LUND UNIVERSITY

The art of reflected intractability: critique according to Foucault

Brännström, Leila

Aspectivity
– The History of Seeing
and Representation

Art & Architcture picnic at Mount Nebo, Jordan 2012. Photo: Jesper Nordahl, 2012

Aspectivity – The History of Seeing and Representation

We are on our way to Allenby Bridge from Petra. Travel always takes longer than we expect and we are running late. Before we cross over to the West Bank in Palestine we want to make a quick stop at Mount Nebo, the hilltop from which Moses pointed out the Promised Land. According to some, this is also where he subsequently died and was buried. However, we still need to have lunch and time is running out. We leave the highway to pick up falafels and water and start moving upward; almost there we realize we won't make it. We pull over and decide to have a picnic where we are. We look out over the Jordan Valley, Mount Nebo is up the hill, and we are sitting in a beautiful landscape filled with old plastic bags, empty containers and trash.

Art & Architecture at Mejan Arc at The Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm is a one-and-a-half-year course at advanced level addressing art, architecture and urban issues. It is directed towards professional artists, architects, curators, writers, and others within the fields of culture, media and urban studies. The course consists of lectures, screenings, text seminars and a study trip. The students' own practices form the point of departure. The course works as a critical forum to address issues on the practice and theory of art, architecture and cultural production. Art & Architectures' current course, Aspectivity – The History of Seeing and Representation, explores issues of perception, knowledge, history and truth, with a focus on the tools we use to find our way in the world, as well as on a critical exploration of how theory and practice have affected how we understand those techniques. An overall aim of the course is to produce a discursive space to support critical thinking, discussion and acting. Our lectures and text seminars range from the history of astronomy, to forensic aesthetics, to the development of photography and its political significance. We read texts on animism, spam, archival practices and the civil contract imbedded in photography.

The course also includes a study trip and this year we went to Petra in Jordan and to Jerusalem and the West Bank in Palestine. Our trip was made in conjunction with the biennale Qalandiya International, (a collaboration between Riwaq Biennale and the Jerusalem Show in Palestine). We also met, and had workshops, with Riwaq, The International Academy of Art Palestine and Campus in Camps.

The practices of the participants were central to our discussions and seminars. We end the course with an exhibition, as a presentation and examination of the course. This publication is not a catalogue representing the works in the exhibition. Rather, it works as a parallel platform to the physical exhibition space. It consists of works / projects / notes / sketches by the students. In addition we've included three texts by lecturers from the past year to mirror some of the discussions we have had. These are Leila Brännström's tracing of a Foucauldian critique in "The Art of Reflected Intractability: Critique according to Foucault"; Eyal Sivan's investigation of the role of the archive in "Archive Images: Truth or memory" and Eyal Weizman's creation of a new view on what an object, or building really can tell us in "Forensic Architecture: Notes from fields and forums". We also chose one text from our seminars, "The Spam of the Earth: Withdrawal from representation" by Hito Steyerl, which questions the ability of cameras to represent anything at all.

Happy reading.

Jesper Nordahl, Substitute Senior Lecturer, responsible for the course Art & Architecture

Rebecka Thor, Researcher and guest teacher at the course Art & Architecture 2012–2013

Participants in the course

Anna Lyhagen is head of the city planning department in a municipality in southern Sweden. She is a landscape architect and also studied art history and leadership. She is inspired by seemingly ordinary things like everyday experience and explores this through art and architecture. She likes to collect and get new impressions all of time. The coming together of different thoughts and perspectives adds up to something new. For her dialogue and understanding is crucial.

Annika Olofsdotter Bergström is a game researcher based in Stockholm. She has extensive experience of working with games in general and with creative game workshops and actions research in particular. She is currently working on a project where she is researching radical game design (games for artistic, political and social critique, or intervention) through use of participatory game design and creative methods. The aim is to explore the persuasive power of games and how games could create alternative futures by changing perspectives. Annika is the author of "Liberate the Computer Heroines from the Boys' room – a project leader's experience interpreted through method and theory" (Luleå University of Technology, 2009). During 2004 – 2007 she was the founder and project leader for the EU-project SuperMarit with the aim to involve more women in the Swedish game industry. She is currently the Swedish expert for the Nordic Game program and the program coordinator and lecturer of The Game Education at the University of Södertörn.

Britta Lundin Forestier is an architect based in Stockholm. She has experience in different fields of architecture and interior design. She is mainly concerned with educational buildings, where investigations of diverse pedagogies result in adaptable and sustainable architecture. She studied architecture at The Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and at Aarhus School of Architecture. She has also held lectures and critique at The Royal Institute of Technology and the University of Arts and Craft in Stockholm.

Cecilia Järdemar is a visual artist based in Stockholm. Her work considers the social and psychological aspects of the human condition. Through photography, video, performance and participatory practice, she investigates human relations, raising questions about how our surroundings impact our actions and behavior, and how we relate to one another. Järdemar's work has been shown in Great Britain, Sweden, USA, Israel, Mexico and Germany, and she has worked on commissions from The Arts Council England and The Lottery Heritage Fund, among others. Currently she is completing an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded PhD on *Photography and the Face* at the Royal College of Arts in London, where she also completed her MA in Fine Art Photography, graduating in 2005.
www.jardemar.com

Jacquelyn Davis is an American writer, arts and culture critic, independent curator and educator based in Stockholm. She is the founding editor of the small publishing press and curatorial node valeveil which is devoted to strengthening creative connections between America and Scandinavia. Functional versus ineffective collaboration techniques and immigrant rights are her primary concerns. Davis holds a BA in Politics & Cinema Studies from Oberlin College, a MFA in Critical Studies from the California Institute of the Arts and a MA in Critical Writing & Curatorial Practice (WIRE) from Konstfack University College of Arts, Craft and Design.
www.instrumentandoccupation.se

John Håkansson is a photographer based in Stockholm. He deals with topics in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning. He graduated from National College of Photography, Gothenburg 1993, was a special student at Academy of Photography, Konstfack, Stockholm 1997 and has a teaching degree from Stockholm University 2011. He is teaching photography part time at Kulturama, a post-secondary school for artistic studies in Stockholm.
http://www.johnhakansson.se

Klara Källström examines visual representation in photography. She adresses questions on the relationship between what is seen, what is told and what is expected – how stories and myths relate to the production of knowledge. Klara is based in Stockholm and is one of the co-founders of B-B-B-Books.
www.b-b-b-books.com
www.klarp.se

Lina Persson is an artist and teacher based in Stockholm. She has an MFA from the University of Gothenburg Valand and is senior lecturer at the animation program at Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts. She works with photography, experimental film and postproduction techniques, investigating the struggle over the interpretation

Ibdaa Cultural Center, Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Palestine, Nov. 2012. Foto: Britta Lundin Forestier

of the future through sci-fi narratives. She traces geological transformations through literary documents and connects technological ideology with the shaping of the planet. Persson's work has been shown internationally, including exhibitions at CAG (US), 0047 (Oslo), VM Gallery (Karachi), IASPIS (Stockholm), Reykjavik Art Festival and United Nation Plaza (Berlin).

Linda Shamma Östrand is an artist based in Stockholm. Her work is conceptual and involves a variety of different media. In recent years she has examined how practices and elements contained within the concept of hybridity can be understood and utilized to create social change. With a father from Palestine and a mother from Sweden she related the term to her own mixed origin, to post-colonial history and cultural hybridity. Examples of work related to this theme is "Älg i postformulerat tillstånd" (the so-called Camoose), a public sculpture placed at the intersection of Mikrofonvägen and Tellusborgsvägen in Stockholm and "Oophaga vicentei × Oophaga pumilio", a living hybrid frog Shamma bred in order to develop a greater understanding of how hybrids are seen and categorized in a biological discourse. Linda Shamma Östrand was born in Enånger and graduated in Fine Art (MFA) from Konstfack University College of Arts, Craft and Design (Stockholm) in 2010. She also has a teaching degree in Art and Media from Konstfack. Currently Shamma works as an artist and lecturer at art universities in Sweden such as Konstfack and KTH - Royal Institute of Technology, but also with clients outside the academy.

Mandana Moghaddam is an Iranian-Swedish artist living in Gothenburg. She mainly works with installations, sculptures, video art and photography. In her work she explores issues of isolation, alienation, history, memories and cultural and gender related restrictions. In recent years she has participated in numerous international exhibitions, in Arnhem, Berlin, Istanbul, London, Tehran, Seoul, New York and at the Venice Biennale. In Sweden she has had solo exhibitions in Stenasalen, the Gothenburg Museum of Art, Röda Sten and Vänersborgs konsthall.
www.mandana-moghaddam.com

Marika Heidebäck is a film director based in Stockholm. She graduated from the Department of Documentary filmmaking at National Film School in Stockholm in 2002. She studied video production at The Royal University of College of Fine Arts in Stockholm in 1998 and Fine Arts and New Media at Valand University of Fine Arts in Gothenburg 1997. Selected filmography: *Holly Gets Even* (2006), *Zorro had a Horse* (2004), *Team* (2004), *We Meet Her Later* (2003), *Ali Doesn't Live here* (2001)

Mirjam Johansson is a journalist, editor and project manager based in Stockholm. She studied journalism at Södertörns University and has written for newspapers and magazines such as Svenska Dagbladet and Fokus and has been the editor-in-cheif of Swedish pop culture magazine People. She also works as the project manager of Doc Lounge Stockholm, a documentary screening network looking to explore new ways of watching and experiencing documentary films.

Monica Aasprong is a Norwegian poet based in Stockholm. She has published a novel and books of poetry. Since 2003 she has been working on the project *Soldatmarkedet* (Soldiers' Market) which is a textwork in different parts. Essential to the work is the title itself and to find different approaches to this specific word. Soldiers' Market includes books, readings, installations and sound works.
www.monicaaasprong.no

Monika Lenkman is an architect based in Stockholm. Her work has a strong focus on how existing architecture can be transformed and how to develop a design which responds to its context and reflects the character of the place. Monika Lenkmann studied architecture at The Bartlett (University College London) and at the Royal College of Art in London. She has worked for Norman Foster & Partners and has been published in Bartlett Book of Ideas. Currently she is teaching at the School of Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology KTH (Stockholm).

Oscar Mangione is the editor of Geist Magazine/Publishing.
www.geist.se

Philipp Gallon is a German photographic artist based in Stockholm. He completed an MA in Photography and Visual Communication at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany, including a study abroad scholarship at the School of Photography in Gothenburg, Sweden. Gallon's work examines the immanent features of photography, its various functions and the contexts it appears in. He is interested in the image as the mutual relation between itself, its

author, its recipient and the context it is shown in. With photography being a cultural product that – due to its numerous social functions and its medial omnipresence – is likely to be considered a documentation of reality rather than its interpretation, his work explores possibilities of providing individual reading approaches. Gallon is represented by NAU Gallery/Stockholm

www.philippgallon.com

Sara Gebran is a choreographer, performer, teacher and city planner, who was born in Venezuela, grew up in a Lebanese family and lived for the past 17 years in NYC, Denmark and Sweden. Together with Anders Paulin she created the art platforms in refugee camps in the West Bank: *Vertical Exile 2009* and *Vertical Gardening 2010 & 2011* from which they released a book of images. Since 1994 Sara has been choreographing, touring and working in collaboration internationally. She is engaged in expanding the notion of dance and choreography. She is part of the collective in Stockholm who created the booking system called *Maximum Spaces*, which offers spaces for rehearsal and performing to artists without much cost. Sara is now appointed as head of choreography at the Danish National School for Performing Arts, attending the post graduate course Art & Architecture at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm and working on various solo projects including: *How to get the water into the tire? Waxing immolation and Another 20 & 20 Plus*.

www.public-e.dk
www.maximumspaces.com

Åsa Andersson Broms is an artist based in Stockholm. Her practice moves freely between photography and sculpture, between media and materiality. Her artistic work is often characterized by a curious exploration of the impact and use of media, such as the creation of collective visions and the use of illusions as a tool of power. She works as a lecturer in the field of public domains at Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. In addition, she works with production and artistic management of exhibitions for institutions and museums. Alternative spaces for contemporary art, such as the Internet, have always been important in her practice. In 1996, she became one of the founders of the Association for Temporary Art [a:t], a forum for presenting and discussing contemporary art. [a:t] is not guided by any prior prejudices as to what art is or ought to be; rather, it searches for new areas and forms of distribution for contemporary art.

www.temporaryart.org/asa

Åsa Hällgren Lif is an artist based in Stockholm. Her paintings are influenced by non-European art, but express personal observations from a northern European country. She works with exhibitions and artistic embellishments. She is educated at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. She has received grants from The Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts, The Swedish Arts Grant Commitee and is represented in the National Public Art Council of Sweden and The Stockholm County Council among others. She is a lecturer on Islamic Art and art consultant for Stockholm County Council.

www.asahallgrenlif.se

WORKS

Anna Lyhagen

San Francisco Earthquake, 1906.
Panorama from Russian Hill, San Francisco, California 1906.
Photo: Arnold Genthe (1869 – 1942)

San Francisco, Vacation, 2012.
Panorama from Russian Hill, San Francisco, California, 2012.
Photo: Anna Lyhagen

Jag fick det berättat för mig, att havet var det onåbara, det obesökbara, utopin om friheten. Flyktingarna i Dheishehlägret utanför Betlehem talade om havet som de ville skapa, som en hägring, en mental bild som de kunde besöka på sina egna villkor.

Den palestinska mamman som kunde resa, tack vare sitt arbete på FN, till havet varje söndag, tillsammans med sin europeiske man och deras två döttrar. Ut ur ockupationen in i det blåa. Men så blev döttrarna större och började fråga varför mormor och morfar aldrig följde med? Mamman undrade om hon skulle berätta för dem hur verkligheten såg ut, att mormor och morfar aldrig skulle kunna resa till havet med dem så länge de var ockuperade. Hon orkade inte förklara, hon ville skona de små. Så de slutade att resa till havet på söndagarna. Havet blev en längtan, ett stråk av salt, en förnimmelse bortom murarna och checkpoints.

Så snubblade jag över Lewis Carrolls bok: The Hunting of the Snark. Berättelsen om de tio besättningsmännen som alla heter något som börjar på B. De ska segla över oceanen utifrån en stor karta som ska representera havet, men är helt tom, utan tillstymmelse till land eller någon annan information. Men besättningen är glad eftersom det är en karta alla kan förstå.

"Vad är det för mening med mercators projektion, ekvatorn, zoner, eller meridianer? De är endast konventionella tecken! Andra kartor är så gestaltade med deras öar och uddar. Men vi har vår modiga kapten att tacka att han gav oss den bästa kartan av de alla. En perfekt och helt tom."

Så hur seglar du utan navigering, utan noder, utan riktning?

Vilka regler ska du följa?

Hur vet du när du är framme?

Vad ska du göra för att komma rätt?

Tänk om du aldrig når fram?

Vad är målet?

Är det slumpen som styr?

Ditt inre liv formas om, en annan verklighet representeras, en annan form av resande, en annan form av tanke. En omedveten process framkallas och väcker handlingar och uppmaningar som inte är synliga annars. Handlingarna måste förhandlas för att föra dig framåt, böjer tiden bort från det förutsägbara. Det förut uttalade blir outtalat därför att det inte finns plats för konventioner längre.

En punkt på kartan. Eller är det smuts?

Du spelar ett spel utan spelplan. Du vet inte hur vägen ser ut. Du kanske aldrig når fram till målet. Du lägger till sammanhang. Du söker de outtalade reglerna. Du inser att du saknar att förlora.

