The
BANK
SHOW

HITO STEYERL
黑特·史德耶尔

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前言 / **PREFACE**

"我深信，与以往任何时候相比，现实生活都比人们所能想象的虚构故事要离奇得多。因此报道的形式就不得不也变得更疯狂、更离奇。否则就会不够'纪实'，就会辜负所发生的事件。"

一黑特•史德耶尔与罗拉•柏翠丝的访谈，摘自《艺术论坛》2015年5月刊。

我们生活在荒诞的时代。而且这种荒诞怪异随着观察技术的更新繁荣变得愈发触手可及。曾经流行的看法是信息过度饱和令人昏聩麻木，然而晚期资本主义不断演变地更高更强，导致一些颇为独特的感性经验开始萌芽，继而爆发，但这些新兴能量却依然被执迷新事物的艺术界刻意忽视。在这个视觉艺术屈服于"热门转发"、语言为"广告业的虚假制度"服务（弗兰科•贝拉尔迪）、微信买卖文体转化为实际利润并形成独特风格的时代，我们批判性思维的方式和文化生产的手段实在不得不与时俱进。

如果说首期THE BANK SHOW: Vive le Capital（银行展：资本万岁）基于对这样一种现实的接受，即当代艺术目前只能在全球资本衡量之下的世界中扎根运作，那么此次"续集"则聚焦一位以独特的方式驾驭当代生活崎岖地貌的艺术家。而她的实践创作往往与现实太过相关。在本次展览核心装置《Liquidity Inc.（流动（资本）公司）》2014年完成之初，其主人公雅克布•伍德的命运已令人感到莫名熟悉:越战中成为遗孤被收养，后进入雷曼兄弟从事金融工作，在2008年的金融危机中丢了工作后又以参加综合格斗谋生；上一次全球经济危机似乎已被尘封于历史之中。然而当你坐在特意为影像作品搭建的、以北斋巨浪为灵感设计的坡道上时，紧急融资复苏希腊的号召刚在众筹平台上募集了一百九十三万欧元资金（此举以未达到设定目标金额而失败），而中国股市的暴跌则为全球金融的未来预期平添不安。

《流动（资本）公司》的主线围绕着当今全球最反复无常的两大力量一金融市场和气候一展开，描摹在其淫威之下的个人境遇，同时也毫无顾忌地探讨抽象概念、历史事件（雅克布生于越南战争期间的身世背景和片中提及的70年代反战激进组织"地下气象员"）以及地缘动态之间在更广范围中的关联。她的实践方式变通、机巧、幽默，正是后网络重度图像化当代文化的鲜明特征。诚如李小龙在视频开头所劝诫的那样（"如水而行吧，我的朋友"），流动性的精髓便是学会变通，不论是搏斗、证券管理，还是在揣摩当代种种现实意义的时候。当众多艺术实践者依旧谨言慎行，让静止的艺术物件背负太多引申含义，或以太过严谨考究的方法处理有明确范围限定的话题时，黑特•史德耶尔已经在这种分秒流变的文化语言中游刃有余、纵情逸乐。

也因此，除了展出两件与"银行展"概念契合的作品一《流动（资本）公司》和《STRIKE》（致敬对象是Sergei Eisenstein 1925年关于俄国革命前夕工人罢工事件的同名电影)，本次THE BANK SHOW续集的一个重要组成部分是艺

术家的写作：从出版过的论文与访谈中被甄选一小部分，通过与"狩猎"（顾虔凡，张涵露，刘倩兮）以及《艺术论坛》中文网的合作，首次译成中文出版。此系列包括艺术家影响深远的论文一《为坏图像辩护》（In Defense of the Poor Image, 2009），《艺术的政治：当代艺术及其后民主转向》（Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy, 2010），《地球的垃圾邮件：从再现中抽身》（The Spam of the Earth: Withdrawal from Representation, 2012）， 以及她与独立记者、奥斯卡获奖纪录片《第四公民》导演罗拉•柏翠丝最新的访谈录。在这段发人深省的对话中，史德耶尔注意到，柏翠丝的这部追踪爱德华•斯诺登揭露NSA（美国国家安全局）监视丑闻事件发酵而摄的影片似乎"在某种意义上存在着编造/欺骗：所有参与者聚在一起创造了这个事件、这个故事，还创作了多种叙事工具与手段；与此同时又被巨变挟裹其中。" 然而这种"编造"又似乎是我们驾驭当下现实的唯一途径—即时编造叙事并对其进行后期编辑。

言至于此，我们到底如何在缺乏必要的历史距离的情况下，批判性地应对有一定深远影响的事件和境况？史德耶尔的写作方式已经为艺术家以及艺术写作者同行们开辟了许多脑洞。此外，虽然她令人信服地预测了外星人在未来极有可能只会通过垃圾图文(spam)理解人类文明—鉴于spam完全以压倒性优势遮蔽了我们更为文雅的成就，她的种种预测依旧稳实地扎根于眼前无法逃避的现实。在这个现实中，"嗑着廉价抗抑郁药，带着改良身体器官"的各色男女组成"超资本主义的梦之队"。艺术界时常陷入对某个乌托邦、来世、或另一种未来（最好能让我们逃脱资本主义的魔掌）的深深渴求，仿佛它们是某种能为意识形态排毒的鲜榨果汁， 却不曾意识到我们甚至生产不出多少达标的、有趣的针对当今局势的创作实践。 "他们怎么能那么无聊？" 史德耶尔的质疑提醒了我们，即使当下我们只能在图像中行动，即使我们只有在被迫参与资本主义体系之中才称得上"存在"，这样的世界里依然有着辽阔未知的领域，而那里承载着发现新的艺术以及政治话语的希望。

文/王辛

观察者的技术

黑特•史德耶尔(Hito Steyerl) 对话劳拉•珀特阿斯(Laura Poitras)

"技术已然让我们感到出其不意，而它所开拓的空间则空荡地刺眼。"齐格弗里德•科拉考尔(Siegfried Kracauer)曾这样写道。这位伟大的德国电影理论家并不只是在感叹机械化世界中生活的匮乏或是疏离，他同时也表达出一种欣喜，以及对于技术带来的可能性的期待，尤其是对电影这一可供玩味、发现不凡体验与视野的空间。劳拉•珀特阿斯（Laura Poitras）和黑特•史德耶尔（Hito Steyerl）的电影与视频有着类似的令人兴奋之感；她们对所使用的全新技术、设备、以及巨大的信息场进行着探索。但她们所揭露的秘密和调查的事件又往往骇人听闻——无论是爱德华•斯诺登所揭露的美国政府对其公民进行的大规模秘密监控，还是以一种半开玩笑但又极其严肃的方式教我们如何躲避无人轰炸机。艺术论坛特邀获得今年奥斯卡最佳纪录片奖的珀特阿斯，和正在纽约艺术家空间举办个展的史德耶尔，请她们就电影制作、认知观念、信息披露、数据加密、以及图像的希望和危险等话题交换各自的看法。

黑特•史德耶尔, 如何遁形：一个太他妈说教的教学片.MOV 文件
2013, 高清视频投影仪 (彩色，有声，14分钟), 工地环境，尺寸可变

Laura Poitras: 上次我们俩碰到是两年前了——正好在我收到爱德华•斯诺登的邮件之前。当时你正在为威尼斯双年展创作项目，是有关监控和无人轰炸机的。

Hito Steyerl: 我们当时还一起头脑风暴了一下。所以几周之后，斯诺登就联络你了？

LP: 是的。现在回想起来，你的项目为斯诺登所揭露的事情埋下了许多伏笔。

HS: 我做了个视频，叫做"如何遁形：一个太他妈说教的教学片.MOV 文件"（A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File, 2013），所讨论的就是如何在被监控的时代里保持不可见的状态。它首映之后四天，斯诺登的新闻就出来了，非常惊人。我到处能看到斯诺登。而且我知道你在其中有牵涉和参与。

LP: 许多人觉得有关消失的想法是纯粹的妄想。但是如果你的住处就是无人机的潜在目标，那么在视野中遁形或者躲避监控就不仅仅是理论上的情况。而会成为真实迫切的问题。

HS: 确实如此。事实上，你当时对遁形的想法是设计一款手机App，可以在无人机靠近时发出警告。

不过问题在于我不知道自己该如何弄出这么个东西。但确实你在这方面已经有很丰富的策略和技术了。这令我肃然起敬，因为你知道许多关于数据加密的知识，以及使用永远不联网的空气间隔计算机，诸如此类。

LP: 在斯诺登出现之前，我已经不得不设法解决信息安全的问题了。那时候我长期跟拍雅各布•亚佩巴姆(Jacob Appelbaum)，他正在中东各地训练激进分子、传授通信安全的技术。那些都是很敏感的原始素材——涉及的内容包括埃及抵抗运动，还有突尼斯的局势等等——所以我们必须非常小心，因为其中有许多人不想在镜头前暴露身份。

不过我之所以喜欢你的"如何不被看见"，包括你整体上的创作的原因是，你将纪实和虚构的元素混合的策略，还配上极其俏皮的叙事——被监控的威胁，还有这种近乎玩闹的规避它的方式。所以我很好奇：当你开始构思一件作品时，它是怎样推进的？你会不会意识到："这个想法从这里开始"？
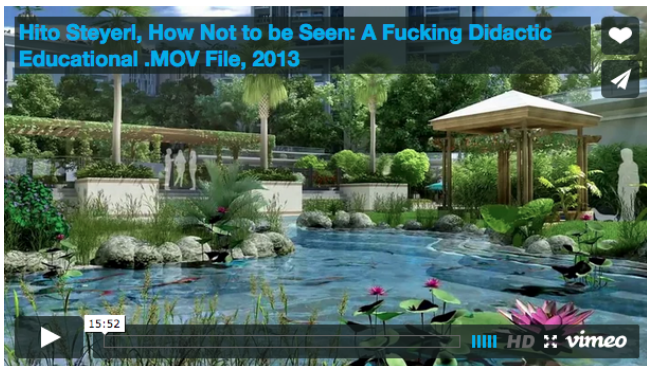
黑特•史德耶尔, 如何遁形：一个太他妈说教的教学片.MOV 文件, 2013

HS: 在"如何不被看见"中，起初是我得知了一个有关叛乱者如何躲开无人机而不被监测到的真事。无人机所能看到的是运动动作和人体热量。所以这些人就会披一张反光材质的塑料布，并且往自己身上浇水来降低体温。当然，矛盾的是，整片区域都充斥着明亮的单色的塑料布，人眼清晰可见，但操控无人机的计算机却看不见。而且人们会在这些塑料布下面看书，直到无人机飞走。他们是特地带着书来的。对他们来说这是个绝好的可以学习并且放松的机会：无人机的阴影变成了某种大学。

那你呢？关于上一部电影，我记得当时我们聊过，它会是一部概述检举揭发人/告密者的片子，而且你已经有很多素材了。然后突然间事件发生，整个项目也完全改变。

LP: 斯诺登会突然之间联络我正是我热爱自己工作的一个原因，它让我能与周围的世界发生对话，而且我真的从来都想不到会有爱德华•斯诺登的存在。我想象力的局限，比起我去现场拍摄时遇到的事件，要无聊得多。所以是的，这个事件很明显地改变了（原计划的）叙事。不过真实电影 (vérité filmmaking) 的制作，以及对当下进行时态所进行的纪录，就是会跟随事物的展开、受故事的线索牵引。这有时相当不确定，也很可怕，但是那样才会有戏剧性。当碰到斯诺登这样显然有着极强引力的事件时，要转移重心其实并不困难。

HS: 然后你碰到了斯诺登，而且在香港的酒店房间里进行了拍摄。这之后你又是怎样工作的？

LP: 在香港，我只是尽我所能地做纪录，并不知道之后会发生什么。通过在那里的拍摄，我处于一种震惊的状态——震惊于这些机密文件，震惊见到了斯诺登，而且发现他竟然如此年轻以及他所面临的危险，震惊于我们很清楚自己的所为会惹怒这个世界上最有权有势的人，以及之后毫无疑问会引起的激烈反应。

格伦[格伦·格林华德Glenn Greenwald]和我都曾目睹过在切尔西•曼宁(Chelsea Manning)身上所发生的一切，以及媒体如何打造出将她病态化的叙述。我们担心类似的事情也会再次发生。但是斯诺登的显著区别在于，他决定好了要挺身而出。他已经做好决定不隐瞒自己的身份。当他第一次这样告诉我的时候，我吓坏了——我觉得这等同自杀。那之前，我一直以为他希望作为一个匿名的消息来源。不过现在回想起来，这样做非常聪明，也非常冒险——他清楚自己没法保持匿名，所以他决定率先公开自己的身份。当我提出想与他会面并做拍摄时，他表示反对，因为他不想让整件事情变成他的故事，还因为如果有人试图阻挠相关报道，那我们都在一起的话就太危险了。但是我说服了他，理由是对人们来说要理解他的动机是非常重要的。

离开香港回到柏林之后，我知道自己有义务对这些文件予以报道。斯诺登在给我的第一封邮件里是这么说的：无论我发生了什么情况，你要保证将这些资料反馈给公众。因此我必须这么做。不过我并不是一个作家——我是说，尽管我一直为平面媒体供稿，但是我清楚自己真正做出贡献将会是以电视记者和电影制作人的身份。

HS: 但我不认为完全是这样的，因为你添加了许多非常重要的贡献——在本身就非常精湛的"第四公民（Citizen Four, 2014）"之外。我认为你真正的成就之一是找到了如何处理这类信息的方法，你的报道方式，以及信息如何被存储、保护、传播、编辑、检查……等等。保留和传播信息，以及审时度势，这整个过程是一种艺术。而且我认为，相较于之前泄密事件的处理方法，比如维基解密来说，你的处理方式很新颖并且思考得极其周到。你是怎么想到这些的？你是怎么制定规则的？

劳拉•珀特阿斯，
第四公民，2014，高清视频，彩色，有声，114分钟   Photo: Praxis Films

LP: 正如你所说的，当时有许多决定摆在我和格伦手里。我们是有所借鉴的。格伦和我都密切地关注过维基解密。格伦还写过相关文章。我也大量拍摄过朱利安[朱利安•阿桑奇Julian Assange]。而且我们看到他们一些相当卓越的成就，尤其是善用媒体合作伙伴来进行多个国际网点的信息发布。在过去，因为政府对美国新闻机构的施压，有些事会被抑制。但是如果好几家不同的国际新闻机构都有相同的信息，那抑制就会变得困难得多。

我们也一样跑了许多家新闻机构，但我对于资料非常小心谨慎。我不信任任何人。我不希望卫报那样的事故重蹈覆辙——他们发布了一个密码，使得未经编辑的国务院电报内容得以泄露。这实际上是身为记者的失误，而不是维基解密，是记者没能保护好密码。

因为国家安全局[NSA]的资料非常敏感，我觉得新闻机构对每件事的处理都必须基于具体事件的基础，只有与事件相关联的一系列文件才能被共享。而这样做有利有弊。缺点就是报道本身会更慢，有不少批评针对这一点，而我也确实同意这样的批评。我也希望自己可以以更快的速度进行报道。但是当斯诺登来联络的时候，我的身后可没有一整个编辑部。我必须亦步亦趋建立关系，尽管我保持着绝对的独立性——我与许多新闻机构有自由撰稿的协议，但都是以一

个一个的故事来展开工作的，而且不保证独家，这样能让我有灵活的安排。当我在华盛顿邮报上发表了有关"棱镜"的故事之后[PRISM（棱镜）是NSA搜集网络交流数据机密项目的代码]，我开始与德国的Der Spiegel（明镜周刊）以及纽约时报合作，而格伦在为卫报工作。但是格伦和我认为，斯诺登是将我们当作记者一独立记者一对待托付信任的。他并没有将自己托付给明镜，或是卫报，或是纽约时报。因此我们也不打算把所有的文档移交给媒体，因为我们曾经目睹过事件恶化，尤其是卫报公布密码的事情。

HS: 这就意味着由你来做决定，OK，这一部分文档资料我打算和一个具体的新闻机构进行合作，然后我们一起操作那个具体的选题。那样就变成了某种美学决定。

LP: 不，那只是发表的策略。它与美学无关。

HS: 我不同意。它确实是一个关乎形式的决定，与如何组织信息有关，与信息的形式有关。在安全层面上而言当然很重要，但也事关保护你的自主权，作品的自主权。它也同样与审美的自主性相关。回到我们第一次见面，我们有一系列谈话是关于美国无人侦察机在土耳其本土协助土耳其的战斗机，有意思的是两年后你和《明镜》一起发表了与那些袭击相应的NSA的文件，文件所显示的正是传达给土耳其空军的信号站，要求派出飞机来执行空袭。就好像你和斯诺登突然间提供了一些我原本以为会永远被隐藏起来的东西：一种视角，俯瞰的视角。

LP: 是的，但你才是那个围绕着信息创作艺术作品的人，这非常不一样。

HS: 好吧，你所运用的技术中很明确的一点就是你观察纪实性的观点，这在你去香港拍摄之前就已经广泛使用了——比如在也门，等等。我总是对主角与他小儿子在黎明祈祷的场景叹为观止。你是怎么进到那个房间去的？

此外还有你的编辑技术，是在信息加密技术上的扩展——选择的技术——以及让资料安全和传播信息的方法。不仅仅是让它们被公开、泄露或揭示，而是真正地为它们找到新的形式和回路。我觉得这是一种还没被如此进行定义过的艺术，但它确实关乎美学。它是一种形式。

这不仅在你的情况中是一个富有创意的挑战，而且总体上也是如此。比方你有一个数据库。这就可以追溯到维基解密的情况，数据库只是一座信息的宝藏库，而且必须创造出一种叙事来浏览、操纵数据。什么样的故事能够适应科技的新属性，以及数据作为档案的宏大性？

新媒体理论学者列夫·曼诺维奇(Lev Manovich)写过数据库。他回顾了季嘉·维尔托(Dziga Vertov)的电影"持摄影机的人（Man with a Movie Camera, 1929）"，并聚焦在他的剪辑工作——即如何在拍摄素材的数据库中遴选，而不是拍摄工作上。但是——我经常在想到这个问题的时候想到你——在二十一世纪，编辑该如何工作？尤其是假如剪辑的人也是拿着相机、声音设备和

加密硬盘的人，就像你那样。她是一个设计出整套交流基础体系的作家。而且她是个女人，不是男的！维尔托的团队有好几个胶片卷轴。那些就是他们的档案。所以，现在不仅仅是叙述的问题，还有取舍运用，转译，要冒着严重的个人风险，还要躲避一大堆军事间谍。这是在新型的、不断拓展的电影制作领域中对透明度和不透明性的处理，而这必然要求能力、技巧上的拓展。

LP: 讽刺的是，被放到美国政府的监视名单上并且每次出入境都要受到询问，但却带来一个意料之外的结果一那就是我在规避国家政府盘查上变得更为聪明，而且也令我更坚韧。我已经作出了决定，我是不会被吓倒的。所以，从某种程度而言，当斯诺登的第一封邮件发送到我邮箱的时候，我对边境人员所提供的基本训练由衷感激。

有关于更宽泛的档案的问题，以及如何寻找意义，则我为即将在惠特尼美术馆所举行的个展而思考的问题之一。档案中有数量巨大的"新闻"以及政府滥用职权的证据，但它也开了一扇通往平行世界的窗口，那个平行世界在秘密之中运转，并挥纵着可观的全球权力。这里面有一整套文化、语言和世界观，绝非仅仅关乎事实。这是我目前的项目之一。

HS: NSA他们是怎么做的？他们如何管理自己的信息？

LP: 对他们来，说从海量的数据中提炼出叙述是一种挑战——他们每天接纳的信息节点数以亿计——而且他们对此并不擅长。他们会使用图标和一些视觉化的工具。例如，他们有一个项目叫作"藏宝图"（TREASUREMAP），通过一幅接近即时的地图反映出网络以及每一台与之相连的设备，以此来提供分析。我为惠特尼所创作的作品之一也会叫取名为"藏宝图"，它是一种颠覆性的反测绘。我认为NSA对数据收集方法的真正核心是回溯查询——如何依照事实看到叙述。这就是为什么他们想要"收集一切"，这自然也就违反了各种法律规定的基本原则与合理依据。这些违反包括了从监控名单到各种更为糟糕的滥用权力，例如运用元数据来锁定无人机的刺杀目标。
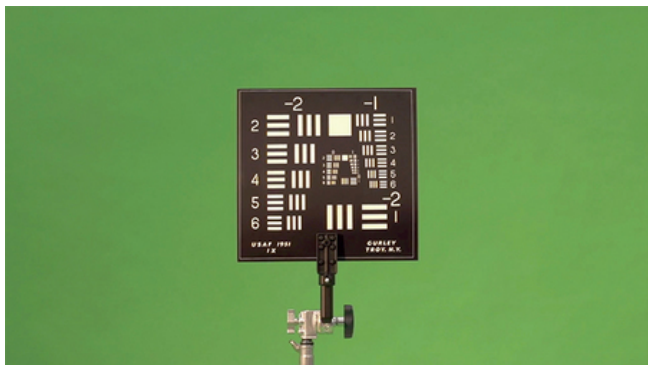
你在自己作品中的剪辑和归档方式是什么样的？

HS: 我始终参与剪辑过程。我认为剪辑一在电影与诸多其他其他活动中一是至关重要的。后期制作不是回顾性地处理内容，而是在制造内容本身。剪切编辑就是在产生意义。

戈达尔说过，剪辑可以是"和"或者"或"。那是传统的电影或者视频的剪辑工作。而现在的剪辑要面对更新的媒体和物理现实，而这些正在很大程度上成为媒介，成为一种更为扩展的活动，相应的就必须有能力在更广阔的领域中处理信息、创造意义。

