fuses of dynamite sticks or the Chinese red string of fate pre-determining our destinies.

The bricks in *Hanging Piece* are caught midfall, locked between the natural laws of gravity and the delight of human engineering. Gravity is one of the four fundamental forces of quantum nature, along with strong interaction, electromagnetic and weak forces. I love the metaphor of quantum physics, for the single electron, proton or quark is not

unlike a work of art. In themselves and alone, they are seemingly inconsequential and insignificant, but in context they perform like the ripples that are caused by the fall of a brick as it drops into the pool of our imagination, creating waves of consciousness that continue to slowly ebb and flow, backward and forwards, until they have touched every boundary and limit. In 1993, I conceived of *Hanging Piece* as a cultural weapon. I now think of it more as the revolutionary embodiment of the alchemical mantra, "as above, so below", a magical talisman between the future and the past.

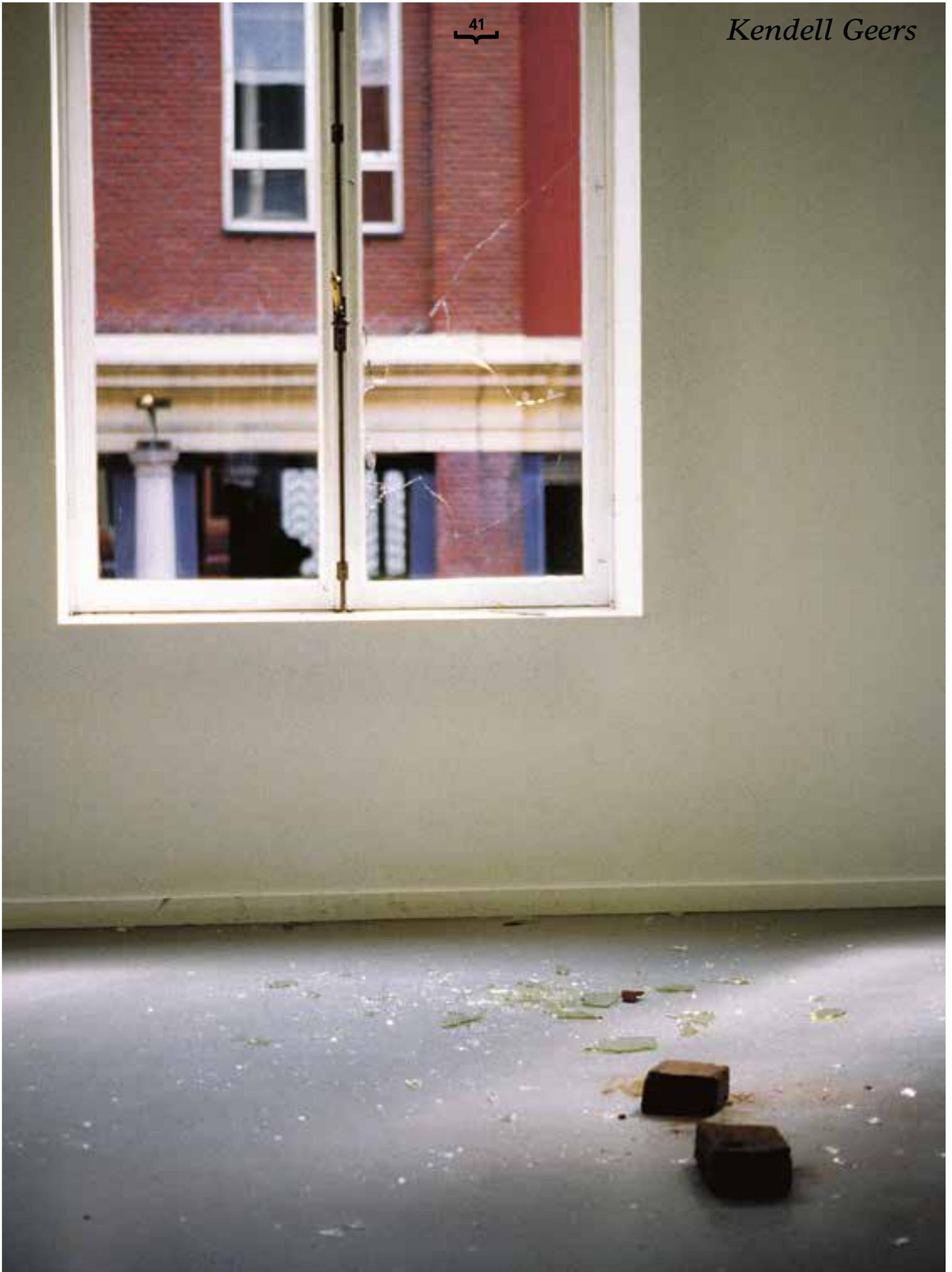
The clay bricks, fired from the very same "prima materia", that according to the Bible we were created from, hang motionless and in harmony. Suspended on red chords, like spiritualised veins from heaven, they are at peace, in a passive meditation. Once the viewer enters their domain this changes, for they begin to swing, backwards and forwards, marking the passing of human presence. Once in motion, they are animated into something potentially threatening, something likely to hit somebody in the face or stomach if you push too hard. It is not however, the first person passing through who is likely to get hit by a swinging brick, but those that follow. The more aggressively and assertively the first person moves through the space, the more likely his or her successors is going to get hurt – a very poetic embodiment of the condition of our planet today as we try to defuse the climatic time bombs created by the short-sightedness of our ancestors.

13 June, 2011

WITHHELD (BRICK)

1993

Performance, Window, Brick, Debris



A Roundtable with Katarzyna Kozyra

FROM

<http://katarzynakozyra.pl/main/>
<http://katarzynakozyra.pl/main/text/5/womens-bathhouse/>
<http://katarzynakozyra.pl/main/text/13/dance-lesson/>
<http://en.freshfilmfest.net/a1439-interview-with-katarzyna-kozyra>
<http://vimeo.com/50591276>
<http://www.artslant.com/ams/articles/show/31613>
<http://www.zb.eco.pl/gb/12/pyramid.htm>

CHRISTOPHER BLASE: In 1997 you used a hidden camera to film women in a public bath in Budapest, and then showed the material at the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw. And then you went to a men's bath, disguised as a man. What led you to make a film about women in the bathhouse?

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: I wanted to show women as they really are, not touched up, not fake; I wanted to show what women's bodies really look like, how they behave when they're acting natural. And I succeeded; they didn't know they were being filmed.

CHRISTOPHER BLASE: These are in a sense forbidden images?

MAGDA SAWON: Her installations, formally beautiful and poetic, but driven by intense, confrontational content, often present her subjects without their full knowledge and/or consent.

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: I did it in the name of what I thought was a good and right idea. I knew I wasn't really hurting anyone. To me, there's no such thing as a defective body. Everybody is the way they are.

JOSEF VOMÁČKA: Some of your works can be described as passionate and captivating documentaries where you were able to take many daring steps for the success of filming. Is it possible to say that some of your works from the 90's can be considered as independent film projects?

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: I don't see a clear difference among media, so you can consider some of my works as documentaries, which they probably are in some way. For me the most important thing is the process of making an artistic work. It's not of that much interest to me is whether the work will get perceived as a document or as a video installation. It's good to do work that is not clear in perception and in form. This can expand the field of social discussion, for

example about art and media. In the 90's I focused on a documentation of some human habits, physicality and gender. My works are a comment on some realistic situations, and I was in these situations for real. But I've never thought about my work as a film production in the literal sense. I was able to do these kinds of things and take "daring steps", as it were, because when I believe in some idea and I feel it, I can do a lot to achieve a goal.

CHRISTOPHER BLASE: And the result, in the case of the women's bath house, was a series of incredibly beautiful takes, scenes out of genre painting, the bodies very ample, very Rubensian...

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: Some of them were, but then there were Dureresque bodies as well. When I went there for the first time, without the camera, I couldn't get rid of art history clichés, and I naturally saw everything in terms of painting: "God, that's a Renoir, that one over there's doing something straight out of Degas".

A.ŻMIJEWSKI: Who were the two elderly, slightly flabby ladies with beards in your 2002 performance, *The Dancing Lesson*?

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: The ladies played themselves in synch with the projection they were watching on the wall. They had fake beards, while the puppets on the walls had fake cunts. I had reversed the roles: male puppets had cunts attached, while the old ladies wore fake beards, which made them old men with tits. The way I animated them was very simple: guys sat and watched chicks jerking on the wall. Pin-up girls. "Pin-ups" are photos of enticing bimbos that you pin up on the wall. And my actors were pinned to the wall they were suspended on.

A.ŻMIJEWSKI: People were reduced to the status of puppets...

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: You could say that. Mechanising people is interesting. Scary too. I also did the

performance as a video installation with over twenty boys taking part. The most interesting thing was that each dancer tried to break out of the schematic choreography that I imposed. On the face of it, they all went through the same motions. But they all did it in their own way. Bits of personality shone through, scraps of individuality, shades and remnants... Some tried to get attention by stylising the character of the puppet they played.

ANDREA ALESSI: It isn't the ostensibly scandalous elements in Katarzyna's work that cross lines. Blood, violence, disability, slaughter, cross-dressing, and all manner of genitalia abound, but her true crime is her undermining of human autonomy, the way she complicates identity and subjectivity, moving from one role to the next, particularly by way of costume and performance.

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: Since the beginning of my artistic career, I was interested in the body. I'm not sure, but maybe this was also because of my illness, because I got aware of my body in a very intense way. I had Hodgkin's disease, a form of cancer, and had to take chemotherapy, etc. *Rite of Spring* (1999-2002) was about the decay of body, and issues like you can't use your joints any more as you get old. It's bodies of old people. But in the work it seems like their bodies know no limitations. I use stop-animation, and the bodies are really moved by me, and the crew, on the floor. We put our energies into the old bodies, moving them around and putting them into exact, choreographed positions. I also changed their sexes to highlight that the body is a kind of a costume. The most incredible thing for me was that we were taking two years to make a piece that lasts maybe four

minutes. It was all our energy of two years in a few minutes.

JOSEF VOMÁČKA: In your student work, and later works as well, you stepped over many taboos and borders...

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: My 1993 diploma work, *Pyramid of Animals*, consists of a sculpture, and a video from a slaughterhouse, made during the killing of a horse. The sculpture presents a horse, a dog, a cat and a rooster set one over another. The idea was from the fairytale of the brothers Grimm. It is about combining reality and imagination. The work was about death at large, and the death of those four animals in particular. I did not make it to achieve a feeling of horror. I made it because of a spiritual need to ask the following question: Do we feel the presence of death when we eat pork chops or use cosmetics or other products made using animals, or has this been annihilated by the presence of our pets – animals we dote on? This work caused a huge scandal. And later – with *Blood Ties* (1995), *Olympia* (1996), *The Bathhouse* etc – it wasn't any better. But I have to tell you that recently I had a big monographic exhibition at Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, and I invited visitors to take part in an audition for the role of Katarzyna Kozyra for my upcoming film. People came and recorded their presentation about me and my work, but mostly about their opinion of me, and it was really meaningful to see how I'm perceived. And what is important for me was that these expressions were not only about me as a shocker. So, something can change after 20 years.

HANNA WRÓBLEWSKA: The works of Katarzyna point to the most important issues of human existence: identification,

identity, transgression. She acts in the realm of cultural taboos, referring to the bodily nature of man and to some stereotypes and behavior in the context of social life. She questions and overcomes them while stirring controversy and (usually) subjecting herself to the criticism of outraged critics. She forces us to re-think and verify the settled order of values by unveiling the facts of reality...

KATARZYNA KOZYRA: I don't intend to make a scandal, or to stir such strong emotions. I'm just doing things that are not 100 percent defined, but somehow in between rules and opinions, things that I have to solve, also for myself. It's not calculated. It's really just my need to investigate.

At the very beginning, with all the critique of *Pyramid of Animals*, I thought I would stop. I didn't consider myself an artist. But I was convinced by a curator to make a solo show, and I thought the only thing I could work on was what I was busy with. I was busy with my disease. For two or three years, I had been getting my chemotherapy, radiation etc, meeting people who were ill, visiting labs and hospitals. For me, real life was that. Of course, I met a lot of people who were ashamed of the state of their body and felt guilty about being ill and about what they look like. And that's what my work *Olimpia* is about. It was so difficult to convince other people to model for me. There was one girl I hoped would agree to being *Olimpia*. I was too shy to just tell her openly what I expected from her. When she died, I thought I should do it – at least I don't have to convince myself.



CASTING
New York, 2012



CASTING
Tel Aviv, 2011





JANUSZ PANAK
participant no. 85

CASTING
Warsaw, 2010-11

PAWEŁ CUKIER
participant no. 20

"I don't think this casting will have a winner, that we will all be playing Katarzyna Kozyra, that she dresses up as all of us."

IKA MATYJASZKIEWICZ
participant no. 213



Jis tann lāgé soee jāné

THE ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS in my work, 1984, appeared in *Tehelka* (with Hartosh Bal) and *Outlook* (with Shreevatsa Nevatia). The captions that appear below them are as they were inscribed in the reports then.

TEXT RESPONSES ARE BY Jeesh Bagchi, Meenal Baghel, Hartosh Bal, Sarnath Bannerjee, Arpana Caur, Amarjit Chandan, Rana Dasgupta, Manmeet Devgun, Anita Dube, Mahmood Farouqui, Iram Chufran, Ruchir Joshi, Rushmi Kaleka, Ranbir Kaleka, Sonia Khurana, Saleem Kidwai, Pradip Kishen, Subasri Krishnan, Lawrence Liang, Vivek Narayanan, Monica Narula, Anusha Rizvi, Ajmer Rode, Nilanjana Roy, Inder Salim, Priya Sen, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh, Gurvinder Singh, Jaspreet Singh, Madan Gopal Singh, Paromita Vohra, Zarina Muhammed

In 2005, when I heard Nirpreet Kaur relate her story, I remember she had to have a psychologist present in the room. It was too much for us to fully absorb. And later, I didn't know what to do with the weight of her words. We urged her to write a book; I hope she does some day.

There is a kind of silence around 1984, which may follow from an impossibility of comprehension of the violence, and the terrors of reliving it. Perhaps the stone-deaf silence that has been the State's response to witness accounts makes the futility of summoning a voice stark. At the time, there were no 24-hour television channels, internet or social media – what we have are eyewitness accounts, notes and photographs. Photographers who documented the massacre that November were terrified that their photographs would be made to disappear from photo-labs by the all-powerful Central Government. Images

did disappear. Those that survived may now be used as evidence, or to relive the emotion. At a street exhibition of photographs organised in 2012 by the activist lawyer HS Phoolka, many of the visitors wept even as they used their cell phone cameras to re-photograph the images on display. In 2005, after the release of the Justice Nanavati Commission Report on November 1984, and later in 2009, to mark the 25th anniversary of the pogrom, I visited Delhi's resettlement colonies, and took photographs in Trilokpuri, Tilak Vihar and Garhi, as well as at protest rallies in the city. These photographs appeared in the print media.

The photographs in themselves are now a kind of artifact, since they were mediated by the mainstream media, and had a certain valence in that context. I wondered how

they might be viewed removed from that context. To trigger a conversation about 1984, in early 2013 I asked some artist friends, who had lived in Delhi in November 1984, or have since or prior, or who see themselves as somehow part of this city, to write a comment alongside each photograph. It could be a direct response to the image, or a more general observation related to the event; it could be abstract, poetic, personal, fictional, factual or nonsensically true in the way of Toba Tek Singh's seminal words on the partition.

"Jis tann lāgé soee jāné", a Punjabi saying goes. *Only she, whose body is hurt, knows*. But perhaps it is also for those of us who were not direct victims, to try and articulate the history of our city – and universe. A world without individual stories, personal interpretations, opinions, secrets and photographs is, indeed, 1984 in the Orwellian sense.





From: T [REDACTED] S
Date: 24 April 2013 18:24
Subject: Reg: 1984
To: Gauri Gill

Hi Ms. Gill,

I am a student from IIT Bombay, and I came across your article '1984' on Kafila. Although it is highly disturbing for me to know about 1984, I am caught between what happened during those days and the truth. Obviously, I was not born then, and my grandfather has lost his memory to narrate the complete story. I kindly request you to send me a few authentic articles so that I can clear the cobwebs in my mind.

Thank you

--
Warm Regards,
T [REDACTED] S

In response, I prepared this list.



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Wikileaks

Is it really necessary to have people always sit and read in fixed positions and with strict postures? Create a comfortable sitting arrangement. Bring in a couch. Let there be beanbags, and mats for lying down. Enjoy reading.

Convert books into audio books and audio-visual books.

Books converted into braille, some converted into sign language videos.

Bring that natural environment in. Potted plants, rooftop gardens.

Allow readers to change and make new book covers and jackets.

Delhi Public Library

LIBRARY AS ...

At present these spaces are dark and dull. Make room for lots of natural light. Use cost effective reflectors.

Ask readers to illustrate books that don't have pictures.

kOsh was formed in 2013. As a group, its members are interested in creating points of deliberation around the artistic practices they are all, individually, involved in. At present, kOsh includes Debasis Beura, Namrata Kashi, Nilanjana Nandy, Shamsher Ali and Suraj Kashi. The idea to come together as a group arose from the desire to identify and explore possibilities, generate energy amongst each other, and establish a dialogue with their immediate environment. debasis.risu@gmail.com, aaryamishra7@gmail.com, nilix22@gmail.com, shamsher.ali19@gmail.com, surajkumarkashi@gmail.com

Break the monotony. Exterior walls should have books murals.

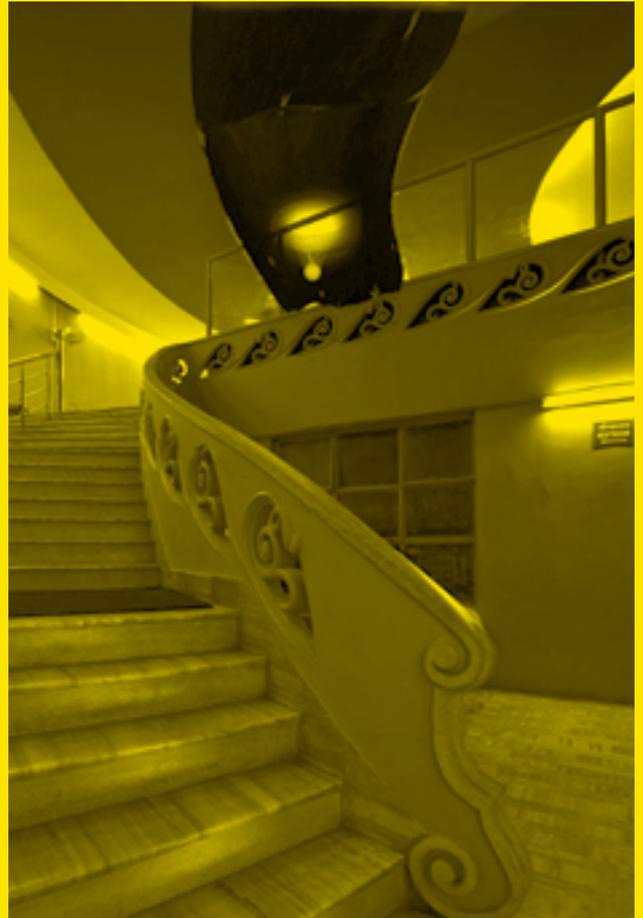
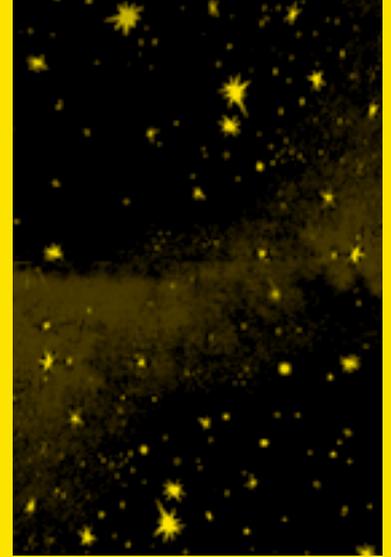
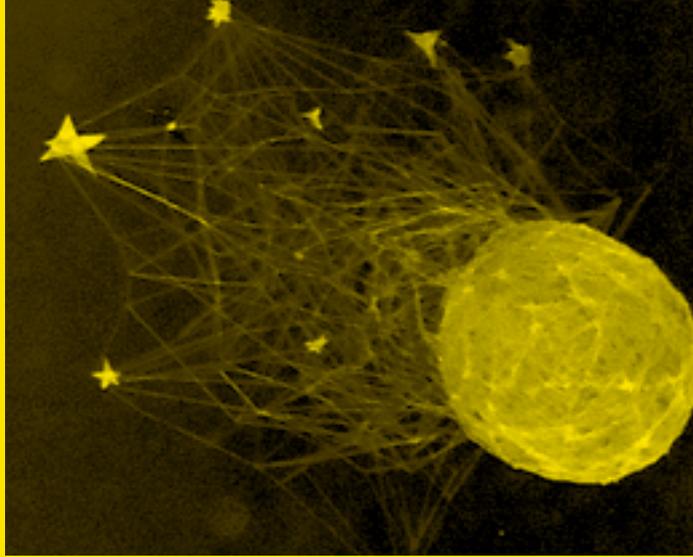
Have a video library. Make available videos on reading, conversations with authors and book launches. People should be allowed to save and carry these with them for use and reference.

Create "scream boxes". Silence should not be dull to the extent of being dead. A scream box with sound absorbers for people to walk into and vent their inner feelings, or read aloud from a book, or laugh when reading something humorous.

Shankar's International Dolls Museum

Birth of New Moon

Sikan Kumar Panda did his Bachelors in Fine Arts (Printmaking) from BK College of Arts and Crafts, Bhubaneswar (2011), and Masters in Fine Arts (Printmaking) from University of Hyderabad (2013). He has participated in exhibitions, including, *Voyage of Exploration*, Srishti Art Gallery, Hyderabad, 2013. In 2013, he was NIV Artist in Residence, Mount Abu, Rajasthan, and Crack International Art Camp, Kushtia, Bangladesh. chikankumar@gmail.com



National Museum of Natural History

InsideOUT



Heidi Fichtner is a Delhi-based curator who has been living in India since 2007, where she considers herself more an immigrant than an ex-patriot. She has lived and worked in New York, Berlin and Paris before settling in India. She has flaming red hair, the color of a forest. hildatree@gmail.com

InsideOUT is a proposition for a six-month initiative of staged interventions and public programmes conceived to break down the real and perceived divisions between the ghostly inside space of the museum and the life of the Delhi/NCR civic body that begins just outside its gates.

InsideOUT enacts a reversal of the museum's activities and collection from the inside of the building toward the outside public space, while providing scope for a critique and re-evaluation of the museum's functioning in the years to come. It aims to instigate learning about natural history, current ecological issues and strategies for conservation from an inclusive, inter-disciplinary perspective, engaging with the natural resources of Delhi as identified by invited guests from within India and beyond. Botanists, ecologists, farmers, environmental activists, librarians, natural history museum archivists, community activists, artists and other cultural producers will be called upon to contribute their expertise for re-envisioning future directions. While the physical space inside the building may remain relatively

unaltered, selected galleries will be closed off such that they can be converted into studio spaces.

PRIMARY FOCI

- *The creation of a community vegetable garden on the museum property and a living vegetal façade on the face of the building.*
- *An assembly of electronically-activated plastic displays from inside the museum, presented among the flowers and fauna of the newly built metro station at Mandi House, just steps from the main location.*
- *An imaginative and up-to-date re-interpretation of the museum's collection and archives.*
- *Developing a plan for the renovation of the building itself, if the owner of the property (FICCI) and the other tenant besides the museum (Ministry of Forests and Environment) were in agreement.*

GOALS

- *To shift the site of learning from the inside of the building to the outside, so that existent ecosystems and living natural history of Delhi can be experienced in a fresh, hands-on environment by anybody who is so inclined.*
- *To invite artists, ecologists, historians, educators and practitioners from other fields to engage with the activities of the garden or the museum and its library and archives, and to conceive projects.*
- *To invite a critique from the invited participants, for a contemporary reading of the construct of "museum" and the field of "natural history", framed in terms relevant to the global discourse emerging in the 21st century.*
- *To draw a wide public, and build participation in the spirit of community-building and fun.*



MECHANISMS

The community garden

Community plots/urban fruit and vegetable gardens, in containers or beds, conceived, constructed and managed by collaborators from fields such as urban gardening/horticulture/architecture and education/social work. The garden shall be designed such that covered structures and seating for social, artistic and educational activities are integrated among the garden plots.

To aid in developing a wide and balanced participation, the plots will be allotted to various local constituencies such as school groups, families/households, neighborhood groups, individuals/collaborations, as well as to invited individuals or collaboratives from areas such as earth sciences, arts and education.

The vegetal or floral façade of the building will be designed and maintained by a local vendor in collaboration with a local landscape artist.

Residencies for researchers and practitioners

These would address specific topics, such as creating an index of the bird species in residence within a 300-meter radius of

the museum and to develop a permanent display for the museum, or developing a garden plot of common healing herbs. Residents would also be invited to update the museum's dioramas.

Resources would be drawn from outside/ public space, and from the museum's collections, library and archives.

Installation of simulated (plastic) specimens from the museum at the Mandi House metro station

With the guidance of the museum staff and an artist, or other individual with experience working in the public space of Delhi, a small selection of the simulated flora, fauna and animal life currently displayed in the museum will be shifted to an appropriate site(s) within the landscaping of the newly finished metro station.

HYPOTHETICAL PROGRAMMES

- A researcher in the natural sciences, or other qualified individual, will be invited to curate the museum's library of books and documents so as to assemble new readings that will be shared on a monthly basis with visitors.
- Weekly screenings of films by artists or conservationists that deal with

questions of nature and humankind's relation to it, as well as more classic "textbook" educational films on natural history, either in the garden, or on a very large screen suspended across the building's outside surface or in the auditorium.

- An artist, or other individual in residence who works with celestial or biological systems, or with issues of conservation or animal welfare, may give presentations to adults or to school groups. For example, pigeon keepers from Old Delhi.

Claire Pentecost, artist and writer, Chicago
Christian Philipp Mueller, artist, Berlin
Pradip Saha, environmental activist, Delhi
Hemant Sareen, artist and writer, Delhi
Vandana Shiva, seed activist and eco-feminist, Delhi
Nadeem Waqif, horticulturalist, Hyderabad

Curators, archivists and educators from museums of natural history, both within and outside of India. Representatives from the *Centre for Environment Education*, Delhi; *FORCE* or a similar organisation working toward water conservation in Delhi, *Art, Ecology, Education Organisation*, Berlin, *Adarsh Bio Organics*, Gurgaon.

INVITED GUESTS IN RESIDENCE WOULD INCLUDE SUCH PEOPLE AS:

Ravi Agarwal, artist and environmentalist, Delhi
Aastha Chauhan, artist and community activist, Delhi
Neha Choksi, artist, Bombay
Marcus Coates, artist, GB
Rohini Devasher, artist, Delhi
Mark Dion, artist, New York
Mona Gandhi, raw food chef and educator, Bombay
Theaster Gates, artist, activist, community instigator, Chicago
Tue Greenfort, artist, Berlin
Henrik Hakansson, artist, Stockholm/London
Pradip Krishen, ecological historian, Delhi
Ratish Nanda, conservation architect and Projects Director of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Delhi



Toilet/Public Space/Public

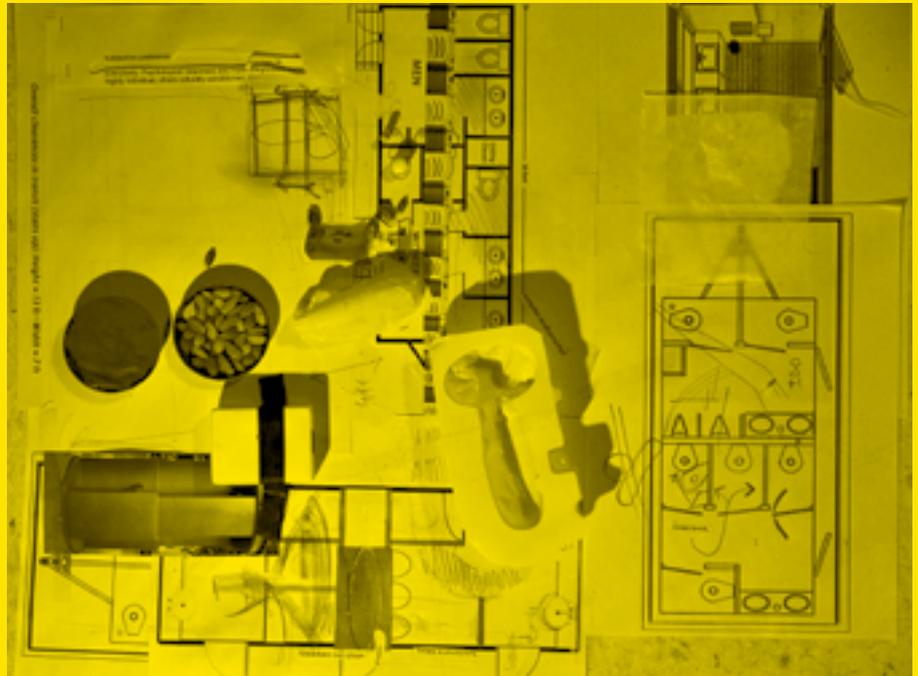
Our lives are shaped by the beauty or ugliness of our surroundings. Architecture occupies a unique place in our sensibilities, for unlike other artistic endeavors, it is totally public in its manifestation. Good architecture has often been of a domestic and human scale; frequently a marriage of very localised needs and materials. But there is something more. Buildings, spaces between them, journeys amongst and through them – these are frames for daily lives. Different frames make different lives, influence how we think, feel, behave – how we are.

We want to explore the most personal space in human life, the toilet, in which the moods induced by our surroundings (personal space in public place), open a whole palate of sensory qualities – from colour and texture to acoustic properties. The subliminal messages these places emanate affect how people view themselves, even how they act. Since public toilets have many users, their design needs to appeal to as many as it can, rather than react to the ephemeral outward manifestations of individuality. As ideas of leisure and our values become increasingly individualised, we need less stereotypically confining environments. What we hope to create are rooms with differentiated characters that are easier



to individualise than those that are just boxes created by the application of technology.

What we like is personal. But how we respond to surroundings is not just subjective preference. That we all react



psychologically to colour, noise, air quality, temperature, is common to everybody. These psychological responses themselves, however, are complicated – some highly individual, others culturally conditioned.

In Delhi, we find a huge shortage of public toilets (or are affected by the way they are). We propose to create a few mobile, fully functional, public toilets.

We will treat these public toilet spaces or individual WC cabins that we create, as our white cube gallery space – places of transformative beauty, places which inspire, motivate, give meaning and fulfillment, spaces that are spirited and nurturing. This is about artistic commitment. Not ego-assertive ‘art’, but listening to situations so that form condenses out of the needs of place, people and circumstance. Social participation and ecological appropriateness are part of this, so is loving commitment: inspiration, care, energy and will.

With technical help from architects, designers and experience of people on site who use public toilets regularly, we are looking to make a unique design for a mobile toilet – functional as well as experiential. This will also be a prototype for future mobile toilets.

The medium of this project will be Hindi, and it will travel through the semi-urban localities and urban villages in Delhi, which still don’t have public toilets.

Layout is an artist collective interested in making location-based ‘aesthetic construction’ that interrogates standard and engineered urban space. They are concerned with cultural landscape, influenced by geological structure and history, into which they integrate their work. The group draws its inspiration from technology, to create a new reality. layout050@gmail.com

What Makes a “Good” Act of Contemporary Art?

IN THE PRESENT, PRODUCING CONTEMPORANEITY

What does it take for a contemporary art action to be “good”? I will draw on my personal aesthetic standards, understanding of art history, and hopes for contemporary art and politics, to produce a standard for determining what is “good”. I have also diligently collected aesthetic standards from history, as well as from individuals and different countries, to provide additional context for determining what is “good”. When I say “good” or “not good”, I too am performing on a stage; the traditions that I have memorised by rote provide the backdrop.

But first, allow me to address this important question myself: What is good contemporary art? The answer is, that something counts as good contemporary art when, in the present, we produce art that is indeed contemporary. This is not the same as producing a contemporary work of art. Rather, one must produce a new contemporaneity and impose it upon our highly landscaped present, which is rife with consensus. One must paralyse, disrupt, delegitimise, reframe, and reassemble the present, creating a new paradigm. It must allow us to live in a new time. Something is good contemporary art if it truly produces contemporaneity within the present.

What does it take for a contemporary art action to be “good”? This is the same as asking what it takes for a contemporary art action to approach contemporary art, to meet the standard, to

be “good.” So the question becomes, what does it take for a contemporary art action to become good contemporary art – to produce contemporaneity in the present?

SUBVERTING EXTANT STANDARDS

We have already narrowed the scope of the debate: contemporary art is art that produces contemporaneity; it re-imagines our present, allowing us to live in a new time. It is not monopolised and dominated by the terms of global capitalism. For a contemporary art action to be good, it must simultaneously re-imagine, suspend, subvert, and even negate our existing standards for what makes contemporary art good. Following this subversion, the extant standards of “good” are no longer suitable. A good contemporary art action sets its own rules and produces something unique each time it does so. It is a sacred force, the destruction of idols, overthrowing and establishing at the same time. Because it is unique and incisive, it is ultimately recorded and preserved in archives and museums.

The status of a good contemporary art action is not determined by the appraisals of collectors or the rankings of artists. A good contemporary art action might be manifest as a collected artwork, art project, or installation: these are all varieties of Utopian projects. They are “good” and “great” like all Utopian projects. When discussing whether or not a contemporary art action is good, we must respect this principle of aesthetic equivalence.

