

SINISTER TO ESTABLISH “FIRST/LAST” NEWSPAPER AT PORT AUTHORITY

PORT AUTHORITY — Recently described as “wheat paste,” DEXTER SINISTER are set to produce a newspaper twice a week for three weeks this fall under the umbrella of PERFORMA 09, New York’s well-regarded bi-annual festival of performance art. Together with a hastily assembled staff of international writers and photographers, the Lower East Side “pamphleteers” will occupy a disused, street-level space in New York’s Port Authority bus terminal on the corner of 8th Avenue and 41st Street, directly opposite the new New York Times building. According to sources close to Sinister, *The First/Last Newspaper (TF/LN)* will be “as much about the current state of news media as anything else.” Last night, they hosted a public opening of the workspace on from 6–8pm and screened *Farewell, Etain Shrlu*, a 1980 documentary narrated by Times Linotype operator Carl Schlesinger. Schlesinger offered a brief introduction. *TF/LN* will appear twice a week for the next three weeks, to be distributed in “various formats” yet to be announced. Likewise, events open to the public will be arranged during their three-week operation. In Sinister’s own characteristically melodramatic words: “You don’t want to start quantifying things or you’re dead.”



NEWSPAPER TAX LEVIED: FEW CAN AFFORD DAILY 6 PENCE

NEW YORK CITY — Text takes time. It takes time to read, it takes time to write, and it takes time to reproduce. Throughout the history of text production, people have been searching for ways to distribute the costs of producing text — financial, temporal — more evenly across a system. This search led former goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg to develop and refine his system of moveable type by the 1450s, which eliminated the laborious book-copying process used previously by monastic scribes. And with Gutenberg’s system in place, Venetian publisher Aldus Mantuanus was able to quickly popularize printed books by the late 1400s.

As text becomes easier and cheaper to produce, more copies of it get made. While Gutenberg’s Bible was printed in a small edition of 180, Mantuanus’s books were printed by the thousands. More copies need more readers and more readers like their text to be portable. While Gutenberg’s heavy Bible was best read at a library table, Mantuanus’s slim editions could be easily slipped in a satchel or vest pocket. You went to Gutenberg’s books, but Mantuanus’s books went with you. As increasingly numerous and increasingly portable copies of texts found their way into the world, they found new readers to buy them and they spread literacy with them.

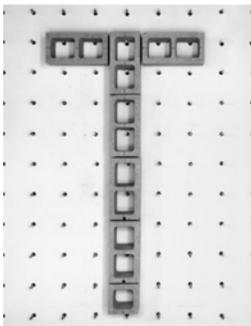
In the next two hundred years, text continued to get swifter, more portable, more widely distributed, giving rise to a new form by the late 1600s and early 1700s: the newspaper. By now firmly established in Europe and North America, the newspaper’s chapter was spurred by a flowering of global trade. Access to time-sensitive political news and financial information was increasingly important, and publishers strived to invent new technologies to meet demand. By the early 1800s, as a result of the industrial revolution, the *Times of London* boasted a press that could print a daily broadsheet at 1100 pages a minute with a circulation to match. By 1830, presses could print on both sides, saving paper, and the “penny press” was born, offering a product that cost 1/6 of the competition’s price. Once again, more copies, cheaper copies, smaller copies meant better distribution of costs, and, as a result, ever more readers.

As the cost of mechanically reproducing text fell, the cost of circulating printed texts fell. According to historian N.N. Feltes, the fruits of the industrial revolution — “paved roads, fast coaches, canals, and, eventually, railways” — made it easier to deliver printed texts to their intended audiences. Around the same time, firms that were known as “booksellers” shifted away from selling each other’s books and instead re-established themselves as something more like the publishers we know today, wholesaling their own books, but not, Feltes points out, “anybody else’s.” This concentration of efforts along a single product line did the trick. After all, it does no good to deliver more printed texts to readers if the demand from those readers isn’t stimulated at the same time. Some of these same fruits of industry that cheapened the cost of circulating text were used to drive up demand: traveling salesmen were dispatched bearing cheap printed prospectuses and catalogs to hawk a publisher’s wares to a more geographically dispersed audience. On those same trains and ferryways were newspapers, streaming paid advertisements for books and, increasingly, the free publicity of literary reviews.

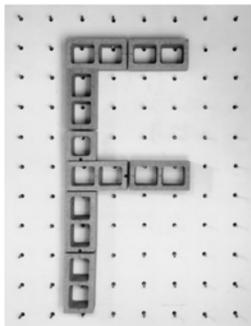
Books were cheaper than ever to print, and they were cheaper, faster, and easier to distribute. Readers were increasingly aware of new books on the market, and, because of the new industrial age, they were increasingly able to find leisure time to read them, all of which set the stage for a flourishing of the Victorian appreciation and consumption of literature. Costs fell, distribution climbed, demand grew, but one variable was not improving. It still took authors a long time to produce a text, and, even given their best efforts, there was no guarantee to publishers that an author’s work would ignite the passions of an ever-widening public.

Again, it was the newspaper to the rescue — or, rather, the technology developed for the newspaper industry. When a newly and disapproving British government levied a tax on the newspaper industry starting in 1712, it grew over the next century to 6 pence. Printers began producing pamphlets instead. Through a loophole in the tax law, pamphlets, which were larger than newspapers, weren’t taxed and were only marginally more expensive than newspapers to print. While few people could afford the daily cost of 6 pence for a 1- or 2-page newspaper, the occasional cost of a 12-pence (1-shilling) pamphlet of 48 pages seemed justified. Printers naturally gravitated toward pamphlets and began filling the additional space required with more advertising, fiction, and other miscellaneous content.

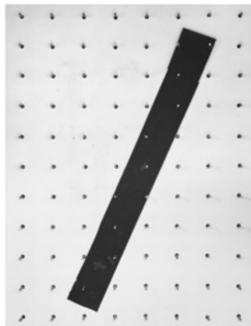
Some printers realized that this new content was more popular than their news coverage and began recruiting proven authors to publish exclusively in the pamphlet format.



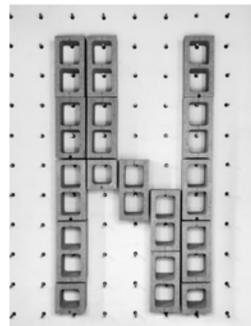
THE FIRST/LAST NEWSPAPER



PORT AUTHORITY, 641 8th Avenue, New York City, NY 10036



4 NOVEMBER 2009



DEXTER SINISTER



Still from *Farewell, etain shrlu*, a 1980 film chronicling the last day of hot metal typesetting at The New York Times.

