RE___ING

Re___ing, co-edited by Sreshta Rit Premnath and Matthew Metzger exists both within Rethinking Marxism's Vol. 23 No. 2 and as Shifter #17. It is a collaboration between Shifter and the art editors of RM. This folding of one identity into another, a re within a Re and the resultant destabilization of both frames of reference, is precisely the nature of re___ing.

While re proliferates additives, doubles and fissures within the sphere of cultural production, it also implies multiple temporalities - to renew and to rewind. ing on the other hand, asserts the present continuous, it is always and already.

Paradoxically, Re is also to reify. When you call me and I respond I am born. When I call you and there is no response I feel the threat of erasure. I therefore call with the strongest faith that you will respond and when you do we cement our relation. The abstract becomes concrete.

At what point does the attempt to exonerate representation from its intrusive counterpart, "the aura", become a concern around appearances rather than labor? As with Borges's Pierre Menard who rewrites Don Quixote word for word only to produce an anachronistic and inadequate adaptation, perhaps pure repetition is impossible. Therefore, although re attempts to proliferate multiples, the insistent ing, always in the present disturbs this veracity.

Here, contributors engage a variety of gestures tied to reproducing by deploying palimpsestic archives culled from historical documents, proposing morphological relations as historic fact and ultimately forcing procedures of mimicry, translation and interpretation to their limit. This limit or threshold in many instances is defined here through the body and its traces, actions, delusions and dreams which often remain utterly irreproducible.

Shifter is a topical magazine that was founded in 2004 by Sreshta Rit Premnath. Premnath continues to edit the magazine in collaboration with guest editors.

Finding the internet to be the only inter-continental "commons" not policed by immigration policy, Shifter began as an online magazine. It was conceived as a topical magazine so that dialogue remained centered around ideas that were not in themselves culturally specific, and could be approached from different directions. It attempts to create a platform where individuals engaged in various fields including visual art, experimental writing, cultural theory, philosophy and the sciences can view their work in relation to each other and without any hierarchy. The online magazine has always been free, but since issue #10 a print edition has also been made available.

With Roman Jakobson's definition of the shifter in mind, the magazine's topics have often focussed on issues of subjectivity and rupture in language, and contributions reveal an equal emphasis on visual and textual strategies.

All previous issues and further information may be found at www.shifter-magazine.com

II RE__ING

ANIMAL COMMUNISM

...it's something that has to do with of course humanity that is displayed there, and the whole question of when is order less humanistic than you would like it to be, or when this order threatens humanity or to what degree you would like to participate in that.

--Michal Rovner

In one of the sub-chapters from Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power*, Canetti discusses a tribe in Australia who exhibit the behavior of what he calls "the lamenting pack," a mass in which singularities cannot come close enough to a dying body in anticipation of its imminent absence and thus the absence of one of the pack's irreplaceable members. Canetti, in his discussion of the lamenting pack, reminds his reader that one of the core instincts of the human-animal is to be close to another who is also part of a larger entity to which the self belongs (who may thus extend the self into him or her). This, as Canetti insists, is an animal instinct found in many, if not all, human societies. I am both attracted by Canetti's essentialization of the human-animal, and skeptical of it as an explanation for certain social and political behaviors.

Very recently I was reminded of Canetti's work when I saw the films of the Armenian-Soviet filmmaker, Artavazd Peleshian (b. 1938). Little known in the United States (I discovered Peleshian's films via a feature on Middle-Eastern cinema hosted by *Bidoun* magazine at *UbuWeb*), Peleshian's filmmaking seems to me to be about the organization of the human-animal into society and the ambiguous caesura separating animal from human being, animal society from human-animal society. In the attempt to rethink Marxism we may consider Peleshian's work an emotional (or affective) expression of animal potential, what we might call an *animal communism*, recovering the term from the many bad connotations it has accumulated throughout the 20th century history.

In Peleshian's second film, *Beginnings* (1967), we see a number of clips of crowds running back and forth across the screen, towards and away from the camera. Much of this footage is archival and seems to come from newsreels. I think that some of it may originate in *October*, Eisenstein's landmark film about the Bolshevik revolution. While much of the content of Peleshian's film is in reference to Soviet Communism, a society Peleshian lived and worked under when the film was made, *Beginnings* would seem to have more to do with what it means to be together, to be (as the American poet George Oppen writes) "numerous." With each new formation of the crowd the heart quickens. It would seem this film is about crowds. Crowds and mass and a physics of power that may continue long after the twentieth century.

As in Canetti, Peleshian is grasping at essences. The essences of the human, of the human-animal in particular. The crowd animates such an essence. It is arguably where the human and the animal meet, recovering the distance between their separation, their caesura. I think this is beautiful, but it is scary too. In *Beginnings* it is scary since the

THOM DONOVAN III

revolutionary crowd that overtakes the Winter Palace becomes the crowd that follows Hitler, and eventually the crowds who riot against police presences in various contexts (the one most recognizable to me is the Southern United States during the Civil Rights era).

I am reminded of Dziga Vertov when I watch Peleshian. The two filmmakers share many of the same problems and qualities with one another. Vertov also liked crowds, and through them overcame divisions between the human, the machinic, and the natural world. A kind of proto-Deleuzian (or late-Spinozan), Vertov creates univocality between (perceived) natural and (perceived) machinic forces. These forces form one substance in the (potential) service of a new revolutionary society. One sees this especially in *Man With a Movie Camera*. The man becoming one with machine; machine rhythms forming a kind of symphony with those of natural falls, people recreating, women giving birth. Machine rhythms do not alienate organic ones but extend and complement them within Vertov's "higher mathematics of facts." One perceives this in the crowds of *Man With a Movie Camera* but also in those of *Three Songs for Lenin*, whose lamentations present the inverse of *Man With a Movie Camera*'s exaltations.

Machines do not have the same place in Peleshian's films as they do in Vertov's, though they do appear frequently. Where they appear, I am reminded of the vulnerability of the human-animal existent, how small the human appears amidst natural and technological forces. This is true of Peleshian's first film, *Earth of People* (1966), in which a quirky soundtrack (a la 60s prepared piano compositions) highlights machine dysfunction and automation and conflates it with human in/operativity. But it is most of all pronounced in *Our Century* (1983), a film about the Russian cosmonautics program. Though we have seen a similar critique in other films about astronautics (*The Right Stuff*, for instance), in this film I am moved by the most basic footage of cosmonauts being tested for their eventual ordeals in outer space. Peleshian reminds the viewer of the suffering of the cosmonauts, who were—like so many other soldiers and men of the warmachine—treated like glorified lab rats. Constellated among Peleshian's other films, I see cosmonauts as yet another creature made vulnerable within an administered world.