In the context of this essay, this principle of aesthetic equivalence can be expressed as follows: all people should pursue the same good within art. Entering one's own contemporaneity is the most important thing. As the philosopher Nietzsche says, all people should assume the bearing of an artist during the second half of their destiny, and mould it into a great tragedy. The philosopher Alain Badiou positions art beside politics, science, and love, as one of the four ways for the contemporary subject to enter the trajectory of his or her own destiny. First, achieve art; only then can we talk about good or bad art actions. It is not an artwork that is good or bad, but rather a life, a destiny manifest in an artwork that is good or bad. So let us compare contemporary art with those other three aspects of the trajectory of one's destiny: art—true art, artful art, well done art—is equivalent to, in politics, a revolution; in science, a jolt to the status quo akin to the theory of relativity or quantum mechanics; in love, the liberation of a desire. A contemporary art action should resemble an act of love, a scientific experiment, or a political project. It is an adventure. Indeed, a good contemporary art action must be the newest and deepest of adventures.

A MEANS OF UNITING WITH THE MULTITUDES

A good contemporary art action must both blaspheme and occupy. It must become a means of uniting with the multitudes, of experimenting, of resisting and re-imagining an empire. It summons people inside an installation of art, displays itself to itself, gaining belief and strength from within, exalting itself, achieving a new collective respiration. A good contemporary art action is the product of the sovereign freedom of the artist as an individual. It produces its own sovereign space within the space of a country; the artist's sovereign installation is its own country. The artist seeks to invite us to her country. She says she will make new laws for us. She lets us become a people again.

She can only make her country within other people's countries, so her country can only be an installation. What we call an art installation includes the artwork of an individual artist, the artworks of various eras, the artworks of people of the same era, and of course, all of those anonymous acts of art, as well as the various contemporary readymades that artists invite along. In an art installation, the artist should not treat the audience as her people, nor as a series of individuals. Behind the dozens of people who show up at the gallery, we glimpse the network that incorporates all people. The artist professes to invite these multitudes into her art installation, even though she only reaches the handful of people in the audience. In her contemporary art action, the audience becomes a people.

FROM

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/cn/lp/ku/mag/dis/kr/en11391165.htm>

Translation from the Chinese: Daniel Nieh



The Unsharable Screen - The Yin of Chinese Contemporary Art?

A Video Essay by Lu Xing-Hua (2014)

“The Unsharable Screen...” is about philosopher Jacques Ranciere’s passage through China, since the 1960s. His meandering through the time-space of migrant workers in the year 2013 is caught by a GoPro lens, a walking camera. What has been collected is the *yin* side of Chinese contemporary art, that is, where it is most absent.

Art can no longer be art by simply rendering the sensual richness of artists and making it available to the humble ones. The time-space of a migrant worker is as yet an unsharable screen for artists. Art is currently not needed by the people. Artists must make art as if they are warranted by the future need of the people and as necessitated by the people.

An artist can be an artist only if he or she manages to help a migrant worker’s metamorphosis into a life-form of an artist. Then he or she could, in turn, have a chance to be an artist.

Artists take social, political and moral responsibility to endorse the course of emancipation of migrant workers. What can they do for the migrant worker? It is one more fake question on part of artists to evade the real confrontation. But let’s try to answer it anyway: To help the migrant workers to be artists, so that the ones who claim to be artists could have a chance to become one.

An artist is, by definition, in the middle of becoming an artist. A migrant worker, by her exodus from her trajectory, is also in the middle of liberating herself from the subjected status. The artist and the migrant worker are working from either end of the tunnel to meet at a certain point. Their paths might never cross. But they are both in the middle of their own adventure. “Art” is this risky adventure. As Mao put it, the re-education of artists is the enlightenment, or even emancipation, of the proletariat.

In the Universe of *The Crystal Frontier*

The Crystal Frontier is an ongoing story that I have been composing since 1998. It follows a group of women who set up the autonomous community of "New Ponderosa". By opting out of contemporary capitalist society and re-settling in the New Mexico desert, these women aim to create a different world – their own world. They want this project to foster fairer, healthier and more egalitarian human relationships and production methods. This underpins everything they do and produce. They work on utilitarian objects – furniture, everyday items, clothing or architecture – both from self-interest and in order to survive.

The world we live in is based on systems of power and exclusion. The idea of Ponderosa is to succeed in creating an egalitarian living space. By not excluding anyone or anything, our world excludes something else. Ponderosa involves a separate exclusion conceived within a world that does not exclude anyone or anything.

Ponderosa is a female community. Their reasons for excluding men from their community are not the same as Plato's for excluding artists from the city. With Plato it was more to do with appeasing the city, which is a far more sweeping process. The utopia of Ponderosa, on the other hand, is better described as a place of tension and problems rather than as an authentic utopia that works. They refer to this in diary entries and snatches of doctrine.

These women left modern capitalist society out of frustration with jobs, labour, employment, relationships, patriarchy and

went to New Mexico in order to find a new way of working, to build their own space, recreate freedom, recreate their own relationship to labour – manual labour and then later reintegrate men within their environment. It's no coincidence that the desert in New Mexico is the setting for *The Crystal Frontier*. Sects and dissident schools of thought seem to proliferate in the west of the United States. I believe it's been the perfect place for life projects or alternative projects since the early twentieth century, if not before. It's somewhere that cries out for them. The desert is a false tabula rasa.

The women in Ponderosa not only want to change their relation to labour, they also want to change their relation to time. One of the things they are against is the mechanical cutting up of time by clocks and machines. They are against the fact that we now have machines that tell time, and that every second is equivalent to any other second and that you can measure it. And so they made the *Perpetual Time Clock* (2004). It does not have hands, only pictograms that indicate the different activities you are supposed to do in one day in order to have a fulfilled day: on top is sleep, and going down clockwise is labour and artistic labour, taking care of animals, yoga and meditation, reading and studying, agriculture and food supply, psychoanalysis and, finally, sport. Sport is represented by the emblem of sports costume that Varvara Stepanova designed in Russia in the 1920s. Stepanova, and these early utopian projects and the arts of the Russian Revolution, have become a recurrent obsession of mine.

The women of Ponderosa do business. This is something I have seen in many

communes. Even the Shakers in America in the nineteenth century had businesses in order to survive. The Shakers manufactured furniture, which became so important for modernist design, in the belief that it encompassed the harmony and the purity of shape that their religion believed in. They sold the furniture outside the commune, which brought money into the commune. _____ The women of Ponderosa too go to the market and sell things they make, _____ for instance, clothes that they make as part of their interest in utopian design, but also as things to sell. _____

_____ The women in Ponderosa have to raise animals in order to survive. _____ They are engaged in agriculture, they build objects that they sell in order to make money, and they raise rabbits. And so, I designed a rabbit hutch called *Pyramid of Love* (2003). It is composed of interlocking triangular boxes. _____ Then I got deeply involved not only with making the utilitarian objects that these women would make, but also with portraying their self-expression or artistic drives and tendencies. _____ *25 Sculptures of Pure Self-Expression* (2003) consists of a number of ceramic objects I imagine as originating from the self-expression of these fictional people. _____

_____ The utilitarian objects they make very often involve textile or ceramics – materials associated with, let's say, feminine craft. _____ It is also often quite an ironic take on feminist art. _____ For example, their hammock bears the inscription "Llano del Rio 1915", which refers to a commune in the Mojave Desert in California that was founded by Job Harriman, who ran for vice-presidency of the United States in 1900. As a socialist, he obviously was not going to win in America, and when his candidacy failed, he decided to found this commune near Los Angeles. The commune built a school, had a farming section, a printing press and its own sort of propaganda organ, and at some point even had a small film studio. All these kinds of stories are really inspiring to me.

Unfortunately, this particular commune was very short-lived: because some property developers in the Mojave Desert wanted to get rid of the colonists in order to build sectional homes, and they switched off the commune's water supply. _____ The commune had to leave and go somewhere else. _____ But in the few years they were there, they developed all kinds of interesting ideas about how to live communally, such as sharing the education of their children. *Llano del Rio* was designed by the architect Alice Constance Austin, who was hired in the early 1910s by Harriman. She was one of the first people to develop a system of underground tunnels for laundry, to plan kitchen-less houses, communal day-care areas, etc. – so as to liberate women from the pressures of domestic work. It is quite fascinating, and I constantly embedded these stories inside my work. _____

_____ For me, the commune and the group have always been about trying to unburden myself of the pressure of being an individual who takes decisions and has an artistic ego. _____ Inventing fictional people and doing their work is a way of freeing oneself of a burden. _____ And also, there is a kind of crossbreeding between historical figures and the fiction. They become part of the same continuum. _____ I never feel completely alone; there is an entire body of images that I am working with and that is playing in the background. _____ *The Crystal Frontier* is an ongoing project, and it informs everything that I do – even new, unrelated projects.

FROM

Utopian Projects, *Mai-Thu Perret, Engadin Art Talks*, eds. Cristina Bechtler, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Beatrix Ruf, Published by JRP/Ringier, 2013

Interview with Mai-Thu Perret, by *Timothée Chailou, The White Review*. <http://www.thewhiterreview.org/interviews/interview-with-mai-thu-perret/>

Mai-Thu Perret: A Conversation with Jacob Proctor, *Monograph, JRP/Ringier, 2011*

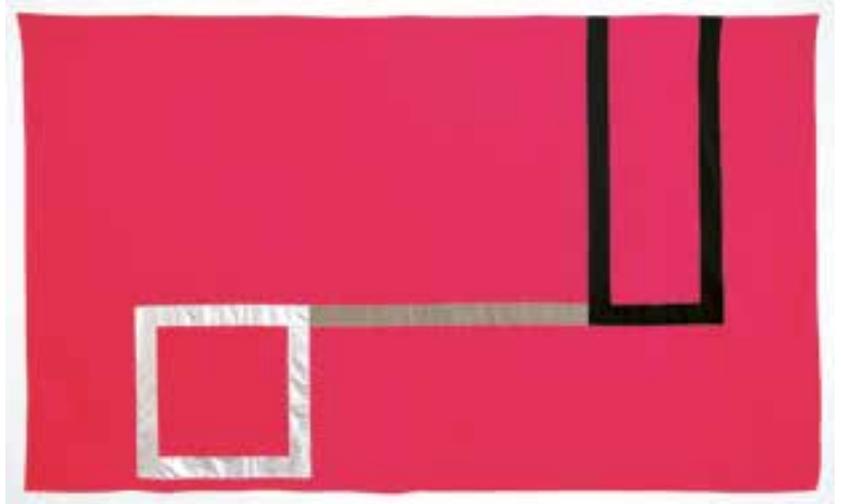




A UNIFORM SAMPLER
2004, Mai-Thu Perret with Liga Dias Collection,
ChemicalMoonBABY Zürich
Photo: Pierre Fantis

PERPETUAL TIME CLOCK
2004, Collection Ricola, Laufen
Photo: Annik Wetter

BLACK BALTHAZAR
2013, Courtesy David Kordansky
Gallery, Los Angeles.
Photo: Stefan Altenburger



PARADE
2010, Courtesy Gallery Timothy
Taylor, London.
Photo: Annik Wetter



BAKE & SALE THEORY
2004

*Bake and sale economics:
clothing propaganda arts
and crafts higher
awareness autocritique
and things*

*Monday thru Sunday
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All proceedings to support
New Postcard Year Zero*

She says she has come here precisely to break with what she was before. She wants to destroy everything she used to be before. She obsesses over like relations, like exchanges, the kind of banners that she says cost you nothing but actually eat your soul away. She is a lifestyle traditionalist, like other people are love traditionalists. The way we survive. I think what bothers her is that we actually do survive. Before, when we were still being an artist's true friend, she found nothing to complain about, and she was the most aggressive of complainants. The fact that the money we were living on was earned dishonestly, is far from sitting in a bank account, interest on some previously doctored deal didn't bother her at all. Everybody has a pain where they stop being able to identify compromise, a kind of official horizon line beyond which they believe that things are no longer under their control and should therefore be ignored. But her horizon encircles everything she makes. One day I told her that wage slavery was nothing, but another form of prostitution and she then pushed this idea to another level, for her pointing with anything she made became tantamount to selling her own body. I told her if she thinks we'd be better off starving. She refuses to reply, and simply tells me that every question comes the mold of the answer: the one who chooses it deserves to receive. She has nothing but contempt for our potential customers. She imagines corrupt yet additive free cigarette smoking pseudo-liberals smiling along the sides of the market place, desiccating, tying our wires, holding them in their hands, maybe tying them around comping them to the other designer items they have amassed in their closets back home. I think she is so protective of the hand we've formed, of the freedom we've built for ourselves that she wants to deny everybody else the possibility of ever coming close to it. Her thinking regarding objects approaches the pre-modern. The only way to engrain it to myself is on a kind of wooden. She profoundly resents providing others with a vicarious way of seeing their discomfort with the placated life they lead. Among us, she is the distinctive character. Needless to say we would never want to see her go away.

The Incidental Insurgents: The Part About The Bandits

"What do you expect us to do?"
one of them asked him sarcastically.
"Rob a bank?"
"Precisely," he said. And they did.
It began as simply as that.

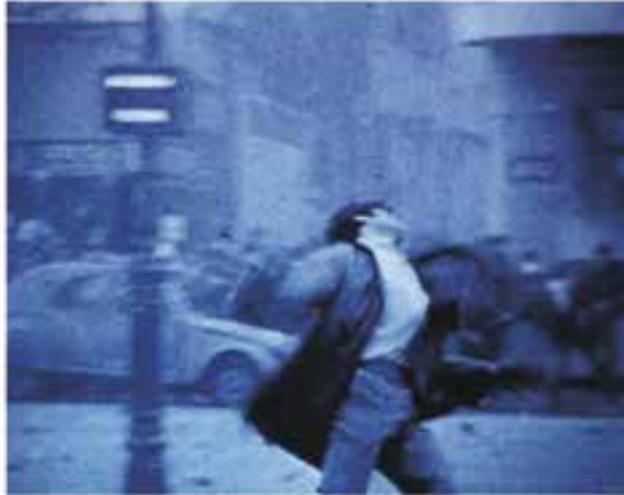
We said our farewells to one another beneath the high vaults of the Terror.

*We are on the fault lines of a shifting terrain
using a dead language
Unable to imagine a different letter, sentence, lexicon
To think of the origin of this power and its mutability
We are here, where empire still draws a deep breath
and exhales in the air that settles in our pores*

*We feel the density of the ongoing moment
See time as density that is breathing, folding, moving
See the archaic in the contemporary
And yet the perpetual present expands
swallowing all other moments
propelling our imaginary back into crisis*

On the Eve of World War One a number of young anarchists came together in Paris determined to SETTLE SCORES with bourgeois society. Their exploits were to become legendary.

عشية الحرب العالمية الأولى التقى عدد من الأناشيطيين الشباب في باريس وهم مصممون على تصفية حساباتهم مع المجتمع البورجوازي. وقد أصبحت بطولاتهم أسطورية.



Victor Serge and The Bonnot Gang
Paris, 1910-1922
The Anarchist as Bandit
فيكتور سيرج وجنوديه جون
باريس 1910-1922
الاناشيطي كمتسلق



Le dernier portrait de GARNIER

Unwilling to be MASTERS or SLAVES, they became bandits---the first ever to use automobiles to ATTACK BANKS. Known as "the tragic bandits", most of them die in shoot-outs with the Paris police or on the guillotine.

وهم الذين رفضوا أن يكونوا أسياداً أو عبيداً، فأصبحوا صنعاليك هم أول من استخدم السيارات لمهاجمة البنوك. عرفوا باسم الصنعاليك التراجيديين، ومات معظمهم إما في تبادل إطلاق النار مع شرطة باريس أو على المقصلة.



To DIE of HUNGER is cowardly and degrading. I preferred to turn thief, counterfeiter, murderer...

الموت جوعاً جبن وهوان. فضّلت أن أصبح لصاً، مزوراً، مجرماً...



The "terrorists" of the early 1890's were mainly poor working class men a cabinet-maker, a dyer, a shoemaker, unable to get any work, often with a family to support, bitter at the injustice they had suffered, and sympathetic to anarchism.

الرفاعيون الأوائل المتسلقون الذين قاموا بعملياتهم كانوا من الفقراء الطبقة العاملة. صناع الخشب، الصانين، وباحثي الأذية على سيق الخشب، غير قادرين على الحصول على أي عمل وفي الغالب من لديهم عائلات عليهم أن يعولوا، يندفعون بالمرارة من الظلم الذي يعانون منه، ومخالفين مع كل سلطوية.

Basel Abbas +
Ruanne Abou-Rahme

Abu Jildeh and al-'Armeet
Palestine, 1930-1934
The Rebel as bandit

ابو جلدة والعريميط
فلسطين 1930-1934
الثائر كصعلوك



I think that if anyone had asked me at the age of twelve, 'What is life?'. I would have replied, 'I do not know, but I can see that it means "Thou shalt think, thou shalt struggle, thou shalt be hungry"'

أعتقد أنه لو سألني أحدهم في سن الثانية عشرة "ما هي الحياة؟" لكنت أجبت، "لا أعرف، ولكن يمكنني أن أرى أنها تعني "سوف تفكر، سوف تكافح، سوف تجوع"



There was no doubt of it, all we could be were outlaws. Ours was a restless, uncontrolled spirit, in quest of some impossible new dignity, how or what we did not know ourselves

لم يكن هناك شك بالأمر، لا يمكن إلا أن نكوننا
مطلوبين. كان لنا روحاً قلقة، جامحة، تبحث عن
كرامة جديدة مستعينة، كيف أو ماذا، نحن نفسنا
لم نكن ندرى.



In Jerusalem when they were sentenced to death by hanging in the British military court, masses of angry people stood in silence listening to Abu Jildeh's final words:

We are where we cannot but be at the tipping point or the point of foreclosure
Performing the gestures of the post- in the heart of the colonial
Burying the liberation in the never was of the almost happened

We are believing and dis-believing
We are in the midst of the not yet material or perhaps the already determined inhabiting a time of radical potentiality and its collapse
We are in search of a new political language in need of this always on the verge always becoming and yet...





I'm not sure why they were there. It was clearly a hostile visit, hostile but somehow propagandistic and proselytizing too. At first the visceral realists kept to themselves, and Alamo tried to talk epistemologic and slightly ironic while he waited to see what would happen. Then he started to relax, encouraged by the strangers' shyness, and after half an hour the workshop was back to normal. That's when the battle began. The visceral realists questioned Alamo's critical system and he responded by calling them out-rate surrealists and fake Marxists.



لمست متأكدًا لماذا كانوا هناك. كانت زيارة عدائية دون شك، عدائية ولكنها لم تكن عدائية وتبشيرية. في البداية ظلت جماعة الواقعية الغريزية متكاتفين، وحاول الألو أن يبدو ديبلوماسياً وسامحاً بعد ما، فيما كان ينتظر أربعمائة ما سيحدث، ثم بدأ بالاسترخاء، تشجيعه على ذلك جعل الغريزيات، وبعد نصف ساعة، عادت وريشة العمل إلى طبيعتها. عادت بدأت المعركة. تسائل الواقعيون الغريزيون حول نظام الألو التقليدي لمواجهتهم بوصفهم بالسرياليين الرخيصين والماركسيين الغريزيين.

I've been cordially invited to join the visceral realists. I accepted, of course. There was no initiation ceremony. It was better that way.

دعيت للانضمام إلى جماعة الواقعية الغريزية. وافقت بالطبع. لم تكن هناك أي مراسم احتفالية للانضمام. كان هذا أفضل.



Roberto Bolaño and María Santiago of Arturo Belano and Ulises Lima Mexico, 1974-1976. The artist as bandit
يوسف بنو بولانو وماريو سانتياغو
أرتورو بولانو ووليس لينا
المكسيك 1974-1976
الفنان كالمجرم



Belano shook my hand and told me that I was one of them now, and then we sang a ranchera. That was all. The song was about the lost towns of the north and a woman's eyes. I asked them whether the eyes were Cesárea Tinajero's. Belano and Lima looked at me and said that I was clearly a visceral realist already and that together we would change Latin American poetry.

"And when do you plan to come back?" They shrugged their shoulders. "Who knows," they said. I'd never seen them look so beautiful. I know it sounds silly to say, but they'd never seemed so beautiful, so seductive.

We are here, on the fault lines of a shifting terrain
We are here, where we cannot but be seeking other ways of being and becoming – always a question of position of the need to constantly re-shift the existing terrain
to be full of desire

لهبنا اشتهاً، وغارتنا القاعة بحماسة والصفحة أين يمكننا أن نذهب، ما الذي سيحدث لنا مع هذه الحاجة إلى المطلق، هذا المعلن إلى المعركة، هذه الرغبة العمياء في تطهير كل العواجز، في الهروب من المدينة والحياة التي ما فيها مهرباً



As day began to dawn, they asked me to join the gang. They didn't say "group" or "movement," they said "gang." I liked that. I said yes, of course. It was all very simple.

عند الفجر، طلبوا مني الانضمام إلى العصابة. لم يقولوا "جماعة" أو "حركة"، بل قالوا "عصابة". أعجبتني ذلك، قلت نعم، بالطبع. كان الأمر بسيطاً للغاية.



We stood up in protest and left the hall gesturing vehemently. Where could we go, what could become of us with the need for the ABSOLUTE, this YEARNING for battle, this BLIND DESIRE against all obstacles, to ESCAPE from the city and the life from which there was no escape?





And the Directory of the
Avant-Garde continued with its
heroes and errors

واستمر دليل الفن الطليعي
بأبطاله وأخطائه



Our search begins with three seemingly disparate coordinates: the early anarchist life of Victor Serge and his contemporary bandits in 1910's Paris; Abu Jilda and Arameet, and their bandit gang involved in a rebellion against the British in 1930's Palestine; and the artist as the quintessential bandit in Roberto Bolaño's novel *The Savage Detectives* set in 70's Mexico.

There is, indeed, a resonance between the inspiring, bizarre and sometimes tragic stories of these diverse bandits, the outsider rebel *par excellence*.

An investigation into the possibilities for the future rather than the past, and using literary and factual texts as starting points, a convoluted story, situated in multiple times

starts to emerge. Initiating an obsessive search, we try to figure out how we, like the bandits before us, find ourselves inhabiting a moment full of radical potential and disillusionment, in continual search of a language *for the moment*.



Consumed with the story of these records we had to steal them back

وحيث أن مسألة الاسطوانات استحوذت
علينا، قررنا أن نسرقتها من جديد

Dara Shikoh Library

Proposal for a University-Managed Museum

**Why should Ambedkar University, Delhi,
run a city museum?**

As a city university engaged in the collection of intangible and tangible knowledge about the city and its residents, Ambedkar University is uniquely placed to curate and administer a city museum.

As an interdisciplinary social science and humanities university, with a range of teaching and research activities—from the creative arts to social entrepreneurship, and from oral history to ecology—the university brings together a special set of skills which can be leveraged for artistic, curatorial and managerial possibilities

Running a City Museum is in keeping with the university's broader mandate of community outreach and involvement in knowledge production in and about the city.



Surajit Sarkar is currently Visiting Associate Professor at the Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University, Delhi. He has worked as a photocopier salesman, a bank officer, a primary school teacher and developer of curriculum for primary schools, a video filmmaker and a video artist for multimedia theatre and dance productions. surajit.cck@aud.ac.in

Dara Shikoh Library

Karkhana, Game and Spectre Testimonies

Why does the Dara Shikoh Library building look like a colonial structure rather than a Mughal monument? We recognise the significance of looking into the historical domination of certain forms and practices of knowledge production over others.

How do we re-imagine the functions and the roles of Maktab khana, the translation bureau of Akbar, or the Kar khana, artisanal workshops, as sites of heterogeneous forms of knowledge production? Unless we engage with the reading, viewing, collecting, or bookmaking practices of the time, we cannot understand the dynamics in which the Dara Shikoh library operated. And yet, how useful it is to evoke the episteme of artistic practices of the past while re-imagining the karkhana today?

How useful would Dara Shikoh's ideas of hospitality and stranger be for contemporary times? How might they allow us to re-imagine notions of public, public art, and aesthetics?

Thinking with these questions, we are proposing three models—the Karkhana, Game and Spectre Testimonies—to devise different strategies, from exhibition and studio practice to a form of carnival, to convert this monument into a public space. Though these three models have their own autonomy, together they evoke the possibility of new ways of meaning-making. This proposal attempts a re-imagining of the space in terms of its visible layers of history and the contemporary relevance of such a site, and stages an intervention.

THE KARKHANA

An open studio for collective practices involving the community from the adjoining university campus and beyond, to evoke new meaning by re-ordering art practices.

Practices—whether they be known as 'art', 'craft', 'technique', 'game', 'fun', 'nonsense' or 'ruminations'—will be experimented with in this space.

Typographers, calligraphers, magicians, bookbinders, tattoo artists, performers, new media practitioners, a wide variety of crafts men, artists, technicians, activists, and those who work between these or in many other capacities, will be invited. Participants can trigger an idea, propose, make, learn a craft or trick, play, perform and exhibit. The exhibition resulting from this engagement will be located in the backyard of the Dara Shikoh Library, but it will also have another community or communities through live chats and social media. An online forum will be made, which will work as a hub of images and ideas.

Benches will be placed around the backyard of the library, and also a bookshelf containing obscure as well as banned books. The books will be selected based on different modes of knowledge production – from the esoteric, to the popular.

The Karkhana does not stand separate; it will feed into the Game and the Spectre Testimonies.

THE GAME

A device for problematising and re-imagining spatial experience, and for generating certain relations between the heterogeneous elements which constitute this space.

In the story of this building, the idea of the library, and the personality of Dara Shikoh are absent and present at the same time; only a speculative reasoning can weave them together. Clues and hints, in the form of texts, sounds, images and performances, will direct the visitor from one place to the next – not to reveal some hidden truth, but to weave multiple narratives in. With no particular point of entry or exit, a visitor can enter the space similarly to how a reader enters the fictions of Borges or Perec, each point opening up to more than one point, creating a mesh of pathways, making sense of and narrating her or his own stories from it. A visitor can, then, engage with the space, experience the collection of items, identify the logics which bind them, and create her or his own narration and make sense of more speculations than already available.

Themes for clues:

Eunuchs

From slaves to nobles, guardians of harems, attendants to guests in the palaces, entertainers and messengers to the king, eunuchs played a major role in the Mughal period. Jogappas, Hijras, Aravanis and Thirunangais have a recorded history. Today they occupy a marginal space in society. State violence, surveillance and exclusion

can be traced back to the 1897 amendment to the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. The last two decades have seen a change in the situation, with the community celebrating its life and demanding its rights. In response, systemic violence on transgendered people, and incidents of torture and murder are not very rare. Our attempt is to look at the polymorphic prevalence of the figure of the transgender through broken narratives, which could point towards new directions, alliances and queer assemblages.

Monsters

Though denied an 'ideal' human existence, monsters are imagined as capable of surpassing what humans can do. Hamzanama—the largest single commission in Mughal history—has a wide variety of monsters dragons, witches, giants, sorcerers and demons. Using these idioms from the past to depict the monsters of the present time can be one way of looking into the notions of 'other'.

Mughal Miniatures

Mughal miniatures are renowned for their meticulous depictions of flora and fauna. Jahangir, in particular, encouraged a very detailed study of birds, flowers and animals. These studies become invaluable now, as several of those species are either extinct or endangered. We will engage with this by using this knowledge system and mapping the macrocosm of the space in and around the Dara Shikoh building and depicting it as a microcosm.

Water Works

The brilliant engineering of water works in the subcontinent dates back to Harappa and Mohenjo Daro (c.2600 BC). The Mughals too demonstrated impressive engineering skills with water harvesting. Clues will be used as

indicators either by their 'presence' or 'absence', to hint towards the existence of such knowledge systems.

Clues will be accompanied by textual evocations, and other forms of provocation—performances, objects, signs—to multiply linkages between, and also to delink, things in and around the space.

SPECTRE TESTIMONIES

Narrations and performances through stories, laments, incidents, jokes, blabber and gibberish.

The building will be activated with voices, sound, light, shadows, performance and other manifestations of spectres. It's not the identity of the spectre that's important; what's important is the creation of a polymorphic idea of spectre, one that speaks through different bodies – known and unknown, from bygone times to the present, and also plants and animals.

Speakers will be installed; the source of sound will be kept invisible, triggered by the movement of people. A few spaces will be installed with low frequency noise that can be felt rather than heard, provoking the visitor in subtle ways. Lights will be triggered, creating shadows in dark corners and brightly lighting up the not-so-noticeable places.

The spectre starts talking from the point of absence. The absence of library, erasure of history, invisibility of certain kinds of knowledge production is where the spectre has to talk from.

Thus haunted, the very question of what 'there is' becomes un-decidable. At the same time, a haunting calls up the question of what to do about it, and what to do about what the spectre tries to say.

Karthik K. G. graduated in engineering and worked as a software engineer. He is currently pursuing his Masters in Visual Arts at Ambedkar University, Delhi, is interested in technology and mapping, generative design, game design, sound art. kark02@gmail.com

Aryakrishnan Ramakrishnan worked with various community initiatives and independent business startups after graduating in English literature. He is currently pursuing MA in Visual Arts at Ambedkar University, Delhi, and working with archives of queer lives in Kerala. He is interested in the play and transformative possibilities of emerging identities, practices and communities. aryakrish@gmail.com



Dara Shikoh Library

Re-arranging Space

Last year, I went to Goa; it was my first time at a beach. I collected some shells, and impulsively felt like storing them as memento. Instead of keeping them in a box or in a drawer, I planned a book in which the shells would be fixed inside the pages, in cavities created through laser cutting. This idea could not be realised, but the impulse behind it—of presenting a memory to a viewer in an intimate and evocative way—remains with me.

The exhibits in the Dara Shikoh Library are stored neatly inside glass-tables. To my mind, this closes the doors of history to the viewers rather than opening them up for engagement.

Drawing from the impulse that guided me in my relation with shells from a beach, and by speaking with historians, consulting museologists, and involving graphic designers for designing text and signage, fresh entry points will be created so we may all be able to engage with the objects in this library.

Vinay Seth grew up in Delhi, and completed his Bachelors in Visual Arts (Painting) from the Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Vadodara, in 2013. He is currently pursuing MA in Visual Arts from School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University, Delhi. vinaywashere@gmail.com

Dara Shikoh Library

Confessions of an Insomniac

Dara Shikoh Library is an unused historical building where the difference in the architectural design of the interior (Mughal empire) and exterior (British empire) are evident in the details of the space. The history of the space speaks to a period between eras, connoting a time characterised by uncertainty, the abandoning of existing structures, change and innovation.

Janine Ramlochan is an Indo-Caribbean Canadian media artist, working in video, assemblage and installation. Her work explores human change processes while blurring boundaries in media, materials and space. She draws on a background in advertising, where she bridged conceptual ideas with an interest in human behaviour, cultural dynamics and media consumption, while working within ad agencies in New York, Bangkok, Toronto and Paris. <http://janineramlochan.tumblr.com>
<http://linkedin.com/janineramlochan>
janine.ramlochan@live.com

I propose an installation here, comprised of:

OBJECTS

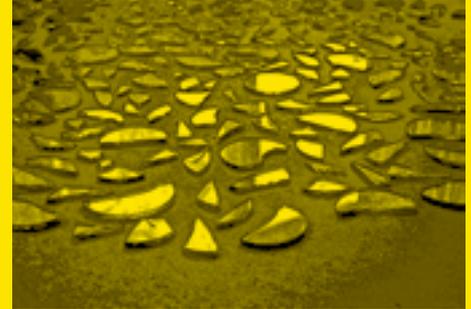
*a toiletries travel bag
 shot glasses
 travel tags
 'handycam' camcorders
 a sea of broken mirror
 a chair, or piece of luggage, may be included, it's surface similarly covered in mirror fragments*

VIDEO

*'scratch videos'
 video collage pervasive in 80's London/
 NYC nightclubs, often constructed with
 material from popular TV sit-coms, to
 create politically subversive meaning*

AUDIO

*wartime bombers
 cartoon characters
 an English preacher
 chimes
 children's laughter
 carnivals*



The installation will be semi-circular, low to the ground in a way that allows viewers to walk around it. Projected off of the mirror fragments, the video images become abstracted, a kaleidoscope of colour and movement. Amidst the shot glasses and broken mirror, video is also displayed on the camcorders' viewing screens, while the handycams themselves add a conceptual layer (lived experience and memory).

Bringing the installation to life relies on the balance between the mirror fragments, the abstracted projections and the reverberation of sound.

As currently envisaged, the programme will unfold with video and audio creating thematic shifts within the installation over time, with a gradual build towards four simultaneous projections. It is expected there will be 4-6 thematic shifts overall.



Missing People: Entanglement, Superposition, and Exhumation as Sites of Indeterminacy

In 1935, Erwin Schrödinger devised an insidious thought experiment. He imagined a box with a cat inside, which could be killed at any moment by a deadly mixture of radiation and poison. Or it might not be killed at all. Both outcomes were equally probable.

But the consequence of thinking through this situation was much more shocking than the initial setup. According to quantum theory, there wasn't just one cat inside the box, dead or alive. There were actually two cats: one dead, one alive – both locked into a state of so-called superposition, that is, co-present and materially entangled with one another. This peculiar state lasted as long as the box remained closed.

then actually dies or comes to life, *but because we look at it*. The act of observation breaks the state of indeterminacy. In quantum physics, observation is an active procedure. By taking measure and identifying, it interferes and engages with its object. By looking at the cat, we fix it in one of two possible but mutually exclusive states. We end its existence as an indeterminate interlocking waveform and freeze it as an individual chunk of matter.

To acknowledge the role of the observer in actively shaping reality is one of the main achievements of quantum theory. It's not radiation or poison gas that ultimately decides the fate of the cat, but the fact that it is identified, seen, described, and assessed. Being subject to observation provokes the second death of the cat: the one that ends its state of limbo.

