

KALEIDOSCOPE #28 FALL 16

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KALEIDOSCOPE

VISUAL CULTURE NOW

Jordan vs Wolfson




WOMEN!

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Block's sex therapy, work and writing, about her decades of practice promoting peace, love and equality, and to contrast it with Ingo's proposals.

As I'm explaining the "Army of Love" to Susan (who looks, btw, like a late-season-two Carrie Bradshaw, plus a decade), she interrupts: "And how exactly will this be funded?"

"So far," I reply, "as far as I can tell, it's art world institutional funds."

"Well you know," she says, "the ideal is the enemy of the real."

Dr. Block then explains that her work is largely financed by "people who are sexually challenged due to their narcissism, like Republicans." They

pay upwards of two hundred bucks to talk on the phone with her. Her voice is sexy, deep. Persuasive. I find myself uncharacteristically tripping over my words. Nerves.

Dr. Block's recommendation to Ingo and anyone interested in communal loving is so American: she suggests we buy and read her latest book. "Study bonobo ways," she says. "It's a blueprint for peace."

She emails me a .pdf of

the text and I forward it to Ingo, along with an invitation for an interview on her weekly livestream, *The Dr. Susan Block Show*, completing a circle. That's what this writing feels like: a loopy sketch I urge you to fill in. Or it's like foreplay, as Ingo problematizes it in *Solution 257*. "The problem with foreplay," he writes, "was that it had little to do with 'playfulness' and a lot to do with 'a play,' in the sense of a theatrical performance." I wish writing weren't so one-way. I wish I could see you. If I could, I would look into your eyes, and ask: "Would you join an Army of Love?" ☹

FUTURA 89+
Hans Ulrich
Obrist &
Simon Castets
interview
JASPER
SPICERO

THE FUTURA 89+ SERIES
FEATURES INTERVIEWS
WITH ARTISTS, WRITERS,
ACTIVISTS, ARCHITECTS,
FILMMAKERS, SCIENTISTS AND
ENTREPRENEURS WHO WERE
BORN IN OR AFTER 1989.

*With the collaboration
of Katherine Dionysius*



In 2014, we invited you to undertake an 89plus Residency at the Google Cultural Institute in Paris, where you developed work for "Centers in Pain" (2014), a project inspired by the disused Wapato Prison in Portland. Can you talk a little about Wapato and what compelled you to create a work about this abandoned prison?

I read about Wapato in a local Portland newspaper in 2013 and decided that I would create work for that lo-

cation. At the time, I had a special interest in interiors that embody stasis. What makes Wapato different from an ordinary abandoned prison is that it has never housed inmates—it was built in 2004, fully equipped, and the county lost funding. They still spend \$300,000 a year to maintain the facility: the landscape is perfectly kept and the inside is pristine, although the technology is dated.

Not long after discovering Wapato, I checked in to an addiction rehabilitation center inside of a renovated hospice that was once abandoned. This is where I developed closeness with the emotional reality of Wapato as a building that experiences pain.

Tell us about your working process and the objects you produced during your time at Google.

My process starts by spending time on the computer, probably 9-13 hours a day, and occasionally walking to certain places to think. For many projects, I begin by finding music—mostly soundtracks, but also songs I’ve composed myself—which I listen to throughout the day. I will also watch certain movies and television episodes or play certain video games repeatedly. I did not produce many objects at Google. One of my strong suits is being able to imagine a product and execute it accurately. For this reason, I spend more time thinking about objects than making them. The greatest asset of the Google residency was having access to the building at night. I would wander around the offices alone, imagining the work for “Centers In Pain.”

The following year, we included your work in the 89plus exhibition “Filter Bubble” at The LUMA Foundation in Zürich. The pieces, taken from “Centers in Pain,” included *Failsafe 0, 1*

89plus is a long-term international, multi-platform research project co-founded and co-curated by Simon Casseis and Hans Ulrich Obrist, investigating the generation of innovators born in or after 1989 through conferences, books, periodicals, residencies and exhibitions. 89plus.com / Instagram: @89plus



I am drawn to post-apocalyptic scenarios, but my vision of it is clean, cold and architectural

and 2 (all 2014), sculptures you have referred to as “a constellation of distressed objects.” Can you elaborate on this description?