In Peleshian's films, human beings are not so much extended and confused with the machine world as they are with the animal. So that the animal expresses both a threat and a promise. The threat is that totalitarianism will be replicated through a new social formation or form of state power. Peleshian's critique of the Soviet state is thinly veiled in this regard, like those of all heretical filmmakers surviving in the Soviet Union (Vertov and Tarkovsky would not be so lucky; nor Peleshian's friend, mentor, and fellow countryman, Sergei Paradjanov). The promise is that the human-animal proves its nobility through its demonstration of noble animal qualities. When I was a student at SUNY-Buffalo, the philosopher Elizabeth Grosz taught a seminar on "becoming" wherein she proposed that what was actually most noble about the human was that which was most like the animal. I think Peleshian affirms this proposition where he reveals the human in its animal vulnerability (such as in the footage of the cosmonauts, or the slowed footage of women giving birth in *Life* [1993]), but also where we see people and animals cohabitating.

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The footage where this is most evident is in Peleshian's most celebrated film, *The Seasons* (1975), where the film begins with slowed footage of a man tumbling in a rapid with what appears to be a sheep. Throughout this film we see men tending to sheep. They do so with automobiles, but the machine is not what's important here. In some of the most deeply affecting cinematic images I've ever seen, one views men sitting around a rapid, struggling to lift sheep from the water, holding them close and tossing them to each other from their horses. In another scene, we see men tumbling—sheep-in-lap—down snow-covered hills. The men and the sheep seem to have the same expressions on their face. Their bodies are both given to freefall. In this moment the human and the animal express the same substance. Which is necessity, or simply the will to live. In another scene, the scene of a wedding procession, the animals appear like people and the people like animals. This is especially true of the cows who are dressed for the procession, and of the bride who, with bowed head, seems humiliated like an animal. As the people embrace and kiss and jostle one another I am reminded of animals in a pen.

Something often noted about Peleshian (in the little criticism I have found about the filmmaker) is his use of telephoto lenses—a lens often used for surveillance, and to obtain close-ups from a distance. Film scholars remark that this peculiar use of the camera was to produce candid, documentary/ethnography-style footage. My own take on Peleshian's use of a telephoto lens is that it has something to do with the filmmaker's ontology, an ontology that strives to create both a form of closeness and a form of distance through apparent closeness. To use the telephoto lens the way that Peleshian does is no doubt to have at a distance. But it is also to lose at this distance, inasmuch as it is to allow the view to be obstructed in often random ways, thus to break the illusion of proximity. As such presence and absence, concealment and disclosure intertwine—a spiritual modulation.

There is a certain affect in the obstructed intimacy that Peleshian's camera affords. And this intimacy—the intimacy of simultaneously having at a distance and losing what is had—is the inverse of that other form of intimacy afforded by Peleshian's camera. In many other scenes Peleshian's camera is situated among his subjects. But this is more than situation, as in ciné vérité or direct action cinema. It is as though, in certain scenes, Pelshian's point of view was that of one of the pallbearers holding a casket in a funeral procession, or was part of a scene in which the people of a crowd kiss and embrace one another - vertiginously. It is appropriate that one of Peleshian's films should be called We (1969), since Peleshian composes an affective complex that we might call an affect of we; that is, of being with others within a series of more or less intimate mass formations. Moving between a pov which partakes of a particular inter-subjective action and a camera shot of obstructed intimacy, Pelshian is one of the filmmakers of the 20th century most in touch with the consequences of the singularplural pronoun—both as a form of being together and of being apart. His communism, an human-animal communism, does not so much express a politics as it does an ethics of how one can be among after the many disasters being among has produced in the 20th century. Against any simple essentialism, Peleshian recovers animal being for humananimal society. As the poet Wallace Stevens writes, "the deer and the dachshund are one," and so are the human and the animal as inalienable extensions of one substance, one world, both extended and threatened by modernization.

LISTED ENTRIES ON JAN LETON (BORN 1771? IN THE WEST INDIES? / DIED 1827 IN SKAGEN) COLLECTED FROM WRITTEN SOURCES AND ORAL ACCOUNTS (1827 - 2005)

A

Age Upon Arrival Jan is An old ugly negro in 1877 An old ugly negro in 1939 A boy in 1957 An old ugly negro in 1969

Age Upon Death Jan is

46 and 56 in 1827, the numbers are written on top of each other in the church book

A

Arrival

As he stands on the beach Jan

Howls, screams and gesticulates in 1877

He is not mentioned in 1928

Waves his hands and screams in 1939

Shouts and waves a letter in 1944

Holds a letter in 1945

Holds a freight letter in 1956

Carries a sign around his neck and holds a letter in 1957

Howls and waves a letter in 1969

There is no information on that in 1977

There is no information on that in 1978

There is no information on that in 1992

There is no information on that in 1998

He holds a letter in 2000

In the story written by Maren, aged 14, in 2005, Jan carries a sign around his neck but it is the light house keeper who runs around waving his arms

VI RE__ING

B

Bailiff

Ole C. Lund

Treats Jan like a lovely child in 1877

Is a strange man, his name will not be forgotten in 1928

Is an optimist in 1939

Wishes he was the owner of a plantation in South Carolina instead of Skagen in 1956

Lazy and happy go lucky Lund wishes for a negro boy in 1957

Is a big spender. Often in financial difficulty in 1969

Is left by his wife in 1970

Is jovial in 1977

Is a happy and easy-going man in 2005

Is jovial. He misses Jan when he dies. Jan is his friend in 2005

B

Burial

When Jan dies

He is buried like a dead dog in the plantation in 1877

Buried between the dunes in the plantation and has rested in peace there for over 100 years in 1939

Buried in the cemetery in 1944

Is not buried in the cemetery in 1956 because the priest does not want Jan in Christian soil

Buried in the cemetery in 1957

Haunts the forest which belongs to him in 1957

Is not buried in the cemetery in 1969 because the priest says his black colour is the sign of a black soul

Perhaps is buried in the cemetery or perhaps in the forest in 1969

Buried in the cemetery in 1978

Doesn't die in 1989

Buried during the night in the plantation in 1992

Is a ghost in the forest in 1992. There's enough space in the plantation for a ghost to walk

Probably buried in the cemetery in 2000 but the priest does not wish to place him beside white Skageans

Buried between two dunes like a dead dog in 2000

Buried in the forest, later dug up and reburied in the cemetery in 2004

Buried under a heap on the ground near the house in 2005

In the story written by Maren, aged 14, in 2005, there is no information on that



Captain

The captain is

American in 1877

TAMAR GUIMARÃES VII

American in 1939

Dutch in 1944

American in 1956

American in 1969

The first white man to treat Jan decently in 1977

From South Carolina in 2000

C

Cargo

Cargo fills local people with horror in 1969

1

Cause of Death

Jan

Dies of excessive drinking in 1877

Becomes sick and dies in 1939

Dies of excessive drinking, but this was quite common, in 1957

Dies of drinking in 1969

Dies of drinking in 2005

D

Danish Slave Trade

We are really efficient at sailing miserable black people from Africa to America in 1957

On board of ships Danish sailors maltreat slaves and then send nice postcards to their mothers

and wives in 1957

Writer thinks sugar mill ruin in St.Croix looks like a monument to a dark era in 1977 Slave Company in Copenhagen operates in 'good and healthy slaves' on an open stock market

shares system Respectable Danish citizens have shares on the slave and sugar trade in 1978