Generally these small booklets were called “numbers” or “serials,” but more specifically they evolved into a range of forms including the part-issue, the three-volume, the bimonthly, and the magazine-serial. Effectively, the serial unbundled the singular book, reformulating it into a series of installments. In doing so, it instantly appealed to publishers and booksellers by lowering risk. If an author’s work did not appeal to the public, at least publishers had not put all their eggs in one basket. But the serial also increased demand: not only were serials more reasonably priced than newspapers, but they were far less expensive than books. The serial was a book on an installment plan. They were widely collectable — and more portable, too. Best of all, the serial kept a writer in the public eye for months, even years, at a time, as a story’s suspense built chapter by chapter. Now, the time it took an author to compose a text was not a liability, but an asset.

Charles Dickens was an author who’d proven himself in the newspaper trade. Starting in 1833 with his first story, “A Dinner at Poplar Walk,” his short essays, or “sketches” of everyday life, had proven popular with the general public. Dickens’s first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, debuted as a part-issue in 1836, around the same time the House of Commons voted to reduce its tax on newspapers to just 1p. With this final regulatory barrier minimized, all the elements needed for a vigorous mass media were in place: it was time for a runaway hit.

Dickens delivered. The first part-issue of *The Pickwick Papers* was a modest edition of 1000, but, with the introduction in Chapter 10 of Sam Weller, Mr. Pickwick’s servant, demand exploded. Working-class Londoners couldn’t get enough of Sam’s Cockney wit and wisdom. By the end of the serial, Dickens’s circulation had expanded 40-fold. The Victorian appetite for “novels in numbers” was raging. (RG)

<http://imomus.livejournal.com/496511.html>

MUSEUM PIECE

Farewell etain shrlu, by David Loeb Weiss. The Museum of Modern Art Circulating Film Library, 1980. 16mm color film. 29 minutes.

July 1, 1978, may have been a lo-hum newsday at *The New York Times* — fighting in Lebanon, a Manhattan explosion, plans for the upcoming Fourth of July — but in the paper’s composing room, things were far from routine. On that summer Saturday evening, the next day’s early editions of the *Times* were being printed for the last time from hot type cast from molten lead; before the night

was through, the changeover to cold type set by electronic computer was final and complete. David Loeb Weiss, a member of the New York Typographical Union and a former proofreader at the *Times* had the foresight to record that historic transition on film, and to ask Carl Schlesinger, a typesetter and an authority on the printing trades who retained *Times* printers in the operation of the new equipment, to narrate the story. This sensitive, unselfish document is the result.

With the clock on the wall sweeping all too quickly through the fifty-six minutes to the first edition’s 9pm deadline, the camera observes the sixty old reliable Linotypes on their final job, revealing in loving detail how molds of letters are cast from 530-degree liquid to form a solid slug of type; how the lines are spaced and spread into columns of full-page newspaper forms on steel tablets, or “printers’ stones”; how engravings, cuts, and headlines are made by hand; how page plates or stereotypes, are placed on nine identical presses that reverse the lead image and print right-reading words on the newspaper page; how corrections for the next edition are fixed on the “stones”; and, not least, how typesetting errors are signaled to the proofreader by striking the first twelve keys of the Linotype keyboard, “etaoin shrlu” — a convention that gives the documentary its title of fond farewell.

The process began with Gutenberg, the narrator reminds us — indeed, the machines at work, soon to be auctioned and cannibalized for parts, are of a kind that has for the past hundred years remained virtually unchanged — and on this night, when the Linotype operator discards the last lead line at the end of the last story and gives his old machine a final pat, when he turns out the lights and closes the door on the suddenly silent room, an era comes to a close. All of the knowledge acquired by the operator in a lifetime of work is now locked in a computer.

But the film is more than an appreciation of the mechanical past, it is also a celebration of the electronic future. Briskly, the camera moves on to the next edition, being put together in lab-like, noise-free, temperature-controlled quarters, where seasoned printers (who have been retrained) orchestrate buttons and magnetic tapes, magically transferring paste-ups to flexible plastic plates on high-speed presses via electronic impulses in a laser beam. If the process seems cold in more ways than one, perhaps it is because the more memorable scenes of personal connection — the page editor and layout man with heads together, coaxing the type into the form; the shop’s many deaf printers speaking to one another in sign language; the pride of the operators and “makeups” in meeting the deadline one last time — have come before. Certainly, the leap in production is hot enough: 1,000 lines of type a minute, or more than seventy times the speed of the process it replaced.

Even now, though, in its state of technical obsolescence, the genius of the Linotype concept is no less astonishing than that of its automated successor. And to witness the end of one revolution and the beginning of the next is to be struck anew by the awesome reach of human inventiveness in our urge to communicate. (GC)

This article first appeared in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, July/August, 1982.

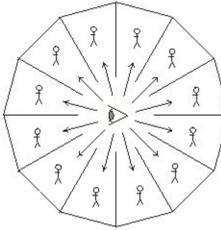
Something funny I have noticed, perhaps you have noticed it, too. You know what futurists and online-ists and cut-out-the-middle-man-ists and Davos-ists and deconstructionists of every stripe want for themselves? They want exactly what they tell you you no longer need, you pathetic, overweight, disembodied Kindle reader. They want white linen tablecloths on treble tables in the middle of vineyards on soft bowly afternoons. (You can click your bottle of wine online. Cheap!) They want to go shopping on Saturday afternoons on the Avenue Victor Hugo; they want the pages of their *New York Times* all kind of greasy from croissant crumbs and butter at a café table in Aspen; they want to see their names in hard copy in the “New Establishment” issue of *Vanity Fair*; they want a nineteenth-century bookshop; they want to see the plays in London; they want to float down the Nile in a felucca; they want five-star bricks and mortar and do NOT disturb signs and views of the park. And in order to reserve these things for themselves they will plug up your eyes and your ears and your mouth, and if they can figure out a way to pump episodes of *The Simpsons* through the darkening corridors of your brain as you expire (ADD TO SHOPPING CART), they will do it.

From “Final Edition” by Richard Rodriguez, *Harper’s magazine*, November 2009

- 1 The Medium Is the Message 2 Media Hot & Cold 3 Reversal of the Overheated Medium 4 The Gadget Lover: Narcissus as Narcosis 5 Hybrid Energy: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* 6 Media as Translators 7 Challenge and Collapse: The Nemesis of Creativity 8 The Spoken Word: Flower of Evil? 9 The Written Word: An Eye for an Ear 10 Roads and Paper Routes 11 Number: Profile of the Crowd 12 Clothing: Our Extended Skin 13 Housing: New Look and New Outlook 14 Money: The Poor Man’s Credit Card 15 Clocks: The Sent of Time 16 The Print: How to Dig It 17 Comics: *Mad Vestibule* to TV 18 The Printed Word: Architect of Nationalism 19 Wheel, Bicycle, and Airplane 20 The Photograph: The Brothel-without-Walls 21 Press: Government by News Leak 22 Motorcar: The Mechanical Bride 23 Ads: Keeping Upset with the Joneses 24 Games: The Extensions of Man 25 Telegraph: The Social Hormone 26 The Typewriter: Into the Age of the Iron Whim 27 The Telephone: Sounding Brass or Thinking Symbol? 28 The Phonograph: The Toy That Shrank to the National Chest 29 Movies: The Reel World 30 Radio: The Tribal Drum 31 Television: The Tinned Giant 32 Weapons: War of the Icons 33 Automation: Learning a Living (MM)

