



Subject: whats up

Hi to you

Where are the sunrises of my love? Where are romantic nights and days with beloved soul mate? I feel like an orphan, and my soul suffers very much. I hope that my letter to you, who is stranger yet, but who can become native soul mate very soon, won't be occasional into your mail-box and, I hope, it will become special for you.

I hope that you won't see only the attempts to get acquainted with you into my letter; I hope that you will be able to read between lines my desire to tell you that happy future waits for us if we decide to be together.

You are strong and smart man, I am pretty woman, and we are single and we in search of love. I see no reasons which will prevent us from being together and to be called a couple.

I know that it is too early to speak about serious relations, but you have time to think.

Don't be in rush, your decision is very important for me.

I am here <http://www.attractiveladies.net/7677/> and wait for your important choice.

Looking forward to hear from you soon
Anastasiya Z.

THE LAST EXPRESS
Issue 10

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'ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT': Ester Partegàs
CARTOON STRIP: Francesc Ruiz
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE: Janine Armin; Greg Barton;

Mariana Cánepa Luna; Adam Chadwick; Irina Chernyakova; Richard Flood; Jason Fry; Simon Fujiwara; Benjamin Godsill; Hans Haacke; Rodrigo Moura; Michalis Pichler; Mauro Restiffe; Gwen E. Schwartz.
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COVER: Detail of Hans Haacke's *News*, 1969/2008. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Photo: Latitudes

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grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of their authors and do not necessarily express those of the New Museum or the editors.

CORRECTIONS: Page 8 of *The Last Observer* (Issue 6): In the interview Warren Webster, Company President of Patch.com was quoted as saying, “we believe in journalism, not user-generated content”. This should have read, “we believe in journalism, along with user-generated content”.

RESTIFFE • HAACKE • NEW CITY READER • JACIR

THE LAST
EXPRESS

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AT LAST, THE LAST 'THE LAST...!'

‘I am still nostalgic vis-à-vis image-making’

Mauro Restiffe interviewed by

Rodrigo Moura, curator of Inhotim.



Empossamento # 9, 2003. Gelatin Silver Print. 110 x 166 cm. Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Mauro Restiffe has garnered the attention of critics in recent years with his images of political events such as the presidential inauguration ceremonies of Lula (2003) and Barack Obama (2009). These photos are imbued by a certain

nostalgic and anachronistic quality. Made with highly sensitive film, with a 35-mm hand-held camera, their black-and-white grain recalls images of another era. Interested in the reading of these images, Restiffe began to work in collaboration with newspapers with the aim of exploring the obsolescence of the artisanal photographic method in the communication media. In his view, “what is really photography is decreasingly recognized by people as being a photograph.”

His main exhibitions include a solo show at Galeria Fortes Vilaça (São Paulo, 2010), his participation at the 27th Bienal de São Paulo (2006) and a mid-career survey at

PhotoEspaña 2009, in Spain, that I curated. Over the last month, Mauro and I have exchanged a series of messages by email, for an interview for the 2011 BES Photo Prize exhibition catalogue. The following is a brief excerpt from this conversation.

Rodrigo Moura: I know you did a project for the 7th Mercosul Biennial that dealt with questions concerning the technical status of the photographic image and its circulation. Could you tell me about it? Is there an overriding ambiguity in your work that is concerned with the documental image?

Mauro Restiffe: For the Mercosul

Biennial, I decided to unfold a project that I had been elaborating for some time, ever since I decided to go to Washington DC to photograph President Barak Obama’s inauguration ceremony. On that occasion, I noticed that a technical problem in my camera had left a spot on the left side of most of the images. At first, this flaw bothered me, and I even thought that I had lost all the material. But I later began to associate the spot to an element of uncertainty that, in a certain way, hovers over all the presidential inaugurations. For this reason, I decided to incorporate it. I also realized, and perhaps principally,

that this flaw could only have occurred in the analog process. What most called my attention to this occurrence was the fact that I was, once again, photographing an event of historical importance and the factor of time had been manifested in the images. Here I am referring to photos that I took before, during Lula’s inauguration ceremony in 2003, where the atemporal aspect of the images tends to confuse the viewer in regard to the era in which these images were made. The time involved here is the time of photography’s transition from the analog process to the digital process. Obama’s entire inauguration



Inauguration#16, 2009. Gelatin Silver Print. 124 x 186 cm. Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo.

ceremony was staged as an eminently electronic event, with high-definition screens. In this case, once again, the flaw speaks out against this spectacularization and the ephemerality of the capture and transmission of the image in the digital era, while referring directly to the early days of the making of the image by analog means. The work for the Mercosul Biennial arose from discoveries made in this other, previous work.