I often compare people to stars and objects to people, in the sense that objects carry the emotional baggage of others. For instance, there is a small reoccurring device I noticed in television and cinema: in scenarios where a loved one has disappeared, characters will repeatedly listen to answering machine messages to hear his or her voice. For “Centers in Pain,” I took answering machines and artificially distressed

them, similarly to how a film prop is distressed. The sculptures are distressed from overuse.

Also on display was the screenplay you wrote for the project. You’ve worked in this medium a few times. Can you tell us about your interest in writing screenplays?

It is commercially acceptable for the language of a screenplay to be simple

because film scripts are interpretive. The way I write feels similar to poetry. A script that has not or will not necessarily be adapted to film is embedded with expansive potential. Casting, location, set design and everything is undisclosed.

You are currently writing a pilot for a sci-fi drama about high school football after the sun has burned out. Are you drawn to post-apocalyptic scenarios?

The Walking Dead (TWD), specifically season 2, is my favorite television se-

FUTURA 89+

well as your childhood friend **Mojo Watt Williams**. What compels you to work collaboratively?

There are not many people I feel comfortable collaborating with. Currently, Bunny and Mojo are the only ones, but it will likely become a more significant part of my practice in the future. I got sober from drugs and alcohol in 2014. Through the rehabilitation process, I learned the importance of practicing empathy. It requires emotional intimacy to collaborate with someone, so it might be an effective doorway to empathy. I am especially interested in approaching people from outside of the art world.

Who are some of the artists and outside practitioners that inspire you?

Bunny Rogers, Christian Oldham, Ben Kellog, Alex Dolan, Elysia Crampton, Kota Hoshino, Wentworth Miller, Mojo Watt Williams, Amy Berg, Rainbeaux Smith, Daniel Keyes, Richard Wright, John LaRoche, Keiji Inafune, Irna Phillips and Shigesato Itoi are the people I think of right now.

Like *Bunny*, your work often employs a desaturated color palette. Can you talk a little about your use of color?

When I was much younger, I spent days as a passenger in a car, mostly traveling through the middle of America. Without going into detail, I will say that those car rides had emotional weight for both the driver and myself; I still have not learned to drive because I am afraid it will change my experience as a passenger. Most of the time, I would be looking out of the window, subdued. So when I use desaturated color, it is commonly about industrially subdued emotion from my formative years. Institutional architecture uses desaturated color to achieve a similar effect. Hospitals,



ries because I perceive the show as an allegory for drug addiction. My acute personal bond with *TWD* is why I am drawn to post-apocalyptic scenarios. This being said, I prefer mild deterioration to complete collapse or a return to the earth. The vision I have is clean, cold and architectural, like a Mormon temple. *The Spirit of the Bee-*

hive by Victor Erice is important to me. While not post-apocalyptic, elements of the film influence my ideal scenario.

You have collaborated with the artist Bunny Rogers several times, as

All images:
"Century School," Exhibition view
Courtesy of the artist and Johan Berggren Gallery, Malmö

schools and detention centers are inspiring to me.

Speaking of schools, could you tell us about your recent project “Centry School” (2016), which was inspired by military academies?

“Centry School” is an extension of the “Centers in Pain” world. It is a science fiction story that takes place in a deteriorating, futuristic version of rural Washington in the year 2014. Three boys in cadet uniforms march a snowy landscape. A woman named Martha, who has recently undergone precision spinal surgery and wears an obtrusive spinal brace like scaffolding, observes the boys from a hospital tower guarded by sentries.

Research for “Centry School” began when a close friend of mine told me about his time enrolled at a military



I am interested in youth institutions focusing on the relationship between discipline and trauma.

academy. I will spare details of his experiences. I was also inspired by season 4 of *The Killing*, as there are many chance overlaps between that season and my friend’s stories. More and more, my attention is drawn toward youth institutions that focus on the relationship between discipline and trauma.

Is this when you developed an interest in bell choirs? We’re very curious to know more about your idea to hire a bell choir for your upcoming project, “Miser Chord.”

