MICHAEL MOGATAS: THE LIMITATIONS OF PROCESS
HANNAH DOUCET

CURATING ON THE FLAT AND DOUBLE-FLAT:
A CONVERSATION WITH CHARLES ESCHE
SHEPHERD STEINER

CHARACTER: CORNEL WEST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
JESSICA EVANS

COLLABORATION, LABOR, AND BREAKING BREAD:
AN INTERVIEW WITH SEAN STAROWITZ
STEVEN DUVAL

MAKING AND SURVEILLING:
A BOOK REVIEW OF ART AFTER THE INTERNET
JOHN PATTERSON

SÉRIPOP GO PILE WILD: THE FACE STAYED EAST AND THE
MOUTH WENT WEST (ELEMENTS) @ GALERIE HUGUES
CHARBONNEAU (MTL)
KELLY CAMPBELL
MICHAEL MOGATAS: THE LIMITATIONS OF PROCESS

HANNAH DOUCET

Mogatas is an emerging artist and co-founder of the now closed C space gallery in Winnipeg, Canada.

Photography and painting have a strong relationship that has been maintained both in collaboration and opposition throughout the history of photography. Many artists work within the intersection of painting and photography, highlighting a porousness between the two mediums. Painters going back as far as Rauschenberg in the 1950’s, used photography as a representational tool within paintings. Alternatively, photo-conceptualists such as Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace rely heavily on tropes of painting in the creation of their photo-based work. In line with this larger painting-photography trajectory, Michael Mogatas’ new paintings feature photography prominently and directly. He creates work using expanses of raw stretched fabric and small photographic transfers onto the surface of the cloth. The works are clean, beautiful and alluring.

In Mogatas’ new work he completely eliminates the process of painting, an essential element of his earlier work. His current method involves an iphone, low-resolution paper print outs, a photocopier, and iron-on photo-transfer paper. In some cases, Mogatas works directly with an image and in others he distorts them. He manipulates the source material by editing the coloration and saturation in Photoshop, creating photographic compositions in a photocopier, or placing images alongside one another on the scanning bed and moving them as they are being scanned. The actions create softly colored photographic blurs that appear as stylized wavering strokes familiar to painting. His methods preserve a tactile presence in the final works. Mogatas appreciates the imperfections and limitations of this process by embracing the mistakes that occur with the printing of his home-office inkjet printer. Akin to American artist Wade Guyton, Mogatas relishes the snags and streaks that occur in the printing process of the photographic transfers. The material technique he explores is crude; the plasticity of the transfer paper forces the photograph to sit on the surface of the fabric, replete with bubbling and wrinkling. Mogatas’ work has a strong relationship to technology, engaging iPhones, computers, photocopiers, and printers in its creation. Imperfections present within Mogatas’ work highlight the fallibility of certain machinery. He engages with these seemingly inevitable failures and bends the technology to fulfill his intentions. The transfer of the photographs directly onto fabric and stretched on wooden frames occur only after editing. Mogatas’ subdued palette, dominated by pastels, beiges and greys, with some images verging on monochromatic. Painterly abstraction is further brought to mind through the discoloring that occurs both through the editing process and the application of the images to colored fabric. The connection between the photographs and reality becomes further distanced. The shift in hue and small scale of the photographs force a remove between the viewer and the imagery, disallowing the viewer to insert themselves into the images. Within some works Mogatas bridges this distance through the insertion of text alongside the abstracted imagery, inviting the viewer to apply meaning to the images.

The pairing of text and image reveals itself as an essential reoccurring element in Mogatas work. In big issues Mogatas couples an image of a woman’s torso in blue and green hues, with the words BIG ISSUES, BIG ISSUES, repeating itself four times in an exaggerated pink font. Mogatas names John Baldesarri as an influence that is apparent in his treatment of text. Baldesarri, best known for his text paintings which aimed to interrogate the nature of painting itself, once said, “It seemed to me that a word could be an image or an image could be a word. They could be interchangeable. I couldn’t in my mind prioritize one over the other”. In Mogatas’ work the words appear in amplified fonts, reminiscent of the clip art or stock fonts found in commercial documents. The cartoonish aesthetic in repetition becomes an image in its own right. In Quickie the text reads “QUICKIE STANDING UP QUICKIE AGAINST A WALL”, the word “quickie” exaggerated in bubble letter font. Mogatas uses the sexual term as a double entendre, referencing sex as well as painting. Devoid of the tedious and laborious process once involved in the creation of his work, Mogatas’ paintings stand proudly against the wall. While his works no longer feature paint in a literal sense, Mogatas’ practice is about painting more than ever before. His critique of the process-based nature of painting is an investigation of the medium itself.

