BEGINNING NO END

BEGINNING NO END

"(a) If the viewer is set up facing the subjects in the form of plane surfaces, which are not at right angles to the axis of the viewer, but make a more or less acute angle with her, and if the subjects are to be rendered sharp throughout not withstanding the oblique angle, the planes of the subjects and the body of the viewer, when prolonged, must intersect in space at one and the same point along a dividing axis. This condition can be fulfilled by a swinging or oscillating of the body. In practice, of course, this adjustment is not made with a protractor and rule, but by simple movement while observing the images in question. (b) Scheimpflug ... has been strangely oscitant, or ... has not understood the sentences."

C. HOSEA > C. LEONARD > W. BRISCO > J. WREN > A. O'REILLY > S. INDRISEK >
B. TROEMEL > T. EDMONSON > Z. POWERS > S. HO > A. DI NARDO > L. MCCOY >
M. KEOUGH > M. FLYNN > N. MIDDLETON > B. CLARKE > L'ESCALIER

PEOPLE ARE LOOKING BETTER: CHRIS HOSEA'S CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS AT DAVID ZWIRNER

C. Hosea > C. Leonard

As to be expected, Christopher Williams's new show "For Example: Dix-Huit Leçons Sur La Société Industrielle (Revision 12)," up through February 12, 2011 at David Zwirner, is about learning processes that have no beginning, no end.

The show's bilingual title, borrowed from the eponymous 1963 essay collection by French philosopher and sociologist Raymond Aron (1905-1983), is an entry into Williams's particularly pedagogical form of ambiguity. Aron's <u>18 Lectures on Industrial</u> <u>Society</u> opens with rhetoric reminiscent of the recent speeches of Barack Obama:

"In general, I think we can say that the idea of industrial society is likely to be prominent at times when economists and politicians are inclined to emphasise the forces of production, science and technology, and to play down the importance of the economic system, whether this is defined by the property system or by the method of economic regulation (by the market or by planning). On the other hand, in periods of prosperity capitalists and liberals are more likely to praise free enterprise and competition than technology."

Transposed into the framework of art, we are led to ask: Are education, innovation, and optimism what art needs now? And following Obama, should we race to "win the future?" Whatever the best approach to such questions, if they are indeed productive questions, an art audience could listen more carefully to, and therefore more generously comprehend, those with whom they disagree.

Close friend and lifelong intellectual adversary of Jean-Paul Sartre, Aron's obituary read: "His greatest legacy... was teaching [his students and readers] how to think if one refused all 'secular religions,' all philosophies of history that pretend to know the purpose and the march of mankind, that begin by rejecting the world as it is and aim at total revolution."

Williams has been working on his <u>For Example</u> series since 2005, and some of the work in the current Zwirner show was conceived and executed during Williams's residence in Baden-Baden last year, a time which Williams spoke of quizzically and fondly as a pastoral, perhaps sentimental journey. In all of Williams's pictures, most everything is in focus: the focus of infinite readings. You will find echoes of Williams's past work, riffs from the history of photography, ambiguous spaces, conceptual art, metonymic referents, musical phrases, objectivist poetry and halls of mirrors.

In true Californian style - think of John Baldessari, Allen Ruppersberg or Ed Ruscha - Williams subverts conceptual art's seriousness, while maintaining its (in)aesthetic experimentation. When I spoke with Williams about these illustrated leçons, it felt natural to ask about his own early experiences with school, with pedagogies.

We sat down at the Maritime Hotel with a tape recorder and coffee on January 10, 2011 and spoke for about an hour. Christopher Williams was born in 1956 in Los Angeles and grew up roaming around Hollywood, Playa del Ray, Studio City North Hollywood, Pasadena, and Valencia, a skater and a surfer.

"I was a surfer from the time I was twelve to the time I was seventeen. So I spent a lot of time in Malibu and in Southern California with the mountains and the ocean, and a lot of time in Big Sur. But basically I'm a city guy. I was lucky enough to get free equipment and everything. I was on a surf team, but I didn't have to compete. I was an exhibition surfer. All I had to do was have their logo on my board and my T-shirt. And I was able to kind of get by, surfing."

I asked Williams if his earliest work tested the conventional parameters of art. "At North Hollywood Junior High School, we were asked in our art class to make proposals for an event on campus," he said. "And I thought that a pornographic image would be the appropriate thing. So I made a pornographic image loosely based on John and Yoko and was kicked out of my art class for doing so."

