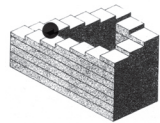
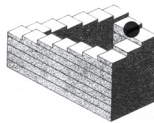
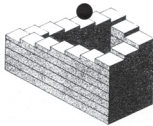


**THE KITCHEN, New York City. Tuesday November 25
2008, 7pm.**

INT. A black box, oriented to the south. Raking seats face a level stage on the floor. Various props (a **PAIR OF LECTERNS**, a **CHROME DRUM KIT**, a **TRUE MIRROR**, etc.) are scattered about the space. A constantly rising canon (the **SHEPARD'S TONE**) is barely audible above the general murmur of small talk as an audience assembles itself.



While reading the program provided on each seat a similar thought crosses the mind of each member of the audience: **THE FIRST RULE IS ALWAYS PRODUCTION NEVER DOCUMENTATION. THE SECOND RULE IS THERE IS NO FIRST RULE.**

A music video, **ABC AUTO INDUSTRY** from the **OMD LP DAZZLE SHIPS (1983)** plays on a projection screen in the center of the stage area.

OMD :

A-B-C, A-B-C, A-B-C, A-B-C ... etc.

1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3 ... etc.

Robotics a science

Tried in some factories

Functions and adaptability

Its own terminology

Auto-industry production

Economic development

Engineering technology

Robotics a science

Frankenstein's monster

Frankenstein's monster

Frankenstein's monster

Frankenstein's monster ... etc.

MICHAEL PORTNOY, wearing mirror shades, walks to the RIGHT LECTERN. An OverHead Projector is switched on. It projects a small microfiche onto the screen. The image comprises 53 chronologically-arranged icons of so-called PRESS RELEASES produced at the 7th Regiment Armory Building during March 2008. The red dot of a laser pointer appears on the first microfiche icon and attempts to track subsequent progress throughout the evening.

This appears to signal the BEGINNING.

M P begins to read a long poem, and continues to do so in fragments throughout the evening.

M P :

The first poem was the title poem.
This time Corinne read it aloud, but she still
didn't hear it.
She read it through a third time and heard
some of it.
She read it through a fourth time, and heard
all of it.
It was a poem containing the lines:

Not wasteland, but a great inverted forest
with all foliage underground

As though it might be best to look immediately
for shelter,
Corinne had to put the book down.
At any moment the apartment building
seemed liable to lose
Its balance and topple across Fifth Avenue
into Central Park.

She waited.
Gradually the deluge of truth and beauty abated.

Then New Years Eve of 2007 came:
We celebrated it with friends at a party
Where everybody was asked to wear
Exactly what they wore exactly one year before.

But all at once it dawned on me that this
Was the real point, the contrapuntal theme;
Just this: not text, but texture; not the dream
But topsy-turvical coincidence,
Not flimsy nonsense, but a web of sense.
Yes! It sufficed that I in life could find
Some kind of link-and-bobolink, some kind
Of correlated pattern in the game,
Plexed artistry, and something of the same
Pleasure in it as they who played it found.

They were made with an idea of seeing
Two realms at once. "Two games, yours and
The verso, an additional waiting to be played
In another time, another space."
A mirrored world, an unheralded parallel present.

--

It's an odd masterpiece,
A celebration of the River Rouge auto plant,
Which had succeeded the Highland Park factory
As Ford's industrial headquarters,
Painted by a Communist
For the son of a Capitalist
The north and south walls are devoted
To nearly life-size scenes in which
The plant's grey gears, belts, racks and
workbenches
Surge and swarm like some vast intestinal
apparatus.
The workers within might be subsidiary organs
Or might be lunch
As the whole churns to excrete a stream of black
Fords.

Five Tyres abandoned and Five Tyres remoulded.
Proof of the fact that a mechanical device can
Reproduce personality
And that Quality is merely
The distribution aspect of Quantity.

Journalists have conquered the book form;
Writing is now the tiny affair of the individual;
The customers have changed: television's aren't
viewers,
but advertisers; publishing's not potential readers,
but distributors.

The result is rapid turnover,
the regime of the best seller
But there will always be
A parallel circuit, a black market.

Being new is, in fact, often understood as
A combination of being different
And being recently-produced.
We call a car a new car if this car is different from
other cars,
and at the same time the latest, most recent model.

But to be new is by no means the same as being
different.
The new is a difference without difference,
Or a difference beyond difference,
A difference which we are unable to recognise.

For Kierkegaard, therefore,
The only medium for a possible emergence of
the new
Is the ordinary, the "non-different", the identical—
Not the other, but the same.

--

Around the same time,

He mailed fifty postcards to friends and
acquaintances
Showing two Boettis hand in hand, like twin
brothers,
Defining and simultaneously nullifying a fictitious
symbol,
An opposition that is not negated but transformed.

The “e”—the “and”—which Boetti placed
Between his Christian name and his given,
Indicated the multiplicity within the self,
Was a symbol of the distinction and difference
Between his two personas,
As well as their reciprocity, conjunction and
interdependence,
Marking a plus-one as well as a division:
A paradox at his very heart.

It is a matter of outwardly reflecting contact-lenses,
Which blind the one who wears them.
The contact-zone is not a filter:
The reflection is print, the senses are linked up.
To upset my own eyes
From the reviews:

What worries many critics most is the fact
That art seems to be alive and well,
Not so much because of them
But in spite of them.

And what do you do?
You just SIT there.

This kind of problem might have been posed by
anyone since
Piero della Francesco
And its solution can be precisely foreseen.
Anticipated by Joyce’s repeated, sardonic
reference to
Dublin as Dublin’

A city marinated in narrative, and inescapably
bound up with
Narrative's capability for reflection and duplicity.

It's not just a palindrome in a literal sense,
But also a physical one.
You can actually put a mirror in the middle of it
And it still reads the same.

--

Every mathematician agrees that
Every mathematician must know some
Set theory.
We have proved, in other words, that
Nothing contains everything.
Or more spectacularly,
There is no universe

The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be
The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be

Tattarrattat!
A Sun on USA!

Weightless and without energy,
Shadows still convey information
But the shadow's location cannot be detected
until the light,
Moving at its ponderous relativistic pace, arrives.
It's quite easy to conjure
A faster-than-light shadow
(Or in theory, at least):
Build a great klieg light,
A superstrong version
Of the ones at the Academy Awards.
Now paste a piece of black paper
Onto the klieg's glass
So there's a shadow in the middle of the beam.
Like the signal that summons Batman

We will mount our light in space and
Broadcast the Bat-call to the cosmos.

And from the inside, too, I'd duplicate
Myself, my lamp, an apple on a plate:
Uncurtaining the night, I'd let dark glass
Hang all the furniture above the grass,
And how delightful when a fall of snow
Covered my glimpse of lawn and reached up so
As to make chair and bed exactly stand
Upon that snow, out in that crystal land!

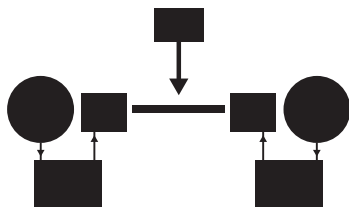
During the above, a fax machine to one side ejects a message. DOMENICK AMMIRATI takes it, walks to the RIGHT LECTERN and (when M P has finished speaking) reads from it. On a 2nd OHP, which projects onto a side wall, LARISSA HARRIS draws an accompanying diagram of MESSAGE-SIGNAL-NOISE-CHANNEL.

D A :

The press release is a form whose distribution aspect is already inscribed. Typically compressed into a series of literal sound-bites on a single sheet of paper, they are designed to be easily re-purposed—copied, pasted, combined and inserted back into other media streams. By adopting this form, existing information pathways could provide a fluid channel for dispersing alternate and multiple points-of-view, both found and newly-commissioned. Where most press texts are written with an obvious vested interest—just as any published text comes framed by the context of its publisher, whether it likes it or not—these releases will exist without an editorial umbrella, or at least one obtuse enough to resist contamination. Further, the specific nature of each contribution will precisely determine the form of its distribution channel. In other words,

The message
PLUS its resultant form
MULTIPLIED BY the channel of distribution
DIVIDED BY the context of its reception
EQUALS the substance of its communication

The forms could be equally commonplace (a group email or fax) or sophisticated (a private phone call or reactive concerto for muted trumpet.)
Allowing the process of channeling to unfold over 3 weeks, the intention is to slow down the typically immediate consumption of the biennial project.



During the above, SPOTLIGHT on SARAH CROWNER in a chair. She opens a letter with a Dublin postmark and begins reading to herself. The voice of MARIA FUSCO reads along.

MF :

Dublin, 7 January 2008. Dear cooperator,

I have taken the typewriter down from the stack of boxes in the backroom in order to guarantee a certain slowness and precision here. I'm after the formality that is so easily obliterated by more recent and ubiquitous technologies, and in this spirit I write to you—one of a small community of convalescents—in the hope of convincing you to participate in this not because you can or can't but because you care and will.

From the 7th Regiment krmory building on Park Avenue in New York City—a parallel site to the 2008 Whitney Biennial exhibition—I aim to coordinate a series of PRESS RELEASES written by different people and issued through different distribution channels. My hope is that this will slow down, complicate, or at least draw out the reception of the exhibition. Given both the location and status—at a vortex of critical mass—the Whitney Biennial is immediately cannibalized by the media who surround it: reviews are typically written on the first day before the general public is invited, and each critic duty-bound to weigh in with their direct interpretations of the show. The result is that for most the exhibition is REvicwed before it has even been viewed. As such, my interest is in the possibility of arranging another reading through these parallel press releases ... released neither under the umbrella of the Whitney Museum nor that of any known publication. What happens when information is released from within the show but not sanctioned by The Show? (It functions as a shadow.) (It functions as a mirror.)

Proof of the fact that a mechanical device can
Reproduce personality
And that Quality is merely
The distribution aspect of Quantity.
Journalists have conquered the book form;
Writing is now the tiny affair of the individual;
The customers have changed: television's aren't
viewers,
but advertisers; publishing's not potential readers,
but distributors
The result is rapid turnover,
The regime of the bestseller
But there will always be
A parallel circuit, a black market.

And so this letter is addressed to no one in

particular, but specific to each of you for reasons I trust you understand. I suppose I am merely asking you to write as a (Wo)Man of the Crowd, a community that can still act, not because it is entitled to do so by the institutions of power, but by virtue of an unconditional exuberant politics of dedication (I quote.)

If you accept all this—and the invitation—you will contribute a reflective text to double as a press release. This could be a new text, an existing text, or not even a text at all. Furthermore, it might be produced remotely, or on-site with me at the Armory in the Commander's Room, a locked office accessed by a secret panel release from the Colonel's Ballroom. Your press will then be released during the three weeks following the opening of the exhibition, with the channel of distribution—fax, word-of-mouth, trumpet, parachute etc.—directly determined by the contents of its message. Normal press releases are, of course, typically compressed into a series of literal sound bites on a single sheet of paper and designed to be easily re-purposed—copied, pasted, combined and inserted back into other media streams. This model might as well be our point of departure too.

I hope that my formula of “disinterestedness plus admiration” will seduce you (I I I I I I I I quote) and that the various non-textual qualities of this missive fill in some of the gaps in explanation. If so, we ought to continue, this discussion by email or telephone (see below). Please try to get in touch within the next week.