The images Mogatas uses for his paintings are found by sifting through his personal archive of iphone snapshots. In Mogatas’ older works found photographs and Internet sourced visuals were used as appropriated reference imagery for paintings. Now he appropriates his own. When he sifts through his iphone to find source material for his work, usually enough time has passed that they have become removed from the original moment in which they were captured. In Untitled #3 multiple image transfers appear alongside one another; a red-hued woman climbs steps, remnants of a shopping excursion are strewn on the floor, and what appears to be a bridge is superimposed over other blurred, graying images. The images feel vague, like distant memories that cannot enforce a cohesive narrative. Mogatas has long wrestled with the concept of painting versus photography as mediums of representation within his practice. Mogatas’ work embodies an ode to, and rejection of, painting with paint. The choice of stretched colored fabrics, although devoid of paint, make reference to color field paintings. Despite this reference, the works maintain a critical distance from abstract painting via Mogatas’ use of photography as a representational tool. Michael Mogatas’ newest works succeed in maintaining an elegant tension between photographic and painting processes. He breaks down the elements that constitute the conventional understanding of a painting; support, surface, and image, and presents it back to us in a reductive, surprising and thoughtful way.
CURATING ON THE FLAT AND DOUBLE-FLAT: A CONVERSATION WITH CHARLES ESCHER

Shepherd Steiner

Charles Escher is director of the Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven Holland. He is co-founder and co-director with Mark Lewis of Afterall Journal and Books, and is the past curator of the 31st Sao Paulo Biennial (2014), the 5th Ljubljana Triennial (2010), 2nd and 3rd Riwaq Biennials (2009 and 2007) and the 9th Istanbul Biennial (2005) among many other things. Along with six other institutions he has steered the Van Abbe to help establish L’Internationale, which “proposes a space for art within a non-hierarchical and decentralized internationalism, based on the values of difference and horizontal exchange among a constellation of cultural agents, locally rooted and globally connected.”

Shep Steiner: Are there significant trends, conjunctions of events, particular artists, ideas or theorists you are moving upon?

Charles Escher: I just am rather dubious about the art world at the moment, largely because it seems to have become quite conservative and conformist at the same time. It is increasingly controlled by collectors/dealers who are simply the least interesting part of the art world. They have become quite conservative and conformist at the local level. Second, I am struck by how pragmatic energy going into getting one going, so the uneven possibilities. First, I think it’s important to hear how present Stephen Wright and Usership and Elizabeth Povinelli and indigenity—especially if it could be applied to Europe. In terms of artists, some recently discovered ‘Anti-de- douan’ folk include Luke Willis Thompson, Tom Nicholson, Nick Mangan, Alessandro Petri and Sandh Hilal. But also I am proud of the Van Abbe’s recent program: Ahmet Öçüt, Hito Steyerl and Renzo Martens. There is Mapa Teatro from Bogotá. From Sao Paulo, Clara Ianni, also a filmmaker called Rodrigo Siquera who does re-enactments of trauma, which are a bit like Joshua Oppenheimer but in his own home culture.

SS: Are there specific possibilities you put into play at the Sao Paulo Biennial that you would like to follow up on or animate elsewhere?

CE: I am quite proud of the protests we generated against the government's restrictions. It is, given the above, it is the only protest, ideally from within the art world that would make me feel like I was doing a good job. Dismissive reviews and attempts to ignore the events in Sao Paulo, collectors writing letters boycotting artists in the show—I’d like that to continue.

Afterword:

Teasing out a number of points is worthwhile if we are going upon?