En Palestinsk man på väg genom Qalandiya checkpoint.
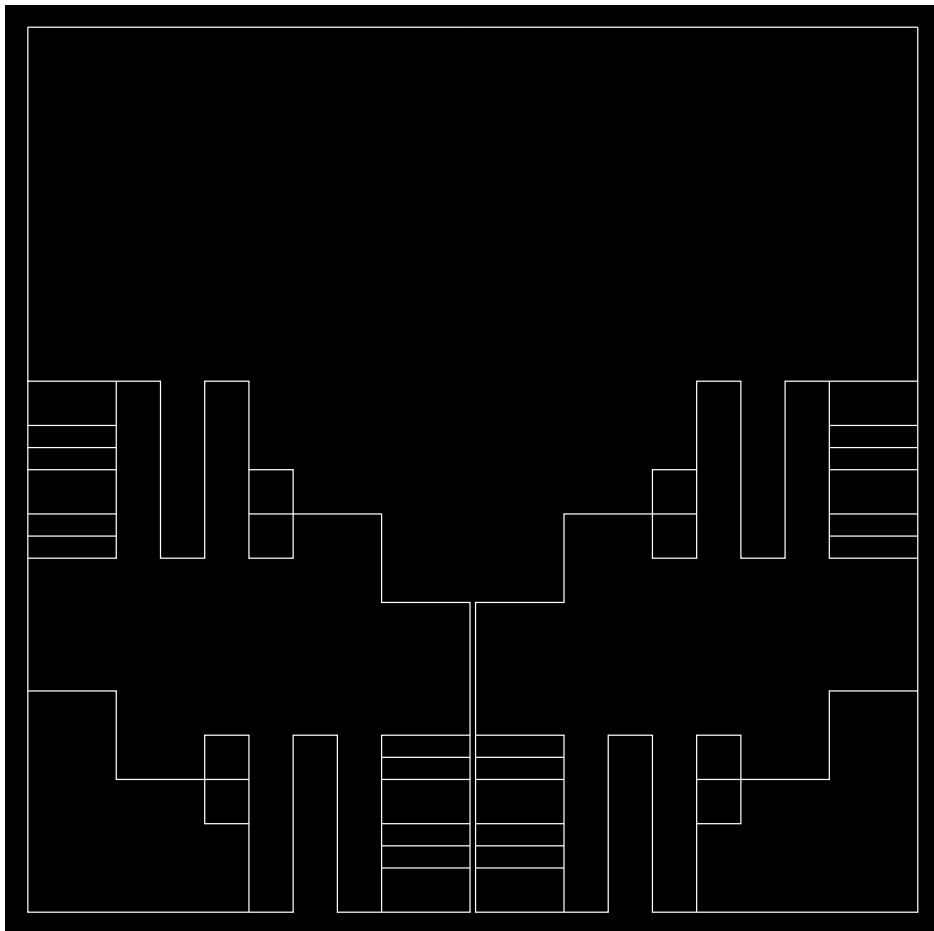
Fyra sammansatta flödesscheman av checkpointen Qalandiya. Flödeschemat är en tolkning av en bild (IDF, 2005) ur Eyal Weizmans bok *Hollow Land* (s153, 2007)

Vi blir visade runt i Dheisheh, en bit utanför Bethlehem, av en ung man som är uppvuxen i lägret. Samtidigt som han berättar går jag och tittar på gator och byggnader. Min blick fastnar vid elledningar, löst hängande mellan hus, tjuvkopplade till elnät på olika sätt. Jag ser vattenledningar som ringlar sig upp längst husväggar, slingrar sig vidare och perforerar dem. Ledningar som är helt exponerade och sårbara, samtidigt både livsfarliga och livsnödvändiga för invånarna.

Infrastruktur är en del av den arkitektur som strukturerar hur vi ska leva i staden. Den planeras som ett fint nät för att distribuera el och vatten till invånare. Planeringen styr vem som får tillgång till vad och hur vatten och el ska ledas in i kvarter, byggnader och vidare in i väggar.

Tillgång till el har nästan blivit en nödvändighet för att delta i samhället och utan vatten kan ingen överleva någonstans. Konsumtion av el och vatten kostar pengar, hur mycket man använder blir oftast till en ekonomisk fråga. Men vad händer om möjligheten att betala inte finns, när distributionen är baserad på en orättvis fördelning, eller är en del av ett förtryck?

I Palestina ser man en tydlig skillnad mellan infrastruktur för Palestinier och Israeler. Palestiniernas hus har vattenbehållare på taket för att kunna lagra vatten, något som israeliska bosättare inte behöver. De 550 000 israeliska bosättarna på Västbanken förbrukar mer vatten än de 2 miljoner palestinier som lever där.

Mannen från Deheishe stannar vid en husvägg och pekar på en liten metallåda monterad på fasaden. Det Israeliska statliga vattenbolaget har monterat vattenmätare på grenledningarna in till varje hus, berättar han. Eftersom invånarna inte kan betala för vattnet har vattenbolaget slutat att komma dit och läsa av mätarna, de hänger övergivna kvar på husfasaderna. Vattenbolaget slår istället på vattnet med 20–30 dagars mellanrum, då fyller invånarna på sina vattenbehållare så mycket som möjligt för att klara sig till nästa gång. En praktik som är olaglig enligt Israelisk lag. Palestinierna måste alltså bryta mot ockupationsmaktens lagar för att få tillgång till vatten.

Kan man bryta reglerna för distribution av vatten, samtidigt som man hävdar sin rätt till vatten? Särskilt i en arkitektur där allas överlevnad inte finns med i planeringen. Om man medvetet leder vatten från befintliga ledningar och bryter den planerade infrastrukturen, modifierar infrastrukturen. Om man visar att modifieringen är permanent, blir det också ett ställningstagande för sin rätt att leva på platsen. En vattendelare på en plats där ingen var planerad, men en markering att det ska finnas en där.

Dheisheh refugee camp. Photo: Philipp Gallon

A Place to Call Home, 2006

I was trying to understand.

So when I saw Aziza standing in the doorway of her house, something in her eyes made me approach her.

After we arrived in Israel they brought us here, she said. There was only sand. No water, nothing.

We had to pay a lot of money to get a place on the boat. The man that listed us said that there are lots of fruits in Israel, fruits and white pigeons. We used to buy pigeons for a lot of money there, so we felt excited.

But when we came here there was not even bread.

They brought us here on trucks. When we arrived nobody wanted to get off. The driver started the truck again, and drove us around in a circle in the sand. Then he took us back to the same spot. He told us that it was a different place. When we still didn't get down he got out and left

the truck. So when night fell we had no choice but to get off and enter the houses.

My husband got a job plastering houses. So many houses had to be built, for the people that kept arriving. In that time there was no hand cream, so he had to use margarine. Over there he used to run his own business. After a while he sent a letter to his sister asking her to find a house again, in Morocco. He wanted to go back. But I didn't want to go back. I would have felt ashamed in front of my family and friends.

I left Aziza standing in the doorway and kept walking.

•

I called a friend who used to live here.

I don't want to talk about it, he said. I don't remember anything from that place. It has

nothing to do with me. I never had any connection with it.

He quickly said goodbye and put the phone down.

•

A while later a young man approached me. He started talking.

The first thing that struck me when I got off the plane is how small everything is, he said, small and faded by the sun.

We felt like strangers here. It was hard to be accepted. We didn't understand the locals, a different mentality. We stuck together with our own people.

I was very proud to serve in the army. I was maybe overly motivated. When you are overly motivated there are a lot of things that are disappointing. But I gave my part to this country, to the survival, and now I feel like I have earned the right to live here.

People here say that we are Russian. There, they said that we were Jewish. But look, I'm not angry about that anymore.

He shook my hand and said goodbye.

•

I sat down in a cafe to have lunch. The owner joined me.

My parents came here from Baghdad in 1951. Look, I have their passport here and it is written; exit only, to go but not return. My parents, in this way, they finished the Diaspora of maybe 2000 years.

My mother used to be called Samira. When she came she had to change it. A Jewish woman can't be called Samira here.

I was born here and my father was very ecstatic: you will never know what is the ghetto; you will never know what is the meaning of ghetto.

The first generation thought that their children would be completely clean from fears, and that they would be healthy, happy and secure. And now we are in the same situation again.

I finished my lunch and walked back into the sunshine.

•

Two girls were sitting in the shade of some pine trees. They looked like sisters. One of them offered me a glass of water.

Our parents came when they were 18, directly here, they told me.

Nobody gave them an option to choose. The government sent them where they thought it would be good for the country. They set my parents future and their present at the same time.

Only educated people knew that the centre would be better. But the government wanted to develop the desert. The people here never had the same chance. They were brought into these places. There is no work here. There is nothing. Half the people here are Russian, the others from Morocco. The government didn't think at all. They paid the city halls to receive people. Like cattle. There was a price on every person's head.

But we want to stay here. We believe this town has a future. We just hope that it comes soon.

I thanked them for the water and left.

•

I saw a man waiting for the next bus to Be'er Sheva, a small bag by his feet. He told me he had been visiting his mother. I asked him what it felt like, growing up here.

My experience was that I was alone, he said. I felt very alone. I felt different from everyone else. On the outside I might have seemed like I had many friends. But that was only on the outside. In my home I felt alone too. My father hit me. In those years it was part of the education. It was common. I had a lot of arguments and fights with my sisters, because it was a small flat and we shared a room. My father solved these problems by hitting us.

What I remember most when I got older was that there was nothing to do. I spent most my time with a group of friends, and our mission was to protect ourselves from reality. We felt locked into this small town, wanting to fly but there were no opportunities. It felt like a prison. There was nowhere to go.

But I knew all the time that there was something else, somewhere else, I just didn't know what it was, or what I was looking for. I only knew that I wanted to be there. .

The bus arrived and the man boarded it.

•

I followed Yusef to his balcony. The sun was going down. He had a view over the whole town.

This is Israel he said. The closest place to God. Centre of the universe. Everyone thinks that the world is running around, but it is the universe running around the centre here. This is my home. This is your home. This is where we belong.

Alp d'Huez from *à disparaître*, 2013, by Daniel Andersson.

and when one is running, all objects appear blurry.

–"We Have No Instincts, Only Legs to Run On," Hannah Gamble

Was it Martin Amis or Will Self who wrote something along the lines: *Sex, money and sports are the only reasons to live?* I dare replace the word "money" with "art" and insert the word "endurance" before sports, then this quote makes sense. On the evening of January 3, 2013, I was feeling trapped and anxious in my apartment during a cold, dark winter in Stockholm. As a general observation, I have too much energy. When I do not use this excess energy at the end of any day, it becomes my enemy – eats at my sanity, prevents peaceful sleep, inhibits productive work. The hour was approaching 10pm. When the world closes in and invisible rats begin to nibble: I run. For as long and hard as I can. When I'm finished, I am new and occasionally convince myself that I am invincible.

There is nothing more satisfying than running. I have been formally trained to run – with high school and college cross country coaches instructing me how to maximize my stride, pay attention to my gait, position my arms so as to not expend additional energy haphazardly swaying limbs, slide my feet barely above ground preventing unnecessary impact. I am not tall, but my center of gravity is positioned to my benefit – like a boxer's physique but with a talent for sliding stealthily between particles of air. My earliest memories are of running towards those I love or away from those I despise. In short, running along with two other sports (cycling and swimming) are an inherent part of my identity. Many do not know this about me – my dependence on this triumvirate. Over the course of my life, these activities served as healthy substitute for more harmful pursuits, situations or mutually shared realities: lethargy, apathy, anxiety, nymphomania, substance abuse, depression, complacency, resignation, ad nauseam. Instead of destroying myself with these extra molecules that I am blessed and cursed to have, I redirect them – expunge them towards the universe. But much like a boomerang or the ethic of reciprocity, this energy returns to me. I am in continual motion, destined to terminally combat this charge.

Running is a solitary sport. The pleasure derived from it is understood by other runners, but none of us know what another runner feels. I have had moments where I have experienced what many refer to as the "runner's high." Once one experiences this euphoria, they are more inclined to take the sport seriously – to the next level. After one is alone on a path and this wave of bliss envelops, the runner is hooked. I became obsessed with running in my teens, and it kept me on the "straight and narrow" when friends and acquaintances were dangerously swaying left and right – fighting not so gallantly their own foes. Just as quickly as one falls in love with their beloved, one falls in love with running. Just as quickly as one falls out of love, one's ability to run can be taken away.

I orchestrate my runs in a number of ways: by duration, speed, distance, intervals or pleasure. The run which took place on January 3 was organized with duration and pleasure in mind. My default run is both on pavement and on a designated trail in the forest near Nacka, and usually, all goes well. But this time, I encountered a patch of ruthless, black ice which prevented me from making my way home. Like most traumas which happen to people all over the world *all of the time,* each gruesome experience is singular in design. No one knows what another person's trauma is like – no matter how much one explains or expresses it, some veiled *idea* of trauma is all that is shared. Mine began with hearing my fibia snap then watching my body collapse to the ground in shock. No one was around when I fell. No one heard my scream. No one saw me attempt to stand then writhe in pain. No one saw me shiver intensely as my body temperature dropped in sub – zero conditions. No one saw me cry as I thought that I would die before someone found me. No one saw me crawl like a wounded animal towards light for help. No one saw me finally use my mobile phone to dial 112 – the American equivalent: 911.

Then I'm whisked away to the ER, the hour approaching midnight, my ankle swollen to the size of a baby elephant's. After waiting for an ocean of faces to determine whether or not I had indeed broken bones, they pushed my gurney into a sterile room where doctors and nurses gathered around my body – as if I was already dead. Then one warns: "I'm not going to tell you that this isn't going to hurt." They gave me an additional dose of morphine intravenously and proceeded, in layman's terms, with the act of shoving my foot which was almost ripped off its hinge back into place. This is a step to determine if they need to perform surgery (or not) and to fit the foot and leg into a splint or cast. I have never experienced such pain be-

fore – never of this magnitude. It is the kind of pain which causes one to screech, then laugh psychotically from relief after the doctor finishes the act – akin to the shrill cackle of a joker who made it through the 6th layer of Hell.

The surgery which followed the next morning – only 6 hours later to my surprise – was cake compared to that which had occurred the previous night. They paralyzed me from the waste down and placed a titanium plate and screws into both my tibia and fibia to ensure bones would heal properly. I was informed that my bones would not heal normally (a.k.a. nonunion) without this freakish reinforcement. I desperately tried to negotiate with Swedish health care professionals in my drug – induced haze; they wouldn't listen. I am now forced to carry this new hardware in my body for at least one year – possibly longer. Every doctor tells me something different than the one before. I have been told I can realistically run again in six months, four months and three months post-op. I now have two physical therapists: one in Stockholm and a virtual one in Boulder. I have read close to everything available on my injury – every horror and success story, how-to page and forum geared towards athletes and octogenarians alike.

I am now at three months post-op, and I'm able to shuffle-run on the treadmill – pathetic and painful. I'm not yet ready to run outside. I fear the pavement and possibility of black ice reappearing, even though it is now spring. Because of this delay in being able to run at 100 percent, I cycle. My body responds beautifully; vigorous, aggressive spinning pumps blood throughout my body and accelerates healing. I do not know when I will run again on the level that I was before, and I'm not confident that I will be able to participate in impact sports in the same way. It is this space where I now find myself – in between – which makes my state volatile and crucial. I wait and observe.

Since the Aspectivity course investigates ways of seeing – according to the syllabus, "our desires, ideals and lifestyles are created from visual images" – I share the inscape of a runner who has been denied her primary pleasure, of someone who was confined for six weeks to a cast and instructed not to walk *at all* for two months but who now walks, who will be stronger and more agile than she was before, who writes with a perspective she never invited but now accepts. We devise and create castles, constructions of power and competency; these stately images and sublime memories of victory are linked to how we interact with the world and others today. When any given architecture crumbles and links weaken, the test is how to recycle the remainder.

I have known real pain, even though I do not recall it like one remembers a birthday party or perfect day at the park, and I cannot explain it well to others. Clarity often comes with being denied that which one desires most. I harbor a pristine image of me running full force – no pain, surviving, winning. I hope to remind you that most, if not all, concerns are relative; one's position in life changes as quickly as a bone snaps on a winter's night. Frankly, most people do not care about your tragedy until they have experienced their own of equal or greater value. And just when I was struggling to find an analogy for our delicate relationship (reader / writer) – that you cannot feel my pain and I cannot feel yours, that we only imagine or express the plight of the Other – America gave me one. She's dependable like that.

April 15, 2013. I'm on the metro moving between two familiar points; I scan my phone screen to read the news. It's more acceptable in Stockholm to pay attention to my mobile device rather than engage in conversation with the stone-faced man in front view. I read: someone has bombed Boston Marathon runners on their day of supposed victory. Schrapnel flies into anonymous flesh, runners' legs are strategically destroyed – for some, even amputated – tourniquets are constructed. I know that I shouldn't feel so much about this particular news piece because I read stories like this every day. Most, if not all, of these tragedies affect me on a purely objective, analytical, archival level – rarely on an emotional one. My inability to feel emotions regarding each article I read is not enough evidence to support that I'm an insensitive jerk, but more so: I'm a product of a *phenomenon* related to the fact that individuals of our era are flooded with too much information, too many traumas and heartbreaks, too many unfair, unforeseen, unpredictable moments which do not lead to sound conclusions or justice. We live in a fog of text – image dichotomies which hope to corner our attention; we respond with self-preservation of the senses.

And then I'm crying again, but this time on public transit surrounded by others who, most likely, aren't used to seeing someone express raw emotion. And maybe these are selfish tears felt only because I still feel the pain of my injury with each step and am reminded of my own suffering by what I have read, or maybe I understand what it feels like to have the pleas-

ure of running and possible victories brutally rejected – like war, suffering is nonsensical, illogical, constant. But until opening *The New York Times* and then reading articles from competing media sources on this same event, I may have forgotten what it feels like to be affected emotionally by current events at all. I give an example of what it takes for most of us to *really* feel – and see. Am I trying to tell you something? Yes. I am.