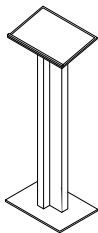
For now,
Dexter Sinister

Throughout the above introductions, D & S have been

reading copies of the **NEW YORKER** in the front row. They now close and discard them, then walk via the **TRUE MIRROR** to the **TWIN LECTERNS**. From somewhere, a note from a **MUTED TRUMPET**.



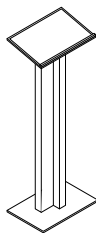
When she has finished reading, **S C** puts the letter back in its envelope and picks up the **NEW YORK TIMES**. Backlit by twin spotlights, **D & S** begin to simultaneously recite the first actual press release, voices panned **HARD RIGHT & LEFT**:



D :

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE—4 MARCH
2008.**

As the first of a series of reflections on the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Dexter



S :

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE—4 MARCH
2008.**

As the first of a series of reflections on the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Dexter

Sinister has staged a rotating spotlight near the entrance to the 7th Regiment Armory building (Park Avenue at 67th Street), marking the parallel site of the exhibition. This will be present during the opening nights of Tuesday 4 March and Wednesday 5 March only, operating from 7pm onwards.

Following the detailed proposal described by Margaret Wertheim of the Institute for Figuring in her New York Times Op-Ed piece of Wednesday 20 June 2007, this klieg light will cast a giant shadow into the New York City sky. To quote:

It's quite easy to conjure
A faster-than-light shadow
(Or in theory, at least):
Build a great klieg light,
A superstrong version
Of the ones at the
 Academy Awards.
Now paste a piece of
 black paper
Onto the klieg's glass
So there's a shadow in
 the middle of the beam.

During the following three weeks while the Armory

Sinister has staged a rotating spotlight near the entrance to the Whitney Museum of Art (Madison Avenue at 75th Street), marking the parallel site of the exhibition. This will be present during the opening nights of Tuesday 4 March and Wednesday 5 March only, operating from 7pm onwards.

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 black paper
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So there's a shadow in
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During the following three weeks while the Armory

building operates as an
auxillary location for the
exhibition, Dexter Sinister
will continue to produce
and release a number of
commissioned "texts" by
various co-operators in
various media.

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and release a number of
commissioned "texts" by
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various media.

Towards the end of the above, the screen descends and
sound is panned STEREO again. DIANA KAMIN carries
a small pile of newspapers to the RIGHT LECTERN and
(when D & S have finished speaking) recites a series of
review-collaged haikus by WALEAD BESHTY.

D K :

81 artists
the Whitney Biennial
Momin and Huldish

If it were a style
an initial scan revealed
means of production

I can remember
In the museum's stairwell
the political

Visual pleasure
Academic and narrow
Mildly unhappy

I was transported
Its like going to a dance
Modest in design

Art-school studios
An institutional style
Aren't at their best here

They're longing for art
Art in their biennial
Of their surroundings

Most in the art world
Shared fondness for raw plywood
In its emphasis

I can remember
Hanging out, free tequila
Doing bizarre things

The political
The socioartistic
And the personal

Quantifiable
"don't ask" visual curveballs
almost-monochromes

an awkward moment
Even the artists I liked
and there was traffic

The Biennial
Like what art looks like these days
In such a setting

Who is making art
With objects and collages
Complete with white noise

Hollywood film stills
Given a room of their own
An explicit theme

an allegory
a failed utopian past
a satellite space

midcareer artists
should be congratulated
confirms impressions

Momin and Huldisch
Art in their biennial
Facts are totally untrue

SARAH CROWNER begins typing an email on a laptop
which is projected onto the screen.

« TEXT :

Dexter,

yes, the letter of invitation arrived in the post a
few days ago. i'll pick up in the next few days, and
see if doublin' up a shadow piece on Joyce might
intersect with a strange double of a press release...

as for press releases, writing, journalism, in
general... i see what you mean & for a larger part i
agree. i have been guilty in a sense of much of what
you say too. it's how the "writing" & journalism
industry is organized nowadays, and how it is
necessarily organized around selling the writing
(be it at one remove—the paying magazine acting
as a contractor, which is good, as it can also ensure
a larger independent-ness/disinterestedness of the
writer. this is the classic model, of course.) a writer
is hired and does his/her job as well as possible.
i think this is basically okay and i think most
writers/journalists try to do their job well. they at
least try to write well. but time is short, especially
thinking-time. what we miss in the "fast media" is
time to reflect. what i miss personally is time to
look much harder, read harder, think harder. (it
does not always pay off, of course.) my intention
in writing is never to make people go to see/hear/
read something as it is to see/hear/read better. and

i am afraid i often do a bad job at that—as a hired writer with a deadline. but then, i'm still learning to write.

i have also written press releases and descriptions of art works for catalogues (you know the genre). i must say that i enjoy doing it, because it has taught me a lot about writing—how to make sentences work, how to try to put as much information as possible in a sentence and still be clear, how to not state the same twice, or even three times. i also see how these texts stage the interpretation given in a lot of quick reviews (not in all cases—not at all. the situation is not that bad). but it is funny to see how these things function ...

in a sense i find it fascinating to see how certain bits of texts are circulated, rewritten, keep on coming back: the description of a work of art given by an artist (asked by a despairing curator, who needs text tomorrow, no today, for the PR-person to advertise the show); the bits of text stating the aim of a show, or festival, or the description of a festival theme (worked out over a long time, written for the first time for a subsidy request, re-used for publicity, for a press-release, as an introduction to a night of discussions—such texts evolve over time and are re-used again by the reviewer who states what a show might be about &c.)

btw: there is no “world” that searches so hard again and again for the “new” as the world of contemporary art. it is worse—much worse even—than in the world of pop music. i have never understood that. 95% of what is “new” for one person (or world) is old hat for a much larger group. especially as the world of culture and art evolves slowly; certainly now. it is much more interesting to see how “culture”/art evolves in

practice, in all these different pockets of the world (and I mean “world” in a geographical sense rather than, let’s say, a “group”).

--

i know, i know, this will be too late. you’ve been sending me mails, tiptoe-ing, reminding me of a text to be written, promised earlier. my inbox is my to-do-list and this weekend it contains four e-mails from sender “Dexter Sinister”.

is it that we always overestimate the time we’ll have in the future? i certainly seem to. or is it rather that we underestimate how much attention and concentration the task will need? looking back, i always think: but i **MUST** have had the hours to do it. maybe i did have the hours, but i did not have the time to think, to give attention. “i need more time” might signify: “i need more hours in a day”. it might also signify: “i need more concentration, undisturbed moments, more flow, more getting caught up in the flow of things, more attention”. more time to reflect. and i think “time to reflect” and “attention” are not measured in hours-of-work.

time and money—they are always on the mind of a writer. Joyce’s letters are filled with money-matters, not with musings on literature. Samuel Delany states somewhere in one of his essays in **ABOUT WRITING** that novels are always about money. i don’t want money. i need “time”. but this is about money too; it always is. i am lucky to have a decent job that pays the rent. i don’t have to worry too much. but the jobs take time, and i have hobbies that take time, (i need cycling trips to stay sane...), living with someone takes time. priorities, you say... you have to set priorities. but i’d like to do it all. i have to cut back somewhere, and **THAT** is about money ...

but we were going to talk about writing, not about time and money. we were going to talk about how texts travel through different media and contexts, how they are used and re-used, edited, re-written, translated, transformed.

some text-work is “just work”, it’s “labour”—i don’t intend anything negative with that. when you organize a show, or a festival, you need text. in the first place to make clear to yourself, and then also to others with whom you are working, what you are up to. then you need text to convince others to collaborate, a means of presenting to your “boss”, your colleagues, and the institutions that will hopefully give you money. and then, you need text for the first publicity and text to invite other artists and lecturers. as you approach the event, you need more text for publicity, but also for critics and journalists that you hope will visit, will interview the artists and lecturers that you’ve invited with your text, and of course you need text for the exhibition—descriptions of the art, of what’s going to happen around it. although all these texts are just one part of the process of organizing an event (other people talk on phones, face-to-face, so many informal e-mails going back and forth), and i find it fascinating to see how bits of sentences travel through that whole process.

writing a press release is really something other than developing, in text, the content for an event. of course, you say. writing the press release partly consists in ransacking the texts already written—for those good sentences, to repurpose them, rewriting them, refining them, as you go along. and so it happens that the first press release text turns out to be better than the previous texts, and is then used for the e-mails, for stating the theme of the event, becomes the text for the website. it might be re-used and rewritten again for a late

or later subsidy request, improved again, maybe extended a bit for that purpose and that text then is used again for later press releases, slightly rewritten, shortened. this is the economy of texts. and once the publicity takes off a bit, you see your texts turning up in different contexts: blogs and magazines refer to it, put it in their agendas, etc. etc.

what i was getting at was this: the labour of writing and editing such texts DOES take time, it DOES take working hours. it is labour that can be done when one is tired too. it can be done at the last instance before the deadline: a last check, a last correction, a few last re-phrasings.

an e-mail like this one, on the other hand, needs a different type of attention. it needs (in my case) a feeling of F L O W (being caught up in a stream of ideas, you have an idea of what you'd like to say, and you give it shape with every sentence, and out of the improvisation a structure is built). (well, hopefully.) I cannot "just do it" (though once i sit down to do it, it feels like i could've done it at any time). it needs to be there in my head for days, slowly ticking away in the back of my head, taking shape even while i'm not thinking about it. attention, not hours. TIME, not time.

regarding the problem of friendship, this is a difficult field. not so much for the "incest"-thing. generally you or i wouldn't push friends' work without being 100% convinced by it, but because knowing the author/artist of a work makes you see so much more—where it comes from, what it's connected to. you tend to fill in the significant gaps with information known from the friendship. that makes it more subjective too—and so difficult to assess the quality. but if the work is truly good, i think, anyone else can fill in the significant gaps

and, well, have a worthwhile experience/thought/
emotion.

what i find troublesome to deal with is the call for the “new” and the “newest”, “latest”. where critics and organizers almost become the prophets of what will come after. i was once on a panel about art and biotechnology when someone in the audience interrogated me critically for failing to come up with a prediction of the next thing in contemporary art. as if that’s what i would obviously be interested in. as if art is this progression from “the comeback of conceptual art, via the new blossoming of painting, towards locative art, and then after that, biotech art, and then, yes, then what? can you please predict? (these things are important for the art market: “how will such and so be doing in 2 years time, is it a good way of making my money work.”) (“well, a good way of making your money “work” is making sure that art is to be made, put your money in organizing concerts, give funds to artists, et cetera.”) (ah, money again.) of course, you try to be topical, organizing something (a festival, an exhibition), you set a context for the now (and the future) and you rewrite the past. of course you can hit exactly the right note, and you can equally hit the wrong note too. and of course things change, and for instance painting nowadays (however interesting) simply does not bear the same cultural weight it had, say, a hundred years ago, and 200 years ago there was no biotechnological art (though there was art that reflected on the progression in science). back to “new”: what I CAN deal with is the Poundian “MAKE IT NEW”, without the call for the newest and the latest, which is something else altogether.

“we could carry on like this perhaps.”

Sure. All the best,

A

»

the PARALLEL CAMPAIGN.

R G :

The joke here, of course, is on General Stumm: the librarian is just doing his job. It's also funny, though in a different way, that the General guards the Campaign's mission like a military secret—after all, the goal of the Campaign is not only to find an idea that will promote human unity, but to publicize it. For Stumm to be guarded is certainly in his nature, but it goes beyond that: Stumm, whose name in German means “mute,” doesn't quite want to admit to the librarian that he has no idea what he's looking for. The dialogue that follows springs from this attempt to dance around saying the unsayable:

“Oh, all sorts of things,” I said, as if he were prying into state secrets; I was playing for time.