现在被扩展的不是电影，而是拓展性剪辑、拓展性后期制作、以及在不同平台和形式之间的流通。我认为这是分析当代活动的至关重要的途径之一。

LP: 你独立完成剪辑，还是与剪辑师合作？

黑特•史德耶尔, 如何遁形：一个太他妈说教的教学片.MOV 文件
2013, 高清视频投影仪 (彩色，有声，14分钟), 工地环境，尺寸可变

HS: 我自己做剪辑，不过之后还有色彩校正、合成、3D建模和渲染。我的团队来做后面的大部分工作。但我也会看效果：当我创作"余波(After Effects)"时，几乎没有任何实时回放。有太多的信息要处理，在你看到最终成果前大概需要两小时或是更久。所以剪辑就被渲染所取代了。渲染、渲染、双眼盯着渲染的操作条。那感觉就好像是我自己一直在被渲染。

如果剪辑时没法真的看到最终成效，你会怎么做？你只好揣测。就是一种揣测式的编辑。你会试图猜想它看起来大概什么样，如果把关键帧放在这里或那里。然后会有很多算法，来替你完成这些猜测。

LP: 我在做这个有关NSA故事报道的时候，感到最为迷惑的方面之一是如何处理我自己所同时兼顾的各项职能角色。你是怎样定位自己身份的？

HS: 我从来没有受过要成为艺术家的训练，我也并不渴望被打伤这样的标签。对我来说那样很奇怪。但是艺术界已经成为了一种感知性产业——它表达着我们周围发生的紧张局势，从房地产业相关的一切到军事化、到赞助行为、到地缘政治、到普遍的工作条件以及不平等现象，从实习生到高资产净值人士等等。

LP: 我才读了你有关于计划重新设计大马士革国家博物馆的文章，里面对上述问题展开了精妙的讨论。你自己如何在博物馆和市场这些体制中游弋？你的作品也是按照版数进行出售的吗？

HS: 是的，我会做几个版本。不过合同中会注明作品可以以线上线下任何形式来进行流通。它并不受到版本的局限。

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劳拉•珀特阿斯，
第四公民，2014，高清视频，彩色，有声，114分钟　　　Photo: Praxis Films

LP: 你有没有想过制作一部故事长片？

HS: 没有，我知道在展示我作品的地方并不存在那种注意力。要做九十分钟长片的展映非常困难。人们只会放弃它。在电影院里就不同了。

LP: 电影最大的好处是你会有一群被俘/执迷的观众——在那九十分钟里你可以拥有他们。还会有爆米花，你喂他们吃、给他们舒服的座椅。你不用去担心他们来来回回进进出出。

我觉得在艺术界里，（作品）时间过长常常被认为是种越矩，因为那会强迫观众走出自己的舒适区域，让他们受到耐久力的测试。然而在主流电影里，耐久是绝对可以接受的。所以时长在这两个领域中接受度完全不同。当然了，沃霍尔是以优美的方式将之推向极限的一个极高明的例子。

HS: 作为艺术，"第四公民"毫不费力地做了一些许多艺术家努力想要达成的事情——它渗入了大众媒体的流通界。事实上，它是二十一世纪以来最有影响力也最有效的政治艺术作品，完全没有遵循任何所谓政治艺术的狭窄教条。而且尽管你是独立的，但电影发行却走商业渠道——这有助于将电影传达到最初的斯诺登视频所传达到的观众群。

LP: 我以商业的方式发行电影是因为我的作品确实属于叙事类电影的范畴。而我的叙述类型是通过对个体面对冲突的叙述来理解更大的主题，这种类型恰好与更为流行的电影是契合的。所以虽然我没有屈从地改变我的实践方式来迎合大众，或者做出妥协，但它却的确有着接触普罗大众的潜力。我喜欢这一点。电影之所以这么美好是因为它是一个平民化的媒介。"第四公民"其实符合好莱坞电影长久以来的传统类型，那就是个人对国家的对抗。

HS: 但同时我认为它在很多方面是前所未有的，因为这部电影感觉上就像是在记录自己的制作过程。报道事件本身是它所报道的内容。这电影与其说是一部作品，其实更像是对作品进行的记录。但这部电影某种意义上也似乎在欺骗：你们所有人聚在一起、创造了这个事件、这个故事、以及许多用来讲述故事的工具；与此同时你们被巨变挟裹其中。这件作品最终是一个开阔而复杂过程，里面包含着尚未完全展开的政治、司法、信息、美学和基础建设等各个层面。

LP: 我承认是有一些史无前例的方面——披露和报道的尺度、斯诺登对自己的曝光、反体制的记者获得了独家新闻、以及电影制作者成为了参与者。

驾驭这一切是很复杂的。比如，在我们即将要报道安格拉•默克尔之前我就知道，这会是条大新闻。而且，当然了，我会准备好带着摄像机去记录那一天。所以在两类事情之间就会产生一种奇怪的融合，一类是那些我可以预见会有影响力的、我会去记录的，另一类就是我无法预见的。

在你自己的作品中，你是否会觉得可能可以制造状况，或者是成为一种催化剂，然后对于那些与之相关的人有影响？

HS: 不，我不这么觉得。

LP: 但是你的叙述方式是在把玩时间与因果效用的。

HS: 嗯，对我来说一个主要的问题是处理现实生活的那种类型：怎样通过形式来处理它。传统的新闻报道有一整套标准的表达方式。其中一些很有必要，比如核查事实。不过我深信，现在比以往任何时候来看，现实生活都比人们所能想象的虚构故事要离奇得多。因此报道的形式就不得不也变得更疯狂、更离奇。否则就会不够"纪实"，就会辜负所发生的事件。

LP: 你认为什么样的形式能够与这种新的题材相匹配？

HS: 对我来说，整个问题的核心是图像生活与所谓的现实之间的关系，前者也曾被我们称之为再现。以前被称之为现实生活的这个东西已经被深刻地图像化。现在事关如何找到不同的流通形式，甚至是物理性地改变基础设施，因为现有的流通渠道都受政府和财团控制。

LP: 我今天去了艺术家空间(Artists Space)，你在那里布展的时候我看了一会儿，这种再现和现实之间的紧张关系是显而易见的。例如我看到"地下气象员(Weather Underground)"的时候很吃惊，因为它被演绎的方式非常搞笑、超现实。你知道那部有关这个组织的电影"地下(Underground, 1976)"吗？当地下气象员组织在四处躲避的时候，埃米尔•德•安东尼奥(Emile de Antonio)、玛丽•兰普生(Mary Lampson)和哈斯克尔•韦克斯勒(Haskell Wexler)拍摄了这部电影，真的是一部非常大胆的片子。

HS: 我大概二十年前看过而且非常喜欢。当然了，在今天，地下气象员成了

一个商业天气预报公司的网站。他们一度明确地表示名字的由来就是这个激进组织。

在我的视频中，来自地下气象员的播报者——由一个年轻姑娘和两位成人表演者扮演——站到舞台上播报天气，但所播报的天气奇怪地混杂着人造天气、政治天气、感情天气、各种灾难，渐入癫狂：气候变化、金融、地缘政治。到处都有风暴酝酿，不同的点点滴滴混杂成一次持续海啸。

LP: 这是个特别棒的比喻。在我走进去看的时候就击中了我——我整个人置身于那种蓝色之中。而且我有着非常情绪化的反应，我感到自己好像被冲刷成某种东西。

HS: 我其实是在试图营造一种感官，就好像整个空间都在水下。窗户上有蓝胶，让倾泻进来的光也都是蓝色的。

LP: 确实非常漂亮。还有那个弯曲的坐席——那是海浪吧？

HS: 是的，影片中还有一个反复出现的主题是葛饰北斋的波浪——我记得是叫"神奈川冲浪里"。那是十九世纪典型的日本木刻。富士山在背景里，船只在浪潮中摇摇欲坠晃来晃去。这个场景反复出现在电影里。

这件作品以雅各布•伍德(Jacob Wood)为灵感，他是一个金融咨询师，后来转行成MMA（混合武术）评论人。他将不同类型的流动性联系起来：以风险为基础的金融流动资产随时可以摇身成为一场完美风暴，还有李小龙所描述的优雅的流动性："要无形无状，就像水……水可以流动、或是渗透、或是滴注、或

黑特•史德耶尔，如何遁形：一个太他妈说教的教学片.MOV 文件
2013, 高清视频投影仪 (彩色，有声，14分钟), 工地环境，尺寸可变

是冲刷。如水而行吧，我的朋友。"这个视频装置位于一个半管状/波状/健身房状态的结构，小孩可以在那里玩耍，或者只要愿意人们也可以在那里睡觉。我觉得他们应该脱掉鞋子、弓向垫子，不过这在一个西方语境里，好像要求得太多了。

LP: 我想跟你讨论一下我正在给惠特尼的画册写一些基于斯诺登档案的东西——不是从新闻的角度来写，而是理论和艺术的角度。

HS: 是的，我想调查一下在土耳其发生的事情。在你给《明镜周刊》写的文章中，你详细地写了NSA与土耳其秘密警察之间的内部合作，以及所有手机通讯基本上都受到监听的事实。

而我碰到过那些手机通话在法庭上作为笔录被宣读的人：记者、政治家都因为所写的文章或者是在电话上的通讯而面临数年的监禁。这被视作是恐怖主义。在涉及新闻和舆论自由的方面，土耳其一直是出了名的糟糕。但现在我们看到了一条监控链：NSA为另一个国家的指控提供数据。现在我们知道这一切是如何运作的，这要感谢斯诺登先生。

LP: 通过档案，你会意识到一切都像是一盘棋。有些是我们佯装生活于其中的政治现实，然后另一些是表面之下的实际举动，在政治舞台之下的现实政治。我们已经在维基解密中看到过了。能够往里看看，并且真的看到深层国家势力运作，简直令人难以置信。

HS: 土耳其的情况证明了他们的国家如何受到西方监视的基础设施所支持，一种卓越的深层国家势力，并通过企业合作来升级。我一直坚信这些永远不会被透露出来。我在欧洲长大，而许多我的朋友——都是东欧人——都已经能够看到他们的特务/情报活动档案材料了，因为在共产主义垮台之后这些都解密了。但我们这些之前在西德的人一直没这样的机会。

在斯诺登泄出事件里，产生了真正的"之前"与"之后"。

LP: 你所建立的叙事，以及你对原始文献的反复使用，让我想到了亚历山大•克鲁格，想到了他的电影和写作——他对一种对立的或是替代性的公共领域的坚持，他将原始文献作为出发点进行叙事和批判。

HS: 是的，确实有不少手法是从克鲁格以及他与奥斯卡•内格特(Oscar Negt)的合作而来的。

LP: 在某种程度上，我们已经失去了那种艺术与电影之间密切的、批判性的互相交织的关系了。通常，当我去看当代艺术，并且是移动影像的作品时，我会感到失望，因为它看起来很简陋。有时候我看到画廊里的视频作品会想，哇，这个制作实在廉价。

HS: 那其实还好。制作廉价并不是问题。但问题是，他们怎么能那么无聊?

你作品中的图像质量又是怎样的情况呢？你追求什么样的制作价值？

LP: 我的作品从最早的16毫米到后来的数码标清，再到高清。但我并不认同数码和胶片机之间有什么巨大差异。我的作品更多地受到人和叙事的驱动，即使我所想要的图像是电影式的。

HS: 但是你拍摄时用的是小型的手持摄像机，不是吗？而且由你自己完成大部分的工作。在伊拉克和也门，你也都是自己完成的。而这种方式会决定你与被拍摄的人之间会有特殊的联系——那些为了能够拍摄而建立起来的联系。我觉得如果团队更大、装备更多、灯具更多的话，情况就会大相径庭。

LP: 是的，确实如此，在伊拉克和香港都是这样的。两次都是很危险的处境，所以单独工作更有利。我愿意承担风险，因为这是我的作品，但我不想让其他人也去承担同样的风险。

劳拉·珀特阿斯，誓言，2010，35mm，彩色，有声， 96分钟

LP: 我的下一个项目将在惠特尼，而且我目前还不太清楚那意味着什么。美术馆的语境和公众之间是什么样的关系？政治内容在美术馆语境当中如何受限？与电影院有什么区别？

HS: 我觉得就政治语境来说，你不必担心。你可以用余生去搞抽象绘画。你可以高枕无忧了。你有通行证。

LP: 我不太确定是否真是这样，或者我是否能指望这些。

HS: 另外一个完全相关的问题，则需要依据具体情况来逐案判断。那取决于你要在那里展示的内容，以及它们如何与具体的地点进行沟通。

LP: 我对于要做以装置为基础的作品很激动，因为它没有长篇叙事电影的约束。在叙事长片中，你不得不为了叙事某一环节的需要而只能选择那三分钟的镜头。我很期待从那样的形式中解放出来，可以让观众能够更多地参与到叙事体验中，可以交出一些选择权。我不会放弃叙述——仍然会有开头、中段和结尾，有揭示也有转折点——但是观众进入作品的方式会更有活力。

你是怎么设计在艺术家空间的那种展陈方式的，还有那些不同的元素？

HS: 总共有五件视频作品。然后在书店后面有个项目空间，我放了三个自己的讲座。所有这些讲座都以某种方式探讨作为战场的美术馆。其中一个讲座中，我揣测一种设置了障碍的舞台，无薪酬的艺术实习生们要向豪华陪审团推销项目想法。所以我们用FEMA的沙袋堆出一个路障来。你可以用它来阻挡洪水，或是躲避敌人的炮火。但是在书店里，这个东西还有一个功能，就是用作观看电视屏幕时的座椅。还有一个讲座是把幻灯片和动画投影到像是军事沙盘一样的东西上，就是那种士兵们用来绘制地形和分析视线的。我得知沙盘（sand-boxing）还是一个计算机安全里的术语，你用它来隔绝虚拟环境。所以这就更像是展览中的游乐场部分，因为那不是艺术，所以你可以去玩和做实验。

LP: 我当时以为是反过来的。因为那是艺术，所以你可以去玩去做实验。

HS: 不过你要知道，它不被认为是艺术会更好，因为那样你真的可以随心所欲。

LP: 那你明天要做的讲座是什么？

HS: 叫做"免税艺术（Duty Free Art）"，它是关于自由港艺术仓库的，一种域外的区域，与为大马士革国家博物馆做重新设计和其他在叙利亚的建筑项目相衔接。在维基解密上，有叙利亚统治者巴沙尔•阿萨德的行政机构与雷姆•库哈斯(Rem Koolhaas)的工作室OMA之间的电子邮件往来。当我联络OMA要求确认这些信息的真实性时，他们的回复真是天才："我们没法确认（这些电子邮件的）真实性。"试想一下，假如这是对于艺术作品不同版号的确认模板："我无法确认这件艺术品的真实性。"我们所知道的那个艺术界一定会炸裂的。

人们往往认为这些讲座是行为表演，但其实完全不是。那不是戏剧。那甚至不是个讲座。它更像是个谈话。这来自于我作为老师的教育活动。

对我来说，没有预算的时候我就会去做个谈话，因为特别便宜。我也乐在其中。它就像是一种财政紧缩的形式。你总是可以进退有余。你将自力更生。那个"自力更生(Left To Your Own Devices)"本来会是在艺术家空间这个展览的名称。向宠物店男孩致敬。可惜我给忘了！

LP: 这是个好题目——你改天得用用这个标题。

HS: 这题目也很适合描述你的工作：自力更生！

LP: 你的讲座似乎与你不断发展和重建的作品方式是一致的——作品里有一种自发的和瞬时性的方面。你从一个项目到下一个时，怎么持续研究？

HS: 比方说，在创作"十一月(November, 2004)"时，我经常重新审视那些材料。这个电影是关于我一个在库尔德斯坦被杀害的朋友的；差不多每两年我会进行一次更新，因为事情的发展非常戏剧化。

在你这个情况里，斯诺登会联系你并不是一个巧合。而我当时是突然之间面临这一切的。Andrea Wolf是我青少年时期的朋友，她大约1996年的时候加入了库尔德斯坦工人党PKK的女子军队。最后在一场与土耳其武装部队的战役之后，她被法外处决。我与这一切都毫无关系，而且我耗时很久才明白这其中情况。但是这定义了我现在的作品和生活。

LP: 关于这个事件，你有哪些没能解答的问题吗？或者没有抒发的感情？

HS: 嗯，这个案件还没有被澄清，而且可能永远不会澄清了。但我认为政治上，情形已经不同了。就如你在《明镜周刊》的文章中所写的，PKK现在或多或少是以美国为首的反对Daesh[ISIS]联盟中的一部分。那些过去被当作恐怖分子处决的女性武装分子，现在则成为争取性别平等的榜样。她们以巨大的勇气去争斗，但仍旧面临死亡。情况一直在转变，但是最为惊人的是在库尔德社会中某些地方的真正变化，他们向着基本的民主和探索性的自治在转变。在一场极端暴力的内战中，这是一个艰巨的、令人钦佩、而不断濒临危险的项目。

LP: 那么你想继续研究和更新这件作品吗？

HS: 并不是我想，而是它至今还没让我走出来。情况还在继续，也还在变化，而我觉得自己知道得还不够。也许有一天会的。

为坏图像辩护

"坏图像"（the poor image）是流动的副本。它们质量差、像素低。并随着传播速度的加快而折损。坏图像是图像的幽灵、是预览、缩略图、飘忽不定的想法、是免费分发和流通的图片，它们从慢速数码传输中挤压出来，被不断压缩、重制、撕裂、合成、从一处被复制粘贴到另一处。

坏图像是图像碎片，是AVI（多媒体文件格式）或JPEG（压缩的图片文件），在这个按像素高低分级和估价的表象阶级社会中，坏图像是落魄的无产者。它们被大量地上传、下载、分享、修改和编辑。它们舍弃图像质量换取可及性，将图像的展示价值变成了膜拜价值（cult value），将电影变成了视频片段，将沉思变成了消遣。由此，图像被从电影院和档案馆的穹顶中解放出来，并以其自身的物质性为代价涌进了数字化的不确定性之中。坏图像趋近于抽象，是一种形成于自身的视觉概念。

坏图像犹如原始图像第五代的非法私生子，血统不免令人起疑。它的名字被刻意地写错。它蔑视历史遗产、民族文化甚至版权。它像诱饵和索引一样被传递，又像是对其视觉前身的提示。它嘲弄数码技术的承诺。坏图像不仅时常被人轻视为模糊不清的图像，甚至人们会怀疑是否能够称其为图像。只有数码技术才能在第一时间生产这样破败的图像。

坏图像是当代屏幕的不幸，是视听制作的残片，是冲刷数码经济海岸的垃圾。它们在音像资本帝国的恶性循环中的加速和流通，印证了激烈的图像错位、偏移和置换 。坏图像在世界各地移动，如同商品或其拟像，礼物或赏金。他们散布快乐或死亡威胁，阴谋论或违禁品，反抗或愚蠢。坏图像展示出了不可多得、显而易见和难以置信——如果我们仍然希望去设法破译它。

低分辨率

在伍迪·艾伦（Woody Allen）的电影《解构哈里》（Deconstructing Harry）中，主角是失焦的。[1]这并非是技术问题，而是主角所患的一种疾病——他的形象始终是模糊的。由于角色在影片中的演员身份，这种疾病为他带来的首要困扰便是：他找不到工作。清晰度的缺失在这里成为了一个实质的问题。清晰的焦点成为一种舒适和特权的阶级定位，而失焦则降低了个人作为图像的价值。

然而，当代的图像等级并非仅仅倚仗清晰度的高低，同样重要的还有分辨率的高低。正如德国电影导演哈伦·法罗基（Harun Farocki）在2007年的一次著名的访谈中所说，看一下任何一个电子商店则不难发现这个评价体系在当下是如此明显。[2] 在图像的阶级社会中，电影院扮演着旗舰店的角色。就像旗舰店中对高端产品的营销是为了迎合高层次的消费环境。相比之下，更多负担得起的、通过DVD、电视和网络传播的衍生品，虽然是相同的图像，但却被看作是坏图像。

由墨西哥 普埃布拉市长组织的销毁盗版DVD的公共项目

显然，分辨率高的图像看起来更精彩、更吸引人、更逼真、更具魔力与魅力，或者也更让人害怕。可以说，它们更好（rich）。如今的用户界面也越来越多地迎合电影爱好者和唯美主义者们的品味，他们认定35毫米胶片是图像最基本可观性的保证。那些以电影胶片质量作为视觉重要性唯一标准的坚持，几乎不顾意识形态上的偏差而不断被赞颂。不论曾经还是现在，高端电影产品的消费都稳固地植根于民族文化、资本主义式的工作室制作、对多数男性天才的膜拜以及原版的系统中，因此在其本身的结构中时常显得保守——然而这些从来都不重要。对分辨率的迷恋仿佛是少了它即是对作者的阉割一样。对电影胶片的膜拜规范了主流甚至独立电影的制作。随着科技更新而来的图像更替和降级，好图像（rich image）也建立其自身的等级制。