After the pornographic poster affair, Williams was tracked into in "a detention group for misdirected, intelligent kids." Luckily, Williams found some traction there. The teacher took the class to free jazz concerts by Captain Beefheart and Ornette Coleman and shows at the Pasadena Museum. Williams first encountered work by Carl Andre, Ellsworth Kelly, Claes Oldenburg, Joseph Cornell, Duchamp, and Warhol. "So I ended up in a great place, where I was exposed to a pretty wide range of contemporary art. And knowing those names led me to looking at the Sunday paper and looking at the list of exhibitions. I started riding buses to visit commercial galleries to see those same artists. I realized that in high school there were two activities: there was pot and surfing. I had a very low grade point average, so I knew I wasn't going to get into a good college without getting my grades into a good place and without putting a portfolio together. And I knew I wanted to go to art school. So I dropped out of high school, and I went to a community college."

Williams lied about his age to enroll at L.A. City College. At first, Williams didn't enjoy his art classes there. "They didn't have anything to do with the kind of art that I was interested in," he says.

A change came when Williams poked his head into an art class in which he wasn't enrolled, a course taught by John White. "He had a slide of Guernica by Picasso projected very large on the wall," Williams remembers. "And he was hitting golf balls into the slide and then discussing wherever the golf balls would hit. And this looked good to me."

With support from White and early Artforum editor Fred Danieli, Williams gained entry to CalArts, where he earned both his BFA and MFA, studying under a star-studded cast of characters including Michael Asher, John Baldessari and Douglas Huebler.

Bennett Simpson, in his 2006 Artforum review of Williams's "What Does the Jellyfish Want?" wrote:

"[T]he ceaseless rhythms of absence and plenitude that distinguish Williams's practice belie a pleasure in contextualization that traditional accounts of Conceptual art rarely acknowledge. For all its displacements—indeed, because of its displacements— Williams's work admits a level of affect that may not immediately be expected by viewers trying to 'make sense' of the many contingencies each photograph contains."

Despite his work's quizzical ambiguity, Williams works pragmatically within existing structures--since 2008 he has been Chair of Photography at Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, Bernd Becher's former post--for meaningful change. I asked

Williams to compare Vogue magazine and the white cube art gallery as spaces for encountering photographs:

"They both have really different functions. I think magazines are really interesting, so it's not a hierarchical thing I'm going to say. But it's a statement of difference. I think this [e.g., Zwirner's gallery] is one of a handful of places in our culture where speculative thought is still part of it. It's not pure entertainment in here. It's related to the entertainment industry or to the culture industry, but there is the ability to slow down and ask questions here, if you like ... And when I'm making a picture, I tell everybody I'm working with, 'Let's try to make a picture where even if they are not interested in the subject, they want to look more.' So, you're not interested in photographic technologies at all, but maybe the complexity of the camera makes you want to linger over it longer. Whereas a magazine is really about speed, in a way. Certainly, you can slow down there, too. You can tear the pages out and rearrange them and re-photograph them, and do things like that. Which is one of the ways that I functioned as a younger artist; literally tearing things out of magazines and re-photographing them and thinking about how they functioned. I think it's the idea that you can spend ten seconds with a picture in here, or you can spend ten minutes. You know? And I think that's a huge difference. If there's something political about my work; and certainly with my subject matter, I'm interested in artifacts from the cold war... But if I were to locate a real politic, it would be about insisting on trying to create the conditions for a different kind of looking: different from television. I get a lot of ideas from television."

Zwirner Gallery's playful press release provides an oblique set of rules for encountering Williams's exhibition:

The Scheimpflug Rule

If the camera is set up facing a subject in the form of a plane surface, which is not at right angles to the axis of the camera, but makes a more or less acute angle with it, then if the subject is to be rendered sharp throughout not withstanding the oblique angle, the planes of the subject, the lens, and the camera back, when prolonged, must intersect at one and the same point. The condition can be fulfilled by swinging or tilting the camera back or lensboard, or both. In practice, of course, these adjustments are not made with a protractor and rule, but by simple observation of the image on the ground glass. Again, too specific. Let's try again.

To focus is to assert a preference for one surface over another. To choose between the light meter or the green dress. How to represent them? Let's say that both, on that afternoon, trembled slightly.

Close the darkroom door. You are in semi-darkness, moist and cool, fragrant with chemicals. Left behind is the roar of the city, industry, the sounds of labor, transportation, the masses. Alone at last, quiet and still, time to work. As the images appear in the trays, it becomes clear that you have not escaped, you are simply in a smaller, muted space filled with images of industry, labor, transportation, the masses.

Here's another way to travel from photo to photo. A bright derelict room divided theatrically by a free-standing section of wall. Long shadows are cast toward the white-washed walls from the intense daylight entering through the far line of windows. Switch focus. The same in reverse, and the centre wall oscillates between the space of the photo and the inhabited space of the viewer.

Yet again, Christopher Williams's work has no beginning, no end. It is about better seeing where we are now, gathering and storing necessary supplies and techniques, sharing ideas and conversation using all means at our disposal, sharing ideas like these with each other. As the citizens of Egypt have shown us, it may sometimes be necessary to take lightningswift, tactical, nonviolent action. Williams quietly provides us a useful place for refocusing plans for today-because the future will win itself.