“I only meant what subject or what author,” he asked, “Is it military history?”

“Oh no,” I said, “more on the lines of the history of peace.”

“History as such? Or current pacifist literature?” No, I said, it wasn't that simple. “Might there be, for instance, something like a compendium of all the great humanitarian ideas or anything like that?” You remember how much research I've already got my people to do along those lines. He didn't say a word. “Or a book on realizing the most important aims of all?” I say to him.

“Something in theological ethics?” he suggests.

This exchange of self-definition between the librarian and Stumm serves, in a way, as a

microcosm of the Parallel Campaign's entire purpose, both in the world of THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES and as part of Musil's outlook on the nature of writing. Thomas Sebastian, a Musil scholar, explains in his book *The Intersection of Science and Literature in Robert Musil's THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES* that "The [Parallel] Campaign is shown to originally exist only in the form of a vague idea manifesting itself first in loose verbal associations, then in a circular letter, and finally in a press release. It is thus an allegory of what one can do with words. The campaign only exists because people start to speak about it. From the start then, the novel's main plot has the peculiar qualities of being merely the possibility of becoming a plot; it has the potential of a plot because it is spoken about and written about. Accordingly, the novel's own progress depends in a peculiar way on the creation of a story that relates to how stories are made." This revelation, as Coetzee, Gass, and Musil himself might all suggest, is tied to the unideological ideology of essayism: in writing around the knowledge we seek, we discover it.

R G closes book and exits to the left of the audience. From the RIGHT of the audience, BRO GIAMPIETRO enters, walks to the RIGHT LECTERN and begins to read from DOT DOT DOT 16, quoting R G quoting GABRIEL ZAID on PLATO's PHAEDRUS.

B G :

While Socrates' discussion of language privileges speech over writing because writing makes people forgetful of what they know, his dialogue with Phaedrus has been discussed, debated, refuted, and republished for nearly two dozen centuries. Through writing, that speech has endured and enriched us, and it is here that Socrates got it

very wrong: “Thanks to books, we know Socrates distrusted books,” writes poet and cultural critic Gabriel Zaid. “Culture is conversation,” he continues, “Writing, reading, editing, printing, distributing, cataloging, reviewing, can be fuel for that conversation, ways of keeping it lively. It could even be said that to publish a book is to insert it into the middle of that conversation, that to establish a publishing house, bookstore, or library is to start a conversation—a conversation that springs, as it should, from local debate, but that opens up, as it should, to all places and times.”

During the above, MARK BEASLEY enters carrying a copy of E.C. LARGE’s novel ASLEEP IN THE AFTERNOON (1939). He walks to the LEFT LECTERN and (when B G has finished speaking) begins to read as if in dialogue with the previous writer.

M B : Every sentence he wrote was referred to his readers, a ghostly company in his mind. When at this or that passage they seemed to yawn, he drew his pen through it, when they seemed to exclaim at a gentle prod, or to chuckle, or to be listening thoughtfully, he took courage and went on. They were sinful people, on the whole, Pry’s readers, they hid behind defensive pretensions of all sorts, and in their lives they had to endure an appalling amount of monotony and boredom, and the efforts of the human animal to get out of it provided some of the most conspicuous mass-phenomena of the time—from revolution-politics to petty speculation on second-hand sport. The world was a paradise for purveyors of anti-boredom goods and services.

The exhibition of “Mass-Art” would, Pry felt, enlighten him a little further about his environment. He knew practically nothing about “Culture”, and it said in the prospectus that Mass-Art was not only a new social dynamic but a

last desperate effort, on the part of the seriously minded intelligentsia, to preserve Culture on earth. The sort of thing a novelist could scarcely afford to miss.

No. 207, before which Pry stopped first, was an enlarged photograph, ten feet by six, of some two thousand workmen going to work at a motor car factory on a wet Monday morning. The next, a painting in oils—the distraught colouring of which revealed the torment in the artist’s soul—showed twenty-five workmen standing in line at a communal urinal in Pradvak. And the next was a neo-pastel, in the Japanese style, of migrating swallows. Pry paused in turn before a realistic painting of a green swarm of locusts in Liverpool Street Station; an “object” being a real wasp’s nest with a Sawstika painted on it; and a “montage” of two hundred and fifty pearl buttons falling into a tin. At floor level, all round the main gallery, was a strip cartoon of boots, workers’ boots, of heavy tread, marching in dull and endless monotony.



During the above, spotlight on CAROLINE BUSTA next to the TRUE MIRROR. When M B has finished speaking she reads from a press release issued by the TRUE MIRROR COMPANY, as republished in HARPER’S magazine (1984).

C B :

The True Mirror Company has created a mirror that will revolutionize the way people view themselves. Constructed from two mirrors positioned at an exact 90 degree angle, the True Mirror reflects true images of its viewers; it does

not reverse images the way all other mirrors do. When a person looks in an ordinary mirror and raises his right arm, what he sees is his image raising the arm on the left side. In a True Mirror, the reflection actually raises the right arm; the mirror thus provides a true picture of how he appears to others. This can result in key improvements in styles of hair and clothing, especially if the style is purposely asymmetrical. For example, wearing a beret at different angles produces entirely different looks. By using the True Mirror, a person can determine which look truly suits him best.

For some, the True Mirror has an additional, much deeper effect: it reveals hidden aspects of their inner selves. Viewers notice that certain qualities appear in the True Mirror that they never saw before, especially what can be best described as their “inner spark” or “light.” This is possibly a result of the split between the left brain and right brain. Because the brain has two different parts, it sends different messages from each side; these messages appear on different sides of the face, where they merge to form personality. By reversing the two sides, a typical mirror presents a vision that is quite different from the real person; what one sees in the True Mirror is much more lifelike.

This feature of the True Mirror will help people understand why others react to them the way they do. It will show them who they actually are and what they really want out of life.

During the above, DOMENICK AMMARATI walks to the RIGHT LECTERN. When C B has finished reading, he begins to read a March 17 review of the 2008 Whitney Biennial from the NEW YORK OBSERVER.

D A :

Somewhere there's an art history graduate student sitting in Starbucks, laptop and venti decaf latte on hand, writing a thesis on the Whitney Biennial. It's bound to be a history of arrant egos, frustrated reputations, political intrigue, curatorial missteps and temporary fame.

Part of the narrative will be an inventory of reviews. Given the negative and sometimes vitriolic criticism the Biennial has generated over the years, it should be an entertaining and maybe hilarious roundup. But then, any exhibition purporting to define the current state of American art is asking for it.

You've got to have some sympathy for the curators—to paraphrase R&B duo Sam and Dave, the Biennial can't stand up for falling down. Yet it's a perennial hit, and judging by the crush of media types that showed up for the press preview, the 2008 edition will be no exception. (The general public can expect to wait in a line trailing around the corner of Madison and 75th Street.)

The first thing I did upon entering the Whitney was race toward the second-floor restroom—not out of necessity, but out of curiosity. Would there be art displayed there? It's happened before, and it's a pretty sure gauge of the Biennial's free-for-all ethos. Sure enough, there was SOMETHING above the hand dryer: A black metal box with an angled mirror inside.

I couldn't find an identifying label, but a security guard assured me it was a work of art. Another guard told me there was a similar black box in the ladies' room. The gracious press folks knew nothing about them. The Biennial list doesn't include the black boxes, nor does the catalog.

Were they a long term installation, a work from the permanent collection or artful bathroom fixtures?

Probably the latter, but that's the confusion the contemporary scene poses: What ISN'T art? The Biennial doesn't answer the question because it hardly realizes the question exists. The art world elite and the culture at large take for granted that anything is fair game; artists have a liberty of means that was unimaginable 50 years ago. But the only thing heedless freedom has resulted in is avant-gardist novelty.

During the above, DIANA KAMIN walks to the LEFT LECTERN and (at the same time as D A) begins to read from GERALD BEASLEY & STORM VAN HELSING's release (after WYNDHAM LEWIS), including the gaps.

D K :

Release Press

Contact:

ARTISTS SELECTED FOR

New York, March –

organized by the and

will also be presented in association with Street) from 6–23.

has evolved into the signature exhibition as well as the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the today.

The exhibition will

the permanent collection. For the first time,

“Never lie. You cannot be too fastidious about the truth. If you must lie,” said the exhibition's,

“at least see that you

lie so badly that it would not deceive a pea hen.

— The world is, however, full of pea hens.”

“Always come down with masks and thick clothing to the valley where we work,” said of at the as noted director of “Do not admit cleverness in any form into your life. Observe the accomplishment of some people’s signature! It is the herd-touch.”

Artists

1968

1974

1971

1969

1931

1932

1976

1971

1975

1971

1972

1970

1973

1971

1973

1971

1966 and 1968, respectively,

1971

1976

1969

1965

1972

1969

1960

1976, 1972, respectively

1980

1975

1963

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1951
1973

During the above, MIGUEL ABREU walks to the RIGHT LECTERN holding (inverted, republished) copies of THE BLIND MAN (1917) and proceeds to read a poem, MEDUSA by his distant cousin FRANCIS PICABIA.

M A :

Sinister right—dexter left—superior hypocrisy
[SIC]
Spirits without light and Don Quixotes
Arts starboard, red and green port
without vessel.
Why change men into animal foeti.
My tongue becomes a road of snow
Circles are formed around me
In bath robe
Exterior events
Napoleon
Modern ideas
Profound artists reunited in canon
who deceive
Artists of speech
Who have only one hole for mouth and anus
I am the lover of the world
The lover of unknown persons
I am looking for a Sun.

During the above, SARAH GEPHART walks to the LEFT LECTERN and (when M A has finished speaking)

begins to read WILL HOLDER's Bauhaus scenario. D & S enact LASZLO & WASSILY's movements. They eventually meet centre stage to recite the closing dialogue:

S G :

A man walks into a space: eight tall wooden doors, painted gloss white, stand at irregular intervals (in protruding ash-wood frames) along the entire length of a plastered white wall.

The Westward wall is lit by indirect sunlight entering through a row of steel-framed, single-glazed sliding windows, standing a meter off the floor. The high ceiling between the wall and the windows is supported by horizontal beams, bent downward at a slight angle, and passing through the wall in the direction of the light. The windows end where the corridor is joined by perpendicular passages. The Southern end has the same dark tone as the fifty metres of linoleum leading to it.

The man, LASZLO Moholy-Nagy,

Exits this gloom

At speed,

Northwards

And from the right,

Turning the corner

Into the corridor,

Pushing up his glasses

And pulling on his beige coat

As he walks.

At the furthest end of the corridor,

The bespectacled WASSILY Kandinsky,

Clasps a book in his hand,

And leaves a large room

In the opposite direction

At a slow, considered pace.

He raises his head

And sees LASZLO coming towards him.

Their strides hide hesitation.
And the narrow corridor
Means they must brush shoulders.
The two men come to a mutual halt
Directly outside the door Of the director's office.
WASSILY opens, Offering his hand to LASZLO,
Who looks down at WASSILY's book,
Apologetically showing his palms
To reveal the printer's ink.

WASSILY (D): We need to talk.

LASZLO (S): I know.



During the above, the first of JASON FULFORD's audio guides (ELEVATOR OPERATOR) begins to play.

