

No Necessary Correspondence

Whitney Museum of American Art
Independent Study Program, 2022-2023
Studio Exhibition

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Introduction

This past year, the Independent Study Program ran as it normally would—two seminars a week led by a rotating group of artists and scholars, including Ron Clark’s introductory reading seminars. This is a structure that was concretized in the early 1980s while the program was located at 384 Broadway, its longest home prior to 100 Lafayette, where twenty-two cohorts, including ours, have studied together. New York City real estate has caused the program to be peripatetic, necessitating a number of negotiations, reroutings, and infrastructural changes. All the while a number of things have stayed the same, or more accurately, traveled with Ron for many years throughout his fifty-five year tenure. It comes as no surprise that these fixtures (the chalkboard, the seminar table, the stacking chairs, among others) serve a pedagogical function as well as a locational one.

During our first seminar, Ron disclosed that this would be his final year directing the program. He elaborated on this in an informal speech at the annual holiday party where we gathered alongside members from the previous two cohorts that missed this tradition due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some seminar leaders addressed Ron’s tenure in the first weeks of the program, and by the second semester, practically every one acknowledged his contributions on the occasion of his retirement—even through humble resistance. These took the form of prepared and improvised reflections at the

beginning of their presentations and in a couple cases, seminar leaders would respond to the circumstances by presenting something outside of their typical approach.

Silvia Federici led one such seminar. Reflecting on her visits over the past seven years—which she maintained did not address art directly—she took this opportunity to link the struggle of artists and cultural workers to those of women and domestic laborers, as delineated in her 1975 polemic, *Wages Against Housework*. Cultural work, she argued, must be struggled for because the reproductive labor of culture likewise goes unacknowledged and unwaged across all sectors of society. When questioned about structural distinctions between high and low art she urged us to refuse the designation of artistic labor as exceptional, a status which necessarily produces invisibility and exploitation.¹

Through Silvia's theorization we can begin to understand the social reproduction of Ron's labor in the seminar leaders' recurring acknowledgement that the ISP has provided a crucial, incomparable sense of place for those who have passed through the program. While fifty-four cohorts have experienced the program and several faculty have shifted in and out of primary roles within it, Ron has persisted in his leadership, maintenance, and advocacy. Hal Foster has referred to the ISP as "the life project of one person,"² a project that can be understood to have inspired

1 "My aim is not to debase the practice of art, quite the contrary; my goal is to open a new avenue of discussion about artistic labour that stops looking at artistic labour as an exceptional practice because it provides excuses for exploitation. Creative work, I argue, is devalued precisely because of its exceptionality that allows its invisibility as a form of labour." Katja Praznik, "Introduction: The Paradoxical Visibility of Yugoslav Art Workers, or Should Artists Strike?," in *Art Work: Invisible Labour and the Legacy of Yugoslav Socialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 14.

2 Howard Singerman, "In Theory & Practice: A History of The Whitney Independent Study Program," *Artforum International*, February 2004.

in its participants what Vito Acconci articulated through sensing:

Whatever the intention, in order to achieve that goal [companion-ship] these people have come to this particular place and no other. The individual goal is subsumed into what's called "a sense of place." When "place" is embodied concretely enough to be "sensed," it has been distinguished from the places surrounding it.³

In other words, the Independent Study Program is cited (sited) in Andrea Fraser's formulation that the institution of art is embodied, and "exists in the interests, aspirations, and criteria of value that orient our actions and define our sense of worth."⁴

We locate this possibility of embodied place at the ISP in the way Andrea posits an urgency for stewardship in her interrogation of institutional reproduction:

Social structures and institutions may exist abstractly and impersonally, but we reproduce or transform them with our own bodies and minds, through our own individual and collective investments. So the first question is: What matters to us and why? Institutions play a central role in making things matter. They collect and orient a whole range of investments, including both material resources and psychological energy, by offering particular kinds of benefits, establishing values, safeguarding standards and creating models of achievement that we aspire to.⁵

Institutions are sustained as abstractions beyond us and as intimacies within us. The impulse to sustain them is oriented towards investments that are financial, psychological, and

3 Vito Acconci, "Public Space in a Private Time," *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 4 (1990): 908.

4 Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique," *Artforum International*, September 2005, 102.

5 Andrea Fraser and Hiuwai Chu, "Conversation with Andrea Fraser," in *Andrea Fraser: L'Œuvre C'est Moi* (Mexico City: Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, 2016), 48.

cultural (making things matter). Such expenditures can take the form of fiscal investments that enable the property conditions for gathering while the psychological investments take the form of transmitting institutional memory by safeguarding and ushering anew collective thought. As Sharon Hayes wrote in 2019, “holding on to physical space in New York City is bruising,” a statement felt potently today with recent real estate inflation onset by the pandemic. Despite the internal and external pressures the ISP has encountered—disbelief, financial constraint, and concerted efforts to dismantle the program—Sharon admiringly acknowledges “the precarity of the conditions of possibility through which the collective effort succeeded.”⁶

These pragmatics have moved in tandem with the Independent Study Program’s own theoretical exigencies and given rise to the practices emblematic to its discursive focus. In addition to entertaining conceptions of site-specificity, the ISP could be said to foster “debate specificity,” a term Mary Kelly, who was a faculty member in the program for nearly a decade, coined when describing her shift away from the dominance of medium-specificity in art.⁷ As Miwon Kwon later observed, artists working with multiple definitions of site, in and beyond site-specificity, may instead find their “locational anchor” in the discursive realm.⁸ In other words: the locus of site-specificity shifts from territorial to discursive formations.⁹

6 Sharon Hayes, “Notes on Visit: Working as an Artist in the Independent Study Program,” *October*, no. 168 (May 1, 2019): 55.

7 Douglas Crimp, “Douglas Crimp in Conversation with Mary Kelly,” in *Mary Kelly* (London: Phaidon Press, 1977), 15.

8 Miwon Kwon, “Introduction,” in *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002), 28.

9 T. J. Demos, “Rethinking Site-Specificity,” *Art Journal* 62, no. 2 (Summer, 2003): 98.

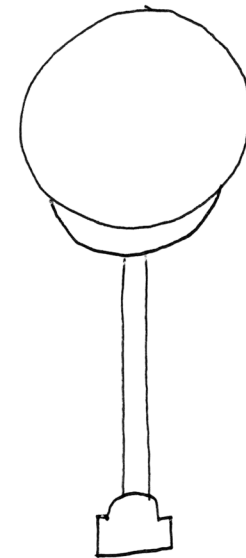
Writing from the seminar room, we notice the ways that these forms are attended to as well as the site where we encounter them. We are humbled to witness and participate in the program’s persistence through displacement and change (social, political, economic), and its ability to sustain a community of discourse. We have practiced such formations through our own collective activities and habits, such as our film screening nights, studio critiques, and even maintenance of the space. More recently we have come together to share our practices with the wider community through our exhibition and this accompanying catalog. We looked to the writing of Stuart Hall, a longtime friend of the program and foundational thinker to it, to reflect on our efforts to bring this project together during this period of closure. Hall argues for a theoretical position founded on “the open-endedness of practice and struggle,” one that “may have no necessary correspondence to its origins.”¹⁰ This open-endedness considers difference—of historical conditions, political aspirations, and of their origins and effects—“to intervene in history in a progressive way.” We can read Ron’s historical intervention as a context for gathering where our distinct voices might constitute a collective force (in continued struggle and practice). As Hall writes:

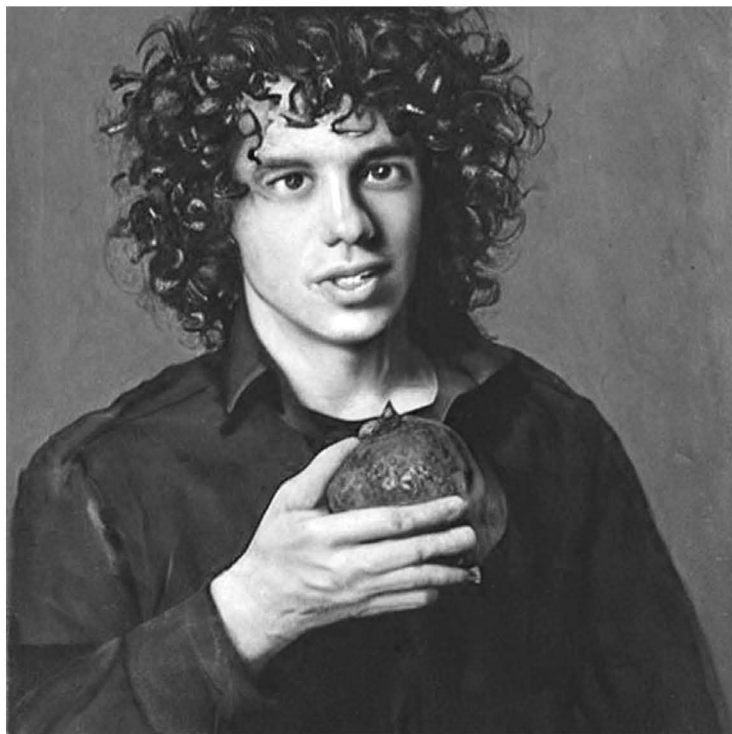
By developing practices which articulate differences into a collective will, or by generating discourses which condense a range of different connotations, the dispersed conditions of practice of different social groups can be effectively drawn together in ways which make those social forces not simply a class ‘in itself,’ positioned by some other relations over which it has no control, but also capable of intervening as a historical force, a new kind of social subject, capable of establishing new collective projects.

—Sophie Kovel and Emilio Martínez Poppe

10 Stuart Hall, “Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates,” in *Cultural Studies and Communication* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1996), 15–16.

Philip Cartelli





L'ORCHESTRE ROUGE



Suzanne Cointe présidant une réunion culturelle

A part Suzanne Cointe, dont le Grand Chef dit « C'est notre homme à la Simex », aucun des employés ne se doute du rôle réel de la firme. Ils entrent dans le réseau avec un bandeau sur les yeux : quand le Grand Chef déliera le bandeau, il sera trop tard pour reculer. Procédé douteux ? Hypocrisie condamnable ? Trepper a répondu : « Je choisisais des hommes dont j'étais certain qu'au moment décisif, ils marcheraient. » Mais il doit tout de même être assez difficile de trancher si un homme acceptera, le moment venu, la torture et la mort pour une cause épousée un peu à l'aveuglette...

Les bureaux de la Simex ouvrent à l'automne 1941 au-dessus du Lido. Vingt mètres plus bas, sur le même trottoir des Champs-Élysées, le colonel Rémy installe au même moment la centrale de son réseau dans l'immeuble du cinéma Ermitage. Il y trouve des avantages identiques à ceux de l'immeuble du Lido : façade commerciale rassurante, labyrinthe de couloirs compliquant les filatures et, surtout, plusieurs issues. Mais Rémy, qui a la Gestapo à ses trousses, est contraint de déménager fréquemment sa centrale. Après bien des errances, l'un de ses adjoints lui signale qu'un certain colonel Lévy, bon patriote, accepterait de lui louer un appartement.

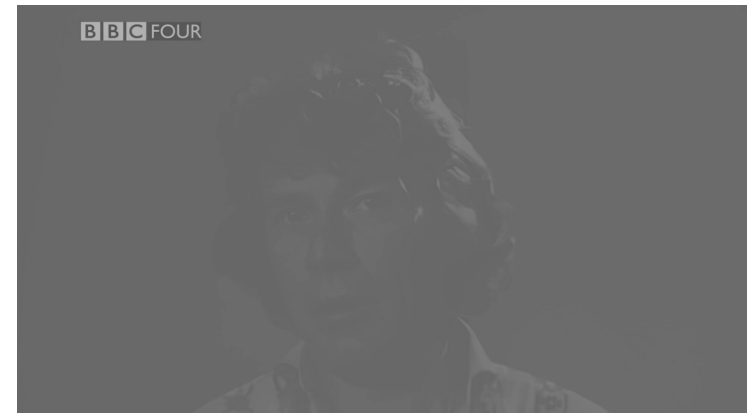
• Par l'entremise du concierge, écrit Rémy, rendez-vous est pris avec le propriétaire qui habite à deux étages au-dessus. Il n'est pas question que je lui dissimule rien.

I'm interested in creating a work of video art and am a bit stuck as to the appropriate form and content of this work. I want it to be about the relationship between image and text on the screen.

Let's say I want to explore this relationship in a contemporary sense through a collaboration with you. What could that look like?

How would you respond to images since I can't send them to you?

A still image of a man facing the camera, with a blue background behind him. He has longish hair and a button-down shirt that situates him in the 1970s. In the upper left corner of the screen is the logo, "BBC Four."



Tony Chrenka

New York, 2023

Mylar, tinted lighting gels, aluminum

20 × 4 ¹/₄ × 4 ¹/₄ inches

New York, 2023

Mylar, tinted lighting gels, aluminum

20 × 4 ¹/₄ × 4 ¹/₄ inches

New York, 2023

Mylar, tinted lighting gels, aluminum

20 × 4 ¹/₄ × 4 ¹/₄ inches

Untitled, 2023

Graphite on paper

14 × 11 inches

21 × 18 inches (framed)



New York, 2023
Mylar, tinted lighting gels, aluminum
20 × 4 ¼ × 4 ¼ inches

Eli Coplan



Vehicle, 2023

Steering wheel, car horn, power supply

Steering wheel: $15\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{2} \times 7$ inches; other components: dimensions variable





Giulia Gabrielli

STANZE

[indoors, daytime]

1.

[full illumination, then less]

A: "We have watched for 4,000 years: now we have seen!"

[standing up]

B: "[Wait], all eyes, including our organic eyes, are
[still] active systems of perception, processing
translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, forms
of life"

2.

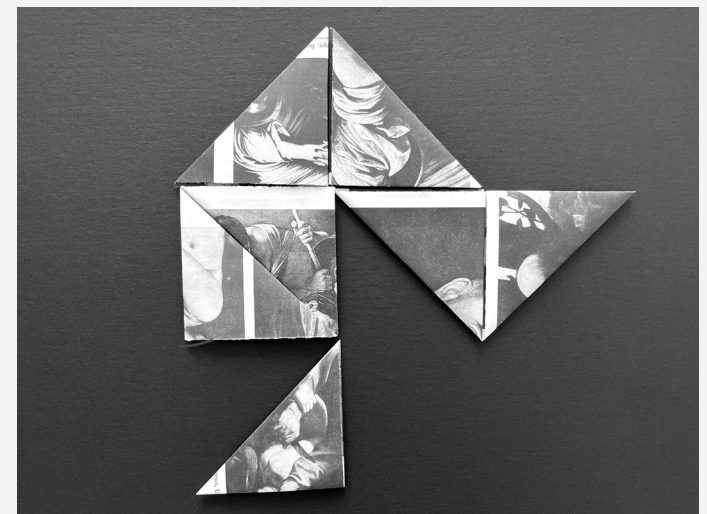
A: "We have been talking about this for so many years..."