PICTURE AN IMAGE OF A PHOTOGRAPH

TIVOLI, NY — Picture a man caught in a dispute between drug gangs in Mexico. This image appeared in *Time* magazine, August 28, 2008. He is lying dead in the street, surrounded by a group of onlookers. Bystanders are taking photos of the body with video, digital, phone-cameras. The number of people in the picture taking a photo of the body almost outnumber the body who are not. To understand the economy of this image requires knowing that a piece of information (a photograph) is a unit of exchange in which our attention, and the attention of others, is accorded value. We don’t know the fate of these pictures but some likely have been posted on the Internet to become tokens of exchange on blogs, on-line communities and chat lines. We are all involved in an information economy each time we log on to MySpace, send an e-mail of wherever the circulation of information heightens our visibility. The image-economy is founded on our activity as self-performing subjects, feeding back and exchanging information in order to improve our stake within this media feedback loop — “the social studio”.



In 1785 the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham designed the panopticon, a prison that allowed an observer to observe all prisoners without the prisoners being able to tell whether they are being watched. Although many were built as prisons Bentham envisioned many other uses for the panopticon, as French Philosopher Michel Foucault suggests: “[Bentham] thought that the panopticon apparatus could be used to construct metaphysical experiments on children. Imagine taking foundlings, right from birth and putting them in a panoptic system, even before they have begun to talk or be aware of anything . . . different things could be taught to different children in different cells; we could teach no matter what to no matter which child, and we would see the result. In this way we could teach children in completely different systems, or even systems incompatible with each other; some would be taught the Newtonian system and then others would be got to believe that the moon was made of cheese . . . and then we could wait again until their twentieth year when they would be put together for discussions.”

Bentham’s idea of the totally engineered subject (and engineered society) didn’t come out of the blue, the notion that the blank slate of the human soul could be inscribed with any number of designs had been posited by Aristotle — and the notion of the *tabula rasa* was re-inscribed into Christian society by the Christian philosopher Thomas Aquinas.

The figure of the “foundling,” the individual picked from obscure poverty or fetal isolation to be formed or re-formed as an economically valuable unit, can also join the ranks of experimental subjects in the social studio. Linnaeus introduced the term *Homo Ferus* in his encyclopaedic work *Systeme Naturae* in 1758. Taking his cue from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he observed that children raised by animals take on the social characteristics of their foster parents (wolves, bears, sheep, etc.) If a child raised in the society of animals assumes the attributes of that society, children raised in different human societies will assume the attributes of those humans. It was in the enlightenment that the notion that an individual could be radically fashioned reached the level of the social experiment in which study of a particular case, removed from its defining context, can provide insights into the operations of the general.

The battleground for this concept was, in one instance, the body of Kasper Hauser (1828) who until the age of sixteen had been chained to the wall of a windowless cellar near Nuremberg. Following Hauser’s discovery, this child untouched by any civilizing influences of society, was taken into the patronage of the kindly rationalist Feuerbach and subjected to an enlightened education, and was later passed on to the aristocrat Earl Stanhope, who displayed him as a remarkable instance of the *civilized* man, the blank slate of Hauser, it would seem, could be inscribed with the most genteel script.

The emphasis on the importance of learning runs from Bentham’s panopticon, through the behaviorist John Broadus Watson who proclaimed to the *Psychological Review* in 1917, “The time has come when psychology must discard all reference to consciousness [. . .] Its sole task is the prediction and control of behavior; and introspection can form no part of its method.” Prediction and control now become dominant figures in the social studio, the emphasis centered on the performance of the organism maximized through learning.

But Bentham’s proposed experiment resembles the modern social psychology experiment in another key respect: it involves the containment of its subjects within controlled conditions (the *mis en scene* of the experiment) a characteristic which was transferred effortlessly to the famous experiments of Stanley Milgram (in his infamous Obedience to Authority experiment) and Philip Zimbardo (with the Stanford Prison experiment) and later still these modalities provided the structure, and were transferred wholesale, along with the teams of the behavioral psychology experiment, the relative TV show.

Bentham’s notion of the panopticon as a prototype-behavioral laboratory brings together a number of ideas which were awaiting their experiment, ideas that would become axiomatic in the 20th century’s positivist, scientific understanding of itself — that social reality (and reality per-se) is constructed, that society creates (forms and reforms) the subject, that the reformed subject could increase efficiency and utility within society (achieving the greatest good for the greatest number on the one hand and giving maximum economic performance on the other) and that the subject has no innate characteristics.

Bentham also provides the prototype of a cybernetic view of society. The education of Bentham’s hypothetical children, in which radically different systems could be taught, resembles a program in two respects: in common parlance as an education program, but also, as a program of computation in which the children receive information and exchange information with other programmed subjects. Bentham’s children can be understood as information machines operating within an information network — the shared knowledge they produce and reproduce depends on the data put into the machine — (the moon is made of cheese, 2 x 2 = 5). In line with cybernetic thinking Bentham’s social studio is an information ecology. It is the feedback between the individual parts of the system within the social studio that maintain the system.

The term *cybernetics* (the study of feedback systems) was coined by Norbert Wiener, author of *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and Machine* (1948). Wiener joined MIT in 1919 and was one of the founders, along with Julian Bigelow and Vannevar Bush, of the Radiation Lab, or Rad Lab, at MIT (a facility which provided the model for MIT’s famous Media Lab). Just prior to The United States’ entry into World War II Wiener worked on the development of the “anti-aircraft predictor” from which he developed a notion that feedback systems are the organizing system for the universe itself.

From 1940, and with a staff of over 3000 researchers from across a number of disciplines, the Rad Lab developed a number of military projects, including (SAGE) Semi-Automated Ground Environment, an anti-aircraft system, and the Atlas and Polaris missile systems. What is remarkable about the Rad Lab, particularly in relation to our subject, the social studio, is the manner in which this research was conducted. The Rad Lab used a non-hierarchical management style, an epistemological trading zone in which knowledge across disciplines such as chemistry, mathematics, and physics was exchanged. The Rad Lab became the model for interdisciplinary research projects in commercial and academic institutions.

This notion of a non-hierarchical research environment was itself a cybernetic model. As Ted Turner has observed: “Wiener believed that biological, mechanical, and information systems, along with the emerging digital computers, could be seen as analogs of each other. All controlled themselves by sending and receiving messages and, metaphorically at least, all are simply patterns of ordered information in a world otherwise tending toward entropy and noise.” By the early ‘50s such decentralized, system-oriented forms of thought were being played out as artistic experiments at Black Mountain College in North Carolina by John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and their students.