The branding iron of the slave company was an 'S' surrounded by a heart in 2001

D

Date of Arrival 1806 in 2005

1812 in 1969

Comes to shore one evening, in 1977

D

Diary Written by Jan Leton, or on his Behalf

Staccato writing, crossed down words. The four badly damaged pieces of paper are now in pieces in 1977

VIII

RE_ING

Four densely written diary pages, on bad paper, bad language, full of mistakes in 1978 A scroll found in his hut after his death in 2000

E

Eroticism

The Bailiff asks Jan for a kiss in 1877

One of the guys says, Jan probably wanted to sleep with the girls, in 1992

F

Fishermen

Think Jan is Satan in 1877

Think Jan is the devil in 1939

Sail out to greet oncoming boat but ride back to the shore because they are afraid of a black man in 1956

Are filled with horror because Jan is a genuine negro in 1969

Are filled with horror and think that his blackness is the same as the smoke from hell in 2000

₹

Forest

Planted by Lund in 1877

Farmers help Lund in planting the forest in 1928

Lund would look and Jan would plant in 1957

Jan plants. Plantation is an amazing wonder, in 1977

Jan plants in 1992

Jan and others in 1998

Jan helps a little with the plantation in 2000

G

Ghost

Forest belongs to Jan and he haunts it in 1957

Jan is a ghost in the forest in 1992. There's enough space in the plantation for a ghost to walk

G

Given as a Gift

A proof of devotion from the captain to the bailiff in 1877

A concrete joke in 1939

A harsh joke in 1944

Perhaps a joke in 1957

An American rough joke in 1969

A token of gratitude in 1977

A grotesque joke in 2000

TAMAR GUIMARÃES IX

L

Legal Status

Jan is

A servant in 1877

A slave in 1957

A good servant in 1969

A slave in 1977

A slave referred to as a servant in 1978

A slave freed on the last years of his life in 2004

M

Monkey

Is listed in the bailiff's death inventory. Worth 5 rigsdaler in 1828

Is Jan's only company, is evil and is later sold in 1877

Drinks brandy with Jan. Both are sent away to the sand dunes during the King's visit so as not to offend his majesty's sense of aesthetics in 1939

Drinks brandy with Jan and they break into cellars and food storage rooms together in 1956

Both are sent away to the sand dunes during the King's visit in 1956

Is sold to someone in another village in 1956

It is probably the monkey, and not Jan Leton, who is buried in the forest in 1957

Is given to Lund by another ship captain. The monkey is Jan's only companion, besides Lund, snaps and tobacco in 2000

0

Other Slaves in Denmark

Jan is probably the only negro slave in Denmark in 1956

There were several slaves in Denmark in 2003

P

Place of Origin

Jan is

From the West Indies in 1827

From South Carolina in the North American free states in 1877

From South Carolina in 1939

From South Carolina in 1945

From South Carolina in 1956

From the West Indies in 1969

From Green Key estate in St Croix in 1977

From St Croix in 1978

Is brought from South Carolina, but born in the West Indies in 2000

In the story written by Maren, aged 14, in 2005, Jan comes from St.Croix

Χ

RE ING

S

Ship Which Brings Jan to the Shore Ship is American in 1877 American in 1956 Probably American in 1957 American in 2000 Danish in 2000

S

Stowaway

Jan is a stowaway on board of a ship, probably trying to get to the Gambia or Ghana, in 1977, 1978 and 2000

W

While in Skagen

Jan

Goes around with a pipe hanging from his predator-like teeth all day in 1939

Tastes paradise in 1939

Is a slave, plants a forest and serves the bailiff in 1957

Is sometimes abused by the locals who secretly fear him in 1969

Plants the forest in 1977

Is Lund's domestic servant in 1978

Takes care of Lund's agriculture in 1992

Is bullied for being black in 1989

Helps a little with the plantation but is mostly a house servant in 2000

Is treated well and is never whipped in 2000

Speaks Danish with local dialect but never becomes part of the community because for that he was too different in 2000

W

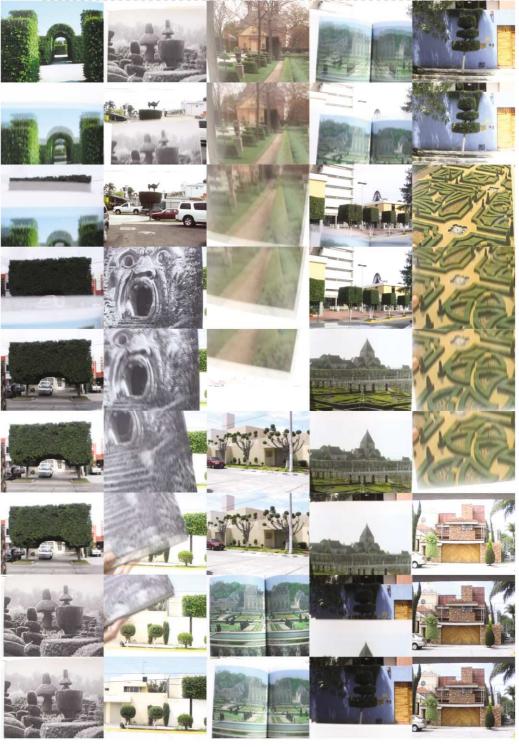
Whip

An important tool in 1877

The propelling force for getting Jan to work in 1939

The way to get the best out of Jan; he is used to it, in 2000

PATRICIA ESQUIVIAS ΧI



RRMX\articles/RRMX559013/RRMX A 559013 O.3d[x]

Friday, 11th February 2011 1:42:32

XII

SHIFTER 17 RE___ING



PATRICIA ESQUIVIAS

XIII



EXCERPTS FROM THIS IS THAT AND THAT IS THIS

this is that and that is this is a book of conversations that I eavesdropped upon while traveling in India, and transcribed into drawings. In each case the length of the drawing is an indication of my presence and not necessarily a depiction of an entire interaction between speakers. Individuals are represented by differently colored lines, made up of dots, the duration of the utterance determining the length of that line. A single drawing is distributed between four pages. On page one the viewer is presented with lines indicating the author/observer as present, but outside the conversation. Containing cuts the central pages produce variations in signification as they are turned from right to left, or left to right. On page four words spoken in English appear as such, in sequence, floating without context.

Chapters are organized spatially and temporally in order to situate people in relation to the practices of their everyday lives and, at the same time, to reflexively position myself as an author/observer outside of these practices. I have also limited attributing to persons more than gender and an approximation of age, as, in most cases, this is all I know about the subjects of this project. Age as a descriptive category is represented in the following way: younger (twenties-thirties), middle-aged (forties-fifties), and older (sixties-eighties). It should also be noted that not all of the conversations I witnessed appear in the book.