This text is devoid of academic quotes and art historical references. Using these devices would not make my position and experience more credible; you would not gain access to my trauma or anyone else's by tricking yourself into seeing connections which may or may not exist outside of yourself. Yet, if I have to choose one work which helps me define my position, let it be Daniel Andersson's *à disparaître* (2013). The Swedish artist expresses his passion for road cycling with a series of aerial graphite drawings illustrating *Le Tour de France* cycling route in stages. Because I wait to run, I redirect my energies to road cycling. Slopes, twists, turns and inclines are what make life worth living – one is able to disappear, to get lost with such graceful sports. Instead: only your glory can be seen.

As with most courses which are site-specific and socio-political in nature, I can absorb course material, attend lectures, watch films, go on field trips, but I will never know what it is like to live another person's life in another country with a different language and set of circumstances, alternative narratives, structures for reasoning and spirituality. I could have made an artwork closely linked to the Middle East, but I instead chose to introduce the question of how anyone anywhere can ever truly access a person's trauma or perspective. *What is to be done?* I responded by creating a work in which everyone exists in the same labyrinth together – far from accurate but worthy of investigation.

I'm sorry if my text does not fit. My personal archive of images, memories and representations of running and endurance sports are no priority. My desire for personal freedom is not as important as war x, conflict y or resolution z, but x, y and z were fueled by selfish motives as well (yet often masked as collective issues) – much like how my anticipated physical liberation is now fueled by the denial of such. I share with you my drive to not be a prisoner in my own body, and I now empathize with those who are confined in any way. Questions remain. Who or what is to blame for our relations with one another? Where does one person's suffering begin and another person's empathy end? Are we responsible for how we respond to stimuli? Is it possible to change without experiencing trauma and shock?

We are not given the same maze to make our way through. My map will not work for you. Yet, do not be afraid to enter the construct. Some dead ends only require that you turn around and go another direction. Let us escape the labyrinth when it is filled only with convoluted tricks and traps – instead of playful, creative alternatives. Getting lost isn't the end of the world. When you meet the beast, the creature may not even look you in the eye. When in doubt, follow the thread. Sometimes, there is no obvious exit.

John Håkansson

http://telecomtower.tumblr.com

Driving on coffee "cuts crash risk"
Long-distance lorry drivers who drink coffee have
fewer roadtraffic accidents, research suggests.
BBC News – World, 20 Mars, 2013 08:00 CET

Floor tile of Jaffa

Photo: Klara Källström and Thobias Fäldt

City of dreams

Razor sharp sunrays are reflecting in the January waters of Jaffa. The neighbourhood kids are playing catch up on their black Arabian stallions while loving couples gather to watch the horizon. Smoke from grilled fish and water pipe mixes in the salty sea breeze and reminds the senses of lost memories and unfulfilled dreams. A can of shoe polish slowly floats ashore, soon followed by another one, and another one, and another one until an armada of thousands of identical cans occupy the seacoast. A paraglide passes slowly over the invasion and disappears over the rooftops. With regular intervals armed helicopters pass the scenery heading southwards.

An oversized excavator is hiding by the coast between two mounds of finely grained sand. It digs up stones and places them in a gigantic mill that transforms them into the growing mounds. Among the stones, the excavator picks up a tree, a piece of metal or a floor tile and pulverises it just the same – without prejudice. The new beach promenade of Jaffa is being constructed.

Jaffa. The Jaffa of my childhood. Where I took my first careful steps to school. It was so far from the house on Shaarei Nikanor to the junction where Tabeetha school was. Jaffa, where I drove my orange tricycle indoors and practiced mountain climbing on the marble pillars of our living room. Where I rescued chicklets who had fallen from the palm trees on our veranda from the teeth of our black cat.

Jaffa, where the neighbouring Arab children would throw stones on our open red Jeep, their drug addict parents would sit on the steps of our house and chew sunflower seeds in the sun. I despised them.

The Jaffa of my childhood was a dream.

Not a childish, allegorical dream. A real dream. A dream that was only true as long as it lasted.

Many years passed before I realised that the city of my dreams was built on somebody else's sleepless nights. It happened over sixty years ago, long before I was born. How could I know that the street that I grew up on had another name, that the house that I grew in had other children? That the neighbours living in a shed leaning on one of our walls had previously lived in what became the ruins now transformed into fine grained sand on the new beach promenade? How could I know that the Jaffa of my dreams had been clinically cleansed?

In any case, there was nothing I could do. And it was too painful to feel the bottomless helplessness spreading all the way through my fingertips. So I closed my eyes. I bit my tongue hard and let the mute rigor mortis spread through my throat.

The excavator picks up another object and places it into the gigantic mill. Soon all will be erased. All traces. All memories troubling the city of dreams will be gone.

I pick up a fragment of a mosaic, or maybe a floor tile, wrap my fingers around it and hold it greedily in my hand as if I was trying to rescue a fleeting dream.

Text: Johannes Wahlström

Lina Persson

Video still from *Subatomic particles*, 2012 .

– We have to trust in the future, and that's
  a lot of what we do already, in the present,
  is trust.

– Hope they trust us, thats what I'm more
  concerned about.

– Haha, in fact that's it, we don't know. In
  fact they may decide; these people really
  need to be thaught a lesson back there.

– Yeah, I have a feeling… So I think if you
  are ready, I am.

– Alright so, I'll turn it up. Now.

Interview from *Hypothetical Situation I*, sound, 2012

My Israeli friend Adinah wrote to me before I left to tell me that her father passed away earlier that year. She thought that I would understand because I lost my dad recently as well. It seemed to me a strange coincidence that both of our fathers died at almost the same time. It gave us yet another reason to meet each other during my visit to the site.

I met Adinah for the first time as an adult. We crossed paths at Konstfack University in Stockholm in 2008 when we started our master studies, she at the Jewelry Department and I in Fine Arts. In retrospect I think that the meeting might as well have occurred at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, where Adinah took her bachelor, where coincidentally, I was admitted at the same time as an exchange student.

I would describe Adinah as "lovable". When I looked up the term (it's probably the first time I ever used it) I became aware that it describes a person who is "friendly", "charming" and "worth liking." Synonyms include terms such as "accommodating", "nice", "good", "helpful", "polite" and "urbane". However, I think there are other reasons that I have come to feel this sense of love for my friend, beyond all of these qualities our relationship has helped me as a Swede / Palestinian in regards to a country I, in my upbringing, was taught to distance myself from. It was something my dad constantly made me aware of and I never really questioned. As an adult I have made several attempts to understand the situation/ conflict and Israeli perspectives. I cannot say, however, that I managed. Not until I met Adinah was I able to experience this exclusive feeling that, for lack of a more equitable vocabulary, is in some way about reconciliation. When I think back on those situations I remember when another masters student from Israel and myself were at the Royal Opera in Stockholm to see a show depicting the conflict in the Middle East. Previously we had arranged a number of projects together in an attempt to show that Palestinians and Israelis actually *can* meet. Our friendship operated for a time as a major manifestation of this claim. In some expected way the cooperation came to an abrupt end after the show. My friend told me she felt provoked as she found the story was depicted from a Palestinian perspective. She considered that the set was exaggerated and (in the effort to save our friendship) searched for support from me. Considering how fond I was of her and how much I genuinely believed in our project it would have been more than logical to give her

the answer she wanted, but instead, I sided with Palestine. My dismissive comment made me think of my dad's infallible, and in my opinion, often unhealthy loyalty for his country.

Adinah and I decided to meet at four at the central bus station in Jerusalem. Since I was unfamiliar with the area, I asked if there were more stations to choose from, there were none. Not according to Adinah anyway. To be on the safe side, I came to the station 30 minutes before our scheduled meeting time. The thought occurred to me that she might have been waiting for me somewhere else. When the clock was three fifty – five I was certain. Adinah was always on time. I tried to dismiss my concerns by reminding myself that I always find it in some way strange to meet someone in a country in which I have never seen them. Such meetings are a reminder that the global life that we live runs in contrary to the world's natural laws. This idea calmed me somewhat and allowed me to wait the additional 30 minutes that it took to make the call that clarified the issue. I called Adinah but for some unknown reason got the wrong person. Misunderstandings like this make me frustrated. Unclear about what to do next, I went to Damascus Gate, the entrance to the old town: Jerusalem's main tourist attraction. I sat on the famous stairs and noticed my friend Ben[1] walk by. Ben had helped me with some banking business I needed to take care of after my father's passing. When he heard about the misunderstanding that occurred between Adinah and myself he began by asking me if my friend is Palestinian or Israeli. I replied Israeli. This is how I learned that there are two main bus stops in Jerusalem, one for Israelis and one for Palestinians.

I made another attempt to call Adinah from Ben's telephone to ask if we could meet at the Damascus Gate. I thought I'd suggested this given venue already at our first call. This time I got a hold of Adinah who told me that she also stood at the same bus stop, and waited, just as I did. I had no clear understanding of where she was and she apparently had no knowledge of the Damascus Gate, even though she grew up and lives in Jerusalem. I gave the phone to Ben who speaks Hebrew and perhaps could better explain where we were. A few minutes later he ended the call and I followed him a block away where I met Adinah in a traffic intersection. All the confusion and delay seemed insignificant the moment I saw my friend. Later, when we passed Damascus Gate and I explained that it was from there that I called her. She pronounced it Shchem gate (Hebrew), her name for the site.

Linda, West Bank, around 1985

Linda, West Bank, 2012. Photo: Klara Källström

In an attempt to get away from the traffic and the ambiguous encounters, I suggested that we should go to a place where we could talk in peace. I recommended "Educational Bookshop," a coffee shop combined with a bookstore that offers a wide selection of books on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is run by Palestinians. Adinah told me that she had never been there but expressed that my question made her uneasy rather than curious. My friend hesitated. It took her a few minutes to agree to my initiative and I, knowing no other place, stood by my proposal. Shortly before we arrived she told me that she was worried about being seen in the district. I assured Adinah that she could feel secure but my confidence did not seem to change her attitude. Her eyes did not meet with any passersby on the way to the bookstore. When we arrived, Adinah looked around among the books, and then insisted on inviting me to a cup of sahlab[2] (Arabic). The drink made me remember the trips I made to Palestine during my childhood. I came to wonder whether it originated from Israel or Palestine. The idea that it would have emerged from both sides felt as satisfying as it seemed unlikely. Adinah and I started to talk about ourselves, about our jobs and our families. I told her about my intense schedule and the trips to Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem. Adinah said she always wanted to go to those places and asked me how it was in Ramallah. She said that she would like to go there, but that she did not dare to expose herself to the authorities. Her fears provoked me, and the feeling came over me once again that it is we – the Palestinians – who are the victims. This time, I tried to locate the frustration of a larger system. I wanted to regard the troubles that affected us as a structural or political problem.

Adinah followed me to several gallery openings. She kept her body close to mine as we walked between the different exhibitions. Later in the evening I escorted her back to the place where we met earlier, in the traffic intersection, a no man's land, located between East and West Jerusalem. In order to find my way back to my group I brought Ben with me. Since it was late and we would go back to Ramallah during the evening he suggested that we should leave Adinah before her husband picked her up. It was just a matter of a few minutes. Much like me, Adinah was worried when we parted. I asked her to send me a message when she got home. At last in Ramallah I was told over the phone that everything went well, and the uncomfortable feeling finally began to pass.

The events that occurred during the day made me think of the movie "The Fox and the Hound: friends when it comes," the story of the dog and the fox who grew up together but are separated because they belong to different camps. The Disney movies (all of the 53 available to choose from) have always captured my love. Maybe because I recognize parts of myself in the problems I struggle with when I am expected to decide whether I am Swedish, or Palestinian; a supporter of Israel, or of Palestine. Maybe because of those movies, unlike other Disney films, I recall the love that is not unconditional, that there are limits to what we are allowed to represent and, above all, that loyalty trumps friendship.

[1] Ben is Palestinian now residing in Jerusalem where he lives in a house with an Israeli friend. The two have developed a good friendship and work on projects together, but they never talk about the conflict. Ben believes that the conversation and emotions surrounding it will result in the end of the friendship.

[2] Shalab; Arabic: salab, Hebrew: sakhleb. The drink, which is often served as dessert, usually consists of milk, vanilla, sugar, starch, and is flavored with orange flower or rose water and pistachios. Shalab was originally based on an orchid plant and was popular in the lands of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, it was drunk in England during the 17th and and 18th centuries, where it was called "saloop".

Mandana Moghaddam

In the state of siege,
time becomes space
Transfixed in its eternity
In the state of siege,
space becomes time
That has missed its yesterday
and its tomorrow.

Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish 1941 – 2008

Hebron, November 2012. Photo: Mandana Moghaddam

Marika Heidebäck

Ferris Wheel in Gaza, May 2003. Photo: Marika Heidebäck

Mirjam Johansson

"You can take it.
It doesn't mean anything to me.
I don't know why I saved the clips.
Burn it if you want."

Articles that my mother clipped from Swedish newspapers, mostly Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet, from January 20, 1976 to June 18, 1983. Most of the clippings are about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but the book also contains a number of articles about anti-Semitism and Zionism. In 1969 my mother escaped, as one of many Jews, from Poland to Sweden, not wanting to repeat the mistakes her parents made 30 years earlier by staying in an anti-Semitic country. Unlike my grandmother who constantly spoke about the war, my mother never talked about the things she had experienced. Now, I try to start asking.

URKLIPP

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Video stills from *Terrain Vague*, 2013 .

From the art project "Vertical Gardening" 2010, Jalazoun refugee camp, West Bank, Palestine.

This picture was taken on October 22, 2010 at 4 p.m. I am the small person on the left with the grey hoodie and angry look, together with the Swedish dancer Ylva Henrikson, on the right, with the blue hoodie and surprised look.

We are standing on the rooftop of the butcher's house at the center of the refugee camp Jalazoun, close to Ramallah city, in the West Bank, Palestine. We are surrounded by people from the refugee camp.

It is the last day of the art project Vertical Gardening, which I did in 2010 together with a number of residents of the refugee camp, Palestinian artists and Swedish artists Anders Paulin and Ylva Henrikson.

That day was planned as a celebration of the work done during one month together with the community of Jalazoun. We started in the morning with a seminar together with the participants in the project – artists, architecture students and volunteers from the camp – where we had a discussion on the objectives of the project: To use the activity of working together as a tool to create discourse on collective use of public spaces. In order to reach this aim it has of course been very important to continuously find strategies for how to use the project for the subjectivity of the community we were working with, and also to avoid the automatic reflex of implementing our own values and identities in this foreign context.

When this picture is taken we are about to start the public celebration, which is a program of performances on three rooftops surrounding the central plaza of the camp, done by three local dapke dance groups from Jalazoun – The Tigers, Shabab Harriye and The Youngsters – the Palestinian Circus School and a trio by Ylva, me and a violin player. The music is played by a local DJ. During rehearsals with the groups we agreed to follow my instructions:

"When I do this sign (arms ups) it is for group 1 to start and stop; When I do this sign (head moving in circle) it is for group 2 to start and stop; And when I do this sign (leg up) it is for group 3 to start and stop." Nobody followed my signs during the performance. The DJ didn't look at me, neither did the dancers. I look disappointed in the picture. (I turn to look at my angry self in the projected picture on the wall.)

It was a warm day, we were wearing too many clothes, since women can't be on a rooftop showing their bodies, that's the reason for the XL hoodies. We are working hard to hear each other, as the sound was extremely loud. And I am irritated. (I turn to look at my angry self in the projected picture on the wall.)

I had agreed with the Tiger group to do one number without music – to add some sort of eccentric twist to the traditional folkloric dance. They didn't really like the idea at first, but after long discussions they agreed. In the show they didn't follow the plan, and kept the music on throughout their performance.

I wanted all groups to use their street clothes instead of traditional costume, they absolutely didn't want that.

We had agreed that everyone would keep the length of all numbers to no more than 2 minutes, instead of the traditional music length of 8-12 minutes. In the show the music continued on. I tried to give the sign we'd agreed upon, but they didn't look in my direction. I called them with cellphones, but they didn't hear it. Maybe they forgot, I don't know.

My relation to dapke is this: I come from Venezuela, from a Lebanese family. Through my whole childhood there was dapke all over. To me dapke represents nationalistic stagnation, super rigid formations of steps, traditional music and costume, So here I am, trying to deal with three dapke groups and with something that I don't consider art, while I'm supposed to be celebrating.

Dapke looks like this: (I show some steps, then ask the audience to join and learn it in the dance circle).

After a while dancing dapke with loud music I stop and say: Thank you, but let's stop now, don't get too happy, because this is not art, and not only is it conserving traditional structures, but it's used for us westerners to project our own identity on the exotic image of the other and we don't want to do that right?