The metaphor of film can illustrate the two possible states of Schrödinger's cat in time.

X

According to common logic, a missing person is either dead or alive. But is she really? Doesn't this only apply at the moment when we find out what happened to her? When she turns up or when her remains are identified?

But what, then, is the state of missing itself? Does it take place inside Schrödinger's box, so to speak? Is it being both dead and alive? How can we understand its conflicting desires: to want and to dread the truth at the same time? The urge to both move on and keep hope alive? Perhaps the state of missing speaks of a paradoxical superposition that cannot be understood with the conceptual tools of Euclidian physics, human biology, or Aristotelian logic. Perhaps it reaches out to an impossible coexistence of life and death. Both are materially interlaced in limbo – as long as no observer opens the "box" of indeterminacy. Which is, in many cases, a grave.

The metaphor of film can illustrate the two possible states of Schrödinger's cat in time.



Macrophysical reality is defined by either/or situations. Someone is either dead or alive. But Schrödinger's thought experiment boldly replaced mutual exclusivity with an impossible coexistence – a so-called state of indeterminacy.

But that's not all. The experiment becomes even more disorienting when the box is opened and the entanglement (*Verschränkung*) of the dead and the live cat abruptly ends. At this point, either a dead or a live cat decisively emerges, not because the cat



X

In 2010, Spanish prosecutor Baltasar Garzon brushed up against the state of superposition.¹ Two years prior, he had brought charges against leading officials of the Franco regime, including General Franco himself, for crimes against humanity. He opened investigations into the disappearance and suspected murder of around 113,000 people—mostly Republicans from the Civil War period—as well as the forceful appropriation of 30,000 children. Many of the disappeared ended up in mass graves around the country, which at that time, were being patiently dug up by relatives of the disappeared and volunteers. None of the thousands of kidnappings, disappearances, summary executions, and killings by starvation or exhaustion had ever been prosecuted legally in Spain. And total impunity had been made legal by a so-called amnesty law in 1977.

Garzon's case was the first to challenge this situation. Predictably, it ran into immediate controversy. One of the many points on which he was challenged was that many of the accused, including Franco himself, were dead. And according to the law, if they were dead then Garzon had no jurisdiction. He found himself in a legal deadlock: he had to assert that the dead were still alive in order to investigate whether they were dead in the first place and guilty in the second.

This is where superposition comes into play, since a potential legal argument in this case can be derived from Schrödinger's paradigm. Garzon could have argued that one had to get to the point of being able to open Schrödinger's box. Only then could one determine whether the defendants were dead or alive. Until this happened, a state of superposition between life and death had

to be assumed. Franco, for instance, had to be proven dead. If not, it had to be assumed that he was in a state of superposition, until proper observation and measurement could take place. As long as Franco was at least potentially alive, investigations into the crimes of the Franco period could continue.

But the state of superposition not only affected the accused perpetrators. It also determined the legal status of many of the disappeared. As lawyer Carlos Slepoy argued, any disappeared person, regardless of the date of disappearance, had to be assumed to be alive. As long as he or she was in a state of having been kidnapped and not yet found, the crime was ongoing. It could not fall under any statute of limitations. As long as the victims weren't proven dead—as long as they were still missing—they were in a state of superposition and indeterminacy. While the crime was lingering, Schrödinger's box remained closed, and both a potentially dead missing person and a potentially living missing person were entangled in a paradoxical legal quantum state. This state of indeterminacy enabled the cases to remain open and investigations to proceed.

X

Schrödinger's mental exercise in indeterminacy echoes another famous thought image: the idea of the two bodies of the king. In 1957, historian Ernst Kantorowicz described how the bodies of medieval kings were split into a natural body and a body politic.² While the natural body was mortal, the body politic, which represented the mystical dignity and justice of the realm, was immortal. While the king was in power, both states were superimposed on his body. He incorporated the nation in a body politic that was immortal and immaterial.

Trash being dumped into site of suspected mass grave at Kasapderesi Siirt Province Turkey, October 2011.

In addition, the king also possessed a natural, material body that was subject to passion, foolishness, infancy, and death. The idea of the twin body of the king became one of the defining factors in developing the concept of sovereignty—ruling power incorporated within a body, in which death and eternal life are superposed.

Neither Schrödinger nor his numerous interpreters took into account the fact that in the twentieth century, his thought experiment was uncannily echoed by new experimental forms of asserting sovereignty. The result was a state that no quantum physicist could foresee.

In the twentieth century—the age of genocide, of racism and terror—the superposition of life and death became a standard feature of various forms of government.³ In these experiments, Schrödinger's "box" became a site of lethal detention or mass extinction by radiation and poison gas—as in Schrödinger's original setup—or by explosives, which Albert Einstein eagerly added to the quantum list of WMDs.⁴

Schrödinger even went as far as to explicitly mention the name of the poison gas that threatened the cat's life in 1935: hydrocyanic acid. In 1939, hydrocyanic acid was used in a Nazi gas chamber in Poznan to kill disabled people. Later on, it was produced industrially as "Zyklon B" by a company called Degesch and employed in the gas chambers of all the major extermination camps of the National Socialist empire.

X

In 2011, I was in the Spanish town of Palencia, where a mass grave from the Civil War was being exhumed on the site of a children's playground. Volunteers rushed to recover as many remains as possible from the roughly 250 people suspected to be buried there, who were summarily shot by Francoist militias. Funding was going to be cut off within days, so every volunteer was given equipment to participate in the excavation. I was assigned a grave in which a baby's coffin sat on top of the bones of a person, who was most likely executed. The arm bone of this person revealed perimortem trauma—a wound sustained around the time of death and an indicator of a violent demise.

But why would a baby be buried on top of a murdered Republican? The archaeologist explained that babies who died unbaptized were (or even still are) believed to go to limbo. The limbo of infants has been a subject of discussion in the Roman Catholic Church since the days of Augustine. The question is whether unbaptised infants can be granted salvation, since their original sin isn't purged by baptism. On the one hand, unbaptised people are supposed to go to hell after they die. On the other, deceased babies haven't had time to commit many sins, so it was thought that their punishment should be rather mild. The solution was the limbo of infants.

The limbo of infants – an intermediary state between salvation and damnation, bliss and torture – is thus not just a place of eternal boredom and hopelessness. In limbo, the children might even ascend to a state of ultimate happiness by establishing a different vision of things – being unresolved things themselves, dumped onto the bodies of people shot as terrorists and insurgents. Things superposed onto other things in a cemetery superposed on a children's playground, as the first Spanish republic shines uncomfortably through the second.

The baby was gone. The crumbling coffin was empty. Its remains had possibly been taken along when the bones of the richer people in the cemetery were moved to a new location. Only a tiny finger bone remained, which mixed with the remains of the executed supporter of the Republic.

X

In 2011, a plaster cast of a skull said to belong to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was put on display in Hannover. But many doubt whether the skull really belonged to the philosopher.

In 1714, Leibniz developed the idea of the monad. According to Leibniz, the world is made of monads, each of which encloses the whole structure of the universe. He calls them "perpetual living mirror(s) of the universe":

All is a plenum (and thus all matter is connected together) and, in the plenum, every motion has an effect upon distant bodies in proportion to their distance, so that each body is not only affected by those which are in contact with it and in some way feels the effect of everything that happens to them, but is also affected by bodies adjoining itself. This inter-communication of things extends to any distance, however great. And consequently every body feels the effect of all that takes place in the universe, so that he who sees all might read in each what is happening everywhere, and even what has happened or shall happen, observing in the present that which is far off as well in time as in place.⁵

But monads also have different degrees of resolution. Some are more clear in storing information, some less. Like monads, bones, skulls, and other objects of evidence condense not only their own history, but – in an opaque and unresolved form – everything else as well. They are like hard disks that fossilise not only their own history, but the history of their relations to the world. According to Leibniz, only God is able to read all monads. They are transparent to his gaze alone and remain vague and blurry to ours. As the only being able to read them, God is in all things.

But humans are also able to decipher some layers of monads. The strata of crystallised time in each monad capture a specific relation to the universe and conserve it, as in a long exposure photograph. In this way, we can understand a bone as a monad – or

more simply, as an image. But equally, these objects condense the forms of observation that produce them as durable and individual objects, and snap them back into one distinct state of materiality. This also applies to the plaster cast of Leibniz's skull, as well as to the story of its retrieval. Already at the time of its "recovery," many people doubted whether the skull triumphantly presented as Leibniz's was really his.

These doubts were exacerbated by the fact that the church documents relating to Leibniz's burial had been lost. Eventually, on Friday 4 July, 1902, the remains under the Leibnizian marker were exhumed. On Wednesday 9 July, 1902, they were examined by one Professor Dr. W. Krause, by order of one Herr Waldeyer. Whatever casket had occupied the grave was by then entirely rotted, and thus had left not a clue as to its original occupant. Nevertheless, Krause concluded that the skeletal remains were indeed those of Leibniz.⁶

While the origin of the skull is contested, the provenance of the cast seems better established:

The cast was part of the estate of a former NS civil servant. His 90 year old widow offered it for sale 15–20 years ago, along with 3000 books about racial science. A report of the institute für Germanic Volk and Race Science in the Gau capital Hannover indicates that Leibniz' grave was opened between the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944.⁷

Leibniz, the co-inventor of mathematical probability, might have computed the likelihood that the skull belonged to him. But could he have imagined that the skull was both his and not his?

X

Probability became the crucial difference between the experiments in political sovereignty and Schrödinger's experiment. In Schrödinger's experiment, the probability that a live cat would emerge from the box was 50:50. But whenever the metaphorical "box" of political laboratories was opened, this probability would drop to extreme lows. And whatever



Burnt photo roll in situ between guerrilla uniform rags, belt buckle and a 20 mm ammunition case. A shoulder blade is stuck between rocks close-by.

emerged wouldn't be a cat, but humans – more precisely, corpses upon corpses. The "box" became a site for the superposition of death upon death, and a factory for the breathtaking multiplication of victims. The twentieth century radically advanced the development of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. It took the box and turned it inside out so it would spill all over the planet. Why stop at two dead creatures? Why not millions and millions?

Additionally, the twentieth century also perfected observation as a method of killing. Measurement and identification became tools of murder. Phrenology. Statistics. Medical experimentation. Economies of death. In his lectures about biopolitics, Michel Foucault described the stochastic calculus that determined life or death.⁸ Counting and observing were radicalised to make sure that anything that entered the box died when the box was reopened.

This development also signified the death of the political idea of the two bodies of the king, one dead, one immortal. Now one had to imagine two dead bodies: not only the natural body, but also the body politic. Not only were natural bodies killed in and outside the insidious boxes of sovereignty. The body politic, which was supposed to be immortal, died as well. The idea of a state, nation, or race incorporated within a single body was radically denied by thousands of mass graves – the *fosses communes*, which were deemed necessary to violently manufacture a "perfect" and homogenous body politic.

The mass graves thus formed a negative image of the desired incorporation – and its only tangible reality. Any idea of a natural "organic body" of the nation (race, state) had to be painfully realised by extermination and genocide. The *fosse commune* was the body politic of fascism and other forms of dictatorship. It made perfectly clear that the "community" that produced it was a "fausse commune," a complete and disastrous fake vying for legitimacy.

Schrödinger's innocent, if eccentric, quantum state of indeterminacy was echoed in political laboratories of sovereignty. Here, gaping political limbos were created in which law and exception blurred in deadly superposition, transforming certain death into a matter of probability. Schrödinger's thought experiment came to presence in the mass graves that violently ended many possible superpositions and entanglements of humans and things. And the dream of parallel worlds in which impossible

realities coexisted was transformed into the proliferation of possible deaths and the impossibility of any world other than the one that miserably dragged on existing.

X

As quantum theory predicts, the state of entanglement is transitional. It can even be exceptionally short – a window of opportunity made to be missed. And as mass graves were successively excavated, states of indeterminacy ended too, forcing decisions between the state of life and the state of death, which – the twentieth century being what it was – overwhelmingly fell on the side of death. Missing persons were identified and their remains were reburied or returned to relatives. And as the bones were retransformed into persons and reintroduced into language and history, the spell of law over them ceased.

But many of the missing remain nameless. The remains of some of them are stored in the anthropology department at the Autonomous University of Madrid for lack of funding to proceed with DNA testing. This lack of funding is of course connected to the precarious political situation in which this investigation finds itself. The unidentified skulls and bones speak about anything but their names and identities. They show perimortem trauma and indicators of stature, gender, age, and nutrition, but this doesn't necessarily lead to identification.⁹ More than anything, the unidentified remain generic, faceless, all mixed up with combs, bullets, watches, other people, animals, or the soles of shoes. Their indeterminacy is part of their silence, and their silence determines their indeterminacy. They maintain an obstinate opaque silence in the face of sympathetic scientists and waiting relatives. As if they chose not to answer their last and final interrogators either. Shoot me all over again, they seem to say. I'm not telling. I will not give it away. But what is the thing they refuse to betray?

Perhaps the bones refuse to re-enter the world of relatives, family, and property, the world of name and measure, in which skulls are forced to speak of race and rank instead of love and decomposition. Why should they want to re-enter an order that sustained and strengthened itself over their dead bodies? That had to execute them in the first place in order to keep the realm of belonging, faith, and knowledge intact? Why should they want to return from the world of naked matter in which they freely mix with the dust of the universe?

This is what the unidentified missing teach us: even as their bones are carefully handled by forensic anthropologists, they staunchly remain things, refusing to be identifiable in the register of human beings. They insist on being things that decline to be named and known – things that claim the state of potentially being both dead and alive. They thus transgress the realms of civil identity, property, the order of knowledge and human rights alike.

X

In 2011, Hüsni Yildiz went on a hunger strike to force the exhumation of his brother, who disappeared in 1997 while fighting as a leftist guerilla. His grave had been located in early 2011 among hundreds of other nondescript mass graves in the Kurdish region of Turkey. Thousands of bodies, most killed during the dirty war of the 1990s, are believed to have been dumped into shallow graves, waste dumps, and other places of disposal.¹⁰ As more mass graves are discovered every day, Turkish authorities have, for the most part, refused to open investigations or even recover the remains of the dead. Sixty-four days into Yildiz's hunger strike, the grave where his brother was suspected to be buried was finally excavated. Fifteen sets of remains were recovered, but as authorities have not initiated DNA tests, Yildiz still doesn't know whether the remains of his brother are among them. In the meantime, Yildiz has declared that not only the fifteen people recovered, but also the thousands more missing are his brothers and sisters. The indeterminacy of remains universalises family relations. They rip the order of family and belonging wide open.

X

00:15:08:05

HS – I see one box which does not contain remains.

LR – Yes this is ...

HS – Can you show it to us?

LR – This is a complex case because this came from the cemetery of Toledo, a city near Madrid, and then the relatives with an undertaker of the cemetery, they went to dig in the common grave where they thought their relatives were. So they did that with a shovel and put all the bones in big plastic bags ... So we have a mess of bones and of these shoes, we don't know if they belong to the people killed or to other, like, normal mortality, and they also went to the common grave ... But this, we found, it's very common to find, to find personal objects in the excavations.

HS – *What sort of objects? Shoes?*

LR – *This is the heel of a shoe and that is for the shirts, the buttons, some other buttons and some coins ... well, metal objects and ... But we have found, this is the ... for the belt? Yes, the buckle. So for example all this came from one, from skeleton sixty ...*¹¹

X

But in the twentieth century and beyond, we have almost always waited in vain to access the other quantum state involved in superposition, the state in which the missing would still be alive – not potentially, but actually. Paradoxically alive, as things in a state of entanglement. In which we could hear their voices, touch their breathing skin. In which they would be living things outside the registers of identity, pure language and the utter overwhelming of senses; things superposing on ourselves as things.

They would form a state beyond any statehood – one in which they wouldn't be entangled with their own dead bodies, but with our living ones. And we would no longer be separate entities, but things locked in indeterminate interaction – material extimacy, or matter in embrace.

They would drag us to this place, where we would become entangled matter, outside of any categories of identification and possession. We would be waveforms leaving behind individuality and subjectivity to become locked in the paradoxical objectivity of quantum realities.

X

The mass grave that is supposed to contain the remains of my friend Andrea Wolf is located in the mountains south of Van, Turkey. The gravesite is littered with rags, debris, ammunition cases, and many fragments of human bone. A charred photo roll I found on site may be the only witness to what happened during the battle that took place there in late 1998.

Even though several witnesses have come forward stating that Andrea and some of her fellow fighters in the PKK were extrajudicially executed after having been taken prisoner, there have been no attempts to investigate this suspected war crime, nor to identify the roughly forty people supposedly buried in the mass grave. No official investigation ever took place. No experts went on site.

No authorised observer can break superposition, not because there were

no observers, but because they have not been authorised. It is an impossible place, incompatible with the existing rules of political realism, constructed by the suspension of the rule of law and aerial supremacy, beyond the realm of the speakable, the visible, the possible. On this site, even blatant evidence is far from being evident.¹² Its invisibility is politically constructed and maintained by epistemic violence. This is the main reason why the pictures on the charred photo roll remain unavailable for now, pushed into a zone of zero probability.¹³ Technical means, expert knowledge, and political motivation to investigate and analyse them are unavailable. But these illegible images can also be seen from a different perspective: as poor images, things wrecked by violence and history. A poor image is an image that remains unresolved – puzzling and inconclusive because of neglect or political denial, because of a lack of technology or funding, or because of hasty and incomplete recordings captured under risky circumstances.¹⁴ It cannot give a comprehensive account of the situation it is supposed to represent. But if whatever it tries to show is obscured, the conditions of its own visibility are plainly visible: it is a subaltern and indeterminate object, excluded from legitimate discourse, from becoming fact, subject to disavowal, indifference, and repression.

Poor images take on another dimension when they expand into fractional space.¹⁵ They may be blurred 3D scans, cakes of dirt compressing buttons, bones and bullets, burnt photo rolls, dispersed ashes, or lost and unintelligible pieces of evidence.¹⁶ Just as commercial, political, and military interests define the resolution of satellite images of the earth's surface, so do these interests define the resolution of the objects buried beneath it. These indeterminate objects are low-resolution monads, in many cases literally materially compressed objects, fossilised diagrams of political and physical violence – poor images of the conditions that brought them into being. Even if they cannot show the extrajudicial executions, political murders, or shootings at demonstrations that they might have recorded, they bear the traces of their own marginalisation. Their poverty is not a lack, but an additional layer of information, which is not about content but form. This form shows how the image is treated, how it is seen, passed on, or ignored, censored, and obliterated.

Even if its content is destroyed, the charred 35mm roll shows what happened to itself as

it went up in flames, doused with unknown chemicals, incinerated along with the photographers' dead bodies. It shows the violence of maintaining this particular state of indeterminacy.

Through their material composition, these poor images reach far beyond the sphere of representation and into a world where the order of things and humans, of life, death, and identity, is suspended, and "all is a plenum (and thus all matter is connected together) ... And consequently every body feels the effect of all that takes place in the universe, so that he who sees all might read in each what is happening everywhere, and even what has happened or shall happen, observing in the present that which is far off as well in time as in place."¹⁷

But who is the ominous reader in Leibniz's text? Is he the ultimate observer endowed with unlimited authority? Whoever he is, he is not up to the task.¹⁸ We cannot leave the task of observation to some obscure monotheist idol, who supposedly reads and knows everything. And we do not need to. The zone of zero probability, the space in which image/objects are blurred, pixelated, and unavailable, is not a metaphysical condition. It is in many cases man-made, and maintained by epistemic and military violence, by the fog of war, by political twilight, by class privilege, nationalism, media monopolies, and persistent indifference. Its resolution is managed by legal, political, and technological paradigms. A bone which would be abject debris in some parts of the world, a poor image mixed with trash and dumped into landfills alongside broken TVs, could be overexposed in others, scanned in HD or 3D, highly resolved, investigated, tested, and interpreted until its mysteries are solved.¹⁹ The same bone can be seen in two different resolutions: once as an anonymous poor image, once as a crystal-clear piece of official evidence.

Positivism is thus another name for epistemic privilege, assumed by official observers who control hi-tech tools of measurement and are authorised to establish facts. But mistaking this privilege for a solution, when it is just proof of superior epistemic resolution, is sloppy and convenient thinking. It not only denies the existence of expanding pockets of zero probability and gaping limbos in the rule of law, it also shields itself from the unsettling thought that everything could be different and that probability cannot reign in contingency.

If Leibniz's omnivisionary male observer is impotent, then justice is blind to resolution. She carefully runs her fingers over the edges, gaps, and rifts of rugged and glossy images, of low-resolution monads left in fractional space, registering their tectonic profile, feeling their bruises, fully confident that the impossible can and indeed will happen.

FROM

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/missing-people-entanglement-superposition-and-exhumation-as-sites-of-indeterminacy>

END NOTES

- 1 Thank you to Jenny Gil Schmitz, Emilio Silva Barrera, Carlos Slepoy, Luis Rios, Francisco Etxebarria, José Luis Posadas, Marcelo Esposito for all information relating to this issue, and for their generous hospitality. This first part of the text owes very much to discussions with Eyal Weizman.
- 2 See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
- 3 See Giorgio Agamben's *The State of Exception and Homo Sacer*. See also Foucault on biopower.
- 4 In a letter written in the 1950s.
- 5 G.W. Leibniz, *Monadology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898), 251.
- 6 www.gwleibniz.com/leibniz_skull/leibniz_skull.html.
- 7 Michael Grau, *Universalgenie Leibniz im Visier der Nazis*, Sept. 12, 2011, *Berliner Morgenpost*.
- 8 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2008).
- 9 L. Ríos, J. I. Ovejero, and J. P. Prieto, Identification process in mass graves from the Spanish Civil War, *Forensic Science International* (June 15, 2010).
- 10 Discovery of Kurdish Mass Graves Leads Turkey to Face Past, *voanews.com*. Howard Eissenstat, Mass-graves and State Silence in Turkey, March 15, 2011, blog.amnestyusa.org.
- 11 Interview with Luis Rios, Sept. 12, 2011.
- 12 Thank you to Tina Leisch, Ali Can, Necati Sönmez, Şiyar, and many others whose names cannot be mentioned.
- 13 In the meantime, this text has been redeveloped into part of a joint performance with Rabih Mroué called *Probable Title: Zero Probability*. I am deeply indebted to Rabih's contributions, especially in his brilliant text *The Pixelated Revolution*, which gives other examples of low-resolution evidence.
- 14 I discussed some examples of documentary pictures, mainly from Georges Didi-Hubermans essay *Images malgré tout*, in Hito Steyerl, *Documentarism as Politics of Truth*, republicart.net/disc/representations/steyerl03_en.htm.
- 15 See Jalal Toufic, *The Subtle Dancer*, p. 24: "a space that is neither two-dimensional nor three-dimensional, but between the two." Available at d13.documenta.de
- 16 *Bones of the Disappeared Get Lost* again after Excavation, bianet.org.
- 17 G.W. Leibniz, *Monadology*, *ibid*.
- 18 For him, whatever is the case is necessarily the best of all possible worlds anyway.
- 19 This applies particularly to the bones of murdered Kurdish individuals, which get extremely different treatment according to whether they were killed during the Anfal operations ordered by Saddam Hussein in Iraq, or by Turkish armed forces and militias during the civil war of the 1990s. The Anfal mass murders were investigated by world-class military specialists and interdisciplinary teams, whereas the Turkish cases were barely investigated at all.

Forensic Architecture

[1]

Forensis is Latin for “pertaining to the forum” and is the origin of the term forensics. The Roman forum to which forensics pertained was a multi-dimensional space of politics, law and economy, but the word has since undergone a strong linguistic drift: the forum gradually shifted to refer exclusively to the court of law, and forensics to the use of medicine and science within it. This telescoping of the term meant that a critical dimension of the practice of forensics got lost in the process of its modernisation – namely its potential as a political practice.

Forensis, as we employ the term, seeks to bring new material and aesthetic sensibilities to bear upon the legal and political implications of armed conflict, struggles for justice and climate change. It is committed to the examination of the prevalent status of forensics in articulating contemporary notions of public truth, and seeks to interrogate the relation between the two constitutive sites of forensics – namely *fields* and *forums*.

The *field* is the site of investigation and the *forum* is the place where the results of an investigation are presented and contested. However, both are more than mere locations. The field is a dynamic and elastic territory that increasingly becomes the object of investigation itself. The forum, in turn, is a composite concept – constituted as a shifting triangulation between a contested *object*, an *interpreter* mediating between the language of material things and that of the forum, and the social-political space of the *assembly*.

The presentation of material evidence in forums increasingly turn to resemble what the Roman rhetorician Quintilian called *prosopopea* – the mediated speech of inanimate objects. Small things such as commodities, coins, statues, or weapons

could be physically handled, presented or traded in the forum. Things too far away, too abstract or too large – such as cities, resources, rivers, territories or states – had to be brought vividly to life by the power of an aural demonstration. They had to be made evident (visible), credible and persuasive. Contemporary modes of *prosopopea* animate material objects and landscapes by converting them into information, transmission and projection and, by merging with the human voice of the witness or expert, speaking through them.

As the famous forensic anthropologist, Clyde Snow, once put it, “bones make great witnesses; they speak softly but they never forget, and they never lie”. The interpreters, meanwhile, are no longer necessarily people but also technologies of detection and imaging. And forums are no longer confined to arena-like buildings, but become increasingly diffused across a wide spectrum of sites and media forms.

A *new forensis* must emerge to challenge the assumptions of received forensic practices.

A “forensic agency” was established at the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths in 2011 under the name of *Forensic Architecture*. This agency was unique in that its members – architects, artists, filmmakers and theorists, fellows, students and members of the Centre, rather than qualified scientists and pathologists – were those undertaking the investigations. We set our research agenda and chose each of our investigations according to our political interests and commitments, and in order to interrogate the ways in which new types of evidence can affect political and legal processes. We investigated the actions of states and corporations in such places as Pakistan, the Amazon basin, Yemen, the US, Chile, Bangladesh, Palestine/Israel, Guatemala, the areas of former Yugoslavia and the extended frontiers of Europe, and offered our analysis to civil organisations, NGOs, activist groups, and prosecutors who have presented it in various legal and political forums.

Our work emerged as a historical, theoretical and artistic research into contemporary forensic and legal practices, and critically evaluates their epistemologies, assumptions, protocols, and politics of knowledge production.

Forensis is a good model for connecting activism and science, because it is structured by the necessity of taking sides in an argument, of fighting and defending claims. Rather than draw its right to speak by an authoritative aura of neutrality, it is fuelled by partisan and militant passions. Having an axe to grind could sharpen the quality of one’s data rather than make it suspect.

FORENSIC ARCHITECTURE

From the perspective of forensics, architecture is an analytic and probative mode for enquiring into the present through its spatial materialisation. Forensics turns space into evidence, but also into the medium in which different types of evidence come into relation with each other. Forensic architecture thus intensifies the investigative capacity of architecture and turns it into a mode of public address, into a way of articulating political claims, and making them face cross-examination in the most antagonistic of forums.

On the other hand, forensics, as seen from the point of view of architecture, is extracted from its purely juridical context and placed in the political context of the forum. Producing and presenting new types of evidence challenges the very forums in which evidence is presented. It can affect the transformation of the forum, demand a change to its protocols or expand its perceptual and conceptual frames; it can even, sometimes, call for the destruction of the forum and for instituting a new one in its stead. Forums may emerge when a new claim becomes evident.

Forensic architecture had a modest start: it was inspired by the unassuming work of building surveyors – the careful and systemic

analysis of the structural and infrastructural conditions of a building.

Building surveyors understand a crucial thing missed by most architects: a building is not a static thing. Rather, its form is continuously undergoing transformations and, in these transformations, it registers external influences. The various material components of a building—steel, plaster, concrete, or wood—move in different speeds in response to the constant force of gravity, the influence of the climate, changing patterns of inhabitation and use, and the unique force of impact. It is in the material deformations and structural failures that micro and macro forces, political and historical processes can be searched for.

If the figure of the detective was the nineteenth century's response to the density, complexity and alienation of the modern metropolis, the building surveyor is the indispensable figure for understanding the present condition of cities, as that of urban warfare. Violence—eruptive in case of armed conflict or latent in ceaseless architectural acts of securitisation—comes to reconfigure both the metropolis (the western city) and the megacity (where its armies look for their enemies) – by the entangled acts of construction, fortification, destruction and reconstruction. At a time when most people dying in armed conflicts die inside buildings, the city is no longer merely the location of war, but rather the instrument for conducting it. When the dust of its destruction finally settles, the way it settles can become evidence, the kind of evidence that may become an element in an ongoing conflict.

PREDICTIVE FORENSICS

Predictive forensics is an investigation concerned with evidence for a destruction that has not yet taken place. It is now commonly employed in the context of two major and seemingly unrelated fields – environmental science dealing with planetary scale climate change, and security analysis concerned with predicting the risks associated with what used to be known as “the global war on terror”.

While in relation to climate change, too little is actually being done, in relation to the securitisation of the war on terror, state mobilisation is at an overkill. Militarised preventive action is tasked with predicting, and then disrupting, the operational networks of the enemy before they act. The most prevalent tactics of security risk management involves “pre-emptive targeted assassinations” – the killing of individuals

that are thought to increase the overall levels of risk. Of targeted assassinations, the most common technique employed is firing missiles from drones.

Predictive forensics—the futurology of contemporary warfare—identifies future crimes in the analysis of pattern of behaviour and patterns of movement in space. As such, these attacks are not unlike technical analysis on stock prices, which attempt to predict the future on the basis of recurring patterns of past behaviour and movement.

This turns the contemporary battlefield into a field of calculations: risk analysis, pattern recognition, proportionality calculations (how many civilians would die) and, finally mission assessments undertaken after the strike. But this economy, just like the financial one on which it is based, has fallen in crisis. Military attacks, designed to reduce risk, end up multiplying it.



DRONE WARFARE

The logic of Drone warfare is more diffused than a straight line between aircraft and target. It relies not only on technologies of navigation, communication vision and munitions-delivery, but depends on a set of juridical, political and territorial conditions. The areas currently most intensively under attack by drones—North Waziristan, Gaza, and the remote areas of Yemen and Somalia—are frontier regions, each with its own historical, political and territorial particularity, and under a different juridical and sovereign arrangement. Common to them all is that they lie outside the effective control of state governments. It is the nature of the frontier that enables this war, which means that the law, or its absence, is the constitutive condition of violence.

This condition is most clear in Waziristan, the southern part of a region known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), established as an exceptional zone during the time of the British Raj. The area is geographically within the Pakistani state, but normal state law and effective state control do not apply here. Exits and entries are permitted only to residents and the military. Informal regulations, enforced by both military and militants, prevent the bringing in or taking out of electronic paraphernalia, including navigation equipment, mobile phones and cameras. Consequently few images of the damage caused by drone

strikes and eyewitness/survivor testimonies are available. Media blackout is an enabling condition of drone warfare.

The only other photographic perspective—that of commercial and publically available satellite images—is of a resolution in which the damage brought about by a drone strike is hardly visible. This has to do not only with the technical resolution of satellite imagery, and the laws that limits it, but also with the technical characteristics of these strikes.

Drone missiles of the kind used to target buildings and interior rooms within them are equipped with a “delay fuse”. The few milliseconds between impact and detonation allow the missile to penetrate through the roof, and then spray hundreds of lethal steel fragments inside the room. These fragments kill upon contact, but usually leave the structure intact. A small hole in the roof is the only signature that indicates that the room under it has turned into an execution chamber.

The diameter of a hellfire missile—one of the most common types fired by drones—is about 18 cm; other missile sizes do not vary by much. The size of the hole depends of course on several other factors, such as the way the roof is constructed and its materiality, but most holes are smaller than the 50 cm square, which is the size of a single pixel in the resolution to which publicly available satellite images are degraded. The impact these missiles leave on a structure is thus just at the threshold of visibility of the satellite photograph.

Although at a resolution of 50 cm, the general features of individual buildings can be identified, a hole in a roof might appear as nothing more than a slight colour variation – usually a single darker pixel. Even if satellite images close to the time before and after an attack could be obtained, very little difference would be observable between them. The 50 cm/pixel resolution acts as a snow screen that carries no signal.

While we don't know the exact specification of drone optics, we know that if they allow to identify “a tall man pacing on a roof”, they are planned and executed using a significantly higher resolution than the one at which their effects are recorded in satellite photographs. This fact inverts one of the most basic principles of forensics, namely that the investigator should be able to see more, in better resolution, than the perpetrators of the crime. This inversion is derived from a more fundamental one: usually it is state agencies that investigate individuals or independent organisations, and can thus muster better optics than

killers. In our case, however, it is state agencies that are the alleged criminals, and independent organisations that do the forensics. The difference between the resolution of the attack and the resolution of detection creates a differential in knowledge that opens up a space of denial.

At the threshold of detectability, the technical/material surfaces—that of the roof and that of digital photography—come simultaneously into view. On either side of this threshold—with an object shown either in a clear resolution, or recorded at such a low resolution that there is nothing to be seen—we can only examine one or the other, the roof in the former and the condition of image-making in the latter.

Examining the condition of image making beyond the threshold of visibility becomes a legal and political question.

One reason for this limitation on resolution is the issue of privacy. Half a meter square is the frame within which the human body fits, and therefore disappears within. The 50 cm/pixel resolution is thus designed to erase most traces of people from images, leaving us with the urban or rural terrain that they inhabit. This is a useful resolution for commercial satellite image providers, as they can avoid claims of privacy breach. But the regulation also has a security rationale. Not only do important details of strategic sites get camouflaged in this resolution, but also, the consequences of violence and violations orchestrated by states become harder to investigate.

In a further radicalisation of the geo-politics of resolution, US satellite image providers make an exception to the 50 cm rule in Israel and the Palestinian territories it occupies. Amendment to the US remote sensing act demands that these areas are shown only in a resolution of 1 meter per pixel, in which a roof, for example is made of 9 to 16 pixels on average. This contributed to Turkey's decision, after its conflict with Israel over the Gaza Flotilla, to send its own image satellite into space and make publicly available 50 cm a pixel images of Israel.