1 Airports

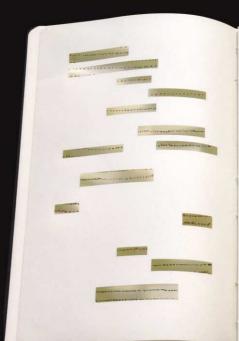
Indira Gandhi Airport, New Delhi Wednesday, January 20, 2010 3:42 PM Two older men sitting waiting to board a plane

2 Restaurants

Pearl Palace Hotel, Hari Kishan Somani Marg, Jaipur Monday, January 18, 2010 8:50 PM Two women and two men eating together

3 Gardens and Parks

Ferozeshah Mehta Gardens, Malabar Hills, Mumbai Friday, January 29, 2010 10:55 AM Two men sitting together on a park bench SUSAN JAHODA XV



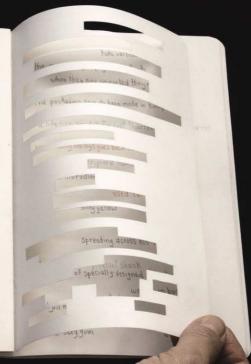
several times over
surpluses have been extracted
in acrisis
capital devalued.

and the assets
children and migrants:
astonishing pace
a dangerous cilvation.

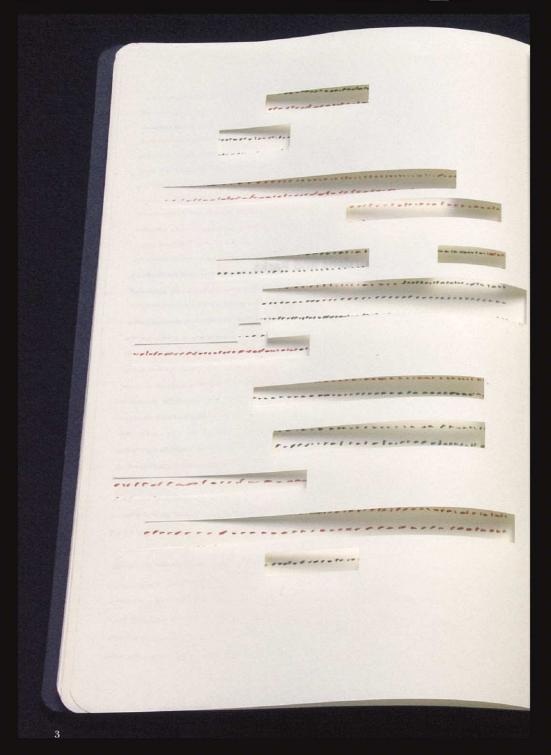
strike
question

claim.

stagnates or ceases



SHIFTER 17 RE__ING



what a problem

nuisance

you have let things get out of balance recently crows are not flying

nuisance

What a problem it is

makes you feel like the sky is falling

park attendants should run

reap the benefits of globalization

that's what they are paid to do

onto the grass and shoo them

profits are expected from a new deal if it comes through on Monday

XVIII RE__ING

The Negus said:

"Give me the lion, keep the stele!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the restitution of the Lion of Judah and the Obelisk of Axum.

The Negus said:

"Give me the war chest, keep your sloppy morality!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the restitution of the two artefacts stolen during the second Italo-Ethiopian war.

The Negus said:

"Give me revisionism, keep anti-revisionism!"

Haile Selassie, King of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the habit in contemporary politics of re-processing history as a manipulating agent in the national moral landscape.

The Negus said:

"Give me the give, keep the keep!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the national Italian attitude to conceive history as an overall negotiation.

The Negus said:

"Give me the 'Colonial and Political History', keep the History and Institutions of Afro-Asiatic countries'!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the change of academic disciplines in universities after the decolonization.

The Negus said:

"Give me the Ras, keep the Tafari!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to his appellation Ras (Ethiopian, Duke) that connected with his former surname Tafari created the word and subsequent movement, Rastafarianism.

The Negus said:

"Give me awareness, keep the 'heroes' (explorers, soldiers)!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the rereading of some documents of the colonial period without critical analysis with the effect to reproduce the imperialist atmosphere of the epoch. PATRIZIO DI MASSIMO XIX



XX RE___ING



The Negus said:

"Give me transformation, keep bad management!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to Afropessimism.

The Negus said:

"Give me 'Faccetta Nera', keep 'Faccetta Bianca'!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to two songs made up by the Italians during the second Italo-Ethiopian war, 'Little Black Face' and 'Little White Face'.

The Negus said:

"Give me the contemporary, keep the vintage!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to Benedetto Croce's idea that history is always contemporary history: the past should be of interest only when it can be useful for our present.

The Negus said:

"Give me the Italian, keep the anti-Italian!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, because, although classes, nations, affiliations and identities are 'myths' (mental processes of collective status) every form of dissociation from the national one seems bounded to fail.

The Negus said:

"Give me the persuasion, keep the definition!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the will that arises in people close to rhetorical forms of expression, people that would rather be persuaded than instructed.

The Negus said:

"Give me dignity, keep both the lion and the stele!"

Haile Selassie, king of Ethiopia, to the Duke of Aosta Amedeo, January 1969, referring to the paradox: as long as you conserve the two artefacts you will keep the presence of our relationship, as long as you give it back to us, you are allowed to be redeemed.

XXII RE__ING

ALICJA KWADE XXIII

XXIV

RE___ING



Konrad W. Sprai

PRIVATE PRACTICE for social communication and behavioural problems

Dernburgstr. 55 – 14057 Berlin – Telephone (030) 321 36 41

Graphological personality analysis

Client:

Alicja Kwade

Writer:

unknown female person "M1"

I received a 15-line sample of handwriting on unlined paper with the request to carry out a graphological character analysis of this sample for diagnostic purposes.

The writing style reveals an artistic and musically inspired personality possessing enormous aesthetic sensitivity and imbued with a high intellect. Temperamental, lively and alert, as well as open-minded and dynamic, she participates in all surrounding events and activities that stimulate and inspire her aesthetic receptivity and her artistic imagination. She has a very strong feeling for harmony and proportions and her sense of style is very pronounced.

At the same time, the handwriting manifests characteristics which indicate depressive moods, melancholy and weariness. Here we observe a permanent conflict between the love of life and the will to actively shape this life (particularly in the artistic sector) on the one hand, and phases characterized by lack of interest, discontent, despondency and taedium vitae on the other.

These are the typical personality traits of a hypersensitive, vulnerable person who is permanently torn between two poles. This battle of emotional paradoxes expends an enormous amount of energy and saps a person's strength on a permanent and tenacious hasis

For this reason, the writer experiences phases of successful and rewarding creative accomplishment, alternating with periods of mental and physical fatigue, weariness and exhaustion. These states can lead to a feeling of impotence and to collapse. This means that the highly sensitive and vulnerable psyche of the person we are analyzing here is at permanent risk.