The urgent question for me throughout this whole celebration is: How am I going to video document this event? How am I going to show the funders that this is not a wedding, but the finalization of an art project?

It has been very difficult to explain to all art grants, that our work is not a NGO-project, but the creation of a choreography. How will we explain that Vertical Gardening itself is not just planting, it's a choreography – in – geography, a mobilization of people in time and the territorial space? That we are not social workers, we are working with social issues, but through the perspective of art? In this case through the strategy of rooftop planting, as those are the only spaces available in this camp.

Is it really a problem of documentation?

The text is an excerpt of Sara's solo performance called *"How to get the water into the tire?"*

Verkligheten utanför den chartrade bussen känns avlägsen. Landskapet är böljande. Nästan på varje kulle har bosättare slagit sig ner. I dalgången, i den svalkande skuggan ligger den äldre bebyggelsen. Det nybyggda är tydligt avskilt från det äldre, det andra. Skuggan av stängsel målar rutnät i asfalten. Ljuset är skarpt, gräset bränt och torrt längs sluttningarna, men mellan de bländvita husen uppe på kullarna kan ändå frodig grönska skönjas. Det heliga landet är inte bara en berättelse, en illusion från historien. Det är här, det är nu.

Om man såg landskapet uppifrån skulle de nybyggda byarna avteckna sig så som en svärm flyttfåglar tecknar kluster över hösthimlen. Byarnas vita kluster sträcker ut sig och förtätas igen på varje ny kulle. Nattetid växer de sig större. Arkitekturen är sammanhållen, byarna tycks vara varandras bröder. Ibland växer de sig större till städer, estetiken håller dem samman. Husens framsidor vetter mot dalen, samtidigt som kedjan av hus slingrar sig runt och upp på höjden. I trappsteg byggs ring efter ring av hus. På avstånd tycks byarna bilda solida enheter, monument som majestätiskt tonar upp sig till ointagliga fort.

Referenserna liksom associationerna är många. Av den skarpa vintersolen bildas dis som skiktar ljuset som genom ett gudomligt filter. Det landskap som genom årtusenden har återspeglats i oräkneliga berättelser och bilder projiceras likt en scenografi. I tidiga reseskildringar, som David Roberts illustrationer från mitten av 1800-talet, återges en romantisk och mystifierad bild av det heliga landet. Palats belägna på höjder, som för länge sedan förvandlats till ruiner, avbildas mot ett förföriskt panorama där ljuset sträcker sig ner från himlavalvet. Det är i det här bibliska landskapet som historierna samsas. I Första Moseboken kapitel 11:9 berättas det om hur människorna på jorden försöker att bygga ett torn så högt att det kan nå himmelriket. Guds vrede skingrade då folket och gav dem olika språk för att splittra dem och deras övermod. Detta torn har genom historien fått namnet Babels torn.

Arkitektur kan användas av dem som företräder samhällets makt för att skapa gemensamma visioner. Men en vision företräder också målet i sig självt, ett mål som ofta kan vara svårt att uppnå. Om en vision vacklar och förändras över tid så förändras också målbilden. En vision som vacklar behöver därför stödjas för att inte falla. För att behålla föreställningen om vad visionen ska leda till krävs list och inflytande. Genom att försköna och dölja brister och genom att upprätthålla ordningen kan verkligheten arrangeras om. Illusionen blir därför en nödvändig pelare i konstruktionen av en vision. Uttrycket potemkinkuliss används ibland när man vill beskriva en osanning och använda illusionen som verklighet. När Krim kolonialiserades på 1700-talet av Katarina II:s älskare Potemkin, lät han bygga en stad av kulisser för att dölja avsaknaden av välstånd.

Arkitektur kan också ses som ett slags estetiskt verktyg för att återupprätta en förlorad enighet. En gemensam vision kan förena, och med hjälp av en illusion som representerar det goda, kan den också osynliggöra ett territoriellt och mänskligt övergrepp. Babels torn är förmodligen en sägen men den har ändå format våra värderingar, inspirerat oss till hur makt och samstämmighet kan visualiseras och har återspeglats i modern arkitektur och stadsplanering. De nybyggda byarna som har beskrivits förefaller eftersträva en enad estetik som inte bara utnyttjar byggnadens arkitektoniska språk utan också stadsplanen som verktyg till att forma en visuell identitet. Ett komplicerat system av visioner som inte bara är en visuell angelägenhet, det är också en militär och marknadsstrategisk angelägenhet. Kanske är det ingen tillfällighet att man inom militära strategier talar i termer av swarming. Metoder och strategier utvecklas, söker nya liknelser för att kunna expandera. Swarming, att svärma, används som en militär strategi för att forcera ett område genom att eliminera fysiska hinder, slå hål i väggar till människors hem. Liknelsen är hämtad från insekter kollektiva handlande. Vilka nya termer som används inom samhällsplanering och nationsbygge är oklart. Tydligare är att det tar sig uttryck här i det heliga landet men även i den övriga världen. Vi fortätter att bygga kulisser i tron att det är en samstämmig vision om framtiden.

Dissonans / 1.1

Sakletarna, akryl på plåt, 26 x 21

Underströmmar, akryl på plåt, 117x96

TEXTS

Leila Brännström,
The Art of Reflected Intractability:
Critique according to Foucault
(Den reflekterade olydnadens konst).
Fronesis, nr. 36–37, 2011.
Translation: Sarah Clyne Sundberg.

Eyal Sivan,
Archive Images: Truth or memory.
Experience with truth, transitional justice
and the process of truth and reconciliation.
Documenta 11 Platform 2, 2001.

Eyal Weizman,
Forensic Architecture:
Notes from fields and forums.
dOCUMENTA 13 Artist Book n° 062,
Hatje Cantz, 2012.

Hito Steyerl,
The Spam of the Earth:
Withdrawal from representation.
e-flux journal #32, 2012.

The Art of Reflected Intractability: Critique according to Foucault

Leila Brännström

I.

"What is Critique?" is a transcript of a lecture that Michel Foucault gave at a seminar at the Sorbonne in May 1978. The text is sometimes presented as a precursor to the better-known article "What is Enlightenment?" published a few years later.[1] Despite the thematic similarity between the articles, the lion's share of "What is Critique?" differs from the latter article. The texts have in common that Foucault bases them both on Immanuel Kant's newspaper article "Answering the Question: What is enlightenment?" published in *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 1784.[2] In both cases he also seeks to define the main characteristics of a critique that doesn't aim to point out flaws, or pass judgment, but rather to make visible historically anchored relationships between power, truth and subjectivity.[3] By making these visible, the critic seeks to intervene in the present with the intention of making possible other modes of thinking, speaking and acting.[4]

Foucault begins "What is Critique?" by fixing critique in a historically specific context. He asserts that a *critical attitude* emerged parallel, and as a counterforce, to the modern knowledge-based and officially sanctioned mechanisms of power such as *discipline* and *governmentality*.[5] In his earlier works Foucault showed that the thoroughgoing transformations that Western societies underwent from around the 17th century and onward, in connection to population growth, industrialization, the development of capitalism and the

dissemination of apostatic doctrines, had the consequence that state power no longer could control either the individual or the multitude with the harsh and ostentatious, though sporadically practiced, mode of exercising power that had been prevalent up until that point. Instead the state authorities now came to rely on mechanisms of power that were informed by knowledge about individual persons, as well as about the population as a whole, and which were primarily intended to shape, rather than to subjugate, the subject in expedient ways.[6]

The Christian practice to lead every individual toward salvation through controlling and monitoring her life in detail is seen by Foucault as a precursor to the modern, individualizing, and knowledge-based mechanisms of power. He asserts that the Christian enterprise of government, which had previously been used in relatively limited settings, such as in monastic life, spread to all areas of society during early modern times. The state authorities, which noted that these ways to exercise power are economically and politically advantageous, now began to support their use in society and even to adopt them.[7] Thus the governmental society emerges – a society characterized by the art of governing each individual toward an expedient way of life. Foucault asserts that the governmental society generates its antithesis within itself, a mindset, which he calls the critical attitude. This attitude is about a resistance to being governed, not in some radical anarchist way, rather, *"like that,* by that, in the name of those

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principles, with such and such objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them."[8] In a society where the subjects are made governable through mechanisms of power that adhere to the truth of knowledge, "critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth."[9]

II.

In "What is Critique?" Foucault asserts that his way of speaking of critique isn't too far off from Kant's definition, not of critique, but of enlightenment.[10] In Kant's call to, "use one's own understanding without the guidance of another" and to question ecclesiastical and worldly doctrines, Foucault sees something of an archetype for the critical attitude.[11] One should bear in mind Foucault's phrasing that the critical attitude is not very different from Kant's definition of enlightenment – which is to say, not the same as it. There are, after all, important differences between Foucault's critical attitude and not just Kant's critical project, but also his definition of enlightenment. At the same time there is an affinity between this critical attitude and Kant's notion of both critique and enlightenment, which may explain why Foucault develops his thoughts on the meaning of critique in connection with Kant in particular.

For Kant critique is to know knowledge. The critical enterprise is about investigating how we can know anything, to determine where the boundaries of possible knowledge lie and to establish how valid, or legitimate, knowledge can be distinguished from illegitimate, or invalid, ditto.[12] In Kant's philosophy this primarily becomes a question of clarifying the universal necessary conditions for any knowledge.[13] Despite the conditions of knowledge being neither universal nor necessary for Foucault, there's an affinity between Foucault's critical attitude and Kant's critical enterprise precisely in that both include an investigation into the conditions of possibility for our knowledge. One important difference between their respective approaches lies in that Foucault's critical attitude, as opposed to Kant's critique, doesn't try to examine claims of knowledge with the purpose of judging their validity. Rather the intention is to create conditions for alternate ways of thinking, speaking and living.

Foucault emphasizes the fact that Kant takes on the present time in his "Answering the Question: What is enlightenment?"[14] Foucault claims that Kant's contribution may be the first example of a philosopher formulating the mission of philosophy, not in relation to the eternal questions, but rather in relation to the present time and cultural context.[15] Occupied with contemporary concerns, Kant intervenes in this present moment. To Foucault it is precisely this – to speak at once as an element and as an actor in a historical moment – which defines the critical attitude.[16]

An additional component in Kant's text that Foucault sees as characteristic of the critical attitude is the call for *courage* in relation to claims of authority.[17] Enlightenment to Kant is the courage to make use of one's own understanding – that is to say one's ability to know – to question the validity of the authorities' claims to truth. Foucault reminds us that a legitimate use of reason for Kant demands knowledge of the conditions for the validity of knowing, that is: critique of knowledge. It is through knowing the premises for knowledge and their limits that illegitimate claims of truth, as well as the claims to power which invoke and rest on them, can be rebuffed and the subject can be desubjugated "in the context of power and truth."[18] Critique of knowledge, the ability to differentiate legitimate knowledge from illegitimate knowledge, is a necessary premise for enlightenment as the courage to question the veracity of authorities' claims to truth.

Foucault stresses that the autonomy of reason for Kant is dependent on critique of knowledge, not just to be able to rebuff illegitimate claims, but to bend to legitimate claims. Enlightenment to Kant isn't just about questioning the guardianship of authorities and traditions, but also about voluntary subjugation to the authority of reason. "Instead of letting someone else say 'obey!' it is at this point, once one has gotten an adequate idea of one's own knowledge and its limits, that the principle of autonomy can be discovered. One will then no longer have to hear the *obey*; or rather, the *obey* will be founded on autonomy itself."[19] Enlightenment is the courage to use critique of knowledge with the intention of submitting to the authority of reason and thus reach autonomy.

Unlike the Kantian idea of enlightenment, the goal of Foucault's critical attitude is not submission to the authority of reason; rather it is led by the practical interest to renegotiate or avoid various forms of government. It is not as the sentry of reason that the critic questions the claims of authority, but rather as the subject/object of government. In Foucault's view, reason isn't some meter separate from enlightenment/critique, which guides it with reliable

knowledge so that it can navigate between legitimate and illegitimate claims to authority. Claims to authority – regardless of whether or not they are judged to be legitimate or illegitimate – create effects of power and bring into being demands of subjugation. Critique/enlightenment scrutinizes the knowledge that passes for truth, not to show it up as untrue, but to map its power effects and investigate possible paths of flight from the government that the knowledge sanctions.

III.

Foucault argues that because of the historical development during the 19th and 20th centuries, which saw science take a confident and prominent place in society and the officially sanctioned exercise of power rely to an increasing extent on knowledge generated by various scientific disciplines, the critique of reason/knowledge – rather than the questioning of government – became the heart of social critique. The critique of reason came to either ask the Kantian question of the validity of knowledge and aim to reveal the illegitimacy of historical modes of knowing and the ways in which they are employed to exercise power (in the style of the later Frankfurt school), or assume a radical skepticism toward reason which portrayed the problem of subjugation as a question of *excesses of reason* rather than a question of *lack of reason* in the organization of society (in the style of the earlier Frankfurt school).[20]

As opposed to these two forms of social critique, resistance to government (like that), not the illegitimacy, or excesses, of knowledge constitutes the basis for the Foucauldian critical attitude. The critical attitude doesn't aim to differentiate valid claims of reason from invalid ones. Neither is reason in and of itself subject to critique. "I don't know if it's too much, or too little reason, but in any case surely [we are] facing too much power," Foucault writes.[21] The critical attitude seeks to investigate reason and knowledge in order to explore the relationships between power, truth and the subject.[22] How might one proceed to analyze these relationships?

In "What is Critique?" Foucault advocates a "historical-philosophical practice" to make visible historically anchored relationships between power, truth and subjectivity. He sketches a possible approach – eventualization (French, *événementalisation*) – to implement said project. Eventualization on the *archeological level* means to empirically map the interplay between different power mechanisms and various elements of knowledge [nexuses of knowledge-power] to establish what makes claims to authority and demands of subjugation acceptable in the sense *de facto* accepted at a certain time and in a certain place. The purpose here is not to identify general principles of reality, but rather to find the elements that might be relevant to analysis.[23] On the *genealogical level* the conditions for the appearance of the knowledge-power nexuses are tracked and reconstructed. That is to say, the conditions that made them acceptable. Conditions for the appearance should not be confused with *necessary* causality. On the *strategic level* those interactions are analyzed which reproduce the acceptability and that could transform the same. At this level the critic seeks to identify how a knowledge-power nexus could disappear, or at least what might make such a disappearance possible. Thus, through archeology, genealogy and strategy one investigates how a nexus of knowledge-power has appeared and is being sustained with the purpose of finding out how the nexus might be toppled, based on a decision to not be governed (like that).[24]

IV.

In "What is Critique?" Foucault describes the critical attitude, which is driven by the will to not be governed (like that), as a *virtue*. In an essay that discusses "What is Critique?" Judith Butler posits that Foucault understands virtue as an ethical attitude that goes beyond following a set of prescriptions.[25] Virtue implies that the subject is trying to shape herself reflexively based on a set of ethical rules of conduct. In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault highlights the meaning of virtue in connection to a discussion of practices of chastity. Virtue isn't primarily about abstaining from giving in to desire – if to do so would be a violation of the rules of chastity. Rather it is to actively develop a practice of desire – a directing of desire – guided by the rules of chastity. That the subject shapes herself according to, but not only in accordance with, ethical prescriptions, means that her relationship to the prescriptions isn't mechanical and predictable, but critical. The subject of virtue continuously brings into question, reevaluates, and changes the prescribed ethics and thus, at least implicitly, the knowledge that they are based on.[26]

Butler explains that Foucault denotes the critical attitude as a virtue because it constitutes an ethical approach where the subject seeks to shape herself as a sort of subject which

continuously questions the demands of obedience that are placed on her and the nexuses of knowledge-power that make these demands acceptable. This questioning, as Foucault speaks of it, takes place both on the level of discourse, as well as on a practical-political level. The goal is "desubjugation," that is to say liberation from the demands of obedience through an inquiry into and revelation of its boundaries.[27] The purpose of the "art of reflected intractability" is to conquer the possibility of alternative ways of being in the world – alternate ways of thinking, speaking and acting – that are not supported by the demands for obedience and the knowledge that undergirds them.[28]

The critical attitude's questioning doesn't lean on any higher truth, which in advance, once and for all, can give the direction for the alternative ways of being in the world that the critical attitude seeks to make way for.[29] Early on in "What is Critique?" Foucault determines that critique is *negative* by nature and practiced in relation to something else that has already been established.[30] It does not have a normative program of its own. Its *ethos* is precisely the disinclination to let oneself be governed. This driving force should be understood as a desire for freedom, but this freedom is a freedom *from*. Freedom for Foucault is always freedom from certain, historically specific, forms of demands for subjugation and it follows that critique is an investigation of the possibilities to practice freedom within a given historical context.[31] Like Judith Butler very rightly points out, the will to not be governed shouldn't be taken as a natural human instinct. Rather it is formed in the subject's encounter with the demands of subjugation made on her.[32] A basic supposition here is that demands of subjugation can never entirely permeate a subject, rather she will always have the ability to react to, reject, evade and transform them.