PEOPLE ARE LOOKING BETTER: CRAIG LEONARD'S "CHRIS HOSEA'S CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS AT DAVID ZWIRNER"

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco

Xenia and Danielle,

Mostly, I have left the review structure intact and simply edited the original writer's assertions to make slightly more visible the value structure of operating in William's work. And how arbitrary it is to interpret work by an assumed reading of an artist's educational background and Just Because Christopher Williams was a Student of John Baldessari Doesn't Make him Funny.

I had another idea to simply write about Christopher William and Roe Ethridge battling it out over surfing.

(could you cut it the text where I finished editing it)

Willie

Christopher Williams's recent exhibition "For Example: Dix-Huit Leçons Sur La Société Industrielle (Revision 12)," up through February 12, 2011 at David Zwirner, is about learning processes that have no beginning, no end.

The show's bilingual title, borrowed from the eponymous 1963 essay collection by French philosopher and sociologist Raymond Aron (1905-1983), is an cheery entry into Williams's particular form of pedagogical rhetoric. Aron's <u>18 Lectures on Industrial Society</u> opens with rhetoric reminiscent of the recent speeches of Barack Obama:

"In general, I think we can say that the idea of industrial society is likely to be prominent at times when economists and politicians are inclined to emphasise the forces of production, science and technology, and to play down the importance of the economic system, whether this is defined by the property system or by the method of economic regulation (by the market or by planning). On the other hand, in periods of prosperity capitalists and liberals are more likely to praise free enterprise and competition than technology."

Transposed into the framework of art, we are led to ask: Who will benefit if education, innovation, and optimism become central talking points of contemporary art discourse? Following Obama, should we race to "win the future?" and what exactly does that mean. Whatever the best approach to such questions, if they are indeed productive questions, an art audience could listen more carefully to, and therefore more generously comprehend, those with whom they disagree. Does any over the age of 20 expect an audience to listen to them in a mimetic manner? Does art produce subjectivity in that manner? How is it that one could define art as anything outside of intersubjective politics and class relations.

In his obituary for Aron, Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, "His greatest legacy... was teaching [his students and readers] how to think if one refused all 'secular religions,' all philosophies of history that pretend to know the purpose and the march of mankind, that begin by rejecting the world as it is and aim at total revolution." The two were rivals and colleagues with all of awkward laughter which that entails. I could have the names reversed, but either way, one of those two forms a part of the rhetoric structure which Christopher Williams's exhibition produces. And thus distant listener, within this exhibition you would have found an entry into left-wing pedagogical meaningfulness and proxy affiliation with Postwar Parisian intellectualism.

Williams has been working on his For Example series since 2005, and some of the work in the current Zwirner show was developed during Williams's residence in Baden-Baden last year. Williams spoke of fondly of this time as a pastoral and perhaps sentimental journey. According to Wikipedia, Williams was born in 1956.

I get an excitement from these facts in combination.

It can be a bit difficult to think of Williams as a Californian artist when one compares him with the likes of John Baldessari, Allen Ruppersberg or Ed Ruscha. When I spoke with Williams about his illustrated leçons, it felt natural to ask about his own early experiences with school, with pedagogies. We sat down at the Maritime Hotel with a tape recorder and coffee on January 10, 2011 and spoke for about an hour. Christopher Williams was born in Los Angeles and grew up roaming around Hollywood, Playa del Ray, Studio City North Hollywood, Pasadena, and Valencia. He enjoyed both skateboarding and surfing.

"I was a surfer from the time I was twelve to the time I was seventeen."

This would be between the years of 1968 and 1973.

"I spent a lot of time in Malibu and in Southern California with the mountains and the ocean, and a lot of time in Big Sur. But basically I'm a city guy. I was lucky enough to get free equipment and everything. I was on a surf team, but I didn't have to compete. I was an exhibition surfer. All I had to do was have their logo on my board and my T-shirt. And I was able to kind of get by, surfing."

One can only assume Williams was a babe.

A REVIEW OF A REVIEW OF A REVIEW

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren

So far this is all so fucking boring. Some cut and paste. Moving some paragraphs and sentences around. Where is the personal perspective? Where is the criticality? After quoting Obama, the original review asks:

"Are education, innovation, and optimism what America needs now?" $% \left({{{\left({{{{{\bf{n}}}} \right)}_{n}}}_{n}} \right)$

However, Obama signed the fucking indefinite detention bill. Obama can now send your ass to Guantanamo for no reason and without trial. And sooner or later some fascists are going to get elected in the fine U.S. of A. and take full advantage of this new legal prerogative. Are

"thirteen medium-sized color and black-and-white photographs"

really what we need now?