Berlin, 2 August 2010

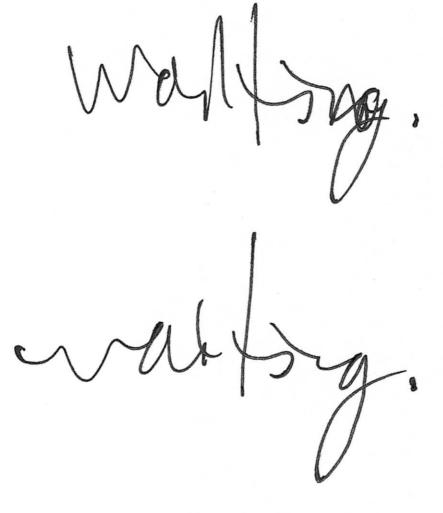
[signed]

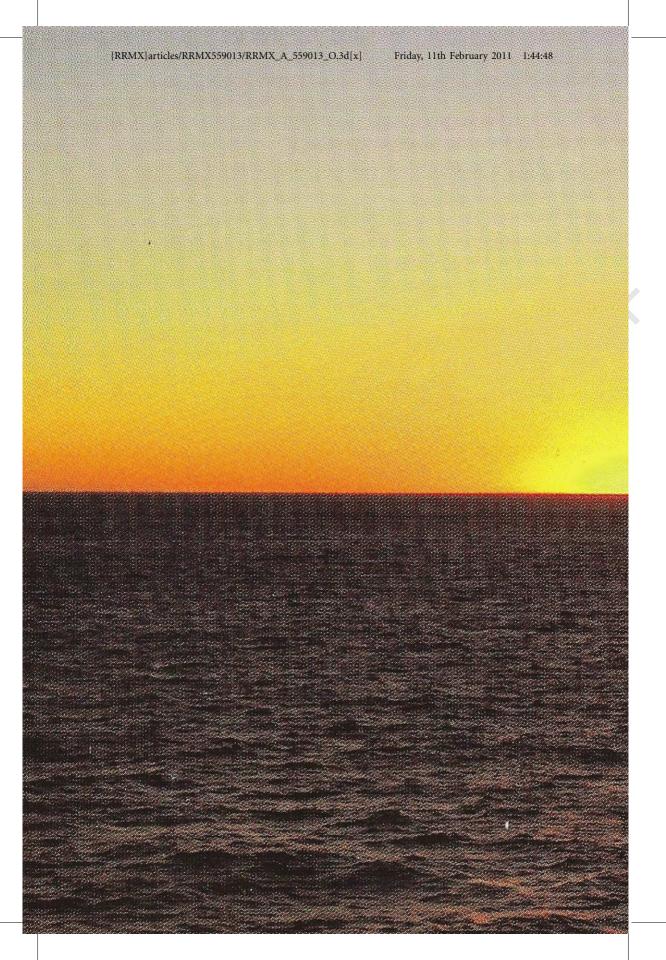
Konrad W. Sprai

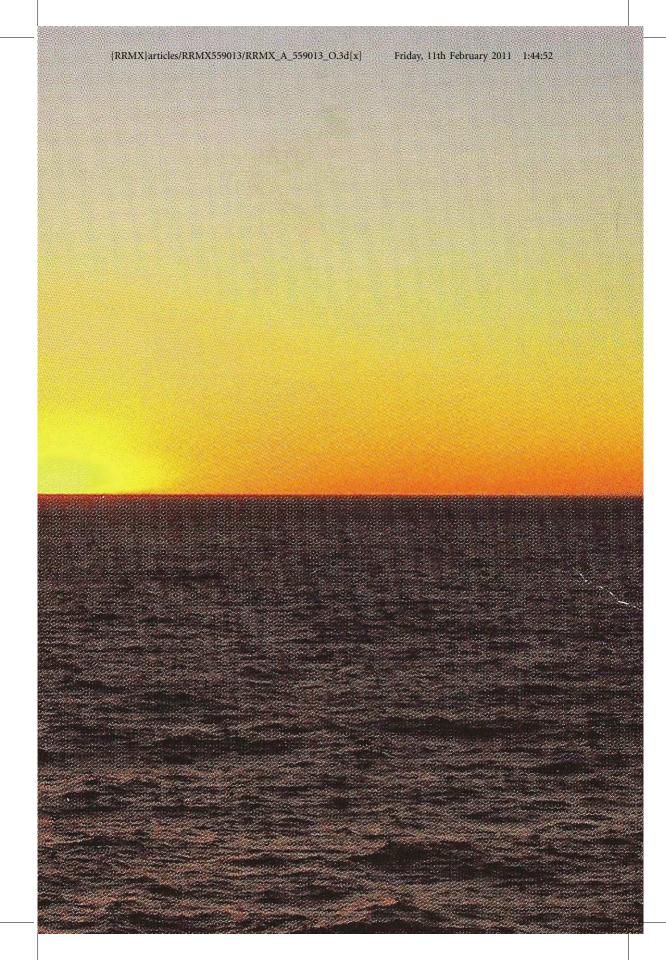
probicon GmbH D - 10961 Berlin Germany

MIKE SCHUH

XXVII







XXX ING

THE CONDITION OF THE ORPHAN: A DIALOGUE

Transcribed from a conversation that took place in Chicago on July 14th, 20101*

Answer: But they love it...the thing itself...

Question: What "Thing" are you referring to? And who "loves" it?

A: The Real...the substantive real...audiences today are looking for an unmediated experience.

Q: But what does that have to do with your project?

A: Well, as you know, we are trying to create an Orphanage here in Chicago... an actual functioning Orphanage. It is meant to be a highly aggressive critique of thinking of human beings as raw and quantifiable data, which according to my admittedly limited understanding of neo-liberalism is one of its main tenets, perhaps best exemplified in the formulation of Human Capital...which to my ear sounds a lot like Human Collateral (as in damage)...abstracting human beings into statistics...into "real" numbers...So we tried to devise an approach for working with human beings as material that would follow this cold logic and we happened upon the figure of the Orphan.

Q: An art project using orphans as a means to stage a polemic against Human Capital?

A: Yes, I think so.. that's the basic idea. There are other figures to look to of course, but the orphan strikes me as peculiar and exceptional. The Orphan is often presented as the hero in myth, like Siegfried, for example; and more recently the emblematic figure in pop culture is Harry Potter. Occupying the central role in the popular imagination, the Orphan becomes a cipher for collective desire and aspiration and is thus a vehicle par excellence for ideology. Having none of the classic familial relations to hem in the narrative potentialities of the mythic Orphan there is virtually no end to the amount of projection that can be cast upon the character... They can, in a sense, do or be anything. In non-mythic terms Orphans often are the bearers of a brutally imposed ideology when they are conscripted into armies...think of images of rifle-wielding children in Africa, Latin American, and Asia. But obviously there are older models as well in Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Q: Why not "The Prostitute" and open a brothel? Or "The Slave" and start an enforced labor camp, to tackle other figures of subjugation?

A: Well, I wasn't interested in becoming a pimp for one thing, plus both those options seem a little too over-determined. Those two figures in particular might tend to be read allegorically in an art project...and I don't want to allegorize anything. To my mind what makes the figure of the Orphan so compelling is that they are so ontologically Other that

^{*} At the participants' request we have altered their identities.

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their condition is in some very real ways unknowable...beings utterly devoid of rootedness ...an image of a type of radical dispossession that I feel gets close to this might be a scene from Akira Kurosawa's "The Bad Sleep Well", when the main characters step out of the tunnel where they had been holed-up and walk into a barren landscape... they survey the ravaged vista (which is surely a stand-in for the post-atomic bomb psyche of Japan) while recounting their past...I suppose it's perverse to draw a connection between the notion of the orphan and an image of a nation's near-total destruction.