Escher’s negotiation of the market is. His metaphor of the “art ecology” seems a common sense approach to nurturing some aspects of this ecology and not others. For him the market is: “First of all, version of pedigree seeds developed by Monsanto: it doesn’t make the best bread and it definitely flattens the already mono-cultural horizon of the Canadian prairies. Third, his organizational position behind the scenes of the global economy has given him a uniquely critical perspective on the notion of autonomy. Apparently, the great historical defenders of arts autonomy only saw it in the museum, and were simply not privy to as how it got there. It seems the art school (as one small part of the larger apparatus of the art institution) has to introduce this question early on so that autonomy does not remain the favored trope. Taken as a whole all of this relates to a theoretical presupposition Esche brings up: given the weight and pervasiveness of the market, its mediating role in shaping and channeling creative energy, it appears that Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s emphasis on, and theory of flatness has more of a purchase on trends and events than ever. Esche mentions the work of Austrian theorist Gerald Raunig, who offers one of the sharpest positions of the crypto-Deleuzian/ Guattarian type, partly because he is constantly trying to solve real problems. Raunig’s argument in “Flatness Rules” is for a critical horizontality that “common.” This relates to the kind of work that Esche believes the art institution must do. Thus Esche’s emphasis on the protests generated at Sao Paulo, but also the potential the institution of art has for remaking the state from within. Obviously the reinforcement of the neoliberal system is a way of living, nevertheless it is tempting to see protest from within the art world as a baby step toward this larger end. Esche’s notion of curatorship, like Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of critique before him would have us both think the art object and extend the art field horizontally.

Esche’s horizontal logic here is catchy, because when he brings up Elizabeth Povinelli on indigeneity and Steven Wright on use, we can also think of these positions as ways one can analyze Brian Massumi’s notion of the autonomous art object. Seeing the art object horizontally in terms of the viewer’s response or use, makes the art object less autonomous by perceiving it as part of a larger economic machine or relation—basically the insight of minimalism. Povinelli’s work on “The Governance of the Prior” presses horizontality in a slightly different way, isolating presuppositions in respondents that are located up-stream from content as such. Nevertheless both amount to an emphasis on the viewer as a mobile institution that is horizontally attached to the art object, and moreover ripe with possibilities for excavation and problems to dispatch—William Wright’s “pavour” in a way. For his part, in user-objection to Povinelli the “government of the prior” is brought to light in order to reveal a signifying chain that undoes any claim to sovereignty made by the subject. Both offer critique that is clearly related to the rhetoric of the ‘horizontal’, especially the notion of arte Povinelli’s version of autonomy are complicated; meaning horizontality and depth are also twined together. This is especially true if we hold onto the Lacanian insight that the subject has no nature beyond the contingent laws of language through which it is constituted. The subject is always a technical prosthetic of the object, let alone that subject’s machinic interdependence in a system of relations. My point here is to mark a certain prohibition against the ontology in many existing post-Deleuzian/post Guattarian politics, and in fact in as many versions of art, criticism and curating. Horizontality is how politics typically gets played out in the art world—off-site exhibition, social practice, the de-emphasis of painting or photography as static art for durational practices like film, sound art over the visual, indigeneity, class, etc.—and for good reason. Raunig relates verticity to “a deepening of the conserving conserving museum.” His call to arms like Esche’s involvement in L‘Internationale is for “the flat-re-composition of the common.”

Politically, I like everything being offered for argument here except Raunig’s doing away with depth. I abide by the following ‘Aztec’ metaphor on thought on thought: you can do so because of the kind of pressure that critiques—in the first place, Jacques Derrida and Paul Dehez, and now philosophers including Deleuzians like Erin Christovale and Brian Massumi have to define the autonomous art object. Seeing the art object horizontally in terms of the viewer’s response or use, makes the art object less autonomous by perceiving it as part of a larger economic machine or relation—basically the insight of minimalism. Povinelli’s work on “The Governance of the Prior” presses horizontality in a slightly different way, isolating presuppositions in respondents that are located up-stream from content as such. Nevertheless both amount to an emphasis on the viewer as a mobile institution that is horizontally attached to the art object, and moreover ripe with possibilities for excavation and problems to dispatch—William Wright’s “pavour” in a way. For his part, in user-objection to Povinelli the “government of the prior” is brought to light in order to reveal a signifying chain that undoes any claim to sovereignty made by the subject. Both offer critique that is clearly related to the rhetoric of the ‘horizontal’, especially the notion of arte Povinelli’s version of autonomy are complicated; meaning horizontality and depth are also twined together. This is especially true if we hold onto the Lacanian insight that the subject has no nature beyond the contingent laws of language through which it is constituted. The subject is always a technical prosthetic of the object, let alone that subject’s machinic interdependence in a system of relations. My point here is to mark a certain prohibition against the ontology in many existing post-Deleuzian/post Guattarian politics, and in fact in as many versions of art, criticism and curating. Horizontality is how politics typically gets played out in the art world—off-site exhibition, social practice, the de-emphasis of painting or photography as static art for durational practices like film, sound art over the visual, indigeneity, class, etc.—and for good reason. Raunig relates verticity to “a deepening of the conserving conserving museum.” His call to arms like Esche’s involvement in L‘Internationale is for “the flat-re-composition of the common.”
poets had glimpsed for quite some time. The ontologi-
cal drive for buried truth is now to be understood with
a flat horizon built into it, where the truth of the thing
or object shades off into other things that are less argy
not typeset, staged or exhibited for visual display.
Flow in the exhibition environment as well as porous-
ness between the inside and the outside is one option
here that all recent Biennials have begun opting for.
Collaboration, which has been a recurrent motif of
Esche’s curating is another way of spreading things
thin. Fostering young artists, working at the local level,
injecting energy into emergent scenes, using the art
field and institution as models for political process, es-
establishing the culture of biennials as long-term, rather
than short term proposals, extending the art field into
conversation and the writing about art, all directions
Esche has been consistently pursuing for the last 15
years are further ways he has operated on the flat.