复活 （作为坏图像的）

然而对好图像的坚持也会带来严重的后果。近期一次有关散文电影的会议上，一位发言者由于认定没有合适的投影仪而拒绝播放英国纪录片导演汉弗莱•詹宁斯（Humphrey Jennings）的作品。尽管会议安排了完全符合标准的DVD和音频播放器，观众们也只好凭空想象影片中的画面。在这个例子中，看不见的图像或多或少是有意为之，并基于审美的诉求。但是更多地是源于新自由主义政治的结果。二十甚至三十年前，新自由主义对媒体生产的调整开始慢慢淹没非商业化的形象，这使得人们几乎看不到实验电影和散文电影。因为这类作品在影院中流通播放的费用昂贵，而如果在电视上播放则会被电视观众所忽略。因此，它们不仅渐渐淡出影院，也逐渐从公众视野中消失。一直以来，散文视频和实验电影的大部分内容是不可见的，完整的影片始终留给电影博物馆或电影俱乐部那些寥寥无几的放映机会，在按其原始的分辨率播放之后，便再次消失在不见天日的档案库中。

这种变化显然与新自由主义激进化进程中将文化作为商品的概念相关，也与电影的商业化及其向多极性散播，以及独立电影制作的边缘化相关。同时与全球媒体产业的重组和某些国家和地区视听产业的垄断亦有密不可分的关联。这样一来，抵抗性的和不遵从习俗的视觉材料表面上消失了，却转为地下的档案和收藏，只在那些互信的机构或个人之间以非法的翻录录像带的形式传播。这些录像带数量极其稀少，传播仅仅依靠朋友和同行之间的口口相传。然而，随着网络视频在线观看的普及，这种局面开始发生巨大的改变。数量越来越多的稀有资料重新出现在公众平台，有一部分经过了精心编排（比如Ubuweb），而有些仅是简单的堆放（如YouTube）。

如今，网上大概能找到至少二十部克里斯•马克（Chris　　Marker）的散文电影。你如果想看他的回顾展，自己便可以制作。但是对坏图像的使用不只是简单的下载：你可以把这些文件保存下来以便日后再看。如果认为有必要甚至可以对它们进行编辑和修善。处理后的结果则会继续进入流通。许多快被遗忘的杰作的不清晰多媒体文件（AVI）在半公开的点对点（P2P）平台上交换；从美术馆用手机偷录的视频在YouTube视频网站上传播；艺术家作品的放映版DVD被出售。[3]大量的先锋电影、散文电影或非商业电影以坏图像的形式复活了——无论是否如它们所愿。
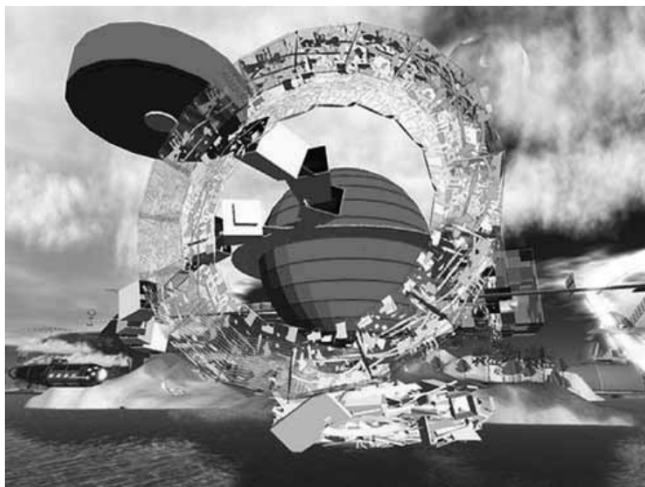
克里斯•马克在《第二人生》这个游戏中的家，2009年5月29日

私有化和剽窃

激进的、实验的、经典的电影作品和视频艺术的稀有版本重新以坏图像的形式出现在公众视野，这当中还有另一层重要含义。它揭示出的远远不只是图像本身的内容和样貌，还透露了原始图像被边缘化、以及社会力量的聚拢导致它们作为坏图像在网上流通等种种现状。[4]坏图像之所以是坏图像，是因为它们不承载图像阶级社会的任何价值——它们非法而卑微的地位使其得以免除这种评价标准。分辨率的缺失佐证了它们是由挪用和置换而来的。[5]

显然，这种现状不仅与新自由主义媒体产业和数字技术的结构调整有关，还与后社会主义和后殖民主义对其国家、民族文化和档案所进行的结构调整有关。在某些国家解体后，新的文化和传统便会出现，历史进而被创造。显然这也影响了电影存档——很多时候整个电影文献遗产需要面对没有国家文化支持框架的难题。就像我之前在萨拉热窝的一个电影博物馆所见，国家级的档案只能在音像制品租赁店延续它们的生命。[6] 盗版录像从类似混乱的私有化经营资料库中流出。而另一边，不列颠图书馆甚至在网上以天价出清这些内容。

正如库杜伍•艾顺（Kodwo Eshun）指出的，坏图像的传播部分填补了在国家级电影机构的空白，后者往往认为当下时代很难运作一个存储16 / 35毫米胶片的档案库，或维持任何基础设施的分配。[7] 从这个角度看，坏图像揭示了散文电影或任何实验性和非商业电影的衰退。这些电影之所以在很多地方能被看到，是因为在那些地方文化生产被视作一项国家任务。而私有化的媒体产业

却逐渐发展得比国有控股或赞助的媒体产业更为重要。但是，另一方面，随着网络营销和商品化的进程，对知识内容猖獗地私有化，也使得盗版和挪用蔓延；于是便引发了坏图像的流通。

不完美的电影

坏图像的出现使我们想起了胡安•加西亚•埃斯皮诺萨（Juan García Espinosa），于1960年代末在古巴发表的经典的第三电影宣言：《给不完美的电影》。[8]埃斯皮诺萨认为，之所以称其为不完美的电影，是因为 "几乎所有技术上和艺术上高超的完美电影都是保守而落后的。"不完美的电影是在努力克服阶级社会中的劳动分工。它将艺术、生活和科学相融合，模糊了消费者与生产者、观众与作者的边界。它虽受欢迎，但并非是消费主义；它对自身缺陷的坚持使其没有走上官僚主义的道路。

埃斯皮诺萨在其宣言中同时反思了新媒体的前景。他明确地预测出视频技术的发展将会危害传统电影工作者的精英地位，使得某些大众电影生产——所谓的人民的艺术——成为可能。就像图像和不完美电影经济缩小了作者与观众的分别，并将生活与艺术融为一体。最重要的是，模糊的、业余的、充满人工制品的图像让图像原本的可视性严重地妥协。

某种程度上，坏图像经济等同于不完美的电影，而完美的电影更像是作为旗舰店的电影概念。但是，真正的当代不完美电影比埃斯皮诺萨的预期更加矛盾和戏剧化。一方面，坏图像经济及其世界范围内的分布，连同混录和挪用的伦理道德，促使了比以往任何时候都更多的制作人群体的加入。但是，这并不意味着这些机会仅用于激进的目的。仇恨言论、垃圾邮件或其他的废物都会通过数字化的连接而生效。数字通讯也成为最具争议的市场之一——这是一个长期以来遭受持续的原始积累和大规模（且在某种程度上是成功的）私有化攻击的区域。

坏图像所循环流通的网络既构成了薄弱的新共同利益平台，又成为商业和国家事务的战场。它们不仅包含实验性和艺术性素材，还包含惊人数量的色情和妄想的素材。当坏图像的领地内允许其他形象的进入，它便被最先进的商品化技术所渗透了。它促使用户积极参与构建和传播内容的同时，也召唤他们投身生产领域。用户变成了坏图像的编辑、评论者、翻译者和（联合）作者。

于是，坏图像成为被多数人制作和观看的流行图像。它们表达出当代人群的所有矛盾：机会主义、自恋症、渴望自主和创造、无法集中注意力或下定决心、随时准备侵犯的同时又随时准备服从等。[9]总之，坏图像呈现了当代人情绪状况的快照，他们的神经质、妄想症、恐惧、渴望激烈、渴望乐趣、心烦意乱都被一一展现。图像的状态不仅与无数的文件传输和格式修改有关，也与无数关心它们的人有关，他们一遍遍地对图像进行修改、添加字幕、重新编辑或上传。

鉴于此，或许人们应该重新定义图像的价值，或更准确地说，用一个全新的视角来看待图像。除了分辨率和交换价值，人们可以设想另一种由速度、强度和

广度定义的图像价值。坏图像之所以是坏图像，因为它们被粗暴地压缩且快速地流通。它们失去质量以获得速度。但它们也表达了非物质化状况，不仅与观念艺术共享遗产，还与当代模式的符号化生产分享可能。[10]正如菲利克斯•瓜塔里（Felix Guattari）所说，[11] 资本的符号化转向，有利于压缩和灵活的数据包的创造和传播，这些数据包被整合到不断更新的组合序列中。[12]

这种视觉内容的扁平化处理——从概念中形成图像——将图像定位在一种普通的信息转向中，知识经济将图像和文字说明从语境中剔除，放进永久的资本主义去领土化的漩涡中。[13] 观念艺术史上首次将艺术品去物质化描述为对可见物的恋物价值的坚持。然而，结果却是去物质化的艺术品完全适应资本主义的符号表征，也因此适应资本主义的观念转向。[14] 某种意义上说，坏图像遭受着类似的紧张局面。一方面，它的运转是对高分辨率的恋物价值的一种对抗；另一方面，这也正是为什么它最终完美地融入到信息资本主义中，这种资本主义的蓬勃发展有赖于密切的关注度，也更多地体现在表象而非实质，强度而非思考，预览而非放映上。

同志，你今天的视觉纽带是什么？

但是，与此同时一种逆向的矛盾也在发生。坏图像的流通创造了一个循环，它充分满足了军事电影、（部分）散文电影和实验电影的最初理想——去创造另一种图像经济，一种商业媒体洪流内外的不完美电影。在文件共享的时代，即使是那些早已被边缘化的内容也会再次进入流通，连接起分散在世界各地的观众。

因此，正如坏图像创造了共享的历史，它也构建了匿名的全球网络。在其流动的过程中不断构筑联盟，引起翻译或误译、创造新的公众和讨论。在视觉内容丧失后，它也重新获得了政治影响并围绕其间创造出新的光环。这种光环不再基于"原作"的持久性，而转为复制品的瞬间性。它不再固定在由国家或企业支持的传统的公共领域，而是漂浮在暂时且不可靠的数据库表面。[15] 随着与电影殿堂渐行渐远，它迎向了载满观者欲望的全新且转瞬即逝的画面。

就像吉加•维尔托夫（Dziga Vertov）曾经说过，坏图像的流通产生了"视觉纽带"（visual bonds）。[16]按他的说法，这种"视觉纽带"本应将世界各地的工人们连在一起。[17]他想象了一种共产主义的、视觉的、亚当式的语言，不仅用于传递信息和娱乐消遣，还可以将观者组织在一起。某种意义上，如果在全球信息资本主义的规则下，观众们被几近相同的诸如兴奋不已、感情充沛、协调一致、忧心忡忡等身体感觉相连，那他的梦想就已成真了。

但是也有一些坏图像的流通和生产是基于手机、相机、家庭电脑、以及一些非传统的传播形式。它的视觉连接——合作编辑、文件分享、或大众传圈——揭示出生产者之间偶然形成的不稳定关联，这种关联同时构成了散布在各处的观众。

坏图像的循环为资本主义媒体流水线和另类视听经济注入原料。除了引发不少困惑和麻木之外，它也造成破坏性的思想运动和影响。坏图像的循环由此开启

了非传统信息流通的历史新篇章：维尔托夫的"视觉纽带"、彼得•魏斯（Peter Weiss）在《反抗的美学》（The Aesthetics of Resistance）中所描述的国际主义工人教学法、《第三电影和三大洲主义》（Third Cinema and Tricontinentalism）的循环等不均衡的电影制作和思维。因此坏图像——其状态可能是矛盾的——需要在碳粉复印的小册子、宣传鼓动类电影、地下视频杂志和其他另类材料等经常使用美观较差的物质材料中找到其该归属的宗谱体系。此外，它对许多历史观念的再度审视与这些循环关系密切，其中就包括维尔托夫的"视觉纽带"观点。

设想这样一个场景：某个来自过去头戴贝雷帽的人问你："同志，你今天的视觉纽带是什么？"

你兴许会答道：就是这个通往当下的链接。

现在！

坏图像是往昔大师级电影和录像艺术的来世。它们被排除在电影曾一度躲避的天堂之外。[18] 在从民族文化保护者的舞台上被赶出，又被商业流通所丢弃之后，这些作品便成为了数字化的无人荒地上的流亡者。它们不断转变分辨率和格式、速度和媒介，有时甚至失去了名字和归属。

现在，许多这样的作品都以坏图像的形式重回到我们的视野中，我承认。有人或许会争辩说这些都不是真实的，那么恳请谁能给我展示一下什么才是真实。坏图像早已无关真实之物——那个原始的原作。取而代之的是，它是关乎其真实的自身存在：关乎密集的流通、数字化的传播、以及断裂和灵活的暂时性。它关乎反抗与挪用，正如它关乎因循守旧和开发利用。

简而言之，它关乎现实。

文/黑特•史德耶尔
译/刘倩兮

[1] 《解构哈里》，伍迪•艾伦（Woody Allen）执导，1997年。

[2] "Wer Gemälde wirklich sehen will, geht ja schließlich auch ins Museum," 摘自哈伦•法罗基（Harun Farocki）与亚历山大•霍尔瓦特（Alexander Horwath）的对话，法兰克福报，2007年6月14日。

[3] Sven Lütticken的精彩文章《可见的复制品：论移动图像的流动性》启发了我从这个角度关注坏图像。原文见e-flux journal第8期（2009年5月）。

[4] 感谢库杜伍•艾顺（Kodwo Eshun）的观点。

[5] 当然，有些情况下低分辨率也会出现在主流媒体中（以新闻为主）并具有极其重要的价值，如紧急事件或突发灾难。参见Hito Steyerl "记录的不确定性"，《先验》，第15页（2007）。

[6] Hito Steyerl，《文献政治学：电影中的翻译》，Transversal（2008年3月）

[7] 参见与作者的邮件往来。

[8] 胡安•加西亚•埃斯皮诺萨（Juan García Espinosa），《给不完美的电影》，Julianne Burton译，Jump Cut, 第20期（1979年）：24-26页。

[9] 参见包罗•维尔诺（Paolo Virno）《群众语法：当代生活形式分析》，（MIT出版，2004年）

[10] 参见亚历克斯•阿波罗（Alex Alberro）《观念艺术与公共政治》，（MIT出版，2003年）

[11] 参见菲利克斯•瓜塔里（Felix Guattari）《作为集成权力形态的资本》，Soft Subversions，（纽约，1996年）：第202页。

[12] 所有这些变化都在西蒙•谢赫（Simon Sheikh）的精彩文本中有所描述：《研究对象或知识商品？艺术研究评论》，《艺术与研究2》，第2期，2009年春。

[13] 参见阿兰•赛库拉（Allan Sekula）《阅读文献：劳动力与资本之间的摄影》，《视觉文化导读》，斯图亚特•霍尔（Stuart Hall）、杰西卡•埃文斯（Jessica Evans）编 (伦敦/纽约: Routledge 1999年), 第181–192页.

[14] 参见亚历克斯•阿波罗（Alex Alberro）《观念艺术与公共政治》

[15] 海盗湾网站试图捕获西兰公国的域外炼油平台，以便安装他们的服务器。参见Jan Libbenga《海盗湾计划购买西兰公国》，The Register，2007年1月12日。

[16] 吉加•维尔托夫（Dziga Vertov）"Kinopravda and Radiopravda"，《电影眼：吉加•维尔托夫的写作》，阿奈特•迈克尔森（Annette Michelson）编，伯克利：加州大学出版社，1995年，第52页。

[17] 维尔托夫 "Kinopravda and Radiopravda," 第52页。

[18] 至少从怀旧的角度而言

艺术的政治：当代艺术及其后民主转向

将政治与艺术相联的一种标准做法是假设艺术以某种方式呈现了政治议题。但是还存在另一种更为有趣的视角：将艺术领域中的政治作为作品的所在。[1] 只看艺术它做了些什么——而不是它展示了什么。

在各种艺术形式中，纯艺术是与后福特主义的投机活动最紧密相关的，连同浮华、经济的繁荣和萧条。当代艺术并不是一个身处偏远的象牙塔中、不谙世事的学科。与之相反，它稳妥地深陷于新自由主义的层层包裹中。我们没法让围绕着当代艺术的那些宣传炒作远离企图除颤(defibrillate)经济放缓的休克政策。这类宣传炒作体现在受到庞氏骗局、信贷上瘾、以及昔日牛市等牵连的全球经济的各个面向中。当代艺术是一个没有品牌的品牌名称，随时可以被套用到几乎任何事情上；它是一次快速整形术，为那些亟待改头换面之所招徕创意的新势；是赌博的悬吊感与上流阶层寄宿制学校教育所带来的严苛乐趣的互相结合；是一处设有许可的游乐场，在其中，世界受到纷杂的放宽管制措施的迷惑，开始崩塌。如果当代艺术是答案，那么问题就是，如何使资本主义被打造得更好看？

不过当代艺术并不仅仅事关好看。它也同样事关功能。在灾难资本主义(disaster capitalism)中，艺术的功能是什么？财富由穷人流向富人，这一巨大而广泛的财富重新分配所产生的碎屑，正是当代艺术赖以为食的供养，而重新分配则通过持续的由上至下的阶级斗争来执行。[2] 当代艺术使得原始资本积累抹上了一丝后观念艺术所带有的华丽炫耀之彩。此外，它所涉及的范围也已发展得更加去中心化——重要的艺术中心早已不仅限于西方的几大都市了。今天，解构主义的当代艺术馆涌现在任何一个自恃甚高的专制统治中。一个有违人权的国家？没事，来一座盖里(Frank Gehry)的美术馆！

"全球古根海姆"(The Global Guggenheim)是一个在一系列后民主寡头集团中设立起来的文化炼油厂，就像那些数不胜数的国际双年展一样，个个都把职责设立为要对过剩人口进行提升和再教育。[3] 艺术因此促成了地缘政治势力一种新型的多极分布式的发展，这些势力掠夺性的经济通常通过内部压迫、自上而下的阶级战争、以及激进的震慑政策(shock-and-awe policy)而得到助长。

当代艺术因而不仅是反映，更是积极地干预了朝着新的后冷战世界格局的转变。在那些T-Mobile电信公司四处插旗的所之之地，当代艺术是符号资本主义(semiocapitalism)不均匀发展的始作俑者。它也参与了为双核处理器所进行的原料开采。它产生污染，让街区贵族化，也行凶施奸。它诱引并消耗，随后抽身离开，伤透你的心。从蒙古沙漠到秘鲁高原，当代艺术无处不在。而当它最终被拽进高古轩，从头到脚沾满了血与尘土，却激起一轮又一轮热烈的掌声。

出于什么原因、又是对谁而言，当代艺术会有这样的吸引力？一个猜想：艺术生产呈现出了一幅后民主形式超级资本主义(hypercapitalism)的镜像，这种超级资本主义看起来将要成为后冷战范式中的政治主导。它似乎不可预测、无从解释、才华横溢、反复善变、喜怒无常、并且深受灵感和天分的指引，正如任何向往独裁专政的寡头所希望看到的自己一样。有关艺术家角色的传统概念，与想要成为独裁者的自我形象太过吻合，而后者将政府视作一种潜在的——也是极其危险的——艺术形式。后民主政府与这种不稳定的男性-天才-艺术家的行为模式有着很大的关联。它是不透明的、腐败的、以及全然无法解释的。

这两种模式都以男性的紧密联结来运转，其民主程度就像是你家附近的黑帮分会。法律法规？我们何不把它们看作一种品位？权力制衡(checks and balances)？是支票(cheques)和收支盈余(balances)吧！良好的政府治理？糟糕的策展！这下你明白为什么当代寡头热爱当代艺术了吧：因为这一套对他们很适用。

因此，传统的艺术生产可以是这些通过私有化、征收和投机买卖所创造出来的财富新贵们的一种楷模典范。然而与此同时，实际上的艺术生产则是许多新贫阶层的劳作工坊，他们努力地做着JPEG艺术大师、滥竽充数的观念艺术、画廊小姐、以及过载的内容提供者以期博得机会。因为艺术也意味着工作(work)，更确切地说，是"突击工作(strike work)"。[4] 艺术的生产就像是在后福特主义竭尽全力过劳工作(all-you-can-work)的传送带上的一种景观。撞击或突击工作（shock work），是在疯狂速度下进行的富有情感的劳作——热情、活跃亢进、并且极度妥协。

最初，"突击手们"是早期苏维埃中的超时劳动者。这个术语来自俄语的udarny trud，意为"超级高效、充满热情的劳工"（udar类似英语中的shock，strike，blow）。现在，转化到时下的文化工厂，"突击工作"与震撼的感性维度有关。与其说是绘画、焊接和铸模，艺术的撞击工作其实包含着撕扯、闲聊和装模作样。这种加速的艺术生产形式创造出了冲击与炫目，轰动与影响。其作为斯大林式生产大队的历史源头，为超级生产力(hyperproductivity)的范式带来了额外的优势。"突击手们"在各种可能的尺度和变化中，粗劣地制造出感受、认知和差异。激烈的投入或是全盘撤离、高尚或是扯淡、现成品或是现成品现实——无论何种，"突击工作"为消费者所提供的是那些他们从来不知道自己想要的东西。

"突击工作"的喂养靠着耗竭和进度，截止日期和策展废话，简短闲聊和优质印刷。它还因为加速的剥削而兴旺了自己。我猜测——除却家务和看护工作——艺术是免费劳力最多的产业。它全靠不拿报酬的实习生和自我剥削的参与者的时间与精力来维系自己，在每一个层面、每一种功能中都是如此。免费的劳力和猖獗的剥削是不可见的暗物质，它们保持着文化行业的周转顺畅。