ADDING PROFANITY TO NEW YORK POST STYLE POLITICAL DRIBBLE : JACOB WREN'S REVIEW OF WILLIE BRISCO'S REVIEW OF LEONARD'S REVIEW OF HOSEA'S REVIEW

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly

In a recent review of Willie Brisco's Review of Craig Leonard's review of Chris Hosea's review of Christoper William's show at David Zwirner, Montreal-based writer and musician, Jacob Wren, decided to mock the previous writers' pretentious and historically tangential reviews of Williams's exhibit, which he believes is not enough to solve the current political ineptitudes of the United States. Wren quotes, "Are education, innovation, and optimism what America needs now?" from Leonard's review and replies with a tangent of his own: reminding us, with poor grammar and improper use of the word 'however', that President Obama signed a bill not allowing prisoners to be moved from Guantanamo Bay. A few short sentences later Wren regains critical posture by posing a question to the reader,

"Are 'thirteen medium-sized color and black-and-white photographs' really what we need now?",

but without any indication to whom he is quoting; is this redaction intentional?

It is the question at the end of Wren's review that reveals to us a potentially shortsighted approach to his current engagement with contemporary art. As we are uninformed to the origin of the thirteen photographs he is referring to in his text (they are presumably the photographs in Williams exhibit, the show in which this series of reviews are stemming, but those photos are in color) we are provoked to take his question at face value: does art have a role in a world with such political, social, and environmental problems? — Is that what Wren means or is he referring only to contemporary photography (which is potentially the most literal and socially reflective medium, and in the context of Christopher Williams, it is poetically used and is presented as being inherently political – as evidenced by the title of his exhibit) ?

The question, astoundingly the fulcrum of his review, is posed while neglecting a tremendous amount of art history: a response to Wren could be easily formed by looking at a fractional output of important artists over the past 100 years. While I agree this particular exhibit of photographs is not the most blatant political aid or disruptor, it has its place as a conceptually sound and non-indexical exhibit of photographs by an artist not of the internet generation. As problematic as Wren's short review is, it also lacks any valuable insight – aside from a front-page knowledge of politics. It seems to only beg the dim question, why does anyone make art?

ADAM O'REILLY AND THE PROBLEM OF RHETORICAL VIOLENCE

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek

If the purpose of a critical review is to eviscerate, malign, and otherwise destroy one's opponent – and I'm pretty sure we can all agree on that point, at least – then Adam O'Reilly has made an admirable, if ultimately impotent, stab in the right direction. I picture him in a room, a dark room, a dark and windowless room, with the (metaphorical) body of Jacob Wren strapped to a chair, a copy of his short and misanthropic review duct-taped to a stained sweatshirt. Adam O'Reilly stalks, in some approximation of a panther's gait, around his quarry; accuses him of veering on tangents, neglecting the deliciously obese corpus of art history, of being dim.

Yet at the crucial moment, O'Reilly loses his nerve; he's gone far, but not far enough; it's as if, at the last second, he swapped his knife for a fat dab of peanut butter, which he then smeared on Wren's quivering face. Embarrassing, sure, but without any resounding finality. He makes the crucial mistake of quoting Wren in his own words, as if Wren's words are even worth quoting, as if the dignity of quotation should even be extended to Wren. (You'll notice that I don't quote O'Reilly at any extended length here whatsoever; he doesn't deserve it.) O'Reilly treats Wren like a worthy opponent whose views he opposes while making it clear that, if the opportunity presented itself, he might still be keen to share a drink with the guy, to hash out their crucial differences in some dramatically-lit gentleman's lounge.

I imagine O'Reilly withdrawing a cigar from his shirt pocket; Wren deftly provides a lighter; the two men begin to discuss photography. This is O'Reilly's mistake: he does not have the wild-eyed disposition of a killer. The art critic of the 21st century must not fall prey to bi-partisanship; he must sharpen his knives, and carry extra knives in his boots; he must not substitute peanut butter for the necessary beheading.

SORRY FOR DUCKING OUT, BRAD

B. Troemel

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >

Hey Danielle, I've read all the reviews and find myself unable to respond. The [review of the] art exhibition the reviews were based on wasn't of any interest to me and the writing project seems to have devolved into some type of snake-eating-its-tailmeta-meta-meta-criticism of two people who disagreed with each other without articulating their positions for more than % of a page length. I really like the idea for the responses but don't feel like I can contribute anything positive, unfortunately. I do get the sense that time played a role in the way people responded. I also think a more expansive initial topic might be good too - I would bet a few people (myself included) hadn't heard of this photographer until now.

Sorry for ducking out,

Brad

SCOTT INDRISEK AND THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENT RHETORIC

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >

B. Troemel > T. Edmonson

- ... the future will win itself.
- ... really what we need now?
- ... why does anyone make art?
- ... the necessary beheading

Scott Indrisek dramatizes Adam O'Reilly's critical methodology in two parts: first, as some sort of off-brand Reservoir Dogs torture scene, and secondly as a moment of Old Boys' Clubstyle fraternal complicity over what I imagine to be very expensive cigars. Along the way, this narrative asks us to consider impotence, dark rooms, stained sweatshirts, peanut butter, dramatically-lit gentleman's lounges, lighters, knives, boots, and extra knives.

