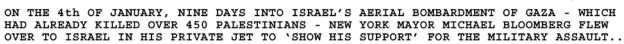
"IF YOU'RE IN YOUR APPARTMENT AND SOME 'EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED' PERSON IS BANGING ON THE DOOR SCREAMING \I'M GONNA COME THROUGH THE DOOR AND KILL YOU! ' DO YOU WANT US TO RESPOND WITH ONE POLICE OFFICER -WHICH IS PROPORTIONAL - OR WITH ALL THE RESOURCES AT OUR COMMAND?" MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, JANUARY 2009

BOYCOTT BLOOMBERG







THE VISIT WAS STRATEGICALLY TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH THE NEXT PHASE OF OPERATION CAST LEAD': THE GROUND INVASION OF GAZA ONE OF THE MOST DENSELY POPULATED AREAS ON THE PLANET

AFTER A FURTHER THIRTEEN DAYS OF 'WAR', ISRAEL CALLED A HALT TO ITS OFFENSIVE. AND WITHDREW ITS FORCES IN TIME FOR THE INAUGURATION OF U.S. PRESIDENT OBAMA. U.N. ESTIMATES PUT THE PALESTINIAN DEATH TOLL AT OVER 1300, A THIRD OF THOSE KILLED BEING CHILDREN. THOUSANDS MORE HAVE BEEN INJURED AND MAIMED. NUMEROUS WAR CRIMES HAVE BEEN REPORTED BY AGENCIES SUCH AS

THE W.H.O. AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, INCLUDING THE SHELLING OF DESIGNATED CIVILIAN SHELTERS & U.N.BUILDINGS, FIRING ON AMBULANCES, THE DELIBERATE TARGETING OF HEALTH FACILITIES, AND THE USE OF

WHITE PHOSPHOROUS AS A WEAPON...

ALONGSIDE THE MILITARY ONSLAUGHT THE ISRAELI GOVT. ENGAGED IN AN AGGRESIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO PORTRAY ISRAEL AS THE INNCOENT VICTIM, NOT THE POWERFUL OCCUPIER AND PERPETRATOR OF TERROR. SURREAL BBC BROADCASTS, DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN 'BALANCE', REPORTED MASS CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, BEFORE ALLOWING ISRAELI MINISTERS TO HAVE THE FINAL WORD, DISPUTING THE FACTS AND JUSTIFYING THEIR ACTIONS. SUCH DENIALS DEPEND FOR THEIR SUCCESS ON REPRODUCING A NARRATIVE IN WHICH THE ISRAELI'S ARE LIKE 'US' - CIVILISED WESTERNERS, OR (FOR BLOOMBERG) INNOCENT NEW YORKERS IN NEW YORK CITY

AND THEIR BRAVE COPS. GAZANS, BY CONTRAST, ARE 'EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED' KILLERS. WHEN THE RATIO OF 100 PALESTINIANS KILLED TO EVERY 1 ISRAELI DISTURBS THIS NARRATIVE THE

STRATEGY TURNS TO ONE OF REPEATED BULLYING NEGATION DRESSED AS CONTEMPT.

WE WOULD USE ALL OUR RESOURCES TO KEEP YOU SAFE. WE WOULD'NT GET INVOLVED WITH RIDICULOUS LIKE THINGS PROPORTIONALISM.

THERES NO SUCH THING AS A MEASURED RESPONSE TO TERRORISM PERIOD.

EUROPEAN HEADQUATERS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION COMPANY BLOOMBERG LP, 92% OWNED BY ITS FOUNDER MICHAEL BLOOMBERG. ALONG WITH ITS WIDER SPONSORSHIP FOR CONTEM -PORARY ART, THE SPACE IS A PIECE OF CORPORATE PACKAGING WHICH MAKES IT LOOK HIP AND

LIBERAL. IT IS CULTURAL CAPITAL FOR BILLIONAIRE BLOOMBERG, WHO WITH ALL HIS POWER AND PRES-TIGE PLAYED HIS OWN PART

IN THE DEVESTATION OF GAZA.BLOOMBERG FAVOURS AN EXCES-SIVE, DISPROPORT-IONATE APPROACH, YET HIS SUPPORT FOR CONTEMPORARY ART MARKS HIM AS CIVILISED & PROGRESSIVE.

PORLERS BLOOMBERG SPACE IS A LONDON GALLERY LOCATED WITHIN THE

.DESPITE ALL THE DIPLOMAT-

ICALLY-WORDED CONDEMNATION

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

& CALLS FOR A 'CEASEFIRE',

HAS REMAINED IMPOTENT IN THE FACE OF U.S. BACKING

FOR ISRAEL, UNABLE, OR UNWILLING, TO IMPOSE ANY

MEASURES WHICH WOULD HELP

ACHIEVE AN END TO THE

SINCE THE 2003 IRAQ

DEMOS.