Experiments which Allan Kaprow, who had studied with Cage at the New School for Social Research, was to christen Happenings in 1958. The happening is a system in which artists, audience, and environment worked together to produce a work, shifting the emphasis away from the action of the action painters to the artistic production of the social studio, and also transforming the work of art into the modalities of the experiment, into the logic of the network.

It was from the same milieu that events like the Trips Festival emerged in the mid-sixties. Here the technologies of electronics and LSD served as tools to expand human potential. Echoing media theorist Marshall McLuhan’s idea that each technological innovation represents an extension of human potential, here we see the body itself as part of a media ecology. Art Farm’s *Environman*, (1969), always with a dash of irony, used image technology and something called the “alpha computer” within a simulated environment to direct their subjects to an “electronic oasis.” This project, strobing the figure and ground of the social psychology laboratory and the hippie commune, might be understood as a staging of the human being as sensory information node, where the technologies of electrification and computation pursue the same ends as the technologies of mind expanding drugs.

Counterculture yellow-pages *The Whole Earth Catalog*, was inspired by the cybernetic theories of Norbert Wiener, and, like the Trips Festival, was initiated by Stewart Brand. The catalog served as a resource with which community members in the 1960s could build a network (70,000 people in the U.S. are

estimated to have done so between 1967 and 1970). All over America people renounced the system in order to conduct their own experiments in their own social studios, keen to make a new start in re-programmed societies.

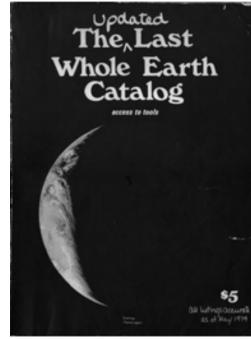
It was out of *The Whole Earth Catalog*, and the network that grew around the publication that the Whole Earth Lectronic Lark, or WELL, emerged. WELL, an early BBS, and one of the first social networking sites, was one of the first instances in which a community was sold to itself as a commodity, exchanging information with itself — a media ecology, a system as servomechanism, self-regulating its behavior through feedback.

It would also seem that “the society of the spectacle” has given way to a society of self-performance, in which surveillance is no less real but is this time non-scopic forms of surveillance (GPS systems, credit card checks, the code of DNA used to mark identity, etc.) and much of the surveillance relies on self-surveillance and self-regulation.

In 2005 the WELL’s contemporary equivalent MySpace was sold to News International for \$580 million. Murdoch was buying a constituency of self-performing subjects in the feedback loop of an online community. Evidence of the blurring of the corporate and the personal abound: Xero, for instance, is a software program that tracks workers through GPS technology in company phones, (so if you phone in sick and head for the beach, make sure you don’t take your mobile with you). A recent survey by the Center for Business Ethics at Bentley College (U.S.) found that 9 out of 10 employees observe their employees’ electronic behavior, and a recent study by the American Management Association and ePolicy Institute ascertained 76% of employers watch employees surf the web and 36% track content, keystrokes and the time spent at the keyboard, and 38% of employees hire staff to sift through email. A report by Forrester Research and Proofpoint found that 32% of employers fired workers between June 2005 and June 2006 for violation of email policy. Software such as Verified Persons keeps tabs on employees outside the office with ongoing background checks — any legal disputes or run-ins with the law will be registered and flagged.

We live in a matrix of surveillance, the surveillance by employers and the state are part and parcel with the self-surveillance that often goes beyond the statutory invitation to “you the viewer” to “have your say.” This edict to confess, to perform has become a foundational part of the structure of the media: from television shows screening handycam footage of hapless viewers bumping into lampposts or falling off ladders are stitched together; amateur videos of natural disasters and terrorist attacks provide the “authentic image” in print and TV news. Eyecryde Joe’s and Jane’s confess all, undergo extreme makeovers, have their rides pimped, have their homes refurbished, their children reconditioned, their marriages fixed, choose new partners, choose new wallpaper, are fed by celebrity chefs, are starved by personal trainers, run the marathon, make poverty history, bungee-jump wearing a red nose and clown’s shoes. In this arena of the information economy we increasingly use media to police ourselves, maintain ourselves, judge ourselves against others, regulate our behavior, measure ourselves. In an era when direct government intervention is despised (I don’t need handouts from Big Government!) new technologies of self-control grew up to replace them (I don’t want to end up like the trailer trash on *Judge Judy!*). As a greater part of our lives is taken up with the work of watching and the work of being watched, it seems the feedback loop is tightening. (SR)

A shorter version of this text first appeared in *Control Magazine* 18, 2009. The phrase *Social Studio* is taken from the title of an exhibition by artist Artur Zmijewski at BAK, Utrecht, November 2008.



PUBLIC OCCURRENCES BOTH FORREIGN AND DOMESTICK

BOSTON — IT is designed, that the Country shall be furnished once a month (or if any Great Occurrences happen, oftener,) with an Account of such considerable things as have arrived unto our Notice.

In order hereunto, the Publisher will take what pains he can to obtain a *Faithful Relation* of all such things; and will particularly make himself beholden to such Persons in Boston whom he Knows to have been for their own use the diligent Observers of such matters.

That which is herein proposed, is, First, *That Memorable Occurrences of Divine Providence* may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are. Secondly, That people every where may better understand the Circumstances of Publick Affairs, both abroad and at home; which may not only direct their *Thoughts* at all times, but at some times also to assist their *Businesses* and *Negotiations*. Thirdly, That some thing may be done towards the *Curing*, or at least the *Charming*, of that *Spirit of Lying*, which prevails amongst us wherever nothing shall be entered, but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our Information. And when there appears any *material mistake* in any thing that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next.

Moreover, the Publisher of these *Occurrences* is willing to engage, whereas there are many *False Reports*, maliciously made, and spread among us, if any well-minded person will be at pains to trace any such *false Report* so far as to find out and Convict the *First Raiser of it*, he will in this Paper (unless just Advice be given to the contrary) expose the Name of such person, as a *malicious Raiser of a false Report*. It is supposed that none will dilate this Proposal, but such as intend to be guilty of so villainous a Crime.