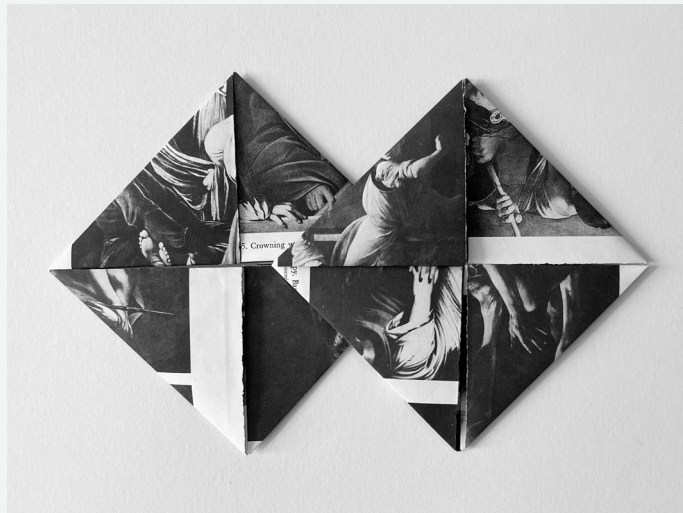
B: "I think we should be paid for that"

C: "How come you wanna be paid for this work? Isn't it in
itself a reward?"

B: [thinking] "At what point can work become its own reward?
At what point is this activity itself self-realization?"

D: [lifting head] "[How much do you want?]"





3.

A: "Just speaking is too aleatory, no trace remains of anything, neither of what was said nor of what was heard"

B, C: [*jumping rope*] "We consider incomplete a history that was built on non-perishable traces"

D: "Also to be known is to be dominated"
4.

A: "Before producing, one will have to distribute"

B: "[That is what brought us here, don't you see?]"

C: "Use value is a concept about life and not about art"
5.

A: [*playing hopscotch*] "Art is the symbol of a work that requires the participation in a myth"

B: "The invisibility of the artist as worker is also the invisibility of the art in our everyday life"
6.

A: "The problem of art is always a problem of life, it is not a problem of culture, you understand?"

B: "The fact that you don't play inside this thing disturbs me"

7.

A: [*moving toward B*] "For me doing one thing is a way of not doing two"

B: [*looking at her hands*] "Acting becomes simple and elementary"

C: "One must find the time to have the time to see things simply"

D, E, F: [*turning in circles*] "We do all the subjective operations that provide space around us"
8.

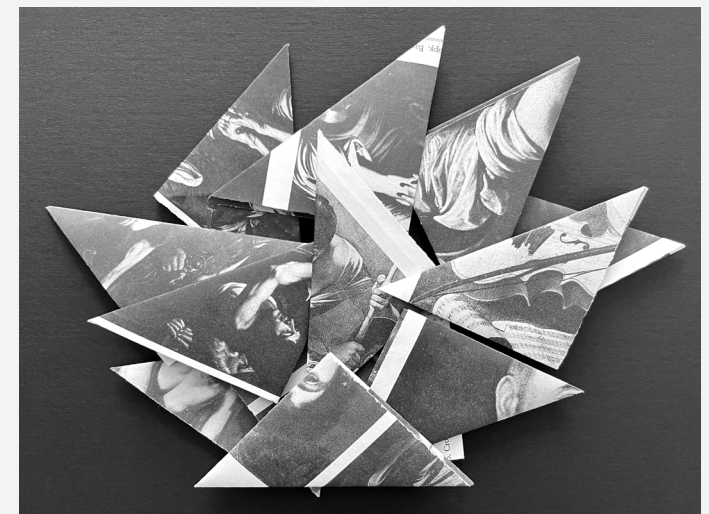
A: "[Who are we?]"

B, C, D, E: [*singing*] "You know the famous story: we are not workers, there is no such a thing as work, [we] are entrepreneurs, we sell ourselves, we are all sellers, we are not workers, we are not exploited, we are all sellers, we have capacities that we bring to the market (...) the only terrain we have is the market, and we are all different agents in [it], all selling and buying something"

A: "[I do not know what I feel...] everything you do every day can secretly help to prepare the event you expect"
9.

A: "The 'after' [then] loomed as a repetition, an endless reiteration of something known (...) At that point I realized that how I was had no importance, performance was required of me for what the work demanded..."

B: [*throwing a ball*] "[...in whatever language you will choose]"



10.

A: "To claim the right to start from scratch"

B: [toward C] "[I think] they took us for people from the moon..."

A: "I would like a world in which all expression remained at the existential level: writing, playing music, painting, doing operations of any kind and in any medium"

B: "An invitation to participate"

[A, B, C pausing]

C: "The exclusive concentration of artistic talent in individuals and the suppression of it in the greater masses is the result of the division of labor"

11.

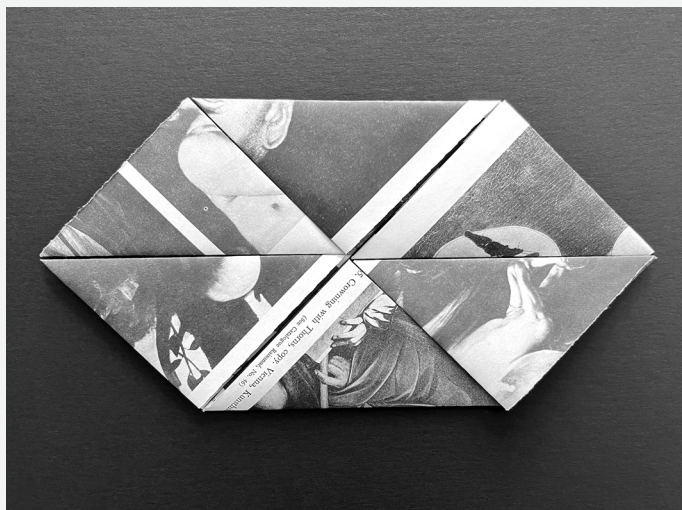
A: "Art as source, as dispositif (...) is a space of defunctionalization of subjectivities, singularities emerge there emancipated from all utility"

B: "[Hm... Isn't] the artist (...) a consciousness confined to a role?"

C: "[No matter what,] artistic [work remains] the (...) most vital hook to refer to the possibility of an intended, integral, and unforeseen shift in power dialectics"

D: "Freedom is leaving home with nothing but a toothbrush"

E: "[If not twelve]"



[in order of folding] [how Zelma Mercatali taught me]

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, reproductions: *Sacrifice of Isaac*, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; *Amor Victorious*, Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum; *Conversation of St. Paul*, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome; *Fainting Magdalene*, Collection Alorda, Barcelona; *Fainting Magdalene*, Marseilles Museum; *Flagellation of Christ*, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples; *Portrait of Alof de Wignacourt*, Louvre, Paris; *Beheading of St. John the Baptist*, La Valletta Cathedral, Malta; *Resurrection of Lazarus*, Museo Nazionale, Messina; *Nativity*, Museo Nazionale, Messina; *St. John the Baptist*, Nelson Gallery, Kansas City; *Supper at Emmaus*, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan; *Conversion of St. Paul*, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome; *St. Francis*, Museo Civico, Udine; *St. John the Baptist*, Galleria Borghese, Rome; *Conversion of St. Paul*, Collection Odescalchi-Balbi, Rome; *Crowing with Thorns*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; *Ecce Homo*, Palazzo Comunale, Genoa; *Sleeping Cupid*, Private Collection, Indianapolis; *Martyrdom of St. Lucy*, Church of St. Lucy, Syracuse; *Sleeping Cupid*, Palazzo Pitti, Florence; *St. Jerome Writing*, Church of St. Giovanni, Valletta, Malta; *Crucifixion of St. Andrew*, Museo del Arte, Barcelona; *Crucifixion of St. Peter*, Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

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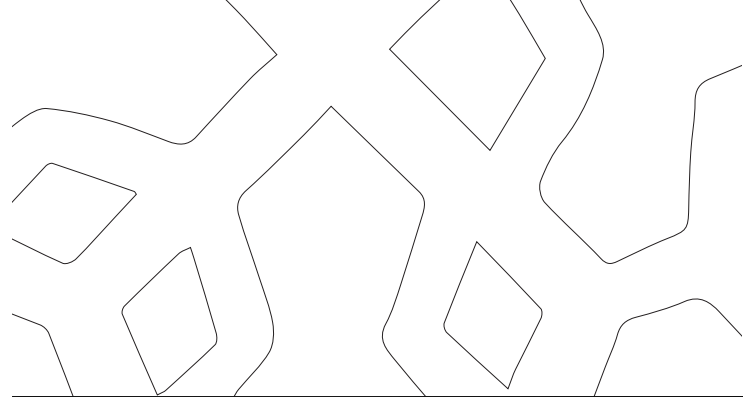
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Utsa Hazarika



“...so she opened the doors, and he slowly turned the words came alive and began to speak to her, saying, “these are for those who have known the cruelties of political imprisonment and the no-rd term carries with it the potential to change the terms of every duality.