SLAUGHTER. THIS FAILURE

LEAD TO WORLD-WIDE CIVIL

ACTION, INCLUDING THE BIGGEST PROTESTS IN LONDON





JOIN FREE SCHOOL

BOYCOTT

BLOOM BERG

NOW

4.0.2009



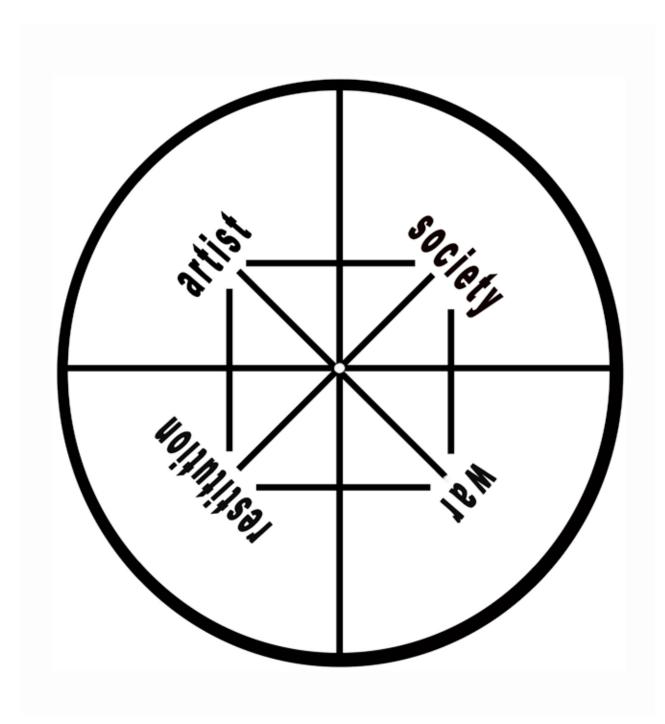
FIRST SERIES VOL. I, No. 1

LONDON, MAR. 12, 2009

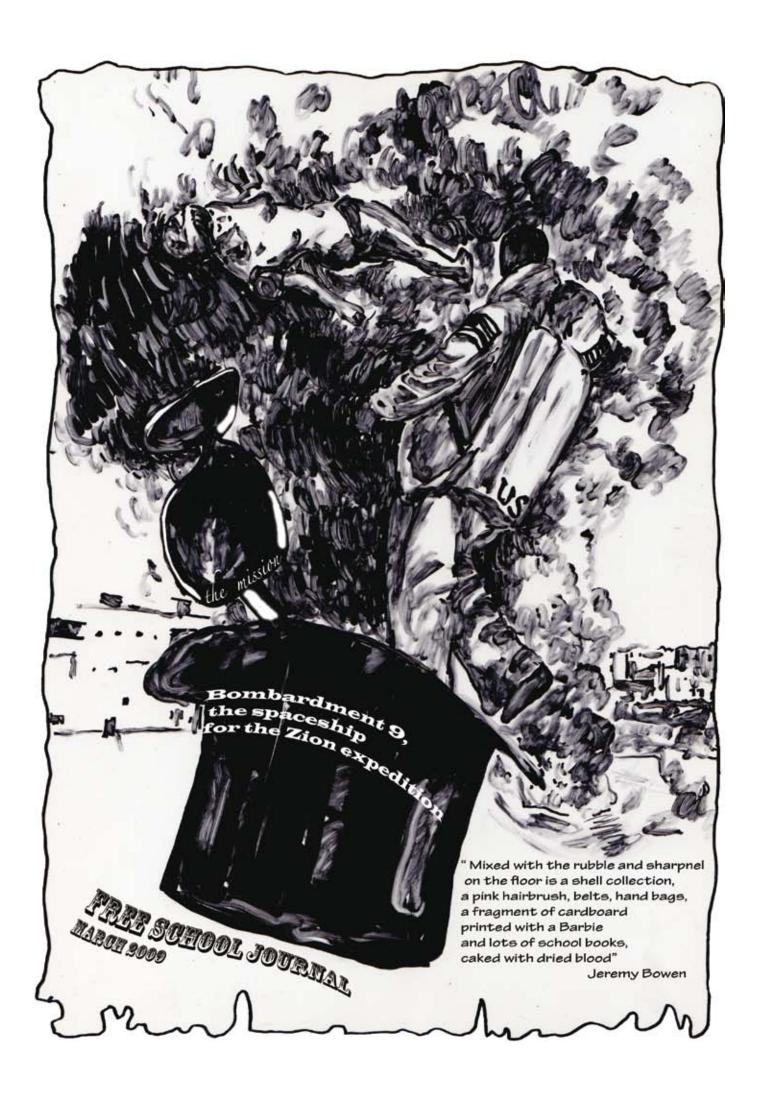
WE ARE LOOKING FOR ARTISTS & WRITERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A 'FREE SCHOOL' MAGAZINE.

WORK SHOULD RELATE TO THE RECENT ATTACKS IN GAZA, THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, MEDIA BIAS, THE CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OF ART, BLOOMBERG, ART AS A SPECULATIVE COMMODITY, ART & PROTEST, AND OTHER ASSOCIATED OR RELEVANT SUBJECTS.

Front Cover	Initial Proposal - Boycott Bloomberg, Andrew Cooper & Dean Kenning
Inside Front	Arnaud Desjardin
Page 2	Art and Society? (Preliminary Sketch Dec. 08), Paul Sakoilsky
Page 3	Youngmi Kim
Page 4	Open Letter to Free School, John Cussans
Page 8	Monkey on the Shoulder, Lado Daraxvelidze & Rachael House
Page 10	Politics of Aesthetics 1 & 3, Martin Sexton
Page 11	Corinna Till, Eddie Farrell, Emma Hart, Michael Wedgwood
Page 12	Death Everywhere, Antonio Cabrera
Page 13	Art Futures? Sam Thomson
Page 15	Shrapnel, Lisa Cradduck
Page 16	Oreet Ashery & Larissa Sansour
Page 20	Lee Holden
Page 21	Bloomberg Terminal, Melanie Gilligan
Page 22	Huw Lemmey
Page 24	Berkeley Square Tree, Guy Allott
Page 25	Curating KnowledgeThe stupidity of the signifier Collectivises, Enda Deburaca
Page 28	Lily Barson
Page 30	Charley's Shock 'n' Awe (After Mills & Colquhoun), Jonathan Trayner
Inside Back	For Gaza, Joanna Choukeir
Back Cover	All political horror and social unhappiness comes from trading what we want most for what we want now, Freee



ART AND SOCIETY? Preliminary Sketch Dec. 08



Open Letter to Free School On the subject of Gaza, Ethics and Aesthetics

'In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant.'

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer - Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944)

'WHATEVER is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling'

Edmund Burke - A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756)

Five weeks have now passed since Israel announced an end to the recent phase of military operations in Gaza. The shock and awe of the military bombardment is over but the remains of phosphorous bombs are still burning holes into the skins of children who play in the ruins of their homes, schools and hospitals, and into the skins of the surgeons who try to heal them. The bombardment is over but the suffering of the Gazan people deepens.

When I returned to teaching at Chelsea College of Art and Design in early January the Israel Defence Force's ground invasion and aerial bombardment of Gaza had been going on for 9 days. There had been two rallies in London against the war in as many weeks, the second bringing together tens of thousands of British citizens marching to the Israeli embassy in protest against its country's actions.

Since the demonstrations against the Iraq War in 2003 those involved in protest in the UK have grown accustomed to our government and media playing down, ignoring and selectively misrepresenting the massive demonstrations of public outrage that regularly occur here. But in light of the particular nature of the war being waged by Israel against the elected government of Gaza; its mobilization of the rhetoric of the War on Terror to justify the collective punishment of Gazan citizens; and the extension of the propaganda offensive into the realm of global media - this was a particularly appalling and enraging silence.

My dismay and anger at the lack of public condemnation of events by our politicians and media channels was amplified by the silence of the university at which I work and the union of which I am a member. Why were these institutions not speaking out against the blatantly disproportionate use of violence by Israel's armed forces against the blockaded civilian population of Gaza? Why were there so few open public denunciations of these atrocities and so few challenges to the sophistry of Israel's media representatives? These were questions I put to the MA students at Chelsea at the beginning of the first lecture of the new term.

In response to the questions several students said they would like to discuss the issue directly with other students and asked if I could forward this suggestion to the student email list along with their names and emails. This I did. The following week, before I began my lecture - appropriately, as it turned out, on the subject of 'The Beautiful, Sublime and Grotesque' - I announced the proposed establishment by students at Chelsea of a Solidarity Network for the People of Gaza.

As soon as the announcement was made a student in the lecture hall stood up and demanded to be removed from the student mailing list in protest of my use of the college mail system for pro-Palestinian propaganda. I must admit I was shocked. I knew feelings were strong on both sides of the issue but I was not expecting to be challenged politically in that context, especially on the grounds of an assumed academic neutrality expected of lecturers at an educational institution.