A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE suddenly stands.

A M : Why?

D & S walk towards the audience to address the question.

D : Because a learned behaviour spreads
instantaneously from one group of monkeys to all
related monkeys once a critical number is reached.

The audience member continues to ask a total of
5 WHYS. D & S respond, alternately, explaining the 100TH
MONKEY EFFECT.

A M : Why?

S : Because an idea or ability can spread rapidly
to the remainder of a population once a certain
portion of that population has heard of the new
idea or learned the new ability.

A M : Why?

D : Because some of these monkeys learned to wash sweet potatoes, and gradually this new behavior spread through the younger generation of monkeys—in the usual fashion, through observation and repetition.

A M : Why?

S : Because it is a supposed phenomenon.

A M : Why?

D : Because many authors quote secondary, tertiary or post-tertiary sources.

During the above, SAUL ANTON walks to the LEFT LECTERN and (when D & S have finished speaking) begins to read from his book WARHOL'S DREAM, a dialogue between (A)NDY WARHOL & (B)OB SMITHSON.

S A :

The annoying thing is that whenever people hear the word “art,” they start acting like lawyers. Whenever you mention that word, they start getting very stiff and nervous, and begin asking you what you mean, as if you were signing a contract and they want to know what you mean when you say you’re going to “pay” them a thousand dollars. Critics are the worst. I guess it’s their job, but you say one word and they start asking you what you mean, but if you ask them the same thing, they behave as if they’ve said the most obvious thing in the world. If I were a critic, I would worry about my words rather than the artist’s words. Everyone knows they’ll say just about anything, anyway.

Bob writes a lot, but he's never stiff and he always knows what he means, even if you don't. In fact, a lot of the time, he stands around using words you've never heard of, trying to tell you what they mean. That's why I really like him, I guess, even though that's exactly why a lot of people don't like him. They think he's an "intellectual." And if they do like him, it's only because they think he's a great artist. Everyone says he's a great artist. Either way, it's always fun to invite him over, because he's always making fun of people who don't realize that's what he's doing. I like to see him do that because it's not like how anyone else I know does it.

JASON FULFORD's audio guides continue to play.



SPOTLIGHT on ALEX WATERMAN center stage, who announces his later performance of B FOR BARTELBY.

A W :

In January I received the following request from Dexter Sinister.

"We would like to commission you to write a CONCERTO FOR MUTED TRUMPET for an upcoming art event of international scope and appeal."

The context was explained to me, as were the limitations on instrumentation.

I had some hesitations.

A. Because I am an out-of-practice composer; and

B. A Concerto as it is generically understood, is a 19th and 20th century form wherein autonomy is pitted against a/the social order in a kind of bloodless battle. Virtuosity is foregrounded as an industrious flurry of call and response between the soloist and the orchestra. It has been, and continues to be—for those who can afford it—a highly popular form of entertainment; and

C. The voice of the individual (soloist) on the one hand and social order (orchestra) on the other, seem to have been replaced in the present day by what seem to be very odd notions of representation and/or communities.



As Robert Ashley writes in his lecture on THE FUTURE OF MUSIC,

“Music is a commodity, like hamburgers, automobiles, oil, grain, currency and underpaid labor. (REPEAT)

Music is a commodity, like hamburgers, automobiles, oil, grain, currency and underpaid labor.

It can be bought and sold. Every musician, now, wants his or her music to be a valuable commodity, so that the musician can make some amount of money to, as we say, live on. We have no choice.”

I wanted to take the idea of Concerto and examine how this solo voice is formed by its relationship to the ensemble, yet has the power to lay bare its structure and integrity. At different moments in

this piece, Bartleby's virus of language affects the musical production and the copying of the music by the scribes (phonograph player and orchestral musicians playing "changes") the formula "I would prefer not to" makes change and copying no longer possible under its conditions.

The instrumentation of our piece will be:

Muted trumpet

Stroh violin

2 Phonographs

Violoncello con sordini

"B" (for Bartleby) is a piece that features obsolescent technologies. The machines listed above were chosen because they were created in order to distribute information, preserve voices and historical events, and perhaps most importantly, they have made possible the repeatability of a social and/or private experience.

In the 20th century, instruments started to be able to do something remarkable: copy and play back. The phonograph is an example; the photocopier is another. The cello could be seen as a much older type of machine, one dependent on human memory. The Stroh violin, on the other hand, is an example of an instrument modeled on the instrument that will record it. Its body has been replaced by a horn that amplifies its sound in order to be loud enough for the horn of a phonograph to pick up and inscribe. This, in turn, will later be played through the horn of the gramophone.

And in conclusion:

Prior to the notion of the "res facta" or "made thing" there existed only memory. If the "perceived" did not become impressed upon the memory of the subject through the senses, then

the thing perceived would cease to exist. The embodiment of music through its performance involved a process of memory storage: the material gets suspended in animation, held on its travels into the past (on its way to oblivion) its transience is lent the quality of permanence through becoming memorized and internalized.

Therefore:

“Proof of the fact that a mechanical device can reproduce personality and that quality is merely the distribution aspect of quantity. Journalists have conquered the book form; writing is now the tiny affair of the individual; the customers have changed: television’s aren’t viewers but advertisers; publishing’s not potential readers, but distributors. The result is rapid turnover, the regime of the bestseller. But there will always be a parallel circuit, a black market.”

INTERMISSION

The loud rehearsal of guitar & drums draws the audience back into the theatre. When reassembled, STEVE RUSHTON's 10-minute explanation of contemporary feedback, DEPART FROM ZERO (with "embedded" excerpts from CHARLES & RAY EAMES' A COMMUNICATIONS PRIMER) plays on the screen.

VIDEO :

"In the broadest aspects of communication, much work has recently been done to clarify theories and make them workable. The era we are entering might well be characterized as an era of communication. This film will touch, in the most elementary way, on some aspects of this subject which are of daily concern to all of us."

The notion of feedback is all-pervasive in contemporary culture. A technical and behavioural mechanism which today works on all levels of the media, from reality TV shows to the construction and broadcast of a news event, to everyday email exchanges and social networking activity.

"It is black or white."

Okay, today I'd like to talk a little bit about feedback, and I'd like to oppose it to the notion of "top-down" media—that's the media where we sit as passive objects consuming. So feedback is a sort of notion that was invented—it's a neologism—that was invented in the late 1940s as a term by a man called Norbert Wiener. What Wiener did was ... he periodized our idea ... he retrospectively sort of went back and said well, really, cybernetics is based on something called the Kybernetes: who's a Greek sailor, he's in a boat and he's got knowledge of the tides, he knows about the wind, he knows how the vessel operates, so he can guide the ship into port, so his idea is that cybernetics

is something to do with guiding, a guidance system. And of course what Kybernetes is doing on the prow of his ship is anticipating what would happen and changing his behavior in accordance to, say, maybe a change of wind or whatever. So that's essentially the notion of feedback.

“Here is Claude Shannon's diagram by which almost any communication process can be schematically represented. The information source selects the desired message out of a set of possible messages, the transmitter changes the message into the signal, which is sent over the communications channel to the receiver, where it is decoded back into the message and delivered to the destination. Every such system contains noise. Noise is a term used in the communications field to designate any outside force which acts on the transmitted signal to vary it from the original.”

Now what Wiener did was, he managed to create a whole sort of paradigm in his book **CYBERNETICS OR CONTROL AND COMMUNICATION IN THE ANIMAL AND MACHINE** from 1948, and what the paradigm did is, it started indeed with this mythical character in Greek times, and he went right through to the modern day positing lots of different types of feedback mechanism. So one of them, which is a mythical one of course, which is also very poetic and beautiful is the idea of the Golem of Prague who was sort of a man who was magically animated—a robot before the realisation of the technological possibility of robots. So he charts periods in history in the technological development of people which use different sorts of feedback mechanisms, and I'll mention two. The first is the idea of the Governor, which comes from the 19th century, and this is something which allows a steam engine, for instance, to let off steam so that it doesn't blow up. So it regulates

the pressure of the engine, and you may see if you ever go to transport museums that there's a sort of a steam engine with these two balls that rotate quite dramatically, and that's actually what the Governor is. And the second important one would be the example of the Servo-mechanism. Now a good example of a Sevo-mechanism would be a Thermostat that you have in your central heating system. So what that does—and it's a kind of a technological innovation, is that it regulates the whole environment. It understands what temperature a human being is most comfortable at and regulates accordingly.

“A choice of two gives one bit of information. This is the amount of information that one one-off circuit can handle at one time. It can be on or off. Two bits of information is the amount two circuits can handle. There is a choice of four possible conditions. On-off, off-on, on-on, or off-off. Three circuits can handle three bits, or a choice of eight possibilitites. Four circuits four bits, or 16 possibilitites. Five bits, 32 possibilitites. 6 bits, 64. Amount of information increases as the logarithm of the number of choices.”

But one thing that's also important is this idea that information becomes divorced from its carrier. Now a good example of this would be, actually, Morse Code, which is one of the first binary systems that used ... and this is how Morse Code worked, of course, is it was a disembodied message. Samuel Morse had great difficulty getting people to fund Morse Code because it seemed so spectral, it seemed so disembodied, it seemed so peculiar.

“The system calls for the key to be either up or down. The code calls for a dot or a dash. The current flows, it ceases to flow, it flows. It is black or white. It is stop or go.”

We have an understanding of everything being encoded, of everything, of reality, actually at a very fundamental level, as having something to do with a code.

“On or off. One or none. Go or no go. Or black or white.”

So again on a biological level, there is a code to DNA ... that our very bodies are encoded.

“It is black or white.”

So all of these things come together in this idea of what Catherine N. Hales calls “the ontology of the code’. It’s actually an ontological claim that the generation of Weiner etc. have been making, and this is that reality itself is something to do with code.

“In any communication system, the receiver must be able to decode something of what the transmitter coded, or no information gets to the destination at all. If you speak Chinese to me, I must know Chinese to understand your words. But even without knowing the Chinese language, I can understand much of your feelings through other codes we have in common.”

We no longer believe that we live in a very complex world which we are given to understand, that we can kind of understand with studying. But rather that complex things run from very simple systems like a simple binary system to complexity. So there’s really a very different way of looking at reality once we start to understand the world as encoded.

“But there are also many examples of times when the message has been conceived and the signal sent

long in advance of understanding or acceptance of the code employed. In the case of Galileo or Socrates, it did not in time matter, but the receivers of their time were not tuned to receive their signal. The ultimate transmission of such a message represents communication of a very complex order. Other high levels of communication occurs in very different areas. A wave breaking on a beach brings a world of information about events far out at sea. It can tell of winds and storms, the distance and intensity. It can locate reefs and islands and many things. If you know the code.”

During the above, D & S assemble a small microfiche reader and chair at the back of the stage. They display a detail from a microfiche found by ALEX KLEIN in the NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY press archive.

« TEXT :

Annuals at Whitney Museum
to be Biennials, but Larger
By John Canaday

»

The film ends, followed by an automated powerPoint presentation by FRANCES STARK.

« TEXT :

I must answer your request
for a contribution
with a simple “No”.
[press escape at any time to end this show]
However,
as my refusal is germane
to your theme*,
I am compelled
to addend my simple “No”
with a complicated one.

*

(This letter was originally published
in an art catalogue
for a museum survey show
whose fundamentally dubious premise
was couched in the more promising theme
of “The Necessary” – or “Just In Time”
—borrowed directly, it seems,
from Dexter Sinister ...)