In her commentary on Foucault's text, Butler writes that it isn't thrill-seeking that drives the critical attitude, rather it is the fact that the subject is already thrown into crisis by the demands for subjugation that surround her.[33] The subject does not want to be governed (like that) because she already knows the limitations and repressing effects of for example what counts as a coherent gender, who qualifies as a citizen, whose experiences count and so on. However, the experience of crisis is not just about immediate experiences of hardship, but also about the sense that something else – something more fair, more legitimate, more desirable – is possible.[34]

V.

At the very beginning of "What is Critique?" Foucault stresses that "critique" signifies a number of different types of activities that won't let themselves be uniformly delineated and uniformly defined.[35] He emphasizes that there is not *one* concept of critique, neither is there one *single* attitude of critique. However, in his talk Foucault does argue for a particular mode of critique, the will to not let oneself be governed (like that).

The Foucault-inspired social anthropologist Talal Asad posits that Foucault's anchoring of critique in the will to resist government results in an argument for an, in his view, problematic ideal of constantly reshaping oneself to prove that one can live "without the guidance of another." Asad asks himself why the will to not be governed (like that) should be held above the desire for social reform, for instance. He argues that our main concern perhaps shouldn't be to figure out *how* we can live without the guidance of another, but rather to figure out *what* we need to live.[36]

However, according to my reading of "What is Critique?" and also against the backdrop of Foucault's intellectual oeuvre in general, it is not possible to separate the will to "not let oneself be governed (like that)," or the will to "live without the guidance of another," from the question of *what* we need to live. Our ideas about this *what* are always already permeated by nexuses of knowledge-power that have become a part of ourselves. This is precisely why we must resist government (like that) by investigating the relationships between power, truth and the subject. This is not to say that the question of how we can resist government (like that) is always a more relevant point of departure than the question of what we need to live. The point is that the questions are intimately linked to each other.

The will of the critical attitude to not be governed (like that) is not about disobedience for its own sake, or about a private project of self-realization. The will to not be governed is a quest for freedom that emerges as a reaction to already established societal claims of authority and demands for subjugation. Critique in Foucault's sense can be initiated by individuals, but it doesn't really stem from individuals as it plays out in a societal context of power and subjugation.[37] This is how I understand Foucault's concluding words in "What is Critique?" that the will to not be governed is at once "an individual and collective experience."[38]

[1] Foucault, Michel "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rainbow. New York: Pantheon, 1984.

[2] Kant, Immanuel, "Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?," in *What Is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth – Century Answers and Twentieth – Century Questions*. Ed. James Schmidt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

[3] I would argue that one for good reason can equate the notion of "enlightenment" in the latter article with the notion of "critique" in the former. Foucault doesn't present the kind of critique he is describing as the exclusive, or preferred mode of critique, but rather as an urgent mode, especially suited to create distance from our habitual ways of viewing and being in the world (compare Foucault, Michel, "What is Critique?" in *The Politics of Truth*. Eds. Sylvère Lotringer and Lisa Hochroth. New York: Semiotext(e), 1997, pp. 24–26 and p. 48.)

[4] That is not to say that other kinds of critique can't intervene in the present, or make space for other ways of thinking, speaking and acting.

[5] For careful descriptions of these mechanisms of power and broader references, see Lemke, Thomas, *Eine Kritik der politischen Vernunft. Foucaults Analyse der modernen Gouvernementalität*. Berlin/Hamburg: Argument, 1997. In this instance, "officially sanctioned power," denotes both direct and indirect official power. Indirect official power is power that is practiced by other actors than official authorities, with the approval and underwriting of the official powers. The power practiced by the employer, or the forensic psychiatrist, are examples of indirect official power.

[6] Compare e.g. Foucault, Michel *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison,* 1975 and the lecture series Foucault, Michel *Security, Territory, Population: Lecture at the Collège de France 1977–1978.*

[7] Compare e.g. Foucault, Michel "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp. 208–226, pages 214 and 224 in particular; Foucault, Michel, "Truth and Juridical Forms," in *Power*. Vol. 3 of *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, Ed. James D. Faubion. Trans. Robert Hurley et al. New York: The New Press, 2000, pp. 52–87; "Lives of Infamous Men," ibid., pp.157–175 and Foucault, *Security, Territory...*, pp. 115–224.

[8] Foucault, "What is Critique?" p. 28.

[9] Ibid., p. 32.

[10] Ibid., p. 32.

[11] Kant, "Answering the question..." p. 58.

[12] The possibility of metaphysics is the entry point to *Critique of Pure Reason*. To answer the question of whether metaphysics is a possible science, Kant examines the faculty of reason in general. Critique as an examination of the conditions of possibility, or the "self-examination of reason," is portrayed in the introduction to the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* as the establishment of a, "court of justice, by which reason may secure its rightful claims while dismissing all its groundless pretensions, and this not by mere decrees but according to its own eternal and unchangeable laws" (Kant, Immanuel *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Critique of Pure Reason*. Eds. Paul Guyer, Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, AXII).

[13] Kant explains that his critical enterprise is, "to supply the touchstone of the worth or worthlessness of all cognitions *a priori*" (ibid., A 12, B 26).

[14] This is far more obvious in, "What is Enlightenment?" than in "What is Critique?"

[15] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" p. 38; compare Foucault, "What is Critique?" pp. 33–34.

[16] In "What is Enlightenment?" Foucault speaks of the critical attitude as a, "philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era." (Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" p. 42.)

[17] Foucault, "What is Critique?" pp. 33–34.

[18] Ibid., p. 36.

[19] Ibid., p. 35.

[20] Ibid., p. 36–49.

[21] Ibid., p. 43.

[22] Ibid., pp. 44–47. Even though it is not spelled out in the lecture, the critical attitude's resistance to government (like that) is not *only* about examining these relations. My impression is that the resistance to being governed (like that) constitutes a more comprehensive project, of which the examinations of the relationships between power, truth and the subject is an important component.

[23] In "Zu 'Kritik' bei Foucault," which is a comment on Foucault's text, the German social- and gender-scientist Katharina Pühl asserts that theorists who work in the Marxist tradition often feel that Foucault's theoretical perspective can't be used to develop systematic, or social, critique, as it lacks an image of the social whole. Pühl explains that Foucault doesn't advocate a position according to which social critique can spare an understanding of overarching social contexts and patterns. Rather it is about starting from the other end to find out what the links of power relations are that make up a chain, so that an image of the whole eventually emerges. (Pühl, Katharina "Zu 'Kritik' bei Foucault," in *Erkenntnis und Kritik. Zeitgenössische* Positionen. Eds. Devi Dumbadze *et al.* Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2009, pp. 67–68.)

[24] Foucault, "What is Critique?" pp. 49–60. In "Criticism and Captivity: On Genealogy and Critical Theory," David Owen notes that critical theorists (Nancy Fraser for instance) often dismiss Foucault's genealogical approach precisely because it looks for the circumstances that limit our self-government and our freedom regardless of the degree of truth in the ideas that we have (Owen, David "Criticism and Captivity: On Genealogy and Critical Theory," in *European Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2002, pp. 224–226.) Owen asserts that we must distinguish between two kinds of voluntary, non-physical limits on our self-government: To be prisoner to an ideology in the sense of false consciousness on the one hand, and being prisoner to a perspective on the other. By "perspective" he denotes a contingent, but not necessarily false, way of making the world intelligible. The perspective decides what *could be* true or false. A subject who is subjugated and shaped by a perspective is limited in her self-government and her freedom in the sense that it is difficult for her to reorient her thinking and realize that it is possible to see and think in other ways than she does. Owen claims that critical theorists often see the ideological imprisonment as the only kind of voluntary non -physical limitation of our self-government and freedom and thus understand genealogy as a confused mode of ideological critique.

[25] Butler bases this on the understanding of virtue that Foucault developed in the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure and The Care of the Self.*

[26] Judith Butler, "What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue," in *The Political: Readings in Continental Philosophy*. Ed. David Ingram. London: Basil Blackwell, 2002, pp. 215–218.

[27] "Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we would call, in a word, the politics of truth". (Foucault, "What is Critique?" p. 32.)

[28] Butler, pp. 219 – 221.

[29] This aspect of the critical attitude is underlined by Katharina Pühl in "Zu 'Kritik' bei Foucault." Pühl claims that the lack of criteria for "right" and "wrong" in relation to politics as well as to claims of power has often led to the notion that Foucault's theoretical perspective can't be used to develop systematic or social critique. To this Pühl answers that Foucault doesn't view critique in terms of any kind of linear notion of progress, rather as something that emerges from the specific nexus of knowledge-power that is already in place at a certain time and a certain location. Thus, there can't be any general answers to the question, "How not to be governed?" (Pühl, pp. 60–64.)

[30] Foucault, "What is Critique?" p. 25.

[31] David Owen reads Foucault in a similar way when he claims that the will to not be governed (like that) is about a commitment to freedom in the form of self-government. He points out that Foucault doesn't seek to justify why we should be committed to freedom as self-government but, "given that we are, there is no compelling reason why he should be required do so." (Owen, footnote 13.)

[32] Compare Butler, p. 219.

[33] Butler, p. 215.

[34] Here one can note that Foucault, in his introduction to "What is Critique?" speaks of the "pleasures and compensations" that are linked to the activity of critique. (Foucault, "What is Critique?" p. 25.)

[35] Ibid., pp. 24–25.

[36] Asad, Talal "Reply to Judith Butler," in *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Inquiry and Free Speech*. Talal Asad *et al.* Berkeley: Townsend Papers in the Humanities, 2009.

[37] Compare Pühl, p.61.

[38] Foucault, "What is Critique?" p. 61. Compare to Foucault's answer to Jean-Louis Bruch's question. (Ibid., pp. 72–75.)

Phoenix Centre (where the headquarters of Campus in Camps is located), Dheisheh Camp.
Photo: Jesper Nordahl, 2012

Archive Images:
Truth or memory

Experience with truth,
transitional justice and the process of
truth and reconciliation

Eyal Sivan

Crimes against humanity justice, in moving image. The case of Adolf Eichmann's trial.

I am originally from Israel, a country where the political use, or the instrumentalization of, what we call memory is an integral, constitutive element of the political culture. Even in the 1930s David Ben Gurion – who later became the first prime minister of Israel – theorized about, "the transformation of Jewish suffering into Zionist redemption." No other country in the world uses the memory of suffering as Israel does, to justify its policy, or its existence. Obviously, no other country dares to detain the legacy of the victims of the biggest crime of 20th century.

Zionism, the Jewish nationalist movement, and its political expression – Israel – acquired legitimacy through the genocide of Jewish people during World War II. Resolution 181 – the Partition Plan for Palestine which divided the land between Jews and Arabs – was voted through by the United Nations General Assembly in 1947 with a large majority, in large part due to the memory of World War II being so "fresh" at that time. Israel's policy derives its moral credit from the commonly accepted idea of it being the homeland of the survivors of genocide.

Though far from historical fact, this common belief is deeply rooted in the present-day conscience of the western world. It gives Israel a privileged moral position. Victims, as we all know, are always considered to be on the good side. Paradoxically this "untouchable" position also weakens Israel, and exposes it to a permanent critique. How can it be that a nation that suffered so much during history can make others suffer? How can it be that the victims' memory does not prevent them from becoming criminals? This is a question heard and read here and there. Putting the problem this way already pretends to ignore the political function of collective memory. "This screen memory, which shows some of the horrors so as to dissimulate others, is nothing but a choice tool for all the lying, strategy and murderous propaganda," noted Rony Brauman. As a political argument, memory easily becomes an instrument that stimulates, encourages and justifies different types of collective and political violence. Did the genocide in Rwanda against Tutsis and moderate Hutus prevent the new regime in Kigali from launching massive massacres against Hutu refugees in Zaire in 1999, or from establishing a terror regime in Rwanda? Did the memory of Turkish and Nazi persecutions against Serbs prevent them from killing Bosnians? Did Chinese memory of Japanese crimes prevent China from building concentration camps and persecuting Tibetans? Did the memory of the deportation of Boers prevent their descendants from becoming perpetrators? Did Afro-American soldiers, presumably carrying the memory of slavery, behave differently from their white counterparts during the Vietnam War? Did taking part in the French resistance against Nazi occupation prevent some of these resistance fighters from becoming torturers in Algeria? Of course

this list is endless. "Which ethnic cleansing, which forced transfer of populations, which pulsation of vengeance, did not find its inspiration in this linear memory and the cult of the victim with which it is associated?" asks Brauman. One might argue that one of the reasons is that this dichotomy rests on the linear vision of collective memory that easily creates antagonistic categories. Nations rarely see themselves as criminal or cowardly. In the world of memory, nations are either victims or heroes, sometimes both. Tzvetan Todorov writes, "The world of heroes, and maybe this is its weakness, is a one-dimensional world which includes only two opposed terms: We and them, friend and enemy, courage and cowardliness, heroes and traitors, black and white. This is also the case in the sphere of representation of victimhood.

This is, of course, also the case in Israel. This memorial vision was imposed in Israel in the beginning of the 1960s thanks to the trial of Adolf Eichmann. On April 11, 1961 in Jerusalem, the trial opened on the Nazi criminal, Adolf Eichmann, former SS lieutenant, head of the IV-B4 bureau which handled the internal security of the Third Reich. Eichmann was in charge of the mass deportation of Jews, Poles, Slovenes and Roma in Europe to the concentration and death camps. Following his capture in 1960, in Buenos Aires by Israeli secret service, he was tried in Jerusalem. His trial, which was an international event, took place in the brand new auditorium of the *Beit Ha'am* (People's House). It was the first big public trial of a Nazi criminal since the Nuremberg trials at the end of World War II. Moreover, it was the first trial entirely dedicated to the extermination of Jews during that war.

To insure a resounding echo of this event, which was intended as a lesson to Israeli society, as well as to the world, the material organization of this event was conceived as a show. What gave this trial a truly spectacular dimension was the fact that, around the world, millions of people could follow it through their TV sets. The election of John F. Kennedy as US president the year before, in 1960 – after the first TV-centered electoral campaign – served to demonstrate the impact of images disseminated through this new medium. It is quite unknown that the first session of the court judging Eichmann was held a month before the official public opening of the trial. On March 10, 1961, a special session of the court took place to discuss the requests of the attorney general Gideon Hausner to permit video-recording in the court, "for the purpose of television broadcasts and cinema screenings in Israel and abroad." This was an original demand. Never before had a trial been video-recorded in its entirety and broadcast on TV. "We know of no relevant statutory provision," said the judges. The request of the attorney general was closely linked to the political aim behind the Eichmann trial. For the young state of Israel, the public exposure of the survivors' suffering was a political and didactical need. The trial, as an event, was supposed to become a memorial monument. The defendant's responsibility and the revelation of the truth were secondary. In fact, as Hannah Arendt wrote, it was Nazism put on trial by Zionism.

The staging and the filming of this trial were supposed to insure a full representation of Jewish suffering during the war. It aimed to reflect the position of Israel, through the voice of the attorney general, as the sole proprietor of this suffering. Dr. Robert Servatius, counsel to the Eichmann defense, strongly opposed the request of the attorney general. Servatius' main argument was the, "risk of distortion of the proceedings, and the desire of the witnesses to play-act before a world-wide audience." Alternatively, Dr. Servatius requested the court make its consent conditional upon "an objective presentation of the proceedings."

Despite the general mediocrity of Eichmann's defense, the remark is interesting. We might say that this point concerning the objectivity of images is a question of its time, the 1960s. But even today, we can still hear, here and there, arguments claiming objectivity, when it comes to visual documentation.

After a short debate, the court concluded: "This danger does not outweigh the favorable aspects of the proposed recording." The favorable aspects were mentioned by the judges during the debate, quoting Bentham, " Where there is no publicity, there is no justice... Publicity is the very soul of justice." The decision of the court took into consideration the present time of the trial. Nothing was said concerning the future and the fact that the result of the filming of the trial would be a factual trace, an archive for future generations.

This trial was of considerable importance from every point of view. The human and historical value of the evidence presented and the extraordinary view that it provided of the Nazi death machine, gave it a dimension that no other trial had previously attained.

An American company, under the direction of the filmmaker Leo Hurwitz, was put in

charge, by the State of Israel, of the full video recording and given exclusive marketing rights to the Eichmann trial images for one year. About 500 hours of video were recorded for posterity.