Is there an official position regarding academic neutrality on political issues at the University of the Arts? Are there other people in the institution who believe that an academic must be 'neutral' or 'impartial' on 'sensitive' political issues? Could this explain the general lack of debate on Gaza there? And if such an unspoken ideology does exist how can it be reconciled with the theoretical and political approaches to art and aesthetics that we regularly debate at Chelsea? Is there something that makes this particular situation different to the others we discuss?

In retrospect I am indebted to this student for having the courage to stand up and speak out on the strength of her convictions. It was by reflecting on her concerns that I decided to formulate my thoughts on these issues in an open letter to Free School¹ and to state my position, as best I can, not only as an artist and teacher, but also, primarily, as a human being.

The intention of this letter is therefore threefold: to attempt to express in words as clearly as possible what I think and feel about these issues and why I it is important for artists and educational establishments to address them directly; to promote an open discussion and debate about the situation in Gaza and artistic responses to it; and to encourage tactical planning by artists and groups who wish to work collectively in protest against further preventable human suffering

in Gaza and elsewhere.

Feelings, Facts, Ethics and Aesthetics

"There's no moral difference between a stealth bomber and a suicide bomber, both kill innocent people for political reasons" – Tony Benn

"Protecting audiences from nightmarish or indecent scenes is not convincing. War is ugly. And if you are honest you have to show the ugly face of war. What is war if not horrible?" - Ahmed Sheikh, Chief Editor Al Jazeera

I was reminded of the opening lines of Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment while watching Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York, arguing against the theory of 'proportionalism'² in a CNN interview in early January. He illustrated his claim that "There's no such thing as a proportional response to terrorism" with an illuminating parable about an emotionally disturbed person trying to get in to your apartment and threatening to kill you. In such a situation he asked: "Do you want us to respond with one police officer – which is proportional – or with all the resources at our command?" (to which John Stewart of The Daily Show, in one of the few moments of light relief during this grim phase of the conflict, retorted - "I guess it depends whether I forced that guy to live in my hallway and made him go through checkpoints every time he wants to take a shit").

Although I consider Mayor Bloomberg's analogy inappropriate in terms of its fit with the situation in Gaza, I am happy that he used a parable to illustrate his view on 'the facts'. It is a particularly paranoid parable which suggests that the appropriate response to subjective fear is the use of extreme military force to eradicate the source of that fear. In keeping with the escalatory logic of the War on Terror the metaphor is reversible and incremental.

In terms of the general argument I want to put forward here it is important that Mayor Bloomberg makes use of a conventional literary device in order to more effectively argue the case justifying Israel's 'right to self-defence' against terror. For the argument to work the audience must understand the metaphor and appreciate its appropriateness. Understanding is a consequence of an aesthetic process. All political expression passes through similar aesthetic channels.

One of the fundamental obstacles to our recognition of the aesthetic dimension of everyday life is the historical emergence of a distinct realm of cultural production called Fine Art, elevated from all the other everyday arts and popular creative practices, to which a set of specific academic and formal discourses have become conventionally associated. It is this separation of artistic spheres and the designation of appropriate philosophical/critical discourses to the separate spheres that has led to the progressive critical de-aestheticization of everyday life and politics. This is the basis for the common assumption that the practice of Fine Art is somehow sullied or de-legitimated when it engages with social and political realities. If, however, we are able to forget about the distinct category of Fine Art for a moment, and re-apply the notion of aesthetics and critical theory to the arts in a general and extended sense, then we can see that such events like a news article, and our responses to it, are quite properly the object of aesthetico-political analysis in complex and multi-faceted ways. If war, media and propaganda are conceived, styled and activated according to aesthetic theories why should citizens and artists not engage these works as such?

Truth, like Beauty, is as much a question of form, as it is of fact. The fitting invention of appropriate analogy is a traditional feature of the craft of political rhetoricians. It is as much an aesthetic element as the choice of suit the speaker wears, or the graphic formatting of the news program. By extending our conception of aesthetics into the realm of everyday life and politics – as was common in earlier phases of our understanding of art and aesthetics - we can see that the facts and feelings we experience in relation to the world on a daily basis are in a constant state of mutual, reflective interdependence. In short the realm of feeling cannot be separated absolutely from the realm of fact any more than the realm of aesthetics can be separated from the realm of ethics. We know things sensually and discover truths about the world as much through the diverse works of the arts in their extended sense as through the proofs of the evidential sciences. And ultimately political rhetoric is far closer to the former than the latter.

Bearing this in mind we can see that just because we don't have access to 'all the facts' or have a 'complete understanding' of the historical context of a particular political situation that we therefore have no right to engage in arguments about the truth of its representation.

From the beginning of the media coverage of the conflict in Gaza it was clear that the public representation of the war was going to be carefully controlled by the propaganda arm of the Israeli war machine³. There is an aesthetic to media spin that we have grown sensitive to after twelve years of New Labour. We recognise it when a government spokesperson manages to answer a question in such a way as to prevent any further discussion, the way they repeat the same response to a differently nuanced pitch of the same question. I want to underline that this is an aesthetic effect, something we both recognise and feel from frequent experience without necessarily being able to prove it scientifically or articulate it clearly in convincing words. Our engagement with the world in general is aesthetic. And our response to television news and political rhetoric is no exception. For me there is something particularly infuriating about the coincidence of the aesthetic of cool, smart, rehearsed and media-savvy political rhetoricians addressing the military actions of their governments which are destroying human lives 'as they speak'. Others may not have the same reaction. But

however we react and respond, this is something that has to do with ethics and aesthetics in a broad sense, things that the discourse of art has often claimed privileged domain over. We may not 'know' the truth of what we see and hear said on television with certainty but our feelings have a sensuous relation to it. And although one may not know what is actually going on, one knows when someone is preventing you from seeing for yourself⁴. By controlling the image of the conflict in Gaza, the Israeli authorities attempted to prevent potential public opposition to their actions. On one level it is an effective strategy in controlling 'perceptions' of the truth. But on another level the strategy backfires, as any child instinctively knows. When someone with the power to do so prevents you from seeing what they are doing, then they are probably doing something they don't want you to see.

It is now five weeks since the latest ceasefire in Gaza and some semblance of the 'facts' about the proportions of the recent phase of the conflict can be made out through the clearing fog of war. As distant tele-mediated observers of the conflict we have even less access to the facts than those reporting from the region. A radical uncertainty about facts in the media is now widely felt as a general condition of life in mass-multi-mediated societies.. But we each have our own ways of assessing issues of contested truth represented by two opposing parties, as we do to the issue of facticity in the news media in general. We feel that some media sources are more truthful, impartial or objective than others. We trust some journalists more than others. We feel one argument has more of the ring of truth to it than another. And in this way we are all involved at some level in the ethico-aesthetic dimension of the rhetoric of legitimation and the issue of truth in the media.