A Reconsideration of the Newspaper Industry in 5 Easy Allusions



Trying to find a comfortable position (from *Air Made Visible: A Visual Reader* on Bruno Munari, Verlag Lars Muller, 2001)



Tamara Shopkin

CIRCULATION + 2.7% / - 0.2%

MID-ATLANTIC — My 5-ft., 7.5-in., 126-lb. frame is being carried at 566 mph at an altitude of 45,000 feet, in a 231-foot-long Boeing 747 flying from London to New York. I am buckled into a 45 cm wide international economy class seat, watching a movie on the 13 x 20 cm seatback in-flight entertainment screen in front of me. The movie is called "State of Play," a thriller starring Ben Affleck, Russell Crowe, and Rachel McAdams. The plot: old-school *Washington Globe* journalist (Crowe) and new-school *Washington Globe* blogger (McAdams) investigate links between squeaky-clean congressman (Affleck) and dirty corporate murderer. I'd print news-stand is skeptical of young blogger's skills as journalist, but together they crack story. I reach the closing scene, in which Crowe is typing up his copy, blowing the lid on the whole affair. He finishes his final sentence, and in a symbolic gesture of new-found respect for his blogging sidekick, puts her name next to his in the by-line, and asks her to hit the "enter" button on the keyboard that will send their piece to print. The credits roll over a slow, elegantly soft sequence following the subsequent journey of this front page, above-the-fold story: the plates being made, rollers inked up, paper taken from the stack and fed into the press, the news printed, the day's edition being cut, folded, bundled and shipped out across the country.

I enjoy this sequence. It's as if all those movies of journalists and newspapers have been boiled down into one scene: *Citizen Kane*, *The Front Page*, *Deadline USA*, *Scandal Sheet*, *Big News*, *Copy*, *I Cover the Waterfront*, *Confirm or Deny*, *Foreign Correspondent*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, *Night Editor*, *All the President's Men*, *The Killing Fields*, *Salvador*, *The Pelican Brief*, the final season of *The Wire*. I am a sucker for their romance; the romance of the tenacious journalist writing through the night to file his copy on time; the hardworking, ink-slinging printers tending the presses of freedom and truth; newspaper vans, emblazoned with the masthead, hurtling through the streets, delivering their paper bundles to newsstands and street vendors. The romance of ritual and education; of sitting at breakfast with the folks and listening to Dad gabble about the state of the nation as he reads the paper over his cereal and coffee. Or of reading it on the daily traipse to and from work — the ink on your hands, the fine art of folding a broadsheet so it can be read in the confines of a packed commuter train. Or maybe leafing lazily through the Sunday supplements in the smug of a quiet country pub, dozing in the corner of the crossword page, no screen glare or battery life to worry about. And then there's the romance of all those names, of worlds and times, suns and stars, examining, heralding, observing, guarding and posting news for us: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Evening Standard*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *El Pais*, *La Repubblica*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Times of India*, *Asahi Shinbun*, *International Herald Tribune*.

This is the subtext of sentimentality that tear-stains every report on the demise of print media — all those auto-obituaries, in which newspapers track their own descent into obsolescence with stats and sums. Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

Washington Post circulation down 2.7% to 751,871! *New York Times* up 0.2% to 1,136,437! What they're really yearning for is a world in which there's a physics to news, where it is typed out from notebooks by Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford, and brought to you by lovable street urchins in tweed newsboy caps. A world in which the news is finite and for consumption in one sitting; the *International Herald Tribune* is read over an espresso in Paris, not *The Huffington Post* scrolled through and refreshed every 30 seconds on a laptop, over a tall half-skinny latte-frappe-chino in Williamsburg.

The credits end and the 13 x 20 cm seatback in-flight entertainment screen in front of me reverts back to the Skyman, reminding me we're still somewhere high above the ocean. I look out of the window and down at the Atlantic. My mind drifts back to last year, to the South China Sea, heading north towards Taiwan.

It's mid-April 2008. My 5-ft., 7.5-in., 126-lb. frame is being carried at 23 knots at an altitude of approximately 20 feet, on the *Ital Contessa*, a 1096-foot-long container ship en route from Hamburg to Shanghai. I've been at sea for nearly five weeks, and I have never seen so many ships before — containers, coasters, ro-roes, reefers, bulk carriers, tankers of all sizes, the ship in the sky as busy as motorways. Those heading east are high in the water, their containers empty. Those sailing west to Europe are sunk low in the sea, their cargo heavy with products from China, South Korea, and Taiwan.

I think about what's in those containers bound for Europe. I imagine the vessels laden with laptops, phones, desktop computers, mp3 players, and printers. I remember a news report, a few months previously, describing how two underwater cables in the Mediterranean were damaged — the 17,400-mile-long FLAG (Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe) and 12,427-mile SEA-ME-WE-4 (South East Asia-Middle East-West Europe 4) cables — severing internet services for large parts of the Middle East and India. I've never had a mobile phone signal or internet access since I boarded the ship in the U.K. I think about the resultant dumb physicality of the phone and laptop I've carried with me, and how so much of the technology that allows online media to exist still has to rely upon inanimate lumps of plastic, steel, and wire for delivery and distribution. Back at 45,000 feet, I wonder if news only really moves at the same speed humans do; my 5-ft., 7.5-in., 126-lb. frame and 25 x 36 x 3 cm, 5.6-lb. MacBook, both hurtling along at 566 mph. I begin to think about the passionate futurist sentimentality of online news and ebook advocates. They have their own romance of repute, that of a brave new first date with technology. Their romance is with a putative democracy of global IT accessibility allowing a world of citizen journalists to speak truth to power. Of Twitter feeds and smart-phones bypassing transnational boundaries, bringing instant news of election protests in Iran, or police brutality at anti-G20 rallies in London. Of a new form of journalist, as adept at constructing reports with the written word as they are with the latest digital A/V gear. Of direct interaction with readers shaping stories or a title's news agenda. Of lower overheads and full-spectrum syndication. Of not only news but whole books downloaded to a single e-reader device. It's as if all those science fiction tales about instantaneous global communication have come true: *When the Sleeper Wakes* (a networked world), *Men Like Gods* (wi-fi), *Things to Come* and *Star Trek* (mobile communications), *Earth* (citizen journalism), *Mortality Report* (e-newspapers).

But like any good sci-fi yarn, there's a dark side. The blogger (and print journalist) Zone Styx Travelcard recently wrote: "I sometimes try to imagine a culture without artefacts — the endpoint of digital in which no-one prints a book, buys a newspaper or magazine, presses a CD (let alone a record), and wonder when it will arrive. And how I will make a living. Then I remember that in climatechange a hundred years' time, humanity will be reduced to small pockets of hunter-gatherer-fisher-farmers, scraping out an existence on small temperate islands, as continents become uninhabitable, scorched wastelands. Assuming the climate stabilizes and these surviving communities start to send out sorties to the old hubs of civilization, as they gather together relics from the Old World there will presumably be a huge lacuna. The cultural fossil record will start to go blank from the turn of the century onwards, and with no internet, no electricity, the migration to digital will appear as a kind of universal amnesia. These survivor-explorer archaeologists from the future will find books, records, magazines, CDs, but they will be decreasing to a trickle as the years go by, while even if they manage to fire a computer up, there will be no distant Google server-farm to supply them. The newspaper auto-obituarists lament rather than capitalizing on their own physicality. The online partisans run scared from theirs. (DF) ■



Quinton Oliver Jones

CULTURE TODAY BECOMING MASS AFFAIR

MILAN — Today it has become necessary to demolish the myth of the "star" artist who only produces masterpieces for a small group of ultra-intelligent people. It must be understood that as long as art stands aside from the problems of life it will only interest a very few people. Culture today is becoming a mass affair, and the artist must step down from his pedestal and be prepared to make a sign for a butcher's shop (if he knows how to do it). The artist must cast off the last rags of romanticism and become active as a man among men, well up in present-day techniques, materials, and working methods. Without losing his innate aesthetic sense he must be able to respond with humility and competence to the demands his neighbors may make of him.