Is this the answer to the eponymous "problem" of rhetorical violence... that it's not violent enough? Was it the Guantanamo reference so early on in this project that shaped this allegory - rife with prototypical American imagery in its discussion of captive prisoners and processed food? Is this a critical canon that actually appeals to anybody? I'd like to imagine a critical vocabulary that extends beyond the Myriad Knives of Critical Vigour versus the Peanut Butter of Self-Compromise, including, but not limited to, complexity, fluency, self-awareness, acuity, and wit.

TESS EDMONSON'S "SCOTT INDRISEK AND THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENT RHETORIC"

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >

B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers

In her review of Scott Indrisek, Tess Edmonson portrays a man wrestling with masculinity. For him, the language is physical, but the experience is not. Compromise is the key word, or rather

Self-Compromise,

absorbing imagery of war and business as metanarrative in a life of... not quite leisure. Un(der)employment? A life of people writing reviews of reviews. An emasculated life? Unfortunately for Edmonson's Indrisek, rhetoric is not real life. Fortunately for Edmonson, rhetoric can be a form of combat in itself.

The Necessary Beheading.

Edmonson seems particularly unimpressed, and dreams her own escape hatch. Unfortunately, the route to this escape hatch requires self-awareness, and the last time I asked someone (last Friday), that is something that is very difficult to achieve. Fortunately, difficult challenges provide the greatest opportunity for personal growth. Throughout this exercise of reviewing a review of a review, I have experienced moments of wonder ("I wonder what I should write next?"), discomfort ("is it okay that it sounds like people are being made fun of?"), awe ("this cup of tea is still warm!"), anxiety ("what was I supposed to do today?"), and, yes, acceptance ("I think two paragraphs should do just fine").

PISSED SOLIPSIST: ZEESY POWERS AND THE DECLINE OF REARVIEWS

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >

B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > S. Ho

Zeesy Powers's review of Tess Edmonson's review, "Scott Indrisek and the Problem of Violent Rhetoric" perfectly mirrors the inherently entropic process that we are participating in. Beginning by briefly summarizing the general thrust of previous reviews, Powers hints at the self-reflexiveness necessary to this project while pointing out that such self-awareness leads only to self-defeat. We are told rather simplistically that efforts towards some such actualization is hard and consoled with an empty yet enigmatic platitude: difficult challenges provide the greatest opportunity for personal growth. Powers's own meta-narrative irreverently plays to the irrelevant and mundane: recalled conversations, minor anxieties, cups of tea. The progressive decomposition of Powers's text manages in two short paragraphs to encapsulate the pathetic and hilarious disintegration intrinsic to this entire review-of-reviews process.

Fittingly, it ends in a shower of expletives.

THE FUTURE WILL BE TIRING: ZEESY POWERS'S "TESS EDMONSON AND THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENT RHETORIC"

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >

B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > A. Di Nardo

Powers's review of Edmonson's "Whatever The Title Is Now" is a text polemically charged with both weariness and vivacity. Foraying into the dregs of our regurgitative, sociopolitical climate, citing, for instance,

a life of reviews writing reviews

Powers's directs our attention to Edmonson's interest in the role that combat plays with the rhetorical. And while Powers', like the reviewer's review that she reviewed, seems to also believe in the influence of rhetoric and its potential for 'change', I cannot help but read a drawling weariness. A playful weariness, but a weariness nonetheless. And then, there were the fucks. I think we all needed those fucks.

We began this exercise asking, at bottom,

Are education, innovation, and optimism what art needs now?

We delved into the old dilemma,

Why does anyone make art?

Entered an enclave of quietly transposed

Self-Compromises,

philandered with peanut butter and a superabundance of knives.

And now? From Powers's review I am reading an offspring of questions about physicality and experience, about the battle for 'authenticity' in the ART INDUSTRY, and finding it amusing that we've managed to skirt the issue of Williams altogether.

Indeed, my friends, the future will be tiring.

THE FUTURE WILL BE TIRING : ZEESY POWERS'S "TESS EDMONSON AND THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENT RHETORIC" BY ARIANNE DINARDO

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >
B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > S. Ho > A. Di Nardo > L. Mccoy

Sometimes when I'm reading something it's like "I'm in the words, I'm in the words" and they are all over the place but I'm not really getting the words. I guess.

I wonder what it would be like if in the future, Zeesy, wrote the word 'fuck' and that was her review, just the word 'fuck'. Would that feel like a lot or a little? What if Arianne wrote "The future will be tires", and it meant something really huge, like she meant it would be cyclical and when she said "tires" we really got that, right away?