Of course we can argue endlessly about the 'human cost' of this or any other conflict conflict and the legitimacy of the statistical sources. Sadly even debates about ratios of civilians to non-combatant deaths is part of the continued media-propaganda war we find ourselves in when we look for an uncontested foothold to challenge the unequal relation of military power and human suffering between the two sides. But we should not let the disputed details blind us to the bigger ethical picture⁵.

When it comes to issues of human violence and suffering these feelings become increasingly acute.. On some issues we find ourselves implicated in the necessity to move towards clarity and certainty about them. On these occasions our instincts compel us towards the truth. I feel strongly, for instance, that the rhetoric justifying Israel's bombardment of Gaza is wrong. I feel it strongly enough to want to contest it. I may be wrong too. As I have said, will never have all the facts or know with total certainty the whole truth about a particular event. But we should not let this stop us from the quest to know with more certainty. And one of the best ways to do this is to engage in the dispute over facts on those issues which most disturb, interest and concern us.

Life is an aesthetic experience. And as such it is ethical and implicated in the everyday play of power, justice and truth. What you feel about things, especially those things that upset, horrify and outrage you has everything to do with art? What is art if not the creative expression of all that it is to be a living human who feels and thinks about being in the world? Art is the refined and considered reflection on the experience of living and being in the world. It is not something that can be removed from that experience

There are many different arts and many different kinds of aesthetic associated with each art form. The contemporary artist is not restricted to any particular form, aesthetic sensibility or doctrine. And different situations call for different artistic responses.

The anxiety some artists feel, that by being associated with specific socio-political issues their career as an artist could be jeopardised, only goes to show how illusory the myth of a fully de-politicized art career is.

Remember, no one is an expert on everything and one can never have all the facts. But as socially engaged citizens you are the best experts in the practice and aesthetics of your everyday life. Don't let the rhetoric of neutrality and impartiality suffocate your instinct for truth and freedom to express critical dissent. Don't let uncertainty about 'the facts' or your lack of 'proper' knowledge about 'complex issues' detract you from the path of taking action and putting your art in the service of what you believe to be right. If you feel strong enough about a social or political issue then you can use all the knowledge and skills at your disposal to make your side of the arguments heard and seen. It does not matter if this is 'properly' art or not. You can always make 'pure' art at other times when the issues are not so urgent for you.

Personally I believe that it is the purpose of both education and art to encourage and cultivate discussion, debate and, if necessary, active dissent about immediate political and social realities. Both should create conditions that allow individuals and groups to speak openly about that which they feel and believe to be true and that which they feel and believe to be wrong; they should facilitate our instincts and desires to seek knowledge and understanding on those issues which most concern us; and they should enable us both to express outrage at, and create solutions for, the preventable causes of human suffering.

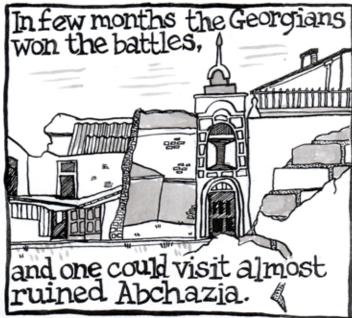
As Adorno - after retracting his famous claim that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" - put it:

'Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as the tortured have to scream'.

- ¹ Free School is an open, informal and collectively run and organised educational initiative based in London.
- ² Proportionalism is an ethical theory that lies between utilitarian ethics (which judge the rightness of an action by the consequences it causes) and de-ontological ethical theories (which claim that an action is either right or wrong in principle regardless of its consequences).
- ³ The plan to invade Gaza had been in preparation for six months. The IDF and Israeli government had learned from the experience of the recent invasion of Lebanon that foreign journalists posed a threat to the successful outcome of military action. As a consequence no foreign journalists were allowed to enter Gaza during the offensive and were only allowed to witness the conflict from one particular viewing point in Israel. Moreover, on arrival in Israel, foreign journalists were issued with anti-Hamas propaganda packs.
- ⁴ This was the case for John Snow of Channel 4 news who went to Israel to cover the events in Gaza. "Getting at the 'whole' truth of this was effectively impossible" he said, "yet viewers made up their minds about the conflict on the basis of what they saw".
- ⁵ The available figures regarding the human casualties of the recent conflict are still contested but it is generally agreed that approximately 1,300 Gazans died during the conflict. The distribution of civilians and combatant deaths in Gaza varies between 895 civilian deaths (according to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights) and 300 (according to the Israeli Defence Force). Israel claims that 13 Israeli's were killed during the conflict including 3 civilians while Hamas has claimed that it killed 80 Israeli troops. In either case we are looking at a ratio of Gazan to Israeli deaths of between 16:1 and 100:1. And these figure do not take in to account the amount of people injured and whose lives have been shattered by the conflict, numbers vastly disproportionate between the two sides. In the days directly after the end of the conflict the BBC estimated that 400,000 people in Gaza were without running water, 4,000 homes had been destroyed and hundreds of thousands of people were homeless. In terms of military action the statistics are also starkly out of proportion. As of January 13, Palestinian militants had launched approximately 565 rockets and 200 mortars at Israel since the beginning of the conflict, according to Israeli security sources. During the same period The Independent reported that Israeli forces had carried out 2,360 air-strikes using fleets of F-16 fighter jets and Apache attack helicopters in one of the most densely populated regions on earth, one without safe havens or bomb shelters for civilians seeking shelter. These are cold statistics and make for a grim factual comparison. But all the same the figures give a representation of a mortal statistical dimension of the conflict, and as such are also part of the ethical-aesthetic 'picture' of it.

monkey on the shoulder words by Lado Daraxvelidze pictures by Rachael House

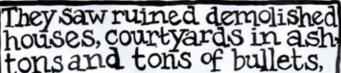


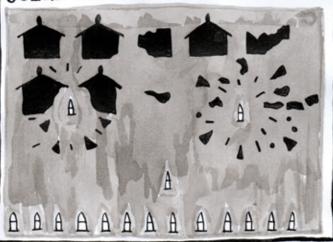


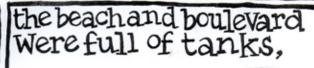




The day before Christmas

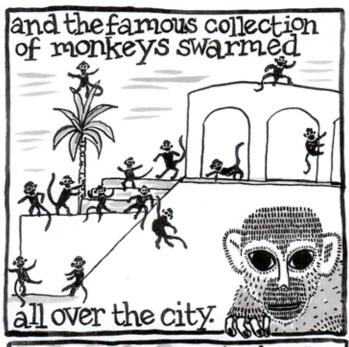








the biggest zoo in Caucasus was destroyed





he bought some plastic Santaclauses and some boxes of freshapples and went home again by train.