Horizontality as critique is nothing new. Critique has
always involved unpacking the vertical strata of soci-
ety and laying it flat. In some cases where flatness is
the prevailing myths as was the case in America in 1950s
it was necessary to envision a “Power Elite” as a
kind of Upper Crust of Middle Class society and no
doubt the current myth of the Network society—take
Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World
from the Witte de With—requires a little more altitude
built into its model as well. In Jacques Rancière’s
terms critique as separation is founded upon a similar
flattening of verticality, though always with vertiginous
complications attached, for paradox and conflicted-
ness are two of his master tropes. In
The Politics of Aesthetics

Undoubtedly for Esche the practice of placing one
object next to another is now simply the bottom line
for the language of curating that must additionally be
expanded into other less obviously connected play-
ning fields, one of which must now include a second
flat field at depth. Of course, the double flat has been
there all along. The question is how best to bring
it—what the Antonio Negri of Insurgencies calls “con-
stituent power as a composition that constitutes itself
in a mechanic process”—into visibility. Until then we
can only wonder if this is what I Internationale hopes
to galvanize? If it is where the multitude awaits?

While the vertical is always involved unpacking the
horizontal, the horizontal is perhaps more complex
than we have ever done anything alone. I hope that my prac-
tice remains a patchwork of texts/environments/projects
that are inviting, and

Taste in art-making, urban issues, community building and
hopeful creative gestures to complex ideas.

I also think that each project having its own identity
is key, especially in relation to the problem of artist
visibility. I tend to hide behind sigils, logos and strong
graphic images, if I may say so myself, because I’ve
worked with great graphic designers over the years.
In KC, many folks might not know that I’m behind a
project as “Sean Starowitz” but they’re more than
likely aware or heard of BREAK! KC. Byproduct or

COLLABORATION, LABOR, AND BREAK-
NING BREAD: AN INTERVIEW WITH SEAN
STAROWITZ

STEVEN DUVAL

On a rainy Saturday afternoon I met Sean Starowitz
in Kansas City at ‘Talk Shop’, the temporary cultural
center he co-runs, which was hosting an exhibition of
the ‘Langston Hughes Club’ (a photography group that
is made up of members of the fast food workers col-
lective Stand Up KC). It was an incredibly refreshing
experience after walking into many white cubes. Here
were photos depicting the lives of workers by work-
ers with arresting results. Starowitz was there talking
about the work and engaging people that entered the
space. He described himself to me as a bread baker.
As I discovered he is also a collaborator, organizer,
teacher, curator, fundraiser, facilitator, and artist with
a diverse and committed practice. We also talked
about the role of the artist in the community and the
critical problems of that position when attempting to
instigate real change. Below is an interview we did at
another of his collaborative projects: Bread KC—an
event raising money for the arts in Kansas City.

Steven Duval: In the documentation of your project
‘Byproduct: The Laundromat’ you have a photo of a
t-shirt that says ‘I had a token conversation at an in-
visible venue’. It reminded me of Gregory Scholello’s
use of the physics term ‘Dark Matter’ as reference to
a cultural sphere that is everywhere but goes unseen.
How does visibility play into your activities?

Sean Starowitz: That’s a great question and I was
super informed by Gregory’s work when I was in un-
dergrad, actually my studio thesis was on Dark Matter
and Everyday practices.