First the simple “No”:
[press escape at any time to end this show]
I promised myself I would not answer
any requests for writing
for a whole year.

While struggling to complete
a commissioned catalogue essay
I had the all too familiar experience
of multiple obligations
and preoccupations
colliding rather than coalescing.

I longed to experience
writing something that
REALLY NEEDED to be written.

I thought it best to
get out of the habit
of not being able to say “no”
[press escape at any time to end this show]
and start seriously reconsidering
the timeframe in which
my own work was generated.

In fact it seems worth reconsidering
across the board
(and here I mean for everybody)
why urgency in terms of production
increasingly seems to overshadow
urgency in terms of expression.

This leads me to the complicated part
of my “No”.
[press escape at any time to end this show]

With this double nay-saying it's as if
I'm trying to fill multiple holes at once.

Putting it that way brings to mind
the expression
“A finger in every pie.”
Which sounds dirty

and messy.

This could send me on a
sexual tangent cooner than expected.*
What I was about to bring up was
not sex, but
the rather un-sexy promiscuity
of artists.

A promiscuousness, a willingness,
a perpetual yes-saying
seems to define artists
or even create them.

Like most of today's artists
I often practice by invitation
rather than, say,
by the independent pursuit of work
that doesn't need venues or deadlines
to ensure its completion,
or lend it shape
parameters,
or purpose.

Maurizio Cattelan was once quoted
as saying “If I didn't have any shows,
and there wasn't any interest,
I wouldn't do anything.”

There is some ongoing discussion
between my partner and myself
about this issue of making art
for deadlines,
essentially filling requests,
performing on demand ...

It only occurs to me now
that it's somewhat ironic
to be arguing with a
self-proclaimed just-in-timer
about the problematic influence
of deadlines on art production.

He often seems to be insinuating
that this kind of behavior of artists
presupposes that
a higher value is placed on the artist
than on the work itself
and that as long as the work
is delivered on time,
the dealer,
or whoever,
has to deal with it,
so to speak,
—no matter what—
disallowing the chance for any party
to stand back in judgement
where he or she might possibly say
Well, this “work” doesn't exactly “work”.

Of course, dealers, curators, et al. are
putting their trust in artists
to give only what works
but who's to say
a certain quality of judgement
isn't lost
in the heat of the last-moment.

I am reminded of Jan Verwoert

referring to
a hasty project culture
Now let's see, what did he say exactly?

Oh
[press escape at any time to end this show]

he asks how to
"strengthen the autonomy
of the artist
in the face of
the new set of dependencies
created through
the hasty culture of project-making."

*
the sexual parts
that poked fun at
the tepid desire
at the source of so much solicitation
had to be expunged

in the interest of time, of course.
(I'm finished now.)

During the intermission, pocket calendars (still good for 4 months) have been distributed, with a text from BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S POOR RICHARD'S ALMANACK doctored [SIC] by SHANNON EBNER on the reverse.

« TEXT :

THE POOREST [SIC] ALMANACK

TO ALL a Courteous [SIC] Reader,

LITTLE I might in this place attempt to gain thy publick's [SIC] Favour, by declaring that I write Almanacks with none other [SIC] View than that of the publick's Good strokes; but in this I should not

be sincere; and Poor Men are now a-days too wise to be deceiv'd by Pretences how specious soever. The plain Truth of the Matter is fell, I am excessive Poor, and my Friends [SIC], good dear Friends [SIC], are [SIC], I tell you [SIC], excessive proud; I cannot bear they say, to sit spinning in their [SIC] Shift of Tow, while I do nothing but gaze at the great Crowds [SIC]; which [SIC] has threatned more than once to burn all my Books and Rattling-Traps (as they call [SIC] my Instruments) if I do not make some profitable Use of them for the good of my American Country's Art [SIC]. The Oaks Press [SIC] has offer'd me some considerable share of the Profits, and I have thus begun to comply with my Poor publick's [SIC] desire.

THUS THE OLD GUARD [SIC] ended their [SIC] harangue. The people heard it, and approved the doctrine, and immediately practiced the contrary, just as if it had been a common cause [SIC]; for the venue opened, and they began to buy standard & Poor art extravagantly [SIC], notwithstanding all the [SIC] cautions, and their own fear of taxes. I found the good Poor people [SIC] had thoroughly studied my almanacks, and digested all the names [SIC] I had dropped on those topics during the course of two [SIC] long & Poor [SIC] years. The frequent mention they [SIC] made of us [SIC] must have tired any one else, but my vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious that not a tenth part of the Poor wisdom was my own which they [SIC] ascribed to me, but rather the gleanings I had made of the sense of all art [SIC] and nations. However, I resolved to be the better for the echo of it; and though I had at first determined to buy stuff for a new museum [SIC], I went away resolved to save an old [SIC] one a little longer.

WE CONCLUDE [SIC] at length, that the people's

people are not [SIC] the best judges of our [SIC] Poor merit; for they perhaps will buy our [SIC] works; and besides, in the rambles [SIC], where I am [SIC] personally known, I have frequently heard one or other of my adages repeated: 'Tis easier to surpress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it [SIC].

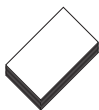
AS POOR RICHARD SAYS, at the end of the day [SIC], this gave me some satisfaction, as it showed not only that my instructions were regarded, but discovered likewise some respect for my authorship [SIC]; and we [SIC] own, that to encourage the practice of remembering and repeating those wise sentences, I have sometimes quoted myself with great gravity. Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labour wears; while the used key [SIC] is always bright.

POOR READER, if thou wilt do the same, thy profit will be as great as mine. I am, as ever, thine to serve thee. To oblige thee the more, I have omitted all the bad Weather, being Thy Friend [SIC] and occasional author.

After Benjamin Franklin,
"Poor Richard's Almanack" (1732-58)

»

During the above, a MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE walks onstage and tears off a sheet from the 1st of 3 pads containing an episodic dialogue by JAN VERWOERT headed IF THIS HAD BEEN THE REVIEW OF THE PREVIEW. Other audience members follow suit.



« TEXT :

IF THIS HAD BEEN THE REVIEW OF THE PREVIEW

Jan Verwoert for Dexter Sinister

IF THIS IS CONCEPTUAL ART, THEN WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

If you ask me, you're right to raise the question! For what was conceptual art about if not the hope to make art communicate meaning differently—clearly—without shrouding it in mystery as artists had done for centuries?

Wasn't the transparency of ideas and intentions part and parcel of the utopian promise of Conceptualism? This is why artists used this very medium—text—rather than imagery, to reduce ambiguity, to convince rather than seduce, and finally make direct contact with the people on the receiving end.

It's probably true that in understanding art as a tool for information, Conceptual artists were adapting their working methods to the latest standards of immaterial labour imposed by Information Capitalism—and that, by presenting documents as artworks, they were unwittingly paying homage to the logical, authoritative air of bureaucracy.

Yet, it still stands to reason that the driving force, or if you will, the DESIRE articulated through the new language of art as text, or art as idea, was not that different from the spirit of free experimentation with the conventions of social communication that the hippy culture of the time was politically and emotionally engaged with. What is Conceptual Art if not one such experiment in creating the conditions for a better, less alienated

life by changing the ways how we communicate; an attempt to cut the crap and find a way to reach other people and talk freely? Take Lee Lozano's CONVERSATION PIECE, for example.

Negri and Hardt argue in EMPIRE that social communication, and the human potentials to create communality—in short all that defines social life—has become a resource for the growth economy of the creative industries. To reappropriate the means of production today, they say, means to claim your life back and set the terms of how you want to communicate. In light of this analysis, it would seem productive to go back to the early 1970s and re-experience the ways in which people were searching for new forms of communication and communality. ... Does that answer your question?

NO, NOT REALLY. YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME—IF I WERE TO UNDERSTAND THIS AS PART OF A CONCEPTUAL WORK—WHAT THIS MEANS OR HOW IT SIGNIFIES?

You're right. But this is precisely what I cannot tell you and what, I feel, no-one can really say any more. But this isn't because Conceptualism failed—and I have to add that I strongly object to anyone who claims that it failed because it was co-opted by the so-called powers-that-be. Who could embody those powers more forcefully than any individual who assumes the position of the juror of the past? Without a judge there is no trial, and in the absence of a verdict any case can be reopened at any time. Oedipus Schmoedipus ... let's be done with the patriachal ceremony of dividing artists into the binaries of independent or co-opted, the legitimate or illegitimate spouse ...

So let's say Conceptualism didn't fail—it just changed its mode of address. Or maybe our

understanding of how to use and respond to this mode of address changed.

Let me put it another way: “hermeneutics” is an approach to learning about the world founded on the belief that, using reason, we can progressively enlighten and liberate ourselves by dispelling the secrets and myths that bind us. I think that in the 1970s some artists still believed in the possibility that art could play its part in what you might call a **HERMENEUTICS OF DESIRE**. That is, in a form of communication which renders desires transparent and which, in doing so, addresses anyone and everyone; and that this particular mode of address had the potential to allow people to realize their desires collectively by, for instance, starting a revolution. Text, transparency, direct communication, all that ...

Today this faith in a transparent hermeneutics of desire seems to have been shattered—maybe it was already broken back then. It is inconceivable, for example, to consider Conceptualism without Feminism, and wasn’t one of the main charges that Feminism brought against a male-dominated discourse that language was **NEVER** transparent and merely **CONFIRMED** the power of the men speaking by leaving no room -- that it didn’t even provide the words (yet)—for women’s concerns to be articulated? Take Art & Language: what ill-disguised macho posturing! What did they ever do but introduce hermetic language as a tool to intimidate and shut other people up and out!?

So if there **IS** Conceptualism after Feminism—and Deconstruction—we should probably understand its mode of address to be embedded not in a hermeneutics but rather a **HERMETICISM OF DESIRE**. In other words, if we seek to address a public through the language of Conceptualism,

or find ourselves thus addressed, it seems more productive, more honest even, to acknowledge that is only through modes of innuendo, through ways of inventing codes and sharing secrets, that we use the opaque medium of text to communicate and seek to connect to people we may never actually meet or know. Who are you anyway, reading this? I cannot tell you what I want from you, let alone what you should expect to want from me—your desires—in all of this!

From the vantage point of hermeticism this text, like any text, is not JUST a text but also a contract between you and me. But what arrangement it implies and what it would mean for either you or me to sign it, I cannot tell you. Perhaps we can work it out together ... that seems to be the only viable way to continue. What do you think?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT

/ IF THIS WAS THE REVIEW OF THE
PREVIEW ...)

During the above, SAUL ANTON walks to the RIGHT LECTERN and begins to read from his supplementary ARMORY ADDENDUM to WARHOL'S DREAM.

We headed east out of the park until we came to Park Avenue. More and more lately, this is where I seem to end up. I don't really see why that is the case. It worries me a little, frankly, as I tend to think of Park Avenue as a place where people come to die. If you've ever been to a party on Park Avenue, you know what I mean. Not that there isn't something very appealing about that.

B: Park Avenue has always felt like a mausoleum to me. But what do you think? You must come here much more often than I do.

A: Funny you say that ... It's true, I guess, except maybe for the really rich people. They're nothing like the regular rich people. Really rich people are never boring; in fact, they usually throw the best parties.

B: Why is that?

A: I think it's because they're so rich, they just say what they think. They don't censor themselves because it doesn't matter.