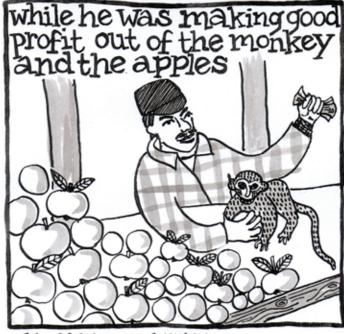


The train was late and there in the big crowd of refugees our Kutaisian guy stood with a monk-ley on his shoulder and the apples Santa clauses

Hearrived 4 hours late at 8 in the morning



and went directly to the market;



KEY: SOCHUMI = SUKHUMI AB CHAZIA = ABKHAZIA



February 2008





If today all galleries cease to exist, will you still make the same art tomorrow?

The question arose out of a conversation betwween Corinna Till, Eddie Farrell, Emma Hart, Michael Wedgwood



Art Futures?

ARTfutures is an exhibition held every year at the Bloomberg Space. According to the website, it showcases "The art of tomorrow". It's a contentious claim, but there's also a bad joke behind the title. So what is a futures contract?

A futures contract most typically refers to an agreement that two parties enter into, giving these parties the obligation to conduct a transaction of a particular product at a particular price and at a particular time in the future. In order to make futures contracts tradable, they are usually written with standardised quantities of time and money and product volume and traded at a Futures Exchange (equivalent to a stock exchange). This exchange will also set prices. For example, the exchange will say how much they think a particular product will sell for several months from now.

Farmers will often sell futures contracts on the stock they produce (e.g. cows) to guarantee getting a fixed income for this product at a later date. The farmer may also buy futures contracts on something like animal feed to guarantee a fixed expenditure for something they know their business will continue to need in the future.

The social utility of Futures Contracts exist in their ability to re-distribute risk. If the price of cows goes down in the future, the farmer would make less money. This could be risky if, for example, the farmer also has a mortgage to pay. Alternatively, if the price of cows goes up in the future, it could be the steak restaurants that have to close because they can't afford the beef. A futures contract reduces the risk for both parties by agreeing now on a set price for cows sold several months from now.

In reality, these contracts are not always held by steak restaurants and cattle farmers. Almost always there will be many levels of speculators between the farmer and the restaurant. For example, imagine you are a speculator. Perhaps last month you bought a futures contract from a farmer that allows you to buy cows in 3 months time for £100 each (lets imagine that buying this contract itself cost you £10). Since then, a widespread plague has reduced the number of cows around and they're already worth £120 each. If they stay at this price until your futures contract matures, you will be able to buy them at £100 and sell them immediately to someone else for £120! At this point the value of the futures contract itself has risen to £50. You may never want to touch the cows yourself, so you could sell your actual futures contract today to someone who does, so long as they think that cows are going to stay at the £120 mark or keep going up. The risk for the speculator is that cows will go down in price below £100 each. Who would want a contractual obligation to buy cows at £100 each if the standard market value falls to £90? If this happens the futures contract becomes worthless and can be costly to the person holding it.

So a futures contract means different things to different people. To some it is a way of selling off the risk of running a business in which profits may go up or down. To others it is a way of buying this same risk in the hope that it will be profitable.

Have you got the joke yet?

So ARTfutures is a joke on the idea that Art is a business. Unfortunately it is probably a bad joke because art (in its presently rich and varied form) could never function in a way that a futures commodity does. Remember, a futures contract is only tradable because it is based on a standardised product. Yes, all cows are different, but a futures contract in cows would normally have a minimum weight requirement or similar.

Can't you standardise art? Well, a while ago the Dutch government tried. They offered state benefits to all practicing artists, as long as the artist donated a work of art to the Dutch nation, each month, in exchange. What happened to all this art? Well, it all went to be stored in aircraft hangers. Recently, they had so much art there that they stopped the whole system and asked the artists to show up and collect their work. No one came because most of the art they had donated consisted of cans, bits of wood, pencils, doodles and lots of other odds and ends that really weren't worth much at all.

So you still want to buy that futures contract in my work? Thought not, but I think I can still convince you that it would be in your interest. After all, if I agreed to sell you my work in six months time for a pre-determined price, and all I came up with was an old boot, I'd never sell anything that way again! Its in my interest to sell you something that you really like. In fact I can sell you a futures contract in my work just so long as you have an idea of what you're going to get... all it means is that I have to start working in series'. So will it be a medical cabinet, a spin painting or a spot painting for you Sir?

Does it even matter Sir? After all, you will be able to buy it at this year's price and sell it after my upcoming auction for a whopping RECORD PROFIT!

So yes, Damien Hirst could sell out his first photo-realist painting show at the White Cube before the paintings were all made. If you bought one and it turned out to be rubbish you could still make a profit on it because PRICES KEPT RISING. Just like the housing market, why not? Now he has finally flooded his own market and prices aren't rising anymore. But that's ok, because his business model allowed him to sell off his risk to other people. Who bought this

risk? Well, no one has put their hand up yet, but the White Cube allegedly sacked 18 members of staff last February, a large number even for such a big gallery. Why did they take such drastic steps? Well...perhaps their business model 6 months ago included a promise to give Damien a large slice of cash for some of the works he was, as-of-then, yet-to-make. After all, why else would they now be holding 200 works by the artist that they can't sell.

So maybe you can have a futures market in art, just so long as you standardise your production. Be wary of making anything too original - you might scare off your investors. What a blow to figure this out just as I'm told that ARTfutures won't be happening this March like it normally does. Maybe futures markets just aren't so funny at the start of an economic downturn.





Popular Middle East euphemisms and misnomers

Wherever there is anything at stake, terminology is never innocent. Shaping, justifying and advancing political agendas as well as national identity and history has a lot to do with chiselling the appropriate concepts to fit one's own political agenda. Language is highly efficient means of seduction. Whoever successfully coins their own terms and manages to slide them into the mainstream dialogue stands a better chance of having their own political agenda generally accepted – without having to argue for it.

In the context of the Middle East, terminology is never neutral, but rather consistently designed to promote political agendas by altering, distorting, camouflaging or simply muffling facts. The following is a list of words and concepts commonly used by Israel – and, in many cases, accepted by the international community and media – to mask, conceal, distort and blur the nature, reality and illegitimacy of the occupation.