I tend to think of myself as a quilt maker and table
designer - though I’ve never made either of those
objects, per say. My approach is to thread individual
patchwork squares together and try to figure out what
the shape and design of a table is. I think that is one
of the great challenges of our time - How do we create
spaces/environments/projects that are inviting, and
participatory? How do we invite people not only to the
table to share something but also offer their insight,
options and ideas? Those spaces seem to be far and
few between these days. I like to think of my work as
the common thread that stitches a project together or
the table that everyone sat down at to have a meal.

Sean Starowitz: That’s a great question and I was
super informed by Gregory’s work when I was in un-
dergrad, actually my studio thesis was on Dark Matter
and Everyday practices.

I tend to think of myself as a quilt maker and table
designer - though I’ve never made either of those
objects, per say. My approach is to thread individual
patchwork squares together and try to figure out what
the shape and design of a table is. I think that is one
of the great challenges of our time - How do we create
spaces/environments/projects that are inviting, and
participatory? How do we invite people not only to the
table to share something but also offer their insight,
options and ideas? Those spaces seem to be far and
few between these days. I like to think of my work as
the common thread that stitches a project together or
the table that everyone sat down at to have a meal.

Sean Starowitz: That’s a great question and I was
super informed by Gregory’s work when I was in un-
dergrad, actually my studio thesis was on Dark Matter
and Everyday practices.

I tend to think of myself as a quilt maker and table
designer - though I’ve never made either of those
objects, per say. My approach is to thread individual
patchwork squares together and try to figure out what
the shape and design of a table is. I think that is one
of the great challenges of our time - How do we create
spaces/environments/projects that are inviting, and
participatory? How do we invite people not only to the
table to share something but also offer their insight,
options and ideas? Those spaces seem to be far and
few between these days. I like to think of my work as
the common thread that stitches a project together or
the table that everyone sat down at to have a meal.
Talk Shop... It allows for collaborative authorship, and participation, and just maybe a new way of working or engaging within a community. Somebody said to me recently, “Are your fingerprints on this?” and I found that to be really flattering and something I’m striving for. It’s there if you want to find it.

S.D. One of the things you mentioned when we met at the ‘Talk Shop’, where the Langston Hughes Club were showing their photography in the exhibition ‘I, Too, Am America’, was the importance of acknowledging power relations especially with regard to ‘socially engaged’ art practice. The positioning of the artist/curator as the central author or as facilitator/collaborator becomes crucial here. How did you deal with that power dynamic when working with the Langston Hughes Club where empowerment and self-determination is central to their work?

The hope is that by asking these hard questions of SEA we can get to a place where artists and cultural workers can meet people and communities where they are, rather than coming to the table with a fixed idea. But as always, there has to be a connectedness. A true relationship has to be built and may not have an end goal in mind. When working with different communities audiences and collaborators, for me its important to leave my experiences, knowledge, and expertise at the door and actually try to engage with people. Hopefully, in that process we’re able to create something new together, alongside one another and that’s the space where you truly shift power dynamics.

S.D. I think you make an excellent point about the glorification of the artist and it brings me back to a problem with certain projects and processes that occur within “Socially Engaged” Art (SEA) is that there tends to be a top-down approach either through an institution, organization, or by the privilege of an artist. This can be very problematic and really makes me question this whole entire field. Is it possible to have social change without some form of social exploitation and individual artistic glorification? To me this is the kind of question we need to be asking in the field. I think Langston Hughes Club (LHC) challenges this question at its core and marks a radical shift in the power dynamic between labor reform and artistic practice. LHC is not an exhibition of a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist documenting the lives of fast food workers in a “poverty porn” sense, or the controlled frame of poverty America through the lens of the media; rather, the workers are telling their own stories, with their own voice and through their own frame of reference. The LHC has been in control of the project, not a curator, or photographer. Stand Up KC does a wonderful job of making sure the workers are interviewed not the organizers, and that they’re the face of the movement. It’s truly humbling and empowering. You don’t see this way of working often enough in the contemporary art world or SEA practices, nor do I think they really care about this type of work. It’s about museums playing middlemen for dealers and collectors and where they can “park their money.”


I, Too, Am America. The importance of acknowledging power dissatisfactions with the world into an image of something better, and it could be this imaginative transformation that leads us to hope and rejuvenation. Antanas Mockus, the philosopher and educator who became the Mayor of Bogota re-imagined civic politics with creative gestures. For example, to increase public safety his office hired mimes to act out the proper ways to cross the street, within three years pedestrian fatalities dropped by 50%. Further, the violence vaccine program his office enacted pushed homicide rates to fall 70%.