自由漂浮的"突击手们"，加上新的（以及旧的）菁英和寡头集团，就等于艺术在当代的政治框架。而当后者试图向后民主转变时，前者塑造出它的图像。但是这样的情况事实上又能说明什么呢？无非是当代艺术的参与方式是在转化全球的权力格局。

当代艺术的劳动力大多由这样一群人组成：他们日以继夜地工作，但却不将自己与任何一种传统劳动力的形象挂钩。他们顽固地抵制被安置到任何明显得足以定义成特定阶级的群体当中。更为简易的方式是将这些人归类为群众或是大众，然而如若继续追问则会显得很不浪漫：他们是否是落魄的全球化自由职业者，不属于任何疆域，并且不受任何意识形态桎梏：一支通过谷歌翻译来交流的想象力后备军。

这个脆弱的群体并没有形成一个新的阶级，而是充满着——如汉娜•阿伦特曾经带着鄙夷所阐述过的——那些"遭所有阶级拒绝（refuse of all classes）"的人。这些被阿伦特所描述的无依无靠的探险者们，这些城市里的皮条客和无赖们，随时准备着受聘为殖民者的雇佣军和剥削者，他们的形象依稀（并且较为扭曲地）镜像映射在全球范围内流通着的创意型"突击工人"的大军之中，也就是今天所说的艺术界。[5] 如果我们能意识到现在的"突击手们"可能栖居在类似的变动立场上——即休克资本主义那些不透明的重灾区上——那就会出现一幅有关艺术劳动的画面，它断然是非英雄主义的、充满冲突并且模棱两可的。

我们必须直面这样的事实，对艺术劳工来说，要组织起来并进行抵抗并没有唾手可得的途径。机会主义和竞争都不是这种劳动形式的一时偏离，而是其内在结构。而且这群劳动力永远不会齐声达成联盟，除非是跟着一支病毒般的Lady Gaga模仿视频一齐起舞的时候。英特耐雄耐尔已经结束。现在就让我们紧跟着全球化吧。

这里有则坏消息：政治性的艺术照例回避了对所有这些事情的讨论。[6] 设法处理艺术领域的内部条件，连同其中公然的腐败——想想那些靠贿赂把项或这或那的大型双年展放进那些外围地区的事吧——哪怕是那些将自己视为政治性的艺术家们，要解决这些问题也是他们议程上的禁忌。尽管全球的政治艺术都试图表现所谓的地区性处境，并且按照惯例把不公与贫困打包在一起，但有关其自身生产与展示的条件仍然并没怎么被探索过。甚至可以说，艺术的政治是许多当代政治性艺术的盲点。

当然，体制批判在传统上曾对相似的议题给予过关注。但是今天我们所需要的是对其进行相当程度的扩充。[7] 因为与体制批判的年代相比，那时关注的是艺术机构，甚至是广义上的再现的范围，而艺术生产（消费、分布、营销……等等）在后民主的全球化中所扮演的角色却不尽相同，还有所扩展。举个例子，一种相当荒谬而又普遍的现象是，时下的激进艺术往往受到大部分掠夺性银行或是武器贸易商的赞助，而且彻底地嵌入到城市市场化、品牌推广、以及社会工程的修辞法之中。[8] 出于非常明显的原因，这些情况很少被政治性艺术所探讨，在许多案例中，政治艺术只是在为富有异国情调的自我种族化、简洁扼要的姿态立场、以及好战激进的怀旧情怀提供内容。

我当然不是在追诉一种清白的立场。[9]那最多只是一种幻象，最坏也不过是又一个卖点。更何况那是极其无聊的。但我确实认为，政治性艺术家们如果正视这些问题那就可以更加切身相关，而不是安全地作为斯大林主义的现实主义者、CNN的情境主义者、或者杰米•奥利弗与监护官会面（Jamie·Ol-ive·meets·probation·officer）的社会工程师，去上街游行。是时候把那些锤

子和镰刀纪念品式的艺术扔进垃圾桶了。如果政治被理解为他者，发生在某个别处，永远只属于那些没人能叫出名字的被剥夺了公民权的社群，那我们最终就会失去那些在当下使艺术本质上变得政治的东西：它作为劳动、冲突、以及……乐趣之所在的功能——这处处凝结了资本的矛盾之处，也凝结了全球和地区之间那极度娱乐但时而疲乏的误解。

艺术的领域是一个充满了激烈的矛盾和惊人的剥削的空间。这是一个权力四起、投机炒作、金融谋划、并且受到大量而扭曲的操控的地方。但是，它也是一个充满共性、运动、能量和欲望的场所。在其最好的更迭中，它是一个异乎寻常的世界性的舞台，充满着机动的"突击劳工"、四处流动的自我推销员、高科技神童、预算高手、超音速翻译、博士实习生，以及其他数字时代的牧民和短工。它是硬接线、薄表皮的，而又极具可塑性。它可能沦为陈腐之地，竞争残酷无情，而团结一致仍然像一句外语那样无法达成。这里聚集着的是富有魅力的人渣、欺软怕硬者、离选美冠军一步之遥的美人。它就是HDMI(高清晰度多媒体)、CMYK(用于印刷的四分色)，和LGBT(女同、男同、双性恋和跨性别者)。他们狂妄做作、娇媚妖艳、魅惑众生。

这个烂摊子能保持浮动是因为一波又一波辛劳工作的女性所带来的活力。在虎视眈眈和资本的控制之下，这一窝蜂满是情感的劳工，紧实地将自己交织进其多重矛盾中。而所有这一切都让它与当代现实密切相关。艺术精确地影响着现实，因为它与现实的所有面向都缠绕纠结在一起。它是混乱的、内嵌的，它制造麻烦而不可抗拒。我们可以试着将其理解为政治性的空间，而不是试图呈现一些总是发生在别处的政治事件。艺术并不在政治之外，而政治则驻留在艺术的生产、它的分布以及它的接受之中。如果我们担负起这一点，我们可能就会超越再现政治（politics of representation）的平面，而着手从事真实的政治，它就在我们眼前，可以即刻上前与之相拥。

文/黑特•史德耶尔
译/虔凡

[1]我这一想法是在林宏章(Hongjohn Lin)为2010年台北双年展所作的策展陈述之上的扩展。Hongjohn Lin, "Curatorial Statement," in 10TB Taipei Biennial Guidebook (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2010), 10-11.

[2]自1970年代以来，这个话题一直被描述为一种全球的以及持续的征用进程。参考大卫•哈维(David Harvey)的书《新自由主义的简史(A Brief History of Neoliberalism)》，牛津大学出版社，2005年。至于财富分配的结果，有一份研究报告出自位于赫尔辛基的联合国大学世界发展经济研究所(UNU-WID-ER)，报告指出在2000年，最富有的1%的成人人口占有全世界40%的资产。而贫穷程度占世界成人人口后50%的人所拥有的全球财富仅占1%。

[3]就这种寡头集团的参与仅举一例。这类双年展从莫斯科发展到迪拜到上海，到许多其他所谓的转型国家中，我们不该important为后民主视作一个非西方的现象。申根国的区域就是后民主规则的一个典范，其政治体制并不由民众投票来获得合法性，并且有大量民众被排除在公民权之外（更不用说旧世界里，对于民主选举出的法西斯所产生的日渐增长的支持）。当下的"波多西原则(The Po-tosí-Principle)"展览，由Alice Creischer、Andreas Siekmann和Max Jorge Hinderer组织，展览从另一种历史性相关的视角凸显了寡头与图像制作之间的联系。

[4]我所阐述的意思是对于Ekaterina Degot、Cosmin Costinas和David Riff所组织的第一届乌拉尔工业双年展(2010年)的发展。

[5]阿伦特对于品位的论述可能有误。品位并不如她遵循着康德而阐述的那样，必须是一种共有的事物。在这里的语境中，它事关对于共识的生产制造、对于声誉的工程建设、以及其他设计精巧的诡计，而这些东西，哎哟，蜕变成了艺术史的书目。让我们直面现实吧：品位的政治并不关乎集体(the collective)，而关乎收藏者(the collector)。并不与共性相关，而是与赞助相关。并不与分享相关，而是与资助有关。

[6]当然也有不少值得称道的很棒的反例，而我也承认我得羞愧地埋下头来。

[7]也如Alex Alberro和Blake Stimson编辑的《体制批判(Institutional Cri-tique)》书里所论述的，（麻省理工大学出版社出版，2009年）。也可参照在线期刊transform。

[8] 最近在奥斯陆的Henie Onstad Kunstsenter艺术中心的展览"古根海姆能见度研究小组"，一个由Nomeda和Gediminas Urbonas发起的非常有意思的项目，探讨了地区性（部分当地居民）艺术景象和古根海姆特许经营体系之间的紧张关系，用个案分析的方式对古根海姆的效应进行了分析。还可参考Jose-ba Zulaika的《毕尔巴鄂古根海姆美术馆：博物馆、建筑和城市复兴》，（内华达州大学巴斯克研究中心出版，2003年）。另一个案例分析：Beat Weber和Therese Kaufmann的《基金会、国务秘书和银行———一家私人机构的文化政策之旅》。还可参照Martha Rosler的《拿了钱就跑？政治和社会批判艺术能否'存活'？》，e-flux第12期，以及Tirdad Zolghadr的《第十一届伊斯坦布尔双年展》。

[9]本文在e-flux上出现是作为广告补充的位置，这一点就足以说明问题了。情况更为复杂的事实是，这些广告还有可能有助于标榜我的展览。冒着自我重复的风险，我想强调的是，我认为无辜和清白不是一种政治立场，而是一种道德立场，因而是与政治无关的。有关这种情况的一个有趣的评价出现在Luis Camnitzer的《艺术中的腐败/腐败的艺术》，文章是在1995年4月世界文化之家所举办的一次座谈会上，以探讨马可波罗综合症的语境之下发表的。

地球的垃圾邮件：从再现中抽身

无线电波的浓云每秒都在离开我们的星球。我们发出的邮件、快照、亲密的亦或官方的沟通、电视直播、短消息，正盘旋着从地球向外漂移，形成一个聚集着我们时代欲望与恐惧的建筑结构。[1]在数十万年后，地球之外的某种智能生物将一头雾水地筛检我们的无线传播。想象那些生物看到具体内容时的迷茫表情——我们传送到太空深处的所有图像中绝大多数都难免是垃圾。任何人类学家、鉴定家或历史学家，无论是来自这个世界还是别处，都会把这些垃圾信息视作为对人类最贴切的还原，我们时代和我们自己的逼真肖像。如果用数码碎片来试图重构人类的模样，得到的，很有可能是一张垃圾图片。

垃圾图片（image spam）是数码世界中的几大暗物质之一；它看起来就是个图片文件，得以逃过了过滤器的侦查。这类图像数量惊人，在地球上空漂浮游走，奋力抢夺着人的注意力。[2]它们为药物、山寨品、整容、廉价股、学位等打着广告。在这些垃圾图片上，人类穿着性感，拿着学位证书，露出牙齿矫正后的笑容。

赛门铁克的博客上征用的医学相关的垃圾图片

垃圾图片是我们给未来的一封信。和标注着一男一女的现代主义空间胶囊（典型的"人类"一家）不同，在当代，作为人类代表被派送到太空的肯定是一张垃圾图片，上面是一个增强版广告假人。[3]宇宙将会这样看我们；宇宙很可能已经在这样看我们了。

从绝对数量上来说，垃圾图片目前已经超过了地球的人口，它甚至已经成为了"沉默的大多数"。然而是什么的大多数？这些日益加速的广告中描绘的人到底是谁？这些人的图像将如何向外星的接收者诉说着我们当代的人类性？

从垃圾图片的角度来看，人是有进步空间的，或者用黑格尔的话来说，可以更完美的（perfectible）。他们可以更"无暇"，这个语境下的"无暇"意味着性欲高涨，极瘦，拿着可以抵抗经济衰退的学位证书，手上戴着使他们上班从不迟到的冒牌手表。这是当代的人类一家：男男女女，靠山寨抗抑郁药度日，他们身上的部位都是整容而来。他们是超级资本主义（hypercapitalism）的梦之队。

然而我们真的长这样吗？不。垃圾图片可能会向我们展示"理想的"人类，但并非用真人示范；恰恰相反，垃圾图片中的模特儿是经过图像处理后的复制品，变化大得不真实。一支由数码增强版生物组成的储备军，他们似某种具有神秘武术的小恶魔小天使，诱惑着，推搡着，将人绑架到肮脏的消费狂喜之中。

垃圾图片针对的是那些长得和广告不一样的人群：他们既不瘦，也没有可以抵抗经济衰退的学位证书。以新自由主义角度来看，他们的有机身体上没有任何可以被称为完美的地方。这些人可能每天打开收件箱，等待一个奇迹，等待长年累月的危机与辛劳之后的彩虹。垃圾图片正是针对着这些人类中的大多数，然而图片上面显示的却不是他们。尽管那些人如垃圾一样多余，可有可无，但垃圾图片并不为他们说话，它只对他们说话。

事实上，垃圾图片中的人类形象和现实中的人类形象没有一点关系。相反，它精确地表现了人类所不具有的特点。它是"负图像"（negative image）。

效仿与着迷
Mimicry and Enchantment

为什么会造成这种情形？有一个显而易见的原因，我在这里只简单带过：因为图像总是催生效仿欲，使人想要成为其中所刻画的形象。在这种观点中，霸权主义渗透在我们日常文化中的方方面面，并通过琐碎的图片来散播其价值观。[4]如此，垃圾图片则可被解读为身体生产的营销工具，并最终创造出一种介于易饿症、激素过量，以及个人破产之间的文化。其实这种观点是比较传统的文化研究，它视垃圾图片为强制说服和潜伏引诱的手段，最终使人同时屈服于两者，并沉迷于健忘的愉悦中。[5]

如果说垃圾图片不仅仅是简单的意识形态手段和教化工具会怎么样？如果说真

埃德·拉斯查，商品-猪肉罐头，1961/2003，银盐印刷，
33.02x25.4cm

实的人——不完美的、性欲正常的人——并未因为先天不足就不站在这些垃圾广告一边，而是选择完全遗弃这种塑造，会发生什么？如果垃圾图片因此成为了一种广泛的拒绝，一种人类集体从再现（representation）中撤离的行为，那么怎么办？

这是什么意思呢？我已经注意到这个现象有一段时间了，人们开始努力避开摄影或移动影像的拍摄，默默地与一切镜头保持距离。不管是带门禁的高档小区，还是精英techno夜店；不管是明星拒绝采访，希腊无政府主义者们砸碎相机，还是抢劫犯毁坏液晶电视，人们既是主动，也是被动地回绝被持续监视、录像、辨认、拍照、扫描、录音……在如今这个媒体渗透得无孔不入的时代，图像再现更像是一种威胁——虽然在从前它一直被视作为一种政治特权。[6]

很多因素造成了这个现实。那些麻痹人的垃圾谈话节目和游戏真人秀使得电视不可避免地成为了一个聚集并娱乐底层阶级的媒介。电视里的角色被暴力地化上妆，等待他们的还有无数颇具攻击性的煎熬、坦白、质问，以及审视。早晨的电视节目简直是现代版的酷刑室，不仅有折磨，还看得到施刑者的罪恶快感，以及观众，很多时候还有受刑者自己。

另外，人们也逐渐从主流媒体中淡出，从有生命危险的紧急情况、极端状况、自然灾害、人祸，或者战争的报道中，从全球各地冲突地带的网络视频直播中淡出。如果他们不是被困在自然或人为的灾祸之中无法动弹了，他们的躯体都似乎正在消减——正如厌食症审美标准所暗示的那样。人们要么看起来无比憔悴，要么体型缩小了。很显然，节食就是经济衰退的转喻，它们都成为了永恒的现实，造成了巨量的物质损失。这种衰退同时伴随着知识退化，反智在绝大多数主流媒体中几乎成为了信条。智力本无法因为人挨饿就溶解了，然而对智力的嘲讽和敌对则成功将它从主流刻画中驱逐。

企业对人的塑造是一个例外，要进入这个区域非常危险：你可能得忍受讥讽、嘲笑，经历考验、压力，甚至饥饿或死亡。与其说是在表现人，它更像是在表现人的消失。但话说回来，既然主流媒体对我们进行无情的攻击和侵略，现实中也差不多，那么人为什么不消失呢？[7]谁能忍受猛击而不想逃出这种视觉威胁及持续曝光呢？

除此之外，社交网络和手机相机制造了一个群众互相监视的区域，并加入到城市中无处不在的控制网络，比如CCTV、手机GPS定位，以及人脸识别软件。除了体制监视以外，人们如今也习惯性地互相监视对方，他们每个人拍下无数张照片，并在同一时间发布。与这种横向再现（horizontal representation）有关的社交控制已经非常具有影响力。雇主会搜索应聘者的名声；社交媒体和博客成为了羞耻和恶意中伤的殿堂。来自广告和企业媒介的由上而下的文化霸权，如今被从下到下的互相自我控制和图像自我约束的机制所取代，而后者更难摆脱。这同时也意味着自我生产中的模式转化。霸权逐渐被内化，人们不得不服从，不得不表演，于是，再现和被再现也成为了压力。

沃霍尔那关于每个人都可以成名十五分钟的预言早就成真。如今，我们的愿望正好相反：如果可以隐形，哪怕只是十五分钟都行，哪怕只是十五秒，都好。我们踏入了全民狗仔的时代，偷窥狂和展示癖的时代。相机闪光灯的照耀使人

们成为了受害者，抑或是名人，其实两者都是。当我们在收银机、取款机前注册的时候，当我们的相机将我们最细微的动作和快照标上了GPS定位的时候，我们并没有被这些机器娱乐至死，而是被再现五马分尸。[8]

出走
Walkout

这就是为什么很多人现在远离视觉再现。他们的直觉（以及智力）告诉他们，摄影和录像都是危险的介质，它们难以捕捉到时间、情感、生产力，以及主体性。它们可能监禁你，或使你永久惭愧；它们可能使你陷入硬件的圈套、格式转化的难题；更重要的是，一旦这些图像被上传到网络，它们永远也删除不掉了。你有裸照吗？恭喜你——你已不朽。这张照片将比你和你的后代更长命，比木乃伊牢固，它正遨游于宇宙深处，期待着跟外星人打个照面。

对相机的古老的恐惧在数码世界重获生命。只是如今，相机不会带走你的灵魂（数码世界的公民会在这里用iPhone代替），而是会榨干你的生命。它们一刻不停地使你消失，萎缩，或者让你浑身赤裸，等待一场牙齿整形手术。事实上，认为相机是再现的工具其实是一场误会，它们现在是消失的工具。[9]人们被拍下得越多，在现实中剩下得越少。

回到我之前举过的垃圾图片例子——它是它所包含之物的负图像，这话怎么说？并不是像传统文化研究所秉持的那样——因为意识形态将效仿欲强加给人，所以人们才会为了达到无法达到的高效、魅力，以及苗条的标准，而屈从于他们的压迫者和指正者。不是这样的。让我们勇敢地假设：垃圾图片之所以是它所包含之物的负图像，那是因为人们同时在做出行动，积极远离这种再现，只留下增强版的、通过了挤压测试的假人。于是，图像垃圾成为了一种自发的记录，记录下微妙的抗议，以及人们从摄影和录像再现中出走。它见证了一次几乎察觉不出的大迁移，人民从一种太过极端以致于无法自持的权力关系中离去。与其说垃圾图片是一种霸权的见证，不如说是人民抵抗纪念碑，他们抵抗自己被表现成图片中那样；他们正在抛弃一种被固定了框架的再现。

政治和文化再现
Political and Cultural Representation

这个状况粉碎了许多关于政治和图像再现之间关系的教条式传闻。我这一代人一直以来都以为再现是政治和美学的主要战线，文化是探索渗透于日常环境下的"软"政治所瞄准的热门领域。文化领域中的变革也被赋予了重审政治境况的期待。再现这个充满细微差别的领域似乎可以带来政治和经济上的平等。

然而慢慢地，我们意识到：两者之间的联系比我们期待的要弱，而商品和权利之间的割裂，以及不同感官之间的割裂，都没法互相平行存在。阿芮埃拉·阿祖雷（Ariella Azoulay）关于摄影作为公民契约（civil contract）之一种的论述为我们提供了丰富的背景材料。如果摄影是一则参与其中的人的公民契约，那么今天我们从再现中撤退就是对社会公约的违背：其中一方原本认为会获得

参与感，但得到的却是流言蜚语、监视、证据、连环自恋狂，以及偶尔的叛乱。[10]

当视觉再现达到饱和，并被数码技术推广，对人民的政治再现则陷入了深深的危机之中，陷入了经济利益的阴影之下。当每一种少数族裔都被默认为潜在消费者，并且或多或少被视觉再现，而人们在社会和经济领域中的参与度却变得越发不均的时候，当代视觉再现的社会契约仿佛二十世纪初的旁氏骗局（Ponzi schemes），或者更加准确的说，仿佛人参与到游戏之中却无法预测结局。

如果这两者之间一定有联系的话，它也是不稳定的，因为在这个充满了系统性的投机买卖和去规范化的时代，符号和它们的指向之间的关系将更加摇摇欲坠。

投机买卖和去规范化不仅仅适用于金融化和私有化的趋势，它们还指涉日益松弛的公共信息准则。从前，新闻行业的专业标准关乎真相生产，而现在被媒体批量生产取代，也被谣言的克隆以及在维基百科讨论版上的煽风点火取代。投机买卖不仅是一种金融操作，也是符号和它的所指之间可能发生的状况：奇迹般的突兀生长，或者旋转，任何剩余的索引关系都断裂了。