Denial based on manipulations of the regime of visibility—wherein “neither confirm nor deny” is officially sanctioned as the “Glomar response” to a Freedom of Information Act request—aims to add no information to the public domain. US state agencies are, therefore, authorised to “neither confirm nor deny the existence or non-existence” of a secret war of assassination in Pakistan. The power to deny the obvious in the frontier is to keep the frontier beyond purview. The

Glomar, then, seeks to operate as the legal version of a snow screen.

RETURN TO THE WITNESS

Forensic Architecture has been involved in researching drone warfare in Pakistan, Yemen, and Gaza. To address the differential of knowledge between perpetrator and investigator, and the context of state obfuscation and denial in a frontier zone, we shifted our attention to different kinds of testimonial practices. This meant that we needed to re-consider the entanglements of a human (rather than purely material) perspective with technologies, informed by the spatial, media and aesthetic sensibilities that we have developed throughout the project.

Following the principles of *forensis*, we designed our investigation not for one forum, but a multiplicity. We've provided evidential reports in the context of legal action brought about by Pakistani lawyer Shahzad Akhbar in the UK Court of Appeal, as part of an international investigation by the UN special rapporteur for Counter Terrorism and Human Rights (presented at a side event of the UN General Assembly in New York); in journalistic investigations with the Bureau of Investigative Journalism; and in providing information to various documentaries on drones.

Here, I would like to present illuminations in relation to two of the testimonies that we obtained. One was an aural deposition of a survivor of a drone strike and the other was a hand-held video (most likely from a mobile phone) shot under perilous circumstances in the aftermath of another drone strike. Both of these testimonies were incomplete, blurred, saturated with gaps and lacunae. The memory of the witness was interrupted by the subjective experience of extreme violence, while the video testimony registered the rushed movements of a videographer in a situation of danger. Both had to make a dangerous path across the siege lines of Waziristan before the testimony they recorded could be widely disseminated.

The witness was a German woman (she insists on remaining anonymous) whose house was destroyed in October 2010 in Mir Ali, North Waziristan. After the strike, she made her way out of FATA and back to Germany, where she was detained, together with her husband, on counter-terrorism charges. Her husband is facing trial and she has been actively pursuing public and legal action on behalf of her family and in protest of drone strikes. Some of the details

of the attack, in which five people were killed, including her brother-in-law, were obscured from her memory. Based on her step-by-step instructions, we constructed a computer-model of her house, down to the location and size of each room, door and window, including every piece of furniture, utensil, tool, toy or decoration that she could recall. With the model complete, the witness could “return” to the space and time of the attack, and recollect aspects of it. Important elements revealed in this reconstruction included the presence of toys and a child walker in the open courtyard (which could have indicated to a drone operator – were they seeing the scene in high enough a resolution – that children were in the premises).

Unlike in our other investigations, here architecture did not function as a mode of reading material evidence—we had no ruins to study, measure and reconstruct—but rather as an organising device around which to collect the memory of a violent event.

In her magnum opus about the classical and medieval tradition of mnemonic techniques, Frances Yates emphasised the relationship between memory, architecture, destruction and forensics. She attributed the invention of the art of memory to the Greek poet Simonides: he had just walked out of a banquet hall full of people when the roof collapsed, killing everyone inside. The bodies could not be identified, but Simonides was able to reconstruct the flow of conversation between the guests around the table, and so remember where each guest had been sitting. Thus identified, the bodies could be returned to their families for burial. The mnemonic techniques of the art of memory, attributed to this experience, have since reserved a special place for architecture as a medium for establishing relations between people and things. The technique, made famous by the rhetoricians and orators of antiquity like Cicero and Quintilian, involved forms of architectural construction, but necessitated also periodical destruction.

Tasked with remembering long and complex speeches, orators imagined themselves walking through buildings they had constructed in their mind. Every room in these buildings was furnished with objects relating to the issues that the orator wanted to bring up – a fountain (perhaps a naval battle), a dagger (a murder), a plant (nature), a bed (perhaps a love affair). In recalling the speech, the speaker would imagine walking through the building, passing corridors, traversing courtyards, opening and closing doors, encountering objects,

using and moving them around, and thus navigating through the issues and ideas that were to be part of their speech. The same building could thereafter be used for other speeches. All that was necessary was to remove one set of objects and drag in new ones, then “walk” through the building again. But, there was a problem that was not dealt with by Yates. Just like in other attempts at material or digital erasure, the objects arranged in a room could not be fully removed, however many times they were dragged out. The French poet Jacques Roubaud described the way objects would reappear in the context of wrong speeches, haunting the building or specific rooms within it. When they became too cluttered with the ghosts of such objects, these buildings had to be exorcised, abandoned or destroyed, turned to ashes, so that nothing remains. This reveals something of the multiple ways in which architecture and memory intersect with violence and destruction; and, tangential to our investigation perhaps, also of the importance of forgetting, a task considerably more difficult than that of remembering, but, nevertheless, one on which memory depends.

One object in particular was important to the witness from Mir Ali, in our process of computer modelling of the witness’ house, which satellite photographs now show is in a state of complete ruin. It was a freestanding fan in the small courtyard that mostly served women and children. The witness seemed uneasy about it, repeatedly readjusting its location. Later, when we arranged for a partial reconstruction of the events within the digital model, with the witness “walking” within the model of the house, she mentioned remembering seeing human flesh on the fan’s blades. The fan and the spaces of the house seem to have become anchors to her memory.

The second testimony dealt with fragments of information saturated in a video footage. Shot in the aftermath of a March 2012 drone strike in Miranshah, North Waziristan in which four people were killed, it is a rare piece of footage. When the video was broadcast on NBC news, Amna Nawaz, NBC Pakistan Bureau Chief in Islamabad explained that it was smuggled out of Waziristan, by being passed from hand to hand before it arrived in her Islamabad office. In the context of this broadcast, the video functioned merely as an illustration of indistinct rubble, a visual confirmation that destruction had indeed taken place. However, there was much more information within the blurry footage.

The first thing that our study of the video revealed had to do not with the ruin as the object of documentation, but rather with the subject documenting it. The videographer filmed out of a window of a building overlooking the ruin. The window frame, and the dark interior of the room where the videographer was located, occupied a large part of the video frame. The slanted, dark frame, and the hasty movements that resulted in the image blurring, were not irrelevant information, disturbance, or noise obscuring a clear signal. They were the capturing of a moment of danger into digital data. To us, they suggested that the videographer was filming from a certain depth inside a building, moving within the room, careful to avoid the open space of the window. This suggested that it might be dangerous to be seen filming the aftermath of a drone attack in Miranshah. There could be several reasons: local militants may prohibit documentation of sites of attack and might consider the videographer to be a spy; or the videographer might be worried about US drones watching from above, as they do in the aftermath of attacks, sometimes firing again at the same place, after more people have gathered.

The video captured a relation between two rooms that were each functioning as a recording device of sorts – the room out of whose window the videographer shot the first part of the footage, and the room in which people died. Indeed, a later sequence within the video showed the interior of an empty room. The videographer evidently left the room in the multi-storied building, and entered the ruin. The interior space was structurally intact, but for a small hole at the center of the ceiling – a hole smaller than the 50 cm/pixel of the satellite image of the roof. While the window was the relevant aperture in the “videographer’s room”, the hole in the ceiling was the relevant aperture in the “targeted room”. We used the light streaming in through it as a compass around which to orient the room within the ruin. The interior walls were clearly dotted with hundreds of small traces caused, we believed, by the fragmentation of the munitions that entered through the ceiling. A careful examination of these fragments revealed two distinct gaps within the patterns of fragments. Although we cannot be sure, these are likely the outlines of the people that died in the room. Their bodies absorbed the fragments, leaving their “shadow” on the wall behind them. In this case, the room’s walls could be thought of as something akin to a photograph, exposed to the fragmentation of the blast similar to a negative exposed to light. The traces of dead

bodies had thus become part of the material structure of the room itself, etched into its architecture.

This investigation – concerned with a media representation (video) of a media representation (wall) of real casualties in a denied war – is an attempt at intervening within regimes and technologies of visibility in a lawless frontier, which otherwise seek to destroy its images. Imaging the frontier is undertaken by cross-referencing and reconfiguring the master’s own tools.

Both these testimonies blurred the difference between testimonies and forensic work. To a certain extent, they exemplified the power of the concept of *parrhesia* – a term that in ancient Greek meant “to speak everything”, and in ancient Hebrew evolved to mean “in face of the public”. These two meanings of the term designate aspects in the practice of *forensis*. In a series of lectures titled *Fearless Speech* that Michel Foucault delivered shortly before his death, he used and further developed the concept of *parrhesia* as the courage to risk one’s life in order to tell a necessary and unpopular truth. *Parrhesia*, Foucault explained is a form of criticism articulated “in a situation where the speaker or confessor is in a position of inferiority with respect to the interlocutor. The *parrhesiastes* chose to speak the truth to those who try to hide, deny, or cannot accept it. *Parrhesia*, then is linked to courage in the face of danger: it demands the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger. And in its extreme form, telling the truth takes place in the ‘game’ of life or death.”

Although, in the hands of Michel Foucault *parrhesia* seem to have a more broad and complete relation to the truth than these fragments before us, it is remarkable to realise the relation between these. As a form of testimony that involves risk-taking that comes to expose sovereign violence against attempts to deny it, these faint and momentary flashes of parrhesic testimony pose the most fundamental challenge to what we refer to as *forensis*.



Written Trailer: 2007–2009

Whenever I taught film, I insisted on watching the material in great detail; first at the editing table, then with the help of video, today with DVD. Sometimes we watched a film—sequence for sequence—for four days, scrolling backwards and forwards again and again. This method is not at all common in film schools or film-theoretical seminars. In fields of study where everything is about words, it is also not the usual practice to read and discuss a text line by line, as I learnt in 2005 when Antje [Ehmann] and me met with some friends once a week in order to read and discuss texts together. Everybody in our group—with the exception of myself—had studied either literature and/or philosophy, and everybody had only experienced this kind of reading in self-organised groups outside university. Amongst other texts we were also reading Giorgio Agamben's *Was von Auschwitz bleibt* (Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive). Additionally we also re-read other texts about the camps and watched films about them, which I also showed and discussed in my class in Vienna, at the Academy of Fine Arts. A particular scene in Erwin Leiser's *Den Blodiga tiden* (Mein Kampf, 1959) and Alain Resnais' *Nuit et brouillard* (Night and Fog, 1955) caught my attention: men, women and children are getting on a train that will take them to Bergen-Belsen, Theresienstadt or Auschwitz. This

material was shot in Westerbork in 1944. Westerbork, situated in the north of the Netherlands, was at first a camp for Jewish refugees from Germany. After the Netherlands' occupation by the Nazi Germans, it came under the control of the security forces and was renamed *Polizeiliches Judendurchgangslager Westerbork* (Westerbork Police Transit Camp for Jews). Around 100,000 people, most of them Jews—according to the Nazi concept of race—and also a few hundred Roma and Sinti were brought here and then transported to other camps. Only a few thousand survived. Westerbork was a special camp, in which many inmates wore civilian clothes and where the SS was hardly visible. There were no beatings or murders; food was scarce, but nobody starved to death. And there was a hospital, a laundry, a kindergarten; there were religious services and cultural events, concerts and cabarets. The camp administration was carried out by inmates: inmates registered the newcomers, served in different camp police groups and drew up the weekly deportation lists—although the leader of the camp, SS man Albert Konrad Gemmeker, had the last word. Gemmeker commissioned the photographer Rudolf Breslauer, a Jewish refugee from Germany, to shoot sequences with two cameras for a film about the camp. Some pages of the script have survived:

Close-up: the commander in uniform, at his desk reading the certificate. Behind him on the wall, the Führer's image. The commander stands up, presses a bell button.

Cross-fades: the junior squad leader enters the room, approaches the commander, helps him into his coat, gives him his leather belt, cap and gloves.

Cross-fades: the command building, from the front. The commander leaves the building, approaches the camera on the middle path.

These scenes were either never realised, or did not survive. Gemmeker told the court after the war that he had intended to make a film about the camp for its visitors – a kind of record of achievement for his superiors.

First I ordered a DVD with documentary footage shot by Breslauer from the Westerbork memorial. When we first watched this material in my seminar, we all had a hard time reading these images. One student pointed out a man in the camp's railway station who was helping a policeman to close the sliding door of the wagon in which he himself was being deported. Almost everybody getting on the train was carrying luggage, and we realised that you have to consider that all their belongings will be taken away by the Nazis as soon as they arrive in Auschwitz. Taking this into account, the bundles, parcels and blankets being dragged along – which usually indicate a compulsory change of location – turn into tragic signs.

I read more about Westerbork during the following months, an extensive diary for example, written in the camp by the inmate Philip Mechanicus. He doesn't mention the film shootings, but he reports that in 1944 many of the inmates were afraid that the camp would soon be closed down. He also thinks that the SS wanted to maintain the camp in order not to be sent to the Eastern Front. So it is also possible that Gemmeker wanted the camp to be filmed to prove its usefulness for the war economy. In the images of the deportation from Westerbork to Auschwitz – and here we see the film's only close-up – we can see a girl wearing a headscarf and looking timidly or anxiously into the camera. This image has been reproduced frequently. In 1992 the Dutch journalist Aad Wageaar successfully identified her after a year's research: 10-years old Settela Steinbach, a Sinti. In one of the film's sequences he discovered an inscription of a name and date of birth on the suitcase of a woman who was being brought to the train in an invalid-chair. From

the deportation lists he was able to work out the date of the shoot. He also discovered the number 74 written in chalk on a wagon, and that this number had been crossed out and corrected to 75 when the train left – so a further person must have been assigned to this wagon.

I repeatedly discussed what I was reading in the seminar in Vienna. We looked again and again at some details of the images and tried to understand the motivation behind certain scenes with the help of our background knowledge. I decided to make a film in the spirit of such studies, a film that would also depict the process of examining the images. The raw material was silent, so I kept it like this and only added some intertitles. I wanted the images themselves to speak. (*Respite*, 2007). Television doesn't show any silent films. Music, sound or a voiceover are always added because of the anxiety that the viewers might immediately think that there was something wrong with the transmission or their television set. So I didn't even try to find television money for this project. But the TV channel 3sat did actually show the film without sound in 2009, although at a very late hour – this might have evaded the attention of the programmers higher ups. Inge Classen, who programmed it, told me that she had only once shown a film without sound, *Un chant d'amour* (A Song of Love, 1950) by Jean Genet.

In 2007, I finished quite a few projects I had been working on for years, including *Übertragung/Transmission*. When we were in Washington in 2003 to do some archive research for *Eye/Machine* and *War at a Distance*, we saw that almost everybody who visited the Vietnam War Memorial touched either the stone or the names of the more than 50,000 dead engraved there. It was Antje's idea to make a film or installation about the behaviour of these and other visitors to memorials all over the world. The opportunity to realise this project came about a little later, when Christoph Schenker of the Zurich Academy of the Arts invited us to make a work to be presented in a public space. During the following years, we were always on the look-out for places where people would touch a stone or a sculpture. The visitors to St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome probably touch the foot of the Petrus sculpture in order to gain some of its holiness. But in the Jesuit Church in Munich, they pat the cheek of the bust of Father Rupert – who was an anti-Nazi – because they want to pay respect or to console him for his sufferings; so here they want to give and not to gain. We filmed many types of magical touchings, efforts to transmit something invisible.

The work was installed in a tram station in Zurich. A flat screen was fitted next to a WC. When I came to this place shortly before the official opening, I saw that there was a bench in front of the screen with two homeless people sitting on it. They already seemed to know the film very well and predicted what was coming next. But many people waiting for the tram didn't give it a second glance. When the bar tables with snacks and aperitifs had been set up, I spoke to a technician about how to enhance the quality of the sound. Then there was a honk behind me: a cleaning vehicle was approaching the station.

Two men began cleaning the concrete floor with a high-pressure device. A bystander took photos of this, whereupon a cleaning man threatened to punch him. This must have intimidated me, because when one of the men also began to clean the wall where my screen was embedded, I was struck by the thought that the tram station had already been spotlessly clean even before they started to clean it. The next moment, the screen faded out. When the technician took a look at it, water poured out of our installation. So there was no ceremonial opening. We went to a dinner where I was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Schwyzer-Winiker, whose foundation contributed a lot of money to the project *Kunst Öffentlichkeit Zürich*. Usually you have to explain a film in order to get money for it; here politeness required me to explain my film after I had spent the money on it. The equipment had been paid for by the city of Zurich, and municipal workers had destroyed it. It took a few weeks until they found a way to repair the damage.

In January 2009, we had a two-day shoot in the military base of Fort Lewis, near Seattle, Washington. Fort Lewis is 40 square kilometres in size, and has up to 40,000 inhabitants. We were in only one building with some seminar rooms next to a canteen. We were filming a workshop in which civilian therapists explained to army therapists how to work with *Virtual Iraq*, which is used in the treatment of soldiers and ex-soldiers who had been traumatised in the war. Immersion Therapy lets the traumatised patient repeat his or her crucial experience, retell it and re-experience it. *Virtual Iraq*, or *VI*, is a computer-animation programme which is supposed to make the immersion, the diving into the source of the trauma, easier or more powerful.

The civilian therapists who work for the companies and institutions that develop and distribute the *VI* system, and who are also in charge of the supervision, were dressed like lawyers or business people – most of

them were women. The military therapists – the majority were men – wore camouflage uniforms. They kept their jackets on, which was advisable since the heating system hardly worked. The rooms were carelessly furnished, the ceiling lighting – as we learnt – hadn't functioned for years. There are hardly any private companies that would hold their seminars in run-down rooms like these. Such austerity – I also saw this in the Bundeswehr – stands in bizzare contrast to the usual waste of the military. We were allotted three gobetweens, one person for each member of our crew. A PR woman was flown in from the Pentagon in order to monitor/advise us.

The civilian therapists first gave rather half-hearted talks with image examples. Afterwards, role-playing. The therapist sits at a computer, wearing a headset. The patient sits or stands next to him, wearing data-specs. These show the *Virtual Iraq* imagery. There are two locations: one is a desert road, which is driven through by a Humvee. The other is a city with a market place, a mosque, large squares, narrow alleyways and houses you can walk through. The patient chooses his path, the therapist selects incidents. The therapist can lead the patient into virtual ambushes or make him witness terrible assassinations. He can choose between accompanying sounds of helicopters, muezzins and explosions of all kinds.

During the role-plays everybody was cooperative. You might think that a patient would say that these two scenarios with only a few choices would have nothing to do with the cause of his trauma. But it became apparent that the role-plays which were attended by military therapists alone, lacked a certain degree of fantasy and tension – so we could only use very short sequences from them. Most of the military therapists chewed gum as if they were just ordinary soldiers.

Then something really extraordinary happened. One of the civilian therapists who was playing a patient described a patrol walk through Baghdad. It was his first mission and he had been assigned to a certain Jones. They had been ordered to clean the streets, which basically meant pulling down propaganda posters. Jones suggested separating, and that each of them should see to one side of the street. This was against orders, but they did it. When he went into a courtyard, he heard an explosion. He ran over – at this point the patient faltered and began to ramble. The therapist playing the therapist interrupted him: What had he seen?

Soldier: "When I went around the corner, I heard this explosion. I thought to myself: Shit! No! I immediately turned around to look for Jones, but I couldn't see him anywhere. Damn! I immediately ran to the other side ... I can't see him any more ... I ran over to see what had happened. There was smoke everywhere ..."

Therapist: "You're doing great! What did you see there?"

Soldier: "When I arrived, I saw ... that there was nothing left above his knee."

At this point he broke down. In the following session he repeatedly asked to stop, insisting that he couldn't bear it any more. The therapist insisted on continuing. He hesitated, stuttered and got caught up several times in self-reproach and attempts to explain what he was thinking back then. His acting was so convincing that friends of mine, to whom I had explained our film (*Immersion*, 2009) nevertheless believed that they were watching someone recounting a real experience. The press officer who had given us permission to shoot also thought that it was real.

The images that were made to provoke a recollection of the trauma are very similar to the ones with which US soldiers are now being trained and prepared for the battlefields. I would like to deal with this in my next work.

FROM
Written Trailers by Harun Farocki, in
Harun Farocki. *Against What? Against Whom? Antje Ehnemann, Kodwo Eshun*
(eds.), Berlin/London, 2009.





Skipper Tower and Palika Bazaar Park

A Place of Impossibility

The Lincoln Assembly

The ruin is a ruin precisely because it has lost the presence of meaning, while retaining its suggestiveness. It bespeaks a loss of something, while denying complete irretrievability of the absent object. It evokes an ambivalent break from, and nostalgia for, the past. More pointedly, it signals the imminent breakdown of meaning, and therefore fosters dizzying compensatory discursive activity [...] The ruin, in many ways, is a trope of reflexivity, the reflexivity of a culture that interrogates its own becoming. As a result, the ruin is often the playground of strategies that tell us more about the identity of the beholder than that of the ruin or its original environment.”ⁱ



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The ‘creative appropriation’ of the spectator precipitated by ruin, its signification—and to whom—is in many ways, analogous to the fracture, dematerialisation and fragmentation of the physical and conceptual frame in contemporary visual art forms. This has implications for spectators, but also for artists and, for that matter, for educators and students.

“Under the intensity of creative experimentation (the situation and challenge of artists’ practice) each work asks itself (and therefore us, too) whether there might be a ‘place’ where culture has not yet reached; it hopes to be that ‘place’ – an elsewhere that is not yet a ‘place’ on culture’s terms”ⁱⁱ

If institutional interests operate such an enclosing grip on the representation of cultural production, is the prospect of a ‘place for art’ simply a utopian pipe dream?

Could the institute itself, as a place of articulation, examination, deconstruction and interrogation, be ‘in ruins’?ⁱⁱⁱ

Disturbing the desired ‘seamlessness’ of the institution’s self-image by pointing to actual seams or failings in the infrastructure, its use/non-use/misuse, has less to do with place and more to do with an as yet undefined space – i.e. a proximity. The proposed project attempts to bring about a reinvigorated proximity to place through a dynamic encounter with the abandoned or ruined site and the public place.^{iv}

It underlines what Nick Temple described in his 2013 essay as ‘the creative potential of the fragment to restore our embodied relationship to the world’.^v It reflects on whether it is less about constructing new institutions and perhaps more about re-imagining the existing institution with all its flaws, and accepting that institutions are always ruinous—failing in a way to remain intact and, yet, always coming into being—in a nascent state.

In the now.

Founded in October 2013, the Lincoln Assembly is an imaginary group with a fictitious constituency and a focus on a place for art.

Through residencies and a series of visual arts encounters with users and visitors of various sites, *The Assembly* proposes to focus on the important question of the ‘now’. Through a socio-curatorial practice, the idea of ruins as incomplete projects, or ruins in reverse—constantly looking forward, but seldom achieving their original idea—will be explored.

Viewers will encounter physical manifestations of the incomplete projects. Documents, e.g. photographic records, will be created to both subvert and affect rhetorical frameworks and structures and remark on our present condition. These will be situated as temporary works or signs in and between sites. A series of encounters will attempt to re-imagine and create a kind of encampment around the ‘place of possibility’.

The project will also reference the place of fragments and removals from the sites, exploring notions of entropy and places of dis-assembly, by focusing on images of detritus.

The project aims to problematise assumptions of what may constitute a work of art. Visitors will be invited



to scrawl, scribble, draw, doodle, write graffiti and obliterate the unframed photographs as a form of continuous encounter.

The project attempts to interrupt or occupy the image/site to bring it into the present – the now. The artwork/physical site becomes as one experienced as incomplete project or ruin, and in many ways a by-product of this experienced and discursive process.

- i. **Author unknown**, *Ruins of Modernity: An International Conference and Project*, University of Michigan, March 17–19, 2005
- ii. **Phillipson, M.**, *Managing Tradition: The Plight of Aesthetic Practices and their Analysis in a Technoscientific Culture*, in *Visual Culture*, C. Jencks (Ed.), Routledge, London and New York, 1995.
- iii. **Shepley, A. & Dutton, S.**, *The Institute of Ruin at Talking Place, Serious Knowledge 7*, an international conference at the Bergen Academy of Art & Design, Norway, 22–25 January, 2013
- iv. This ongoing process within the potential space of ruin or incompleteness was explored in *The Institute of Ruin* (ibid.). We explored the practice of suspending the work in an unresolved state in relation to the creation of institutions.
- v. **Temple, N.**, *Unfinished Narrative*, Catalogue Essay in *Entropic Union*, an installation by Alec Shepley and Clive McCarthy, Galleria Legnica, Poland, 2013



The Ring Rail

The Ring (T)Rail Urban Renewal Project



The Ring Rail is a 35.2 km urban corridor running through major residential, green, heritage, institutional and commercial areas of the city. Introduced as a passenger railway, it runs parallel to the goods-shunting line that circumscribes the extents of New Delhi. Lack of connecting modes of transport to and from this region has rendered the passenger train inconvenient and largely irrelevant within the city's major transport networks. The massive urban sprawl since the Ring Rail was set up has further reduced connectivity between it and other parts of the city.

The Ring (T)Rail Urban Renewal Project envisions the stretch as a quiet precinct that provides space for non-motorised traffic, pedestrians and street vendors.

Delhi has a rich urban street life, a thriving mix of people, vendors, street artists and daily service-givers. The urban corridor along the Ring Rail offers an occasion for slow-moving, non-motorised and pedestrian traffic that activates and drives urban street interaction, public art and commerce.

A digital information cloud will store a database of cell numbers of vendors so that customers can locate them by sending a text query to the 1G cloud.

The Ring (T)Rail acts as a buffer between the dense ridge forests at the heart of the city and the chaos of the main roads.

On a suitable weekend, Anagram proposes to demonstrate this concept on a strip of land between Dhaula Kuan and Nizamuddin, along the existing line, temporarily pedestrianised with due permission of the Railways.

Anagram Architects was established in 2001 by partners Vaibhav Dimri and Madhav Raman. They have participated in exhibitions and have also published in various journals. Their proposal, *The Ring (T)Rail Urban Renewal Project*, received Honourable Mentions BIO23, 23rd Biennial of Design, Slovenia (2012), and acknowledgment in *Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction*, Zurich (2011). mail@anagramarchitects.com



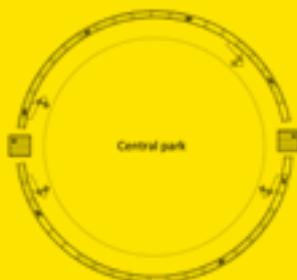
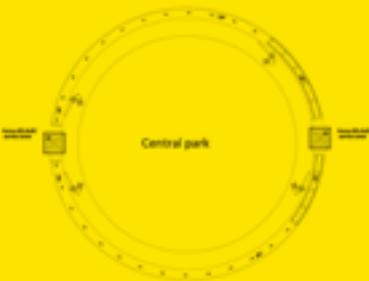
Central Park, Rajiv Chowk

Making Porous

Central Park is located in Rajiv Chowk, which has undergone layers of changes over the years, each stage coinciding with a moment in the history of the capital. Access to the park is difficult. There are plenty of entrances but, except the one opposite the Palika Bazaar, they are all closed. One cannot access the park from the metro station exits. One is not allowed to carry cameras into the park. Rajiv Chowk, which is lively with its markets at night, turns dark and dull towards the Central Park.

Central Park can be re-activated through:

- Reworking access to it
- Introducing street lighting and furniture
- Utilising the existing context around the park



I propose to rework the park's periphery and enhancement of the spacial experience of this "open" park through a structure that is light, airy and porous, making nights livelier and animated with a play of light and shadow.

At the ground level, an elevated circular ring around the park – a colonnade.

A raised pedestrian walkway supporting the upper floor rings, with provisions to sit-wait-read. Raised by a few steps from the road, as a gesture of buffer and pause for entering.

At the upper level (the middle zone) – a spectacle ring.

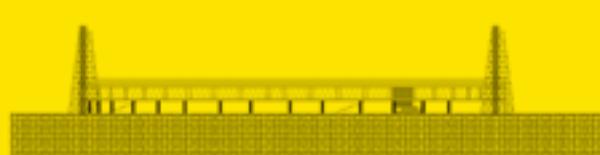
A continuous ring incorporating spaces for interacting with the park and surrounding buildings, and with open galleries, bookstalls, cafes. A porous ring, with a "winter half" and a "summer half".

The terrace level.

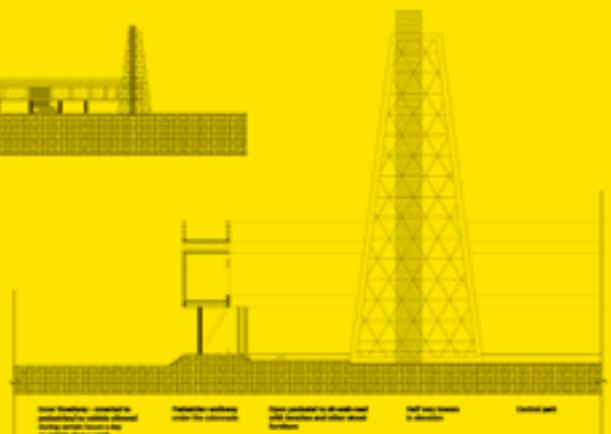
For jogging and sitting, and as a look-out zone for special events and shows in and around the park.

SALIENT FEATURES

- Ground floor (Pedestrian Ring)
- Upper floor (Spectacle Ring)
- Terrace floor (Sit-out Ring)



South Elevation drawing



Sectional Elevation

Chandni Arun Narendra completed her Bachelors in Architecture in Gujarat, and is currently pursuing a Masters in Visual Arts from Ambedkar University, Delhi. She is interested in the intersection between public spaces and art, to create a discursive platform that engages with varied publics. akeeed09@gmail.com

BIFURCATION OF THE MIDDLE ZONE

The Winter Half (the northern half)

Structure: metal grid with reflective and opaque glass block fillers, optimised for letting in natural light. Reflective glass to enhance view of the centre from radiating roads by reflecting the existing architecture. Opaque glass to enhance the experience of the open structure – during day with its porosity and at night with its luminousness.

The Summer Half (the southern half)

'Jaali walls' to make the interior cool and comfortable, while maintaining porosity. Balconies and 'jharokhas' to allow a view of trees and vegetation in the park.

Halfway towers

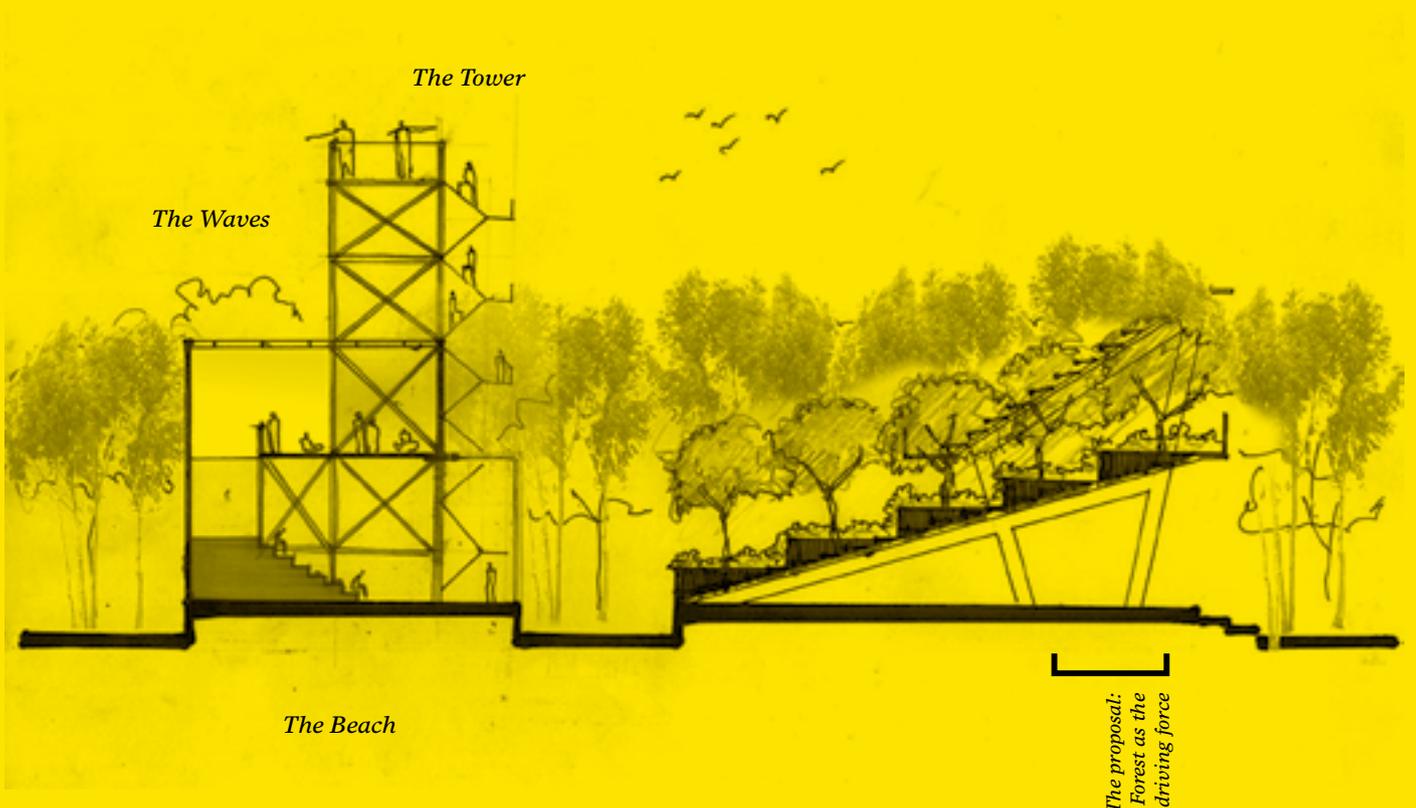
At the halfway point (where the ring bifurcates), there will be two towers with an open/porous lift shaft as well as amenities and services – public toilets, utility rooms, watching platforms, staircase.