Middle East Conflict Security barrier Reunified Jerusalem **Israel Defence Forces** Anti-Semitism No partners for peace Hamastan For security reasons **Terrorists** Judea and Samaria Retaliation Self-defence **Precision bombing** Restraint Two narratives **Militants** Disputed territories Moderate physical pressure Israeli War of Independence Israeli Arabs Jerusalem suburbs Religious conflict Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East Jewish state Disproportionate force Gaza Disengagement

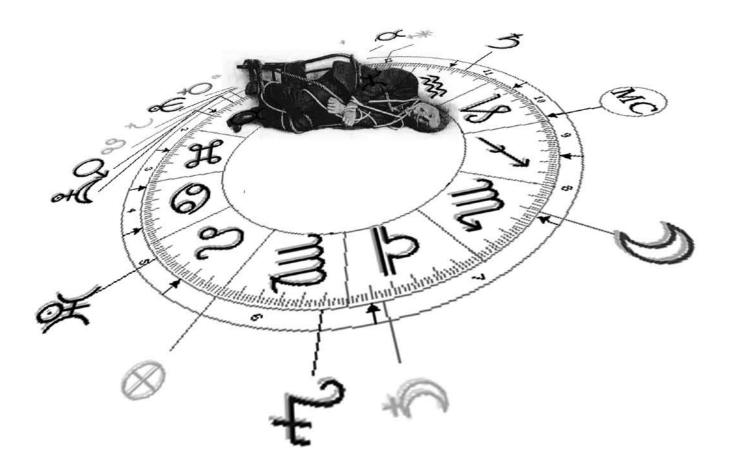
The Israeli peace camp



Settlements







Bloomberg Terminal

A key feature of contemporary financial investment is the ever-accelerating need for information of all kinds. For example, hedge fund managers who recently played such a key role in the financial system work through connecting information across a variety of fields and so require access to fresh knowledge constantly. Bloomberg is one of the main information providers for the financial world, a major part of the financial nervous system. The most commonly known dimension of this business is Bloomberg's television, print and radio coverage on financial markets and other news. However, a large portion of its business is derived from the specialized information it provides to investors via Bloomberg terminals – a many screen computer set up that streams together all manner of financial trading data and a lot of other information as well. The Bloomberg terminal involves computer hardware but more significantly it is a subscription to a financial, regulatory, and market database. Subscriptions are expensive, eliminating most individual traders. Typical subscribers include hedge funds, banks, and other financial institutions. Among other things, the system allows investors to access endless amounts of data, monitor the relationships between different investments and analyze them using advanced tools. A Google image search for pictures of hedge fund managers will turn up many photos of these guys at their desks surrounded by fifteen to twenty screens, which probably include Bloomberg's system as well as those of its competitors.

The Bloomberg system is used by more than 250,000 customers internationally. On a tour of Bloomberg's London offices, I was told it is the second largest private internet network in the world after the U.S. military. The tour guide also explained that the reputations of Bloomberg and its competitors often hinge on differences of a second with regards to getting information out. Bloomberg has whole sectors employed to field angry phone calls from Bloomberg terminal users whose systems have gone down, ready to eat their swivel chairs because every second they aren't connected could mean the loss of untold quantities of capital.

A description the Bloomberg offices themselves gives some sense of the business of financial information. Surprisingly, many services are provided in house on this expensive City real estate. The building seems organized in hierarchical tiers of importance: everything related to the specialized investor products such as the Bloomberg terminals is on the top floors, below that are print and internet journalism and in the basement television. Employees are surrounded by televisions of all sizes, buzzing from every surface, all playing Bloomberg news channels. A bench in the lobby has several screens inset in the seat while all around bands of TVs are suspended from the ceilings and walls. A 24-hour snack bar in the lobby encourages employees not to take lunch but to keep replenishing themselves on the cornucopia of bite sized nourishments.

One last detail highlights the spirit of instantaneous information transmission which permeates the Bloomberg business. The basement television offices are set up so that reports are purged of any extraneous time and labour. Journalists complete their stories at their desks and send them electronically to one of a several mini news booths at the edge of the room where they appear on a teleprompter. The teleprompter operates on an unmanned automatic camera system that requires no crew whatsoever and allows the reporter to control it from his/her news desk. There they also choose from a variety of garish backdrops (e.g. the London skyline in bright pinks and reds). While I was there, a news piece being shot downstairs was on the upstairs television within a few minutes. Apparently various big financial institutions have such Bloomberg booths in the corner with in house reporters ready to reel off new info at the drop of a hat.

Goldsmiths/BA Expo Award Installation for Terminal 5, Heathrow.

The Business Development Office at Goldsmiths has teamed up with BAA, Imagination and Artists for 2012 (af2012) to open up an amazing opportunity for Goldsmiths students across all disciplines.

We are looking for collaborative submissions from Goldsmiths students who would like to design and build 2 installations for the new Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport, with a build budget of £40,000 for the two accepted submissions. The pieces will be part of BA's Expo initiative, and offer unprecedented exposure to the students selected.

The two selected teams will be working with af2012 in a dedicated studio with a goldsmiths alumni mentor. The installations will be open to the public on 13th September, and will remain in the departures hall of T5 for 3 months.

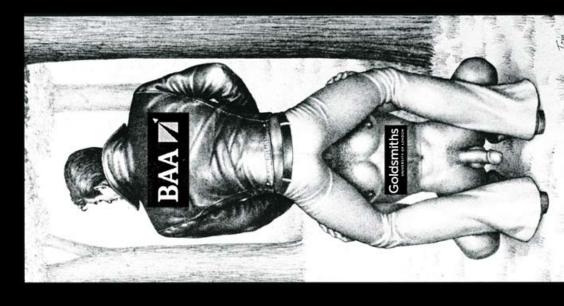
If you would like to get involved, please put together a project team (2+ students) and send a 500 word collective statement, including a preliminary outline of your ideas for the installation with some pictures of your individual work to t5@af2012.org by Friday 9th May. 5 teams will then be invited to meet BAA at T5 and discuss the proposals in detail on the 16th May.

For more information, please contact the af2012 team at info@af2012.org





"COLLABORATIVE SUBMISSION"



(OFFERING UNPRECEDENTED EXPOSURE)

Goldsmiths/BA Expo Award Installation for Terminal 5, Heathrow.

"This attitude may either appear in condescending loyalty and apparent generosity towards aesthetic producers by corporate sponsors, or it may emerge in carefully orchestrated activities of control by the state support systems. Both approaches evidently refuse the idea of linking cultural production any longer to political analysis and critique. In moments of socio-economic crisis, the cultural support system therefore rids itself of its public risk factors, such as the discourse of critical theory within aesthetic practice; and even the last vestige of artistic "freedom" to simulate self-reflexivity, autonomy, and transgression- seems to have vanished. When state support and corporate enterprise have finally taken full command of artistic production and distribution, formal opposition and conceptual negation become totally allen to the artistic project that aims to enter these support systems. Or, in reverse perspective: aesthetic producers now totally conform to these new conditions imposed by the governmental or corporate support structure, even though they might have celebrated radical individuality...

...Just as artists seem to be hardly aware of the political implications of corporate and state patronage, so the "liberal" corporate and state patron hardly care about the actual cultural production generated through its subsidies- as long as the output does not seriously threaten the pacifying effects of the cultural-economic pact, and as long as it maintains the myth that "culture" can actually flourish within the framework of the late capitalist state...

...Governmental and corporate interests of national and ideological self-representation operate inevitably out of utter disregard for the individual artist's motivation."

Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry", pgs 120-121



by huw





Curating KnowledgeThe stupidity of the signifier Collectivises

An aggressive headless construction or knowledge that teems with excited anticipation of an enjoyment of total abandon may find itself expressed in a number of figurations. We might consider the authority of the towers blown away or the hammers destroying the capsized monument to a tyrant or perhaps the video recording of executed decapitation circulating on the net or the no less glamorous corpse found in a North London supermarket car park. The carnivalesque violence of everyday pathology assumes a dismal routine-ness in the anti-place of tough love anarchy. "Deal with it!" Assemble from the wasteland with no belief in treasure. Don't panic, go organic, kill shit cunt NOW! The scavenger will take what he can, what pittance of enjoyment is offered from this ecological nightmare of excess. Mario Merz or David Hammond, the artist puts shit in our way.

When Georgio De Chirico distances himself from the dreamlike, imaginary fumblings and frottages of psychic automatism he has no time to wait in phenomenological passivity for the dream to put subjects and objects in his way. DeChirico constructs with a conscious intensity that comes from a fully committed personal and structural engagement that arises from "a fatality of the human spirit which is governed by fixed mathematical laws. It ebbs ,flows, departs and returns and is reborn like everything on this planet." In those words De Chirico describes the institution of his isolated subjectivity with a visceral and structural pulsation , the return of the fatality of the jouissance of the signifier. The death drive and the responsibility and relation to the Other of the subject is structurally taken into account. De Chirico does not shy away from the subjective responsibility for the fatality of the human spirit. His drive to create is no flight from reality to a non antagonistic inhibited inner space. So too does De Chirico avoid the pitfalls of group idealising ego identifications by rejecting the politically correct protest of the surrealist manifesto bound as it is to its own superego injunction of cohesive formulation.

De Chiricos is an aesthetic that is concerned with its place in this world as the subject/object relation is fraught with doubt and our relationship with our environment, increasingly sadistic. It was that very striking relation with its place in this everyday world that gave the work an intensity that stunned Breton as he first encountered De Chirico painting in a shop window. Max Ernst first viewing was in a book shop and Yves Tanguy first struck by its mystery from the top of a bus.

Committed to engaging in everyday conscious life in conception and showing, the works of De Chirico critiques the vainglorious aesthetic of utopian modernism and refuses the political posturing of the post modernist protest. And so the vitality of De Chirico construction remains in critical dialogue with contemporary awareness of the objects crucial place in the world of excessive production, an unrelenting production that is bound by no law but a headless pulsation.

The works of Sarah Lucas, Isa Genzken, Sam Durant and others have been described by Massimiliano Gioni as seeming to stem from badly repressed rage describing a space "where domestic violence overlaps with social unrest and class rebellion." This anti-oedipal rage against the machine ("altogether now, "Fuck you I wont do what you tell me" chorus") is celebrated as an attack against all authority, "artists dethrone any sense of authority". Is this critical celebration and carnivalesque masquerading really so wonderfully subversive or liberating? In today's culture of compulsive immediate superego enjoyment, the headless corpse of barbarism is the authority that returns profanely in many guises and the premature critical celebrations of anti authority identification is but another manifest return. If work is to engage with everyday life in a structural sense, it must not merely repeat "the stumbling on the scene of a freshly committed crime", (Gioni on Lucas) a compulsive repetition of a restaging of the already democratically sanctioned headless enjoyment of idealised affections.

Yesterday, I actually did stumble on the screen of a freshly committed crime,. The pavement was police cordoned in fetching dayglo tape and plastic barriers, a coagulated blob of thick mucous livery red black puddle seemed to pulsate, an aborted message in the afternoon heat, a pound of suffering flesh, a disturbing vitality of enjoyment. We can describe the abject horror of Kristeeva or we can look to the failure of the signifier or the success of the signifier in relation to jouissance. Difficult to differentiate the staging from the act.

"Obviously another stabbing, London is crazy" the guy from the Italian coffee shop tells me. The effect of the signifier, that introduces the symbolic law can found the belief that there is this Other that is barring our enjoyment. A vitality of enjoyment seems to be surrendered, this is the price to pay for symbolic subjectivity. A seeming loss of ones being of radical enjoyment. The gain is in being able to relate to language as desire and not as a being truly trapped in the imaginary world of paranoid and murderous, rival identifications. When the entry to language as desiring subject is barred by the lack of a metaphor, (which is increasingly the case in an instrumentalised, anti-authoritarian, universalising culture of jouissance, the erasure of the Other of symbolic institution) then the subject identifies at the level of psychotic demand. So there is a problem with this form of headless celebration of excessive anti-authority, freedom and enjoyment. The problem may be that this form of critical celebration merely apes the trauma of liberal subjectivity and propagates the ideological assumptions of a globalising universalism, that is heightened egoic individualism with all of its unconscious paranoid conflicts/enjoyments.

In the disregard for the symbolic law we abandon the subject to the jouissance of the Other . Universal amusement

replaces the Other, death of the author and the pound of flesh made real. The coagulating sameness of the drive of the Thing of progress. We are experiencing increasingly the barring of the critical signifier that can take us away from the deathly jouissance of the Other, the retreat of criticality. These are the everyday events, the ongoing foreclosing occurrences of everyday life, the failures of universal liberal language to deal with real difference. If the works of De Chirico critiques the vainglorious aesthetic of utopian modernism and refuses the political posturing of the post modernist(surrealist) protest by acknowledging the structural repetition of the death drive then might we discern in his works and words a criticism of the vain glorious aesthetic of anti- authority posturing that corrupts the utopian freedom of the marketplace.

With De Chirico the fatality of the human spirit is never seen as one of existential gloom. The ego's mechanical identifications are rejected in favour of an isolation that takes account of the pulsating ebb and flow of the Subject/Other confrontations. The relation to the other, object is subjectivised as De Chirico constructs a metaphor of universal resonance, a metaphor that loads the object with excess signifier-ness, with the sense of both timeless, suspended enigma and unspoken superego guilt. Philip Guston, picking up on De Chiricos superego excess, rejects the inhibition of the ideals of the existentialist gestures of freedom, those same ideals now being taught to bad terrorist guys in Afghanistan in anger management lessons in programmes referred to as "Beauty without Borders", cynical idealisations. Guston paints the superego excesses of meaning of words and things in a metaphor which connects the excesses of historical material incessant production to the excess which escapes socially conforming desire, the jouissance of the headless, hooded excess knowledge, as enjoyment of the human dereliction regarding responsibility toward the other. Guston has learned from De Chirico who being half Italian and half German had learned from Schopenhauer "that to have original. extraordinary even immortal ideas one has to isolate oneself from the world for a moment in such a way that even the most commonplace happenings seem new and unfamiliar and so reveal their true essence". The truth of the subjective relation to the Other, a revealing of the fantasy that underscores reality.