A projection through one of the domed windows of the structures, falls in the window's shape on the wall. In it, Stuart Hall sighs deeply, his face fading to a clip of the Union Jack flying in colonial India, and fades back again, looped and pulsing.

Between the diurnal and the nocturnal, that mirrored a new kind of social being, formed across multiple historical fault lines.

If we talk about the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, the act that began the process of de-citizenising... removing the citizenship from the brown parts of the Commonwealth — the Home Secretary at the time... said its great merit was that it could be perceived as a new kind of social being, formed across multiple historical fault lines.

खूनी दरवाजा मुझमे है |

This visual and sonic approach, moving seamlessly across the boundaries of poetry, abstraction, documentary and newsreel, articulated something universal that mirrored a new kind of social being, formed across multiple historical fault lines.

An artistic technique that mirrored a new kind of social being, formed across multiple historical fault lines.

“I f you're watching this video, that means I've been arrested... after surviving his arrest and trial in 2016, the violence the state's propaganda unleashed, being excluded from his university, and an assassination attempt, Umar Khalid was arrested again in 2020, under India's UAPA law. Under its new amendments, where all kinds of incarnation are possible.

et them bear witness to the process by which the living transform the dead into partners in struggle.

endment, the law can be used to detain any individual without evidence or a trial. Umar is still in prison, although his witness



Who killed Saunders?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who killed Godse?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is the enemy of the RSS?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is the enemy of the BJP?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who spread Marxism?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.

No, it wasn't Marx. Umar Khalid
wrote Capital himself.

Who wrote Capital?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who wrote Hind Swaraj?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who wrote the Constitution?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who gave us Ambedkarism?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.

Who was responsible for Kakori
Kand?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who brought Gandhi to the nation?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.

Who was responsible for World
War II?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who was responsible for the
French Revolution?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who was responsible for the
Renaissance?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.

What is Ambedkarism?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is Bhagat Singh?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is Ambedkar?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is Rajguru?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is Khudiram Bose?
Umar Khalid, Umar
Khalid.
Who is
Mar Umar
xK

Who owns America?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who does Israel fear?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who does Palestine love?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is my dear friend?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is my love?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is Gandhi's dear friend?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is Ambedkar's dear
friend?
Umar Khalid, Umar Khalid.
Who is Marx's son?
Umar Khalid, Umar
Khalid.
Who is Marx's
uncle?

मुझे ए
क नज़र से देख
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میرے
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Pierced Window Screen, second half of the sixteenth century, made in India, red sandstone, Rogers Fund 1993, Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York

Jack Hogan and Francis Jones

I Thought I Hated U, Moon Snail

vimeo.com/jackhogan/itihums was developed from a text we found, titled *I Thought I Hated U, Moon Snail* (I.T.I.H.U.M.S.). We discovered the pages rolled up and wedged under a rock on the now-near-totally-eroded remains of a once-popularly-used beach. As professors in the areas of snailology and capitalism-at-large respectively, we specialize in conditions produced through living within predatory systems and the snailification* of the body-mind. I.T.I.H.U.M.S. is, we think, a strong example of the kind of commonly reported snail-delirium created under duress from untenable economic and social systems. The emotional well-being of the narrator dissolves as they descend further into what their friend terms their *moon snail rage obsession*. We are curious about such rage obsessions, how they develop and proliferate. Unfortunately, we are unable to point to a direct causality for the subject's despair in this instance, besides the obvious antagonizing force of the snail...

EATING VOICE

(a perspective on the pull of
de-consistency as it pertains
to language and space)

why why, name the cavity
they were always sighing
some where
between these things is the organi-
sing thing wrapping around
desire n makin it fail 2 fledge
desire being necessarily disoriented
my feeling for you being
like a voice, projected clearly
and then evaporated into
echo and gone (but not gone)

I have never
been fond of the word loyalty
I give you this in rest,

loyalty is an incurious locomotive

calling calling

calling calling

finale
the last instant I can recall

the feeling was like
something being inserted into my vocal folds

hello? hello?

hello?

you told me I bring things up too much, ask too many
questions. time passes. I think I dreamed of chasing you.
eventually I left

you, flaked on the wet expanse

I walked back in the cold air

and the city lights projected onto my fadingness

I cooled

I lived less outside of the mesh-net of our interactions

I think I loved you

I thought I hated u

it was nothing like a loyalty

rather felt like a compersion between all things between us as long

as I knew you, my finale

my rasp

sometimes when I talk for a long time on the phone

it's like the person on the other line is eating my voice

your anxious ear

my perversion

that is, all love

is perverted because it should have died

within these eviscerating trash dunes

perversion thrives everywhere

perversion is the most consistent weed

the most resilient flower

the season of the century

the channel in the void

disloyal metronomes furnish

fine especially in their disloyalty

their habit of being inconstant



my cheeks flush
my ears ring, classic
catch in the throat, classic
liver twitch
brain heave
pancreatic
trickster
intestinal
flex
all of this

is where my condition of love and permanent lying comes from
the expression of perversion the closest thing I know to the pretension
of innateness

I open my mouth
you tell me you hate the city, you want the irredeemable lines of the
shore,

