

Reader discretion advised.

This book contains language that some readers may find disturbing, including reference to sexual and emotional abuse, physical violence, murder and drug use.

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We Could See You
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Title cards
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* *

curtains

Editors' Preface

Jess Chandler, Aimee Selby, Hana Noorali
& Lynton Talbot

in

In May 2019, Hana and Lynton were working on an exhibition that would open that October at the David Roberts Art Foundation, London, as part of its annual Curators' Series. Called *The Season of Cartesian Weeping*, the exhibition was to consolidate, put into practice and stress-test some of the thinking they had been developing around the role of language in the visual arts and its use as a material by artists. Particular focus was placed on developing a shared praxis with artists who considered language itself as the building blocks of immaterial architectures, spaces that might simultaneously provide shelter from and repel certain forms of institutional domination or co-option.

The exhibition also aimed to address a contradiction at the heart of our cultural institutions and territories for art: that while they offer effective spaces to voice political dissent and to platform activism, in occupying those spaces we simultaneously sustain many of the problems that art intends to critique—unpaid labour, unethical corporate partnerships, structural racism. Rather than refuse such a space altogether, artists were invited to consider how language might be used to build environments that can facilitate more discrepant forms of knowledge production to evade the relentless market capture of ideas, language and sociality that defines our current political climate. This would be a kind of critical disarmament in which language and discursive modes might be harnessed to reorient, retell or reimagine our relations to the institutions and territories that stratify us. The critical impulse of this project is one that also drove the *Intertitles* inquiry.

Although divergent in approach, the work produced within *The Season of Cartesian Weeping* could be broadly characterised as poetry. Though multifarious in nature, the oppressive structures identified in the project were understood as symptomatic of increased capitulation to neoliberal market forces and a technocapitalism that not only resists but, increasingly, casually co-opts forms of refusal and counter-hegemonic modes of being. The exhibition tested the assertion that the commandeering of language back from the violent ways in which neoliberalism finds expression in our speech is a crucial form of resistance to the infrastructures that frame our experience and codify our behaviour in the world. Poetry, in this sense, might be a critical force in building another space for encounters with art.

At the same time, Jess had recently established Prototype, building on the work of its precursor, Test Centre, to explore more deeply the interplay between poetry, writing and the visual arts. Prototype's commitment to providing a space for interdisciplinary publications, in a publishing environment so restricted by the demands and structures of its marketing and distribution systems, posed an equivalent response, its own form

to

Foreword

*My Immediate Orbit: A personal
and partial writing-and-the-art-world
rundown 01–21*

Isabel Waidner

It's 01. I'm from a working-class background, self-educated and the only writer I know.

03? 04? An open call to submit to American genderqueer feminist art journal *LTTR* issue 2? or 3? circulates among London queers. I submit —rejected.

Then, nothing.

04? Art duo Guestroom hold semi-regular readings and book group meetings in their gallery/project space in Shacklewell Lane, Dalston.

More nothing.

Excerpt from an interview with New Narrative writer and San Francisco Poets Theater impresario Kevin Killian, recorded in 06 but not published until 19:

INTERVIEWER: Has Poets Theater changed since you first became involved in it in 1985?

KK: Today I think that poetry audiences are less isolated than before due to developments in contemporary art, and the involvement of their peers in art is welcomed more and more. That's the way I always wanted it to be, just didn't know how to make it happen. Except for what I did [create SF Poets Theater]. Now you see poets at art openings and, wonder of wonders, you see some artists at poetry events.

No equivalent to Poets Theater exists in the UK — not in the eighties, not in 06. As far as I'm concerned, poetry and the visual arts remain pretty segregated over here.

06? 07? *The Happy Hypocrite*, a new UK art writing journal edited by Maria Fusco and published by Book Works, is seeking submissions for its inaugural issue. I pick up a flyer to this effect in an East London nightclub. I've never seen anything like it — 'a greatly needed testing ground for new writing, somewhere for artists, writers and theorists to express experimental ideas that might not otherwise be realised or published' — and it's not like I haven't looked. I keep the flyer but don't submit until issue 10, over a decade later. After a series of guest editors, the twelfth and final issue of *The Happy Hypocrite* will see Fusco return as its editor. It will be published in late 21.

For now, still more nothing.