The designer of today re-establishes the long-lost contact between art and the public, between living people and art as a living thing. Instead of pictures for the drawing-room, electric gadgets for the kitchen. There should be no such thing as art divorced from life — with beautiful things to look at and hideous things to use. If what we use every day is made with art, and not thrown together by chance of caprice, then we shall have nothing to hide.

Anyone working in the field of design has a hard task ahead of him — to clear his neighbor's mind of all preconceived notions of art and artists, notions picked up at schools where they condition you to think one way for the whole of your life, without stopping to think that life changes — and today more rapidly than ever. It is therefore up to us designers to make known our working methods in clear and simple terms, the methods we think are the truest, the most up-to-date, the most likely to resolve our common aesthetic problems. Anyone who uses a properly designed object feels the presence of an artist who has worked for him, bettering his living conditions and encouraging him to develop his taste and sense of beauty.

When we give a place of honor in the drawing-room to an ancient Etruscan vase which we consider beautiful — well proportioned and made with precision and economy, we must also remember that the vase once had an extremely common use. Most probably it was used for cooking-oil. It was made by a designer of those times, when art and life went hand in hand and there was no such thing as a work of art to look at and just any old thing to use. (BM) ■

This was one of a series of articles written by Bruno Munari about design that appeared in the Milanese daily paper, *Il Giornale*.

HEADLESS BODY, TOPLESS BAR

GLASGOW — David Simon, author of *The Wire*, lost no time getting to the point at a Senate Commerce Committee in May this year. Testifying on the future of journalism he pegged this slow death to the incestuous nature of the internet: "The internet leeches that reporting from mainstream news publications, whereupon aggregating websites and bloggers contribute little more than repetition, commentary and froth. Meanwhile, readers acquire news from the aggregators and abandon its point of origin — namely the newspapers themselves." The ongoing death of journalism debate has made us all aware, albeit slowly, of the economic damage inflicted on newspapers in recent times. The argument has been well made that the erosion of news collecting leads to the erosion of democracy. Investigative journalists are the watchmen of civil liberties and good models of practice in government. Those investigations require sustained financial resources and a sound infrastructure. In a report issued in October this year by The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism — "The Reconstruction of American Journalism" — authors Leonard Downie, Jr. and Michael Schudson argue that "We would

be reminded that there is a need not just for news but for newsmen. Something is gained when news reporting, analysis, and investigation are pursued collaboratively by stable organizations that can facilitate regular reporting by experienced journalists, support them with money, logistics, and legal services, and present their work to a large public."

Simon, Downie and Schudson make worthy points and all of them go on to make the case for innovative economic models that will sustain news gathering. But this still begs a much more basic question — why do we read newspapers? What if the readers' primary concern isn't actually "news"?

Let's take a detour. This is an extract from *Ava: Life in the Afternoon* in which journalist Rex Reed records an interview with movie legend Ava Gardner:

"Ava, I sure loved you last night in *The Bible*. You were really terrific, darlin'."

"Crap!" Ava pours another cognac. "I don't want to hear another word about that goddam *Bible*. I didn't believe it and I didn't believe that Sarah bit I played for a minute. How could anybody stay married for a hundred years to *Abraham*, who was one of the biggest bastards who ever lived?"

"Oh, darlin', she was a wonderful woman, that Sarah."

"She was a jerk!"

"Oh darlin', ya shouldn't talk like that. God will hear ya. Don'tcha believe in God?" Larry joins us on the floor and bites into a hot dog, spilling mustard on his tie.

"Hell, no." The Ava eyes flash.

"I pray to him every night, darlin'. Sometimes he answers, too."

"He never answered me, baby. He was never around when I needed him. He did nothing but screw up my whole life since the day I was born. Don't tell me about God! I know all about that bugger!"

Reed included the interview in his first book, *Do You Sleep in the Nude?* (1968). There is an energy and freshness to the work that still shocks. At the time, Reed's style was seen to overturn the carefully scripted scenarios of publicists protecting their stars. It was just one salvo in the style revolution that rippled through journalism (even *Time* magazine in 1968 felt able to report Jacqueline Susann's remark that "If I had an affair with Jack the Ripper the offspring would be Rex Reed.")

The point here is simple. Reed's interview is a blast. It doesn't matter whether we get the "news" on a second-rate movie or an update on a star doomed to mediocre roles. Instead, we get prose that pumps blood into the author's characters. There is a wildness in the dialogue and a ruthless eye directed the overall portrait of Ava Gardner that demonstrates just what great journalism can do. Ironically, it reads so strongly today because publicists have reclaimed the interview format and drained it of vitality. But it is that wit, energy and ear for language that we crave in journalism.

Another detour. *The Guardian's* TV critic Nancy Banks-Smith reviews a documentary on an aging British firefighter ("Frank, 66, with a quadruple heart bypass and a titanium knee") and the BBC's history drama, *The Tudors*:

"The bulling in Andalusia was like a fading variety theatre. Frank was on first, which suggested he was the juggler, not the crooner. The young bull was slim-legged and deep-bodied. Frank, sporty all his life, has the rangy build of a cowboy. After the first few flourishing passes, the bull, wearing a bleeding necklace of banderillas, stood foursquare and thought. Frank raised his sword and stopped being funny.

When I looked back, the bull had sunk down as if dreadfully tired. This seemed to satisfy the crowd, who waved anything white. Frank gave a bristling press conference. 'As long as I want to do it, leave me alone and let me get on with it.' Perhaps the questions had not been to his taste.

A new series of *The Tudors* was three times as long and 10 times as tedious. Henry now has a good queen and a bad leg, which make him very testy, but, luckily, his girlfriend is sympathetic: "Poor you, your Majesty." There was a lot of that. I think of as sat-nav drama: "Where is Salisbury?" "Salisbury's not far from Newark." "Pontefract is the gateway to the south!" Peter O'Toole, who used to be Pope, seems to have jacked in the job, and who would blame him."

It might be hard to find a more ephemeral corner of journalism than TV reviews. Certainly, there is no news involved. Most definitely it bears little relevance to the high-flown concerns about the future authority of the Fourth Estate. But it is a moment of knowing pleasure and that shouldn't be underestimated.