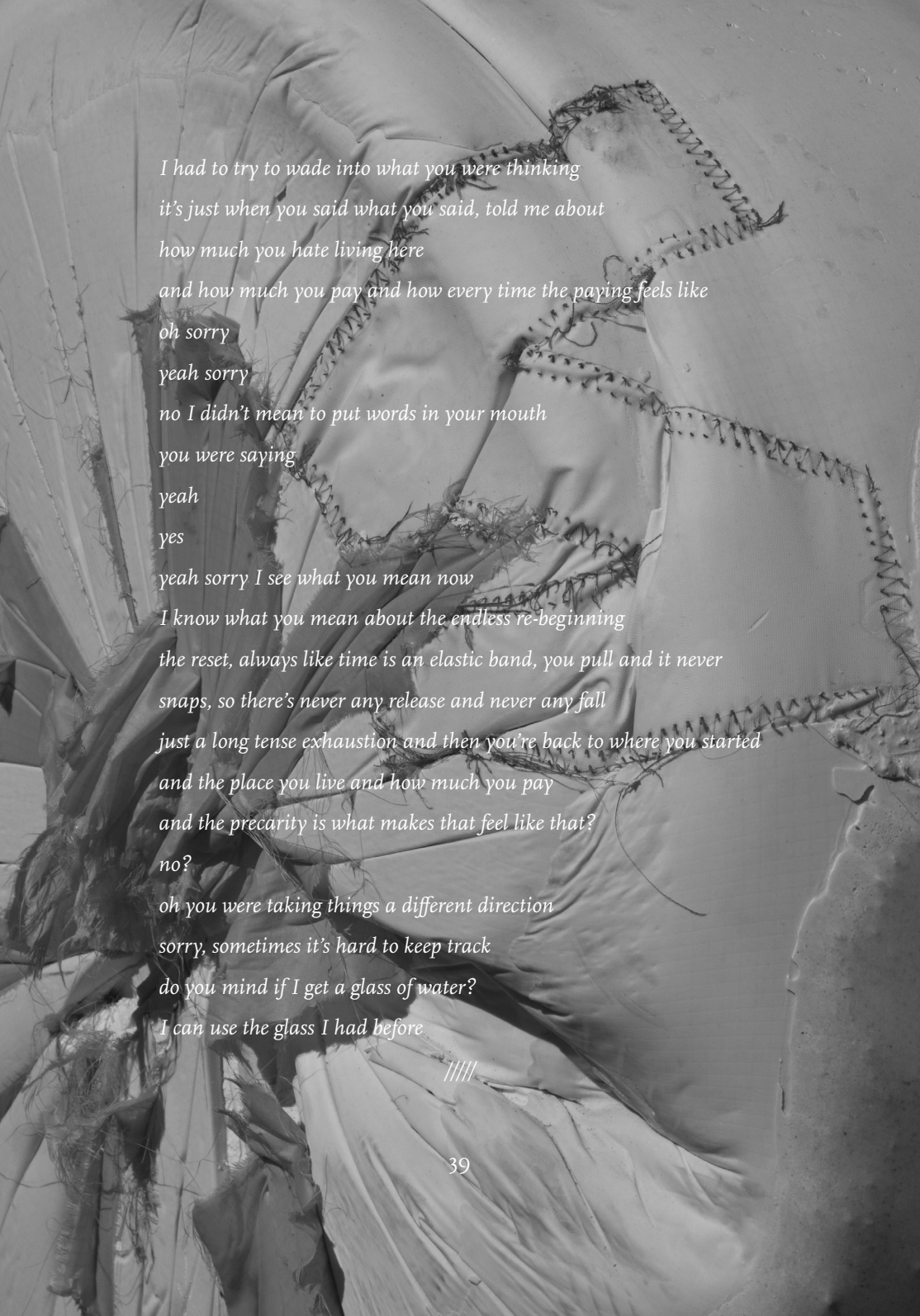
this dirt that changes every moment
erosion, eating, the casual ah ah oration of water against land

I do mean speaking
or writing, language of the
language of the

of the

////

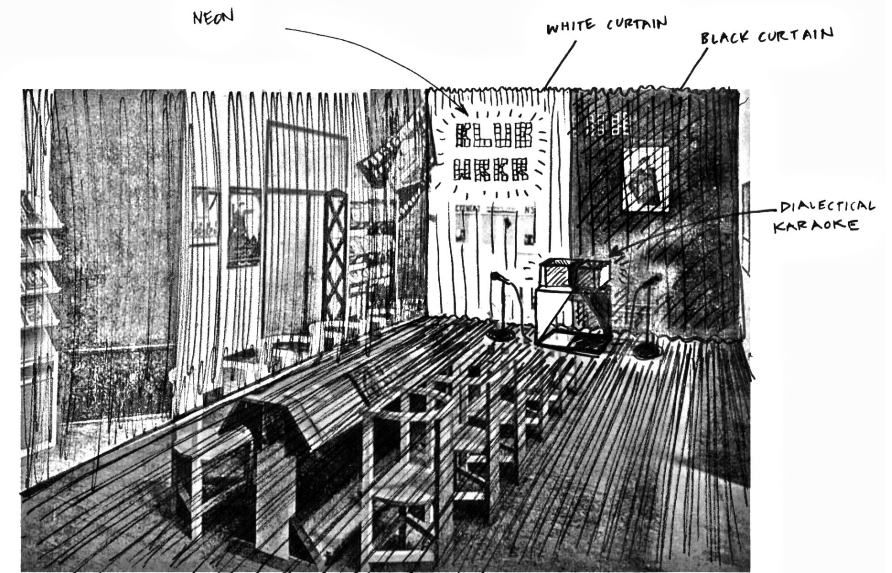
Forgive me, I cut out for a moment
when I saw you were writing everything down I knew



I had to try to wade into what you were thinking
it's just when you said what you said, told me about
how much you hate living here
and how much you pay and how every time the paying feels like
oh sorry
yeah sorry
no I didn't mean to put words in your mouth
you were saying
yeah
yes
yeah sorry I see what you mean now
I know what you mean about the endless re-beginning
the reset, always like time is an elastic band, you pull and it never
snaps, so there's never any release and never any fall
just a long tense exhaustion and then you're back to where you started
and the place you live and how much you pay
and the precarity is what makes that feel like that?
no?
oh you were taking things a different direction
sorry, sometimes it's hard to keep track
do you mind if I get a glass of water?
I can use the glass I had before

/////

Kyle Bellucci Johanson



FRIEND OF THE PROGRAM

The first essay written in France was also a love letter for a friend who had died.¹

What a comfort that Montaigne didn't choose one form over the other.

I came to New York to leave Chicago. I lost a friend there named Gregory Bae, an artist's artist.

I didn't like what the city was like without him.

That doesn't really say it right but hopefully you can understand how I felt. I didn't like facing daily social life without him. I hadn't realized how much I relied on the community between us.

¹ Michel de Montaigne, "That Men by Various Ways Arrive at the Same End" in *Essays* (Simon Millanges, Jean Richer, 1580), 1.

I arrived in early September, one of twenty-two participants of the heavily mythologized Independent Study Program, in its final year at 100 Lafayette under the direction of Ron Clark. Within a couple of weeks two aspects of the program had come into focus. First, this thing is theater; a didactic play in a state of constant reproduction that has been sustained more or less this way since the early '80s, complete with a stage manager/director/narrator and a cast who are ushered on and off stage to perform biweekly seminars. Second, a central organizing framework of the ISP are the friends of the program. These committed social relations spanning decades sustain this historical intervention, at times beyond the lifespans of its comrades.

Being an artist can often feel clumsy, stumbling around in the dark so to speak, hoping to bump into an idea or co-conspirator to navigate that space of unknowing with.

Greg made a show in the dining room of my apartment during (at his request) the coldest, darkest month of 2019. *Black Hole of Love* / 사랑의 블랙홀 was a constellation of poetic experiments attempting to freeze time. Greg magnetized an atomic clock's second hand, placing it in a relentless and futile effort to move forward, a kind of tiny quiet purgatory. The clock's glass face had been meticulously etched and painted to resemble an array of rain droplets, mimicking in great detail the ones Greg noticed on the porthole window of the plane that would eventually take him back to the U.S. while it sat on the tarmac of the Seoul airport. Greg was losing a love at the time, and leaving a place of deep significance. He referred to this show as a response to losing love and indulging in that loss, saying, "a cosmic indifferent force will not yield to anyone's heart. The desire to stop time is, nevertheless, as egotistical as it is romantic."



The only worthwhile reason to make art, or to do anything for that matter, is to make friends.

I suspect there might be something worth noticing between the effort to freeze time and the effort of cultural reproduction. Maybe it's something about revolution. Perhaps it has to do with a notion of community or belonging. In either case there is loss. We've certainly been grieving.

Karaoke is a form of theater that most everyone has experienced in one form or another. Performed for friends and yet-to-be friends alike, it can be done in earnest or in biting irony. It's a chance to participate in cultural reproduction and criticality. It is also usually fun. Just before the pandemic, Greg and his partner Ali came over to my flat in Chicago. We shared a few drinks late into the night which led to a spontaneous series of YouTube karaoke duets.