The road around the park will be a pedestrian walkway. Staircases from the ground level ring to the interior of the park will serve as connections with metro gates.

Rabindra Rangshala

If a Tree Falls in a Forest, and No One is Around to Hear It, Does It Still Make a Sound?

Rabindra Rangshala:
Cause for dilapidation –
Human encroachment



PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The place is an encroachment within a dedicated forest area. This site is ideal to test the “If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” philosophy. The philosophy deals with the notion of ‘presence’ and ‘perception’. The proposal tries to place these notions within the context of the Rangshala as conscious gestures, and positions the forest as the driving force.

STEP 1

Stepped forestation.
This involves allowing the forest to engulf the current seating area of Rabindra Rangshala. Typically, this would take from 6 months to a year. Will community foresting be seen as ‘human activity’?

STEP 2

Insert three spaces within the theater black box.

The beach

A soundproof gallery that views the forest around as a formal activity.
A beach for viewing the forest, until a tree falls.

The waves

A closed gallery at an upper level with no visual access beyond the black box.
The sound of a tree falling, if one falls, can be heard through the open-to-air roof.

The tower

This formal element connects all the spaces and opens at the top.
A lighthouse, to count the number of trees and see if any are missing.

PROGRAMMATIC LOGIC

The inversion of the relationship between the arena and the theater black box allows the forest to regain its place within the “encroached” set up. The inserted programmes are quarantined from the forest, and yet they function

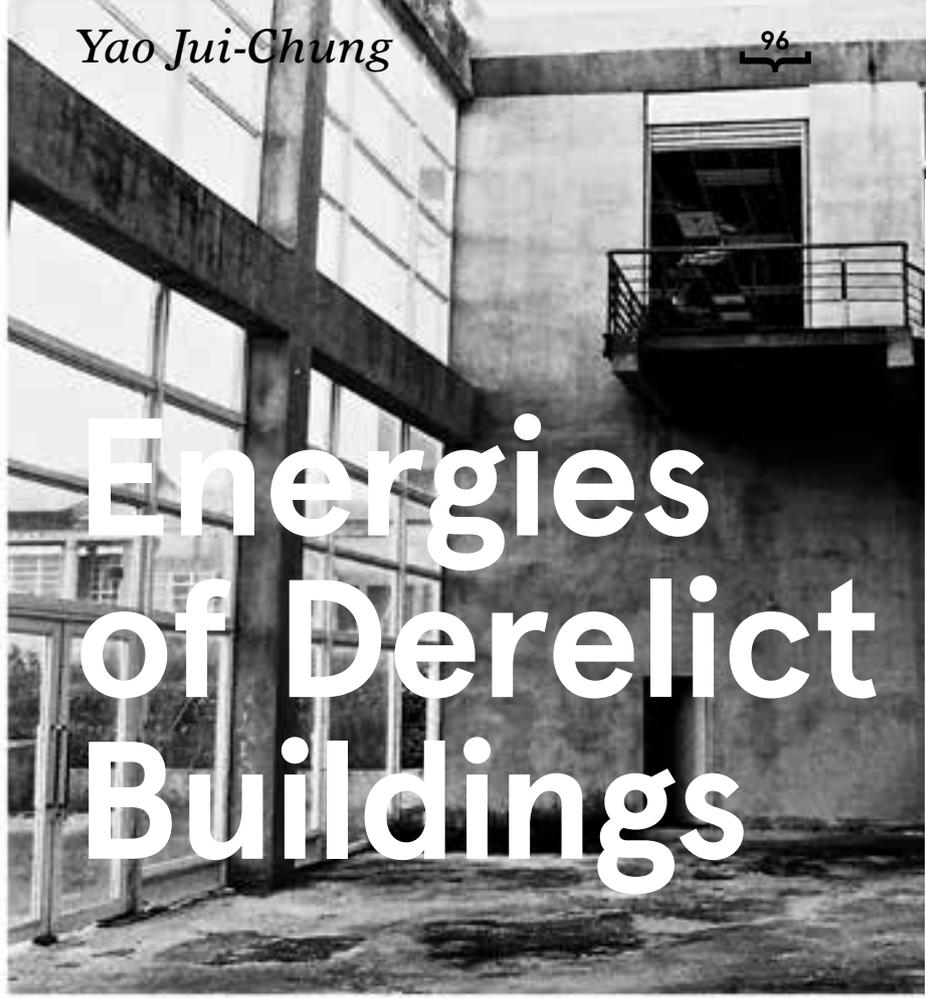
because of it. Spatially, they have the capability to hold any alternate programme that a white box can hold. But on its own, it’s a theater to check “If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?”

#Bird watching #forest museum
#natural history

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The audience
become the performers.
The arena becomes
the stage.





Energies of Derelict Buildings

Taiwanese society has undergone acute changes since my university days – from changes in social class system after the lifting of martial law, to the advances in freedom of speech. We came to realise that what we were studying was detached from social reality. This was also the time of student protests and street protests. The student protests at that time weren't able to incorporate our demands. I watched from the sidelines, but I was very excited about the social spirit of the period. We often cut classes to attend activities held in disused or "marginal" spaces.

[...]

In 1992 we performed a play at the Shuinandong Smelt Works (a.k.a. 13 Stories, a derelict building) with the Tian-Da-Na Experimental Theatre Troupe. The production was *Hamletmachine*. We were the first inter-disciplinary theatre troupe and this was the first multimedia theatre production in Taiwan. We disbanded in 1997. What stands out in my memory is a line from this production. It was: "[...] at my back the ruins of Europe; The bells sounded in the state funeral." The mood of the play seemed to fit the social currents of the time. We used a lot of derelict buildings to put on theatre productions and for filming locations. It was very popular for theatre troupes to do this. We did a lot of experiments at the derelict HuaShan. That's what first sparked my interest in derelict buildings. It's been almost 20 years. These experiments, which have been about using these spaces for creative purposes, have been important not just for the Taiwan Art Scene, but for everyone.

[...]

Derelict buildings can naturally make for a good metaphor, a symbol for a certain state of mind, as our circumstances and our background can be seen in a similar way – as derelict buildings pending redevelopment or reconstruction. Derelict buildings provide a kind of creative energy that can be harnessed by artists.

[...]

If we go and look at a disused building, we might think it strange to see it amid the fields. Why would they build something so strange here, when it's quite clear to everyone that it's not appropriate? But if you hadn't gone there you wouldn't know why it became disused. Because you observe the surrounding landscape. The experience of growing up in that place will be completely different too. So my students also think of it as a kind of illusion. That is an interesting process. It's not only about how one organises research materials. It's also a search, face to face, in the same moment of time.





台南縣將軍港觀光漁市漁貨直銷中心

Jiangjies Fishing Port Tourist Fish Market and Seafood Direct Sales Center, Tainan City
Construction started in 2003, completed in 2005
About NTS 85,000,000

2010: 林曉濱Lin, 洪燾-Han & 鄭啟榮Teng, 洪昇-Jung

I'm interested in the power operations behind the ruins. It could also be said that I use photography to look at what ruins have generated, and construct my idea of political geography from this. For example, the great amount of military architecture that was constructed during the Cold War due to the cross-strait situation, and then the subsequent cutbacks in the military, resulted in many abandoned buildings. The many jails for political prisoners that were constructed during this period serve as testimonials to the absurdity and severity of the Cold War period. The many abandoned factories I have documented also suggest the movement of industry to China in search of greater profits under the conditions of

globalisation, and because of the unique political relationship between Taiwan and China, Taiwan is being eviscerated in the process. Recently, I organised a project requiring students to photograph abandoned public spaces throughout Taiwan, highlighting the shadow of political struggle cast over the spaces resulting from failed government policies. This project was intended to put pressure on the government and bring about changes in official policies, thus serving as a successful case of art intervening in society.

FROM

Simulating Dereliction in Taiwan
An Interview with visual artist Yao Jui-Chung, eKenlai Magazine, <http://www.erenlai.com/index.php/en/focus/2011-focus/architecture-beyond-the-pale-in-taiwan/4212-yao-rui-zhong>

Unsitelness and the Archival Event, Timothy Murray Thinks Art with Yao Jui-Chung, http://www.yaojuichung.com/pdf/press/magazines/unsitely_aesthetics.pdf

Yao Jui-Chung



台東縣杉原美麗渡假村

Melliwan Resort on Shanyuan Bay, Taitung County
Construction started in 2004, ceased in 2007, resumed in 2011
NTS 350,000,000

2010©黃詩恩Huang, Shih-En



花蓮市測測之心陽光電城

The heart of Hualien Sunshine Electric City, Hualien City
Completed in 2009
About NTS 440,000,000

2010 ©黃子瑞Huang, Tzu-Jui

Afrofuturism and the African

Afrofuturism is considered what speculative fiction, myths, legends, science fiction and stories of that genre are to African-Americans, Africa, Africa of the diaspora, and black people in general. It refers to what blackness looks like in the future, real or imagined.

The history of Afrofuturism comes from America, and the term was coined by Mark Dery in 1993. He talks about literature, so for instance, about Octavia Butler. But then it also moved into new regions, for instance music, and so we have people like Sun Ra and George Clinton. But for me specially Sun Ra, because he has a special place in my heart. He believed that he came from Saturn to Earth, to spread the message of love and peace. He introduced the idea of 'alien' to black people in America.

But that was specifically about African-Americans, and I wanted to find a place for Afrofuturism in Africa. And the first place that led me to is Mount Kenya, obviously, where, according to Agĩkũyũ tradition, the god of Mount Kenya lives. So Munyaga is seated on top of this mountain, and he introduced our Adam and Eve, Gikuyu and Mumbi, from whom nine children, and so the nine clans, descended.

But even before the myths of Gikuyu and Mumbi, the idea of Afrofuturism, or legends or myths, was introduced to me by my mother. She is a great paediatrician and storyteller, and so her stories were truly science fiction. Truly! I remember her telling me stories like how, if I ate pumpkin, my hair would grow. That if I attached leeches to my nipples, my breasts would grow. (I did!) And also, she would talk about the way that, in the Agĩkũyũ tradition, if you circle the Mahuma tree seven times, you would change sex. Growing up, obviously, past my mother's stories, I began to read stories on my own, and they were inevitably filled with the ogre and the young girl who wandered off into the forest, and what happened when she ran into the forest, and how she met the horrible ogre there because she had wandered from the ways of society. And that's also when I met Ben Okri, and got introduced to the idea of the spirit child, and the idea of using spiritualism, or mythical-realism,

within storytelling. And that for me is also a link to Afrofuturism.

What really inspired me about Ben Okri was his ability to merge, seamlessly, the idea of the spirit world and fiction, and the idea that we live in a continent that is so closely linked to the spirit world that we use it in a very everyday way. And that is true when it comes to witch doctors, *sangoma*, or people who deal with the spirit world.

It's also true of the genies of the coast, and I don't know how many people have gone to Mumbasa or Zanzibar, but I know from personal experience that there was a cat that followed me for 5 km, and every time I turned around it was there. My friends can attest to this, and I am positive it was a genie.

So, Afrofuturism has always been part of our culture, has always been part of us. But more interestingly, it has been part of the history of West Africa. West Africans, specially the people in Mali, called Dogon, believe that they were told about a planet called Sirius-B before it was discovered by western scientists.

And they were told of this planet by a race of amphibian-like aliens who came in from the ocean and told them not only about the planet, but also about the rotation of the planet and how it worked in space. Some of their cave drawings showed the amphibian creatures, drawn below the people who came.

So they had this knowledge in the 1930s, but it wasn't until the 70's that this planet was seen. And if this isn't curious science fiction history, I don't know what is.

But also from South Africa, we have people like Credo Mutwa, who believes that there is a reptilian race of people whose bloodlines extend into modern day royalty and business people and it is what I guess theorists would call the *Illuminati*.

So, fact or fiction, myths have always existed very close to us. But there is a growing need for Afrofuturism, and I have to ask why. And when I was



talking about this with a friend of mine, Michael Odhiambo, he said Africans are inherently futuristic, given the sheer capriciousness of our situation. The writer David William Cohen has said, "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of man against forgetting." And this makes a lot of sense, because it seems that Afrofuturism as a genre is growing, because as Africans, or as descendents of Africa, we've never had a space or a voice within our own history. We've never had a chance to talk about our own history; it has always been written by other people. And without this link with our own history, we are using Afrofuturism to stake a place in the future, so we can strongly identify ourselves in the future.

Mark Dery argues that the younger generation uses technology as a way to insert themselves into both a real and imaginary landscape, to physically assert their presence in the present, and to make it clear that they intend to stake their claim in the future.

Since we can't claim our history, we are now trying to project our own future. And in that we have to ask ourselves, "Into what spaces are we projecting our own future?" In Kenya, we are doing it in music. To me, *Just A Band* have demonstrated Afrofuturism in their music. (And some of my favourite musicians are in this band as well.)

In one of their latest songs, *Huff+Puff*, they say:

*Give me five, it's good to be alive
The sky seems so far away
Hope you know that we've been to the moon
and back
Be sure that nothing's gonna hold us back.*

We know that we are larger than life, larger than earth, larger than the cosmos, and this is reflected in our work and in our music.

Around the continent, there are people like Nnedi Okorafor, who has written the book, *Who Fears Death*. In the book, Nnedi talks about manipulating technology as we know it, to understand where we are, or to grasp our environment. And, as Africans, we do that all the time. We use technology that was invented outside of our own spaces, and use it in our own ways. In *Who Fears Death*, Nnedi Okorafor creates these particular machines called the water capture stations that absorb water from the atmosphere around them, so that people can take baths, have clean drinking water, and so on.

That's the fictional side of it. But in practice, how can one use Afrofuturism? Well, for that I would refer to *AfriGadget*, the website, which has a plethora of people doing very inventive and, for me, very futuristic things, including a young thirteen year-old called Richard Turere.

He created a way to run a flashlight using a car battery, to keep predators away from his family's livestock. That, to me, is a very Afrofuturist sense of using technology, but in a very rustic way, in a way that makes sense to us.

In my film *Pumzi*, I used the idea of technology – self-powered generators. In it, there are people who run on treadmills, and generate electricity in order to power where they live. I thought I was being very innovative – until I googled, and realised I wasn't so much! Self-powered generators are used; they exist. There are ways of using kinetic energy to power stations. It is not completely in practice at this moment, but it is an idea about how we can use technology in a very Afrofuturist setting, to run our

everyday things. And of course, there is no way we can talk about the future without talking about technology.

What is most important, and what I found while making *Pumzi*, was that Afrofuturism works best for me because with it I am able to extrapolate on ideas and thoughts and feelings I have about the way the world is running, without offending people, and without being too heavy-handed.

Pumzi was, for me, a reflection of society. It's set 35 years after the water war, and where everybody lives inside because they have been told the outside is dead, until one character Asha has a dream – which is not allowed, because everyone is supposed to be taking dream suppressants – and when she wakes up, she finds a seed that she then plants and it starts to grow. But in a world where the outside is dead, and her being a curator of a virtual natural museum – and that's the only place you have access to nature – she had to find, to fight a way out of herself to prove that life exists.

My metaphor for *Pumzi* is about life and sacrifice, and that we have to mother Mother Nature, we have to make sacrifices in order to live in this world, and we have to know that our behaviour will affect generations to come. As a storyteller in the tradition of the Agiküyü, my job is to be a seer, not just a historian, and to be able to say: There is more to life that we see. Listen to the storytellers; they also have a voice, and their voice is important.

FROM
Afrofuturism in popular culture:
Wanuri Kahiu at TEDxNairobi, 14 September, 2012. <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/Afrofuturism-in-popular-culture>





In the Faraway Past and In the Future

[1.1] "... Seeing that the sun has risen, his mind is filled with wonder, and with a broad smile on his face, he reflects: 'What has happened is amazing'."

Astronomers and Their Reasons: Working paper on Jyotihsastra, Christopher Minkowski, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Number 30 (2002).

[1.2] Jantar Mantar is an appeal to experience in the form of observations as a part of astronomical practice. A palpable experience of Earth's cosmic motion.

[1.3] Observation of celestial bodies requires physical alignment with the instruments. The architectural scale of Jantar Mantar allows seeing ones self as being part of the movement of the universe, defining now and there, local time, and past and future.

[1.4] Astronomy is a speculative method to understand our own movement and time in relation to other bodies.

[1.5] "Placed within this complex, one is moved beyond the experience of time as a personal phenomenon, to a realisation of the larger order of time in which one exists."

On Jantar Mantar, in *Kāla, Exhibition catalogue, Mati Ghar, IGNC, New Delhi, 1990-91. Concept: Kapila Vatsyayan.*

[1.6] Jantar Mantar, Delhi, is a street laboratory of democracy. Here protestors sing about bringing the heavens down to earth.

[1.7] Unlike observatories that use telescopes to extend our view and travel towards the stars, Jantar Mantar serves as a host to stars. Direct-sight observation makes one feel one has a very intimate connection with one's visitors, becoming part of 'cosmic' movement – their and our comings and goings. It seems Jantar Mantar is a house for stars and planets to visit us.

[1.8] The dome of the Mati Ghar employs astronomical tools in an eclectic way – disks, circles, and sphere, dividing them into degrees. It allows for observation of trajectories of apparent motion, upwards. It refracts light into the field of view of the observer, making it appear as orbits of, and for, her own observation. It casts shadows for orientation. And yet, our brains can't measure what they observe, but we can guess, speculate, imagine and try to find co-ordinates.

[1.9] *Dance of the Light Echoes*

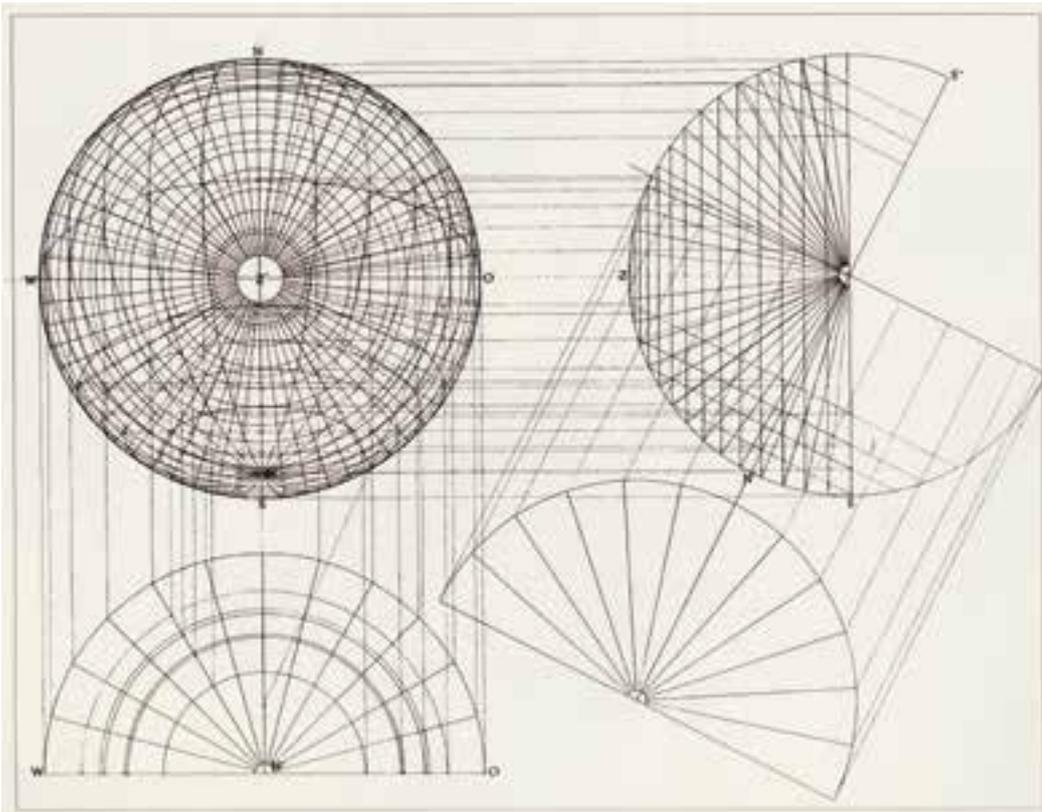
[1.9][a] A linear structure that will create light echoes, a phenomenon observed in astronomy – that occurs in space, revealing events from the distant past (light explosion).

[1.9][b] Create a sense of belonging to the abstract movement that is related to, but is far away from, me. A sense of being very grounded and embodied, yet part of an ephemeral and vast space. It is about the wonder of observation, and of awareness that we are part of some movement caused by our inter-dependence.

[1.9][c] A fictional astronomical/architectural instrument in which human and her movement holds the central place, causing the observation of trajectories – orbits without center of orbiting, which may or may not be comprehensible.

[1.10] "The wheeling stars, a study of their movements, pure mathematical calculation, these shaped men's worldview and particularly sharpened their sense of structures and systems. We are lucky to find an investigator."

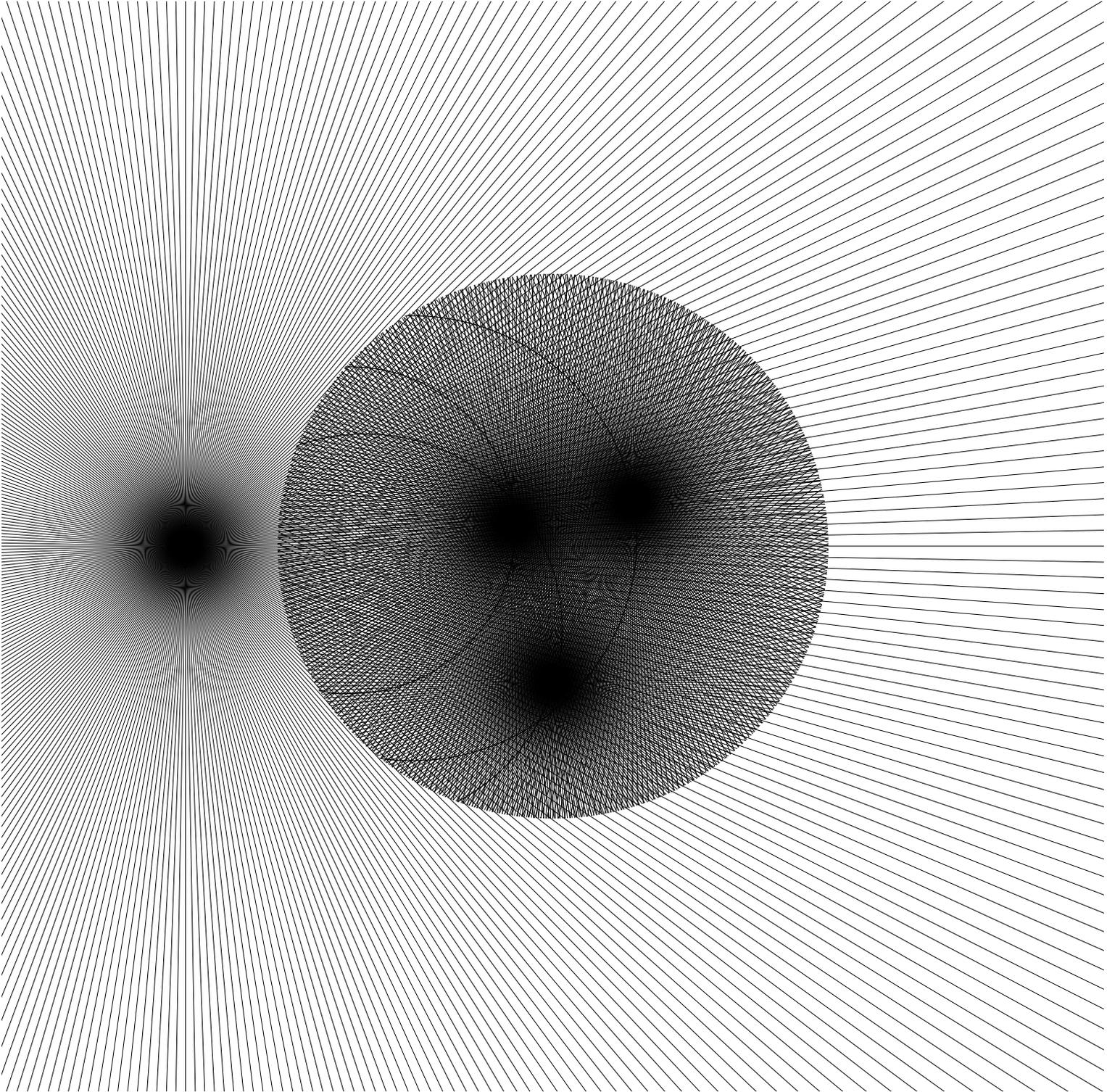
Kham: Space and the Act of Space, *Exhibition catalogue, Mati Ghar, IGNC, New Delhi, 1986.*



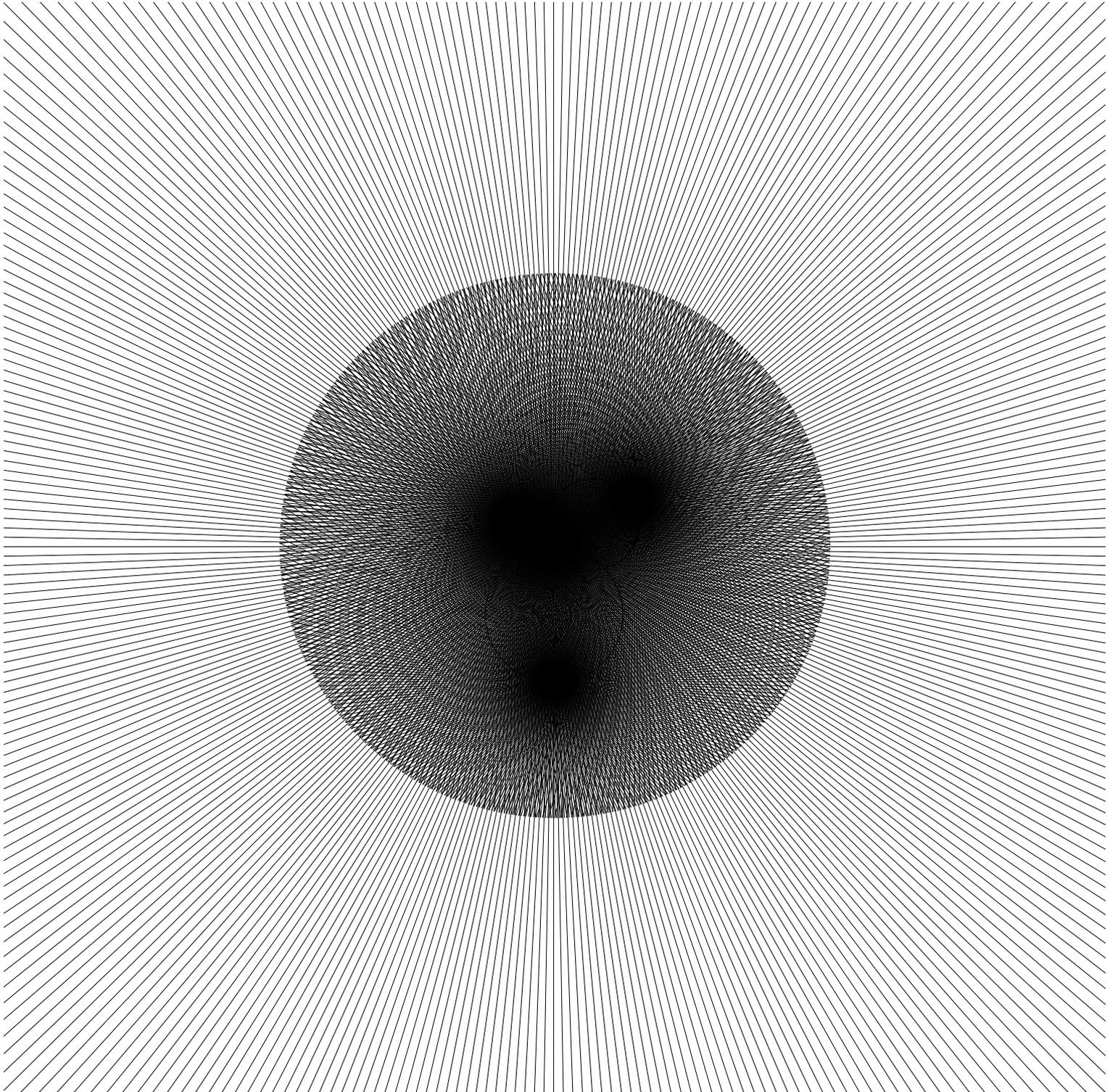
Jai Prakash Yantra,
Jantar Mantar, Jaipur

Drawing and drum-shaped sandstone and
plaster model of the Great Jai Prakash Yantra,
Jaipur. Photo: Volwahsen, A.,
Cosmic Architecture in India, Prestel, 2001

DANCE OF THE LIGHT ECHOES
Step 1



DANCE OF THE LIGHT ECHOES
Step 8



Shankar's International Dolls Museum

Grazing, the Dolls Museum

1. Grazing*, the Dolls Museum stretches itself wide into a polymorphous shape that wriggles out of a din box. Like clear soup, it phases out structurally for a year. Each phase produces a version of the Dolls Museum and new instagrams of doubt as by-products.

* Grazing is a way of life, a method of inhabiting, place for thinking, expansion, infiltration and re-stressing. As an area, its main function is to make negotiations and develop relational structures; a conceptual field that allows casualness. Grazing is duration enticed, or duration at leisure.

2. Lurking. This phase introduces the idea of travel, distances, directions, survey information, inquiries and an expectation to explore and see further. Lurking inside the dolls museum implies allowing** travelling together. Different groups collide occasionally, producing instances of roundness and the finite.



** Allowing getting lost and not reaching, never arriving, buying the ticket but not climbing up the staircase, just staying longer, stressing for a while and leaving. Allowing the translation of the idea of play into many subsets of activities, so that the visitor doesn't get to see the dolls and those cabinets, and the duration of their stay is stretched and spent in other dissimilar exercises.

Lurking involves working with mathematicians, to develop formulaic compositions of the museum's pathways and equations that predict the possible number of collisions in each composition. The compositions are further used in such a way that they create hindrances and distort the museum's architecture.

2. Shakiness of the ground. This phase introduces ideas of discovery, of landing, instability of positions, visions of what is ahead, slight movement and construction of a vocabulary to understand this newly erupting geography.

Shakiness of the ground references the sets of belongings, inherent ideas of gathering and prescriptions that the Dolls Museum has accumulated –



gathering of dolls, nations, states, jewellery, eyes, hair, costumes, characters, plays, stories, rituals, festivals, and peculiar passions and affinities that led to the collection. These references form the contours of the newly formed world map. Shakiness of the ground prepares lessons in geography and history based on new narratives discovered inside the Dolls Museum.

The following activities happen:

- **Insertion of an archivist's time and continuity into the traveller's time.** One records the travel while travelling, introduces an archivist's new school of diagrams, invents names, logics and modes of travel, and attempts disorientation programmes.
- **Creation of measures of many kinds.** Thoughts, child's doodles, gazes – from a foot to a foot, human foot to a doll foot, a hand to a hand, via each window display, via instruments that register fictive positions inside those cabinets.
- **Engagement with each doll to make the Dolls Museum re-enact an altered political geography.** The visitor-traveller inhabits the archivist-traveller's dilemma, and occasionally becomes a passer-by with no responsibility of reporting.

3. Fielding. This phase formulates chances and accidents during the travel. It puts together a bibliography of readings that help read Dolls Museum. Performers and readers join in, improvise and alter the texts and the museum.

Fielding essays the state of agility, swift changes in positions. It is about straying and craning the neck, browsing and



concentrating, fickleness, haste, slipping and missing, and stretching of the hand.

4. Methods. This phase engages with the idea of breaking into a place. A kind of burglary, a theft. It introduces a sense of violation into the space that corrupts the sanctity of the discovered and articulated geography, punctures its interiority and turns it into an open and accessible exterior.

Breaking into a place is a special kind of intrusion. *Methods* is a jolt, a moment when suddenness strikes and collapses this wall or that doorknob, a way of entering and being public. The focus will be on heightening and accentuating that moment of suddenness, and transforming it into a live spectacle.

The non-human performs the intrusion – *Methods* introduces and invites plants, rats, earthworms, spiders and cockroaches as legal migrants. It allows other living forms to grow for a particular duration. Even a Money plant. These new inhabitants alter the atmospherics of the space – its humidity levels, oxygen and moisture – and build their own micro-environments.

Methods also invites biologists to gauge changes in the environment and the new inhabitation cycles formed after the incident.

5. Exhaustion. This fifth phase manifests in the expansion of the place, and further mutations.

Exhaustion invites storytellers to expand the narrative around every doll, form new clusters and communities. The frozen postures of these dolls carry secrets and treasures, they can host many stories, and are witness to changes and events; they embody and enact human minds, are prototypes of the world of humans.

Exhaustion plays with the embeddedness or deeply inserted specifics of race, caste, gender, costume, occasion, religion, region and country that each doll represents.

Exhaustion also suggests internal hemorrhage. A state of amputation or a strong cut, where blood clots or is frozen using ice, after the circumstance of profuse bleeding.

6. Desks: Dummy Conversations. This sixth phase offers specially arranged desks. It creates a bubble landscape, introduces the casual as a curve; it processes the same space with multiple distances.

Dummy Conversations uses the staircase to the museum as a desk, processing brief states of immersion while climbing up the staircase of the building, before reaching or arriving. Before entering the museum, it introduces a relay of pauses, a few stops that act as preparation ground.