However, a large share of these recordings remained unusable. The Eichmann trial was held over more than five months, more than a hundred victims spoke as witnesses before the court. It was the first time that victims of Nazi persecution spoke publicly. During their testimonies, media was present in the court and the world was fascinated by the horror stories. Two months after the beginning of the trial, a unique witness began his testimony. Before the court and the survivors of hell, Adolf Eichmann, whom the prosecutor presented as the incarnation of the devil, had to answer the fifteen charges concerning the elimination of several million people. In his defense, he seeks shelter behind the orders of his superiors and the obligation to obey those orders, all the while giving profuse explanations concerning the functioning of the destructive machine of which he was one of the chief engineers. Answering his counsel's questions, as well as the attorney's and the judge's interrogations, he described before the court his precise deeds within the Nazi regime, without denying even one of the facts, and exposing to the court a full view of the historical fact concerning the Nazi extermination machine.

What is striking, when listening to his testimony, is the fact that there is no contradiction between the perpetrator's and the victims' testimonies. But the perpetrator and his truth were of no interest in the aim of this trial.

In a filmed interview, Leo Hurwitz, the director of the filming of the trial remembers, "I was terribly excited that Eichmann was going to be tried because it had the possibility of exposing why these events happened. [...] I felt sure that people in Israel would be interested in that [...] but it seemed they were not interested in discovering the nature of fascism. They were only interested in dramatizing the terrible events that happened to Jews."

Despite the fact that the full Eichmann trial was filmed, only a few shots of the victims and a single shot of the defendant declaring "not guilty", become the iconic visual representation of the trial. Indeed, despite the fact that hundreds of hours were filmed in Jerusalem, only a few canonical icons were left in memory. Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to the capital punishment on May 30, 1962. The next day, he was hanged and his ashes were dispersed in the Mediterranean Sea. Eichmann's execution led to the disappearance of the filmed footage of the trial, buried somewhere deep within the archives. Memory replaced history. It was in 1977, on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the trial, that the archives, found in America, were brought back to Israel. A short time later the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive was founded in Jerusalem with the mission to conserve all audio-visual material concerning contemporary Judaism. The archive was housed at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

During the years 1978–1979, the Spielberg Archives decided to extract a selection of 72 hours, which was done according to an unclear logic. These 72 hours of images, recorded onto poor quality tape were presented not as copies, but as originals. The rest of the footage was officially declared inaccessible or non-existent. Following criticism formulated towards the archives in the late 1990s, its director declared, "All the sensational moments of the trial are available, then the essential is safe." A few sequences were regularly sold, and became the usual illustration of the trial. The trade of a few pieces of memory was obviously much more profitable than a long and austere mission of archiving the full audio-visual material. The original tapes were stocked haphazardly and without classification, in the only free place that was cool enough to conserve them correctly, an unused washroom, where they were discovered in 1991, during the production of the film *The Specialist*.

A comparison between the catalogue of images and the trial minutes shows that almost a third of the video archives, essentially evidence from camp survivors, seems to have been lost for good. This is a deep paradox for an archival institution dedicated to the preservation of the same. It just shows how much and how easily the display of the duty of memory can replace act of real memory.

If the results of the Eichmann trial are virtual archives, that is because the trial itself in fact reached its goal. The pleas of European Jewry, their torture and the memory of the catastrophe were repatriated to Israel. From then on, they were a source of indisputable legitimacy, symbolized by the icon of the man in the glass booth. The staging of the Eichmann trial, like the decision to film and record it in its entirety, aimed to place the viewer in direct and immediate contact with the harsh testimony of the survivors. The origins of this decision lay in the desire to reflect, in the optical sense of the word, the horror experienced by the victims, both those who survived and those who

would live again through the evidence and the pleas, in order to keep a trace of it. The viewers of the trial footage were to be exposed only to this horror: the few minutes that we know – from the numerous TV broadcasts – were probably deemed sufficient by the State of Israel to reach this goal.

Hundreds of books, thousands of studies, have been written on the Eichmann case and trial. No one of the scholars, scientists or specialized historians was interested in the images. Does it mean that truth is not attached to the filmed material? Or is it only a question of time? One of the greatest experts on the Eichmann case, Dr. Hans Safrian, from the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., once declared that he is not interested in seeing Eichmann or his trial. Nobody was interested in hearing the perpetrator. The material – as a full documentation of trial – was not considered a document. And what about the testimonies of the victims who were witnesses? The Eichmann trial is one of the biggest filmed archives of the testimonies of Jewish victims. It covers a full range of witnesses from all over Europe, from 1933 to 1945, from the rise of Nazism, through the extermination camps, to their liberation. The women and men who testified in the trial did it just 16 years after the event, they were young and their memories "fresh." Despite all these elements, the archives were forgotten. In 1982, Yale University was given possession of a cinematography project on holocaust survivors, begun in the late 1970s by residents of New Haven, and transformed it into the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. In 1994, Steven Spielberg started filming the project Shoah Survivors. Beside it, nobody cared about the preservation of the images of the Eichmann trial witnesses.

What were the archival images of the Eichmann trial needed for, if neither the images of the perpetrator, nor those of the victims, were used, or even preserved? If historians do not consider these images to be documents? There is no question of truth here. The beginning of an answer might be the question of the function of collective memory. The act of filming allows emphasizing the spectacular position of the event. Some images, mainly images of victims, help to create the icons of memory... what we used to call "monuments."

One of the most famously iconic scenes from the Eichmann trial is the fainting and the evacuation of a witness, a survivor of Auschwitz, who collapses under the evocation of the horror. Spectacular and moving, this tragic sequence became the symbol of this endless trial. This famous moment of the trial, used in almost all of the films about the Eichmann trial, and many others about World War II, clearly illustrates the issue of archive, truth and memory. It is the Yehiel Di-Nur testimony. Forty-five years old at that time, he had spent two years in Auschwitz. A writer, native to Poland, the only survivor in his family, he gave up his name at the time of the liberation and signed his books with the pseudonym Ka-Zetnik, derived from K.Z., short for Konzentrationslager (concentration camp). In Israel he published one of the very first books about Auschwitz. Famous in his country, he was only known by this pen name and never appeared in public, even in photos, before his testimony at the Eichmann trial. In court, he spoke, in a few sentences, about the "Auschwitz Planet", about its inhabitants without name. "I see them, they are staring at me, I see them, I saw them standing in the queue," he said. Stopped by the attorney general, who tried to question him, Ka-Zetnik fainted and collapsed, unconscious. The courtroom is deeply distressed, ambulance drivers run to evacuate him.

Today, Ka-Zetnik himself does not recognize the description of Auschwitz he gave. Since the Eichmann trial, he took back his real name and now situates Auschwitz on our planet, as a human construction and not as a malediction from elsewhere. If he still suffers from anxiety, it is directed at the future. He is now using his civic energy in the struggle against the dangers of nuclear armament. Today, use of the spectacular scene of Ka-Zetnik's fainting should amount, due to the circumstances following the trial, to a betrayal of Yehiel Di-Nur. This censuring, i.e. this editing, is very close to the framing one, since choosing means to first eliminate. The truth of every film is not based on an inconceivable absorption of the reality, but on a rebuilding with explicit structure and requirements for choice. Strangely, documentary cinema and archival work rarely dealt with the representation of perpetrators. A great tradition exists of documenting, collecting, archiving, the images and narrations of victims. I mentioned the Yale project and the Spielberg one; I can also mention projects done recently in Rwanda, Bosnia, Argentina and others.

It seems that images of victims fascinate. The narrative of victims is a recurrent issue of study. It seems to be justified by the duty of memory. Strangely this ostensible duty is the

duty of the victims themselves. Perpetrators are not subject to the duty of memory. They are subjects of fiction. As an example, cinematic fiction dealing with the Nazi perpetrators strangely enough uses the prototype designed by Nazi aesthetics and more precisely by the Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl. Except for the films of Lubitsch and Chaplin, the cinema dealing with this period put the SS on screen as they themselves wanted to be shown. To show and hear the perpetrator, like Eichmann, is a starting point for breaking the conventional cliché/ icon of how perpetrators are represented. If historians mostly used Nazi documents to describe the process of destruction and to analyze the conditions for the crime, they however did not let the criminals speak. Based on the discovery of the exceptional audio-visual material created during the Eichmann trial, we decided in our film *The Specialist*, to follow Primo Levi's spirit. In his preface to the Rudolf Höss memoirs, Levi invites the reader to discover a, "human itinerary, which is, in a way, exemplary" and considers this autobiography to be, "one of the most instructive books ever published."

But writing is not an image. If the image is not holy, it has is own logic. And it is to the screen that we brought Eichmann's speech. Here he is, with a lively face and speech, a conscience and doubts that he speaks of with the voice of a man. Here he is, furthermore, in a position of weakness in his booth, face to the judges who keep him under control. Here he is, frail, vulnerable, all in all: human. Perpetrators hidden behind mythological fictionalized representations become inhuman figures, monsters, beasts, madmen etc. In the western world, representation of victims corresponds to the Judeo-Christian idea of redemption. Images of victims serve a similar function to that of the representation of the crucified man hanged on the church wall.

Focusing on the perpetrator as the main figure risks creating an analogical movement for spectators, a feeling of identification and comprehension towards the one that explains and justifies at length. This man who tells us his work, his joys, his sadness, looks like anybody. The technical problems he had to resolve, his conscience problems, the "duty" which obliges him to execute the orders, are experiences that every one of us experience. But it is precisely on this familiar feeling that we shall count. It is in this tiny space, which divides identification, comprehension, and indulgence that we can choose to evaluate it. By using the regular icons to represent crimes as they are shown daily through the suffering of the victims, seen a thousand times, commented on a thousand times, they become clichés in the sense that Roland Barthes describes shock photo, "Facing these images, we are deposed of our judgment. Somebody has trembled for us, thought for us, judged for us. The photographer left us nothing. Just simple intellectual acceptance."

I prefer to count on the power of imagination against the re-digestion of horror images. I do not share the idea of the denunciating power of theses images. We hear that exposing a crime against humanity is to begin to fight it. These kinds of euphoric clichés elude the question of political responsibility by substituting the show of horror for the reflection on the horror. "When the political event is reduced to a pathetic current affair, pity paralyzes thinking and the aspiration to justice is reduced to a humanitarian consolation. Here you find the banalization of evil."

After the Eichmann trial, filming trials for crimes against humanity became part of the juridical show. This was the case of Klaus Barbie's trial in 1985 and Maurice Papon's one in 1996 in France, and, of course, the I.C.T.Y. in Den Haag and I.C.T.R in Arusha. Those two courts are in fact television studios. The trials are fully recorded. Most of the images can be seen on the courts' websites. Ironically, the defendants' faces are blurred, hidden. The court respects the dignity of the defendants and maybe even considered the testimonies of the victims to be the really important part. Here we – once again – can ask what will happen to these thousands of hours of images? Who and how can we guarantee the freedom of access and possibility of reconstruction of narration and artwork out of this material?

As an integral part of the procedures of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, it was decided to record and broadcast on TV the full hearing of the commission (this was also the case in Argentina). In the first months, the hearings had a massive following all around the country. With time and due to the length of the hearing, interest dissipated. A few films were made during the hearings, but the question of the huge archive of moving images that is fabricated daily by the commission is raised.

As for the Eichmann trial, Den Haag, Arusha, or the T.R.C., the question of leaving material is raised. The aim of filming in all the cases is representation of victims and the creation of

linear collective memory. Fortunately, these images are not considered proof. Unfortunately, they are not considered part of the construction of truth. An image is a representation of a segment of reality. The four black sides that construct, or define, a frame hide more than they show. Truth through images can only be an accumulation of points of view on the same material. This depends on free manipulation of the archival material, on the construction of a new narrative, and on the use of the material, not just as an illustration for a single moment, a speech, or memory.

Images can be objects of thought, but icons, as cult objects, cannot. The respect due icons is not justified for images, which exist only through the work done on and with them. It is strange to remark that the use of image as testimony of truth and the fabrication of audio-visual, or cinema works pretending to be an act against oblivion, is permanently growing. Memory has become a sort of audio-visual collective experience. Image compilations dealing with World War II are for the most part a convenient illustration of the commemorative discourses, characterized by the euphoric cliché "never again." This memory, or rather this imposed mourning is made possible thanks to the constitution of a visual language. In opposition to a living language, which is permanently evolving and which can be used for individual and subjective works, or points of view, what we are dealing with here is the constitution of a code. Like the road signs, these images can be read in the glimpse of an eye. Deteriorated images signify past. Mute images with grey silhouettes running through trenches and explosions mean World War I. Images of railroad trains set to the background of violin music, mean holocaust. Snow and barbed wire mean gulag. The codes are numerous. Together, they create a series of non-transparent images, an empty screen. The codes of images, like the terms that are used to comment on them, become overused. Those images presenting the piles of corpses, the views of the death factories of Auschwitz and Birkenau, the deportees behind the barbed wire, the images of the grey men running in the trenches of World War I, lost their exemplarity much like the narratives of the victims. These historical images in their one-dimensional narrative form, lose their analogous dimension, which can stimulate a point of view and reflection on the present.

Using the image material in a secular attitude, in a contemporary way, should have the ambition of creating historical analogies, or as Todorov writes, "Exemplary use of memory (as opposed to linear use) allows the past to be used in view of the present. Memory can be used as a lesson about injustices acquired in the past and to help fight those taking place in the present, to help us to live ourselves and to advance toward the other." It is the utilization – or the manipulation – which is done with the image that gives it an exemplary dimension.

By working as history works, against memory, and by using all the tools that contemporary art gives us, we might uproot the moving images of trials for crimes against humanity (for example) from their memorial one-sense aim. Then we can bring these images to join our present to get a sense of our own environment. We can give these materials a "status of truth," which will allow us to renew with a tradition of what can be called: Political art.

Eyal Sivan, is a documentary filmmaker and theoretician based in Paris. Born in -81* in Haifa Israel and raised in Jerusalem. After working as a professional photographer in Tel Aviv, he left Israel in -825 and settled in Paris. Since then he has divided his time between Europe and Israel. Known for his controversial films, Sivan directed more than ten internationally acclaimed political documentaries and produced many others. His cinematographic body of work was shown and awarded various prizes at prestigious festivals. Beside worldwide theatrical releases and TV broadcasts, Sivan's films are regularly exhibited in major art shows around the world. He publishes and lectures on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, documentary filmmaking and ethics, political crimes and representation, political use of memory, genocide and representation. He is the founder and artistic director of the Paris-based documentary film production company momento! and the film distribution agency Scalpel. He is the founder and Chief Editor of South Cinema Notebooks - a journal of cinema and political critic edited by the Sapir academic college in Israel where he lectures regularly. In the last years Sivan was Reader (associate professor) in media production at the school of Arts and Digital Industries (ADI), at the University of East London (UEL) were he was co-leading the MA program in film, video and new media. He teaches at the masters degree program in film at the Netherlands Film Academy in Amsterdam and he is member of the editorial board of the Paris-based publishing house La Fabrique.

Benji's place, Betlehem. Photo: Jesper Nordahl, 2012

Forensic Architecture: Notes from fields and forums

Eyal Weizman

The Pyramids of Gaza

The pyramids of Gaza, so a Forensic Architect once told me, proliferate throughout the Strip, but are most commonly seen in the camps and neighborhoods that ring Gaza City and along the short border to Egypt. They are the result, he said, of an encounter between two familiar elements in the area – a three-story residential building, of the kind that provides a home for refugees, and an armored Caterpillar D9 bulldozer. While the bulldozer circles the building, its short shovel can reach and topple only the peripheral columns. The internal columns are left intact, forming the peak of the pyramid. The floor slabs break at their approximate center, around the crest, then fold down and outward to form the faces of the structure. The geometry of the pyramids of Gaza is less ideal than that of the Pyramids of Giza. Their irregularities register differences in the process of construction – the uneven spread of concrete, for example – or in the process of destruction – the inability (or reluctance) of the bulldozer operator to go completely around the building. Sometimes, the irregularity is a result of a previous firefight or a tank shell, shot at a corner of the building to hasten the departure of its inhabitants. Near the border, one can sometimes see a fallen pyramid that has sunk into a collapsed tunnel. Partially exposed under the fine sands of Rafah, the scene resembles that of a colonial-era archaeological expedition.

The Era of Forensics

Within the field of war-crime investigation, a methodological shift has recently led to a certain blurring. The primacy accorded to the witness and to the subjective and linguistic dimension of testimony, trauma, and memory – a primacy that has had such an enormous cultural, aesthetic, and political influence that it has reframed the end of the twentieth century as "the era of the witness" – is gradually being supplemented (not to say bypassed) by an emergent forensic sensibility, an object-oriented juridical culture immersed in matter and materialities, in code and form, and in the presentation of scientific investigations by experts.