08: I put together 20 book-sized copies of my novel *Frantisek Flounders* to distribute among friends, including loose covers (back and front) cut from cardboard boxes.

proceed

Anna Barham

Undone in the face

let's face it sit sites sites wouldn't told to each other let's face it let's face it
let's all take that as of love love look let's face it we're undone by each other
there I'm undone wouldn't talk to each other and my thoughts told to each
other we're undone and if we're not we're missing something I'm I'm if
we're not we're when not to misuse this seems so clear clearly thoughts
import so cool see cool sea this seems so clearly the case with grief the kinds
of grief you seem missing something you see so clearly the case with grief
kinds of grief centre like old times please like old times this seems so clearly
the case with grief so can't we like old times but it can be so only because it
was because it was already can be sent and because it is already the case
with desire you want desire one because I can you want wonder does what
it is what's to his because of an advocate you want the case with desire ready
the case with the final one because wonder does not always stain tact one
does not always stay intact themselves they say facing spacey Stacy ecstasy
you suck ecstasy breaks the text one does not always stay intact one does not
always stay in touch stained text they say wasting text one may want to but I
want to check one may want to touch when they have one being wanting
almonds for far almost or manage to once you once you manage my needs
try for a while you want to try you want to help or manage to for a while
almost did you hope what did you hurt fighting me manage to be for a while
but despite despite us both just one's best efforts conspecifics want space to
step what's best if one's best ever thoughts despite this the storm is done in
the face of the upset to step over the storm one is undone thoughts undone
in the face often the face of the other in the face of upset by the touch other
by the thoughts other benefits what's best if what's up what isn't what's that's
whats the books up over so one is undone over so I'm done in the face upset
by the touch upset by the text I wanted to eat one is undone in the face of the
other by the touch by the thoughts by the scent and to schedule thoughts
medicine by field missing monochrome I sent to you the things by the scent
by the feel by the prospect of the touch touch other perspectives expected
something expected touch with the memory of the field of clear touch by
the memories feel muscles are in session some muscles are incessant
phosphorescent skin shifting into its form I miss you as they say what one
repeats is dead what one repeats is the scene in which one is acting and see
which ones are the days in which one is living is not that dictates which
seemingly one is again the days in which one is living the days in which one
is leaving wondering river men dream bewitched see which redoing to do
which was even which one is it dazed one was living one was leaving one was
speaking which agonising the coming and going becoming a drama which
one is doing and I and die this dies somebody's little processing of personal
attention processing of language learning intentions learning orientations
within this because the machine processing and our own orientations of
language skin I mean here is something like I mean here there's something
of the machine-like digital muscles shifting I'm in here but something of the
machine and nothing such a function to solve I'm not exactly sure what to

repeat

CAConrad

CORONA DAZE



CORONA DAZE 24 by CAConrad

for years after
friends died of
AIDS they still
danced with me in my dreams
did survivors of the Black Plague
dance with their dead
who will dance
with whom
in a year
let's
keep
safe
dance
together
IN PERSON

begin

Anais Duplan

BLACKSPACE

...



For Mackey, self and sound are analogous: the internal counterpart to the external other. For each self, there is a particular sound, which each person has to practice discovering on their own. Discovering themselves. “You have to find what is, where it is, and how to get it out, and how to translate it through a horn or a piano or a keyboard whatever—which you likely call ‘technology’ added.

—one
er. For
each
way to
that it
ow to
pass—
y,” he

PARADIGMS FOR LIBERATION

DAILY, I am enmeshed in a constellation of oppressions, which we could call the white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy.

Has my life been predestined?

Can I pursue liberation?

What kind of liberation can I pursue?

I have discovered that when I experience what is universal in me, I may leave my individual oppressions behind.

This discovery is important, and at the same time, I need a way of working towards liberation that sees me as a unique person, occupying my distinct social positions as a black, Haitian, transgender, nonbinary, pansexual human being. The praxis of attaining liberation as an individual, a member of society, and as a human is incomplete if, in my methodology, I don't address each of these “nodes.”

So far, I've found that one of my best opportunities for liberation is in esthetic experience.