Nevertheless I see trauma as always inscribed into the condition of the Orphan...which is obvious enough I suppose...A child is either bereaved of their parents, or the parent was in such an untenable situation that they gave up their own flesh and blood...either way the separation is traumatic...Another important aspect to keep in mind is that the condition of the Orphan is what we are all destined to assume when we suffer the death of our own parents. Somewhat paradoxically the Orphan is at once radically Other, but at the same time the condition of the Orphan lies-in-wait in each of us...waiting to reconfigure our whole mode of being in the world. So, the "condition of the Orphan" is a subject that spreads out in very complicated ways.

Q: Okay, that is all very interesting, but what does that have to do with the art? Excuse me for being so blunt ...but your stated critique and project seem vague, especially in an art context. As I think I understand what you've been describing, your project is predicated on some unknowable quotient of illusory ideas of Other-ness. This sounds like a giant hedge on, among other things, formal considerations and ethical concerns. Your formulation of the unknowable orphan gets you off the hook both aesthetically and ethically, no?

A: That's just it! I have no idea as to what form this project is supposed to take or its proper manifestation...especially since I don't actually like to work with people... as material I mean.

Q: Why not? Can't you work against your own taboos? Wouldn't that make your whole project more legitimate?

A: What is *legitimate* is certainly an interesting avenue to explore...but in answer to your question: No, I don't think this is the right approach to take for us. In fact we want to avoid the legitimate, or at least the legal. I am more interested in the printed lie or **Bold-Faced Lie.** The lie that is legitimated through print... so in a sense I am interested in legitimating the project, but more as a perpetration of a lie...The printed lie is one of the dominant modes of public discourse...and as such it is the site where the battle between the legitimate and illegitimate occurs today (think of techniques of swift-boating, W.M.D. or the Birthers).

Q: You seem to be taken with the classic binary of the real and the fake...which is a very old problem dating back at least to the Plinian fable of Zeuxis and the grapes and came back into fashion in a big way with the 2006 Whitney Biennale and its play on *Day for Night*. Is this where it could be said your interest lies? Isn't this, a good four years later, a tired discourse? I mean, can't we now agree it was *all* fake?

ZACHARY CAHILL XXXIII

A: What was all fake?

Q: The stories, the archives, the adventures, the documents – both in the art world and in the political malaise of the past decade.

A: I am not sure I'd have any competence to address the constellation you're enumerating. But Yes, if you say so...It was ALL fake.

Q: So why not just do it then?

A: Do what?

Q: Create the Orphanage.

A: You mean...

Q; Yes...take care of Orphans...Do something constructive with your art...

A: How would that be constructive?

Q: You mean helping homeless children?

A: Yes, How would art help them?

Q: If your project is a critique of human capital, why not use the project as a means to do something good? Humanize the effort?

A: Children don't need my help...and besides most things we view now retrospectively as problematic began with the best intentions.

Q: How do you know? Have you ever attempted to help any children before?

A: Alright...so this might be a good time to explain what we actually did. Back in January we went in on a building together to set up the Orphanage on the south side of Chicago. We then started recruiting young people for a youth league...a sort a Chicago Komsomol...Practically we felt that if we gave out the basics – you know food, water, shelter, etc. – we could indoctrinate the children...mold them...sculpt them if you will...we had an array of athletic and artistic activities, mainly what we could afford.

Q: How did it go?

A: Well... for a few weeks...

Q: What happened?

A: We ran out of funding. Art without food is not art...it's a waste of time.

Q: What tangible results occurred? What insights, if any, were you able to gain regarding the condition of the Orphan?

A: None.

Q: None?

A: None. That's what I am trying to tell you. The condition of the Orphan is unknowable.

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It has no relation...we can't "relate" to the Orphan.

Q: I'm sorry, but... What exactly are we talking about now? Maybe you could give me a name of one of the children?

A: Why?

Q: It seems to me that if you had a name the project would seem less manipulative... at least in spirit...but if you can't even recount a single name then it does seem like the Orphans just became material.

A: That's in fact what we were after...to establish the nameless Orphan. For us the Orphan was a mode of being...a living model of how to dismantle the proper name...to supplant the proper name with the common name...if we could do this then the condition of the Orphan could be "relatable" or deployed in other endeavors...

Q: So the child was just a tool?

A: Exactly!

O: That's perverse in the extreme.

A: It had to be extreme. There was no other alternative if we were really trying to enact a serious effort at ideological inscription.

Q: Did you record any of this project?

A: You mean video-tape it? No, drawing was our sole means of documentation.

Q: Why?

A: We were distrustful of video as a medium... I mean for this project... it removes the subjective experience too much...we felt that the experience had to be totally subjective and subjected to our own sensibilities. Any witnessing had to be internalized from the eye to the brain to the hand to the drawing material...we didn't want an externalized filter...we wanted to be the filter...

Q: So you can present the Orphanage as a series of drawings?

A: Yes. The drawings aren't meant to represent...they are as Deleuze would put it... Diagrammatic...they perform a piloting function...a type of forecasting...we felt (somewhat quixotically) that if we made enough drawings the project would come into being.

Q: We are almost out of time...so one last question...

A: Okay...

Q: How does this project relate to labor? Artistic/intellectual labor?

A: Hmmm...I think I see what you are going for with that, but for the sake of consistency... I'll say (and really without trying to be glib) it doesn't *relate* to labor...It is labor...The Condition of the Orphan is labor! It does not, as I said earlier, relate. Does that make sense?

ZACHARY CAHILL XXXV

Q: Not really...

A: Then think of it this way...think of labor in terms of the expression, "she's gone into labor"...the birthing process...mysterious in terms of psychology and ontology alike... it's a wholly different mode of existence, no? Or: it is existence in its most raw state... it's as if in this moment when two cells divide into one...at the precise moment of this division...when the division holds the two together...no longer one, but not two either... who knows how long this moment really lasts?...Who would dare say? Labor and the Orphan are stretched in this situation like two ends of a rubber band...I am not sure I can explain it any better than that....

Q: So am I to understand that your Orphan project is itself labor? Labor as opposed to "a work."

A: Yes...it is a labor...not "of love" exactly...but it is definitely not a work, or even a "process" for that matter!

Q: I believe that is all the time we have left. Thank you for discussing your project with us.

A: You're welcome. It was my pleasure.