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All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society

Total South AIFACS

AIFACS 'entered' my research and my writings earlier this year, while reconstructing the genealogy of India's presence at the Venice Biennale since Independence. In a Biennale catalogue, I had 'encountered' someone called Madanjeet Singh. Born in Lahore in the 1920s, a freedom fighter, an ancient sculpture expert and a photographer, he held two exhibitions of his photographs at the AIFACS soon after Independence. On these occasions, Singh had invited the then prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and he visited both exhibitions. The interest which Nehru had cultivated for this enthusiastic young man led to Singh obtaining a scholarship to Rome in the early 1950s, which then served as a springboard for him to become the cultural attaché at the Indian Embassy in Rome, which also led him to organising the first Indian art exhibition at the Venice Biennale, and hence Singh's name in the Biennale catalogue. That was 1954.

'South' (and the eastern block) had featured prominently in the AIFACS' activities from 1947, until 1954. AIFACS continued to nurture Southern locations for its activities even after the creation

of Lalit Kala Academy, in 1954, while the latter also held 'South' as a central geo-cultural axis in matters of cultural relations. The case of Madanjeet Singh—as surely that of many others—showed how AIFACS fostered encounters, new moments and routes for an artist and her works. With the AIFACS as site and a matrix of

institutional cultural relations during the 20th century in view, Total South is a visionary project which aims to interrogate contemporary meanings of 'South' through public art works from the standpoints of an institution, a city and a country.

Total South deploys public art to carry out its interventions, and it is 'total' because the project's underlying inquiry opens up and expands 'South' into other and unconventional conceptual-cum-geographical spaces. The project's outcomes are multifarious, and they will be the product of cross-fertilisations between academic, artistic and publics' theorisation and production. They will spring from a range of activities: from public engagement with 'South', making the built form and its conceptual underpinnings fluid and, following Latour's conceptualisation of art work as 'metaphor for social theory', Total South will contribute to the ongoing debates on 'theory from the South/on the South'.

THE TOTAL SOUTH CONCEPTUAL TOOL

"Be thankful we are men of the south," Junior said, stretching and yawning. "Southerners are we, in the south of our city in the south of our country in the south of our continent. God be praised. We are warm, slow, and sensual guys, not like the cold fishes of the north." Senior, scratching first his belly and then the back of his neck, contradicted him at once. "In the first place," Senior said, "the south is a fiction, existing only because men have agreed to call it that. Suppose men had imagined the earth the other way up! We would be the northerners then. The universe does not understand up and down; neither does a dog. To a dog, there is no north or south. In this regard, the points of the compass are like money, which has value only because men say that it does. And in the second place you're not that warm a character, and

a woman would laugh to hear you call yourself sensual. But you are slow—that is beyond a doubt."

—In the South, Salman Rushdie, 2009

Junior and Senior live in fictional South India until a tsunami washes one of them away. Rushdie's short story provides us with 'South' as a way of inhabiting the world and as limitation of human conventions. 'South' as a body/mind condition – in Rushdie's rendition, a languid, slow and sensorial one rooted in place and its inherent (almost exotic) difference – contains the very possibilities for things to be different. We all, 'southerners and northerners' alike know that there is some 'truth' in this sensory-drawn geography of the world. However, where and how do we draw the line? How do we actually operate reversal? And what happens when we juxtapose this sensorial geography with that of the legacy of colonialism, and the present geopolitical, development and economic realities that come together in 'Global South'? The languid, slow and sensorial leave way for a much harder and rigid configuration.

"the Global South" assumes meaning by virtue not of its content, but of its context, of the way in which it points to something else in a field of signs – in this instance, to its antinomy to "the Global North," an opposition that carries a great deal of imaginative baggage congealed around the contrast between centrality and marginality, kleptocracy and free-market democracy, modernity and its absence. Patently, this opposition takes on a hard-edged political and economic reality in some institutional contexts, like the G-8 and world bond and credit markets – a reality that makes it appear as though it has a "hard" geocartography. That process of reification is precisely why we cannot simply do away with the term by fiat: it has a life in the world'.

—Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012

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One of the latest manifestations of its 'life in the world' is the 2013 UNDP Human Development Report entitled 'The rise of the South'. The Report's overture shows the image of a compass turned upside down, with the South placed as the upper cardinal point and West occupying the place of East.

Total South situates itself in between the geography of sensibilities and hard geocartography realities to confound, test, subvert, re-imagine these sensibilities, realities, and antinomies.

A PLAN FOR HOW THE SPACE AND BUILT FORM IS TO BE RE-IMAGINED

A radical re-imagination of AIFACS implies subverting, as much as possible, the exhibiting rules in place for its spaces. In this respect, Total South calls for art that turns the buildings façade, halls and the spiral staircase into an expressive tool. The project pushes the institutional towards the contemporary, and the contemporary towards the institutional. In other words, the city of Delhi would see AIFACS 'as never before' and think of AIFACS 'as never before'.

A PROGRAMME-PLAN WITH A DURATIONAL ASPECT OF UNFOLDING

Total South aims to be temporally territorialised at AIFACS, and then leave and reconstitute itself elsewhere, under another form – inside a museum, a university, a gallery, or a biennale – and continue the conversation.

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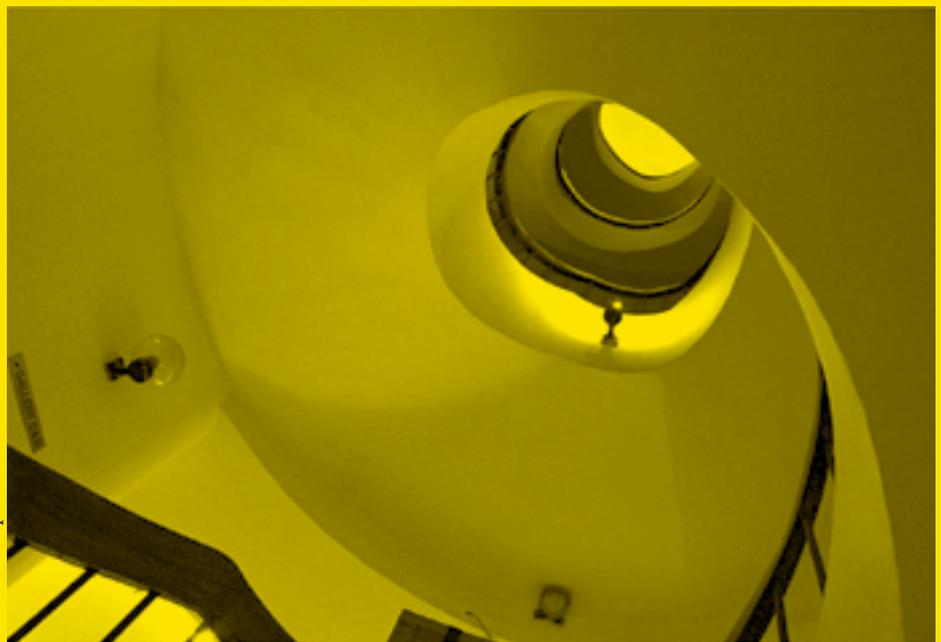
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Foto: Parul Gupta



Vardhman Mall/Faridabad &
Astha Kunj Park/Nehru Place

Drawing with the Community



VARDHMAN MALL, FARIDABAD

Vardhman Mall is an empty, unused mall that can be used by acrobats. Performing could be a way to attract people. Acrobats are crucial, as they become a form of still life, yet portray movement.

By covering the floors and walls of the mall with drawing sheets, drawing will be encouraged everywhere in the mall. The negative spaces inside the mall become

areas to work with unconventional materials, in addition to the usual – tapes, clothes and ropes. The mall is loaded with discarded materials – wires, wood and scrap – which can be incipient to installations.

Campaigns and workshops

conducted once or twice a month, over 6 months, involving artists, architects, designers, engineers, kids, artisans and anyone who uses drawing as a way to think, conceive ideas and expressions, is the way ahead.

ASTHA KUNJ PARK, BEHIND NEHRU PLACE METRO STATION

The park stretches on to the nearby Sant Nagar colony, East of Kailash, and till the boundary wall of the Bahai Lotus temple. This space draws its own public. We will invite them to explore simple, and complex, exercises in drawing with us. The empty spaces, often used by kids to play cricket at certain times of the day could, at other times, become spaces to gather and think, meet others and do nothing. We call upon jugglers, horse riders, monkey carriers, snake charmers, balloon-sellers and donkey keepers to intervene and transform the space into an unmanageable space.

The nearby Nehru Place Complex is a rich source for ideas and materials – brimming over as it is with ornaments, garments and computer-based peripheral junk. Talks on the metro flying overhead would add to the vibrancy, and we would provide shovels to anyone who wishes to dig a deep hole into the earth.



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Panchsheel Park

Rain Shelters for Itinerant Performances

This park is covered with trees—neem, peepal, gooseberry, jamun, pomegranate, lemon and more—that bloom in different seasons, and make the park hospitable to peacocks, parrots and snakes. A jogging track meanders through the park. People from all walks of life from the nearby areas of Sheikh Sarai, Chirag Dilli,

Panchsheel Enclave frequent this park. Perhaps because of its huge size and different exits, the Delhi Development Authority has built six rain shelters in it. Three of these have just a circular base and a green canopy, and three have seating space as well. A pathway leads to them all.

Walking in this park, it has often crossed my mind that these shelters could be used by artists, performers, storytellers and writers: the space and infrastructure is already present; they only need to be re-imagined and used innovatively. It is ideal, for instance, for a type of itinerant performance, enacted through moving from one rain shelter to the next.



Hemavathy Guha trained as a visual artist at the College of Arts and Crafts, Chennai, and is passionate about painting, printmaking and writing. She is currently making mixed media works using domestic and recycled elements.
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Crafts Museum

Engaging the Sky



My engagement with the Crafts Museum spans over 12 years. The spatial structure of the Crafts Museum is a series of informal assemblages organised around a 'spine' – a metaphor for the Indian street. There is a sense of progression into a sequence of open-to-sky and semi-covered spaces that weave in and out ambiguously, taking one from village to temple to palace. The built forms are single storied, low-lying, with sloped roofs covered with clay tiles. The massing and dynamics of the spaces lend themselves to an overriding 'horizontalness'. The visiting artisanal community work and display their crafts at the ground level. This further creates movement and focus towards the earth, downwards.

ENGAGING THE SKY

The mythical concept of 'axis mundi' would be used to create an opposing force – that of looking up towards the sky and engaging with it. The open spaces of the museum would be re-imagined through possibilities for connecting the earth to the sky, creating a 'verticality'. Metaphysical qualities of the sky would be translated into ideograms in combination with 3-dimensional imaginations and interventions that express a deeper, intuitive understanding of our craft traditions. The interventions would be ephemeral in nature and would

create a feeling of soaring towards the sky infinitely.

MAGNIFYING SCALE AND DISTORTING GEOMETRY

By exploring scale and geometry, my interest is in selecting the most interesting pieces of crafts from amongst a range of pieces, and re-imagining them as large-scale spatial experiments. The idea would be to re-interpret certain forms and hyperbolic geometries, and look at them afresh to see if they lend themselves to spatial manifestations. By playing with scale, my intention would be to transform the perception of these craft forms into intriguing abstractions. Abiding by the basic structure and craftsmanship, but distorting it at the same time, boundaries of that craft tradition would be pushed to the limit, through an engagement with the artisanal community.

Indrani Baruah is an artist, architect and cultural researcher, and lives between Guwahati, Delhi and Berkeley. She completed her formal training in architecture from School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, and School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon. She has participated in exhibitions, including Venice Biennale (2012). She is recipient of the Extending Arts Practice Grant, India Foundation for the Arts (2012) and the Public Art Grant, Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art (2013). indranibaruah@hotmail.com

One of my recent works was an intervention in a riverfront – a bamboo raft produced as collaborative community practice attempting to blur the boundaries between artist-artisan-architects. Cultural forms were explored, pushing the aesthetic and technical boundaries of arts, building traditions and vernacular crafts. Fish traps, basketry, and artistry and craftsmanship in bamboo were de-contextualised to their most abstract manifestation – colour, texture, space, line, position, symmetry, balance, tension, structure. The second stage involved a slowing down – the slowest journey on the river Brahmaputra and a concentration of attention on some latent processes.

CREATING WHIMSY

The tiled roofs of the museum that incorporate imaginary and mythic animals of the forest could be explored for re-interpretations and re-imaginings of scale and whimsy. Magnifications and distortions in scale and weaves could be introduced in basketry from different regions of the country.

These proposed interventions are part of my ongoing experiments in challenging the traditional boundaries between art and architecture, artist and artisan, crafts and arts, and towards developing a new, critically engaged hybrid practice that integrates cultural history, architectural traditions and environmental concerns. In the process, provocative public art may emerge, leading to unanticipated interdisciplinary convergences. The idea of 'creative place-making' is a pivotal and perpetual axis throughout all my explorations.

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**ENERGY OF KOSMOS IS
INDESTRUCTIBLE!**
*Haus der Kulturen der Welt,
Berlin, 2013
Production Stills*

Energy of Kosmos is Indestructible!!!

This is a script for a film, shot in the summer of 2012, in Russia and Kazakhstan. The film is still being edited. The script is comprised of excerpts from poems, philosophical texts, scientific writings, academic papers, and historical studies by and about Cosmo-Immortalists, a surge of thinking that emerged in Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It linked the Enlightenment with Russian Orthodox and

Eastern philosophical traditions to create an idiosyncratically concrete metaphysics of its own. The script liberally combines these writings with recent news items and various personal details. It includes the poetry of Nikolai Zabolotsky and Maximilian Voloshin, writing by Maria Ender, and quotes from Nikolai Fedorov, Vladimir Solov'ev, and Alexander Chizhevsky. It's very much indebted to a number of scholars, including

Svetlana Semenova, Svetlana Cheloukhina, Vyacheslav Stepin, and other writers whose work influenced my understanding of this complex and paradoxical field of thought. The script contains little punctuation and no footnotes, and is broken into simple lines of text for subtitling. Some of the more significant quotes are italicised for emphasis.

ACTRESS

Here is what's going to happen
The man in bed is a professional actor
He is not asleep
He will turn on cue and start to speak in Russian
I will translate his words for you

Before he moves, I want to tell you something
My mother was born in the same town as the man who flew
into space from his apartment
Her father was a painter and a fighter pilot
He was killed in battle in China when he was very young
This film is dedicated to him

The footage you are seeing was shot in Ukraine a few
days ago
Liza found this place and I like it very much
Even though I have never been there and know nothing
about the area
We produced the snow by shooting at the sky with
artillery
The actor will read a script for a film

It will be shot on location in Kazakhstan, in Crimea, and
in Siberia
It's based on the ideas of a Russian philosopher
Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov
Who, like others, was convinced that death is a mistake

Because the energy of cosmos is indestructible
Because true religion is a cult of ancestors
Because true social equality means immortality for all

Because of love
We must resurrect our ancestors
From cosmic particles
As minerals
As animated plants
Solar, self-feeding, collectively conscious
Immortal
Transsexual
On earth, in spaceships, on space stations
On other planets

[CUT. ACTOR SPEAKS]

ACTOR

I have no idea what energy is
No one does
But it is subject to a law
A law that has no exceptions
An abstract, mathematical law
About a numerical quantity
That does not change when something happens

Trees fall, houses burn, cities flood, stars explode
But the number remains the same, always
It's peculiar

Life is impossible without energy
*A tree is saturated with solar energy.
Branches are arranged by the most intense solar energy,
Roots, along the paths of the most intense salts of the
earth's force.*

*The forest reveals the saturation of space in three
dimensions;*

It captures the marrow of life.

*The frost on the window forms the image of force-currents
caught on a single plane.*

I want to catch direction.

The body grows out of the meeting of various movements.

There are no boundaries – the connection of things.

Things are nodes of various energies.

Energy is life

Life ends, but energy is indestructible

If you expect to find a scientific definition of
consciousness, you will be disappointed

Like energy, nobody knows what it is, but all know it
exists

In humans, in animals, perhaps in other things

What can be expressed mathematically can be recorded and
transmitted

Backed up like code or a music score

That is what Russian cosmists thought at the beginning of

the twentieth century
It carried over to America

Cosmos is not merely distant outer space
Like cosmetics, cosmos means beauty and harmony
It also means the world, a harmonious world
In which this planet is a mere speck

Unlike cosmos, earth is full of chaos, suffering,
and death

To reach cosmos, one does not travel upwards
Climbing the Eiffel Tower to view the panorama of the
world, to exalt oneself
To reach cosmos one has to dive
To immerse oneself
In the ocean

Cosmos needs reason to be cosmos, not chaos
*Cosmos is a force without reason, while man is a reason
without force*
But how can reason become force, and force become reason?
Force will become reasonable when ruled by reason
In this sense, everything depends on man

Russian cosmists aimed to build cosmos on earth
To construct a new reality free of hunger, disease,
violence, death, need, inequity
Like communism
They happened at the same time

*We don't erect temples to cosmogony
In order to reflect the external world
But merely to see facets of our ignorance*

*All the systems of the world, casts of ancient souls
Are mirrored phantasms of mutual reflection
Two juxtaposed abysses*

*There is no exit from the labyrinth of knowledge
And a man will never become other
Than what he passionately believes*

[CUT. ACTOR CONTINUES]

ACTOR

Here is a simple idea
Common efforts of all mankind should be directed toward a
single task
Victory over death
Immortality
Resurrection of all who ever lived
By all means available to science and art

Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov called this the common task
He meant it literally

Using their own genetic makeup, humans would resurrect
their parents
From themselves, parents would resurrect their own
parents
And so on
Back to the first people on earth

The process could take several thousand years
Which is why it becomes urgent to begin immediately
Because we are all dying

This means
Museums should be moved to cemeteries
Libraries should become nurseries for the resuscitation
of writers.
Armies, factories, farms, hospitals, and universities
should work together to achieve the common task of
immortality
All the productive forces of humanity should aim to
achieve the return of every resurrected human being
Each person with his or her own individual consciousness

A new grand synthesis of various sciences will be reached
on a new, cosmic scale
Nature, including the cosmos and humanity, will become a
scientific laboratory

During this time a new type of society will emerge
Fedorov called it *psychocracy*

Resurrection requires a new body to host consciousness
A rebuilding of tissue
Humans should understand the mystery of how plants
regenerate themselves
We need to study their mechanism of nutrition
For the necessary reconstruction of the human organism,
humans need to become self-feeding

We will build new organs
Change and adapt to new living conditions in the cosmos

As long as humans *reproduce* like animals, they will die
like animals
To exist as a gendered being is to follow the path
to death
Man has a huge energy potential
Which he uses to multiply as a natural being

The energy of love is the most potent of all types
of energy
Love can be used in a new, more powerful way

When sexual distinctions are overcome
A tremendous amount of energy will be unleashed
And it will increase as the need for sexual reproduction
decreases
Love will satisfy a more profound need

This is because
At present, sexual love is egoistic
The noblest ambition of love should be
To fight death
To develop a new creative personality
Immortality and resurrection for all!

In transforming nature's destructive forces
In making them constructive
We will gain control over evolution and the regulation of
the cosmos
We will conquer death itself
And release the endless creativity of life within the
universe

To that end, we must strive to acquire knowledge and experience
 To labor within the existing limits of knowledge and technology
 To use real means and opportunities available today
 Gradually, our limits will expand
 All that seems fantastic to us today
 Will become real!

[CUT. A GROUP OF ANIMALS APPEAR ON SCREEN. THEY RECITE FROM "THE MAD WOLF" (1931) BY NIKOLAI ZABOLOTSKY]

Gathering of the Animals

CHAIRMAN

Today is the anniversary of the Mad One's death.
 Let us honor his memory.

STUDENT WOLF

Most honored Chairman, all of us lament
 the Mad One's sad, untimely death.
 But I've been delegated
 to seek your answer to a question,
 formulated by our board of students.

CHAIRMAN

Speak.

STUDENT WOLF

Thank you. My question is plain.
 We all know that the old forest is dead,
 and that no boring mysteries remain
 for us to believe in to the very end.

We are building a new forest, such as
 has not been seen before on earth.
 Men, women, children, all of us –
 and I swear we shall complete the work.

Before your very eyes, we're altering
 the universe, a wretched thing till now.
 We sit before you on this day of reckoning,
 engineers, judges, doctors, in a solemn row.
 Mighty science sparkles like a waterspout.
 The wolf eats pies and writes down figures.
 He pounds nails. The world trembles at his shout.
 And our technical block's already finished.

And so, most honored Chairman, tell me,
 why do you trouble our sober world
 with that apostate, that traitor's crazy dreams?
 The Mad One's plans are totally absurd!

Just ask yourself this: Can a plant be turned,
 simply by dreaming, into an animal?
 Can a mere product of the earth
 learn how to fly and then become immortal?

The dreams of the Mad One were crazy from the start.
 He gave his life for them. Well, what of it!
 The new century's song is ringing out.
 We build a world, but you, you fly from it!

WOLF ENGINEERS

Arranging crossbeams in a special way,

we are throwing a bridge over to the other shores of
 animal felicity.

We are constructing electrical men,
 who will bake pies.

Internal-combustion horses
 will carry us across the bridge of suffering.
 And a coachman in a glass hat
 will sing a ditty:

"Giddyup, gee-gee,
 twice the ener-gee-gee!"

Of this sort is the builders' dream,
 so their progeny should reign supreme.

WOLF DOCTORS

We, doctors, physicians,
 interpreters of the beasts' emissions,
 into the skulls of wolves insert glass tubes,
 observe the brain at work, constructing,
 the patient's coiffure not obstructing.

WOLF MUSICIANS

On the body's violins, we
 squeak, as science hath decreed.
 With our noses' bow we saw
 through the new days' bolted door.

CHAIRMAN

Slowly, slowly, slowly,
 the marvelous age approaches.

Like balls of thread, we roll into the distance,
 trailing our deeds behind us.
 For we have woven wondrous cloth
 and countless miles our feet have trod.

The forest, with its hunger, misfortune, grief,
 like a fiery neighbor, looms far off.

Look, beasts, at these woods. A bear
 in them consumes a mare,
 while we who dine on pies and ale
 forget the caverns whence we hail.

Look, beasts, at this valley deep.
 Consumed by beasts, a bullock weeps,
 while we who have built our habitation
 note down the magical equation.

Look at this world, oh valiant beasts.
 Here the naked creatures course,
 while we, with the sword of science unsheathed
 to cut off all evil, go forth!

Slowly, slowly, slowly,
 the marvelous age approaches.

I close my eyes and see a glass structure in the forest.
 Handsome wolves, in lightweight clothing,
 are engaged in long discussions on science.
 One of them leaves the group,
 lifts his slender paws,
 rises smoothly into the air,
 lies on his back.

The wind propels this floater eastward.
 Below, the wolves are talking:
 "Our philosopher has gone
 to instruct the Burdock
 in ethereal geometry."
 What's this? Strange visions,
 the soul's mad fabrication,
 or simply the product of the mind?
 Learned scholar, you decide!
 The Mad One's dreams are quite absurd,
 but you don't need eyes in the back of your head
 to see that from the viewpoint of the old world,
 we're mad as hatters to be baking bread!

The ages pass, years drift away,
 but living things are no dream;
 they live and, living, they prevail
 over the old truth's stern regime.

Sleep, Mad One, in your noble grave!
 May your head, unhinged by its thoughts, rest now!
 You do not know who dragged you from your den,
 who harried you into a life of solitude and suffering.
 Seeing nothing ahead, hoping for nothing,
 you roamed the earth, like a great captain of thought.

Yours is the first breaking of the chains!
 You are the river that gave birth to us!
 We stand at the frontier of the ages,
 workers, our heads like hammers.
 We have sealed the ancient graveyard of the forest
 with your mangled, rotted corpse.

Lie now in your grave, at peace,
 Great Flyer, Great Topsy-Turvy.
 We wolves will carry on your work,
 your eternal labors. Onward to the stars!

[CUT. ANIMALS DISAPPEAR. ACTRESS SPEAKS]

ACTRESS

Western leftists think Russians fucked up communism
 And that the Soviets contaminated Marxism with
 totalitarianism and repression
 After all
 Why did the Communist Revolution take place in such a
 backward country?
 Where three-quarters of the population could not even
 read or write
 Where science, modernity, technology
 were largely introduced by force
 Why did it not happen in France, for example?

I suspect there was something peculiar to Russians
 themselves
 That did not carry over to Western Romantic intellectuals
 and artists
 Who remained captive to their own dreaming

Because of Fedorov's unusual call for immediate action
 The whole Soviet experiment was indeed
 An applied cosmism

To this day, the Western Left remains stuck in the
 same place
 Communist hypothesis

Idea
 Dream

It's so hard to accept
 that with all their tragic and glorious moments
 Russians already had it

What was behind that strange energy that realised such a
 radical social experiment?
 The energy that enabled a modernisation so rapid
 a new society that rivaled the most advanced capitalist
 states
 Propelling humanity into cosmos

And yet
 If all energy is truly indestructible
 Where is that energy now?

In a contest organised by an international cosmetics
 company
 Egyptians nominated their president to be sent on an all-
 expenses paid trip
 into the cosmos
 The winner is slated to train at the Global Space Camp in
 Orlando, Florida
 In answer to the question, "Why do you want to go to
 space?"
 The Egyptian president quoted Russian scientist Alexander
 Chizhevsky
*Man is not only a terrestrial being,
 but a cosmicone connected by all his biology, all
 molecules, particles of the body
 with cosmos
 with its cosmic rays
 its flows and fields*

According to Hu Fang in China, a real estate developer is
 planning to build luxury condominiums on Mars

Meanwhile in America
 Google's director of engineering
 is trying to achieve immortality and resurrect his father
 He is trying to modify his own DNA
 taking several hundred different vitamins every day
 to deactivate the genes responsible for aging

In his house he set up a small museum
 A room containing everything that belonged to his father
 books, letters, photos, film and sound recordings,
 receipts, clothes, tissue samples
 because an advanced computer program
 will soon be able to use this material to interpellate
 his father's consciousness

I hope he succeeds

As for the young fighter pilot
 who died over the Great Wall of China
 The only object that remains
 is a painting he made before he went to war
 A landscape
 It hangs on the wall in a room inside a housing unit
 in the city where the man who flew into space from his
 apartment used to live
 I would like to see it

Blackmarket of Useful Knowledge and Non-Knowledge

A room full of whispers. An installation restless and at the same time disconcerting when viewed from the outside. A strange sense of seclusion, closeness, concentration, when you are right in the middle of it. Blackmarket is both intimate and public; an insightful, often very private dialogue and a theatrical posit.

At fifty separate tables lighting up out of the dark, experts sit opposite one guest, changing every half hour – admission is free, the ticket for a discussion costs 1 Euro. From a safe outside position, visitors can listen in on individual conversations through headphones, suddenly up close without being noticed. In the middle of a display and production space, in which narrative formats of conveying knowledge are tested and presented.

During this evening, knowledge transfer as a communicative and performative act becomes a collectively whispered knowledge narrative focused on the subject of gifts.

Blackmarket for Useful Knowledge and Non-Knowledge No. 8:

The Gift and Other Violations of the Principle of Exchange. Graz, Austria, 2007.

BLACKMARKET FOR USEFUL KNOWLEDGE AND NON-KNOWLEDGE NO. 7, Berlin, 2007. Photo: Thomas Aurin

FROM
<http://www.mote09.org/sv/black-market-by-mobile-academyhanna-hurtzig>



**THE ENCYCLOPAEDIC
FRAGMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE
AS THEATRE**

GERLINDE SCHULLER Blackmarket
talks with
HANNAH HURTZIG for Useful
Knowledge and
Non-Knowledge
*took place for the
first time in Berlin in 2005. This interview was
conducted in Vienna on May 18, 2008.*

GERLINDE SCHULLER: Yesterday, the tenth *Blackmarket* was organised, this time in Vienna. What is the basic concept of these events, and how has it changed over the years?

HANNAH HURTZIG : As 'Mobile Academy', we've always tried out various models of knowledge transfer in public space. The format is a narrative form of knowledge transfer in a public space. It has also been about defining theatre as a space of debate in a different way, and going back to an ancient model of the theatre, the *agora*, where themes were publicly negotiated. At the *Blackmarkets*, clients can rent 100 experts and acquire their knowledge in half an hour, and the audience can watch these dialogues and listen to the different conversations via headsets. The idea developed out of a theatre space. Therefore, it is important for the *Blackmarkets* how the status of the audience is defined. We present a space in which the theme is under observation; the theatre is an observation machine in which society can observe itself. In this collective form of knowledge transfer

Blackmarket of Useful Knowledge and Non-Knowledge is a project series by the Mobile Academy, Berlin, that has been organising events in different cities since 2005. The Blackmarkets were initiated by the German dramaturgist Hannah Hurtzig to experiment with new forms of knowledge production and mediation. The underlying concept of the Blackmarkets consists of face-to-face conversations. Experts seated at individual tables are invited to offer a part of their knowledge that can be narrated and learned in thirty minutes. The audience has the opportunity to book an expert and acquire his or her knowledge in a dialogue. The Blackmarkets are staged at different venues. They combine the imitation of well-known places of knowledge mediation such as the archives and the reading room, with communication situations as they are known from the marketplace, the stock exchange, consultation and service talks. The events each have an overarching theme, such as invisible knowledge, dance, our image of America, or guilt.

based on dialogue, what is of interest is less which content is communicated, and more 'how' it is communicated, what form it is narrated in. One can observe – whether the dialogue is understood as a lecture and thus changes its character, or as a kind of interview situation that is balanced or not – how the partners share attention, how the expert and the client assert themselves, when the positions change, what it means to negotiate knowledge as a dialogue.

Every viewer can individually experience these processes in this theatrical observation machine of the *Blackmarket*, in a space with a fragmented economy of attention. It's a space that constitutes itself in its diversity and its inability to be resolved and designated via collective silence and listening, because one doesn't know who is listening to which dialogue when, and with what intention. Even when 750 people come for a *Blackmarket*, the space seems to float, because this crowd is undirected and ungraspable. Therefore, you suddenly have a situation in which the crowd does not possess a heaviness, but a lightness.

GS: The 100 experts sit with their clients on a kind of stage in the middle of the space. Why is this element so important for the *mise-en-scène*?

HH: It's not really a stage but an arena. The stage and the auditorium are moments that reflect each other. There is an arena, where the surrounding audience can observe what is taking place in the middle. It is similar to the ancient arena, where there was only the round circular space on which the chariots drove, and the audience watched from around it. The stage that was cut out from this is a total innovation, because it means that the spectator's view is directed to one place, and the actors have the possibility of appearing and disappearing; they can be both present and absent.

With the *Blackmarkets*, we again create this 'round' – the round space of narration – which is then observed in real time by the persons surrounding it.

GS: You choose the locations in such a way that the aspect of arena always functions. What are the other recurring elements in the *Blackmarkets*?

HH: It must always be possible in the special situation that the observers' views can cross and that there are different, if possible rising, views of the location from above.

The structure of the evening is encyclopaedic. The clients orient themselves using keywords from A-Z. This

defines the seating plan and the course of events. The theme is thus diversified. The encyclopaedia is a very easily comprehensible form of structuring, but in the way we use it, it is also an encyclopaedia hallucinating itself, proliferating, becoming monstrous, and then dissolving again. The encyclopaedic character determines the form, but it dissolves again from the inside.

GS: Trading knowledge, the market situation also appears to be an important basic element.

HH: Yes, because in the *Blackmarket*, two models interact – that of the archive and the market. One wanders through the day and through life searching for knowledge, one uses Google and tries to piece together and collect expertise. That's also how one moves about in the *Blackmarket* evening.

GS: The theme of the *Blackmarket* in Vienna was 'Who will have been to blame'. After two crimes of violence in Austria, the theme of guilt is currently being debated heatedly in the international media. To what extent are popular themes and good timing important to the success of your event?

HH: We seek the themes for each city in discussion with theorists and friends. Together with them, we establish which themes are presently being debated. It's different in each country, and sometimes even from city to city. We don't necessarily look for a theme that is high up in the discourse machinery. Instead, we search for a theme that has, in one way or another, already fallen prey to popularisation. A theme that we assume is time-specific. In the end, we simply claim that a theme exists that is of special interest in this city. We don't shy away from triviality either.

[...]

GS: How long before an event is the theme of a *Blackmarket* determined?

HH: As early as possible. For instance, for Vienna, we started thinking one year ago. We look for three to four times more experts than we ultimately need. We then meet the experts for one to two-hour personal conversations. We consider what their specific theme could be, and which keyword and title it can be given. The concrete preliminary work and looking for experts takes four months. It is an 'anti-curatorial' process, since we do not pre-determine the experts. We let a network gradually evolve out of itself, and then we look into the information and references given to us. The more time we have, the better, because a network structure can then develop and begin to live on its own.

ON THE SCENE OF INTIMACY

Berlin, 2009.

Photo: Thomas Aurin

GS: How far is it your aim to cover the theme as completely as possible?

HH: Not at all. We don't want completeness, but monstrosity and surprise. A 'Wunderkammer' for a theme.

GS: The knowledge traded at a *Blackmarket* is more than just inter-disciplinary. Beside personal experiences, the issue is sometimes non-knowledge, non-recognised or secret knowledge. I listened to a discussion at the *Blackmarket* that ended in a date. Another one was more like a free legal consultation. What forms of knowledge transfer have resulted that surprise you?

HH: Because it is a process of narration and dialogue, we can't and don't want to control it. The dialogue is about negotiating what an expert is and what a client is. The way in which this is negotiated – whether the expert is accepted as a lecturer and initially put to the test, whether clients believe they must use the expert to explain problems of their own, whether the conversation takes place in the form of a confession or a psychoanalytical session, a flirtation, or a job interview – depends on how these two persons negotiate. It is indeed the case that the expert wants to impart his or her knowledge. The extent to which he or she can do so must be negotiated by both parties in this half hour. The flush of the evening comes from a precisely set structure, which simultaneously opens the floodgates to unpredictability.