I often think about Alexander Rodchenko's *Workers' Club*, that he designed and built for the 1925 International Exhibition of Decorative Arts and Modern Industry in Paris, just after Lenin had died in the fever of paranoia and optimism between two world wars. Designed as an optimal space for workers to engage in self-education and cultural leisure activities including chess, I wonder what activities Rodchenko would incorporate had he designed it a century later. Perhaps he would make a dialectical karaoke machine where the chess table had been, a platform for cultural reproduction and critique, where participants could perform the words of other cultural workers set against popular melodies, comrades antagonizing hegemony. I suspect they'd all be duets if not full choral situations.

For the past several months I've asked our faculty, several generations of critical cultural workers and friends of the program, to reflect on the politics of friendship in relation to their work at the Independent Study Program. Concurrently I've asked my own friends, with whom I have established mutual commitments, to identify their favorite political karaoke songs. They have interpreted 'political' and 'karaoke' on their own terms. I've overlayed the faculty's transcribed reflections as lyrics to these songs, played through a two-channel karaoke machine designed in the style of Rodchenko's chess table, in a performance-architecture remodeling the workers club into *KLUB WRKR*.

The intimacy of friendship lies in the sensation of recognizing oneself in the eyes of another.

Friendship for the deceased thus carries this philía to the limit of its possibility. But at the same time, it uncovers the ultimate spring of this possibility: I could not love friendship without projecting its impetus towards the horizon of this death. The horizon is the limit

*and the absence of limit, the loss of the horizon on the horizon, the ahorizontality of the horizon, the limit as absence of limit. I could not love friendship without engaging myself, without feeling myself in advance engaged to love the other beyond death.*²

Our friends are often made heroes when they die. I suspect this is some sort of attempt to cope with their absence or to honor them. We fear they will be forgotten so we make them monuments. This happens all-too-often when these friends are cultural workers, and in some cases it happens before they've died. Institutions clamor to preserve their so-called "authenticity," as if they had never been dynamic contradictory beings. Brecht's words through the mouth of Galileo have particular utility here, in a way I find fitting as Brecht himself has been made a monument. "Unhappy is the land that needs heroes,"³ Galileo reminds his former student.

Monuments can't speak and they certainly can't sing. We can. We can see ourselves in an other's words as we perform them, we can take them up or reject them, offering inflection and interpretation that may have been absent in previous renditions, and we can offer something far more interesting than kindness as we lend our criticality and participation.

2 Jacques Derrida, "Oligarchies: Naming, Enumerating, Counting" in *The Politics of Friendship* (Verso, 1993), 12.

3 Bertolt Brecht, "Scene 12" in *Life of Galileo* (Grove Press, 1966), 115.

Ayesha Kamal Khan



Does the weight⁴ of a place keep shifting?

Where does a place¹ take² place³?

1 coordinates

2 how much of a place is portable?

3



4 Does the mass⁵ shift or the center of gravity⁶?

5 empty masses sing very loudly

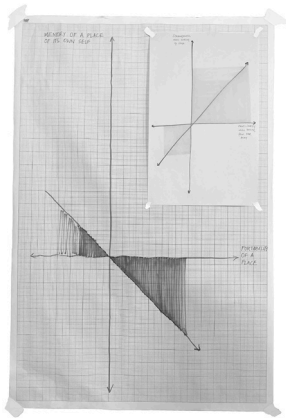
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When a place is grappled by language it pukes⁷ out some imagery that facilitates its expansion.

Many translations later⁸, you are closer to some parts and further away from some.

7



x-axis: familiarity when looking from far away,
y-axis: strangeness when looking up close

8 material fatigue



I'm forgetting something!
میں کچھ بھول رہی / رہا ہوں !

Sophie Kovel



The Marble Freedom Trust, a 1.6 billion dollar fund, is the largest private, single donation to a political nonprofit in U.S. history. The record-breaking donation from electronics manufacturer and political megadonor Barre Seid to Leonard Leo's political nonprofit was first reported on August 22, 2022. Leo is co-chair of the Federalist Society, and, in recent years, is known for architecting the conservative majority in the U.S. Supreme Court. Between 2017–21, he advised and funded five of the six current conservative justices. At a 2015 company party at Tripp Lite, Barre Seid was pictured with a mic in hand. And again, eating a cupcake, one amidst many presented on trays. To his right, a sign read: "Congratulations Barre Seid: 56 Years of Tripp Lite Success!" These celebratory images were posted on the company Facebook page, and later deleted.

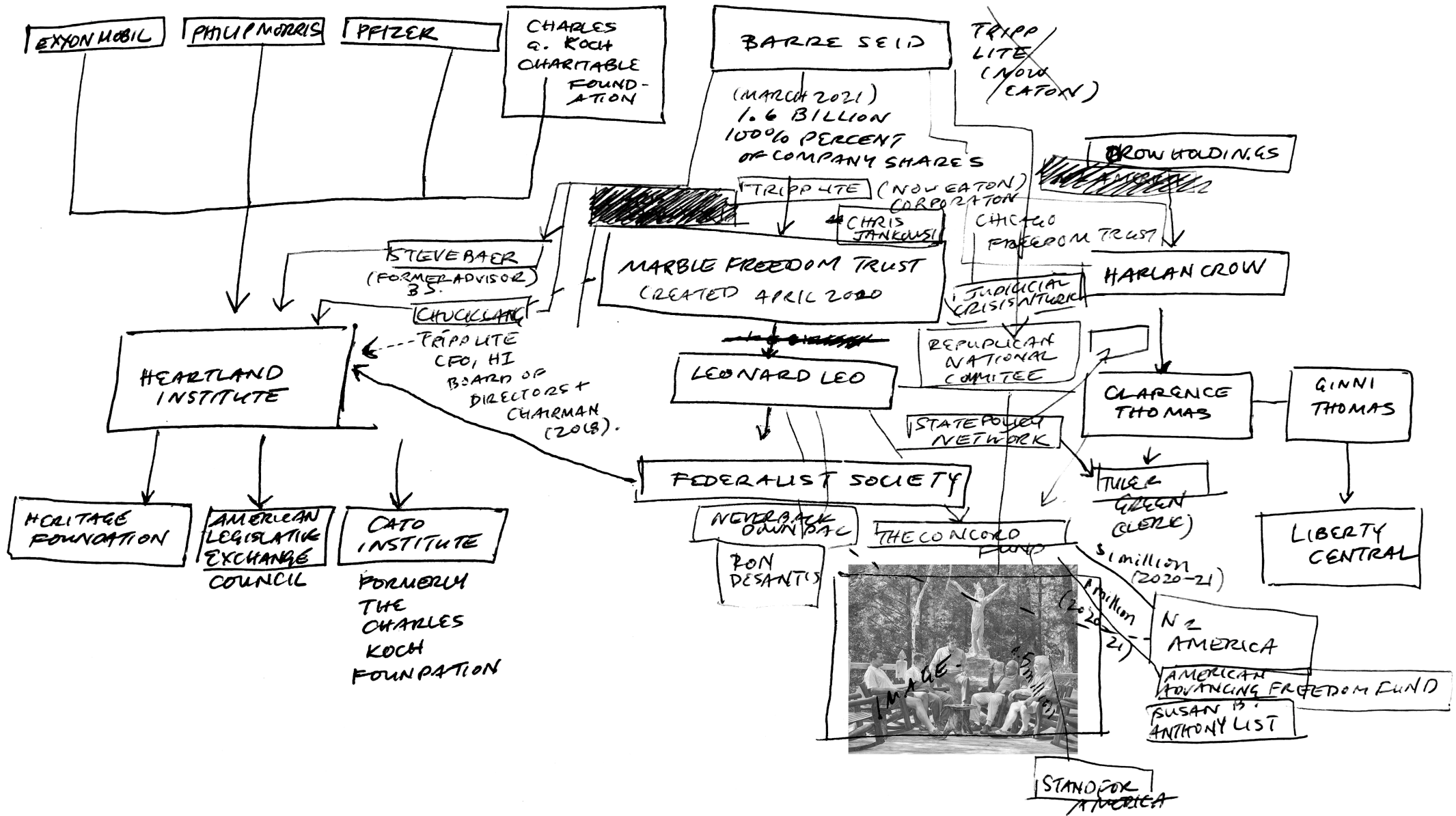
1) Corporate Name		
TRIPPE MANUFACTURING COMPANY		
5) President Name & Address		
GLEN HAEFLINGER 1111 W 35TH ST CHICAGO		
Secretary Name & Address		
BARRE SEID 1111 W 35TH ST CHICAGO 60609		
Officer / Director Name & Address		
Leonard Leo 1111 W 35th St		
6) Share Information	Class	Series
COMMON		