-Dialogue recorded by Zachary Cahill

* for more on the Orphan Project please visit: http://www.theorphanproject.com/

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RE-FRAMING PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBJECTIVITY : HOLLIS FRAMPTON'S THE SECRET WORLD OF FRANK STELLA

From 1958 to 1962, the American photographer, filmmaker and theorist Hollis Frampton constructed a series of fifty-two photographs entitled *The Secret World of Frank Stella*. Each photograph in the series depicts the American painter Frank Stella in a range of poses and settings in and around New York City. Previous scholarship states that it began as a parody of the renowned photojournalist David Douglas Duncan's 1958 publication, *The Private World of Pablo Picasso*. This publication represents Picasso in his studio with finished works and works in progress, and around his villa in Cannes, offering a record of the artist's daily life. *The Private World of Pablo Picasso* includes several hundred photographs printed in a range of formats, from a double-page close-up to sequential images and contact sheets.²

As a parody of *The Private World of Pablo Picasso*, *The Secret World of Frank Stella* targets the subject portrayed and its means of portrayal. It turns a documentary of the most famous artist of the twentieth century into a mockumentary of a then emerging artist.³ This coupling sets in relief the bifurcated issue of authorship and subjectivity as it differently pertained to fine art and photography at this time: while contemporary painters sought a means of departure from the autographic concerns of their predecessors, photographers were perpetually challenged by the theoretical implications of their machine-based medium. A "private world" turned "secret world," Frampton's title inflects a shift from one conception of photographic images to another: from a transparent and objective recording of a subject, where a "private world" is made public, to one where the "secret world" becomes a phenomenon of the revelatory act of photographing and a product of the medium itself.⁴ Intending each of the fifty-two photographs to be individually hung in four rows of thirteen, roughly 9½ x 7½ inches, Frampton made this series for the gallery wall, rather than the printed page—a formal

Bruce Jenkins and Susan Krane, Hollis Frampton: Recollections / Recreations, exhibition Catalog, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, New York (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 46.

² Duncan accompanied the photographs with a six-part written account of his time with Picasso, and a page-by-page diurnal description of the events depicted in each photograph. See David Douglas Duncan, The Private World of Pablo Picasso (New York: The Ridge Press, 1958).

When Frampton began photographing in 1958, Stella had only just begun to work through the painterly issues that would lead him to create his first Black paintings. This was the topic of the exhibition curated by Harry Cooper and Megan R. Luke at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum in 2006. See Cooper and Luke, Frank Stella 1958 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). By 1962, Stella had appeared in Dorothy Miller's Sixteen Americans show at the Museum of Modern Art (1959), had had his first and second one-man shows at the Leo Castelli Gallery (1959 and 1962), and had transitioned to his Metallic paintings. However, according to Guberman, by the end of 1962 he was still not selling paintings. See Sidney Guberman, Frank Stella: An Illustrated Biography (New York: Rizzoli, 1995), 73.

These two conceptions of photography represent the dual concerns of the medium since its earliest days: science and art. Frampton addresses this split in several essays. See in particular "Meditations Around Paul Strand," Artforum (February 1972): 52–7, which will be discussed below, and "Digressions on the Photographic Agony," Artforum (November 1972): 43–51.

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and qualitative difference that emphasizes the autonomy of the photographic print.⁵ As an exhibited set, the photographs were expected to have a collective effect upon the viewer.6

The Secret World of Frank Stella displaces the value of Picasso as author/genius onto a set of relationships, including the subject depicted (Stella), the object (the photographs), the maker (Frampton), and the viewer. The displacement of an authorial subject is evident in specific photographs within the set, particularly in #10 (685 Penn)—a title that references the photographer Irving Penn whose iconic imagery dictates the content of this photograph. Beginning in the summer of 1948, Penn published a series of portrait photographs in Vogue magazine shot against two studio flats positioned to make a small corner wedge. Part of a journal piece entitled "Inside NYC," Penn presented twenty-six notable cultural figures (and two street signs), including The New Yorker drama critic Wolcott Gibbs, the choreographer Agnes de Mille, the jazz musician Louis Armstrong, and the world heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis. Frampton's portrait of Frank Stella, which uses two of Stella's Black Paintings in place of Penn's studio flats, is a cross between boxer and critic. Stella appears in this image shirtless and barefoot with hands crossed—more heavyweight than dandy. The tight framing and homogeneous gray tone of Penn's prints suggest a tense physical encounter between the photographer and his subject. Conversely, Frampton frames the image loosely, exposing the top edge of the canvases and offering a much more casual engagement between Stella and himself. Frampton's photograph lacks the formal control of Penn's. Unevenly lit, Stella merges with his work. While the individuals in front of Penn's lens constitute the leading cultural figures of circa 1948 New York, Frampton's photograph serves to construct the identity of Frank Stella as a leading cultural figure of circa 1959 New York—a construction that the formal failure of the photograph belies and turns into role playing. Nowhere is this role playing more explicit than in #42 (163 Cedar Street Tavern), where Stella is depicted in front of The Cedar Tavern, a well-known watering hole for the Abstract Expressionist generation of artists who preceded him.⁸

Frampton's series invites reflection upon the act of looking into and at photographically constituted worlds, questioning not only who or what is revealed photographically, but also how photographic images constitute, and who or what does this work. In #14 (360 *Photos*), Stella emerges from the darkened recess of a photographer's studio in disguise, with sunglasses and trench coat, invoking Walker Evans's License Photo Studio, New

⁵ One exception is #11 (432 Leonardo after Vitruvius), which measures 9 1/16 x 7 1/2".

⁶ See Reno Odlin, "Letters from Framp," October 32 (Spring 1985): 39. "I doubt anyone (not true, but nearly) got the point of the 52 photographs ... but the SECRET WORLD was apparently a crowd pleaser. Shite. I disliked most of them less on the wall than in the hypo; put them up as 4 suits in a space too narrow to back off and 'get the effect,' so they had to be read as four simultaneous lines. By the time I reprint a dozen of them, they should be perfectly banal."

Vogue (July 1948): 58-63. See also "Opera Addict" in the same issue, 64-5. That same year Penn also photographed Marcel Duchamp and Georgia O'Keefe in the same manner, both significant figures for Frampton's work.

I am thankful to Christa Robbins's Ph.D. dissertation, Privacy and Abstraction: American Painting, Late Modernism, and the Phenomenal Self (University of Chicago, 2010) for bringing the significance of The Cedar Tavern to my attention. Ironically, #42 (163 Cedar Street Tavern) was later used in a 1965 Vogue article on new artists (Guberman, Frank Stella, 84). Guberman states that Frampton took the photograph for the purpose of the Vogue publication, but this is not the case.

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York, 1934. A comparative view of Frampton's and Evans's photographs locates Stella in space between two pointing fingers. Where Evans's photograph functions as a selfreferential product of the subject represented (as a photograph of a space used to create photographs), supporting a notion of photography as an automatic, mechanical process, Frampton's photograph indexes the lost subjectivity of the unknown photographer and the anonymous subjects of his craft.

The critical project of The Secret World of Frank Stella, and its exploration of questions of photographic subjectivity, therefore, does not rest with the parody of The Private World of Pablo Picasso. Through a variety of formal devices, from point of view, to setting, to the overall gestalt of the image, each photograph purportedly alludes to an image from within the photographic tradition. On 26 January 1963, in a typewritten conversation with the sculptor Carl Andre, "On Forty Photographs and Consecutive Matters," Frampton outlined the historical and theoretical stakes of this series.

Every one of the fifty-two shots in that series is one photograph too many. There is no photograph in this Stella series that is not a "gem." There is not one shot that hasn't been made before by a photographer of reputation. My intention was a massive sottisier, the prize-picture on the point of becoming cliché. A photographic cliché is not a set of idées fixes about how to organize a surface, it is a petrified notion about seeing.