GS: So you set the framework conditions and then trigger a chain reaction that you no longer control.

HH: It is, in any case, something that evolves out of itself based on a script, similar to how it is in a theatre-play. In this case, the script is spoken live for the first time by many different voices.

GS: How do you plan such a multi-layered and complex script?

HH: You observe existing structures and bring them together in a new space, in this case the theatre space. If you take the individual elements of the *Blackmarket* apart, there is nothing mysterious about them anymore; they are not invented with a claim to be highly original. Standing in a queue, or sitting opposite each other in a consultation situation – these are everyday situations. And as a neoliberal individual and self-entrepreneur, one is familiar with the situation that one must organise knowledge



on one's own and know which knowledge needs to be combined. All these elements are layered in a *Blackmarket*, resulting in a model space.

[...]

GS: Is the *Blackmarket* concept often copied?

HH: Some people ask, others just copy it, and some take parts of the *Blackmarket* and use them in another context. There are also conferences now that work in this way. Of course, we could apply for a copyright of the *Blackmarket* concept, but I never considered doing so. Instead, I'm interested in observing the scenario I work in – how does someone copy, who is it for, and how does it then turn out. [...] We also issue *Blackmarket* licenses. This means that persons receive a license from us that contains a specific offer for training, and all the expertise on how a *Blackmarket* takes place, the practicability, the type of bureaucratisation and listings.

[...]

GS: What new projects on the theme of knowledge-transfer are you currently planning?

HH: A new project is the *Future Perfect Advice Bureau*. It evolved out of the *Blackmarkets*, but it is a more precise investigation of the micro-structure of communication. There are experts and clients here as well. The experts make an assessment together with the clients, in the way a fortune-teller, someone reading the cards, or a palmist would do.

The clients meet fortune-telling experts, who recall their present, looking back from the future, and offer them advice on important questions and aspects of their current situation in life that has yet to produce their future. For example, on 'What will I not have done?', 'How will I have loved?', and 'Where will I have travelled?' It is a minimal, experimental situation, taking place in a small studio that looks like a private investigator's office. A private investigator also attempts to see into the future by looking to the past in order to find a criminal. The conversations are recorded with cameras and transmitted to another room. In this room there are viewing points from where the conversations can be watched.

[...]

GS: For a long time, the highest goal of educated people was to become *homo universalis*, a universal scholar who combines knowledge from different disciplines. How do you picture the universal scholar of the future?

HH: Could the universal scholar today be replaced by the dilettante? A collective dilettantism as the substitute of the individual universal scholar?

Last Minute Exercise

HANNAH HURTZIG/
MOBILE ACADEMY
Mati Ghar, IGNC, New Delhi
February 15, 2014

Death may be inevitable for everyone, but it does not conclude each life in an identical way. The fraction of time left to the self before death (or the extended process of dying) closes in on the conscious mind, and is the site of a last minute exercise. Each exercise demonstrates that death appears in various guises, changing form with time, place and situation. The discursive installation, *Last Minute Exercise*, will offer different mental and concrete exercises to be practiced in relation to the time of our death. Specialists and practitioners from the fields of biology, medicine, veterinary science, philosophy, law, religious studies, forensics, art and anthropology will gather in a specially designed arena at Mati Ghar, to present and debate philosophical theories, scientific speculations and individual practices. They will present accounts on what death means to science, law, religion, philosophy and culture, share reports on controversies attending to its precise moment of occurrence and the biological process of decomposition, narrate myths and religious metaphors, discuss political scenarios and ethical conundrums, consider theories of metamorphosis, and attend to martyrdom, meaning and meaninglessness while talking about death. The discussions and debates will be open to the public, who will be free to enter into direct, face-to-face conversations with the invited specialists.

Does death connote finality, or transition? Is the moment of death a moment of disintegration into elemental nature, or dissolution into the cosmos? Does it occur when a person stops breathing, or when their funeral rites are concluded? Is it a marker of the marvelous contingency and brevity of human life, or a prelude to an embrace of the infinite? Is it a cul-de-sac, a vestibule, or corridor leading to other states of existence? Or is it a prelude to a return to the world? Is death the occasion for a judgment on the conduct of how a life was lived? Is it the instrument that re-establishes the order of the world? Is it death that ensures that the individual is absorbed into the collective presence of memory or rendered to oblivion? Does death renew life by making room for the living? Is death a means for the harpooning of awareness, an occasion for an ethical lesson and a chance to shape our life? Or is it always an unacceptable imposition that has to be categorically rejected if one has to affirm life?

When is one dead? The answer to this seemingly straightforward question varies with who is asking, who answers, and why the question is being asked. At the same time, a certain definition of the moment of death has established itself around much of the world in recent times: 'Clinical death'.

In 1968 an Ad hoc Commission of the US Harvard Medical School in Boston published what came to be known as the 'brain death criteria', which include absence of brain activity, lack of responsiveness, irreversible loss of reflexes and inability to breathe without a ventilator. With the operationalisation of this definition in clinical practice and palliative care, it is no longer medically

necessary to wait for the heart to stop beating, or for the appearance of the customary signs of death. When one is 'brain dead', one is a corpse, even if the body is still warm and the blood circulating. It is no longer the heart but the brain that determines the time of death.

With these criteria, we have accepted (without ever being asked) a theoretical construct for death. They demand that we take a few startling premises as given:

that death has a definitive location in the body, that it takes place in the brain. We are asked to no longer trust our sensory perception and, instead, rely on the judgment of experts to pronounce a body as dead, and to accept that time of death is based not on a philosophical or ethical rationale, but on the economic rationality and pressing demand for organs, considering the shortfall of donors.

Undeniably, a legally unobjectionable concept of 'time of death' was necessary to juridically frame the transplantation of vital organs still supplied by blood in the body, and it must be acknowledged that the brain death criteria can, and do, save lives. However, as the philosopher Hans Jonas noted as early as 1968, this medical theory of death denies the objective indeterminacy of death.



A TOOLKIT FOR THE LAST MINUTE

Thanatology—meditation on death—is a time-honoured technique, and goes back to Ancient Greeks who understood death as an aesthetic exercise. The *Tibetan Book of the Dead* outlines practices, such as imagining the faces of mourners around a grave. *Last Minute Exercise* puts together different scenarios, motifs and motivations as a scaffolding for a set of discursive exercises that may be practiced in relation to the time of death. The conversations that will unfold here offer conceptual building blocks from which we can fashion our own intellectual tool kit. Perhaps some of these could become talismans, mnemonic aphorisms or mantras, and we could appropriate them to sharpen our consciousness of, and for, the last moment.

How can we take life seriously if we don't look death in the face? Let's talk about a different thanatology, under the Peepul tree at Mati Ghar, New Delhi.

THE UNDEAD: LIFE
SCIENCES & PULP FICTION
Hamburg, 2011.
Photo: Fred Dorr

Also The Real Thing

PROPOSITIONS

FRAMING

An interaction of codes, assumptions and expectations that every situation—fictional or real—is created of.

Through framing, a situation, or a piece of art, gets its order and becomes identifiable and readable.

A super frame: the frame of framings.

THEATRE AS PERFORMATIVE INSTALLATION

Reframe the space and make visible its artificiality. What could one insert into the building/space of a theatre that flips or changes expectations from and/or the functions of that space?

Ignore the theatrical codes of the space and do something non-artificial.

For example: a Catholic Church mass

For example: letting people talk about themselves

Flip it around. Invite theatre spectators to a public space and let them watch through the frame of theatricality.

For example: Going together to (a real) court, watching a real trial, but watching it as a performance. Invite spectators to watch the proceedings through the frame of theatricality.

Detour: Reality

- Reality into theatre or theatre into reality – A crossover of framings.
- Reality = a documentary approach (documents, witnesses/real people, information)
- Reality as something that questions the construction of reality through performative codes.

Question the construction of reality through performative codes.

Where lies the tension between the fictional, the experiential, the narrative, the performative, and the 'real'?

THE STAGE

ACTING

In the field of art, it's connected to theatre/ playing a role.

In an activist context, it's connected to political action. To the real.

ECONOMY

Relationship between success – hope for recognition – self-exploitation (working for no money) – and idealism.

Recognition is the currency.

Idealism is the engine.

A platform of publicity.

What if we invite not 10 performers but 10 politicians?

THE FICTION

A group of people is watching other people representing, showing and exhibiting themselves on a stage.

The "actors" don't act as fictional characters in a drama, but talk about themselves. They tell personal stories or give small speeches. What they show and tell seems to be real and true.

The visitor is not part of the situation; she's the observer.

The exhibition of the self is an economic situation par excellence: an individual standing in front of a community exposing and publishing herself.

The body of the individual becomes a place of various projections: of truth, of faith, of exploitation, of desire, of exhibition.

Also the real thing

THE BODY OF THE INDIVIDUAL: A PLACE OF PROJECTIONS

name
age
where you're from
say something about your background...
what do you do?
what is your work?
what are your interests?
why are you here?
if you are an actor: why have you become an actor? what is acting?
please show an excerpt of a piece (monologue or song or similar)

The information you give doesn't necessarily have to be true.
But it has to be believable.

THEATRE/FACTORY

Only that this specific working place is, coincidentally, a place of representation. And part of the "labour" that is done in that place is to Represent, which is what actors do.

A definition of Theatre: A form of labour that is done in order to be looked at. Doing labour and showing labour become indistinguishable.

REGARDING RE-FRAMING

What if doing and showing labour happened simultaneously –
We do something at a court or a library or the Natural History Museum
And
Do something in a theatre as well?

LIBRARY AS INSTALLATION

It's a silent and intimate place and requires a special way of behaving.
It's a public space for a private act of reading.
It's a place of representation.

Reading/a book can be seen as the ultimate portable theatre or event space.

Watching and otherness: You observe others and this place. Watching becomes precise.

Library as landscape.

Construct a landscape in the library.

Experience the place as a strange place, as an "other" place.

The experience leads one to the idea that it's a surreal, even fictional space rather than a "real space".

What about the librarian?

Insert the fictional into the real and, at the same time, the real into the fictional, and make the framing sensual.



770.54
CON



AUDITION CALL

The Real Thing

A collaborative theatre piece between
Zuleikha Chaudhari and Boris Nikitin

Performance dates

5-6 days in February 2014,
in New Delhi

At: 221 A, Second Floor,
Shahpurjat
(Above RL Model School,
Below Actor Factor)

Audition dates

17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 31
October and
1, 2 November, 2 to 6 PM

*For: Actors, Dancers,
Magicians, Politicians,
Academics etc.*



Pearey Lal Bhawan Association

Cultural Retrofits

Pearey Lal Bhawan seems symptomatic of the condition where the hardware outlives the software. Most people whom we know in Delhi didn't know about Pearey Lal Bhawan, and the few who knew about it spoke of it as being a place of the past – an active public/cultural space hosting a variety of cultural events.

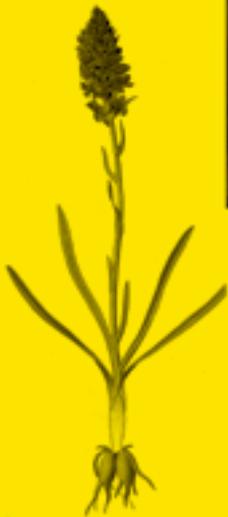
Very clearly, the space (the hardware) was very active until the early 90's – or until the administration (the software) that set up the space was active. As is the fate of many such resources, the next generation of the administration either didn't find it interesting, or didn't have the time and resources, or simply didn't have the vision and the energy.

Today Pearey Lal Bhawan hosts some stray performances and a lot of its spaces are rented out to other enterprises, which have made it their home – there's a newspaper house, a coaching class, an art gallery (more of a shop), and some other functions. In many ways,

Pearey Lal Bhawan has retained its 'public' status – only the types of cultural functions seem to have changed. Numerous people visit it—largely young—but for purposes other than a cultural event.

In many ways, Pearey Lal Bhawan is also an example of how modern institutional form, with its stiff ideas about culture, space, public and architecture, has been unable to cope up with transforming publics and culture. Its idea of culture has been too serious.



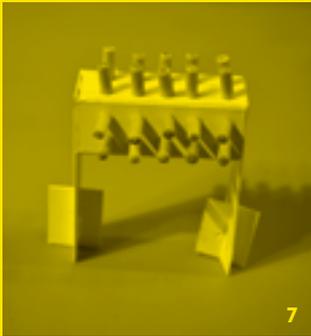
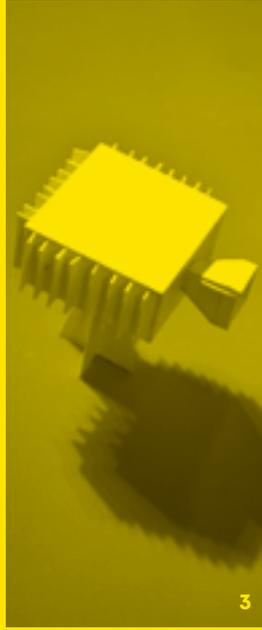


Cultural Retrofits aims at working out an engagement with the numerous young people who keep visiting Pearey Lal Bhawan for something or the other. It aims at setting up a series of interfaces to retrofit the institution for new ideas of people and culture. These playful

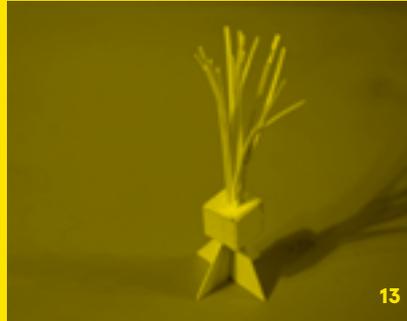
interfaces/retrofits will hopefully soften/dampen the high modern project of culture and help to redefine it.

The interfaces/retrofits will be set up at various places – at the entrance, on the stairs, on the roof, in the lobby, the

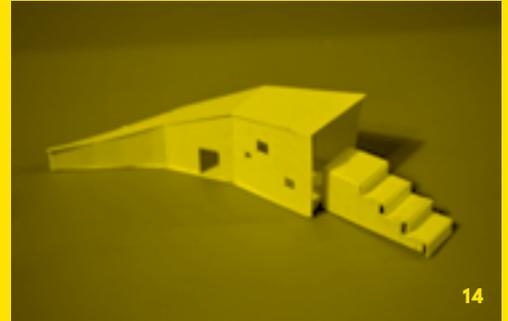
amphitheater, under the staircases, etc. They would sometimes become useful furniture, while, at other times, be follies to spend time with/at. Over time, they will decay, but, while they are around, they will add to the numerous stories of Pearey Lal Bhawan.



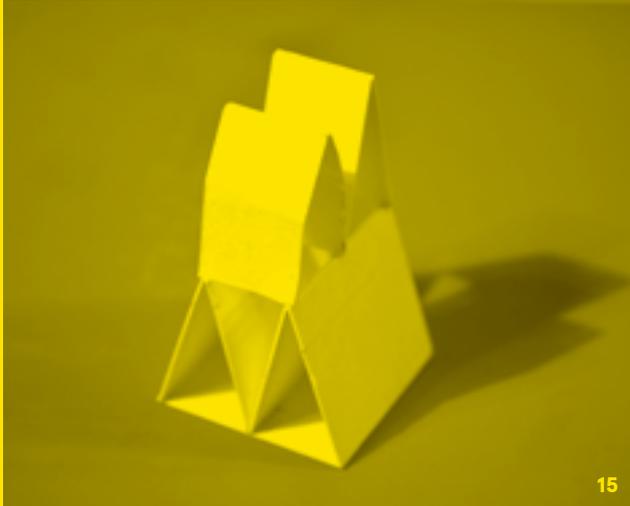
CRIT is a network of individuals interested in developing critical understandings of, and responses to the rapidly changing urban realm. CRIT's methods are multidisciplinary in approach, tactical in orientation, and steeped in a rigorous engagement with the everyday. Since 2003, the group has been involved in research, pedagogy and intervention on/in the urban realm. The main areas of work include housing, urban peripheries, public spaces and emerging urban conditions. 'Cultural Retrofits' is developed by CRIT-Studio, a constituent part of CRIT. The team for the project includes Rupali Gupte & Prasad Shetty. Both are urbanists based in Mumbai. The retrofit models are made by Anuj Daga.



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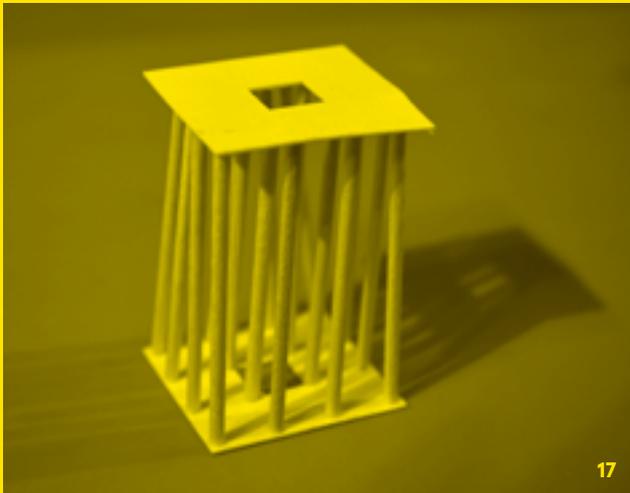
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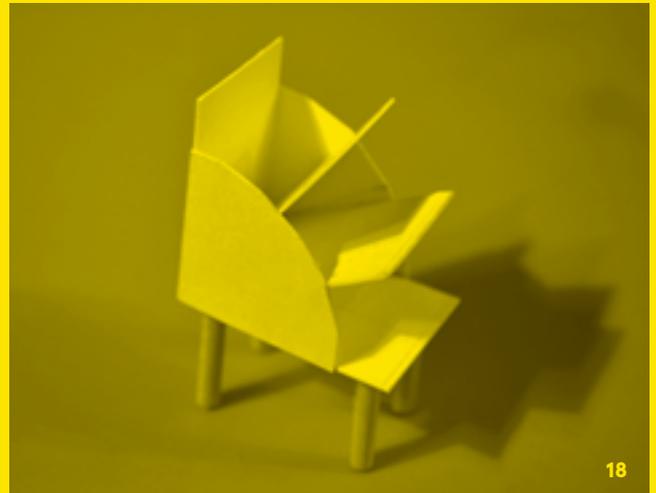
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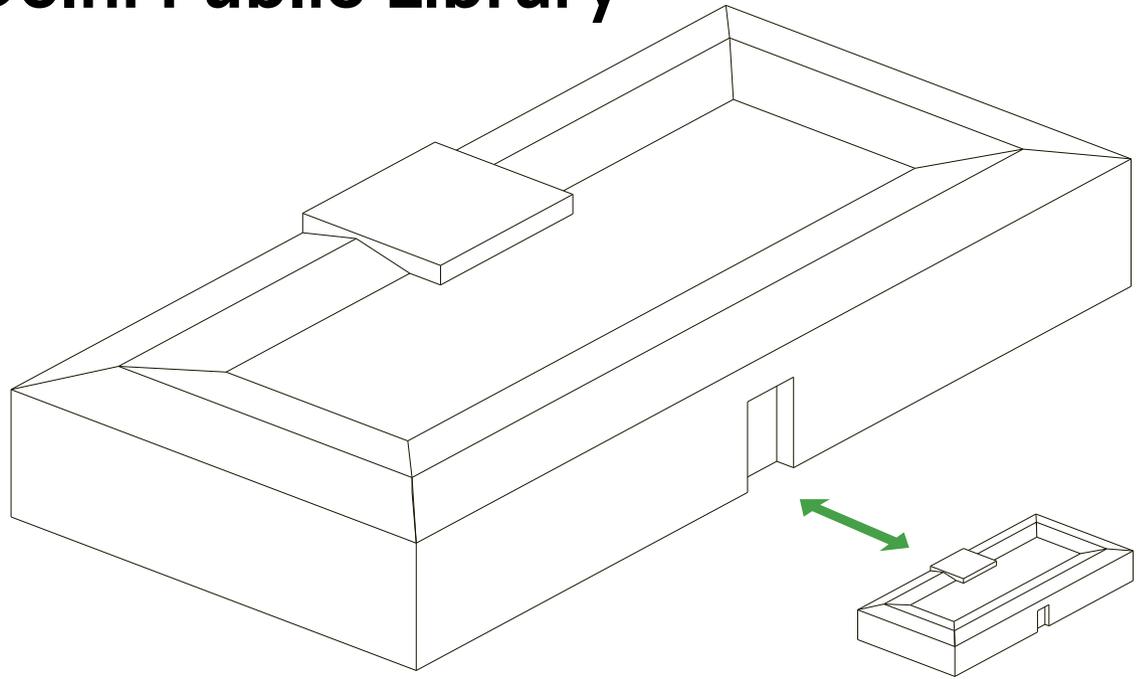
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POSSIBLE INTERFACES / RETROFITS

1. *For Wishes and Luck*
2. *For Notes, Diaries & Journals*
3. *Multiscope – To View the Many Cities*
4. *Fountain of Thirst*
5. *Periscope for the Underground*
6. *Periscope for the Sky*
7. *Play Object 1: For exercise of backs & bottoms*
8. *Play Object 2: Swings and ladders*
9. *Soundscapes*
10. *Play Object 3: Wheel of desire*
11. *Play Object 4: Wheel of need*
12. *Cabin for Everything Else*
13. *Antennas of Light*
14. *Tunnel to Enter the Belly*
15. *Play Object 5: Thinking aid*
16. *Of Nurseries and Gardens*
17. *Play Object 6: For shoulders and legs*
18. *Library of Desires*

Copy and Insert

An Inhabitable Model for the Delhi Public Library

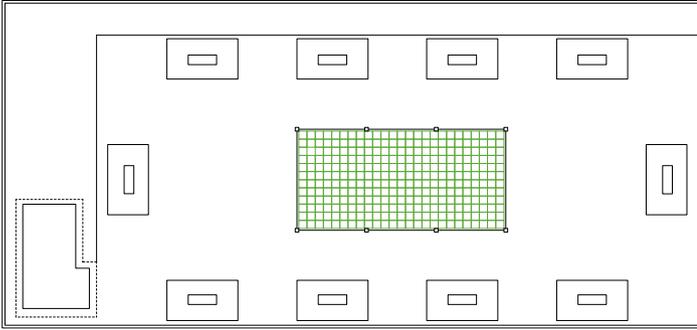


Developed as part of our ongoing research on cultural institutions, this project oscillates between infrastructure and installation. Inserted in the backyard garden of the Delhi Public Library, this 6x12 metre pavilion provides a scaled-down copy of the Library, both mirroring the existing institution and proposing a new institutional model.

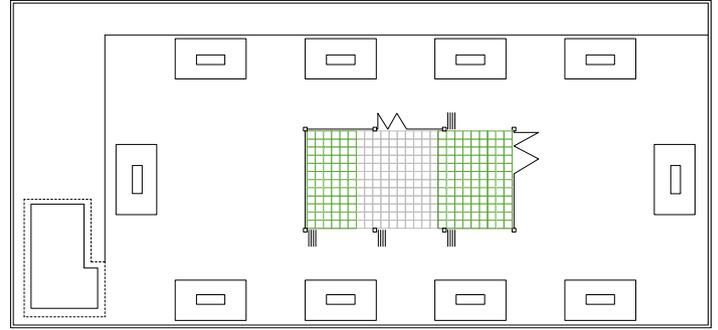
This useable model brings the idea of “gathering” back to a place that was once visited in large numbers and occupied a particular position within the city’s cultural life. We propose a radical pavilion that draws in people to create projects, discussions, programmes, talks, and screenings. Starting from a degree zero condition (the grid of a modular system that is derived from the geometry of the Delhi Public Library), the structure changes and reconfigures according to its uses: from informal gatherings and improvisations, to more formal settings such as performances, exhibitions, conferences, seminars, and readings.

The project becomes a space in which institutional models are both practiced and displayed. The model is operative within the reality of institution building, and within a speculative, universal condition. In the first case, the model is a working tool that establishes an approximation from one scale to the next (for instance from a 1:10 model, over more and more detailed models, to a 1:1 mock-up at the construction site), whereas in the latter case, the model becomes an autonomous object in its own right, and with its own life. The model will be neither reducible to a functional piece nor to an object of disinterested aesthetic contemplation, but one that is dependent on social events and political situations. A physical, public thing, a *res publica*, that is shared, and exists in the hybrid condition of an “inhabitable model”. Eventually, this categorical problem could be its greatest potential: the model of the Delhi Public Library becomes a medium in which practice and theory collapse into one phenomenon.

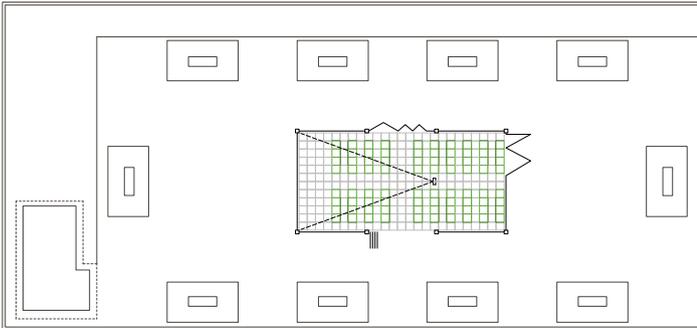




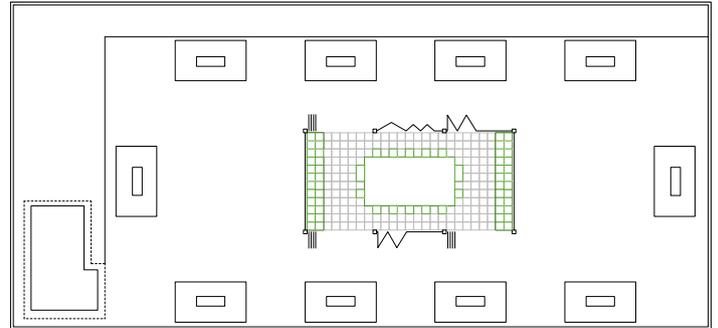
SYSTEM



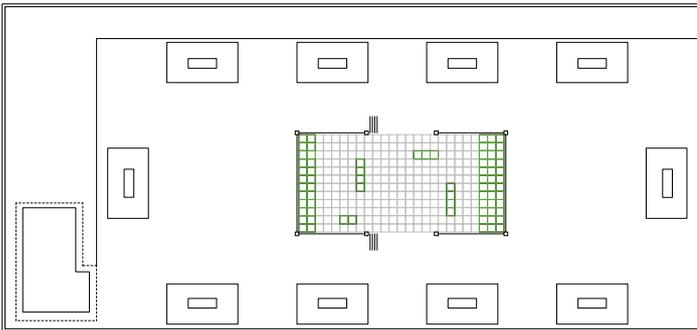
THEATRE



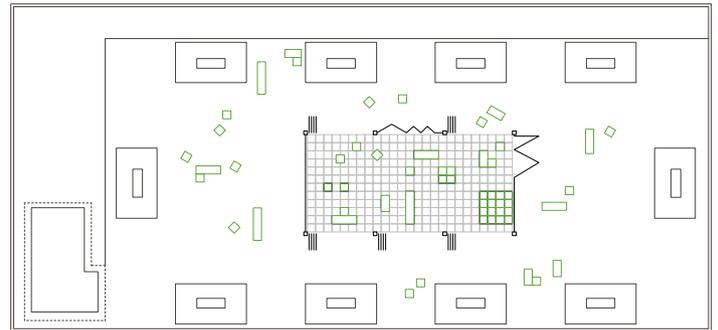
LECTURE



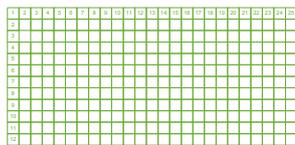
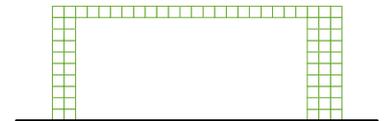
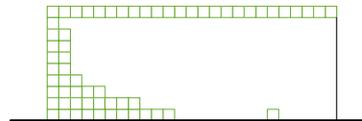
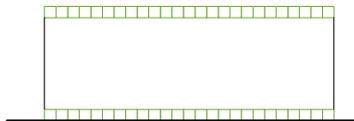
SEMINAR



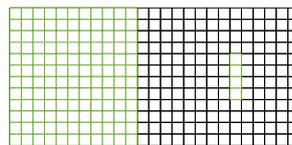
GALLERY



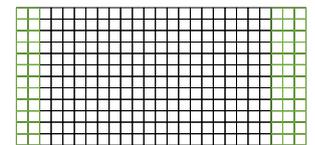
IMPROVISED



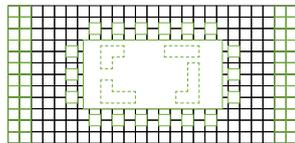
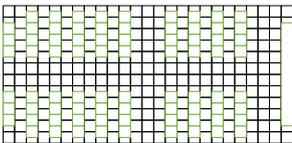
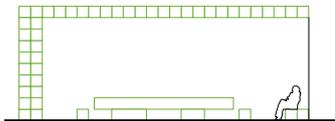
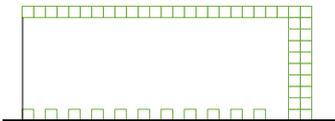
SYSTEM



THEATRE



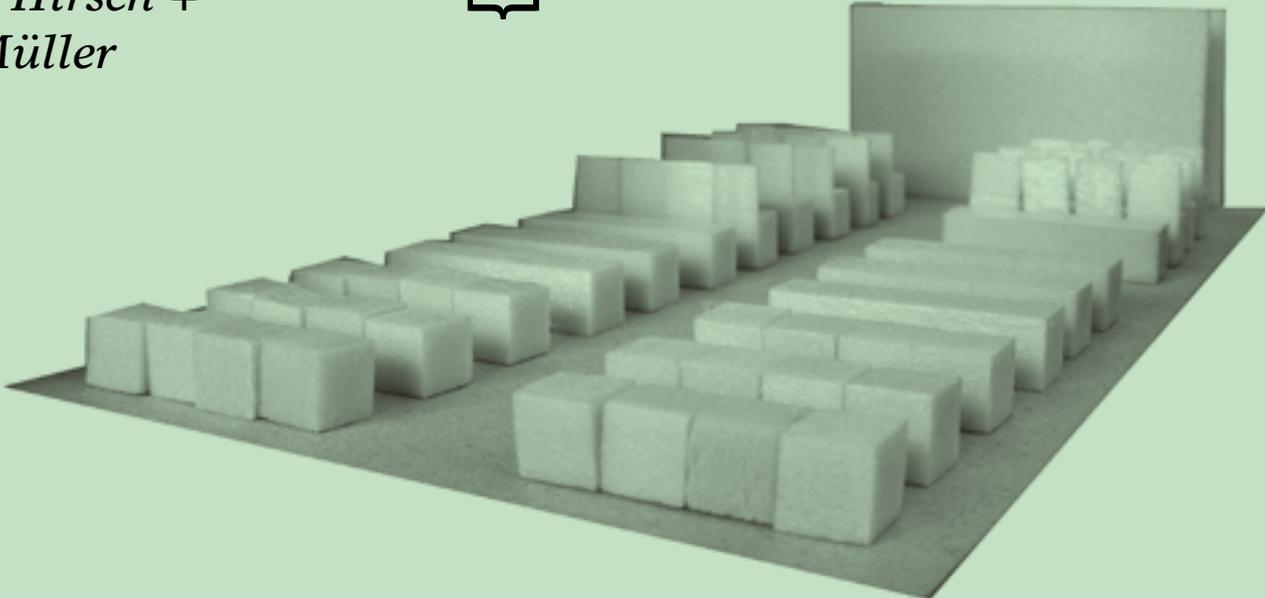
GALLERY



LECTURE

SEMINAR





“James Stewart, SUPERFLEX and India Seem to be Having a Midlife Crisis”

] A conversation between
Alfred Hitchcock, Kapila Vatsyayan
and Robert Smithson

INT. SCENE – DESCRIPTION

The following conversation takes place some time during the exhibition *Insert2014* at Mati Ghar, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), in Delhi. Alfred Hitchcock (British film director), Robert Smithson (American conceptual artist) and Kapila

Vatsyayan (Indian scholar and founder-director of the IGNCA) are casually strolling through the exhibition and stop by the world’s longest film, *Modern Times Forever*, made by the Danish artist group SUPERFLEX. The film becomes a cue to a conversation on the subject of time, a seemingly shared topic of the group.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I believe that the length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder.

ROBERT SMITHSON

I hate British humour.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

With all due respect to SUPERFLEX, I believe that their film *Modern Times Forever* is too long.

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

My dear Alfred, that is such a silly American take on the universe. The film is struggling with modernity’s concept of time. The fact that time was the only dimension that modernity really failed to grasp and control seems like a theme in SUPERFLEX’s work.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

To me it seems as if they are struggling with nothing but my concept that the length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder.

ROBERT SMITHSON

Ok, ok, Alfred, but what else do you know about the group?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Well, once upon a time... No, wait. Let's start this in a more factual manner. Some time ago, a wise man from India created what is known as a PDF, a Portable Document Format, on the body of work of SUPERFLEX. At first, this PDF seemed innocent and, in a very smooth way, created a narrative that made sense of their past, as if one thing had naturally led to the other.

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

There are no "wise men" in India.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Perhaps, but let's pretend there are, for the sake of the story.

ROBERT SMITHSON

Yes, let Alfred speak!

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

This PDF slowly became something of a curse that the group—knowing that their history didn't have a linear and logical narrative—could not live with. Middle-aged men tend to become very sentimental when it comes to truth, and the sugarcoated illusion here was simply too blatant for them to bear. Now, the nature of a PDF is that it represents documents in a manner independent of software, hardware and operating system, and it cannot be unlocked or edited. The group, however, decided to try to do this anyway.