When I'm rushed by the smell of nannies walking

play

Quinn Latimer

*Images TK or 'An acknowledgment
that it is impossible to move
forward' / 'Q' di Quadro or My Body,
Her Refrain (It Comes Back)*

Images TK
or
'An acknowledgment that
it is impossible to move forward'

I had been dreaming in subtitles
Maybe I was watching a film when I wrote this
Or dreaming I was watching a film when I wrote this
Who wrote this, I asked myself, watching the cult film
And fiddling with my phone, watching the moon
Through another familiar frame, luminous unsuppressed screen
Orchestrated to induce identification with one's 'surroundings' while holding
The line between culture and nature, between interior and, anyway, moon
Revealed by the Orthodox fathers at the crest of the hill
Its hallucinated orb or porcelain report reaching a kind of apogee
Glacial then floral in its fullness, almost bordello
As my friend might put it, her blast of hair mouthing some blue
Soundtrack through another poorly fit translucent casement
Many pale apartment blocks and neo-feudal economies away
Between us only the soft and viral confluence of airs, skies both solar and lunar
Constellating our glittery mineral stasis, our looseness of ties to a rocky world
Indexing past arrivals and present planetary returns
In strange animal signatures to which poets to the west affixed weekly readings
I wondered what their sky—once ink, now glitch—revealed that ours did not
Indeed the Eastern Mediterranean sky that came down
This very night like some wet dark denim
Maybe Japanese, maybe American, hard and expensive
While inside my apartment, reports woven of goat hair
And a language of some incised relief most inscrutable
Crossed moving images laden with a more fluent and flunky darkness
Poverties at once emotional and economic and light-source
Almost genre, that kind of scripted violence
All sought my vision to which I could not affix captions
Could not ascribe borders closed open or otherwise
Beyond litanies of feeling or recrimination sans syntax, that is
So I wrote down (I write everything twice) a letter or index
Of something close to facts but not, really, in any instance:

<i>A group of women at the door...</i>	Architecture
<i>It smells like rain and icons...</i>	Debt
<i>Where were you, she called...</i>	Teargas
<i>I wasn't sure but I'm pretty sure...</i>	Values
<i>All those uncertain years, I...</i>	Speculation
<i>You should get to work...</i>	Period Romance
<i>The wall like a flesh wound...</i>	Psychoanalysis
<i>Pledge to hire five thousand new cops...</i>	Austerity

carry on

Jordan Lord

Value Subtracted: A Poetics of Access and Interference

For the last five years, I have been making a film about my family's debts.¹

Before my dad was fired from his job, he worked as a debt collector. Now, my family is in a tremendous amount of debt—much of which is mine.

My dad calls his former line of work 'risk management'.

Ever since he told me this, I've been thinking about what kinds of risks documentary filmmakers are asked to manage, which risks people in documentary films are asked to bear, and what it would mean to not differentiate these risks but rather share them.

In order to have the legal right to show and sell a documentary film, it is standard practice for documentarians to ask the people recorded on film to give up their rights to object to however the filmmaker decides to use these recordings, by designating this material the filmmaker's property. The contracts that simultaneously mediate this transfer of rights and creation of property are called 'access agreements'.

*

At the opening of their essay 'The Guild of the Brave Poor Things', Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos² ask, 'What about a door is a trap when it's known, or known to be unknown?'³ Maybe going in this way is a trap, but for me this question is a door that opens on to a whole host of other questions about what we mean by access or getting in: In what ways does it matter? Who is it for? What does it do? What is known or known to be unknown here?

*

What I can say about my own access (a term I use here with hesitation, thinking of how closely this resembles the ways that documentary filmmakers conflate access and permission) to the artworks I am writing about in this essay is that my access is partial.⁴ It has not emerged at once or in one place or time and maybe has not yet arrived. But the way I have been let into these artworks and ideas has been through years of friendship with, and love for, each of the people I'm writing about. I've often loved them through the work that each of them makes, and through each other—through their entanglements with one another and the way their work moves through those friendships; intertwines; is in conversation.

I am telling you this not just to help you understand from what context my thinking about these people, artworks, and ideas is emerging. It is also to say that there is an inextricable seam here between what access lets in and

1 In terms that are financial and social, accounted for and uncountable, as that which binds us. See Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (2013), available at www.minorcompositions.info.

2 Throughout this essay, after introducing authors or artists with whom I am friends using their full names, I refer to them on a first-name basis. Like most of our friends, I call Constantina Zavitsanos 'Tina'.

3 Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos, 'The Guild of the Brave Poor Things', in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, ed. Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley and Johanna Burton (Cambridge, MA, 2017), p.236.

4 As in both 'incomplete' and 'showing preference or favoritism'. On this see Amalle Dublon, 'Partial Figures: Sound in Queer and Feminist Thought', dissertation, Duke University (2017), www.dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/handle/10161/16226.

to

Alice Theobald