I'LL SLEEP WHEN YOU'RE DEAD : LIBERATORY POTENTIALITY AS CONDITIONAL BOUNDARY

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >
B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > S. Ho > A. Di Nardo > M. Keough

If one examines subconceptualist narrative, one is faced with a choice: either accept the neocultural paradigm of discourse or conclude that academe is capable of intention. Di Nardo's review implies that consciousness is unattainable, given that titling

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(whatever the title is now)
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is equal to narrativity. But if dialectic postsemantic theory holds, we have to choose between subconceptualist narrative and dialectic theory.

The primary theme of Di Nardo's re(:[?])view is a self-reflexive reality, suggesting that several narratives concerning the role of the reader as writer exist. Therefore, the subject is interpolated into a subconceptualist narrative that includes art as a paradox. One is led to yet another decision – that between the neocultural paradigm of discourse and precapitalist desituationism. While initially disturbing, there is some succor in Di Nardo's roundabout method of asserting that the illusion of free will is itself an illusion.

MICHAEL KEOUGH

- C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >
- B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > S. Ho > A. Di Nardo > L. Mccoy >
- M. Keough > M. Flynn

This guy LOVES prefixes: neo-, sub-, de-, post-, pre-. Instead of just talking about stuff, he talks about stuff that's newer, or under, or not, or after, or before stuff. Keough, can't you just tell me straight?

Ok but I'll try to talk about the stuff that I think Keough was trying to get at, and then I'll tell you what I think about that.

Oh wait, I can't do that. I just looked up (googled) the terms desituationism and postsemantic and I probably won't be able to understand those terms without doing a lot of extra reading, and I'm not sure that I'm interested enough in Keough's review to do that.

UNLESS. Is it possible, that by including these specific terms, Keough was hoping to drive the reader to google them, leading the reader to articles where many of his chosen words were employed, in similar syntactic formats, but with a totally different meaning? Some examples (you may want to reread Keough's review to see similarities):

Marx uses the term 'precapitalist narrative' to denote a dialectic whole. But if the posttextual paradigm of discourse holds, we have to choose between subpatriarchial capitalist theory and Lacanist obscurity. Foucault promotes the use of cultural desituationism to attack capitalism. Lacan uses the term 'cultural desituationism' to denote a self-supporting paradox.¹

If the subconceptualist paradigm of discourse holds, we have to choose between deconstructivist narrative and deconstructivist narrative. It could be said that the subject is interpolated into a subconceptualist paradigm of discourse that includes art as a whole.²

¹ Mckinney, Janelle. Discourses of Defining Characteristic : Cultural Desituationsim in the works of Joyce

² Objectivism in the works of Rushdie

Yeah, I just realized that the website of the second reference here has a subtitle "Concensuses of Meaninglessness." I think Keough was making a point. Either that or it's a case of creative plagiarism to sound profound. While I did enjoy the Urban Dictionary entry I found after googling the author's name, I gotta say that I don't know if this whole thing was worth it.

FLYNN'S KEOUGH

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >

B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > S. Ho > A. Di Nardo > L. Mccoy >

M. Keough > M. Flynn > N. Middleton

The review by heroine Maggie Flynn nudges along the suggestion that there is a hunger in audiences for a succinct and plainspoken review hero - anew, we're lead along a labyrinth where each turn further confuses the origins and hopeful epilogue for those who follow.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR NOEL MIDDLETON

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >

- B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > S. Ho > A. Di Nardo > L. Mccoy >
- M. Keough > M. Flynn > N. Middleton > B. Clarke

As one of the later entrants in this marathon of

reviews of reviews of reviews,

I'm beginning to feel like this project also has no beginning, no end. This project is like the labyrinth you mention, Mr. Middleton, and apparently it is like the work of Christopher Williams, whose exhibition seems to have dropped out of people's consciousness somewhere around Arianne DiNardo's contribution. I'm sorry, Mr. Middleton but, like us, Mr. Williams has also become lost in the depths of this critical maze. It is 11:48 p.m. on Friday, February 10 and I can not be your review hero. We are like modern day Theseuses (Thesei?) and this project has become the Minotaur. But, will we slay this beast and make our escape? Fuck, I hope so.

ENTROPY: A REVIEW

C. Hosea > C. Leonard > W. Brisco > J. Wren > A. O'Reilly > S. Indrisek >
B. Troemel > T. Edmonson > Z. Powers > S. Ho > A. Di Nardo > L. Mccoy >

B. Froemer S T. Eamonson S Z. Powers S S. No S A. Di Wardo S L. McCoy S M. Keough S M. Flynn S N. Middleton S B. Clarke S L'Escalier Bill, there is absolutely nothing to respond to here… However, I will try to rectify things in the best way I can.