Trippe Lite Manufacturing Company's 2021 corporate disclosure filings show Barre Seid's name crossed out. Below, Leonard Leo penned his own officership. This move anticipated the transfer of 100% of Tripp Lite's company shares to Leo, who now has full jurisdiction over the 1.6 billion dollar sum. One way for organizations to change hands in dark money groups such as this one is through LLC subsidiaries, known as "disregarded entities," that are wholly owned by the recipient groups. This shielded the organization from disclosures of finances and information that companies undergo, as well as \$400 million in taxes when it was sold to Eaton in 2021. Over the past two decades, the creation of the trust is one amidst numerable contributions by Seid. Charitable gifts that he calls "attack philanthropy." Since 1990, his donations to Federal candidates, PACs, and political parties have been made under variations of the company's name.



TRIPPLITE MANUFACTURING, TRIPP-LITE MANUFACTURING, TRIPP-LITE CORP, TRIPPE LIGHTS CO, TRIP LITE, TRIPP INC, BARRE SEID CONTROL ACCT, TRIPP LITE MANUFACTURING, TRIPP LITE POWER PROTECTION, TRIPP LITE CORP., SELF EMPLOYED, Tripp Lite, TRIPP MANUFACTURING, TRIP-LITE, RETIRED, TRIPP MFC, SEID CO, and BARRE SEID CONTROL ACCT.

Here, unpictured: Leonard Leo and Justice Clarence Thomas at Camp Topridge, New York.



Emilio Martínez Poppe

185

29

5 5

100

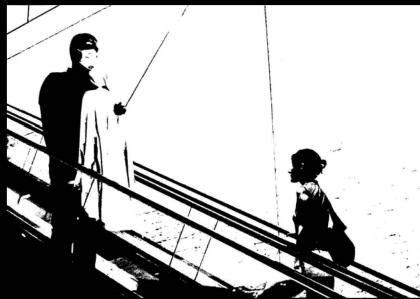
384

100

Anna Rubin







Sim Chi Yin



Stills from *The Mountain That Hid*, 2022. Two-channel video installation with sound, 16:9, 05:56.

The Generational Camera

In *The Mountain That Hid*, Sim Chi Yin sets up a camera in the mouth of an old railroad tunnel in Singapore, attempting to retrace the steps of her grandfather's deportation from Malaya to China in 1949 during the anti-colonial war in the former British territory. The left half of the video diptych shows the view from that inside cavernous space looking out onto the jungle beyond. We hear indistinguishable voices that get closer and then a group of hiking middle-aged women unwittingly come out of the woods and into frame, taking selfies and chatting in Mandarin. Gradually, they realize they are being filmed and what results is an unexpected reality TV-style run-in captured on camera. Their unguarded, gossipy conversation hits uncanny notes on the presence of the filmmaker and on time travel.

As this unscripted drama unfolds on the left, the right side slowly shuttles through a series of almost-still close-up videos, beginning with a lung-like spider web undulating in the wind. Evocative, the images show interiors of Sim's ancestral house in Meixian, in Guangdong province, southern China, a home her grandfather lived in after being deported and shortly before being executed nearby, a fate alluded to with the closing scene of a pig struggling to breathe.



Above: Detail from *The Suitcase Is A Little Bit Rotten* (detail), 2022. UV print on glass, 12 x 9 inches.
Below: Prison photo of Shen Huansheng, the artist's paternal grandfather, arrested by the British colonial government during the anti-colonial war in Malaya (1948–1960).

This short film with two different registers of time also alludes to the movement of the Chinese diaspora between China and Southeast Asia. During the Cold War, colonial Britain used “emergency” powers to send Sim’s grandfather and over 30,000 mostly Chinese Malaysians “back” to China based purely on ethnicity—despite many of them having been born in the colony—while present-day economics has sent waves of mainland Chinese like those Sim met in the tunnel the other way, to Southeast Asia. In a related performance lecture,¹ Sim asks aloud: “Does history write itself in a line, or in circles?”

1 Sim Chi Yin, *Methods of Memory: Time Travels in the Archives*, at Asia Art Archive in America, New York, 2 December 2022, video documentation, <https://www.aaa-a.org/programs/sim-chi-yin-methods-of-memory-time-travels-in-the-archives>.



The Mountain That Hid is part of Sim's larger, ten-year project² focusing on the memory and historiography of the anti-colonial war in Malaya, euphemistically named by the British the "Malayan Emergency," spanning 1948–60, and the broader anti-colonial resistance by the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) to the British forces in modern-day Malaysia and Singapore. Her reckoning³ with this conflict emerged out of a desire to end silence around the disappearance and death of her paternal grandfather, a newspaper editor and educator who, she would learn, was forcibly separated from the family, extradited by the British to China—part of the British colonial authorities' strategy to detain and deport Malaysians suspected of being Communist at the time. He was killed by Chinese Nationalist Party soldiers weeks after his return to China.

The conversation with Sim's ancestors continues the next suite of work, *The Suitcase Is A Little Bit Rotten*, a series of photographic interventions using found imagery, namely magic lantern slides from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Sim exhibits these altered, hand-painted lantern slides on replicas of stands used to retouch glass negatives reminiscent of the historical equipment contemporary with this photo technology. She's updated them with built-in lightboxes.

Here we encounter a different kind of run-in, no less constituted by a visual convergence of the colonial gaze and the subjectivities of the colonized, playing again with the tension between the evidence and its ongoing interpretation. Sim's interest in magic lantern slides was sparked by reading about the British colonial

2 Lotte Laub, Sim Chi Yin, Maaza Mengiste, Sam I-shan, *One Day We'll Understand*, Zilberman Gallery, 2021. <https://www.zilbermangallery.com/images/publications/2046550472808769422.pdf>.

3 Tash Aw, "Personal Histories", *New York Review of Books*, May 11, 2023, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2023/05/11/personal-histories-sim-chi-yin>.

project that deployed lantern slideshows across its empire in a set of choreographed geography lectures to students.⁴

The first group of found lantern slides Sim uses establish the historical mise-en-scene, with landscapes meant to advertise the colony of Malaya produced by the "Malayan Information Agency," the British government's propaganda arm around its colony, from 1928 to 1952. Other more generic lantern slide images of Southeast Asia continue to flesh out the colonial gaze, including schools, plantations and scenes of daily commerce, indigenous people who were forced into colonial subjugation. Some of these came from the Methodist Episcopal Church of New York and were slide lectures to prepare American missionaries for their time in Southeast Asia.