B: You mean they're totally shameless.

A: I guess. Mostly, they just talk about each other. Sometimes they tell me that I'm not a real artist.

B: And how do you answer that?

A: I tell them they're absolutely right, and that I'm really a business artist, because business is the best art there is.

As we were crossing the street, Bob turned to me and pointed to the Armory.

B: When I got out of the army, this is where I was decommissioned.

A: I've always wanted to go in there. It'd be such a great place to throw a party.

B: It's one of the secret museums of New York.

A: A secret museum? ... A museum of what?

B: Every armory is a museum, because every army lives off its ghosts. And every museum depends, at bottom, on events that can give it a basis in so-called "real history."

A: You mean what they talk about on TV?

B: Exactly. And the basic currency of history is war. We talk about post-war art and pre-war real-estate. If art is historical, it's more than just a convenient way of talking about things.

A: I think I'm beginning to see where this is going. You've known all along that we're dead—and now this talk of ghosts ... Everything is becoming crystal clear.

B: Wars mark the beginning and end of eras that are frames of reference not only for art, but for social values as a whole. The go-go 20s, the paranoid 50s. If you pushed me on the question, I would even say that the day of reckoning will come on pop culture. When the medium becomes as popular as what's on it, what's on it will cease to be popular.

A: Bob, I'm beginning to think you're the guy who comes to take you over to the other side of that river.

B: You mean Chiron. It's funny you say that. The first art works I ever made were drawings based on Dante's Inferno, where Virgil takes Dante through the different levels of hell. You're saying that Park Avenue is the border between one level of hell and another?

A: Oh, I understand everything now. You don't have to say another word.

During the above, S makes a phone call. S A is interrupted (and stops reading) by a voiceover announcement from MICHAEL BRACEWELL:

« AUDIO :

It has become apparent that many British towns and cities are gradually but perceptibly becoming identical. Once noticed, this phenomenon appears to accelerate—and within a decade the process will be complete.

Where once the distinguishing characteristics of a place—a corner, a main street, a square—has each enjoyed their own personality, now a fungus-like growth of dreary shop fronts, damp precincts and hot, airless cafes has all but taken over. Walls are thinner, ceilings lower, floors dirtier. The old institutional buildings, once representative of moral and social authority—churches and banks—have been stripped of their fittings, filled with wide-screen televisions, and turned into vast, barn-like bars. All through the town, and through every town, the same two dozen or so brand names can now be found, repeated over and over above the wide doorways.

On the edges of these identical towns and cities, chilly crepuscular hinterlands of carpet showrooms, DIY superstores and sportswear clearance warehouses stretch out in all directions, as far as the eye can see. And even further—because at some point on the horizon their prairie-like expanses now merge with those of the adjoining conurbations, like the land masses on maps of the prehistoric world. A few fields of wiry grass, colourless in the pinkish gleam of immensely tall streetlights, are the only slight variations—a tiny swell in the sea of sameness—that appear within the landscape.

To entertain the inhabitants of this new mono-environment, the various strands of the national media have developed an array of cheap, nasty gimmicks. In addition to which, strong alcohol is now available in the same flavours as children's

sweets and theme snacks: Toffee Crisp-flavoured vodka shots, Bubblegum tequila, Monster Munch Bacardi. New models of cars will now be named after the most popular dishes on Indian takeaway menus, to avoid confusion and encourage consumption: The Vauxhall Korma; the Fiat Madras.

Mobile phones have now irreversibly destroyed the distinction between public and personal space. Young women are talking like camp gay men. When you apply for a mortgage you will be given a voucher for a free Mochaccino Latte. Gratuitous male aggression is not only encouraged, but celebrated.

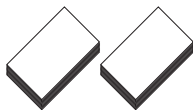
Local newspapers have become directories of horror. Every week, unbelievably vile and stupid people do unbelievably vile and stupid things to each other, and to anyone or anything which happened to cross their path. Animals, in particular, have suffered at their hands. Kittens are reported shot in the face at close range; a dog hung from a tree in a sack and beaten to death.

The wealthiest and most fashionable people in this new state have been made even wealthier and more fashionable, by poorer people who pay to look at pictures of them going to private parties and expensive restaurants, or to read accounts of their luxurious lifestyles and love affairs. Old age pensioners are dressing like rappers. Clumsy fist fights have broken out between businessmen on crowded trains. Toddlers stab one another with screwdrivers. Truancy is rife; teenagers feral. Most jobs are dull and poorly paid. The weather has become first mild, then humid. The sun looks bigger, and redder, and lower in the sky. Dead polar bears have been found washed up on the shores of Scandinavia.

These events have not occurred in a way that is particularly dramatic, let alone apocalyptic. Rather, they seem to have had an athersclerotic, sluggish momentum—their progress incremental, as opposed to declamatory. It is as though history has ended, and the concept of a future, too. All that is left is the sweeping up, at the close of a hot, windy day of low white skies. Horses, their ribs showing through their skin, stand very still on the edges of toxic landfill sites. Jut-jawed, heavy-browed, tattooed on calf or small of back, territorially hostile, the last of the consumers have become scavengers. Their expressions are hostile, and they are swift to take offence.

It is only when one manages to somehow gain a great height over this new landscape, and look down upon it, that you realise what has happened. In the space of a relatively short amount of time, Britain has turned into one enormous shop. And everything that has not assisted this shop in making more profit, has been either forced into dereliction or declared eccentric. And thus, after just a few years, all that was lovely, or gentle or—to use an old-fashioned word—seemly, has been destroyed. »

During the above, a MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE walks onstage and tears off a sheet from the 2nd of 3 pads containing an episodic dialogue by JAN VERWOERT headed IF THIS WAS THE REVIEW OF THE PREVIEW. Other audience members follow suit.



« TEXT :

IF THIS WAS THE REVIEW OF THE PREVIEW

Jan Verwoert for Dexter Sinister

**IF THIS IS A CONTEMPORARY ART SHOW,
THEN WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

It's difficult to say, I agree. We don't even quite know what it means to be contemporary. What is the time that we live in about? People say we live in times of uncertainty. Is THIS the one certainty we share, then? How do we even know that this much is certain?

**IT'S WHAT THE ART SHOWS US:
"UNCERTAINTY" IS WHAT THE ART
REPRESENTS AND EXPRESSES, ISN'T IT?**

Well, yes maybe you COULD say that ... but still, how can we be CERTAIN that the art here represents contemporary uncertainty? For it to do that it would surely have to be certain in its expression for these expressions of uncertainty to convincingly represent the contemporary sentiment. I'm not trying to be willfully paradoxical here. I am simply not convinced that art relates to the contemporary by "representing" or "expressing" it.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH REPRESENTATION?

Well, a moment ago we were talking about the question of hermeneutics versus hermeticism: whether we still believe art to be a tool of learning which serves to render the world and our desires transparent—as the hermeneutic approach maintains; or whether we would not rather assume art to be a hermetic language of coded innuendo that yields knowledge only to those willing to initiate themselves into its opaque codes and participate in the experience of codification. In the light of our skepticism with regard to the

idea that any language could ever be transparent, it seemed that the hermetic take on how art makes meaning was much closer to the way things actually work.

OKAY ... BUT ISN'T THAT A PRETTY BLEAK OUTLOOK?

It doesn't have to be. All I'm trying to say is that art works a bit like fashion: each season there's a new set of codes as fashion re-encrypts the way in which we combine clothes and colors, and which decades we reference when we wear them, and with what kind of attitude we might adopt to carry that look off. To be in sync with fashion you have to initiate yourself in its code and rehearse its combinations, references and attitudes.

When I was here at an Armory building performance last week, it struck me how closely connected the operations of fashion are to that of art—especially in a city like New York. The clothes the kids in the audience were wearing were coded in much the same way as most of the works on show: they were perfectly in sync. And it seemed that the key cipher in this code was, well, whatever you want to call it: uncertainty, depression, alienation ... or equally, post-punk, new wave, no wave, goth ... late 1970s, early 1980s ...

If you look at this so-called “uncertainty”—or depression, recession, alienation, et cetera—primarily as a cipher for a code rather than a sentiment to be represented, then it becomes clear why the “expressions” of uncertainty that define contemporary art, fashion and music ARE so certain, so defined and determinate in their expression: because they are a pretty stable, solid code that artists, designers and musicians have been working on for a couple of years now.

BUT IF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THESE CODES FOR SO LONG, HOW CAN IT BE CONTEMPORARY? AFTER ALL, THE RECESSION IS ONLY HAPPENING NOW—LITERALLY NOW.

Well, isn't that the fascinating thing about contemporaneity? That to be **TRULY** contemporary you actually have to be slightly ahead of yourself, you have to be decidedly **UNCONTEMPORARY** in order to prefigure, presage, and prepare yourself for what is to come. The codes have to already be in place when the shit hits the fan.

Don't you remember the first time around ... ? I recall trying to initiate myself into the codes of alienation as a teenage goth ... god, some twenty odd years ago. At that time I was of course much too young to have experienced anything that could have instilled the deeply existential morbid sense of melancholy I was aiming for. But still I wanted to prepare myself for that experience. The trouble was that I did not **LIKE** parts of the experience of the code. And I **DID NOT LIKE THAT I DID NOT LIKE THEM**. So I tried to force my body to process the code. I deliberately put on a record I didn't like very much—**PSYCHOCANDY** by The Jesus & Mary Chain: simple beautiful songs wilfully effaced by too much reverb and random feedback—then lowered the blinds in the living room and lay on the floor to make my blood pressure drop. All to create an experience through which I would get the code. I don't remember if it "worked", as such, but it prepared me nonetheless.

In this sense you could say that much contemporary art, fashion and music of recent years has not been representing but **PREPARING** us for a moment of alienation—for the event of recession—by teaching us to rehearse the

code in advance of eventually experiencing it. You could even say that recession is the event, or rather the revenant, the ghost, that we were actively **SUMMONING** through this ceremony of preparation and anticipation. Maybe anticipation is the key to any code; the key to the desire inscribed in the code. Perhaps codes are even one of the strongest manifestations of a desire—that strange desire for something, **ANYTHING** really, as long as it stops things from being as they are and have been for a while. And all within the context the still-booming art market ... so we arrive at full tables all dressed up and ready for uncertainty and recession. Funny, isn't it?

FUNNY? WELL I'M NOT SO

**/ IF THIS WERE TO BE THE PREVIEW TO A
REVIEW ...)**

The announcement is interrupted (and stopped) by a ringing phone. D answers and speaks with **TOM MARIONI**, who answers from 1978 and reads from the following list of predictions:

T M :

More sex in art.

California mysticism will reach New York.

Performance and video art are all over.

Everything in art will slow down.

Alternative art spaces will be re-named low budget spaces.

Museums will become shopping centers.

There will be a homosexual art movement.

San Francisco will become the world art center.

Fat coffee table books will be written on conceptual art.

Sony will develop videotape that cannot be reproduced.

Pattern painting will end as fast as op art did.
Etching will replace lithography as a hot new medium.

Art schools will have two departments: crafts and conceptual art.

Art magazines will look like Newsweek.

Artists will decide once and for all they cannot reach the public.

The Third World will produce another Leonardo.

Art schools will teach business, photography, graphic design, electronics, acoustics, political science, museum administration, drafting, writing and public speaking to sculpture students.

The Museum of Conceptual Art will start a museum school, "The Academy of MOCA."