It is a more complex transaction between writer and reader than it first appears. The review stands on its own and it doesn't matter whether or not we've seen the programs Banks-Smith is analysing (an implicit indictment of TV itself). The strength of the piece lies in the play of language and in the assumed communal knowledge of television's formulas. The writer's skill allows her to layer the review with elements of critique, observation, self-reflection, sympathy and wit. The reader responds on many levels to this particular piece and, within the context of *The Guardian*, on a more general level of anticipation and familiarity with this writer's frequent columns.

Perhaps ephemeral as it may seem, the review could only afford to float so lightly on the surface of popular culture precisely because of the wider economics of the newspaper. A freelance journalist could not take the chance of appearing so inconsequential in case the piece was mistakenly perceived as genuinely unimportant. Equally, a writer in the blogosphere could not write so knowingly because the sense of a regular, known audience would be absent.



Writing desk of Charles Dickens as found in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library (Photograph Jason Fulford)

LARGE HADRON COLLIDER EXPECTED TO FAIL DUE TO BACKWARDS CAUSATION, MASSIVE ELEMENTARY PARTICLE PREDICTED PLUS STANDARD MODEL AND COLLIDING BEAM SYNCHROTRON PARTICLE ACCELERATOR EXPLAINED

GENEVA — If you've ever stood too close to the edge of a subway platform and deliberately turned to face the oncoming train as it hurtles into the station, then you understand the visceral thrill elicited by the prospect of mortal collision.

You also grasp the basic idea behind the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), located approximately 100 meters under the Franco-Swiss border near Geneva, Switzerland. In a ring-shaped tunnel 27-kilometers in circumference, scientists plan to accelerate atomic particles to velocities approaching the speed of light, then force them into head-on collisions.

Like you, particle physicists are interested in finding out what happens when things are smashed together at high speed inside of a tube. In scientific parlance, this is called an "event."

Unlike you, most of the physicists involved in the LHC project are not dissuaded from experimentation by the possibility of mortal consequence, which is generally considered relatively slight, compared, for example, with chance of death from high-speed convergence with a train.

Two well-respected physicists, Holger B. Nielsen of the Niels Bohr Institute, Denmark, and Masao Niimiya of the Okayama Institute for Quantum Physics, Japan, have put forth a theory in recent months that the failure of the LHC is inevitable, precisely because the universe cannot survive its success.

Nielsen and Niimiya propose that the probability of backwards causation — that is, influence from the future — be tested by a simple card draw in which the probability of drawing a card combination that would require a restriction on the use of the LHC would be very low.

Nielsen and Niimiya write, "Our proposal is to test if there should perhaps be such pre-arrangements in nature, that is pre-arrangements that prevent Higgs particle producing machines, such as LHC and SSC, from being functional. Our model . . . begins with a series of not completely convincing, but still suggestive assumptions, that lead to the prediction that large Higgs producing machines should turn out not to work in that history of the universe which is actually being realized."

Nielsen and Niimiya argue that their experiment would be a success whether or not their theory of backwards causation is correct. If the draw of cards results in a "card combination of the most common type" and thus leads to no restrictions on the use of the LHC, this would be a successful outcome, indicating that the theory that the LHC could cause damage of such profound universal consequence that it would have to be thwarted by a force sent backwards in time, is wrong. If the restriction card combination is drawn, use of the LHC would not be fully implemented, but a theory of backwards causation would be proved, arguably a more significant discovery than those expected to be made from full implementation of the LHC. Furthermore, restricting the use of the LHC as a result of this experiment would perhaps be a more desirable outcome than a political or mechanical failure of the project, which may be inevitable if backwards causation is true, and which could lead to greater setbacks for physics research.

If the LHC might be sufficiently dangerous that it would necessarily be sabotaged by influence from the future, then why risk firing it up?

At stake is the possibility of proving the existence of the Higgs boson, the only particle indicated by the Standard Model of particle physics that has not yet been observed.

The Standard Model is the theory that comes closest to describing the behavior and interaction of all known matter and energy in the universe. So far, the Standard Model establishes common ground for three of the four known fundamental forces — the weak nuclear force, the electromagnetic force, and the aptly named strong nuclear force — and the twelve known elementary particles — six types of quarks and six types of leptons. (The Standard Model cannot be used to predict the mass of particles or to account for the gravitational force.)

A hadron (Greek *hadros* or "heavy") is a particle made of quarks, such as the proton and the neutron. Protons and neutrons comprise the nucleus of atoms, and thus most



matter we see. Each consists of three quarks held together by the strong force — equivalent to 1039 times the gravitational force. Only a minute portion of the mass of a hadron is accounted for by fundamental particles, however. The rest of the mass of a hadron is quantified in terms of energy, as explained by Einstein's formula relating mass and energy: E = mc².

Einstein's equation shows that particles with zero mass, such as photons, must travel at the speed of light and that particles with any mass cannot reach the speed of light. If particles traveling at the speed of light are slowed down, they acquire mass.

Particle physicists predict that a force-carrier particle is responsible for the interactions resulting in the vast majority of the mass in a hadron. According to quantum theory, this particle, the Higgs boson, creates mass through interaction with other particles as they pass through the Higgs field the theorized lattice of invisible Higgs particles that affect different elementary particles in different ways. The Higgs boson, if it exists, would help to explain the origin of mass by helping to explain why, in space, some particles are slowed down from the speed of light, thereby acquiring mass, while other particles, such as photons, are not affected.

In order to detect the presence of the hypothesized Higgs boson, a particle accelerator is used.

Particle accelerator experiments test for the presence of some unknown matter by examining its effects on surrounding, known matter when particles are slammed together at high speed. To understand how this works in principle, imagine you find yourself in a room, blindfolded and restricted from walking. You have at your disposal a basket of tennis balls. By throwing the balls away from you, you can deduce the shape of objects in your surroundings based on how the balls bounce back. In a similar way, physicists detect quantum particles by using other quantum particles as probes.

As massive particles are accelerated to velocities approaching the speed of light, the wavelength at which the particles travel is significantly reduced. And, since matter at the quantum level exists in a wave-particle duality, a shorter wavelength means the size of the particle is effectively reduced. In other words, if you speed a particle-probe up to a very high speed, the wavelength will be made smaller and will register more precisely the effects caused by its slamming into a target.

High-energy particle collisions also result in the production of unstable particles that rapidly decay into other, constituent elementary particles. The presence and behavior of these particles will be detected through the experiments at the LHC.

The LHC is a colliding beam synchrotron particle accelerator. As such, it is designed to propel two beams of particles (either protons or heavy ions — namely lead in the case of the LHC) in opposite directions, towards one another, through circular channels. In a synchrotron accelerator, the force of the collision of the particle beams is compounded by the fact that they are both moving, rather than in a linear accelerator in which one beam is directed through a straight channel toward a stationary target.