After receiving the invitation to collaborate on what is basically a chain letter and noticing that Jacob Wren had quickly agreed to participate - no doubt picturing in my mind's eye Jacob glued to his computer in Japan briskly responding to everything that came his way - I was intrigued, but also a bit ambivalent, , and slightly paranoid. Feeling like a cog in the post-fordist meaning making machine of a youthful contemporary art daily like crowd - a very loose ensemble of youngish people who too easily employ the (free) enthusiastic intellectual labour of other youngish cultural producers (documentation photographers, artists, and copy writers) - who produce what amounts to an endless series of stylish referents, which then inevitably involves a future cashing in of cultural capital due to the sweaty networking logic at work.¹

As but one editorial member of a new magazine (we have yet to even publish our first issue), who had briefly corresponded with Danielle, it seemed strange to be invited to take part in such a thing. I am no longer or part of a discernibly community

Facebook account might reflect). I am also not part

¹ I felt the same ambivalence. My address was not included in the invitation to contribute to the project, perhaps by mistake. Beside my collaborators, Lorna and Jon (Yuki was not included as well), I know Jacob Wren, and now, Danielle. I have to say that it took me a while to piece this thing together. At first, I thought this was some kind of formal exercise that would end up producing another gimmicky conceptual project. I was also reluctant to participate, because once more, it would mean writing in English. My first reflex was to focus on the list of potential contributors that appeared in the email. Do I have enough information here to map out a scene, or extrapolate a fiction about a group of friends that might have collaborated in the past? Most of them seem to be related to Danielle, as a preliminary research confirmed that some contributed to her magazine Palimpsest. I then started

76

of a so called "anti-blog" artworld-sneering-"make your own life"-post-r e a s ul gs-self-exploiting² -"the point is to make your complicity in the brutal art system self-evident" . My conceit is that I have only just chosen to use a writing style that could be interpreted as . I have no idea why there is an appeal being made to Christopher Williams³ works. My main preoccupation at the moment is . What

could be more uncool?

studied too long and too in depth would result in you aging a good ten years beyond your true age4.

I along with my co-editors have yet to prove ourselves in the publishing world, we have only begun to seek out possible funding options.

(is this not the procedure of choice nowadays? Create a system, then worry about filling it later, after all being able to say you run a magazine seems preferable to the

googling individual names, and in some instances, I found personal websites of young artists that, at face value, shared stylistic commonalities. Most of them don't live in Montreal. Willy Brisco, whom I heard about, but don't know personally, is studying at the Stadelschule in Frankfurt (got that bit from Facebook). And why would I want to participate in this particular network when my connection to Montreal is weak and I have no relationship to the rest of Canada whatsoever? Can I benefit from the symbolic capital calculated in a currency I don't know? I'm still not convinced with this chain letter format. Its basic assumption is that someone who has an interesting practice can make an interesting response to whatever comes his or her way. The truth is, most artists have a very narrow field of interest, which they develop into their practice over the years. So it's possible that an artist has nothing interesting to say about things he or she is not already interested in.

² Being a typical ambitious young artist, I dutifully accumulate my symbolic capital through relentless networking. Yes, it's true that we all work for free way too much. I blame this on the Germans. This awareness for the func-

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embarrassing chatter at openings and parties as to "what you do" as an artist) 5 .

However, on the flip side of the invitation, fickle assumptions aside, I have only heard good things about Craig as an artist, and I have also perused Danielle's website and I am quite impressed with the level of sophistication demonstrated in the publications she has made. I am a big supporter of anyone who starts a gallery on his or her own, as Danielle has done. I appreciate Christopher Williams' work and found something quite endearing about the weird blog entry that formed the basis for this writing assignment. I liked the thrust of the conclusion: a bunch of monads working together producing exciting effects when temporarily corralled together. It made me realize something new about Williams' practice - that as a group of "life-long learners" if we all put our minds to it, we too can decipher the meaning of his photographs, a general intellect! On a basic level, to paraphrase an author I cannot remember the name of "the only thing worse than being exploited is not being exploited at all".

*

Michael Eddy was the first to introduce Craig Leonard's work to me, but actually, in fact it was Robert Knowles who described to me a show of Craig's that was presented

tion of networking used to be the forte of the Köln intellectuals. It was what made them cool. May I point out that Williams was networking with the very same people in Köln only a little bit older than me.

³ I saw Christopher Williams last week at an opening. Actually I spotted him from a distance. I didn't approach him. We met very briefly a few years ago but I don't think he'd remember me. It was the opening of a massive Claes Oldenburg show at Mumok. Williams must have flown in from Düsseldorf to pay tribute to the aging master. I don't really remember what he was wearing.

⁴ The Christopher Williams review is not exceptional, nor exemplary, perhaps it is typical of a certain way of approaching art criticism these at the Khyber in Halifax around 2003.