A woman in Texas will buy buildings in New York to establish permanent installations of environments.

Video art will become known as TV art.

Art institutions will have their own TV satellite network and have live conferences and programs

to promote aesthetics.

Alternative art spaces will be made in the image of the National Endowment for the Arts, a government agency.

Lowell Darling will lose the race for governor but get his own TV show.

Joseph Beuys will move to Northern California.

Sol Lewitt will become the first living American to have a show in the Louvre in Paris.

Lichtenstein will parody photography in his painting.

Oldenburg will design a new museum in Holland in the shape of a wooden shoe.

Andy Warhol will declare punk is dead.

Jasper Johns will start to use perspective.

Carl Andre will go back to work on the railroad.

Dan Flavin will retire from art and devote his time to sketching and tasting wine.

Walter De Maria will be given the cover of Newsweek to design.

Christo will work smaller.

Vito Acconci will produce a play on Broadway.

David Ross will be appointed director of a museum in Texas.

Dennis Oppenheim will make a large sculpture for

the Shah of Iran, despite criticism from his friends.

Brice Marden will mix hashish with wax to make colors more intense.

Chuck Close will become the official portrait painter for Presidents.

Robert Irwin will become a movie star.

The Mattel Toy Company will come out with a Chris Burden doll.

Doug Wheeler will make a room for the White House.

Jim Melchert will become head of the art department at U.C. Berkeley.

Terry Fox will build the world's largest guitar.

Alanna Heiss will open 3 more alternative spaces.

Marcia Tucker will organize a show called "Good Art."

Maurice Tuchman and Peter Selz will open a school for wayward girls.

Still more Morris Louis paintings will be discovered in his garage by his dealer.

Cooking will be taught in art school.

The Berkeley Art Museum will be converted into a parking garage.

By 1980, everyone in America will consider themselves artists, and artists will be forced to call themselves something else.

A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE stands up.

M O A : I have a question!

S & D gesture to continue. He does.

M O A : Among the greatest discoveries human reason has made in recent times is, in my opinion, the art of reviewing books without having read them.

During the above, ADAM PENDLETON walks onstage and listens intently with a stethoscope to one of the lecterns. He begins to sing, first softly, then increasing in volume:

A P :

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed

So in deed ... etc.

During the above, ROB & BRO GIAMPIETRO return from separate sides of the audience and, from the DUAL LECTERNS, read the following caption simultaneously, voices panned HARD RIGHT & LEFT:

The work of Dexter Sinister turns on the opposition—and ever-mounting imbrication—of art and design. But, at the same time, the duo’s work refuses fixity of images or categories; virtually impossible to characterize, their practice encompasses producing printed matter and merchandise-based items, arrangements and displays, creating objects, writing texts, and initiating gatherings and events. Sometimes using the gallery’s press release as a vehicle for narratives substantiating an exhibition’s actions and visuals, Dexter Sinister breaks down the barrier between audience and artist by conducting their projects as workshop-style situations. While their practice evades rhetorical summation and aesthetic synthesis alike—effectively becoming mimetic of its profligate situation—the artists’ interest in the mobility of form suggests a common denominator.

For the installation *Hektor Meets Dexter Sinister* (2007), what looks like ad hoc graffiti scrawled on a wall by an angry teenager is contextually inverted by the fact that the “graffiti” was premeditated, designed on a computer, then carefully placed on the wall as a formal painting. The visuals were combined with serial performance elements including sonically spare noise music grounded in Minimal composition and evoking a post-John Cage mayhem in a series of digital feedback loops.

For their Biennial project *True Mirror*, viewers are invited to come in close proximity with their own reflection, upon which the mirror discloses a secret. Inquisitive viewers may discover hidden portions of the work, placed behind or inside its more evident structures. Like most of Dexter Sinister’s work, *True Mirror* can be understood

as a hall of mirrors— garnering its real power by revealing itself as part of a conceptual system, one that catalogues this mirrored subjectivity as it walks upright through the morass of cultural and political history. In it, we find language is not so much an aspect of their production as it is an essential and symbiotic other half.

Dexter Sinister takes a collective approach to their work, employing a constantly changing roster of collaborators from different disciplines who contribute to a relentless layering of visual and aural textures, creating a discordant dialogue. As a result, it's possible to view their outcomes as organic culminations of multiple individual inputs rather than the result of directorial cues. Their philosophical disinterest in materialism and the manufacturing of goods, however, more closely recall Buckminster Fuller's practical approach to architecture. Most recently, Dexter Sinister has comaintained a space on Ludlow Street in New York to be used for panel discussions, lectures, exhibitions, and as the editorial center for Dot Dot Dot, a magazine they edit collaboratively with an epigrammatic collage of their own writings and excerpts from others.

During the above, LARISSA HARRIS walks to the 2nd OHP and projects a diagram which involves a MAN, a TREE, and a SQUIRREL. She begins to ask a question from the RIGHT LECTERN:

L H :

Some years ago, being with a camping party in the mountains, I returned from a solitary ramble to find every one engaged in a ferocious metaphysical dispute. The CORPUS of the dispute was a squirrel—a live squirrel supposed to be clinging to one side of a tree trunk; while over against the

tree's opposite side a human being was imagined to stand. This human witness tries to get sight of the squirrel by moving rapidly round the tree, but no matter how fast he goes, the squirrel moves as fast in the opposite direction, and always keeps the tree between himself and the man, so that never a glimpse of him is caught. The resultant metaphysical problem now is this: DOES THE MAN GO ROUND THE SQUIRREL OR NOT?



During the above, MARK BEASLEY & ROSE KALLAL walk to the GUITAR & DRUMS, and punctuate the question with a version of NAPALM DEATH's YOU SUFFER (1988, 1.316 secs).

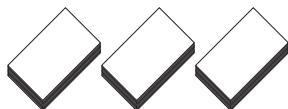
ALEX WATERMAN begins tuning up as L H answers her own question:

L H :

He goes round the tree, sure enough, and the squirrel is one the tree; but does he go round the squirrel? In the unlimited leisure of the wilderness, discussion had been worn threadbare. Everyone had taken sides, and was obstinate; and the numbers on both sides were even. Each side, when I appeared therefore appealed to me to make it a majority. Mindful of the scholastic adage that whenever you meet a contradiction you must make a distinction, I immediately sought and found one,

as follows: "Which party is right," I said, "depends on what you **PRACTICALLY MEAN** by 'going round' the squirrel. If you mean passing from the north of him to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then to the north of him again, obviously the man does go round him, for he occupies these successive positions. But if on the contrary you mean being first in front of him, then on the right of him, then behind him, then on his left, and finally in front again, it is quite as obvious that the man fails to go round him, for by the compensating movements the squirrel makes, he keeps his belly turned towards the man all the time, and his back turned away. Make the distinction, and there is no occasion for any farther dispute. You are both right and both wrong according as you conceive the verb 'to go round' in one practical fashion or the other."

During the above, a **MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE** walks onstage and tears off a sheet from the 3rd of 3 pads containing an episodic dialogue by **JAN VERWOERT** headed **IF THIS WERE TO BE THE PREVIEW TO THE REVIEW**. Other audience members follow suit.



« **TEXT :**

**IF THIS WERE TO BE THE PREVIEW TO A
REVIEW**

Jan Verwoert for Dexter Sinister

**IF YOU'RE DESCRIBING A KIND OF CRISIS
SCENARIO, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?**

I'd say we're doing a lot already. For some years we've been preparing ourselves for crisis and

presaging its eventual occurrence by developing a code of crisis in art, fashion and music—a contemporary form of dark new romanticism; call it neo-goth if you like—though I don't think I would. Anyway, if that code wasn't already firmly established, I don't believe we'd even be in a position to recognize, describe and experience the current situation of recession as a crisis. We'd simply lack the terms to do so. Naming a crisis as such already demonstrates that we're defining and controlling the moment. To give a name is to sign a contract, and our contract with contemporary culture is now signed in the name of crisis. That's the cipher we've chosen to interpret—or ENCRYPT—our experience of the present moment. And so I believe we're already proficient in the use of that code. We know it off by heart ... but still rehearse it to initiate ourselves further.

To be honest, as a European I'm always amazed, and even slightly jealous, when I see how FAST U.S. culture recodes its codes to prefigure and frame the near future. Where I come from people put styles and ideas through the mill for what seems like forever, and whatever survives the grind might be reasonably sound but deeply unattractive—to the point that there seems to be no reason to even bother immersing yourself in the experience these styles and ideas may have once enabled you to have. Don't get me wrong, I LIKE it fast. I admire the agility of U.S. culture to recodify its codes, re-encrypt its ciphers, revisit, recycle and revivify its icons in different incarnations. Just start your tour of the Whitney from the “old” collection on the top floor and you'll see what I mean. It's the image of a country and culture overwritten, reconfigured, recast and recoded ceaselessly, insistently, and most of all, PERFORMATIVELY. It's a constant performance of recodification. And it's a great performance. The rest of the world lines up at the

box office to go and see it.

DO I SENSE A TRACE OF IRONY IN WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

Um, yeah maybe ... but I think only because the situation is **INHERENTLY** ironic -- by which I mean that although I'm aware of producing and consuming a rapidly codified culture while being endlessly attracted to it, I still feel slightly uneasy about its codes. It's not a question of morals, really. I don't mind being corrupted and consumed by ciphers that promise attractive experiences. After all, how else would you learn about what you feel and think? Still, there is a certain discomfort with regard to how that codification works here. Speed is not really the problem. Okay, you might argue that the fast pace at which all this happens is set by the market, because as long as it is still thriving it needs products to circulate—and that, if people took a bit more time to think about what they are doing and what they actually want, the products that they would eventually put out would be coded differently; or not products at all. Then again, so much of this so-called extra time, or “non-productive” time, taken tends to be consumed by the anxious desire to figure out **THE RIGHT THING**—the **LEGITIMATE** thing—to do. **AS IF YOU COULD EVER WORK THAT OUT IN ADVANCE**—sanctifying your cause **A PRIORI**, categorically and unassailably. In the end, I think, it's better to get your hands dirty and deal with the challenge of the code.

If there **IS** a problem here, though, I think it's more related to the absence of other voices in the process of codification. For sure, there are a fair number of different voices, but most of them speak with familiar accents. Again, don't get me wrong: I **LIKE** American accents; I love it when Americans

sing their own songs and, even if I can't make out every line, I've learned to experience my emotions in the key of these songs. It's just that I also long for different voices, or a difference IN THE VOICE; that is, for a mode of address which is not merely ONE, but differentiated to the point where it is about to disintegrate and become many -- and which consequently does not address ME as one, as belonging to this one culture, but rather as a subject, citizen and voice of different cultures and languages, a subject committed to UNBELONGING.

So I'm thinking about a MODE OF ADDRESS here—and I do actually see it very occasionally formulated in certain works—fractured and improvised and not bothered by the overriding code of certified production value. A mode of address that allows different voices to resonate in its articulations in the raw form of citations cut out or xeroxed and glued to the page, or scanned in to stick out from the flow of scripted speech. Of course, there are and will be codes and ciphers at play in this mode of address as well, but MORE THAN ONE, and they perhaps won't interlock to suit the mechanics of the decoder so that the message it spits out is as scrambled as the original transmission was—and not in order to remain enigmatic, but because the emotional state which it encoded was truly scrambled in the first place.

AND WHAT VALUE WOULD THAT HAVE?