The particle beams are accelerated via electromagnetic force conveyed by superconductors located around the tunnel. Other magnets control the direction of the beams, both to maintain their circular path around the tunnel and to direct them to target intersection points where the two beams con-

verge. Here the desired sub-atomic particle collisions will occur.

When fully operational, the LHC will generate close to a billion particle collisions per second at an energy seven times greater than any accelerator previously built, in an underground environment that approximates interplanetary space — in each chamber a vacuum of internal pressure ten times less than that on the moon is necessary in order to move the particles along at such high velocities. The channels are kept cool by superfluid helium, at a temperature close to absolute zero. Such extraordinary coolant is necessary, as the collisions, though quite small, generate energy that is 100,000 times hotter than the center of the sun, along with plausible cause for concern.

Is such cosmic alarm warranted?

Time will tell, and very soon. Last weekend, the first beam of lead ions was injected into the LHC since its failure and temporary closure over a year ago. According to the website of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), which built the LHC, "The first proton beam of the year is likely to be injected in mid-November."

The first high energy collisions will most likely occur at a date after mid-December 2009.

If the predictions of Nielsen and Niimiya are correct, then we almost certainly have nothing to worry about. (AK) ■

AT THE TIME OF WRITING

"Well, now," the old man continued, "They seemed quite concerned with how to join one letter to another, as this is what they were taught to practise from an early age. Every written word produced in itself a different puzzle, and like any thing, the more you practised, the quicker it solved itself unconsciously. Some even made a point of never wanting to stop learning how to construct writing, as it were. But like how we've become conscious of not leaving gaps now that Will's here. Usually it goes without saying that usually we talk and leave out all that that we all know."

"Which is nearly everything, every thing that ever was or is or will be."

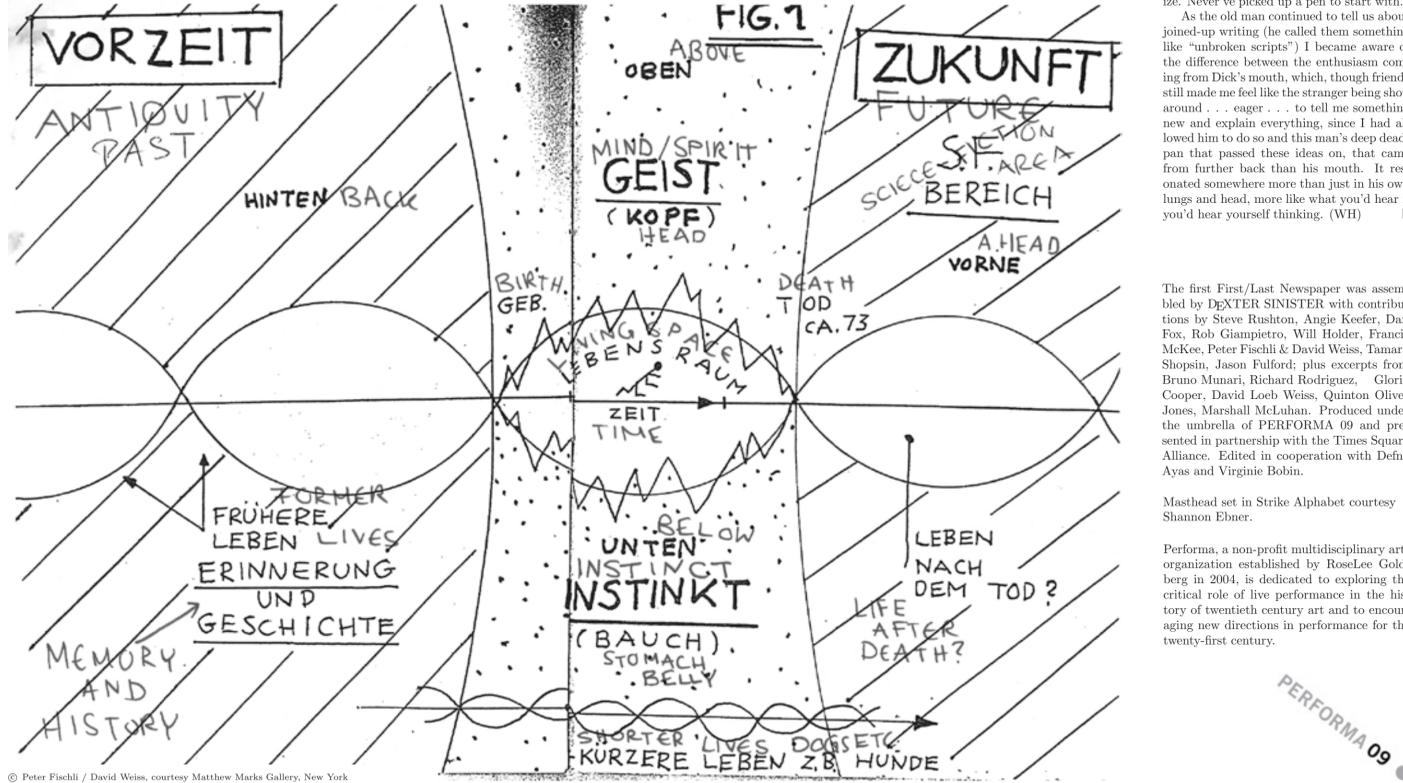
"Hmmbut, well, now, someone arrives amongst us . . . from . . . without our Common Knowledge, and all of a sudden we realise how much we know and what goes unsaid in between. Dick, as the 'kids' you spoke of joined one letter to another, they weren't considering that someone may not share the same ideas as them, or not speak the language they wrote. Too young to realize. Never've picked up a pen to start with."

As the old man continued to tell us about joined-up writing (he called them something like "unbroken scripts") I became aware of the difference between the enthusiasm coming from Dick's mouth, which, though friendly, still made me feel like the stranger being shown around . . . eager . . . to tell me something new and explain everything, since I had allowed him to do so and this man's deep deadpan that passed these ideas on, that came from further back than his mouth. It resonated somewhere more than just in his own lungs and head, more like what you'd hear if you'd heard yourself thinking. (WH) ■

The first First/Last Newspaper was assembled by DeXTER SINISTER with contributions by Steve Rushton, Angie Keefe, Dan Fox, Rob Giampietro, Will Holder, Francis McKee, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Tamara Shoppin, Jason Fulford; plus excerpts from Bruno Munari, Richard Rodriguez, Gloria Cooper, David Loeb Weiss, Quinton Oliver Jones, Marshall McLuhan. Produced under the umbrella of PERFORMA 09 and presented in partnership with the Times Square Alliance. Edited in cooperation with Dene Ayas and Virginia Bobin.

Masthead set in Strike Alphabet courtesy Shannon Ebner.

Performa, a non-profit multidisciplinary arts organization established by RoseLee Goldberg in 2004, is dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth century art and to encouraging new directions in performance for the twenty-first century.



© Peter Fischli / David Weiss, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York