视觉再现固然重要，但并非能完全与其它再现方式协调一致。图像和人之间现在有一种严峻的关系：一边是巨大数量的没有指涉的图像，另一边是缺乏再现的人。用更为戏剧化的话来说：越来越多漂浮不定的图像，对应着越来越多被剥夺权力的，隐形的，以及逐渐消失和彻底失踪的人。[11]

再现的危机
Crisis of Representation

这便造成了一种非常棘手的状况，我们与过去看待图像的方式不同了。过去我们以为任何东西的图像都或多或少是公共视野中某个人或某件事物的精确再现，但是在充满无法再现之人和不可计数之图的时代，过去那种观点彻底更改了。

垃圾图片是当下世界的一个有趣的征状，因为在大多数情况下，它是一种看不见的再现。

垃圾图片无尽地循环流通，但几乎没有人眼见过它。它被机器创造出，由机器人传送，最终被垃圾过滤器捕获。慢慢地，它和反移民墙、栅栏、路障一样无效。从某种意义上来说，垃圾图片塑造的假人始终没有被看见。它们被当作数码糟粕，并最终沦为和它们所吸引的低保真人群同样的糟糕地步。这也就是垃圾图片人和任何其他再现假人不同的地方，后者栖居在可见的世界以及高端的再现中。垃圾图片中的生物却被当做无家可归的数据对待，它们的确也像是背后江湖骗子的化身。如果让•热内（Jean Genet）还活着，他一定会高歌赞美垃圾图片上这些迷人的暴徒、魔术师、妓女、假牙医……

Isee中曼哈顿的截图，一个来源于网络的应用，列出了城市环境中所有的监控设备未知。用户可以根据其内容规划一条可避开未经授权的安全监控设备的路线。

它们依旧不是人类的再现，因为无论如何，人类不是再现。它们是事件，或许某天会发生，或许更晚，在那毫无防护的眼睛眨下的那一瞬间。

但至少在现在，人们可能已经领教了，并接受了在视觉再现中只能以负形式出现这一事实。这种负面在任何情况下都无法成立，因为魔法只会确保一件事，就是你将会见到的正面的一切都不过是民粹主义替代品、披着狼皮的羊，抑或是通过了挤压测试的假人，它们正试图争取自己的合法性。图片上的人被代表为一个国家，或者一种文化，不过是意识形态的压缩典型。垃圾图片是人民的真实化身，一个与原像毫无关系的负图像？一个只能再现出人类所不是的图像？

当人们越来越频繁地成为图像的制造者——而非图像的对象或主题时，他们同时也便越来越意识到：只有在共同制造一张图像，而非共同为一张图像所再现时，他们才是真正的人民。图片是行动和热情的共享土壤，是事物与其变量的交通区域。当图像的生产变为批量生产时，它将逐渐成为公共事务，或者公共事物（public things）；亦或者——用绝佳的垃圾语言来说——私处事物（pubic things）。[12]

这并不意味着图片里展示的是谁、是什么就不重要了，其中的关系远不止单向指涉这么简单。垃圾图片的基因组成并不是人类，如果是那样就好了。但事实是垃圾图片上的人往往会替代真实的人，并为他们顶下出风头的罪名。一方面，这些假人是当下经济状态的所有罪恶和美德的化身（更准确地说，罪恶作为美德的化身）；另一方面，它们又通常是隐形的，因为几乎没人看它们。

其实，又有谁知道垃圾图片里的人在干嘛呢？反正没人看他们。他们的公共形象或许只是一张伪装的小丑面具，只为我们继续不注意到他们。同时，他们也或许肩负着向外星人传达重要讯息的任务，我们最近似乎对外星人也不太感兴趣了，因为它们被排除在混乱的"社会契约"之外，也被排除在除去晨间电视节目的任何参与形式之外；它们是地球的垃圾邮件，是监控摄像和航空红外监视的明星。它们也许暂且与那些正在消失的和隐形的人共享一片王国，王国的臣民大多寄居在耻辱的沉默之中，而他们的亲戚每天都得在杀手前面低声下气。

垃圾图片人是双重间谍，他们同时居住在过度暴露的国度和隐形的国度。这大概是他们总是微笑却从来不说一句话的真正原因：他们谙知自己那僵硬的姿势和即将灭绝的面容其实在为真实的人作掩护，掩护他们尽快逃离历史，喘口气，再重新集合。"快走出屏幕，"他们悄悄地说，"我们会代替你们。从雷达范围离开，去做你们该做的事吧！"无论是哪种情况，垃圾邮件人都不会放弃我们，永远不会。因为这点，他们值得我们的爱和尊敬。

文/黑特•史德耶尔
译/张涵露

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

2. 据统计，每天发出的垃圾邮件总数是2500亿封（2010年）。每天发出的垃圾图片数量每年都非常不同，在2007年，所有垃圾邮件中的35%都是垃圾图片，占到了通讯频带的70%。《伦敦旗帜晚报》写道："垃圾图片可以导致整个因特网瘫痪。"（见：http://http//www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23381164-image-spam-could-bring-the-internet-to-a-standstill.do）这篇文章中的垃圾图片配图来自Mathew　　　　Nisbet的珍贵资源"垃圾图片"（http://www.symantec.com/connect/blogs/image-spam），为了防止误解，大多数垃圾图片上面是文字，不是图像。

3. 这与1972和73年发射"先锋"号太空舱上的金色纪念牌是一样道理，牌子上画了一男一女的身体，都是白人，而且女人的生殖器被忽略了。由于批评指出人裸体的程度有问题，后来纪念牌上的人就只有个轮廓。太空舱将讯息传达给潜在的外星人所需的时间至少得四万年。

4. 这是对早期文化研究中经典的葛兰西学派非常简略的快进式概述。

5. 它更有可能被分析为是部分由于自我击败，于是做出相反举动。

6. 这个观点在全世界不同地区适用度不同。

7. 90年代时，前南斯拉夫人经常说，二战时的反法西斯口号现在被彻底颠倒过来了："把死亡给法西斯主义，把自由给人民"现在被所有立场的民族主义者变成了"把死亡给人民，把自由给法西斯主义。"

8. 见Brian Massumi, Parables for the Virtual (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

9. 我记得我以前的老师维姆•文德斯（Wim Wenders）对拍摄即将消失之事的行为有过详细的论述。然而事物在被拍下之后（或正因为被拍下了）更容易消失。

10. 我无法恰当地详述这个观点。或许最近脸书上的暴动对我们思考这件事或许有帮助，我们可以从它们是违背了令人无法忍受的社会契约这个角度去想，而不是想输入或保持契约。

11. 数码革命时代恰好和一些国家出现的大规模屠杀和灭绝同期，包括前南斯拉夫、卢旺达、车臣、阿尔及利亚、伊拉克、土耳其，以及瓜地马拉一些地区等等。在刚果民主共和国，1998年至2008年间共发生过二百五十万起战争死亡。很多研究者一致认为：刚果的冲突，为IT行业寻找新的材料（比如钶钽铁矿）是主要因素。1990年以来在试图抵达欧洲的路上死亡的非法移民高达1.8万人。

12. 这个用语来自一张盗版DVD碟《火线》（1993）的封面，上面说：严谨在阴处场所放映这张影碟。（译者注：这里"私处"pubic和"公共"public只相差一个字母。）

英文
/ **ENGLISH**

前言 / **PREFACE**

"My conviction is that, now more than ever, real life is much stranger than any fiction one could imagine. So somehow the forms of reporting have to become crazier and stranger, too. Otherwise they are not going to be 'documentary' enough; they are not going to live up to what's happening."

–Hito Steyerl in conversation with Laura Poitras, in the May 2015 issues of Artforum.

We live in odd times. And this oddity is made exponentially more perceivable and accessible by the barrage of new techniques available to observe our reality. The rhetoric used to be that oversaturation numbs, but late capitalism has evolved with such velocity and intensity that original sensibilities have not only emerged but erupted within this space, often to the willing negligence of the novelty-obsessed art world. When visual art is submitted to "viral spreading" and "language to the fake regime of advertising" (Franco Berardi), and as wechat-commerce lingo translates into real profit and solidifies into style, our ways of critical thinking and cultural production will just have to evolve along.

If the inaugural "THE BANK SHOW: Vive le Capital" marked an effort to come to terms with the fact that contemporary art is—and can only be, for a while—embedded and operative in a world calibrated by global capital, its sequel focuses on a single artist whose singular approach to navigating the unstable grounds of contemporary life "in the neoliberal thick of things" feels more relevant than ever, perhaps eerily so. When *Liquidity Inc.*, the main attraction in this exhibition, first came out in 2014, the fate of its protagonist Jacob Wood—an adopted Vietnam War orphan turned Lehman Brothers financier turned MMA (mixed martial arts) fighter after losing his job in the 2008 economic crisis—already felt like an all too familiar narrative with the last global financial fiasco securely tucked into the past. Yet now as you sit on the Hokusai-inspired ramp specially constructed to experience this video, 1.93 million Euros had just been raised on a crowd-funding platform that ultimately failed to resuscitate the Greek economy and, together with China's stock market downfall, one can only forecast continued instability for the global economy and the world that it sustains.

Even though *Liquidity Inc.*'s main arc revolves around two of the most volatile global forces—the financial market and the climate—and how they shape the circumstances of individual lives, it also uninhibitedly explores the expanded connections among abstract ideas, historical events (Jacob's Vietnam War origins and the radical, anti-war group The Weather Underground), and geopolitical dynamics with the nimbleness and comic relief that are the hallmarks of our post-internet, heavily imaged culture. The essence of liquidity is to adapt. As Bruce Lee preaches at the beginning of the video :"Be like water, my friend" whether in fighting, in portfolio management, or, it would seem, in making sense of contemporary reality. As many art practitioners tread cautiously by burdening still objects with too many references or interrogating a limited scope of topics with serious, established methodology, Hito Steyerl has reveled in and improvised on the erratically morphing language of hyper-reality.

In conjunction with the two works on view—*Liquidity Inc.* and *STRIKE*, a 2010 work that harks back to Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 feature about a workers' strike at the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution with piercing concision and potent whimsy, an integral component to THE BANK SHOW sequel is a small selection of the artist's own theoretical (but wildly entertaining) texts which have been translated into Chinese for the first time through a collaboration with The Hunting (GU Qianfan, ZHANG Hanlu, and LIU Qianxi) and artforum.cn. This edition includes Steyerl's seminal essays *In Defense of the Poor Image* (2009), *Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy* (2010), *The Spam of the Earth: Withdrawal from Representation* (2012), as well as a very recent conversation with Laura Poitras, journalist and director of the Academy Award-winning documentary *Citizenfour*. In this mind-bending exchange, Steyerl observes that Poitras' film, which captured Edward Snowden amid his exposé of the NSA spying scandal as it unfolded, seems to "lie in the way all of you came together and then created the event, the story, and many of the tools to tell it while all hell was breaking loose around you." Yet this "lie" seems to be the only way that we can navigate reality today, by creating and post-editing its narrative in real time.

How do we critically engage with events and circumstances of certain magnitude without the necessary historical distance? Hito Steyerl's writings have already opened up some possibilities for fellow artists and art writers. While she predicted that alien intelligence will most likely understand our civilization through spam, due to its crushing dominance over our more refined attributes, her projections are firmly grounded in and

telling of our immediate reality, where "the dream team of hyper-capital-ism" consists of men and women "on knock off antidepressants, fitted with enhanced body parts." Too often the art world finds itself in desper-ate need of utopia, after life, or alternative futures (preferably free of the plight of capitalism), like some kind of ideological cleanse-juice, without realizing its impotence in producing interesting enough works about the present day. "How can people get away with being so boring?" Steyerl asks, reminding us that even in a world where our actions are only mean-ingful when imaged and our presence visible by coerced participation in capitalism, there remains vast, uncharted territories that hold promises for a new discourse in art and politics.

Text / Xin Wang

Techniques of the Observer
Hito Steyerl and Laura Poitras in conversation

"TECHNOLOGY HAS TAKEN US by surprise, and the regions that it has opened up are glaringly empty," Siegfried Kracauer once wrote. The great German film theorist was not merely lamenting the depletion or alienation of life in a mechanized world; he was also expressing elation, anticipation, about the possibilities opened up by technology and in particular by film—a space for play, for discovering extraordinary experiences and visions. The films and videos of LAURA POITRAS and HITO STEYERL conjure a similar sense of exhilaration, exploring as they do wholly new techniques, devices, and immense fields of information. And yet the secrets they uncover and the stories they investigate are often terrifying—whether they are breaking Edward Snowden's revelations of the US government's vast, clandestine surveillance of its own citizens or teaching us how to hide from drone strikes in a half but also deadly serious way. *Artforum* invited Poitras, whose *CITIZENFOUR* won this year's Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, and Steyerl, whose solo exhibition at Artists Space in New York is currently on view, to meet and exchange thoughts about filmmaking, perception, disclosure, encryption, and the promise and peril of the image.

Hito Steyerl, *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013, HD video projection (color, sound, 14 minutes), architectural environment, dimensions variable.

LAURA POITRAS: The last time we saw each other was about two years ago—right before I started getting e-mails from Edward Snowden. And you were working on a project for the Venice Biennale dealing with surveillance and drone strikes.

HITO STEYERL: We were brainstorming about it together. And then a couple of weeks later Snowden contacted you?

LP: Yes. In retrospect, your project foreshadowed a lot of the Snowden revelations.

HS: I made a video called *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* [2013], which dealt with how to be invisible in the age of surveillance. It premiered, and four days later the leaks hit. It was amazing. I was seeing Snowden everywhere. And I knew you were involved.

LP: A lot of people would think that this idea of disappearing was just paranoid. But if you're living in a place that's a potential target for drone strikes, then needing to disappear visually or going off the grid are not just theoretical scenarios. They're real questions.

HS: Absolutely. Actually, your idea for how not to be seen was to create a phone app that would warn you if there were drones approaching.

And the problem was that I had no idea how I could produce such a thing. But you already had a wealth of strategies and techniques to do something like that. I was in awe, because you had this vast knowledge of encryption, having air-gapped computers that never went online, and so on.

LP: Before Snowden, I'd already had to figure out means of securing information. At that point I was filming a lot with Jacob Appelbaum, who was traveling throughout the Middle East to train activists on communication security. That was really sensitive footage—covering everything from the Egyptian resistance movement to the situation in Tunisia—and so we had to be careful, because there were people who didn't want to be identified.

But what I love about *How Not to Be Seen*, and your work in general, are the strategies that you use to combine documentary elements with fiction, with extremely playful storytelling—the threat of surveillance and this almost slapstick approach to evading it. So I'm curious: What's the

progression when you're beginning to conceive of a piece? Do you know: "This is where the idea begins"?

HS: Well, in the case of *How Not to Be Seen*, it started with a real story that I was told about how rebels avoid being detected by drones. The drone sees movement and body heat. So these people would cover themselves with a reflective plastic sheet and douse themselves with water to bring down their body temperature. The paradox, of course, is that a landscape littered with bright plastic-sheet monochromes would be plainly visible to any human eye—but invisible to the drone's computers. And people were reading books underneath these sheets until the drones left. They brought them along for the occasion. It was actually a great opportunity for them to study and to take a break: The drone shadow became a sort of university.

How about you? In the case of the last film, I remember, we talked about it being a film about whistle-blowers in general, and you already had a lot of footage. And then things started to happen and the project completely changed.
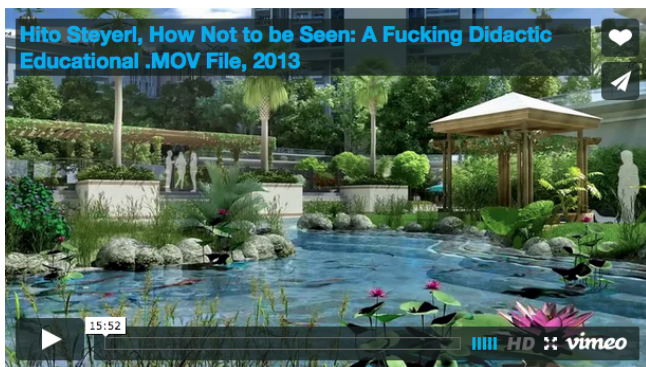
Hito Steyerl, *How Not to be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File,* 2013

LP: Snowden contacting me out of the blue is an example of why I love doing work that is in dialogue with the world around me, because I literally could never have imagined Edward Snowden. The limits of my imagination are much less interesting than what I encounter going into the field and filming. So yes, it obviously changed the narrative. But part of vérité

filmmaking, and documenting in the present tense as things unfold, is going where the story leads. It's uncertain and scary at times, but that is why there is drama. It wasn't difficult to shift the focus around something that obviously has a lot of gravitational pull, which Snowden had.

HS: And then you met Snowden and you filmed in that hotel room in Hong Kong. How did you work on it after that?

LP: In Hong Kong, I just tried to document as much as I could, not really knowing what would happen. Throughout the filming there, I was in a state of shock—shock over the top-secret documents, shock over meeting Snowden and discovering how young he was and the risks he faced, and shock over knowing we were about to anger the most powerful people in the world and that there would undoubtedly be a massive backlash.

Glenn [Greenwald] and I both had seen what had happened with Chelsea Manning and how the media had crafted a narrative that pathologized her. And we were worried something similar could happen in this context. But there was a huge difference with Snowden, because he had decided that he would come forward. He had made the decision not to conceal his identity. When he first told me that, I was terrified—I thought that this was like committing suicide. Up until then, I had assumed he hoped to remain an anonymous source. In hindsight, though, it was very smart and very risky—he knew that he wouldn't be able to remain anonymous, so he decided to preemptively disclose his identity. When I asked to meet him in person and film him, he was resistant because he didn't want to be the story, and because it was dicey for us all to be together if anyone tried to stop the reporting. But I convinced him, arguing that it was important for people to understand his motivation.

After leaving Hong Kong and returning to Berlin, I knew that I had an obligation to report on the documents. Snowden's very first e-mail to me said: *Whatever happens to me, promise that you'll get this material back to the public*. And so I had to do that. But I'm not a writer—I mean, I've been contributing to print journalism, but I knew that my real contribution would be as a visual journalist and filmmaker.

HS: But I don't think that's entirely correct, because you added some other very important contributions—beyond *CITIZENFOUR* [2014], of course, which is masterful in itself. I think one of your real accomplishments was figuring out how to deal with this kind of information, the

way you handled the reporting, and the way the information was stored, secured, circulated, redacted, checked, and so on. It was an entire art of withholding and disseminating information and carefully determining the circumstances. And this was something new and extremely thoughtful, I think, in relation to how leaks were previously handled—by WikiLeaks, for example. How did you come up with that? How did you make the rules?

Laura Poitras,
CITIZENFOUR, 2014, HD video, color, sound, 114 minutes. Photo: Praxis Films.

LP: You're right that there were a lot of decisions that were put in my hands and in Glenn's. We learned. Both Glenn and I had followed WikiLeaks closely. Glenn had written about it. I had filmed a lot with Julian [Assange]. And we'd seen some of the things that they had accomplished that were really extraordinary, particularly the use of media partners to publish with multiple outlets internationally. In the past, stories were suppressed because the government put pressure on US news organizations. That becomes much harder if a number of different international news organizations have the same information.

We went to multiple organizations as well, but I was very careful with the material. I didn't trust anyone. I didn't want there to be a repeat of what had happened with *The Guardian*, where they published a password that led to the disclosure of the unredacted State Department cables. That was actually the failure of the journalist, who had failed to protect a password, not the failure of WikiLeaks.

Because the NSA [National Security Agency] material is so sensitive, I felt

that everything had to be developed on a story-by-story basis with news organizations and that only the sets of documents around those particular stories should be shared. And that has pros and cons. The drawback is that the reporting happens more slowly; there has been criticism about that, and I actually think that criticism is correct. I wish I could have published more quickly. But I didn't have a newsroom behind me when Snowden contacted me. I had to build these relationships as I was going, though I remained totally independent—I have freelance agreements with many news organizations, but I work story by story and I don't promise exclusivity, which keeps me flexible. After I published the prism story with the *Washington Post* [PRISM is the code name for the NSA's secret Internet-communication data-collection program], I started working with *Der Spiegel* in Germany and with the *New York Times*, and Glenn was working with *The Guardian*. But Glenn and I felt that Snowden had entrusted us as journalists—individual journalists. He didn't entrust *Der Spiegel* or *The Guardian* or the *New York Times*. And so we weren't going to just hand over the entire archive, because we'd seen this go badly, particularly in the case of The Guardian's publication of the password.

HS: It means that you decide, OK, there is this subset of documents and I'm going to partner up with a specific organization and let's work on that topic. And that becomes a kind of aesthetic decision.

LP: No, that's just a strategy of publication. It wasn't about aesthetics.

HS: I disagree. It really is a formal decision, about how to format information, about its form. And that's important on the level of safety, of course, but also in terms of protecting your autonomy and the autonomy of the work. It is about aesthetic autonomy, too. To go back to our first meeting, it was so interesting because we began a series of conversations about Turkish jet strikes in Turkey facilitated by American drone reconnaissance, and then two years later you published the corresponding NSA documents about those strikes with *Der Spiegel*, which showed exactly the station that relayed the information to the Turkish air force to send jets to perform the airstrikes. It's like you and Snowden suddenly provided something I thought would be hidden forever: the perspective, the aerial perspective.

LP: Yes, but you're the one who built the artwork around that information, which is different.