I think calling it art allows for a greater depth of exploration and consideration. I know it’s a bold thing to say but it’s necessary. Art and consideration in the same sentence, when arts funding is at an all-time low, and we are constantly at war with people’s couches and Netflix accounts. For example, ‘Fresh Bread’ was shut down in the 1960s on its third pop-up by the City Health Department. While the city was shutting me down, the folks that were in line were tweeting to the City Manager and Mayor Sly James. No less than 5 hours later, I was having a conversation with Councilperson Cindy Circo and City Manager Troy Schulte about the project, all while eating the different types of bread offered through the stand. By the following Monday morning a few emails we’re sent and within 3 weeks Fresh Bread was back up and running and we’re able to pop-up anywhere in the city. I think the reason why the City Manager and Councilperson Cindy Circo were so willing to hear me out, other than the great tasting bread was that Fresh Bread is a creative gesture to a complex problem we have in the city. Fresh Bread wasn’t a bourgeoisie hipster venture; rather it was having a larger dialogue about food access and vacancy while also literally breaking bread with others.

Once again, art can take us to places we haven’t been before and it can give us the space we need to reflect and understand. I think that maybe the historic path of the artist has been blinded by our current market-based economy and our failures in art education. The power of art to affect public opinion and organize has been displaced by the many historic events around the world that try to silence it. Arts and culture are usually the first to be censored, removed, or suppressed. I believe this way of engaging and working provides voice to multiple perspectives, it naturally draws out varied forms of response through reflections, discussion, and debate. You know the sort of things that are elemental in a healthy democratic system. Artists, cultural workers, poets, writers, singers, musicians, performers, dancers, and chefs (among countless others) can be the “canary in the coal mine.”

I think we need song more than ever, we need poetry more than politics, and we need artists to hold up the mirror and provide the space for deep reflection. To quote my dear friend Peter Sellers, “Music is about everything we’re hoping for and that’s not here yet, and music is here ahead of time to tell us. It’s coming”

So to answer your question yes to more useful art, please.

If you would like to know more about Sean Starowitz and his activities please visit www.seanstarowitz.com

Stand Up KC and the Langston Hughes Club: http://standupkc.org/
Omar Khadr, Defense PP Presentation During Sentencing Argu-

On May 7th Omar Khadr was released from prison in
Alberta. Khadr is infamously known as the youngest-
ever prisoner at Guantanamo Bay, where he was
incarcerated at age 15 for allegedly throwing a gren-
dade during a firefight in Ayub Kheyl that resulted in
the death of an American soldier. After ten years at
Guantanamo, and with the Canadian government’s
knowledge of his torture there, Khadr “confessed” and
was transferred to the Millhaven Maximum Security
prison in Ontario, where his eligibility for parole was
debated in tandem with his culpability, his status as a
child soldier, his character.

I noticed on Khadr’s Wikipedia page that there is a
tiny anecdote describing pastel drawings he made in 2009,
in an art program available to compliant cap-
tives. The description says: “Very few of the creators of
the works of art made by Guantanamo captives
have been tied to specific artwork, but several of
Khadr’s pastel drawings were included as exhibits at his
sentencing hearing, to show his peaceful nature.”1

This drawing, of an utterly inoffensive sailboat floating
in a bay, is rendered with capable impressionism that
in a spectacle economy. The pursuit of “unarmed
truth”, he acknowledged, is very difficult for us (fallible
and imperfect mortals) for whom the fear of death
translates into Socrates’ concept of the unexamined
life. “At Disneyland, they say no one has ever died
on the property” West joked “which is why everyone
wants to go to Disneyland.”

“We are at the brink” West said “of personal catas-
trophe.” He was referring to, undoubtedly, the ongo-
ing riots in Ferguson, Baltimore, and Oakland, but
also to a society that deprives its impoverished and
disenfranchised youth of art in their communities or
schools. West emphatically cited authors – F. Scott
Fitzgerald, Jane Austen, James Baldwin - and musi-
cians throughout his lecture with the sentiment that
“the son of a Baptist minister and a devout Christian
has a view of a picturesque ocean harbor.