ROBERT SMITHSON

How?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

They invited all the curators they knew, to independently create a retrospective of their work within one museum, all at the same time, with the sole purpose of unlocking the PDF made by the wise man from India. An epic task.

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

Sounds more like a midlife crisis to me.

ROBERT SMITHSON

What's a midlife crisis? I never really got to that part...

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

Midlife crisis is a term stating a time where adults come to realise their own mortality and how much time is left in their life. A midlife crisis is experienced by many during their midlife transition, when they realise that life may be more than halfway over. It is as if humans who find themselves in their middle age cannot make up their mind if they're growing up or dying. A bit like SUPERFLEX and their struggles with time.

ROBERT SMITHSON

Oh, entropy... seeing time. But that's my story. And in a way Alfred's story too. In his film, *Vertigo*, the vertigo isn't really to do with space and falling. Rather, it's a clear, understandable and spectacular metaphor for

another kind of vertigo, much more difficult to represent – the vertigo of time. Right, Alfred?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Shhhhh...

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

Well, actually it's my story too. I curated a show here about the concept of time. In fact, Mati Char was made for that show.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The spiral logic of the architecture of this building looks like the movie poster for my film, *Vertigo*, made by the graphic designer Saul Bass.

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

That's true. The building was supposed to capture the spirit of the show and the concept of time in all aspects of design and construction. An endless space, and the cosmic dimension of a temporal reality.

ROBERT SMITHSON

Hmm, perhaps what it really was about was the legitimacy of the Indian Republic, the "Righteous Republic" approach. It seemed more like an attack on Western concepts of time, but with a nationalistic undertone.

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

But the same thing could be said about Alfred's film, *Vertigo*. The entire second part of the film is nothing but a mad maniacal attempt to deny time. Western time, that is.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

But I didn't do this with any Indian nationalism in mind. Promise!

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

But time is not just an issue for James Stewart, the protagonist of *Vertigo*, nor the west or the east. In fact we also had T.S. Eliot's poems as part of the exhibition. And is he not a classic and, dare I say, rather conservative, modernist poet from the west?

ROBERT SMITHSON

Conservative, perhaps. But do you know the musical, *Cats*? You know the song "Memories", right?

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

Yes.

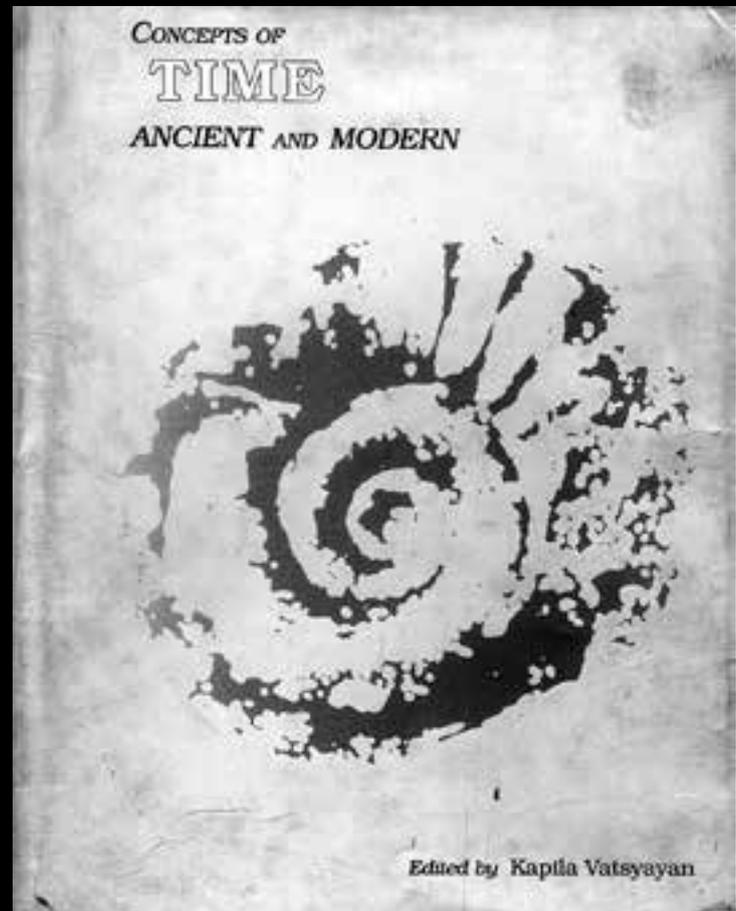
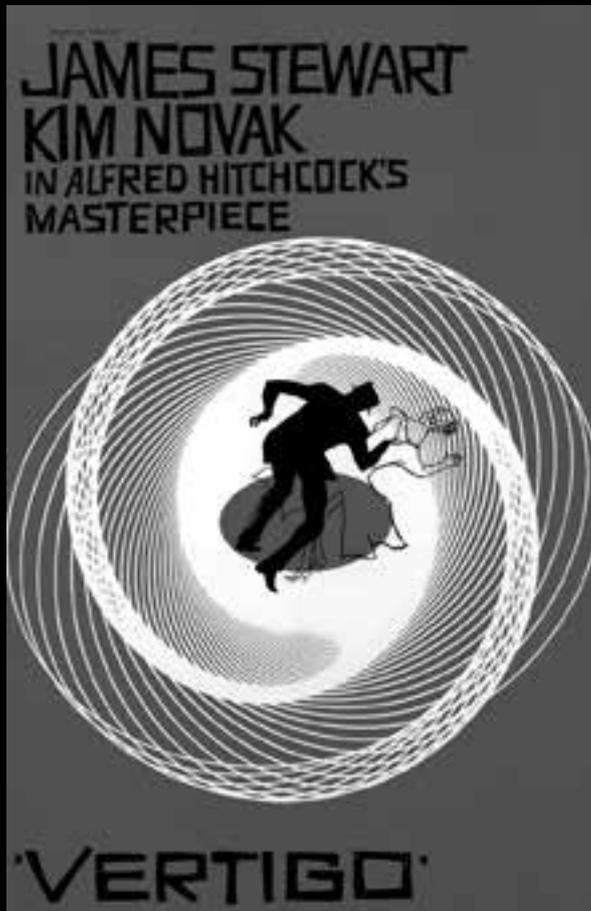
ROBERT SMITHSON

The lyrics in *Cats* are actually by T.S. Eliot. The poems of the great modernist poet became the basis of the world's most popular musical, after his death. The song "Memories" has the cheesy line "Let the memory live again", which could be said to be the story of Alfred's film *Vertigo*.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I guess James Stewart, SUPERFLEX and India seem to be having a midlife crisis then.

SUPERFLEX



ANTON VIDOKLE is an artist and editor of *e-flux journal*. Born in Moscow, he lives in Brooklyn. His work has been included in shows such as *documenta 13*, *Venice Biennial*, *Dakar Biennial*, and exhibited at Moderna Galerija (Ljubljana), Tate Modern (London), Haus Der Kunst (Munich), PS1/MoMA (New York), among others. Currently, Vidokle is Resident Professor at Home Workspace Program, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut.

BASEL ABBAS and **RUANNE ABOU-RAHME** work together across a range of sound, image, installation and performance practices. Their work explores the politics of desire and disaster, spatial politics, subjectivity and the absurdities of contemporary practices of power, and often investigates spatio-temporal resonances in the relation between the actual, imagined and remembered. Their practice increasingly examines the immersive, experiential possibilities of sound, image and environment, taking on the form of interdisciplinary installations and live audio-visual performances. Their recent exhibitions include *13th Istanbul Biennial* (2013), *Points of Departure*, ICA (London 2013), *Or-6th Jerusalem Show* (2012), *Orbits/Grand Union* (Birmingham 2012). They recently founded the sound and image performance collective *Tashweesh*.

CLARK HOUSE INITIATIVE, based in Bombay, was established in October 2010 as a curatorial collaborative and a union of artists concerned with ideas of freedom. Clark House, from which the Initiative took its name, and from where its projects are based, was once an office of pharmaceutical research, an antiques store, and the shipping office of the Thakur Shipping Company that had links to countries in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Japan. Curatorial interventions in the space hope to continue, differently, this history of internationalism, experiment and research.

AMOL K. PATIL (1987) is an artist/performer interested in the vocabulary of vernacular theatre and performance. He creates theatrical exhibitions using elements of stage design and mechanical contraptions, through which he informs his audience of an alternate avant-garde culture.

NIKHIL RAUNAK (1988) often works with cryptic codes that critique conceptual practice in the arts, inventing languages, creating videos and drawings that all stem from his study of graphic printmaking and portraiture.

POONAM JAIN (1989) investigates spaces and cities that she comes to inhabit, using intricate forms to comment on issues that concern a young woman in a city. She uses personal narratives to discuss art history and socio-political concerns.

PRABHAKAR PACHPUTE (1986) is a sculptor who creates experiential installations using drawings in charcoal, terracotta sculptures, light shadow projections and stop motion animation, through which he recreates the feeling of disaffection of the coalminers from his village in Central India.

RUPALI PATIL (1984) re-arranges visuals that critique political oversight and corruption which create unfortunate happenings such as farmer suicides, exploitation through privatisation of water resources, eviction of tribals from their lands, and marginalisation of indigenous communities such as the Kollis of Bombay.

SUMESH SHARMA (1983) is a curator informed by alternate art histories that often include cultural perspectives informed by socio-economics and politics. Immigrant Culture in the Francophone, Vernacular Equalities, Movements of Black Consciousness in Culture are his areas of interest. He co-founded the *Clark House Initiative* in 2010.

ZAMTHINGLA RUIVAH (1966), based in Imphal, Manipur, is a government officer who revived the tradition of weaving shawls among the Tangkhul Nagas, by re-imagining the motifs that had lost their symbolic metaphors following conversion to Christianity, to record the memory of her young neighbour Luingamla Muinao, who was murdered for resisting rape by an officer of the Indian Army. These coded forms went uncensored by the army allowing them to be copied by more than 6000 Naga women across 300 villages, making the luingamla keshan shawl a living monument of public sculpture when worn by women.

SACHIN BONDE (1985) re-appropriates objects to throw satire at the nihilism of right wing politics; through his interest in archaeology and political history, creating intricate sculptures that contain the politics in their materiality.

ZASHA COLAH (1982) is interested in cultural sovereignty, and the way art addresses injustice and legal frameworks. She co-founded *blackrice* in 2008 in Nagaland, and the *Clark House Initiative* in Bombay in 2010, within which her curatorial work researches instances of collective imagination under situations of political exigency. She was head of Public Programs at the National Gallery of Modern Art (2004-2006) and the curator of Modern Indian Art at the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation at the CSMVS museum (2008-2011) in Bombay, and is the current director of the *Mumbai Art Room* of the Contemporary Arts Trust.

CAECILIA TRIPP represents a body of film and video installations, performance, sound and photographic works, which have been shown internationally in museums such as PS1, MOMA (New York), Museum of Modern Art (Paris), De Appel (Amsterdam), Museum of Modern Art (Moscow), Center Of Contemporary Arts (New Orleans), 7th Gwangju Biennale, and Clark House Initiative.

BORIS NIKITIN (1979, Basel, Switzerland) is a theatre director, space designer and curator. He studied at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in Giessen, Germany. Nikitin's works are a mix between lecture performance and illusion theatre, jumping from the highly conceptual to great theatricality, playing with the boundaries between offensive dilettantism and acting virtuosity. The projects play with the concepts of acting, putting them into question, and with the framing of the performance itself, with the codes of theatre, perception, spectatorship as well as with the boundaries between reality and theatre. In some pieces, the boundaries between before, during and after the performance are blurred. Some of the projects have a scientific approach: *Universal Export* deals with neuroscience; *Woyzeck*, a performance Nikitin has been touring with for more than 7 years, is a theatrical discourse about mental property and mental capacity. Nikitin conceives the performances and creates them in collaboration with the performers/actors. The personality of the performer is mostly at the center of the pieces. In some of them the biography of the performers are even the topic itself (*F for Fake*, and *Imitation of Life*). Nikitin mostly makes the space design for his projects himself, and considers them as spatial installations.

ZULEIKHA CHAUDHARI (1973) is a theatre director and lighting designer. Her works shift between performance/theatre and installation as investigations into the nature of the experience of moments poised between reality and the imagination. The projects are conceived of and constructed in response to the physical site/place that they are presented/produced in, and engage with and question the function of the performer/actor in the performative experience. The projects also explore and develop questions to do with the structure and codes of performance – the relationship of the text and performer, the dynamic between performer and space, how narratives are created and understood, and finally, the role of the spectator in the performative experience.

GAURI GILL was born in Chandigarh and lives in New Delhi. Her practice contains complex, yet discreet lines of pursuit. These include her more than a decade long study of marginalised communities in Rajasthan, from which the series *Notes from the Desert* is emerging, and of which the first book is *Balika Mela* (2012). She has explored issues around migration and dislocation in series such as *The Americans* and *What Remains*. Working with both black & white and colour photography, Gill's work addresses the twinned Indian identity markers of class and community as determinants of mobility and social behaviour. She received the Grange Prize for contemporary photography in 2011.

HITO STEYERL's films and essays take the digital image as a point of departure for entering a world in which a politics of dazzle manifests as collective desire. This is to say that when war, genocide, capital flows, digital detritus, and class warfare always take place partially within images, we are no longer dealing with the virtual but with a confusing and possibly alien concreteness that we are only beginning to understand. Today the image world, Steyerl reminds us, is far from flat. And paradoxically it may be in its most trashy and hollowed out spots that we can locate its ethics. Because this is where forms run free and the altogether unseen and unrecognised toy with political projects at the speed of light. It is where spectacle and poverty merge, then split, then dance.

HANNAH HURTZIG and *Mobile Academy Berlin*'s installation work deals with the notion of knowledge and non-knowledge and how it is used and transferred in the act of communication – in a public space. Hurtzig's *Mobile Academy* projects explore the rhetorics and gestures of conversation, of one-to-one dialogues, as well as new and old modes of assemblies. Each project is first a live event (which might involve up to 1000 spectators) and becomes later an installation and an archive. Each project is dedicated to a specific theme/subject and explores it in an encyclopaedic manner. Online sound archives: www.untot.info, www.blackmarket-archive.com, www.taipeibiennial2012.org/participants/hannah_hurtzig

HARUN FAROCKI was born in 1944 in Neutitschein, an area in the Czech Republic, which had been annexed by the Germans at the time. For over 40 years he has lived and worked in Berlin. The work of the artist and filmmaker has had a decisive influence on the history of the political film since the late 1960s. Besides over 100 productions made for television and cinema, Farocki – as long-time author and editor of the magazine *Filmkritik*, curator, and visiting professor in Berkeley, Harvard and Vienna – has conveyed his reflections on the relation between society, politics and the moving picture. His huge significance for the visual arts is reflected in retrospectives of his films in institutions such as the Tate Modern (London), and solo exhibitions in the Museum of Modern Art (Vienna), Jeu de Paume (Paris), Museum Ludwig (Cologne), and, more recently, in the Kunsthau (Bregenz). In 1997 and 2007, Farocki took part in the documenta in Kassel. For many years, the relation between technology and war has played a decisive role in Farocki's works.

KATARZYNA KOZYRA (1963, Warsaw) is a sculptor, photographer, performance artist, filmmaker, author of video installations and artistic actions. In 1993, she graduated from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, Faculty of Sculpture. In 1998, she was a visiting student at the Hochschule für Graphik und Buchkunst in Leipzig, in the New Media workshop under Prof. Helmut Mark. She received, among others, the *Paszport Polityki* award in 1997 and the Award of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage in 2011. In 1999, she received honourable mention at the 48th Venice Biennale for the video installation *Men's Bathroom* in the Polish Pavilion. In her works, she touches upon the most important issues: identity and transience, life and death or religion and sex. She manoeuvres in spheres of cultural taboos as well as the stereotypes of behaviour ingrained in society. Her works are featured in major festivals and exhibitions in Poland and abroad: Venice Biennale; São Paulo Biennale; Sydney Biennale; Busen Biennale; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen, Dusseldorf; Kulturhuset, Stockholm; Museum Voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Vienna; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Kiasma, Helsinki and many more. Since 2010 she has been working on her full-length autobiographical feature film. In 2012, she established the *Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation*.

IVANA FRANKE (Zagreb, 1973) is a visual artist based in Berlin. In her works, largely installations, Franke often uses ambiguous visual phenomena and arresting spatial structures, which she delicately orchestrates to expose disjunctions and offer unexpected connections within the spatio-temporal matrix we inhabit. These works pose profound challenges to our habitual perception and understanding of the environment. Drawing from a wide range of disciplines like neuroscience, mathematics, optics and architecture, Franke redirects photons and confuses the gaze, hosts ghosts, multiplies spaces and makes what is not there to appear. She represented Croatia at the 9th Venice Architecture Biennale (2004) and at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007). Franke has participated in numerous solo and group shows, including P.S. 1 (New York), Museum of Contemporary Art (Zagreb), Manifesta 7 (Bolzano), Reykjavik Art Museum (Reykjavik), Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Rijeka), and Peggy Guggenheim Collection (Venice).

KENDELL GEERS was born in South Africa into a staunch Jehovah's Witness, white, working-class Afrikaans family at the height of apartheid, and understood the power of faith, politics, and ideology at a very young age. He ran away from home when he was 15 to join the ranks of the militant anti-apartheid movement. From those seminal experiences as a front-line activist, Geers developed a body of work that fuses the personal with the political, the poetic with the abject, violent and erotic. For a long time the name Kendall Geers was inevitably preceded in the South African press by the words "enfant terrible". Geers has exhibited extensively all over the world since 1993. Haus der Kunst, Munich, presented a comprehensive overview of his work in 2013. He currently lives and works in Brussels.

WANURI KAHIU completed her first feature film *From a Whisper* (2008), based on the real-life events surrounding the twin bombings of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. The film won five awards at the Africa Movie Academy Awards, including Best Director and Best Picture. Shortly after, she completed *For Our Land* (2009), a TV documentary about the life of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai. Her short sci-fi film *Pumzi* (2009) won Best Short at Cannes Independent Film Festival and the Silver Prize at Carthage.

LU XING-HUA is associate professor of philosophy at the Tongji University in Shanghai, and guest professor of social thought at the China Academy of Art. His research interest connects political philosophy with contemporary art. Besides his regular seminars on political philosophy and its implications for the democracy to come in China, he also curates projects of contemporary art with the artist group *Festival to Come*, of which he is the leading member. His works include *Democracy to Come – A Study on Derrida's Political Philosophy* (2009), *Exigencies of Philosophy* (2009), and *What Does Contemporary Art Do?* (2012).

MAI-THU PERRET (1976, Geneva) lives and works in Geneva. In 1997, she received a degree in English literature at Cambridge University, and she participated in the Whitney Independent Study Programme, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2002-03). After a long stay in the USA (1997-99), she began with her artistic work. Perret's art comprises sculptures, installations, paintings, videos and literature, and relates to a wide range of references, such as avant-garde movements of the 20th century and utopian concepts of life.

KILUANJI KIA HENDA is an autodidact, and his profound springboard into this realm comes from growing up in a household of photography enthusiasts and spending time with photographer turned paparazzo, John Liebenberg, whose documentary photographs of apartheid and the Angolan civil war helped the artist discover the power of images to reveal untold stories. Kia Henda's conceptual edge was sharpened by immersing himself into music, avant-garde theatre, and collaborating with a collective of emerging artists. He uses art as a method to transmit and forge history, more than for putting together the pieces of a complex puzzle of different historical episodes. He explores photography, video, performance, installation and object-sculpture to materialise fictitious narratives and dislocate facts into different temporalities and contests. Using humour and irony, he interferes on subjects as identity, politics, perceptions of post-colonial and modernism in Africa. Working in pervert complicity with the historical legacy, Kia Henda sees the process of appropriation and manipulation of public spaces and structures, and the different representations that constitute collective memory, as a relevant complex of his aesthetic construction.

NIKOLAUS HIRSCH is a Frankfurt-based architect and curator. He was the director of Städtelschule and Portikus and previously taught at the AA in London and UPenn in Philadelphia. His work includes the Dresden Synagogue (2001), Depot Theatre (with William Forsythe), unitednationsplaza (with Anton Vidokle), European Kunsthalle, the *Cybermohalla Hub* in Delhi, a studio at *The Land* (Thailand) and exhibition structures such as *Indian Highway* (Serpentine Gallery), Hirsch curated *Cultural Agencies* (Istanbul), *I knOw yoU* (Dublin), and *Folly for the Gwangju Biennale* (2013). He is the author of *On Boundaries* (2007), *Institution Building* (2009), and co-editor of *Cybermohalla Hub* (2012) and the *Critical Spatial Practice* series at Sternberg.

TOMÁS SARACENO (1973, Tucumán, Argentina) is known for his fantastic sculptures and installations that merge art, architecture and science. Saraceno's work draws on his training as an architect, exploring materials, man-made and natural structures, and the potential for a space. His spectacular works are dreamy and experimental, compelling viewers to re-imagine the world and its possibilities. Saraceno is the winner of the *Calder Prize* and was artist-in-residence at the International Space Studies Program of NASA in summer 2009. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions internationally. In 2012, Saraceno constructed the installation *Cloud City* for the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, creating a complex network of transparent and reflective planes that disrupted the space while heightening the elements around it – the viewers, the sky, and Central Park.

EYAL WEIZMAN is an architect based in London; he directs "Forensic Architecture", a European Research Council project, at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London, where he is a professor for spatial and visual cultures. Since 2007, he is a founding member of the architectural collective DAAR in Beit Sahour/Palestine. Weizman's books include *Mengele's Skull* (with Thomas Keenan, Sternberg Press, 2012), *Forensic Architecture* (DOCUMENTA13 notebook, 2012), *The Least of all Possible Evils* (Nottetempo, 2009; Verso 2011), *Hollow Land* (Verso, 2007), *A Civilian Occupation* (Verso, 2003). He has worked with NGOs worldwide and was member of B'Tselem board of directors. Weizman is the recipient of the James Stirling Memorial Lecture Prize for 2006–2007, and a co-recipient of the 2010 Prince Claus Prize for Architecture (for DAAR).

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the Thai artist **RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA** is widely recognised as one of the most influential artists of his generation. His work defies media-based description, as his practice combines traditional object making, public and private performances, teaching, and other forms of public service and social action. Winner of the *Hugo Boss Prize 2004*, awarded by the Guggenheim Museum, his exhibition there (2005) consisted of a pirate radio (with instructions on how to make one for yourself). Tiravanija was also awarded the *Benesse* by the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum in Japan, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's *Lucelia Artist Award*. He has had a retrospective exhibition at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam that was then presented in Paris and London. Tiravanija is on the faculty of the School of the Arts at Columbia University, and is a founding member and curator of *Utopia Station*, a collective project of artists, art historians and curators. He is President of an educational-ecological project known as *The Land Foundation*, located in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and is part of a collective alternative space located in Bangkok, where he maintains his primary residence and studio.

MICHEL MÜLLER is Professor at the Cologne Institute for Architectural Design and has held academic positions at the Academy for Art and Design, Stuttgart, and the HfG, Karlsruhe. His works include *Power Station* (Darmstadt) and *Machine Hall* (Darmstadt) and he has made architecture for numerous exhibitions, including *Making Things Public*, *Frequencies-Hz*, and *Indian Highway*. He earned his doctorate with a dissertation on planning methods for adaptable architecture from the University of Darmstadt. Müller's ongoing research on institutional models has resulted in projects such as the Bockenheimer Depot Theatre, unitednationsplaza (Berlin), *Cybermohalla Hub* (Delhi) and he is currently making a studio structure for *The Land* (Thailand) and a centre for homeless in Frankfurt.

SUPERFLEX is a Danish artists' group founded, in 1993, by Jakob Fenger, Rasmus Nielsen and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen. They describe their projects as *Tools*, as proposals that invite people to participate in and communicate the development of experimental models that alter the conditions of economic production. They have exhibited internationally. Their midlife retrospective exhibition, curated by six curators—Yuko Hasegawa (Japan), Eugenie Joo (USA), Toke Lykkeberg (Denmark), Lisa Rosendahl & Daniel McClean (Sweden/UK), Adriano Pedrosa (Brazil), Agustín Pérez Rubio (Spain), Hilde Teerlinck (Netherlands) and Rirkrit Tiravanija (Thailand/USA) – opened in December 2013 at Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen.

YAO JUI-CHUNG is an artist, critic and curator, born in 1969 in Taipei. He specialises in photography, installation and painting. The themes of his works are varied, but all examine the absurdity of the human condition. Representative works include *Action Series* (1994), which explores Taiwan's identity and its military takeover, *Recovering Mainland China* (1997), in which he subverts modern Chinese political myths, *The World is for All* (1997–2000), where he examines post-colonialism, and *Long March – Shifting the Universe* (2002). He has created photo installations, combining the style of "gold and green landscape" with the superstitious that permeate Taiwanese folklore, expressing a false and alienated "cold reality" that is specific to Taiwan. Representative works include the series *Celestial Barbarians* (2000), *Savage Paradise* (2000) and *Heaven* (2001). In 2007, he started a series of works in which he appropriates masterpieces from Chinese art history and recreates them, transforming them into his personal history or real stories, in an attempt to transform grand narratives into the trivial affairs of his individual life. His essays have been published in many art journals, and he has published several books, including *Installation Art in Taiwan Since 1991–2007* (2002), *The New Wave of Contemporary Taiwan Photography Since 1999* (2003), *Room The Ruins of Taiwan* (2004), *Performance Art in Taiwan 1978–2004* (2005), *A Walk in the Contemporary Art: Roaming the Rebellious Streets* (2005), *Ruined Islands* (2007), *Yao Jui-Chung* (2008), *Beyond Humanity* (2008), *Nebulous Light* (2009), *Biennial-Hop* (2010). In 2010, Yao assembled photographs of ruins in Taiwan that he took over fifteen years, as *The Mosquito Project*. He teaches at Department of Fine Arts, National Taiwan Normal University.

PAULO TAVARES is a Brazilian architect and urbanist based in Quito/London. His work is concerned with the relations between conflict and space as they intersect within the multi-scalar arrangements of cities, territories and ecologies. Tavares teaches architecture at the Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Arte, Universidad Católica de Ecuador, Quito, and previously held teaching posts at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, and at the Visual Lab of the MA in Contemporary Art Theory, also at Goldsmiths, UK. His writings have appeared in many publications worldwide and his work has been exhibited in various venues including CCA: Centre for Contemporary Arts (Glasgow), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Portikus (Frankfurt) and the Taipei Biennial 2012. Tavares is currently developing a project on the violence of planning and the politics of ecology in Amazonia at the PhD Programme of the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, UK.

RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE enjoys playing a plurality of roles, often appearing as artists, occasionally as curators, sometimes as philosophical agent provocateurs. They make contemporary art, have made films, curated exhibitions, edited books, staged events, collaborated with architects, computer programmers, writers and theatre directors and have founded processes that have left deep impacts on contemporary culture in India. Raqs follows its self declared imperative of 'kinetic contemplation' to produce a trajectory that is restless in terms of the forms and methods that it deploys even as it achieves a consistency of speculative procedures. Raqs Media Collective was founded in 1992 by Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta. Raqs co-initiated the Sarai programme at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, in 2000. www.raqsmediacollective.net

ILLUSION IN MOTION is a multidisciplinary team with firm foundations in the solid realm of the built world and branches reaching into various fields like new media, interactive art, filmmaking and creative consulting. They support curators, galleries, and cultural institutions for their rendezvous with the art world. www.illusioninmotion.com

ARTINSIGHTS is based in Delhi and provides art management and curatorial consultancy to art and cultural institutions in the visual arts. Founded in 2011 by Priya Pall, it has provided direction to the newly set up Heritage Transport Museum (Manesar) and Amity Art Foundation (Amity Education Group), and is an advisory service to art collectors, Indian and international, having curated three significant personal collections thus far. Priya Pall has been working in the field of art and culture since 1995, with a focus on contemporary Indian art since 2006. She has held senior positions in public and private art organisations around the country, and was the Projects Curator for *India Art Fair* (2009). She has also worked as Cultural Officer with the Embassy of France in India. In 2011, she was awarded the *Art Think South Asia Fellowship* for art management by the Goethe Institut.

SRINIVAS ADITYA MOPIDEVI is a writer and researcher who navigates between participating in the curatorial infrastructures of contemporary art, mapping the imaging practices of digital media and the genealogy of art history as a disciplinary field. He runs artbarricade.org, a platform for critical reflection on art. He is currently a doctoral scholar at School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

ARIANE SPANIER DESIGN, a studio that works with architects, publishers, curators, artists, magazine publishers, museums and galleries, was founded in 2005 by Ariane Spanier, an art director and graphic designer based in Berlin. Spanier is the design director of *FUKT magazine for Contemporary Drawing*. She has won many awards, including from the Type Directors' Club of New York, the 100 Best Austrian, German and Swiss Posters competition, and, in 2011, the design competition for the design of *Kieler Woche*, an annual sailing festival in Germany. Her work has been published in numerous magazines and design books. She is a member of *Alliance Graphique Internationale*. www.arianespanier.com

SHVETA SARDA is a freelance editor and translator, born and based in Delhi. From 2001-2013, she was editor with the *Cybermohalla Ensemble*, a prolific constellation of writers and practitioners that emerged out of media labs and studios set up by Sarai-CSDS in working class settlements across Delhi. She is currently translating two novels by Bhisham Sahni, from Hindi into English, forthcoming from Penguin-India (2015).

INLAKS SHIVDASANI FOUNDATION was created by Indoo Shivasani in 1976 to incorporate the existing philanthropic work of the founder, and to provide a permanent independent body for the expansion of these activities. The major objective of the Foundation is to identify exceptionally talented young Indian students and support them financially to develop their skill and talents. It achieves this by awarding scholarships to outstanding young students to continue their post-graduate study/research abroad. Over the last three decades, more than 350 scholars have benefited from these scholarships. The Foundation also grants scholarships and awards to gifted young Indians to carry on their work within the country. In addition, the Foundation has established links with premier institutions, like the IITs and FTII and awards scholarships to students in these institutions. The Foundation also awards scholarships in the area of Fine Arts, Music, Theatre, Film Studies and Sports within India. The Foundation has joint scholarships with the Royal College of Art, Imperial College, School of Oriental and Asian Studies in London, London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, and with UNIDEE, Pistoletto Foundation, in Italy. www.inlaksfoundation.org

17
JANUARY
5:00 PM

Gallery, SAA, JNU, New Delhi
MIRAGE – DISUSED PUBLIC PROPERTY IN TAIWAN
Yao Jui-Chung + Lost Society Document

29
JANUARY
3:00 PM
TO 6:00 PM

Auditorium, SAA, JNU, New Delhi
DISCUSSION: MAI-THU PERRET and SUPERFLEX
With Kaushik Bhaumik

31
JANUARY
5:00 PM
TO 8:00 PM

Mati Ghar, IGNCA, New Delhi
INSERT2014 EXHIBITION OPENS TO THE PUBLIC
Basel Abbas + Ruanne Abou-Rahme | Clark House Initiative |
Eyal Weizman + Paulo Tavares | Gauri Gill | Harun Farocki | Hito Steyerl |
Ivana Franke | Katarzyna Kozyra | Kendell Geers | Kiluanji Kia Henda |
Lu Xing-Hua | Mai-Thu Perret | Nikolaus Hirsch + Michel Müller |
Rirkrit Tiravanija | SUPERFLEX | Tomàs Saraceno | Wanuri Kahiu |
Yao Jui-Chung

Also featuring **NEW MODELS FOR COMMON GROUND**
25 proposals re-imagine the infrastructure for culture in Delhi

+ **LAUNCH OF INSERT2014 PUBLICATION**

+ **ARTIST TALKS**

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT/Hito Steyerl + DUCHAMP, A SILENT ANIMIST/
Kendell Geers, Moderated by Kaushik Bhaumik

1, 3–6
FEBRUARY
12:00 PM
TO 5:00 PM

Auditorium and Library, IGNCA, New Delhi
ROOM INSTALLATIONS: ALSO THE REAL THING
Zuleikha Chaudhari + Boris Nikitin

2
FEBRUARY
11:00 AM
TO 5:00 PM

Seminar Hall, Kamaladevi Complex, IIC, New Delhi
SYMPOSIUM: FORENSIS
Eyal Weizman + Paulo Tavares

5–7
FEBRUARY
2:00 PM
TO 5:00 PM

Gallery, SAA, JNU, New Delhi
WORKSHOP: ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND ABANDONMENT
Yao Jui-Chung

11
FEBRUARY
5:00 PM
TO 8:00 PM

Auditorium, IGNCA, New Delhi
SCREENING: THE ACT OF KILLING
Joshua Oppenheimer

12
FEBRUARY
6:00 PM

Auditorium, IGNCA, New Delhi
PERFORMANCE: ENERGY OF KOSMOS IS INDESTRUCTIBLE!!!
Anton Vidokle

15
FEBRUARY
4:00 PM
TO 8:00 PM

Open Air Theatre, IGNCA, New Delhi
INSTALLATION/PERFORMANCE: LAST MINUTE EXERCISE
Hannah Hurtzig

22, 25
FEBRUARY
2:00 PM
TO 5:00 PM

22 February: Various sites around Delhi
25 February: Mati Ghar, IGNCA, New Delhi
**CONVERSATIONS: NEW MODELS
FOR COMMON GROUND**

**EXHIBITION
CLOSES**

28
FEBRUARY

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The Sharp Edge of the Global Contemporary

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Administrator: Amita Malkani

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Ariane Spanier Design

Exhibition Design

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Aditya Narula

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Shveta Sarda

Project Manager

Shivangi Singh

Researchers

Srinivas Aditya Mopidevi (New Models for Common Ground)

Arnika Ahldag and Uma Katju (Last Minute Exercise)

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