HS: Well, one thing that is clearly part of your technique is your fly-on-the-wall point of view, which you had used extensively before shooting in Hong Kong—in Yemen and so on. I always marvel about that take where you managed to film your protagonist and his little son praying at dawn. How did you even get in the room?

But there are also your skills of editing, which are being expanded by techniques of encryption—techniques of selection—and ways to keep material safe and to distribute information. Not only making it public, divulging or disclosing, but really finding new formats and circuits for it. I think this is an art that has not yet been defined as such, but it is, well, aesthetic. It's a form.

This is the major creative challenge not only in your case but in general, if you have a database. This harks back to the WikiLeaks issue, where the database is just a trove of information, and you have to create a sort of narrative in order to navigate the data. What kind of storytelling can adapt to the technological novelty and also to the vastness of the database as an archive?

Lev Manovich, the new-media theorist, wrote about databases. He goes back to Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* [1929], focusing on the editing work—navigating a database of footage—rather than the camera-work. But—and I've often thought about you when thinking through this question—how does the editor work in the twenty-first century? Especially if, as in your case, the editor is also the person with the movie camera and the Soundbeam and the encrypted hard drive; she is a writer who designs a whole infrastructure of communication. And she's a woman, not a man! Vertov's team had several film reels. That was it—that was their archive. Now it's not only about narration but also about navigation, translation, braving serious personal risk, and evading a whole bunch of military spooks. It's about handling transparency as well as opacity, in a new, vastly extended kind of filmmaking that requires vastly extended skills.

LP: Ironically, one of the unintended consequences of being put on a US government watch list and interrogated every time I crossed the US border is that it made me smarter about how to circumvent the state, and it toughened me up. I'd already reached the decision that I would not be intimidated. So, in a way, I am grateful to all the border agents who provided essential training for when Snowden's first e-mail arrived in my inbox. In terms of the broader questions about the archive itself and how to

find meaning, that's one of the things I'm thinking about for my upcoming show at the Whitney [Museum of American Art in New York]. The archive has tremendous amounts of "news" and evidence of abuses of government power, but it also opens a window onto a parallel world that operates in secret and wields tremendous global power. There is a whole culture, language, and worldview that is not just about facts. That's one of the things I'm working on now.

HS: How does the NSA even do it themselves? How do they manage their information?

LP: Creating narratives from vast amounts of data is a challenge for the NSA—they are ingesting billions of data points every day—and they're not very good at it. They use graphs and visualization tools. For instance, they have a program called TREASUREMAP that provides analysts with a near-real-time map of the Internet and every device connected to it. One of the pieces I'm doing for the Whitney will also be called TREASURE-MAP, and it's a sort of subversive countermapping. I think the real core of the NSA's approach to data collection is retrospective querying—how to see narratives after the fact. That is why they want to "collect it all," which of course violates all kinds of fundamental principles of the rule of law and probable cause. These violations range from watch lists to far worse abuses, like using metadata to target people for assassination in the drone program.

What is your approach to editing and the archive in your own work?

HS: Well, I've always been engaged with editing. And I think that editing, not only in filmmaking but in a lot of different activities, is a crucial activity. Postproduction is not working on content in retrospect but creating the content. Editing is where the meaning is created.

Godard said an edit could be an "and" or an "or." That is how traditional film or video editing works. But now editing, with newer media and with physical reality becoming mediatized to a large extent, becomes a much more expanded activity, being able to channel and process information and to put together meaning in a much more expanded field.

Now instead of expanded cinema, it's expanded editing, expanded postproduction, and circulation across different platforms and formats. I think it's one of the crucial lenses through which to analyze contempo-
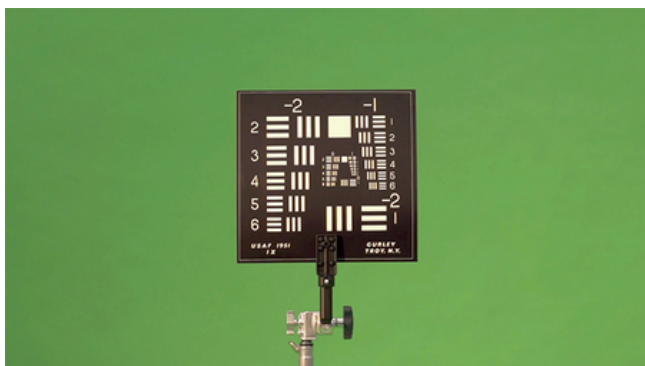
Hito Steyerl, *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013, HD video projection (color, sound, 14 minutes), architectural environment, dimensions variable.

LP: Do you edit alone, or do you work with an editor?

HS: I do the editing on my own, but then there is color correction, compositing, and 3D modeling and rendering. My team does the bulk of this work. But I see the effects, too: When I'm working in After Effects, there is hardly any real-time playback. So much information is being processed, it might take two hours or longer before you see the result. So editing is replaced by rendering. Rendering, rendering, staring at the render bar. It feels like I am being rendered all the time.

What do you do if you don't really see what you edit while you're doing it? You speculate. It's speculative editing. You try to guess what it's going to look like if you put keyframes here and here and here. Then there are the many algorithms that do this kind of speculation for you.

LP: One of the most disorienting aspects of doing this NSA story is how to process all the different roles I'm occupying simultaneously. How do you identify your own position?

HS: Well, I never was trained to be an artist, nor do I aspire to be labeled as such. It's strange to me. But the art world has become a sort of sensory industry—an industry that expresses so many of the tensions that surround us, from anything connected to real estate to militarization to

sponsorship to geopolitics to general working conditions and inequality, from the intern to the high-net-worth individual.

LP: I just read your recent essay about the planning of a redesigned National Museum in Damascus, which articulates these issues so beautifully. How do you navigate within institutions like the museum, the market? Do you sell your work in editions?

HS: Yes, I do editions. But the contract states that the work is free to circulate on- or off-line in any form whatsoever. It isn't restricted to editions.

LP: Have you ever thought of making a feature film?

HS: No, I know that in the places where I show my work, the attention span is just not there. It's very difficult to show ninety minutes. People are just going to abandon it. In the cinema it is different.

LP: One of the best things about cinema is the fact that you have a captive audience—you've got them for those ninety minutes. There is popcorn, you feed them, you give them a comfortable chair. You don't have to worry about them wandering in and out.

I think in the art world, duration is often seen as transgressive because it's somehow forcing the audience to go beyond their comfort level, to subject them to an endurance test. And yet duration is absolutely accepted within mainstream cinema. So duration is perceived very differently in those two domains. Warhol, of course, was the supreme example of really pushing that in beautiful ways.

Laura Poitras, *CITIZENFOUR*
2014, HD video, color, sound, 114 minutes. Photo: Praxis Films.

HS: AS ART, *CITIZENFOUR* does something very effortlessly that many artists strive to achieve—it infiltrates the circuits of mass media. In fact, it is the most influential and efficient political work of art of the twenty-first century so far, without following any of the narrow doctrines of so-called political art. And even though you are independent, you released this film commercially—which helped it reach something of the magnitude of audience that the initial Snowden videos did.

LP: I released the film commercially because my work does fall within the storytelling genre of movies. And the type of storytelling that I'm drawn to, which is about understanding bigger themes through the narratives of individuals confronting conflict, happens to align itself with more popular cinema. So while I'm not bending my practice to speak to that audience, or making compromises, it does have the potential to reach a popular audience. And I love that. What's so beautiful about cinema is that it's a populist medium. *CITIZENFOUR* fits within a long tradition of Hollywood films about the individual against the state.

HS: But again, I think a lot of it is unprecedented because the film feels like the documentation of its own making. The event of reporting itself is the thing that's covered. The film is more like the documentation of a work than a work itself. But the work also seems to lie in the way all of you came together and then created the event, the story, and many of the tools to tell it while all hell was breaking loose around you. The work is, ultimately, the making of an expansive and complex process that has political, juridical, informational, aesthetic, and infrastructural levels that have not yet fully unfolded.

LP: Well, I'll agree there were some unprecedented aspects about what went down—the magnitude of the disclosures, Snowden outing himself, the anti-establishment journalist getting the scoop, and the filmmaker as participant.

It was complicated to navigate. I knew, for instance, right before we were going to break the Angela Merkel story, that it was going to be big. And, of course, I'm going to bring the camera and document that day. So there was this weird convergence between events that I could foresee having impact and then documenting them, and those I could not foresee.

Do you feel that in your own work you might create situations or be a catalyst, and could have an effect on the subject down the line?

HS: I don't think so, no.

LP: But your own approach to storytelling plays with time and cause and effect.

HS: Well, one of the main questions for me is in the genre of dealing with real life: how to deal with it formally. There is a standard set of formal expressions that are used in traditional journalism. And some of them are really necessary, like fact-checking. But my conviction is that, now more than ever, real life is much stranger than any fiction one could imagine. So somehow the forms of reporting have to become crazier and stranger, too. Otherwise they are not going to be "documentary" enough, they are not going to live up to what's happening.

LP: What kinds of forms do you think are commensurate with this new subject matter?

HS: For me, the whole issue of the relationship between, let's say, image life, what we used to call representation, and so-called reality. The thing formerly called real life has already become deeply imaged. And it is about finding different forms of circulation, even physically altering the infrastructure, since existing circuits are controlled by governments and corporations.

LP: I went to Artists Space today and had a look when you were installing, and this tense relationship between representation and reality was palpable. I was surprised to see the Weather Underground, for instance, channeled in a very funny, surreal way. Do you know the film called Underground [1976], about the group? Emile de Antonio, Mary Lampson, and Haskell Wexler made this film at the time the group was in hiding, which was a piece of really bold filmmaking.

HS: I saw it maybe twenty years ago and loved it. Of course, today, the Weather Underground is the name of a corporate weather-forecasting website. At one point it stated explicitly that they took the name from this radical organization.

In my video, reporters supposedly from the Weather Underground—played by a young girl and two adult performers—come onstage to announce the weather, but the weather is a strange mixture of man-made weather, political weather, affective weather, all sorts of catastrophes, going crazy: climate change, financial, geopolitical. There are storms brewing everywhere, different bits and pieces mixed up in one continuous tsunami.

LP: It's a great metaphor. It hit me when I walked in—I was surrounded by all this blue. And I had a very emotional reaction; I felt like I was descending into something.

HS: I was actually trying to evoke the sensation that the whole space is underwater. There are blue gels on the window to flood the whole space in blue.

LP: It's really beautiful. And the curved seating area—is that a wave?

HS: Yes, there's a recurrent motif in the film, which is the Hokusai wave—The Great Wave off Kanagawa, I think it's called. It's the quintessential Japanese woodcut from the nineteenth century. Mount Fuji is in the background, with boats precariously dangling under the wave. And that scene repeats in the film.

The work is inspired by Jacob Wood, a financial adviser turned MMA [mixed martial arts] commentator. He links different types of liquidity to one another: a risk-based financial liquidity that could at any moment morph into a perfect storm, and the graceful fluidity that Bruce Lee described: "Be formless, shapeless, like water . . . water can flow, or creep, or drip, or crash. Be water, my friend." The video is installed inside a half-pipe/wave/gym structure, where kids can play or people can fall asleep if they want to. I have a feeling they should take off their shoes and bow to the mat, but that's probably asking too much in a Western context.

Hito Steyerl, *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013, HD video projection (color, sound, 14 minutes), architectural environment, dimensions variable. Hito Steyerl.

LP: I WANT TO SPEAK to you about writing something based on the Snowden archive for the Whitney catalogue I'm working on—not from a news perspective but rather from a theoretical and artistic perspective.

HS: Yes, I'd want to look into what was happening in Turkey. In your *Der Spiegel* article, you also detailed the internal cooperation of the NSA with the Turkish secret police and the way in which all cell-phone communications, basically, are being monitored.

And I met the people whose cellphone communication transcripts were read in court: journalists, politicians, all facing years of prison for writing articles or communicating on the phone. This was being construed as terrorism. Turkey has a notoriously abysmal record when it comes to the freedom of press and of speech. But now we see the chain of surveillance: The NSA provides the data for another country's accusations. Now we know how it works, thanks to Mr. Snowden.

LP: Through the archive, you come to understand that everything is like a chess game. There's what we pretend is the political reality that we live in and then there are the actual moves that happen underneath, the realpolitik beneath the stage politics. We've seen that with the WikiLeaks releases. And it's just incredible to be able to look inside and see how the deep state works.

HS: The case of Turkey proves how their state is supported by Western surveillance infrastructure, a deep state par excellence, upgraded by corporate collaboration. I have always been convinced that this would never be revealed. I grew up in Europe, and many of my friends—all Eastern European—have been able to see their Secret Service dossiers, because they were declassified after the fall of Communism. But those of us who lived in the West never got a chance.

There is a real "before" and "after" the Snowden leaks.

LP: The narratives you build, these primary documents you're riffing off of, remind me of Alexander Kluge, his writing as much as his films—his insistence on posing oppositional or alternative public spheres, his use of primary documents as jumping-off points for narratives and critiques.

HS: Yes. There is a lot of carryover from Kluge and his collaboration with Oskar Negt.

LP: In a way, we've lost that intimate, critically intertwined relationship between art and cinema. Often, when I go to see contemporary art and

I'm looking at moving-image work, I'm disappointed because it seems very rudimentary. Sometimes I look at a video in a gallery and I just think, Wow, the production values are so low.

HS: That's fine. If the production values are low, it's not a problem. But how can people get away with being so boring?

What about image quality in your own work? What kind of production values do you seek?

LP: My work has gone from 16 millimeter to digital standard definition to high definition. But I don't really subscribe to the idea of some big difference between digital and analog. My work is much more driven by people and narratives, even as I want the image to be cinematic.

HS: But you shot most of your work on small, handheld cameras, no? And you did most of the work yourself. In Iraq and Yemen you did it all by yourself. And this defines your special relation to the people you film—the relationship that you build in order to be able to film them. I think that would dramatically change if there were more crew, bigger gear, lights.

LP: Yes, that's true, in the case of both Iraq and Hong Kong. They were both dangerous situations, so working alone made more sense. I'll take the risks because it's my work, but I don't want somebody else taking the same risks.

Laura Poitras, *The Oath*, 2010, 35 mm, color, sound, 96 minutes.

LP: THE NEXT PROJECT I'm doing is the one at the Whitney, and I don't quite know what it means yet. What is the relationship between that museum context and the public? How is political content contained in a museum context? How is it different from a movie theater?

HS: I think in terms of political context, you don't have to worry. You could go on to abstract painting for the rest of your life. You're covered. You have street cred.

LP: I'm not so sure that's true or if I can count on that.

HS: The other question is, of course, entirely relevant. I think that needs to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. And it depends on the content that you're going to place in there and how it communicates with this precise location.

LP: I'm excited about doing installation-based work because it doesn't have the same constraints as long-form narrative filmmaking, where you have to choose only those three minutes of footage that are what you need at that point in your narrative. I'm looking forward to being liberated from that, to let the audience participate more in the narrative experience—to hand over some of the choices. I won't abandon narrative—there will be a beginning, middle, and end, with reveals and turning points—but how the work is navigated by the viewer will be more dynamic.

How did you come up with the configuration of the display at Artists Space, all the different elements?

HS: There are five video works. And behind the bookstore, there is an event space where I installed three of my lectures. All these lectures deal in some way with the museum as battlefield. In one of them, I speculate about a stage set consisting of a barricade where unpaid art-world interns pitch their projects to posh juries. So we actually built a barricade with FEMA sandbags. You could use it to prevent flooding or to take cover from enemy fire. But in the bookstore, the structure also doubles as a couch for watching TV. One of the lectures has slides and animations projected into something that looks like a military sandbox, which is what soldiers use to plot a terrain and analyze lines of sight. I learned that sandboxing is also a term in computer security, where you basically fence off virtual environments. So this is more like the playground part of the exhibition where, since it's not art, you're allowed to play around and experiment.

LP: I thought it was the other way around. Since it is art, you get to play around and experiment.

HS: But you know, it's much better if it's not considered art, because then you can really do whatever you want.

LP: And what's the lecture you're doing tomorrow?

HS: It's called "Duty Free Art," and it's about the phenomena of freeport art storages, extraterritorial zones of a kind, in tandem with the initiative to redesign the National Museum in Damascus and other building projects in Syria. On WikiLeaks, there are actually e-mails presumed to be exchanged between the administration of the Syrian ruler, Bashar al-Assad, and none other than Rem Koolhaas's studio, OMA. When I asked OMA to confirm the messages' authenticity, their reply was genius: "We are not able to confirm the authenticity of [these e-mails]." Just imagine this as a template for certificates of art editions: "I am not able to confirm the authenticity of this artwork." The art world as we know it would come crashing down!

People tend to think of these types of lectures as performance, but they're totally not. It's not theater. It's not even a lecture. It's more like a talk. It comes from my activity as a teacher.

For me, giving a talk is what I do when I have no budget, since it's so cheap. I like it. It's like an austerity form. You can always fall back on that. You're left to your own devices. That—"Left to Your Own Devices"— was actually going to be the title of the show at Artists Space. An homage to the Pet Shop Boys. Unfortunately I forgot about it!

LP: That's a great title—you need to use that someday.

HS: It would also be a wonderful way to describe your work: left to your own devices!

LP: Your talks seem in line with the way you constantly develop and re-develop pieces—there's a spontaneity, a provisional aspect to your work. How do you continue the research from one project to the next?

HS: With November [2004], for example, I constantly revisit the material. This is the film about a friend who was killed in Kurdistan; more or less

every two years I do another update, because things change so dramatically.

In your case, it's not a coincidence that Snowden contacted you. In my case, I was faced with this situation out of the blue. I had a teenage friend, Andrea Wolf, who went underground and joined the women's army of the PKK [Kurdistan Workers' Party] around 1996. She was eventually extrajudicially executed after a battle with Turkish armed forces. I didn't have anything to do with it, and it took me a long time to understand anything about this situation. But it came to define a lot of my work and also life right now.

LP: What are those unanswered questions you have around that, or unexpressed feelings?

HS: Well, the case has not been clarified yet, and it may never be. But I think politically the situation is different. As you wrote in your article in Der Spiegel, the PKK is now part of an American-led coalition against Daesh [ISIS], more or less. Those same female militants who used to be killed as terrorists have now become role models in the fight for gender equality. They fight with tremendous courage and still face death. The situation keeps shifting all the time, but the most fascinating aspects are the real changes within parts of Kurdish society, the turn toward basic democracy and experiments with autonomy. In the middle of an extremely violent civil war, it's a daunting, admirable, and constantly endangered project.

LP: And you want to continue researching and updating the work?

HS: It's not that I want to; it's that it has not set me free yet. The situation is still ongoing and changing, and I feel I haven't learned enough yet. Maybe one day.

In Defense of the Poor Image

The poor image is a copy in motion. Its quality is bad, its resolution substandard. As it accelerates, it deteriorates. It is a ghost of an image, a preview, a thumbnail, an errant idea, an itinerant image distributed for free, squeezed through slow digital connections, compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed, as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution.

The poor image is a rag or a rip; an AVI or a JPEG, a lumpen proletariat in the class society of appearances, ranked and valued according to its resolution. The poor image has been uploaded, downloaded, shared, reformatted, and reedited.

It transforms quality into accessibility, exhibition value into cult value, films into clips, contemplation into distraction. The image is liberated from the vaults of cinemas and archives and thrust into digital uncertainty, at the expense of its own substance. The poor image tends toward abstraction: it is a visual idea in its very becoming.

The poor image is an illicit fifth-generation bastard of an original image. Its genealogy is dubious. Its file names are deliberately misspelled. It often defies patrimony, national culture, or indeed copyright. It is passed on as a lure, a decoy, an index, or as a reminder of its former visual self. It mocks the promises of digital technology. Not only is it often degraded to the point of being just a hurried blur, one even doubts whether it could be called an image at all. Only digital technology could produce such a dilapidated image in the first place.

Poor images are the contemporary Wretched of the Screen, the debris of audiovisual production, the trash that washes up on the digital economies' shores. They testify to the violent dislocation, transferrals, and displacement of images—their acceleration and circulation within the vicious cycles of audiovisual capitalism. Poor images are dragged around the globe as commodities or their effigies, as gifts or as bounty. They spread pleasure or death threats, conspiracy theories or bootlegs, resistance or stultification. Poor images show the rare, the obvious, and the unbelievable—that is, if we can still manage to decipher it.

Low Resolutions

In one of Woody Allen's films the main character is out of focus.[1] It's not a technical problem but some sort of disease that has befallen him: his image is consistently blurred. Since Allen's character is an actor, this becomes a major problem: he is unable to find work. His lack of definition turns into a material problem. Focus is identified as a class position, a position of ease and privilege, while being out of focus lowers one's value as an image. The contemporary hierarchy of images, however, is not only based on sharpness, but also and primarily on resolution. Just look at any electronics store and this system, described by Harun Farocki in a notable 2007 interview, becomes immediately apparent.[2]

In the class society of images, cinema takes on the role of a flagship store. In flagship stores high-end products are marketed in an upscale environment. More affordable derivatives of the same images circulate as DVDs, on broadcast television, or online, as poor images.

Obviously, a high-resolution image looks more brilliant and impressive, more mimetic and magic, more scary and seductive than a poor one. It is more rich, so to speak. Now, even consumer formats are increasingly adapting to the tastes of cineastes and esthetes, who insisted on 35 mm film as a guarantee of pristine visuality. The insistence upon analog film as the sole medium of visual importance resounded throughout

Public ceremony organized by the mayor of Puebla, Mexico, to destroy pirated DVDs in circulation.

discourses on cinema, almost regardless of their ideological inflection. It never mattered that these high-end economies of film production were (and still are) firmly anchored in systems of national culture, capitalist studio production, the cult of mostly male genius, and the original version, and thus are often conservative in their very structure. Resolution was fetishized as if its lack amounted to castration of the author. The cult of film gauge dominated even independent film production. The rich image established its own set of hierarchies, with new technologies offering more and more possibilities to creatively degrade it.