The next day I went to a lecture at the University of
Winnipeg by the American philosopher, academic,
and activist Dr. Cornel West. Most commonly known
for his analysis of racial debates in his 1994 book
Race Matters, he also holds the distinction of the first
American-American to receive a PhD in philosophy from
Princeton University. His sold-out lecture was compe-
tently introduced in both English and Objibwe by Wab
Kinew, followed by an address from former University
president Lloyd Axworthy in a speech that can only be
categorized as incoherent befuddlement.

Throughout West’s lecture, which was hinged on
the dilemma of preserving social justice in an unjust
society, the nexus of Khadr, the judicious state, and
his pastel drawing remained bright in my mind. West,
the son of a Baptist minister and a devout Christian
in his own right, invokes the oft-forgotten spiritualism
that has been integral to the mobilizing energy of civil
emancipation. Martin Luther King, Jr., was, after all,
an ordained protestant minister, along with the nine-
teenth-century abolitionists before him. With dynamic,
commanding speech West reminded the audience
that the civil rights movement appealed not just to
secular standards of social justice but to a higher
moral code.

I bring up spiritualism here to suggest that the rever-
ence and transcendentism espoused by West was
reinforcing that to be devout is to be amazed. At the
onset of his completely captivating and frenetic ora-
tion he recalls W.E.B. Du Bois’s plea in The Ordeal of
Mansart: “How shall integrity face oppression? What
shall honesty do in the face of deception? What does
decency do in the face of insult? What shall virtue do
meet brute force?”2 With these questions as its

footing for his many references to art and artists,

1 On his Wikipedia page this entry still requires citation, and further
searches online were unsatisfying. So, for the sake of this article,
le’t assume this is true.

2 Camille Paglia, “Cults and Cosmic Consciousness: Religious Vi-
sion in the American 1960’s” Arion, 10.3, Winter, Boston University

3 Du Bois goes onto say “there are so many answers and so
contradictory; and such differences for those on the one hand who
meet questions similar to this once a year or once a decade, and
those who face them hourly and daily.”

Thank you to Janique Vigier.
MAKING AND SURVEILLING: A BOOK REVIEW OF YOU ARE HERE: ART AFTER THE INTERNET

JOHN PATTERSON

You Are Here: Art After the Internet
edited: Omar Kholeif
published: Cornerhouse, SPACE 2014

Deconstruct the title You Are Here: Art After the Internet and the theory behind the book is explained: A collection of authors examine identity, place, and time within the context of the contested history of a genre variously known as net.art, new aesthetic, new media, post-internet. Coming in at just under 250 pages the anthology is concise but ambitious. Ideas expressed by several of the authors are sentiments familiar to art-centric internet circles (or internet-centric art circles), but offer more condensed and articulated versions. Where You Are Here succeeds is its capability as a tool to compress these conversations into an archival format by disconnecting the discussion from online forums where many of the ideas were first publicly expressed and recorded.

A foreword by editor Omar Kholeif acts as outline and mandate for many of the authors, most notably those who identify as curators, critics, or writers. Kholeif suggests the distinguishing feature of the internet is culturally praxis. By offering the perspective of cultural analyst (a decidedly more limited categorization than that of cultural producer) the authors submit to a holistic definition of the internet. In conjunction with the internet's identity as a system, the web becomes activated through the principle of cultural contribution and questioning of itself through the cultural praxis of its many users. This definition and subsequent proposition brings the principle of this book to a focus: That the internet is limited to and defined by its structural nature, which allows it to grow to its ability to be monitored by all analysts (a decidedly more limited categorization than that of cultural producer) the authors submit to a holistic definition of the internet. In conjunction with the internet's identity as a system, the web becomes activated through the principle of cultural contribution and questioning of itself through the cultural praxis of its many users.