There is a photographic tradition of some sort, in precisely the sense that there is a literary or a painterly tradition. This series has reference to a critical attitude towards that tradition. I use the word "tradition" in the broad sense: what has been done. The photographs, to encompass my aim, had to be "bad."10

As a sottisier—a term coined by the modernist poet Ezra Pound¹¹—Frampton stages the series as a collection of "silly remarks" towards the photographic tradition that critique not only their source material, but also the system of values upon which the photographic tradition has historically been built. 12 Consequently, The Secret World of Frank Stella takes a critical stance toward a particular definition of modernist photography, as defined by the modernist photographer Paul Strand.

Paul Strand was among the first photographers to theorize the photographic tradition as a phylogenic process. He encouraged photographers to experiment with a pure use of the

- In her introduction to Circles of Confusion—the first publication of Frampton's collected essays, Annette Michelson positions Frampton's critical essays as an intervention in the issue of subjectivity that persists in plaguing the history of photography. See Michelson, "Time out of Mind: A Foreword," in Circles of Confusion (Rochester, N.Y.: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1983): 13-21.
- Carl Andre and Hollis Frampton, "On Forty Photographs and Consecutive Matters," in Buchloh 10 (ed.), 12 Dialogues 1962–1963 (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1980), 57. It should be noted that Frampton's critique is not solely limited to the photographic tradition. Several of the sources refer to paintings, acknowledging Frampton's often stated remark that our knowledge of the other arts, as well, is largely attributed to their photographic reproduction.
- Oxford English Dictionary online, "sottisier": A collection of sottises; esp. a list of written stupidities. 1929. E. Pound: "The simplest and briefest form of attack is by a sottisier ... Make your sottisier from poetry and the main literary reviews, Sunday supplements, etc." (http://dictionary.oed. com.proxy.uchicago.edu; accessed 25 August 2010).
- Oxford English Dictionary online, "sottises": A silly remark or saying; a foolish action (http:// dictionary.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu; accessed 25 August 2010).

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medium, and to adopt a critical approach toward the photographic tradition by looking through the pages of the journal Camera Work. 13 Strand championed the modernist belief that what moves the tradition forward is both knowledge of that tradition, and the knowledge and conviction that what one is doing is a contribution to it.¹⁴

In 1972, Hollis Frampton took the opportunity of a review of the Paul Strand retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art to reflect upon the period when he worked on The Secret World of Frank Stella, characterizing it as a time of 'weariness'. 15 Frampton brackets his review with a preface and a postscript, each directed at the issue of photographic subjectivity. The preface recounts a firsthand conversation with a photography student who laments that "there was "no history of thought" in photography, but only a "history of things," "no tradition, that is, no body of work that deliberately extends its perceptual resonance beyond the boundaries of individual sensibility," and that all photographs were beginning to look "as if they had been made by the same person." This preface outlines the theoretical consequences of a conception of photography as lacking in subjectivity from the point of view of a maker. The postscript, however, which quotes from the Latin American modernist writer, Jorge Luis Borges, poses an alternative view of photographic subjectivity from the point of view of the reader/viewer:

Throughout the years, a man peoples a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, tools, stars, horses, and people. Shortly before his death, he discovers that the patient labyrinth of lines traces the image of his own face.17

Framing his review of Strand's retrospective with, on the one hand, the claim that all photographs lack the subjectivity of their maker, and, on the other, that all the images we each see are projections of our own subjectivity, Frampton's essay on Paul Strand reassesses the stakes of Strand's photographic theory. He locates within Strand's early writings the origins of a transformation of the role of the artist-a transformation with profound consequences for our understanding of what amounts to "tradition" in photography. According to Frampton, Paul Strand's conception of photographic production, due to its rationale that "every parameter of the photographic process ... directly implies, and defines, a view of reality and of knowledge," and its insistence on the necessity for photographers to know their medium and have conviction in their contributions to it, redefines the role of the artist to that of an epistemologist. 18

Less an indicator of individual style than a marker of one's embeddedness in history

Paul Strand, "The Art Motive in Photography," British Journal of Photography 70 (5 October 1923): 612-5. See also Paul Strand, Seven Arts 2 (August 1917): 524-5.

Strand defines knowledge and conviction as follows: "So if you want to photograph, and if you are not living on a desert island, look at this tradition critically, find out what photography has meant to other people, wherein their work succeeds or fails to satisfy, whether you think you could hang it on the same wall with a Dürer wood-cut, a painting by Rubens or even Corot, without the photograph falling to pieces. For this is, after all, the test, not of Art but of livingness" (Strand, "The Art Motive in Photography," 612).

Hollis Frampton, "Meditations Around Paul Strand," Artforum (February 1972): 52. 15

Frampton, "Meditations Around Paul Strand," 52. 16

¹⁷ Jorge Luis Borges, quoted in Frampton, "Meditations Around Paul Strand," 57.

¹⁸ Frampton, "Meditations Around Paul Strand," 57.

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and culture, Frampton's interpretation of Strand's photographic theory warrants a closer look at Strand's guidelines and caveats for learning the photographic tradition. What one gains in flipping through the pages of *Camera Work*, where the subtleties of print quality are muted over by their reproduction by photogravure, is a history of ways of being-in-the-world. Here is Strand's suggestion:

As a matter of fact, your photography is a record of your living, for anyone who really sees. You may see and be affected by other people's ways, you may even use them to find your own, but you will have eventually to free yourself of them. That is what Nietsche [sic] meant when he said, "I have just read Schopenhauer, now I have to get rid of him." He knew how insidious other people's ways could be, particularly those which have the forcefulness of profound experience, if you let them get between you and your own vision. So I say to you that composition and design mean nothing unless they are the moulds that you yourselves have made, into which to pour your own content, and unless you can make the mould, which you cannot if you do not respect your materials and have some mastery over them, you have no chance to release that content.¹⁹

The Secret World of Frank Stella demonstrates the challenges of Strand's modernist project. It rethinks the limits and constraints of the medium as a historical and material praxis inextricably tied to seeing. Frampton's act of aping the photographic tradition—an exercise (in Strand's terms) of making the "moulds" himself—amounts to an attempt to embody the vision of another, and in doing so, an attempt to bear witness to an historical moment that has already passed. He enacts the necessary process of historical consciousness as a performance of photographic production. In doing so, however, Frampton demonstrates the harmful effects of letting someone else's vision get between his own. "The photographs, to encompass [his] aim, had to be "bad." Individually, each photograph fails on the ground that it cannot stand on its own as a unique photographic achievement; collectively they succeed in demonstrating this failure. They bring to the surface the system of judgment on which Strand's version of modernism depends.

This assessment of failure and success, or success in failure, naturally falls upon the role of the spectator. The act of looking at the photographs in the series tests the spectator's own awareness and participation in the photographic tradition—first by seeing through Frampton's own vision to the source material (seeing in terms of the source material); and second, by discerning, through comparison, a history of transformations in photographic seeing. Viewing the series as a whole, each spectator, too, becomes an epistemologist.