Resurrection (as Poor Images)

But insisting on rich images also had more serious consequences. A speaker at a recent conference on the film essay refused to show clips from a piece by Humphrey Jennings because no proper film projection was available. Although there was at the speaker's disposal a perfectly standard DVD player and video projector, the audience was left to imagine what those images might have looked like.

In this case the invisibility of the image was more or less voluntary and based on aesthetic premises. But it has a much more general equivalent based on the consequences of neoliberal policies. Twenty or even thirty years ago, the neo-liberal restructuring of media production began slowly obscuring noncommercial imagery, to the point where experimental and essayistic cinema became almost invisible. As it became prohibitively expensive to keep these works circulating in cinemas, so were they also deemed too marginal to be broadcast on television. Thus they slowly disap- peared not just from cinemas, but from the public sphere as well. Video essays and experimental films remained for the most part unseen save for some rare screenings in metropolitan film museums or film clubs, projected in their original resolution before disappearing again into the darkness of the archive.

This development was of course connected to the neoliberal radicalization of the concept of culture as commodity, to the commercialization of cinema, its dispersion into multiplexes, and the marginalization of independent filmmaking. It was also connected to the restructuring of global media industries and the establishment of monopolies over the audiovisual in certain countries or territories. In this way, resistant or nonconformist visual matter disappeared from the surface into an un-

derground of alternative archives and collections, kept alive only by a network of committed organizations and individuals, who would circulate bootlegged VHS copies among themselves. Sources for these were extremely rare—tapes moved from hand to hand, depending on word of mouth, within circles of friends and colleagues. With the possibility to stream video online, this condition started to dramatically change. An increasing number of rare materials reappeared on publicly accessible platforms, some of them carefully curated (UbuWeb) and some just a pile of stuff (YouTube).

At present, there are at least twenty torrents of Chris Marker's film essays available online. If you want a retrospective, you can have it. But the economy of poor images is about more than just downloads: you can keep the files, watch them again, even reedit or improve them if you think it necessary. And the results circulate. Blurred AVI files of half-forgotten masterpieces are exchanged on semi-secret P2P platforms. Clandestine cellphone videos smuggled out of museums are broadcast on YouTube. DVDs of artists' viewing copies are bartered.[3] Many works of avant-garde, essayistic, and noncommercial cinema have been resurrected as poor images. Whether they like it or not.
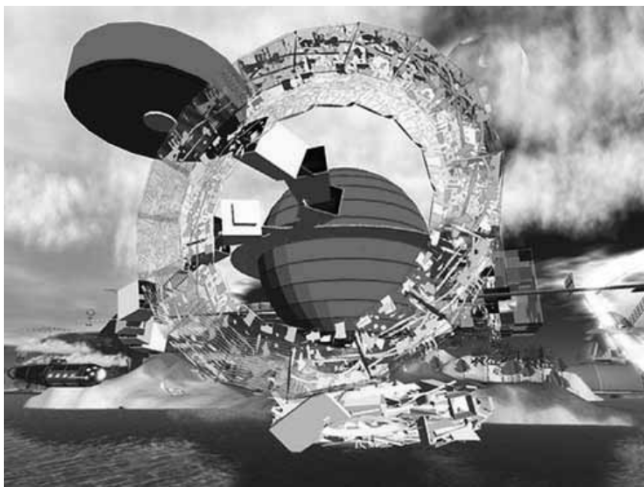
Chris Marker's virtual home as found in Second Life, May 29, 2009.

Privatization and Piracy

That rare prints of militant, experimental, and classical works of cinema as well as video art reappear as poor images is significant on another level. Their situation reveals much more than the content or appearance of the images themselves: it also reveals the conditions of their marginalization, the constellation of social forces leading to their online circulation as poor images.[4] Poor images are poor because they are not assigned any value within the class society of images—their status as illicit or degraded grants them exemption from its criteria. Their lack of resolution attests to their appropriation and displacement.[5]

Obviously, this condition is not only connected to the neoliberal restructuring of media production and digital technology; it also has to do with the post-socialist and postcolonial restructuring of nationstates, theircultures,and their archives. Whilesome nation-states are dismantled or fall apart, new cultures and traditions are invented and new histories created. This obviously also affects film archives— in many cases, a whole heritage of film prints is left without its supporting framework of national culture. As I once observed in the case of a film museum in Sarajevo, the national archive can find its next life in the form of a video-rental store.[6] Pirate copies seep out of such archives through disorganized privatization. On the other hand, even the British Library sells off its contents online at astronomical prices.

As Kodwo Eshun has noted, poor images circulate partly in the void left by state cinema organizations who find it too difficult to operate as a 16/35 mm archive or to maintain any kind of distribution infrastructure in the contemporary era.[7] From this perspective, the poor image reveals the decline and degradation of the film essay, or indeed any experimental and noncommercial cinema, which in many places was made possible because the production of culture was considered a task of the state. Privatization of media production gradually grew more important than state-controlled/sponsored media production. But, on the other hand, the rampant privatization of intellectual content, along with online marketing and commodification, also enables piracy and appropriation; it gives rise to the circulation of poor images.

Imperfect Cinema

The emergence of poor images reminds one of a classic Third Cinema manifesto, "For an Imperfect Cinema,"by Juan García Espinosa, written

in Cuba in the late 1960s.[8] Espinosa argues for an imperfect cinema because, in his words, "perfect cinema—technically and artistically masterful—is almost always reactionary cinema." The imperfect cinema is one that strives to overcome the divisions of labor within class society. It merges art with life and science, blurring the distinction between consumer and producer, audience and author. It insists upon its own imperfection, is popular but not consumerist, committed without becoming bureaucratic.

In his manifesto, Espinosa also reflects on the promises of new media. He clearly predicts that the development of video technology will jeopardize the elitist position of traditional filmmakers and enable some sort of mass film production: an art of the people. Like the economy of poor images, imperfect cinema diminishes the distinctions between author and audience and merges life and art. Most of all, its visuality is resolutely compromised: blurred, amateurish, and full of artifacts.

In some way, the economy of poor images corresponds to the description of imperfect cinema, while the description of perfect cinema represents rather the concept of cinema as a flagship store. But the real and contemporary imperfect cinema is also much more ambivalent and affective than Espinosa had anticipated. On the one hand, the economy of poor images, with its immediate possibility of worldwide distribution and its ethics of remix and appropriation, enables the participation of a much larger group of producers than ever before. But this does not mean that these opportunities are only used for progressive ends. Hate speech, spam, and other rubbish make their way through digital connections as well. Digital communication has also become one of the most contested markets—a zone that has long been subjected to an ongoing original accumulation and to massive (and, to a certain extent, successful) attempts at privatization.

The networks in which poor images circulate thus constitute both a platform for a fragile new common interest and a battleground for commercial and national agendas. They contain experimental and artistic material, but also incredible amounts of porn and paranoia. While the territory of poor images allows access to excluded imagery, it is also permeated by the most advanced commodification techniques. While it enables the users' active participation in the creation and distribution of content, it also drafts them into production. Users become the editors, critics, translators, and (co)-authors of poor images.

Poor images are thus popular images—images that can be made and seen by the many. They express all the contradictions of the contemporary crowd: its opportunism, narcissism, desire for autonomy and creation, its inability to focus or make up its mind, its constant readiness for transgression and simultaneous submission.[9] Altogether, poor images present a snapshot of the affective condition of the crowd, its neurosis, paranoia, and fear, as well as its craving for intensity, fun, and distraction. The condition of the images speaks not only of countless transfers and reformattings, but also of the countless people who cared enough about them to convert them over and over again, to add subtitles, reedit, or upload them.

In this light, perhaps one has to redefine the value of the image, or, more precisely, to create a new perspective for it. Apart from resolution and exchange value, one might imagine another form of value defined by velocity, intensity, and spread. Poor images are poor because they are heavily compressed and travel quickly. They lose matter and gain speed. But they also express a condition of dematerialization, shared not only with the legacy of Conceptual art but above all with contemporary modes of semiotic production.[10] Capital's semiotic turn, as described by Félix Guattari,[11] plays in favor of the creation and dissemination of compressed and flexible data packages that can be integrated into ever-newer combinations and sequences.[12]

This flattening-out of visual content—the concept-in-becoming of the images—positions them within a general informational turn, within economies of knowledge that tear images and their captions out of context into the swirl of permanent capitalist deterritorialization.[13] The history of Conceptual art describes this dematerialization of the art object first as a resistant move against the fetish value of visibility. Then, however, the dematerialized art object turns out to be perfectly adapted to the semioticization of capital, and thus to the conceptual turn of capitalism.[14] In a way, the poor image is subject to a similar tension. On the one hand, it operates against the fetish value of high resolution. On the other hand, this is precisely why it also ends up being perfectly integrated into an information capitalism thriving on compressed attention spans, on impression rather than immersion, on intensity rather than contemplation, on previews rather than screenings.

Comrade, what is your visual bond today?

But, simultaneously, a paradoxical reversal happens. The circulation of poor images creates a circuit, which fulfills the original ambitions of

militant and (some) essayistic and experimental cinema—to create an alternative economy of images, an imperfect cinema existing inside as well as beyond and under commercial media streams. In the age of file sharing, even marginalized content circulates again and reconnects dispersed worldwide audiences.

The poor image thus constructs anonymous global networks just as it creates a shared history. It builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates. By losing its visual substance it recovers some of its political punch and creates a new aura around it. This aura is no longer based on the permanence of the "original," but on the transience of the copy. It is no longer anchored within a classical public sphere mediated and supported by the frame of the nation-state or corporation, but floats on the surface of temporary and dubious data pools.[15]

By drifting away from the vaults of cinema, it is propelled onto new and ephemeral screens stitched together by the desires of dispersed spectators.

The circulation of poor images thus creates "visual bonds," as Dziga Vertov once called them.[16] This visual bond was, according to Vertov, supposed to link the workers of the world with each other.[17]

He imagined a sort of communist, visual, Adamic language that could not only inform or entertain, but also organize its viewers. In a sense, his dream has come true, if mostly under the rule of a global information capitalism whose audiences are linked almost in a physical sense by mutual excitement, affective attunement, and anxiety.

But there is also the circulation and production of poor images based on cellphone cameras, home computers, and unconventional forms of distribution. Its optical connections—collective editing, file sharing, or grassroots distribution circuits—reveal erratic and coincidental links between producers everywhere, which simultaneously constitute dispersed audiences.

The circulation of poor images feeds into both capitalist media assembly lines and alternative audiovisual economies. In addition to a lot of confusion and stupefaction, it also possibly creates disruptive movements of thought and affect. The circulation of poor images thus initiates another

chapter in the historical genealogy of nonconformist information circuits: Vertov's visual bonds, the internationalist workers' pedagogies that Peter Weiss described in The Aesthetics of Resistance, the circuits of Third Cinema and Tricontinentalism, of nonaligned filmmaking and thinking. The poor image—ambivalent as its status may be—thus takes its place in the genealogy of carbon-copied pamphlets, cinetrain agitprop films, underground video magazines and other nonconformist materials, which aesthetically often used poor materials. Moreover, it reactualizes many of the historical ideas associated with these circuits, among others Vertov's idea of the visual bond.

Imagine somebody from the past with a beret asking you, "Comrade, what is your visual bond today?"

You might answer: it is this link to the present.

Now!

The poor image embodies the afterlife of many former masterpieces of cinema and video art. It has been expelled from the sheltered paradise that cinema seems to have once been. 18 After being kicked out of the protected and often protectionist arena of national culture, discarded from commercial circulation, these works have become travelers in a digital no-man's-land, constantly shifting their resolution and format, speed and media, sometimes even losing names and credits along the way.

Now many of these works are back—as poor images, I admit. One could of course argue that this is not the real thing, but then—please, any-body— show me this real thing.

The poor image is no longer about the real thing—the originary original. Instead, it is about its own real conditions of existence: about swarm circulation, digital dispersion, fractured and flexible temporalities. It is about defiance and appropriation just as it is about conformism and exploitation.

In short: it is about reality.

Text / Hito Steyerl

1

See Woody Allen, dir., *Deconstructing Harry,* 1997.

2

See "Wer Gemälde wirklich sehen will, geht ja schließlich auch ins Museum," conversation between Harun Farocki and Alexander Horwath, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* June 14, 2007.

3

Sven Lütticken's excellent text "Viewing Copies: On the Mobility of Moving Images," *e-flux journal*, no. 8 (May 2009), drew my attention to this aspect of poor images. See http:// e-flux.com/journal/view/75.

4

Thanks to Kodwo Eshun for point- ing this out.

5

Of course in some cases images with low resolution also appear in mainstream media environments (mainly news), where they are associated with urgency, immediacy, and catastrophe—and are extremely valuable. See Hito Steyerl, "Documentary Uncertain- ty," *A Prior* 15 (2007).

6

See Hito Steyerl, "Politics of the Archive: Translations in Film," transversal (March 2008), http://eipcp.net/ transversal/0608/steyerl/en.

7

From correspondence with the author via e-mail.

8

Julio García Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema," trans. Julianne Burton, *Jump Cut,* no. 20 (1979): 24–26.

9

See Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life,* trans. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito, and Andrea Casson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e),2004).

10

See Alex Alberro, Conceptual *Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

11

Félix Guattari, "Capital as the Integral of Power Formations," in Soft Subversions, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1996), 202.

12

All these developments are discussed in detail in an excellent text by Simon Sheikh, "Objects of Study or Commodification of Knowledge? Remarks on Artistic Research," *Art & Research 2*, no. 2 (Spring 2009), http:// www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/ sheikh.html.

13

See also Alan Sekula, "Reading an Archive: Photography between Labour and Capital," in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Stuart Hall and Jessica Evans (London: Routledge 1999), 181–92.

14

See Alberro, Conceptual Art and the *Politics of Publicity*.

15

The Pirate Bay even seems to have tried acquiring the extraterritorial oil platform of Sealand in order to install its servers there. See Jan Libbenga, "The Pirate Bay plans to buy Sealand," *The Register*, January 12, 2007, http://www.theregister.co.uk/2007/01/12/ pirate_bay_buys_island.

16

Dziga Vertov, "Kinopravda and Radiopravda," in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 52.

17
Ibid.

18
At least from the perspective of nostalgic delusion.

Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy

A standard way of relating politics to art assumes that art represents political issues in one way or another. But there is a much more interesting perspective: the politics of the field of art as a place of work.[1] Simply look at what it does—not what it shows.

Among all other forms of art, fine art has been most closely linked to post-Fordist speculation, with bling, boom, and bust. Contemporary art is no unworldly discipline nestled away in some remote ivory tower. On the contrary, it is squarely placed in the neoliberal thick of things. We cannot dissociate the hype around contemporary art from the shock policies used to defibrillate slowing economies. Such hype embodies the affective dimension of global economies tied to Ponzi schemes, credit addiction, and bygone bull markets. Contemporary art is a brand name without a brand, ready to be slapped onto almost anything, a quick face-lift touting the new creative imperative for places in need of an extreme makeover, the suspense of gambling combined with the stern pleasures of upper-class boarding school education, a licensed playground for a world confused and collapsed by dizzying deregulation. If contemporary art is the answer, the question is, how can capitalism be made more beautiful?

But contemporary art is not only about beauty. It is also about function. What is the function of art within disaster capitalism? Contemporary art feeds on the crumbs of a massive and widespread redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich, conducted by means of an ongoing class struggle from above.[2] It lends primordial accumulation a whiff of postconceptual razzmatazz. Additionally, its reach has grown much more decentralized—important hubs of art are no longer only located in the Western metropolis. Today, deconstructivist contemporary art museums pop up in any self-respecting autocracy. A country with human-rights violations? Bring on the Gehry gallery!

The Global Guggenheim is a cultural refinery for a set of post-democratic oligarchies, as are the countless international biennials tasked with upgrading and reeducating the surplus population.[3] Art thus facilitates the development of a new multipolar distribution of geopolitical power whose predatory economies are often fueled by internal oppression, class war from above, and radical shock-and-awe policies.

Contemporary art thus not only reflects, but actively intervenes in the transition toward a new post-Cold War world order. It is a major player in unevenly advancing semiocapitalism wherever T-Mobile plants its flag. It is involved in mining for raw materials for dual-core processors. It pollutes, gentrifies, and ravishes. It seduces and consumes, then suddenly walks off, breaking your heart. From the deserts of Mongolia to the high plains of Peru, contemporary art is everywhere. And when it is finally dragged into Gagosian dripping from head to toe with blood and dirt, it triggers off rounds and rounds of rapturous applause.

Why and for whom is contemporary art so attractive? One guess: the production of art presents a mirror image of post-democratic forms of hypercapitalism that look set to become the dominant political post-Cold War paradigm. It seems unpredictable, unaccountable, brilliant, mercurial, moody, guided by inspiration and genius. Just as any oligarch aspiring to dictatorship might want to see himself. The traditional conception of the artist's role corresponds all too well with the self-image of wannabe autocrats who see government potentially—and dangerously—as an art form.

Post-democratic government is very much related to this erratic type of male-genius-artist behavior. It is opaque, corrupt, and completely unaccountable. Both models operate within male bonding structures that are as democratic as your local mafia chapter. Rule of law? Why don't we just leave it to taste? Checks and balances? Cheques and balances! Good governance? Bad curating! You see why the contemporary oligarch loves contemporary art: it's just what works for him.

Thus, traditional art production may be a role model for the nouveaux riches created by privatization, expropriation, and speculation. But the actual production of art is simultaneously a workshop for many of the nouveaux poor, trying their luck as JPEG virtuosos and conceptual impostors, as gallerinas and overdrive content providers. Because art also means work, more precisely, strike work.[4]

It is produced as spectacle, on post-Fordist all-you-can-work conveyor belts. Strike or shock work is affective labor at insane speeds—enthusiastic, hyperactive, and deeply compromised.

Originally, strike workers were excess laborers in the early Soviet Union. The term is derived from the expression udarny trud for "superproduc-

tive, enthusiastic labor" (udar for "shock, strike, blow"). Now, transferred to present-day cultural factories, strike work relates to the sensual dimension of shock. Rather than painting, welding, and molding, artistic strike work consists of ripping, chatting, and posing. This accelerated form of artistic production creates punch and glitz, sensation and impact. Its historical origin as format for Stalinist model brigades brings an additional edge to the paradigm of hyperproductivity. Strike workers churn out feelings, perception, and distinction in all possible sizes and variations. Intensity or evacuation, sublime or crap, readymade or ready-made reality—strike work supplies consumers with all they never knew they wanted.

Strike work feeds on exhaustion and tempo, on deadlines and curatorial bullshit, on small talk and fine print. It also thrives on accelerated exploitation. I'd guess that—apart from domestic and care work—art is the industry with the most unpaid labor around. It sustains itself on the time and energy of unpaid interns and self-exploiting actors on pretty much every level and in almost every function. Free labor and rampant exploitation are the invisible dark matter that keeps the cultural sector going.

Free-floating strike workers plus new (and old) elites and oligarchies equal the framework of the contemporary politics of art. While the latter manage the transition to post-democracy, the former image it. But what does this situation actually indicate? Nothing but the ways in which contemporary art is implicated in transforming global power patterns.

Contemporary art's workforce consists largely of people who, despite working constantly, do not correspond to any traditional image of labor. They stubbornly resist settling into any entity recognizable enough to be identified as a class. While the easy way out would be to classify this constituency as multitude or crowd, it might be less romantic to ask whether they are not global lumpenfreelancers, deterritorialized and ideologically free-floating: a reserve army of imagination communicating via Google Translate.

Instead of shaping up as a new class, this fragile constituency may well consist—as Hannah Arendt once spitefully formulated—of the "refuse of all classes." These dispossessed adventurers described by Arendt, the urban pimps and hoodlums ready to be hired as colonial mercenaries and exploiters, are faintly (and quite distortedly) mirrored in the brigades of creative strike workers propelled into the global sphere of circulation known today as the art world.[5] If we acknowledge that current strike

workers might inhabit similarly shifting grounds—the opaque disaster zones of shock capitalism—a decidedly unheroic, conflicted, and ambivalent picture of artistic labor emerges. We have to face up to the fact that there is no automatically available road to resistance and organization for artistic labor. That opportunism and competition are not a deviation of this form of labor but its inherent structure. That this workforce is not ever going to march in unison, except perhaps while dancing to a viral Lady Gaga imitation video. The international is over. Now let's get on with the global.

Here is the bad news: political art routinely shies away from discussing all these matters.[6] Addressing the intrinsic conditions of the art field, as well as the blatant corruption within it—think of bribes to get this or that large-scale biennial into one peripheral region or another—is a taboo even on the agenda of most artists who consider themselves political. Even though political art manages to represent so-called local situations from all over the globe, and routinely packages injustice and destitution, the conditions of its own production and display remain pretty much unexplored. One could even say that the politics of art are the blind spot of much contemporary political art.

Of course, institutional critique has traditionally been interested in similar issues. But today we need a quite extensive expansion of it.[7] Because in contrast to the age of an institutional criticism, which focused on art institutions, or even the sphere of representation at large, art production (consumption, distribution, marketing, etc.) takes on a different and extended role within post-democratic globalization. One example, which is a quite absurd but also common phenomenon, is that radical art is nowadays very often sponsored by the most predatory banks or arms traders and completely embedded in rhetorics of city marketing, branding, and social engineering.[8] For very obvious reasons, this condition is rarely explored within political art, which is in many cases content to offer exotic self-ethnicization, pithy gestures, and militant nostalgia.