Precisely none. For if there is one thing I believe we should be very wary of, it is of using the code of crisis as a tool to generate values we can supposedly bank on. Codes create certified values when they establish themselves, not because the secret at the heart of the cipher would be disclosed but because people agree to share the secret as a secret. This is basically how Marx explained the

workings of the symbolic economy of Capitalism. **THE VALUE OF THE VALUE OF CAPITAL IS ESSENTIALLY A SECRET THAT CANNOT BE DISCLOSED BECAUSE, IN MODERN TIMES, THE RELATION BETWEEN THE THINGS WE CONSUME AND THE LABOUR WE INVEST HAS BECOME ABSTRACT.** To become tangible this abstract relation is constantly re-encoded by Capitalist culture as a secret—as a secret with the power to make us feel that the things we desire to have actually had a value in themselves, independent of the processes of production that create them. So in one sense, the whole operation of encoding is the simply that of a culture sustaining the illusion of **THE VALUE OF VALUE** by feeding the imagination with ever-new attractive secrets. If the secret today is to codify crisis in a way that makes it feel contemporary, this is precisely how the value of value is generated.

And so in the end—or for now—if we want to resist the drive towards the mere reproduction of value, the point is perhaps not to reject the act of codification and passion for the secret as such, but to **PERFORM IT DIFFERENTLY**, with a different mode of address, one that interrupts itself before it arrives at a workable cipher and engenders the values that) »

During the above, TOBI MAIER from 38 LUDLOW walks to the LEFT LECTERN, opens a letter and (when L H has finished speaking) reads the enclosed poem by ANDREAS NEUMEISTER (2008).

T M :

der Künstler ist abwesend
der Künstler ist nur halb anwesend

der Künstler ist abwesend und anwesend
der Künstler ist anwesend und abwesend zugleich

This is a text in German language.
It is more or less untranslatable.
(This is a press release for German readers only.)

der Künstler ist abweisend
der Künstler ist anziehend
der Künstler ist abweisend und anziehend
der Künstler ist anziehend und abweisend zugleich

This is another version of that German text.
It doesn't make much sense to translate this text.
(This is a press release for German readers only.)

der Künstler ist angezogen
der Künstler ist ausgezogen
der Künstler ist ausgezogen und angezogen
der Künstler ist angezogen und ausgezogen
zugleich
This is a third version of that German text.
It doesn't make much sense to translate those texts.
(This is a press release for German readers only.)

Throughout the 2nd half of the evening, isolated musical extracts from DAN FOX's REFRACTED LIGHT THROUGH ARMORY SHOW (a series of audio liner notes to the record FROM BRUSSELS WITH LOVE (1983)) have been playing through the RIGHT SPEAKER as originally recorded during a previous delivery of the notes in London on October 30, including the gaps.

R SPEAKER :





John Foxx, A JINGLE #1 —————

“ARMOURY SHOW”

“ARMOURY SHOW

To be popular, one must be a mediocrity

Paschally polished window panes

Refracted light through Armoury Show

Oh Armoury Show

The solution and the problem

Oh Armoury Show

The solution kills the problem

Oh Armoury Show

Armoury Show

Die macht der musik

Oh crazy world, you blessed freak show
Is it true I rejoice
Over every dead German?
Perception of realism the banner
Unrelative, unrelative,
Unrelative, unrelative
A hypocrite in pleasure
Never, never, never!
Oh Armoury Show
Somebody must have the last word
The symposium of sycophants
Tell that simple is not best
But best is always simple
ART IS DEAD
LONG LIVE THE NEW MACHINE ART
Tatlin
ART IS DEAD
LONG LIVE THE NEW MACHINE ART
Oh Tatlin
Oh Armoury Show
Armoury Show
Armoury Show”

David Bowie, WARSZAWA —————

Thomas Dolby, AIRWAVES —————

“Strange how the scale forms

In tiny patterns

On my antenna

And the 5 o'clock Show,

hello, hello ...



Brooklyn is crawling

With famous people

I turn my vehicle

Beneath the river west from south ...”

Repetition, STRANGER 
Radio Romance, ETRANGE AFFINITE 
Plan, MEINE FRUENDE 
Lewis & Gilbert, TWIST UP 

Duritti Column, SLEEP WILL COME 
Kevin Newick & New Order, HAYSTACK 

Michael Nyman, A WALK THROUGH H 
Harold Budd, CHILDREN ON THE HILL 
Gavin Bryars, WHITE'S SS 

Erik Satie, VARIOUS

“Une vie très difficile à Paris avec ma mère qui était anglaise, qui a failli être imprisonner pas les allemands. Mon père qui était de l'autre coté de la ligne de démarcation ... Mais au meme temps un soulagement extraordinaire parce qu'il y avait une vraie anarchie, il n'y a plus d'autorité habituelle et c'était vraiment très amusant ...

Pour le personnage de Simone Signoret est une lointaine cousine qui vivait dans le Puy de Dôme. Et, c'est une femme qui m'a beaucoup appris. Et avec laquelle j'étais profondément heureuse parce que mes parents qui étaient hoteliers-restaurateurs, et avaient peu de temps s'occuper a moi. Et a travers elle, j'ai decouverte la vertu du travail, la force de la nature, tous les mystères de la ... de la vie profonde, de la vie ... pas la vie frelater,

voyez ce que je veux dire?

C'était une femme très forte et au même temps très douce, très très croyante dans les lois divines, donc elle croyait un autre égalité à tous.

Le cinéma m'apporte autant que je lui apporte.

J'aime les gens bien, qu'il soit masculin ou féminin, et je n'aime pas les cons qu'il soit masculin ou féminin.

Une amie—ah—Je vais lui donner ... !

Je pense qu'il faut savoir de servir de tout. De savoir comprendre tout. Et les pourquoi des choses, les échecs, les succès ...

Je vais tourner comme comédienne, là, dans un film de Georges Katzander, avec Marie-France Pisier, des acteurs américains, un film sur Coco Chanel. Et puis, je prépare des chansons que je vais enregistrer, pour faire plusieurs 33 tours, d'après les œuvres magnifiques d'un poète d'origine Belge, qui s'appelle Norge.

Les films les plus commerciaux ça été "Les Amants", "c'était Journal d'une Femme de Chambre", ça été "Ascenseur Pour l'Echafaud". "Viva Maria!" n'a pas porté les fruits que l'on attend. "Mata-Hari" n'a pas été un triomphe ... On a eu un procès. On a même pas pu l'exploiter aux Etats-Unis. Les gens n'ont pas vus.

Je ne regrette rien! J'ai les choses à faire, que de penser au passé, en me disant ... de penser ceci cela.

Les sept merveilles du monde? Voulez-vous que je fasse un numération? L'air est une merveille, la végétation est une merveille, les animaux sont une merveille, les éléments, un autre merveille, ça fait quatre ... le vent qu'on voit pas, c'est une merveille ... le ciel, les étoiles ... une merveille.

Moi, la politique ça m'emmerde! Je trouve que c'est un guignol, complètement ridicule. Je regarde ces mecs à la télé, je trouve qu'ils sont mauvais, ils sont mal maquillés, ils sont moches. La vie politique abîme les hommes avec une

rapidité absolument extraordinaire.

Je pense a la vie et a la mort ... oui ... J'essaie de bien employer mon temps.

Intellectuel, c'est comme un langage, c'est un construction c'est un rationalisation, ces certains discours critique. Mais l'intelligence c'est quelque chose qui est original, qui a de la vivacité, qui naît de la vraies pensées ... sincères ... et justes.

Je pense que la beauté ce qui emane ... c'est la radiation ... c'est la vie interieur."

Phil Niblock, A THIRD TROMBONE —————

"For me the great strength of dilettantism is that it tends to come in from another angle. It doesn't always, of course. The other way of being a dilettante is just by doing the most pedantic and obvious things. But an intelligent dilettante will not be constrained by the limitations of what's normally considered possible. He won't be frightened, he's got nothing to lose. You know, a person who has his career at stake on every piece of work is obviously going to be a bit more defensive about what he does, whereas the

dilettante who just kind of says, oh, I'll try this for a while, is not so frightened of failure, I would imagine. But to maintain a dilettante attitude consciously is also rather suspicious. I guess I'm past the dilettante phase now [laughs]. I've decided that I AM a musician or composer, and that's what I do. And I generally can't pretend to be naïve anymore, though I'm still musically naïve, in a sense. I have to take a different approach now to what I'm doing.

In popular arts the question of tradition is very interesting because most popular work is about 94% tradition and about 6% innovation, and that seems to me like a good kind of ratio as well. I believe that the function of culture that is always overlooked by people who are into the avant-garde and experimental music is not only to innovate but to keep rehearsing and rehashing what exists already. And rock music is a great example of this, you know, there's always ... things are always being recalled and built back into the structure again. And of course what you choose to ignore and what you choose to re-enhance, to use again, is just as important a statement as the innovations you make."

Talking Heads, SEEN & NOT SEEN — 




“FA FA FA FAH FAH ...”



“Fa-fa-fa fah fa-fa-fa-fa fah far better ...”





Roxy Music, FOR YOUR PLEASURE 
Talking Heads, HOUSES IN MOTION 
Eno & Byrne, AMERICA IS WAITING 

The Velvet Underground, THE GIFT 

“Waldo Jeffers had reached his limit. It was now mid-August which meant he had been separated from Marsha for more than two months. Two months, and all he had to show was three dog-eared letters and two very expensive long-distance phone calls. True, when school had ended and she’d returned to Wisconsin, and he to Locust, Pennsylvania, she had sworn to maintain a certain fidelity. She would date occasionally, but merely as amusement. She would remain faithful.

But lately Waldo had begun to worry. He had trouble sleeping at night and when he did, he had horrible dreams. He lay awake at night, tossing and turning underneath his pleated quilt protector, tears welling in his eyes as he pictured Marsha, her sworn vows overcome by liquor and the smooth soothings of some neanderthal, finally submitting to the final caresses of sexual oblivion. It was more than the human mind could bear.

Visions of Marsha’s faithlessness haunted him. Daytime fantasies of sexual abandon permeated his thoughts. And the thing was, they wouldn’t

understand how she really was. He, Waldo, alone understood this. He had intuitively grasped every nook and cranny of her psyche. He had made her smile. She needed him, and he wasn't there. (Awww...)"

The Velvet Underground, I'LL BE YOUR
MIRROR 

John Hassell, HEX 



A Certain Ratio, FELCH 

Kraftwerk, TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS 
Donna Summer, I FEEL LOVE 

Grace Jones, SHE'S LOST CONTROL 

Vampire Weekend, CAPE COD KWASSA KWASSA



Thomas Dolby, AIRWAVES

“Be in my broadcast

When this is over



Give me your shoulder
I need a place to wait for morning
No it was nothing
Some car backfiring
Please don't ask questions
I itch all over, let me sleep
Through the airwaves
People never read the airwaves
Do we only feed the airwaves
Or stamp them out at street level?
Airwaves
The dampness of the wind
The airwaves
The tension of the skin
The airwaves
I really should have seen
Through the airwaves ...”



During the above, ALEX WATERMAN begins his performance of B FOR BARTELBY with D & S, simultaneously recorded onto plastic cups. 2 SPOTLIGHTS project their shadows onto the back wall.



As the music concludes, S walks to the RIGHT LECTERN and asks for the various lights to be switched off, then for the house lights to be turned on.

S:

According to the script, this appears to signal the end.

This appears to signal the end. ■