The Surface of the Earth

With the urbanization of conflict, architecture has become the pathology of this era. Geospatial data, maps and models of cities and territories, the "enhanced vision" of remote sensing, 3-D scans, air and ground sampling, and high-resolution satellite imagery redraw the surface of the earth in variable resolutions from the bottom of the seabed to the remnants of bombed-out buildings.

The surface of the earth – now increasingly called upon to perform as evidence/witness in political negotiations, international tribunals, and fact-finding missions – has a certain thickness, but it could not be considered a volume. It is not an isolated, distinct, stand-alone object, and nor did it ever "replace" the

subject; rather, it is a thick fabric of complex relations, associations, and chains of actions between people, environments, and artifices. It inevitably overflows any map that tries to frame it, because there are always more connections to be made.

Surface Pathology

In this context, architecture is both *sensor and agent*.

Sensor, in what way?

We think of architecture as a static thing, but physical structures and built environments are elastic and responsive. Architecture, I once proposed, is "political plastic" – social forces *slowing* into form.[1] This is true on the scale of a building and also on that of larger territories.

Buildings undergo constant deformations: structures are said to "behave" in response to forces, and buildings are said to "perform" (or mis-perform) in relation to program.

It takes years for trapped air bubbles to make their way between paint layers and structure; the path and rate of their crawl depending on larger environmental conditions and their constant fluctuations; walls gradually bend and ceilings sag. Deterioration and erosion continue the builders' processes of form-making. Cracks make their way from geologic formations across city surfaces to buildings and architectural details. Moving within and across inert matter and built structures, they connect mineral formations and artificial constructions. They appear and disappear, continuously translating force contradictions into their lines of least resistance. The structural pathology of a building is a diagram that records the influence of an entangled and potentially infinite political/natural environment, registering year-to-year temperature changes, almost imperceptible fluctuations in humidity and pollution, which are themselves indications of political transformations, patterns, and tendencies.

A blast, however, marks a limit to the responsive elasticity of built structures. An explosion causes a rapid release of energy in the form of sound, heat, and shock waves. The shock wave travels across the structure, increasing pressure on the walls and floor slabs. External walls bend inward, reaching their point of no return, and snap, initiating a progressive collapse. Floors pancake onto one another. Air is sucked in to fill the vacuum, carrying flying glass, steel, and stone. In today's wars, people die when bits of their homes come flying at them at high speed. Later, when these fragments settle across larger areas, the way in which they do so might be interpreted as evidence.

Forum

Derived from the Latin *forensis*, the word "forensics" refers at root to "forum." Forensics is thus the art of the forum – the practice and skill of presenting an argument before a professional, political, or legal gathering. Forensics is in this sense part of rhetoric, which concerns speech. However, it includes not only human speech but also that of things.

Because objects cannot actually speak, there is a need for a "translator" or an "interpreter" – a person or a set of technologies to mediate between the thing and the forum. This was once the role of the rhetoricians who used a technique that the Greeks and Romans called *prosopopoeia* – a mode of speaking on behalf of inanimate objects – and is now the role of the scientist as expert witness. In discussing "giving a voice to things to which nature has not given a voice," the rhetorician Quintilian writes of the power of *prosopopoeia* not only to "evoke the dead" – as forensic pathologists do in international tribunals today – but of "giving voices to cities and states"[2] – the thick surfaces of Forensic Architecture.

Forensics thus organizes the relation among three constituents: a thing, an "interpreter," and a forum. Because the thing and its "interpreter" make up an entangled rhetorical technology, in order to refute a forensic statement it is necessary to dismantle its mechanisms of articulation, which means to show either that the object is inauthentic, that its interpreter is biased, or that the communication between them is short-circuited.

Forensic Aesthetics

Forensics thus includes both *fieldwork* and *forum* work. It is not only about science as a tool of investigation – the *field* – but about science as a means of persuasion – the *forum*.

It is crucially about conviction – not that of other scientists (as in a regulated process of peer review) but that of judges, juries, or publics. *Forensic Aesthetics* is the mode of appearance of things in forums – the gestures, techniques, and technologies of demonstration; methods of theatricality, narrative, and dramatization; image enhancement and technologies of projection; the creation and demolition of reputation, credibility, and competence.[3]

Forensic Architecture

Forensic Architecture refers to the work of expert witnesses who present structural analysis in a legal context. Their practice combines the principles of property surveying, structural engineering, the physics of blast forces, and the chemistry of composite materials. In that sense, Forensic Architecture is the archaeology of the very recent past, but it must also be a form of assembling for the future. The latter is a projective practice engaged with inventing and constructing the forums yet to come.

In war-crime investigations, the evidence most often precedes the forum. It is around found evidence – the thick surfaces of mass graves in Rwanda, Guatemala, or Bosnia, for example – that new forums assemble. The forum will emerge around the building that is destroyed. But the forum is not a given space; rather, it is produced through a series of entangled performances.

Each of its expansions is also a transformation. When the forum already exists, the entry into it of new types of objects, technologies of interpretation, or new types of representation will not simply expand but also transform it. The protocols and languages of the forum will be reorganized around new aesthetic, material, and systemic demands. Forums are immanent, contingent, diffused, and networked; they appear and disappear; they expand and contract, or simply burst like soap bubbles and disappear.

Sub/Ob-jective Probability

In a recent international trial, a controversy surrounding the causes for the destruction of a particular building erupted. The scenario described by the defense and the prosecution varied considerably. An expert witness was asked to study the particular disposition of the rubble, now scattered throughout a large area, in order to determine which of the scenarios was correct or closest. The threshold of probability requested was 85 percent.

Probability measures the likelihood that an event will have occurred. Probability could thus be understood as the way in which doubt exists in relation to objects. Debates, disagreements, and cross investigations are about reducing or increasing the balance of probabilities.

Philosopher Ian Hacking has explained that probability has both *subjective* and *objective* meanings. "Subjective probability," he claims, has to do with evaluating the authority of witnesses – traditionally in terms of social status, nobility, or wealth. In this sense the term "probable" meant something like credible or

approvable, and appealed to authority and consensus; thus, as the eighteenth century was about to close, Edward Gibbon could still write in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that "such a fact is probable but undoubtedly false," without feeling any contradiction. "Objective probability," on the other hand, relates to the properties of the object or phenomenon under analysis.[4] In the mid-seventeenth century, the second meaning of probability started shifting the first. But the two continuously intertwine and entangle; forensics is about the probability of the expert to decipher the probability of the events as marked on the surface of the earth.

Schrödinger's House

If, as quantum mechanics has it, all options within the spectrum of probability exist simultaneously until an act of observation forces one option into exclusive existence, then Schrödinger's cat is indeed both living and dead, and the wartime ruin, the house where she might have lived, has been twice destroyed, once by each of the scenarios proposed in the above trial.[5]

Science and law measure truth as a position on a variable scale of probability. Terms such as the "balance of probability" and "beyond a reasonable doubt" reveal the constant ticking of probability calculations. Scientific literature simply notes the measure of uncertainty and the margin of error; but law – like politics – must render decisions, even if those decisions are based on a fuzzy forensics of probabilities. Decision, if the word is to merit its name, is to be taken in excess of calculations. It will, most often, kill the cat.

Aesthetics, as the *judgment* of the senses, is what rearranges the field of options and their perceived likelihood and cuts through probability's economy of calculation. The word "conviction" could thus draw a line between the legal verdict of "guilty" and the subjective sensation of constructed belief.

If law and politics are based on ruptural decisions, must the practice of history follow suit? Could it rather remain faithful to the non-mutually exclusive nature of probability? Should there be two or rather several memorials to acts of destruction built side by side? If so, how does one avoid this practice falling into the hands of historical revisionists?

Material Proportionality

If *probability* measures the correct balance between confirmation and refutation, the international law principle of *proportionality* comes to determine the correct balance between

rights and *wrongs*, common goods and necessary evils. The principle of proportionality operates by conjuring an economy in which good and bad things could be measured, balanced, transferred, and traded. The question of violence comes to resemble a mathematical minimum problem in the economy of variations. It is in its attempt to reduce violence to its lowest level *possible* that proportionality becomes the contemporary manifestation of Pangloss' Leibnizian principle (or is it Leibniz's Panglossian principle?) of "the best of all possible worlds." If proportionality is about the "too much," then we must ask how much is too much? In the run-up to the American invasion of Iraq, the Pentagon instructed its bombers to try to limit to twenty-nine the number of civilians killed in attacks aimed at political leaders. The thirtieth civilian marked the threshold between sacrifice and crime. An attempt was then made to apply this necro-economy to the precise destruction of building parts – an art of "design by destruction" that translated projected casualties to removing building parts. *Material proportionality* should be the name for the process by which the economy of violence intersects with the science of engineering and the shaping of ruins.

If sovereignty is best understood as the power to calculate on behalf of others, then the evasion of its power is best exercised in making one's actions incalculable or immeasurable.

Trials of Things

Buildings are *agents* in what way?

Built environments are composite assemblies of structures, spaces, infrastructure, services, and technologies with a certain capacity to act and interact with their surroundings.

They structure rather than simply frame events, although never perfectly so.

The attribution of liability to material things is almost as old as law itself. It can be traced to the origins of ancient Greece, where a class of Athenian judges presided over a special court in charge of cases brought against unknown agents and inanimate objects. Miguel Tamen, who discussed this capacity of things, described a curious incident in which a statue of Theagenes made after the athlete's death was beaten by one of his rivals by way of revenge, until the statue fell and killed him. The statue was put on trial for murder, judged guilty, and thrown into the sea, only to be reinstated years later.[6]

The proportionality principle of international humanitarian law offers a contemporary method of passing judgment on things.

The trials of the West Bank Separation Wall in Jerusalem, for example, were not trials of people but rather trials of an apparatus. Instead of witnesses, maps and territorial models were called in. Proportionality was used as the legal measure to judge and *moderate* the behavior of the wall. The wall was found to disproportionately violate an entire territory that included people, fields, houses, roads, military bases, colonies. The verdict demanded that the apparatus should change its route – into what was later argued to be "the best of all *possible* walls"; and so aggressive acts of colonization and dispossession were presented as a tragic necessity administered with care and responsibility.

Forensic Fetishism

In the wake of the war-crime investigations following Israel's 2008/9 attack on Gaza, one of the world's foremost Forensic Architects, assembling evidence against the military, was suspended when it was publicly revealed – to great media fanfare – that he was a collector of Nazi-era fetish items, and thus allegedly unsuited to investigating the Israeli military impartially. I thought that, if true, the fact that he had such a collection should, to the contrary, increase his credibility (or shall we say his probability?).

If fetishism is the attribution of an inherent power and a certain agency to inanimate objects, then what do we expect those experts who speak to buildings and cities (and expecting them to speak back) to be?

Beyond its manifestation in commodity or sexual form, it is in forensics that the fetish is most commonly manifested today. Here, the fetish is not the mystifying and obfuscating veil that masks the true way in which objects are made in the world – a feature of capitalism that Marx identified in commodity fetishism – or the part that stands for the lack of the whole. On the contrary: under the microphysical lens of methodological fetishism, it is in the part that we can find folded into the fabric of complex social relations, imprinted political forces, inscribed events; conjunctions of actors and logics of practice are not crushed on the object but rather traverse it, sometimes held together by it.

This conjunction of forensics and fetish is a rather comical reference to what – in a polemic against iconoclastic critique – Bruno Latour called the "factish," a term that merges the objectivity of facts with the mysterious attraction and autonomous power of fetishes.[7]

The Destruction of Destruction

If fetishes are to be destroyed by their modern enemies, what fate should be reserved for a fetish that is already a ruin? How to destroy the destruction?

In the spring of 2009, the Gaza-based and Hamas-run Ministry of Public Works and Housing compiled an astounding archive containing thousands of entries, each documenting a single building that was completely or partially destroyed, from cracked walls to houses reduced to rubble. Each entry in this book of destruction included a single, frontal-view photograph displaying a catalogue number spray-painted onto the ruin itself.

Each file also recorded how the damage to the building was inflicted: "destroyed by armored D9 bulldozers," "bombed from the air," "shelled from the ground," "directly targeted," "indirectly struck," or subject to "controlled demolition by explosives"; the state of the building: "reduced to rubble," "partially destroyed," or "still standing but dangerous and requiring demolition." In reconstructing histories of violence from the trash and rubble left behind, this archive is another instance of Forensic Architecture. Both practical and political, its forensics escapes, however, the limited frame of international law.

The destruction of refugee camps is often understood as "the destruction of destruction" – the destruction of the destruction of Palestine. The camp is not a home; it is a temporary arrangement. Its rubble is the last iteration in an ongoing process of destruction that connects the destroyed village of 1948 to the destroyed camp of 2009, but the destruction of the latter is also interpreted as possessing a restorative potential.

What could the forensics of the "destruction of destruction" be?

The twelfth-century Andalusian scholar ibn-Rushd (Averroes) penned a treatise of this very name – *Tahafut al-Tahafut* – in which

in which he refuted the refutation of classical philosophy proposed by Sufi ascetic Ghazali in his eleventh century *Tahafut al-Falasifa*.

So is it the refutation of the displacement, a proto-Hegelian *negation of the negation*, here applied to the realm of political domesticity? Should we be packing up for return, when all we can do is to clear up the mess and rubble, destroy the fetish of the pyramids, recycle their components, and start rebuilding the camp all over again, and better this time?

Rebuilding the camp does not stand in contradiction to return; rather, it is its precondition.[8]

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[1] Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007).

[2] *Quintilian's Institutes of Oratory,* bk. 9, ch. 2.

[3] This was the title of a series of seminars that I taught with Thomas Keenan and Nikolaus Hirsch at the Städelschule in Frankfurt/Main in the academic year 2010 – 11, www.staedelschule.de/forensic_aesthetics_d.html (accessed October 2011).

[4] Ian Hacking, "The Unity and Diversity of Probability: Comment: In Praise of the Diversity of Probabilities," *Statistical Science* 5, no. 4 (November 1990), pp. 450 – 54. Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2006 [orig. 1975]).

[5] "Schrödinger's Cat" was a thought experiment devised by Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger in 1935, which he described as follows in the journal *Naturwissenschaften:* "A cat is penned up in a steel chamber, along with the following device (which must be secured against direct interference by the cat): in a Geiger counter, there is a tiny bit of radioactive substance, so small that perhaps in the course of the hour, one of the atoms decays, but also, with equal probability, perhaps none; if it happens, the counter tube discharges, and through a relay releases a hammer that shatters a small flask of hydrocyanic acid. If one has left this entire system to itself for an hour, one would say that the cat still lives if meanwhile no atom has decayed. The psi-function of the entire system would express this by having in it the living and dead cat (pardon the expression) mixed or smeared out in equal parts. www.tcd.ie/Physics/Schools/what/atoms/quantum/cat.html (accessed October 2011).

[6] Miguel Tamen, *Friends of Interpretable Objects* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 79 – 80.

[7] Bruno Latour, *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods* (Durham, N. Car.: Duke University Press, 2010).

[8] Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman, *Book of Return,* Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency, September 2009, www.decolonizing.ps (accessed October 2011).

Image to the right: Gaza. Author of image: Chris Cobb-Smith, 23 01 2009. Mode of destruction / munitions: bulldozer. General remarks: use of bulldozer to destroy corner columns creating a particular form of collapse.

The Spam
of the Earth:
Withdrawal from
representation

Hito Steyerl

Dense clusters of radio waves leave our planet every second. Our letters and snapshots, intimate and official communications, TV broadcasts and text messages drift away from earth in rings, a tectonic architecture of the desires and fears of our times.[1] In a few hundred thousand years, extraterrestrial forms of intelligence may incredulously sift through our wireless communications. But imagine the perplexity of those creatures when they actually look at the material. Because a huge percentage of the pictures inadvertently sent off into deep space is actually spam. Any archaeologist, forensic, or historian – in this world or another – will look at it as our legacy and our likeness, a true portrait of our times and ourselves. Imagine a human reconstruction somehow made from this digital rubble. Chances are, it would look like image spam. Image spam is one of the many dark matters of the digital world; spam tries to avoid detection by filters by presenting its message as an image file. An inordinate amount of these images float around the globe, desperately vying for human attention.[2] They advertise pharmaceuticals, replica items, body enhancements, penny stocks, and degrees. According to the pictures dispersed via image spam, humanity consists of scantily dressed degree-holders with jolly smiles enhanced by orthodontic braces.

Image spam is our message to the future. Instead of a modernist space capsule showing a woman and man on the outside – a family of "man" – our contemporary dispatch to the universe is image spam showing enhanced advertisement mannequins.[3] And this is how the universe will see us; it is perhaps even how it sees us now.