I am certainly not arguing for a position of innocence.[9] It is at best illusory, at worst just another selling point. Most of all it is very boring.

But I do think that political artists could become more relevant if they were to confront these issues instead of safely parade as Stalinist realists, CNN situationists, or Jamie Oliver-meets-probation officer social engineers. It's time to kick the hammer-and-sickle souvenir art into the

dustbin. If politics is thought of as the Other, happening somewhere else, always belonging to disenfranchised communities in whose name no one can speak, we end up missing what makes art intrinsically political nowadays: its function as a place for labor, conflict, and … fun—a site of condensation of the contradictions of capital and of extremely entertaining and sometimes devastating misunderstandings between the global and the local.

The art field is a space of wild contradiction and phenomenal exploitation. It is a place of power mongering, speculation, financial engineering, and massive and crooked manipulation. But it is also a site of commonality, movement, energy, and desire. In its best iterations it is a terrific cosmopolitan arena populated by mobile strike workers, itinerant salesmen of self, tech whiz kids, budget tricksters, supersonic translators, PhD interns, and other digital vagrants and day laborers. It's hardwired, thin-skinned, plastic-fantastic. A potential commonplace where competition is ruthless and solidarity remains the only foreign expression. Peopled with charming scumbags, bully-kings, almost-beauty-queens. It's HDMI, CMYK, LGBT. Pretentious, flirtatious, mesmerizing.

This mess is kept afloat by the sheer dynamism of loads and loads of hardworking women.

A hive of affective labor under close scrutiny and controlled by capital, woven tightly into its multiple contradictions. All of this makes it relevant to contemporary reality. Art affects this reality precisely because it is entangled into all of its aspects. It's messy, embedded, troubled, irresistible. We could try to understand its space as a political one instead of trying to represent a politics that is always happening elsewhere. Art is not outside politics, but politics resides within its production, its distribution, and its reception. If we take this on, we might surpass the plane of a politics of representation and embark on a politics that is there, in front of our eyes, ready to embrace.

Text / Hito Steyerl

1

I am expanding on a notion developed by Hongjohn Lin in his curatorial statement for the Taipei Biennial 2010. Hongjohn Lin, "Curatorial Statement," in 10TB Taipei Biennial Guidebook (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2010), 10–11.

2

This has been described as a global and ongoing process of expropriation since the 1970s. See David Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
As for the resulting distribution of wealth, a study by the Helsinki-based World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER) found that in the year 2000, the richest 1 percent of adults alone owned 40 percent of global assets. The bottom half of the world's adult population owned 1 percent of global wealth.
http://www.wider.unu.edu/events/past-events/2006-events/en_GB/05-12-2006/

3

For just one example of oligarch involvement, see Kate Taylor and Andrew E. Kramer, "Museum Board Member Caught in Russian Intrigue," New York Times, April 27, 2010, http:// www.nytimes.com/2010/04/28/ nyregion/28trustee.html. While such biennials span from Moscow to Dubai to Shanghai and many of the so-called transitional countries, we shouldn't consider post-democracy to be a non-Western phenomenon. The Schengen area is a brilliant example of post-democratic rule, with a whole host of political institutions not legitimized by popular vote and a substantial section of the population excluded from citizenship (not to mention the Old World's growing fondness for democratically elected fascists). The 2011 exhibition at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, "ThePotosíPrinciple,"organizedby Alice Creischer, Andreas Siekmann, and Max Jorge Hinderer, highlights the connection between oligarchy and image production from another histori- cally relevant perspective.

4

I am drawing on a field of meaning developed by Ekaterina Degot, Cosmin Costinaș, and David Riff for their 1st Ural Industrial Biennial, 2010.

5

Arendt may have been wrong on the matter of taste. Taste is not necessarily a matter of the common, as she argued, following Kant. In this context, it is a matter of manufacturing consensus, engineering reputation, and other delicate machinations, which—whoops— metamorphose into art-historical bibliographies. Let's face it: the politics of taste are not about the collective, but about the collector. Not about the com- mon but about the patron. Not about sharing but about sponsoring.

6

There are of course many laudable and great exceptions, and I admit that I myself may bow my head in shame, too.

7

As is also argued in Alex Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., Institutional Critique (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009). See also the collected issues of the online journal transform: http:// transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0106.

8

Recently on show at Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo was Guggenheim Visibility Study Group, a very interesting project by Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas that unpacked the tensions between local (and partly indigenist) art scenes and the Guggenheim franchise system, with the Guggenheim effect analyzed in detail in a case study. See http://www. vilma.cc/2G/. Also see Joseba Zulaika, Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa: Museums, Architecture, and City Renewal (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003). Another case study: Beat Weber and Therese Kaufmann, "The Foundation, the State Secretary and the Bank: A Journey into the Cultural Policy of a Private Institution," transform (April 25, 2006), http://transform.eipcp. net/correspondence/1145970626.

See also Martha Rosler, "Take the Money and Run? Can Political and Socio-Critical Art 'Survive'?" e-flux journal, no. 12, http://www.e-flux. com/journal/view/107; and Tirdad Zolghadr, "11thIstanbulBiennial," frieze, no. 127 (November–December 2009), http://www.frieze.com/issue/ review/11th_istanbul_biennial/.

9

This is evident from this text's placement on e-flux as an advertisement supplement. The situation is furthermore complicated by the fact that these ads may well flaunt my own shows. At the risk of repeating myself, I would like to emphasize that I do not consider innocence a political position, but a moral one, and thus politically irrelevant. An interesting comment on this situation can be found in Luis Camnitzer, "The Corruption in the Arts / the Art of Corruption," published in the context of the "Marco Polo Syndrome," a symposium at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin (April 11, 1995). See http://www.universes-in-universe.de/ magazin/marco-polo/s-camnitzer.htm.

The Spam of the Earth: Withdrawal from Representation

Dense clusters of radio waves leave our planet every second. Our letters and snapshots, intimate and official communications, TV broadcasts and text messages drift away from earth in rings, a tectonic architecture of the desires and fears of our times.[1] In a few hundred thousand years, extraterrestrial forms of intelligence may incredulously sift through our wireless communications. But imagine the perplexity of those creatures when they actually look at the material. Because a huge percentage of the pictures inadvertently sent off into deep space is actually spam. Any archaeologist, forensic, or historian—in this world or another—will look at it as our legacy and our likeness, a true portrait of our times and ourselves. Imagine a human reconstruction somehow made from this digital rubble. Chances are, it would look like image spam.

Medical spam image retrieved from corporation Symantec Intelligence's blog.

Ed Ruscha, PRODUCTS – SPAM, 1961/2003, gelatin
silver print, 33.02 x 25.4 cm.

Image spam is one of the many dark matters of the digital world; spam tries to avoid detection by filters by presenting its message as an image file. An inordinate amount of these images floats around the globe, desperately vying for human attention.[2] They advertise pharmaceuticals, replica items, body enhancements, penny stocks, and degrees. According to the pictures dispersed via image spam, humanity consists of scantily dressed degree-holders with jolly smiles enhanced by orthodontic braces.

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

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

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

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

Image spam is addressed to people who do not look like those in the ads: they neither are skinny nor have recession-proof degrees. They are those whose organic substance is far from perfect from a neoliberal point of view. People who might open their inboxes every day waiting for a miracle, or just a tiny sign, a rainbow at the other end of permanent crisis and hardship. Image spam is addressed to the vast majority of humankind,

but it does not show them. It does not represent those who are considered expendable and superfluous—just like spam itself; it speaks to them.

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

Mimicry and Enchantment

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

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

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

There are many reasons for this. The numbing presence of trash talk and game shows has led to a situation in which TV has become a medium in·

extricably linked to the parading and ridiculing of lower classes. Protagonists are violently made over and subjected to countless invasive ordeals, confessions, inquiries, and assessments. Morning TV is the contemporary equivalent to a torture chamber—including the guilty pleasures of torturers, spectators, and, in many cases, also the tortured themselves.

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

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

Additionally, social media and cellphone cameras have created a zone of mutual mass surveillance, which adds to the ubiquitous urban networks of control, such as CCTV, cellphone GPS tracking and face-recognition software. On top of institutional surveillance, people are now also routinely surveilling each other by taking countless pictures and publishing them in almost real time. The social control associated with these practices of horizontal representation has become quite influential. Employers google reputations of job candidates; social media and blogs become halls of shame and malevolent gossip. The top-down cultural hegemony exercised by advertisement and corporate media is supplemented by a down-down regime of (mutual) self-control and visual self-disciplining, which is even harder to dislocate than earlier regimes of representation.

This goes along with substantial shifts in modes of self-production. Hegemony is increasingly internalized, along with the pressure to conform and perform, as is the pressure to represent and be represented.

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

Walkout

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

The old magic fear of cameras is thus reincarnated in the world of digital natives. But in this environment, cameras do not take away your soul (digital natives replaced this with iPhones) but drain away your life. They actively make you disappear, shrink, and render you naked, in desperate need of or thodontic surgery. In fact, it is a misunderstanding that cameras are tools of representation; they are at present tools of disappearance.[10] The more people are represented the less is left of them in reality. To return to the example of image spam I used before—it is a negative image of its constituency, but how? It is not—as a traditional Cultural Studies approach would argue—because ideology tries to impose a forced mimicry on people, thus making them invest in their own oppression and correction in trying to reach unattainable standards of efficiency, attractiveness, and fitness. No. Let's boldly assume that image

spam is a negative image of its constituency because people are also actively walking away from this kind of representation, leaving behind only enhanced crash-test dummies. Thus image spam becomes an involuntary record of a subtle strike, a walkout of the people from photographic and moving-image representation. It is a document of an almost imperceptible exodus from a field of power relations that are too extreme to be survived without major reduction and downsizing. Rather than a document of domination, image spam is the people's monument of resistance to being represented like this. They are leaving the given frame of representation.

Political and Cultural Representation

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

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

While visual representation shifted into over-drive and was popularized through digital technologies, political representation of the people slipped into a deep crisis and was overshadowed by economic interest. While every possible minority was acknowledged as a potential consumer and visually represented (to a certain extent), people's participation in the political and economic realms became more uneven. The social contract of contemporary visual representation thus somewhat resembles the Ponzi schemes of the early twenty-first century, or, more precisely,

Rendition of iSee Manhattan, a web-based application charting the locations of CCTV surveillance cameras in urban environments. Users are able to locate routes that avoid being filmed by unregulated security monitors.

participation in a game show with unpredictable consequences.

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

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

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

Crisis of Representation

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

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

Image spam circulates endlessly without ever being seen by a human eye. It is made by machines, sent by bots, and caught by spam filters, which are slowly becoming as potent as anti-immigration walls, barriers, and fences. The plastic people shown in it thus remain, to a large extent, unseen. They are treated like digital scum, and thus paradoxically end up on a similar level to that of the low-res people they appeal to. This is how it is different from any other kind of representational dummies, which

inhabit the world of visibility and high-end representation. Creatures of image spam get treated as lumpen-data, avatars of the conmen who are indeed behind their creation. If Jean Genet were still alive, he would have sung praise to the gorgeous hoodlums, tricksters, prostitutes, and fake dentists of image spam.

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

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

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

This doesn't mean that who or what is being shown in images doesn't matter. This relation is far from being one-dimensional. Image spam's generic cast is not the people, and the better for it.

Rather, the subjects of image spam stand in for the people as negative substitutes and absorb the flak of the lime light on their behalf. On the one hand, they embody all the vices and virtues (or, more precisely, vices-as-virtues) of the present economic paradigm. On the other, they remain more often than not invisible, because hardly anybody actually looks at them.

Who knows what the people in image spam are up to, if nobody is actually looking? Their public appearance may be just a silly face they put on to make sure we continue to not pay attention. They might carry important messages for the aliens in the meantime, about those who we stopped caring for, those excluded from shambolic "social contracts," or any form of participation other than morning TV; that is, the spam of the earth, the stars of CCTV and aerial infrared surveillance. Or they might temporarily share in the realm of the disappeared and invisible, made up of those who, more often than not, inhabit a shameful silence and whose relatives have to lower their eyes to their killers every day.

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

Text / Hito Steyerl

1

Douglas Phillips, "Can Desire Go On Without a Body?" in The Spam Book: On Viruses, Porn, and Other Anomolies from the Dark Side of Digital Culture,eds.JussiParikkaan-dTonyD. Sampson (Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2009), 199–200.

2

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

3

This is similar to the golden plaques on the Pioneer space capsules launched in 1972 and 1973, which depicted a white woman and a white man, with the woman's genitals omitted. Because of the criticism directed at the relative nudity of the human figures, subsequent plaques showed only the human silhouettes. It will be at least 40,000 years until the capsule could potentially deliver this message.

4

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

5

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

6

I have discussed the failed promise of cultural representation in "The Institution of Critique," in Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings, eds. Alex Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).486–87.

7

This applies unevenly around the world.

8

In the 1990s, people from former Yugoslavia would say that the former antifascist slogan of the Second World War had be turned up side down:"Death to fascism, freedom to the people" had been transformed by nationalists from all sides into, "Death to the people, freedom to fascism."

9

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

10

I remember my former teacher Wim Wenders elaborating on the photographing of

things that will disappear. It is more likely, though, that things will disappear if (or even because) they are photographed.

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

12
The era of the digital revolution corresponds to that of enforced mass disappearance and murder in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Chechnya, Algeria, Iraq, Turkey, and parts of Guatemala, to list just a few. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which saw roughly 2.5 million war casualties between 1998 and 2008, it is agreed on by researchers that demand for raw materials for the IT industries (such as coltane) played a direct role in the country's conflict. The number of migrants who died while trying to reach Europe since 1990 is estimated to be 18,000.

13
This derives from a pirated DVD cover of the movie In the Line of Fire (1993), which states, in no uncertain terms, that pubic performance of the discisstrictly prohibited.

HITO STEYERL / 黑特 · 史德耶尔
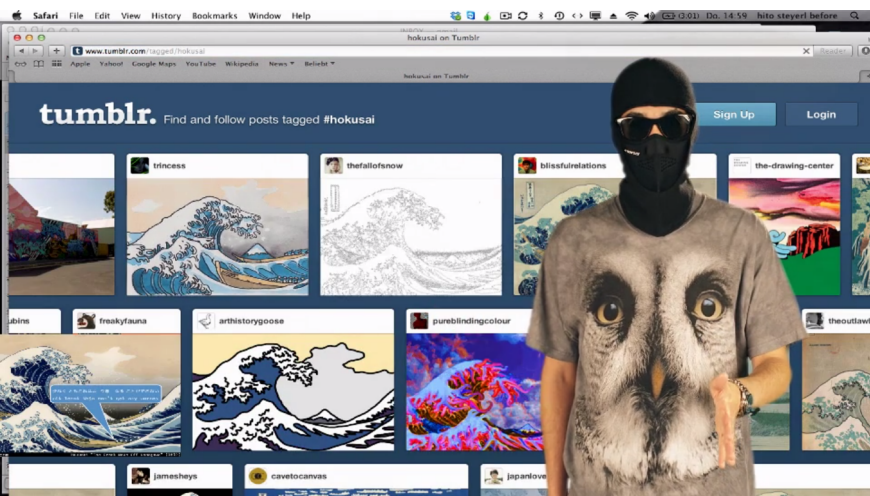
《流动（资本）公司》 **/** *Liquidity Inc.*
单频视频 Single channel video, 30 min, 2014

"...许多人会认为我来自地球,但是事实上,虽然我覆盖了整个星球但我并不来自这里,你也并非来自这里。我在你的血液中,你的眼睛里,你的触摸屏和作品集里。我随着你的心脏跳动、起伏、蔓延。我是流动（资本）公司。" 这件作品讲述了一位叫雅克布·伍德的金融顾问,在上次金融危机中失业之后,转行成为武术家的故事。延续史德耶尔大 部分作品风格,这件创作也基于大量的采访研究和对现成的视觉素材的使用,并在严谨的科学式纪录片和梦幻的蒙太奇风 格之间来回切换。这件作品于2014年在伦敦当代艺术中心史德耶尔的个展中首次展出,于2014年于纽约的Artists Space展出。

"...Some would like to claim me as a native of earth, but in fact, even though I cover this planet, I am not from here. Nor are you. I run through your veins. Your eyes. Your touchscreens and portfolios. I am gushing through your heart, plumbing and wires. I am liquidity incorporated." This new work looks at a financial advisor called Jacob Wood who lost his job during the last financial crisis, and who then embarked on a career in mixed martial arts. As with the majority of Steyerl's films, these works extend from research conducted through interviews and the accumulation of found visual material, and move between forensic documentary and dream-like montage. The work was first exhibited in Steyerl's major retrospective at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; 2014, Artists Space in New York.

HITO STEYERL / 黑特 · 史德耶尔

《击打》 **/** *Strike*
高清影像，平板电视装置 Video，HDV;
28 seconds, 2010

它从一个空白屏幕开始，"STRIKE"（击打）这个词从这里开始浮现，白色大写字母在黑色的背景上，然后一个女人出现，穿着黑色的衣服。她手持凿具走向黑屏的液晶电视，击打无任何特别之处的屏幕，出现一个彩色的画面，然后一切又消失回到黑屏。整个视频不到30秒的时间。然后又重复开始。

It begins with a blank screen. The word 'STRIKE' appears across it, in white capital letters against a black background. Then a woman appears, dressed in black. She approaches an empty LCD monitor and strikes its undifferentiated surface once with a chisel, leaving a multi-coloured web of fractures across it, before everything fades (back) to black. It's all over in less than 30 seconds. Then it starts again.

黑特·史德耶尔作为2015威尼斯双年展德国馆的代表艺术家之一，1966年出生于德国，是当下视频艺术领域最受赞誉的柏林艺术家。她在慕尼黑和东京学习电影研究，并取得维也纳艺术学院博士学位。史德耶尔的作品关注一系列当代社会议题,涉及女权主义、军事化以及由电子技术带来的图像和知识的大规模生产和传播。她参与了一系列重要的当代艺术展览,包括Documenta(卡塞尔文献展)、Manifesta、威尼斯双年展、台北双年展、伊斯坦布尔双年展和光州双年展等。

Hito Steyerl (b. 1966) Berlin-based artist, representing the German Pavillion at 2015 Venice Biennale, is one of the most critically acclaimed artists working in the field of video today. She completed her film studies in Munich and Tokyo, and earned her PhD at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Steyerl's work focuses on contemporary issues such as feminism and militarisation, as well as the mass proliferation and dissemination of images and knowledge brought on by digital technologies. She has participated in a number of leading exhibitions, such as *Documenta, Manifesta, as well as biennials in Venice, Taipei, Istanbul and Gwangju.*

王辛，现居纽约的策展人和作者。哥伦比亚大学美术史系硕士学位后任纽约大都会博物馆特展研究员，2014年亚洲当代艺术周联合策展人，并策划陆扬在纽约的首次个展。长期为展览图录和艺术杂志撰稿，包括Art Forum，Art in America，大都会博物馆博客，Hyperalleric和艺术界。

Xin Wang is a curator and writer based in New York. A recent graduate from Columbia University's MA program in Art History, she has worked as a special exhibition researcher at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has also co-curated Asian Contemporary Art Week 2014 and the New York solo debut of artist Lu Yang. Her writing has frequently appeared on exhibition catalogues and publications such as Artforum, Art in America, Flash Art, the Metropolitan Museum's blog, Hyperalleric, and Leap.

BANK位于前银行工会大楼内(始建于1925年)，毗邻上海历史悠久的外滩区域。作为MABSOCIETY这家国际策展与咨询公司的办公与展示空间，BANK将致力于其在国际当代艺术文化方面的展览项目。我们的项目皆以研究为出发点，旨在触发人们对于文化史，全球性趣味和态度等课题的关注，尤其针对21世纪中国的现状。我们同时与国际性艺术家，画廊，藏家，策展人和机构合作，以支持我们的研究项目。MABSOCIETY是一个综合性的机构组织，将作为中国与世界其他地区之间的文化交流驿站，在呈现展览，出版物和教育项目的同时，为基金会，机构和个人提供咨询服务。

BANK is housed in the former Bank Union Building (est. 1925) located in Shanghai's historic Bund area. BANK functions as the offices and studio of MABSOCIETY, an international curatorial and contemporary firm, and is dedicated to an exhibition program that engages international issues of contemporary art and culture. Our projects are research based and meant to provoke issues of cultural history(s), global interests and attitudes, especially as it pertains to China in the 21st Century. We work with international artists, galleries, collectors, curators, and institutions to support our program. MABSOCIETY is a hybrid organization that acts as a cultural conduit between China and the rest of the world by producing exhibitions, publications, educational programs, as well as provides consultation for institutions, and individuals.

特别鸣谢 | Special Thanks

北苏州路 North SuZhou Lu

外白渡桥 Waibaidu Bridge

外滩隧道 Bund Tunnel

南苏州路 South SuZhou Lu

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RAM
外滩美术馆
ROCKBUND
ART MUSEUM

外滩源33
Rockbund 33

外白渡桥 Waibaidu Bridge

外滩隧道 Bund Tunnel

中山东一路 ZhongShanDong Yi Lu

黄埔公园
HuangPu Park

THE PENINSULA
SHANGHAI

上海半岛酒店
THE PENINSULA SHANGHAI

北京东路 East BeiJing Lu

外滩
The Bund