With their carefully constructed grotesqueness and their backward looking classical expressiveness De Chiricos works between1911 and 1917 reveal a drive from within that devours monumentality and which also negates the subversive desire of heroic protest. These works seem to render superfluous and contrived most of their surrealist counterparts. One hundred years later, in a world of unrelenting, headless, anti-authority, production and proliferation of image excess the question regarding production must be "who needs it?" If the drive to compulsively produce, the inbuilt death drive that takes no account of responsibility to the Other, perseveres, as seems to be the general hope in the art schools, then art practice is to produce nothing but more cynical (that is naïve) commodities and re-stagings for the amusement of an innocent if ironic, marketplace. Artists dealing with the real issue of the responsibility of the art- things' place in the everyday world are confronted with an everyday world in which one presumes ones own pathological freedom, an attitude that presses toward a totalising denial of the Other, that takes its own cynicism itself to be the be all and end allof creative production and destruction, a civilization on the brink of becoming overrun by its own disavowed discontents, its own excessive, perverse objectality.

In a critics attempt to look at "things" in the social world in "the context of socially engaged art practices" as opposed to looking at the "power of the subject, artist, participants and so on", Rikke Hansen attempts to critique the sociality of "woolly" relational aesthetics. Taking as an example Wyn Evans use of a rose which could refer to any rose in art or literature or perhaps to the logo of a Japanese department store, he concludes that the potential multiple readings of things, their layers of meaning allow us to enter a sociality that is to claim an identity for our selves. Mind -boggling insight apart, in this embrace of easy identity do we not witness the retreat of anything antagonistic in the fantasy of the relation subject, object / thing. An internalised critical retreat that substitutes identity for any antagonistic real relation to the Other, in a non political arena of lifestyle choices. This internalisation of the ideal, the denial of the real antagonism of the subject\Other relation is what allows us understand the retreat of criticality as J.J. Charlesworth has attempted to politically describe. Without understanding the relationship of substitutions between the ego ideal and the critical agency, the superego, his project can only bear fruitless witness to an impotence which passively observes the dumbing down of culture from the master technicians, the fat controller of Foucault and Frankfurt. Reduced to the object of enjoyment of his own fantasised Other his own critical agency can only take flight.

The anti-authority protest of liberal economic ideology feeds on the formations of paranoiac ego ideal constructions, ego- ideal identifications. Scientific progress pulsates with the pure fatality of lumpen spirit that relinquishes responsibility for the other, and forecloses the relation to the particular individuals relation to the Other of language. Accepting this scenario then the retreat of criticality is inevitable. The symbolic becomes increasingly imaginarised as we continue take ideals and identifications to substitute for the particular production of subjectivised meaning. Protest has become the site of copycat idealisations and universal demands for prescriptions of freedoms. Anti-authoritarianism, the internalised angry religion of the day ,drives an art production and theory of recycling and restaging , an aesthetic that tries to take account of the decadence of affluence and runs the risk of psychotherapising the political by domesticating the death drive.

The mediated everyday environment of international trafficking, pharmaceutical control and ammunition manufacturing represent material attempts to murder the subject, the incessant pulsation of free reign progress. The denial of the Other of real difference is also internalised in the universalised ideals of instrumental liberal freedom with its egoic

identities and paranoid constructions. Subjectivity is taken for the ego object in object relational aesthetics, in appropriating protest identities and also in the cynical, idealised belief that we know nothing can change. Sally O Reilly in an ArtMonthly review of Sonsbeek 2008 suggests that the Sonsbeek curator Anna Tilroes is not realistic when she speaks of "the struggle to be an individual who makes his own sovereign choices but also participates in society with a strong sense of responsibility". She goes on to say that this notion has already "been pooh-poohed" by a cynical U.K. art community which is more realist. More than a hint of the liberal notion of progress then, the u.k. leading the cynical way forward toward the "One". One wonders from what site of enunciation does Sally O Reilly make her judgemental claims of more reality, might this privileged insight not also be her own fantasy from where she constructs her cynical U.K. cool, non antagonistic "reality". And might this site not be the very ideologically constructed space where she stages the loss of her own critical agency in favour of an adaptation to social conformism even if of the cynical kind. One result of ego ideals taking the place of subjective critical agency would be in their production of inhibitions. "Boys don't cry" maybe, or U.K. artists being cynical or realist do not believe that they can "do" anything. The tiredness of the retreat of criticality, aggressive posturing ,masking the passivity of headless cynical identification. The fantasy of the certainty of cynical reality hides the truth of the subjective relation to the Other, truth as a revealing of the fantasy that underscores reality. The psychical objects disrupts this picture of an all seeing eye, I that gets the picture. The object gaze denatures the normal relationships between objects, bodies and space we use in order to articulate our being. The gaze and the object voice are intrusive interlocutors that make it impossible to put ourselves in the picture.

If art practice is to be anything other than "the repeated attempt by neurotics to adopt the Others ego-ideal", Lacan (Ecrits), then it must cast off the inhibitions of our contemporary cynical cultural superego. Daniel Lagache has demonstrated how the ego-ideal and superego are partners in the cultivation of identifications and guilt in relation to the egos assumption of the demand of the Other. Social conformism and adaptation results in this substitution, this guessing of the Others desire. The Artist gets lucky! Desire prefers the pleasure of fantasy than the satisfaction of the drives. In these universalising guessings of the groups, liberal, curatorial formations desire 9 is served as conservative demand that inhibits the drive. In these globalising curatorial celebration we witness the inhibiting defence against jouissance. The ideological (fantasised) object of cynical (headless) knowledge presumes a cultural or curatorial subject satisfaction in replace of a radical subjectivisation of Other desire. The result is neccessarily a disappointing retreat of radical subjectivity, criticality, and an all embracing defeatist and cynical curatorial congratulation. In "civilization and its discontents" Freud has predicted that this type of idealising ethics is another manifestation of the cultural superego that "only offers the narcissistic satisfaction of htinking one is better 5than others."

The curators of this Summers blockbuster "Traces du Sacre" at the Pompidou centre inform us that " In today's post industrial world the idea of self transformation through art has lost its function". Existentialist self, cultural identity or biochemical organism? What they do not inform us is exactly how they came to this knowledge. So many current curatorial and supposed critical inhibitions. Whatever the knowledge the curators have in store it is only the fall of such knowledge that can effect some version of subjectivity other than that of sociological and cultural restaging of identifications and traumas in the name of understanding. Knowledge as accumulation is a fantasmatic construction that attempts and fails to contain the stupidity of the drive. This fall is the road to the unconscious where an ethical link between interpretations and effects can create a meaningful change. Apologies, curators and cultural (object) relational theorists and critics.

In a delirious climate of incessant knowledge as goods acquisition, a writing of the Other in the real is subjugated to the mastery of a curatorial, galvanizing, institutional discourse of market desires. Psychosis is very current in the clinic of analysis. When the Other is refused the stupidity of the signifier collectivises in silent violations of the vain-glorious aesthetic of utopian cynicism.

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Collective memory(s)

For this I photocopied the first human image from Google on Gaza, 410 times. That is the approximate amount of Palestinian children killed in the recent conflict. At first I was trying to get the image to disappear completely but was I was really interested in the way the image shifted, almost disappeared but later began to grow again, distorted.