In terms of sheer quantity, image spam outnumbers the human population by far. It's formed a silent majority, indeed. But of what? Who are the people portrayed in this type of accelerated advertisement? And what could their images tell potential extraterrestrial recipients about contemporary humanity?

From the perspective of image spam, people are improvable, or, as Hegel put it, perfectible. They are imagined to be potentially "flawless," which in this context means horny, super skinny, armed with recession-proof college degrees, and always on time for their service jobs, courtesy of their replica watches. This is the contemporary family of men and women: a bunch of people on knockoff antidepressants, fitted with enhanced body parts. They are the dream team of hyper-capitalism.

But is this how we really look? Well, no. Image spam might tell us a lot about "ideal" humans, but not by showing actual humans: quite the contrary. The models in image spam are photochopped replicas, too improved to be true. A reserve army of digitally enhanced creatures who resemble the minor demons and angels of mystic speculation, luring, pushing and blackmailing people into the profane rapture of consumption.

Image spam is addressed to people who do not look like those in the ads: they neither are skinny nor have recession-proof degrees. They

are those whose organic substance is far from perfect from a neoliberal point of view. People who might open their inboxes every day waiting for a miracle, or just a tiny sign, a rainbow at the other end of permanent crisis and hardship. Image spam is addressed to the vast majority of humankind, but it does not show them. It does not represent those who are considered expendable and superfluous – just like spam itself; it speaks to them.

The image of humanity articulated in image spam thus has actually nothing to do with it. On the contrary, it is an accurate portrayal of what humanity is actually not. It is a negative image.

Mimicry and Enchantment

Why is this? There is an obvious reason, which is too well known to elaborate on here: images trigger mimetic desires and make people want to become like the products represented in them. In this view, hegemony infiltrates everyday culture and spreads its values by way of mundane representation.[4] Image spam is thus interpreted as a tool for the production of bodies, and ultimately ends up creating a culture stretched between bulimia, steroid overdose, and personal bankruptcy. This perspective – one of more traditional Cultural Studies – views image spam as an instrument of coercive persuasion as well as of insidious seduction, and leads to the oblivious pleasures of surrendering to both.[5]

But what if image spam were actually much more than a tool of ideological and affective indoctrination? What if actual people – the imperfect and nonhorny ones – were not excluded from spam advertisements because of their assumed deficiencies but had actually chosen to desert this kind of portrayal? What if image spam thus became a record of a widespread refusal, a withdrawal of people from representation?

What do I mean by this? For a certain time already I have noted that many people have started actively avoiding photographic or moving-image representations, surreptitiously taking their distance from the lenses of cameras. Whether it's camera-free zones in gated communities or elitist techno clubs, someone's declining interviews, Greek anarchists smashing cameras, or looters destroying LCD TVs, people have started to actively, and passively, refuse constantly being monitored, recorded, identified, photographed, scanned, and taped. Within a fully immersive media landscape, pictorial representation – which was seen as a prerogative and a political privilege for a long time[6] – feels more like a threat.

There are many reasons for this. The numbing presence of trash talk and game shows has led to a situation in which TV has become a medium inextricably linked to the parading and ridiculing of lower classes. Protagonists are violently made over and subjected to countless invasive ordeals, confessions, inquiries, and assessments. Morning TV is the contemporary equivalent to a torture chamber – including the guilty pleasures of torturers, spectators, and, in many cases, also the tortured themselves.

Additionally, in mainstream media people are often caught in the act of vanishing, whether it be in life-threatening situations, extreme emergency and peril, warfare and disaster, or in the constant stream of live broadcasts from zones of conflict around the world. If people aren't trapped within natural or man-made disasters, they seem to physically vanish, as anorexic beauty standards imply. People are emaciated or made to shrink or downsize. Dieting is obviously the metonymic equivalent to an economic recession, which has become a permanent reality and caused substantial material losses. This recession is coupled with an intellectual regression, which has become a dogma within all but a very few mainstream media outlets. As intelligence doesn't simply melt away via starvation, derision and rancor largely manage to keep it away from the grounds of mainstream representation.[7]

Thus the zone of corporate representation is largely one of exception, which seems dangerous to enter: you may be derided, tested, stressed, or even starved or killed. Rather than representing people it exemplifies the vanishing of the people: it's gradual disappearance. And why wouldn't the people be vanishing, given the countless acts of aggression and invasion performed against them in mainstream media, but also in reality?[8] Who could actually withstand such an onslaught without the desire to escape this visual territory of threat and constant exposure?

Additionally, social media and cell-phone cameras have created a zone of mutual mass-surveillance, which adds to the ubiquitous urban networks of control, such as CCTV, cell-phone GPS tracking and face-recognition software. On top of institutional surveillance, people are now also routinely surveilling each other by taking countless pictures and publishing them in almost real time. The social control associated with these practices of horizontal representation has become quite influential. Employers google reputations of job candi-

dates; social media and blogs become halls of shame and malevolent gossip. The top-down cultural hegemony exercised by advertisement and corporate media is supplemented by a down-down regime of (mutual) self-control and visual self-disciplining, which is even harder to dislocate than earlier regimes of representation. This goes along with substantial shifts in modes of self-production. Hegemony is increasingly internalized, along with the pressure to conform and perform, as is the pressure to represent and be represented.

Warhol's prediction that everybody would be world-famous for fifteen minutes had become true long ago. Now many people want the contrary: to be invisible, if only for fifteen minutes. Even fifteen seconds would be great. We entered an era of mass-paparazzi, of the peak-o-sphere and exhibitionist voyeurism. The flare of photographic flashlights turns people into victims, celebrities, or both. As we register at cash tills, ATMs, and other checkpoints – as our cell phones reveal our slightest movements and our snapshots are tagged with GPS coordinates – we end up not exactly amused to death but represented to pieces.[9]

Walkout

This is why many people by now walk away from visual representation. Their instincts (and their intelligence) tell them that photographic or moving images are dangerous devices of capture: of time, affect, productive forces, and subjectivity. They can jail you or shame you forever; they can trap you in hardware monopolies and conversion conundrums, and, moreover, once these images are online they will never be deleted again. Ever been photographed naked? Congratulations – you're immortal. This image will survive you and your offspring, prove more resilient than even the sturdiest of mummies, and is already traveling into deep space, waiting to greet the aliens.

The old magic fear of cameras is thus reincarnated in the world of digital natives. But in this environment, cameras do not take away your soul (digital natives replaced this with iPhones) but drain away your life. They actively make you disappear, shrink, and render you naked, in desperate need of orthodontic surgery. In fact, it is a misunderstanding that cameras are tools of representation; they are at present tools of disappearance.[10] The more people are represented the less is left of them in reality.

To return to the example of image spam I used before; it is a negative image of its constituency, but how? It is not – as a traditional Cul-

tural Studies approach would argue – because ideology tries to impose a forced mimicry on people, thus making them invest in their own oppression and correction in trying to reach unattainable standards of efficiency, attractiveness, and fitness. No. Lets boldly assume that image spam is a negative image of its constituency because people are also actively walking away from this kind of representation, leaving behind only enhanced crash-test dummies. Thus image spam becomes an involuntary record of a subtle strike, a walkout of the people from photographic and moving-image representation. It is a document of an almost imperceptible exodus from a field of power relations that are too extreme to be survived without major reduction and downsizing. Rather than a document of domination, image spam is the people's monument of resistance to being represented *like this*. They are leaving the *given* frame of representation.

Political and Cultural Representation

This shatters many dogmas about the relation between political and pictorial representation. For a long time my generation has been trained to think that representation was the primary site of contestation for both politics and aesthetics. The site of culture became a popular field of investigation into the "soft" politics inherent in everyday environments. It was hoped that changes in the field of culture would hark back to the field of politics. A more nuanced realm of representation was seen to lead to more political and economical equality.

But gradually it became clear that both were less linked than originally anticipated, and that the partition of goods and rights and the partition of the senses were not necessarily running parallel to each other. Ariella Azoulay's concept of photography as a form of civil contract provides a rich background to think through these ideas. If photography was a civil contract between the people who participated in it, then the current withdrawal from representation is the breaking of a social contract, having promised participation but delivered gossip, surveillance, evidence, serial narcissism, as well as occasional uprisings.[11]

While visual representation shifted into overdrive and was popularized through digital technologies, political representation of the people slipped into a deep crisis and was overshadowed by economic interest. While every possible minority was acknowledged as a potential consumer and visually represented

(to a certain extent), people's participation in the political and economic realms became more uneven. The social contract of contemporary visual representation thus somewhat resembles the Ponzi schemes of the early twenty-first century, or, more precisely, participation in a game show with unpredictable consequences.

And if there ever was a link between the two, it has become very unstable in an era in which relations between signs and their referents have been further destabilized by systemic speculation and deregulation.

Both terms do not only apply to financialization and privatization; they also refer to loosened standards of public information. Professional standards of truth production in journalism have been overwhelmed by mass media production, by the cloning of rumor and its amplification on Wikipedia discussion boards. Speculation is not only a financial operation but also a process that takes place in between a sign and its referent, a sudden miraculous enhancement, or spin, that snaps apart any remaining indexical relation.

Visual representation matters, indeed, but not exactly in unison with other forms of representation. There is a serious imbalance between both. On the one hand, there is a huge number of images without referents; on the other, many people without representation. To phrase it more dramatically: A growing number of unmoored and floating images corresponds to a growing number of disenfranchised, invisible, or even disappeared and missing people.[12]

Crisis of Representation

This creates a situation that is very different from how we used to look at images: as more or less accurate representations of something or someone in public. In an age of unrepresentable people and an overpopulation of images, this relation is irrevocably altered.

Image spam is an interesting symptom of the current situation because it is a representation that remains, for the most part, invisible.

Image spam circulates endlessly without ever being seen by a human eye. It is made by machines, sent by bots, and caught by spam filters, which are slowly becoming as potent as anti-immigration walls, barriers, and fences. The plastic people shown in it thus remain, to a large extent, unseen. They are treated like digital scum, and thus paradoxically end up on a similar level to that of the low-res people they appeal to. This is how it is different from any other kind of representational dummies, which inhabit the world of visibility and high-end representation. Creatures of image spam get treated as lumpen data, avatars of the conmen who are indeed behind their creation. If Jean Genet were still alive, he would have sung praise to the gorgeous hoodlums, tricksters, prostitutes, and fake dentists of image spam.

They are still not a representation of the people, because, in any case, the people are not a representation. They are an event, which might happen one day, or maybe later, in that sudden blink of an eye that is not covered by anything.

By now, however, people might have learned this, and accepted that any people can only be represented visually in negative form. This negative cannot be developed under any circumstance, since a magical process will ensure that all you are ever going to see in the positive is a bunch of populist substitutes and impostors, enhanced crash-test dummies trying to claim legitimacy. The image of the people as a nation, or culture, is precisely that: a compressed stereotype for ideological gain. Image Spam is the true avatar of the people. A negative image with absolutely no pretense to originality? An image of what the people are not as their only possible representation?

And as people are increasingly makers of images – and not their objects or subjects – they are perhaps also increasingly aware that the people might happen by jointly making an image and not by being represented in one. Any image is a shared ground for action and passion, a zone of traffic between things and intensities. As their production has become mass production, images are now increasingly res publicae, or public things. Or even pubic things, as the languages of spam fabulously romance.[13]

This doesn't mean that who or what is being shown in images doesn't matter. This relation is far from being one-dimensional. Image spam's generic cast is not the people, and the better for it. Rather, the subjects of image spam stand in for the people as negative substitutes and absorb the flak of the limelight on their behalf. On the one hand, they embody all the vices and virtues (or, more precisely, vices-as-virtues) of the present economic paradigm. On the other, they remain more often than not invisible, because hardly anybody actually looks at them.

Who knows what the people in image spam are up to, if nobody is actually looking? Their public appearance may be just a silly face they put on to make sure we continue to not pay attention. They might carry important messag-

es for the aliens in the meantime, about those who we stopped caring for, those excluded from shambolic "social contracts," or any form of participation other than morning TV; that is, the spam of the earth, the stars of CCTV and aerial infrared surveillance. Or they might temporarily share in the realm of the disappeared and invisible, made up of those who, more often than not, inhabit a shameful silence and whose relatives have to lower their eyes to their killers every day.

The image-spam people are double agents. They inhabit both the realms of over- and invisibility. This may be the reason why they are continuously smiling but not saying anything. They know that their frozen poses and vanishing features are actually providing cover for the people to go off the record in the meantime. To perhaps take a break and slowly regroup. "Go off screen" they seem to whisper. "We'll substitute for you. Let them tag and scan us in the meantime. You go off the radar and do what you have to." Whatever this is, they will not give us away, ever. And for this, they deserve our love and admiration.

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[1] Douglas Phillips, "Can Desire Go On Without a Body?" in The Spam Book: On Viruses, Porn, and Other anomolies from the Dark Side of Digital Culture, eds. Jussi Parikka and Tony D. Sampson (Creskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 2009), 199f.

[2] The number of spam emails sent per day is at roughly 250 billion (as per 2010). The total amount of image-spam has varied considerably over the years, but in 2007, image spam accounted for 35 percent of all spam messages and took up 70 percent of bandwidth bulge. "Image spam could bring the Internet to a standstill," London Evening Standard, October 1, 2007, see http//www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article–23381164–image–spam–could–bring–the–internet–to–a–standstill.do. All the pictures of image spam accompanying this text have been borrowed from the invaluable source "Image Spam", by Mathew Nisbet, see http://www.symantec.com/connect/blogs/image–spam. To avoid misunderstandings, most image spam shows text, not pictures.

[3] This is similar to the golden plaques on the Pioneer space capsules launched in 1972 and 1973, which depicted a white woman and a white man, with the woman's genitals omitted. Because of the criticism directed at the relative nudity of the human figures, subsequent plaques showed only the human silhouettes. It will be at least forty thousand years until the capsule could potentially deliver this message.

[4] This is a sloppy, fast-forward rehash of a classical Gramscian perspective, from early Cultural Studies.

[5] Or it may more likely be analyzed as partially self-defeating and contradictory.

[6] I have discussed the failed promise of cultural representation in "The Institution of Critique," in Institutional Critique: an Anthology of Artists' Writings, eds. Alex Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009). 486f.

[7] This applies unevenly around the world.

[8] In the 1990s, people from former Yugoslavia would say that the former anti-fascist slogan of the Second World War had been turned upside down: "Death to fascism, freedom to the people" had been transformed by nationalists from all sides into, "Death to the people, freedom to fascism."

[9] See Brian Massumi, Parables for the Virtual (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

[10] I remember my former teacher Wim Wenders elaborating on the photographing of things that will disappear. It is more likely, though, that things will disappear if (or even because) they are photographed.

[11] I cannot expand on this appropriately here. It might be necessary to think through recent Facebook riots from the perspective of breaking intolerable social contracts, and not from entering or sustaining them.

[12] The era of the digital revolution corresponds to that of enforced mass disappearance and murder in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Chechnya, Algeria, Iraq, Turkey, and parts of Guatemala, to list just a few. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which saw roughly 2.5 million war casualties between 1998 and 2008, it is agreed on by researchers that demand for raw materials for the IT industries (such as coltane) played a direct role in the country's conflict. The number of migrants who died while trying to reach Europe since 1990 is estimated to be eighteen thousand.

[13] This derives from a pirated DVD cover of the movie In the Line of Fire (Wolfgang Peterson, 1993), which states, in no uncertain terms, that pubic performance of the disc is strictly prohibited.

The Art Museum at the International Academy of Art Palestine in Ramallah, where the Picasso painting *Buste de Femme* (1943) was shown in 2011 as part of the project *Picasso in Palestine* by Khaled Hourani. Photo: Jesper Nordahl, 2012

Phoenix Centre (where the headquarters of Campus in Camps is located), Dheisheh Camp.
Photo: Jesper Nordahl, 2012

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Wall Paper at Benji's place, Betlehem. Photo: Jesper Nordahl, 2012

"There is no vision without details."

– Hussein Barghouti

The psychic and geographical center of Ramallah is Al Manarah Square, a traffic roundabout where six streets converge at irregular angles. Cars and people circulate in apparent chaos around five carved lions statues symbolizing Ramallah's five prominent families which encircle a single Corinthian column, as if standing guard. One lion wears a wristwatch, and depending on one's sense of the ironic, this detail can be read today as a cryptic joke about the materialist slant evident in contemporary Palestinian society, or as a mordant commentary on the duration of its status as an occupied territory. During the Second Intifada, the story goes, some of the lions had their carved tails smashed off by Israeli soldiers – an action that can also be read doubly, a term of endearment for the fedayeen being *achebals*, "young lions," while Palestinian slang for a collaborator is to say he or she has a "fat tail." The West Bank is full of such polyvalent significations, an indication of how the conflict between Palestine and Israel is carried out at the level of semiosis as much as territoriality.

Michael Baers