It sounded great according to Robert's typically enigmatic and very British way of talking about things. Later, Jeremy Stewart would also talk about Craig's work, but in a different register, much more leaning towards what I detected as an earnestness and matter of fact approach. The story was about how Craig was doing a project in Cuba, researching underground pro democracy libraries. Jeremy mentioned that Craig had undergone a marathon session of questioning by the Cuban authorities and had been, in effect, arrested.

Craig had chosen to undertake research in a country where that might actually prove politically harmful. This was far from the reality and enclave that my peers and I found ourselves in, where the act of research could never result in oppressive behaviour from government officials. A softer form of control is at work in North American research enclaves, something more to do with

days through the format of the blog: mixing the appropriate ingredients, a fragment of an interview, first person narrative, a pinch of belle-lettrist cynicism. Lately, I have been trying out to mix different styles of writing in my texts, with a varying degree of success. I think this started when I realized I was cutting out a certain level of content while producing more academic papers. This content was, for the most part, anecdotal, as it related to the context in which I was producing these texts. I have also been wondering about the notion of addressing directly an audience. The truism "we are preaching to the already converted" has reactionary overtones. Obviously, we cannot know wholly who is this audience, but when we go through the exercise of pinning down the people – close and distant – that read our texts, or see our shows

chance to experience Christopher Williams' work in the flesh. However, when I see the documentation of his exhibitions, in particular the permutated series "18 leçons sur la société industrielle," I can speculate that he is addressing his work foremost to his peers, other artists, art historians,

79

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monopolies and capitalist accumulation. Christopher Williams would know a thing or two about this safer way, when he claims that Zwirner gallery is still a place where big ideas can occur.

In 2004, while finishing his studies at NSCAD, Michael Eddy made a project, something I see to be a kind of peer-based antecedent to Craig's work where both artists have engaged in the economy of gift giving. Michael's piece was in a way "completed" with Craig's help. In a smart, provocative and hilarious "process" piece, Michael painted a bird's eye view of the Fuji photo headquarters (based on photographs of the building). He had elected to pursue photography classes during his art school career,

travelled on the bus with this large painting, first from the NSCAD campus all the way to the UPS located in a suburban business park in order to ship it to Ontario. After hitchhiking from the Maritimes through to Ontario, he then met up with Craig to deliver

and then to the collectors that will perhaps purchase one of his images. Williams' art is perhaps the perfect embodiment of an artwork that fills the paradoxical goal of being both a commodity to be collected, a trigger for an aesthetic experience and a site of knowledge. The amount of energy and precision that the artist invests in mediating the meaning of his work speaks about this hyper-self consciousness of the context of receivership. But another aspect of this equation has to be taken into consideration. When you enter a commercial gallery like David Zwirner's, you are not the targeted audience, but filling up the part of an extra, because the gallery needs bodies in its empty vessel to perform the ritual of display. The publicness of art is then a lure. The art historian Stefan Germer once wrote a text in which he was complaining about "kontext art" selling out at the end of the the painting to the Canadian headquarters of Fuji located in Mississauga (Craig was there to help document). Upon meeting the receptionist, Michael tried to convince her to take his painting as a donation, the offer was rejected, and Michael was left having to deal with the painting once again. It was decided that the painting should be returned to Halifax, and a few years later, Craig asked Michael if he could have it. I am bringing this up as a way to speak about Craig, loops, movement, friendships, collaborations, beginnings and ends, and the conceptual ethos of following an idea to its logical conclusion⁶.

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, this, beside its supposedly critical or political content. However, he described his alienating experience of entering a commercial gallery exhibiting this type art (in Cologne I suppose) and realizing that the works displayed were not addressed to him, as a member of an undefined public, but to a private individual aiming to participate indirectly in a network for which the work was one, metonymical fragment. It is perhaps with this complex split in mind that I would like to start thinking about context and audience, even though we don't have an art market in Canada.

⁵ I agree with you that we have seemingly put the cart before the horse. But the way I understood this first step toward our magazine had more to do with a way of consolidating our enthusiasm. Otherwise, we would not have put so much time and energy into producing this edition

, because a lot of our find a right way of integrating this

ideas already coalesced.

81

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Robert S

project within our everyday existence, and be pragmatic about it. I am perhaps overly optimistic or naïve, but I believe that just throwing yourself into something, without at first having all of the solutions, is a first step toward making it happen.

⁶ I am not familiar with Craig Leonard's work beside what I could gather on his website, and what Jon has written about here in this review, but I did meet him briefly in Halifax, during a symposium that accompanied the exhibition Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada (1965-1980), where I was acting as one of the contributing curators. Craig gave a paper on a topic that escapes me at the moment. It was my first time in Halifax. I went there to be immersed in the past for one long weekend, as the conference dealt with NSCAD's con-



ceptual period. My most striking memory of this stay was the art community there. At a dinner party, someone told me: "when we have conflicts, we try to resolve them on the spot. Otherwise, life would be unbearable here..."

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BEGINNING NO END