Yes, it is. Decisions are intuitive at first. Sometimes an idea starts sim-

ply because I cannot find what I want online. In this case, I need to hear certain songs played by a youth bell choir, but they rarely experiment outside of religious genres; I have only discovered one military academy choir who practices contemporary music in the particular way I am looking for, although their song selection is unsatisfactory. Examples of my desired songs include “Elementary School Trial” from *Phoenix Wright*:

Jasper Spicero (American, b. 1990) is an artist who lives and works in New York. He is represented by Johan Berggren, Malmö, and New Galerie, Paris.

Ace Attorney (video game) and “The Glorious Angel” from *Angel Sanctuary* (anime). As is often the case in the beginning stages of a project, I am motivated by the idea that without my influence, specific adaptations like these will never exist.

Your 2015 project “Melting Person” took on a few different iterations, including an online presentation as part of the Serpentine Galleries’ 89plus Marathon in 2013 and, more recently, as part of the 89plus-curated section of “Co-Workers: Network as Artist” at Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 2015. What was your intention with that work?

“Melting Person” is dedicated to my granduncle Sam, who disappeared. He left home at seventeen to join the Navy. While serving, his friend was stabbed to death for being gay. Fearing that he would be next, Sam went AWOL. Many years later, he was found dead, run over by approximately twenty-one cars on an eight-lane highway. Sam’s story became the basis for a narrative database (meltingperson.com). The website is inspired by fictional missing persons cases I researched, combined with elements from the *Armored Core* and *Metal Gear* video game franchises. Kota Hoshino, who composed music for the *Armored Core* series, created an original soundtrack for this project.

Sculpturally, “Melting Person” is centered around a series of ice carvings based on generic logos commonly used for health and wellness branding. I photographed the ice carvings in key locations that occur in the fictional missing persons cases: Grandview, Kansas; Tokyo, Japan; and Mankato, South Dakota. Conceptually, it alludes to an imaginary government conspiracy about water infrastructures, the automotive industry and weapons manufacturing that subsequently alters the life trajectory of Sam and others.

Can you tell us more about projects you have not yet been able to complete? Censored (or self-censored) projects? Projects that were too big, small or expensive to realize? Forgotten projects?

When I was a child, I wrote a short play for Phillip Seymour Hoffman. The idea was to have a modular set in the woods of South Dakota. It all takes place inside of a house. The rooms move mechanically, rearranging depending on the scene. There would be very exclusive viewings of this play. But this is an old idea, a childhood dream.

In general, I want to be a director on large-scale projects. I’d like to adapt several of my works into films, television series or video games. I am trying to find better access to locations and people, but it is difficult at times to convince someone outside of art to collaborate. For example, Bunny and I are planning a new show, “Flowers for Orgonon.” We want to make a movie with identical twins Ryan and Dan Kowarsky, who make music under the name RyanDan. It can be very difficult to contact someone like RyanDan because they are involved in the Christian music community. This type of situation is heartbreaking to me. Similarly, for “Miser Chord,” I want to film a short movie inside of various Mormon temples across the United States, but it is nearly impossible to gain this type of access to those locations. Instead, I will film outside the temples and in surrounding areas. It really breaks my heart, but limited access is also positive. Some of the sculptures in the exhibition can be vague placeholders for the interior. It is much better this way. ☺

RENAISSANCE MAN

Jeffrey Deitch remembers

ALAN VEGA



REFLECTING THE POLYEDRIC MIND OF ITS AUTHOR, THE RENAISSANCE MAN SERIES IS THE SITE OF UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTERS AND PERSPECTIVES THAT CHALLENGE THE BOUNDARIES OF VISUAL CULTURE.

One of my formative artistic experiences was an encounter with the work of Alan Suicide at the OK Harris Gallery in 1975. The impact began with the black press-type sign with the artist’s name on the entrance wall. Instead of the meticulously aligned letters that had become standard in every SoHo gallery, half of Alan’s name was scratched out in an early manifestation of punk attitude. It was a simple gesture, but shocking in its disruption of the expected protocol. Stepping into the gallery, I was confronted by assemblages of discarded TV picture tubes, Christmas lights, broken radios and electronic debris dragged in from the street. Dangling wires were plugged in, activating the lights and tubes that still worked with the