Taking a speculative turn while considering the continuity of family narratives, Sim grafts the image of her young child and her disappeared grandfather into these found magic lantern slide images. While they could never meet in real life, the lineage and connection between Sim's child and grandfather is enacted in this highly constructed—if not already fabulist—visual space of colonial projection.

Sim opens the series with an image of a comet jettisoning through the darkness, evoking the mysterious links between the womb and moon. In the fullest version of the series, the 3D in-utero scan of her child follows, sequenced within more images of the cosmos, until a goose flies and drops the crying newborn into the dark void of the world. Then come the Southeast Asian landscapes, complete with ports, rickshaws and trishaws, lush jungles and pendulous palms; British colonial schools, Western architecture, colonial maps imposed on the populace and the land. Racist

4 Gabrielle Moser, *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press: 2019).

caricatures of indigenous people in the region are thrown into the mix, more images of nineteenth-century astronomy, interspersed with more hazy images of her child's skin and spinal column.

There is her child, donning a sun hat, among the rice paddies at the feet of threshers. Then, on a narrow road in the jungle, her grandfather appears, looking back. In another slide, a young man demonstrates how to climb a tall coconut palm, his figure addressing the camera. Further down the trunk, Sim's baby climbs and follows, unaware of potential dangers. In a color-saturated background, his figure is left black and white and the baby is in high-resolution color. These cues point to her interventions in the slides. Later in the series, figures in bright yellow straw hats at Hong Kong harbor in the early 1900s serve as a shorthand for grandfather's deportation—he stands on a ship above them, apparition-like—as much as they present a typical scene of East Asian daily economic life of the era.

An artist discovers traumas of her family story, traumas which are also collectively held. Now, as a parent, she considers how one might parcel out such a family story to their child, how the child is implicated in this learning. The process mirrors the transgenerational processes of forgetting and remembering, to which photography is a prosthetic body, a mnemonic support. How do we choose to confront shared historical trauma, narrate atrocity, and come into a fuller accounting of the effects of transnational political oppression? Under-histories, counter-narratives, the previously silenced narratives must be heard and seen. And, as Sim's poetic craftwork offers, the assimilation of past horrors also begs for the courage of imagination.

—Cora Fisher

Facing page: From *The Suitcase Is A Little Bit Rotten*, *Skin* (detail), 2022.



Biographies

Philip Cartelli has been wondering about the tensions between the work produced by an individual and the frequently inanimate processes of transmission that we participate in and collaborate through.

Tony Chrenka (b. 1992) lives and works in New York. He participated in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2022–23. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Plot* with Jason Hirata, Theta, New York (2022), and *Strung*, Kaje, Brooklyn (2019). Selected recent group exhibitions include *The Double Time of Drawing*, Clementin Seedorf, Cologne (2023), *Big City Big Lights No Fun*, Shoot The Lobster, New York (2022), and *Remnant, Artifact, Flow*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York (2021).

Eli Coplan is a 2022–23 participant in the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Recent solo exhibitions include *Disney Plus*, Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2023). Recent group exhibitions include *Slow Dance (1)*, Stadtgalerie, Bern (2023) and *Manhattan*, Claude Balls Int., New York (2022). In the fall of 2023 he will have a solo exhibition at Alma Sarif, Brussels.

Giulia Gabrielli is an artist, researcher, assistant, and director from the Mediterranean. She tries to interrupt work. With what they called a life. Giulia is involved in experiments in and on (dis)organizing communal forms of sociality and encounter. She considers scripts and artistic conventions as sometimes helpful devices.

Utsa Hazarika is an artist and writer whose research-based practice ranges across video, installation, and sculpture. She explores how an interdisciplinary dialogue between art and social research can push us to think about power, memory, and resistance. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of the City of New York, Queens Museum, New York; and Cemeti Institute, Indonesia; among others. She will be a Fall 2023 Visual Arts Resident at Pioneer Works, New York.

Jack Hogan and Francis Jones are artists, writers, architects, and communists from Ireland. They developed a collaborative practice when Francis subleased a room in Jack's apartment last summer. Jack and their housemates had to leave this apartment shortly thereafter, when it was put up for sale, meaning the disbanding of a shared home and social space of several years. Laughing and crying at the absurdity of living within the parameters of an economic system that works for next-to-no-one—and doing what they can for art, literature, and world socialism—has kept them busy to date. They are currently funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and Culture Ireland.

Kyle Bellucci Johanson works in performance-architecture situating objects, language, and media to visualize and critique power structures and instigate imaginary futures. In 2018 he founded table, a project space dedicated to situating artist's practices through exhibition, discursive meals, and publication. Recent exhibitions include Feiertag, Kassel; Chicago Architecture Biennial; Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, Chicago; Human Resources, Los Angeles; and Centro Cultural Metropolitano, Quito, Ecuador. Kyle holds a BA in Reconciliation Studies from Bethel University and an MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

Ayesha Kamal Khan works with local material extractions and the incapacity of translation. She exaggerates temporary solutions to claim land, looking for a balance that reveals the lack thereof. Khan's work has been exhibited internationally at art institutions including the Karachi Biennale, the Queens Museum, and the Kuwait Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale. She lives and works between Islamabad and New York City.

Sophie Kovel is an artist and writer whose work examines the economic, social, aesthetic, and ideological operations of racial nationalism. Kovel's criticism has been published in *Artforum*, *BOMB*, *Frieze*, *Spike*, *Jeu de Paume Magazine*, and elsewhere. Recent exhibitions include Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Denmark; the Jewish Museum, New York; Jenkins Johnson, New York; University of California, Los Angeles; and Petrine, Paris.

Emilio Martínez Poppe is an artist and educator based in New York whose work is concerned with the right to the city and the practice of public space. Recent exhibitions include the Queens Museum, CUE Art Foundation, and The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York; Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia; and Vlaams Cultuurhuis de Brakke Grond, Amsterdam. Current teaching appointments include thesis advising in the Communications Design MFA at Pratt Institute.

Anna Rubin is an artist living in New York.

Sim Chi Yin (b. 1978, Singapore) works in photography, film, archival interventions, and performance, focusing on history, memory, conflict, and extraction. She has exhibited at Gropius Bau, Berlin (2023); Harvard Art Museums, Boston (2021); Zilberman Gallery, Berlin (2021); Les Rencontres d'Arles, France (2021); Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong (2019); Nobel Peace Center, Oslo (2017); Arko Art Center, Seoul (2016); and in the Istanbul Biennial (2022, 2017) and the Guangzhou Image Triennial (2021). She will exhibit at the Barbican, London in Fall 2023. Her work has been collected by Harvard Art Museums, The J. Paul Getty Museum, M+ Hong Kong, and the Singapore Art Museum.

Heartfelt thanks to the ISP faculty for their rigor and generosity. In order of visit: Cassandra Guan, Jennifer González, Soyoung Yoon, Alex Alberro, Hans Haacke, Nora Alter, Isaac Julien and Mark Nash, David Harvey, Kenneth White, Yvonne Rainer, Hal Foster, Coco Fusco, Emily Apter, Hito Steyerl, Silvia Federici, Alfredo Jaar, Tina M. Campt, Fred Wilson, Sharon Hayes, Emily Jacir, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Gregg Bordowitz, Mark Dion, Martha Rosler, Andrea Fraser, Gertrud Koch, Renée Green, Benjamin Buchloh, Jonathan Crary, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Thank you to Margaret Liu Clinton for multifaceted organizing and leadership during this time of transition; we are grateful for her belief in our collective and individual successes. Gratitude to the Critical Studies cohort—Maddie Hampton, Sophia Larigakis, Dahlia Li, Jazmín López, Sonya Merutka, Max Tolleson—and to the Curatorial Studies cohort—KJ Abudu, Zachary Feldman, Emily Small, and Johanna Thorell—for their camaraderie.

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