The recognition of this concept is simultaneous liberating and problematic, as the over-saturation of cultural content drowns itself out as "everything becomes about creating hype and momentum[...]. And creating recontextualized intensities of meaning where there is none within the attention competitive hyper-mediation." In the first two-thirds of the book (titled "Essays" and "Provocations" respectively) unanimous focus is placed on the meta-critical consideration of the internet as a structure that is culturally driven by users, but ultimately devoid of its own culture outside of what is defined by the necessities of usability. The culture of the user, while affective on the way they interact with the content seen on the web, ultimately enables its use as a medium. Painting, drawing, photography, internet. However, as the book progresses into the final third ("Projects"), theoretical ideas and observations outlined in the previous text are realized or challenged by a new set of artistic projects. Analysis is replaced by a language of poetics. Expression is privileged and contrasted to function. A good example is "Resolution 978HD: A Visual Essay" by artist collective Model Court. The collection of texts and photographs document the trial and conviction of a Rwandan exile in Finland who was found guilty of war crimes and participation in the 1994 Rwandan genocide by a Finnish court. The trial took place in Rwanda, with witness testimony and legal proceedings broadcast via internet-based video-conferencing to the prison cell and court in Finland. The visual essay contains images and video stills captured by a Finnish police man throughout the proceedings, with accompanying annotations and 'log entries' written by the artists. The narrative constructed around the trial is complex and bizarre. "978HD" does not directly examine the socialstructure of the web (although it does venture into the politics of creating a global fiber-optic infrastructure to support the world's population.) More importantly, the project exists within and on the internet. It feels distinctly of the internet due to the narratives reliance on the technology. The included images adopt an 'inter-net aesthetic', it can be safely assumed the policeman was not a professional photographer. The hypertext and supplemental text read more like the captions on a news-blogs than as didactic wall texts.

The documentary nature of the included works is accelerated by their inclusion in a physical book. The projects become documentation of documentation. Whereas the essays included in provocations take the reader by a theoretical hand, the projects selected by editor Omar Kholeif often seem indifferent to theory, posing a separate set of questions which seem distinctly less involved with internet-politics and more engaged with human-politics, if such a strict divide can be found.

Collectively, You Are Here does not propose a conclusive thesis or offer a holistic insight into the ongoing global impact of the internet and its effects within and around it. Rather, Kholeif's editorial goal supposedly aims to define, on a variety of scales, what it means to be a cultural producer in the midst of a rapidly developing environment. Functionally, the book may provide a useful tool to locate the points within an ongoing, non-canonized history which allow 'cultural producers' to reassess their own position within the system.
SÉRIPOP GO PILE WILD: THE FACE STAYED EAST AND THE MOUTH WENT WEST (ELEMENTS) @ GALERIE HUGUES CHARBONNEAU (MTL)

KELLY CAMPBELL

They pierced my ear with a pink paper clip, telling me (cooing at my neck) that skill and polish are mitigated by class and encouraged by capitalism. Our labours against labour became an exhausting commodity, producing constant and unexpected demands for justification. What we naïvely believed would be a static object became an autonomous living thing, a relentlessly hungry toddler screaming for us constantly.

My ear got infected and no one could drive me to the hospital. They put a pink paper clip in it. The ear infection was a response to the architecture of the gallery, effectively serving the productive refinement. A love of piles could be interpreted as a Lynda Barry-esque resistance to the question of ‘goodness’ though an interest in the primary organizational stage, which shows more critical promise than ‘goodness’ through an interest in the primary organizational stage, which shows more critical promise than the ‘finished piece’ as an illusion or at least boring and inconsequential aspect of gallery practice. Maintaining the initial, strong immediacy is left after it passes through the wringers of self-doubt and those annoying desires to please peers/ the market/ those ‘above you’ who ‘know what they are talking about’. Building a table to eat at together, building something to show that you have the desire to eat together, is more important than ordering the wood from Italy (as if we could afford it) or even making dinner.

And so: 6. The ‘loose ends’, trails of ropes tying groups together. Connecting piles and the spaces between them. These ropes leisurely meander away from their groups to pursue membership in another pile or their own presence as an unruly appendage. The piles are staying east, and the rope is going as far west as he can while still tethered to piledom, which, true to existing in this messy ass world, where you almost never have time to finish a thought. Or maybe a lack of space + time is irrelevant, and the first part of the thought is just more interesting than whatever silver/ boring ghost dressed in business casual is left after it passes through the wringers of self-doubt and those annoying desires to please peers/ the market those ‘above you’ who ‘know what they are talking about’...
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
SEPTEMBER 2015

contact us: scanpublication@gmail.com
full issues online: scanpublication.wordpress.com

Front cover image: Michael Mogatas, Untitled #5, inkjet transfer on canvas, 16" x 12", 2015.
Back cover image: The Face Stayed East and the Mouth Went West, Séripop. Photo courtesy Galerie Hugues Charbonneau.
Layout: Kelly Campbell + John Patterson. Logo: Hannah Doucet.
Scan is made possible by the University of Manitoba School of Art Curriculum Development and Innovation Fund.