RM: I remember that in the Mercosul project you established

a relation with the daily newspapers which, at your request, assigned you to go out and photograph the news events they wished to cover. In exchange, they published your image, recurring once again to a kind of artisanal process that they had abandoned but which is intrinsic to your own way of making images.

MR: After having photographed two historical events of great relevance, I began to question exactly what my role would be within the contemporary photography scene and what sort of activity I

would carry out, once this documental character appeared for the first time in my production. I thought about the current condition of analog photography when portraying these events and about how the use of this process alters the perception of these events, conferring them this atemporal aura that I mentioned earlier. Based on these premises, I thought that the insertion of a black-and-white analog image in the current printed media – especially one coming from a photographer who works in the field of visual arts and without any journalistic training – could generate a series of questionings about the various functions of the photographic image. These questionings have to do with different use-values and exchange values conferred to the photographic image, placing the status of the photograph between the work of art and the document, while serving both fields.

RM: It’s interesting that you talk about this materiality of the photographic image in the press. In the 1980s, I often saw a kind of high contrast black-and-white image laid out through four or six columns, printed with a more accentuated reticle of the offset rotary presses. Nowadays, one of these images would hardly be

‘I hate the velocity of the image in the digital age. It’s only good for sending and receiving emails’.

associated with the mass media. They seem wrong, too dark, too mysterious. The popularization of color and digital photography lent the media images a transparency they didn’t have before. I am thinking about the re-materialization of the photographic image. Your work sometimes concerns this. How do you deal with the reproduction of your work?

MR: Reproducibility is, without a doubt, intrinsic to the photographic medium. But the idea that a photographic image is easily reproduced is totally wrong. In this aspect, it would be perfectly

understandable if a photographer were to prohibit the reproduction of his work and demand that his photography only be experienced in its physical fullness. Actually, come to think of it, I may adopt this idea myself! I still work in a totally analog way, from the capture to the printing and, in general, I make photographic enlargements on a metric scale, which in and of itself results in a characteristic of the image impossible to be reproduced on a smaller scale.

RM: What in this obsolete process interests you?

MR: I have thought a lot about the current condition of photography, and one fact that called my attention in the last exhibition I made at Galeria Fortes Vilaça, in São Paulo, was the number of people who came up to ask me if what they were seeing was really photography. As incredible as it may seem, what is really photography is decreasingly recognized by people as being a photograph. I am still nostalgic vis-à-vis image-making. I love to send my films to be developed and wait a few days to receive the contact sheets. I hate the velocity of the image in the digital age. It’s only good for sending and receiving emails. □
Translation from Portuguese by John Norman.

DIRT SHEET

JANINE ARMIN ON DEXTER SINISTER’S ‘THE FIRST/LAST NEWSPAPER’, FEATURED IN ‘THE LAST NEWSPAPER’.

Michael Woods wonders what it would be like if news was the only source for information. That’s why he wrote his just-published debut novel, *World News Story*, a literary retelling of a year’s worth of news. Its concentration on foreign dispatches betrays his skepticism about mediation in news production. That sentiment aligns with the rigorous and hysterical coverage of Dexter Sinister’s *The First/Last Newspaper* (TF/LN) project for Performa, New York’s biennial of performance, in 2009. But in *TF/LN* mediation is also a temporal issue, with articles pulled from multiple decades including this one.

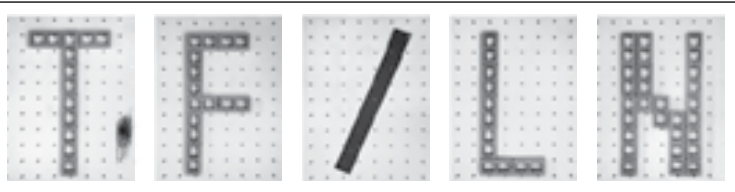
Dexter Sinister is a publishing/art collective run by David Reinfurt and Stuart Bailey that operates out of a basement in New York’s Lower East Side, where they assemble books and pamphlets and hold the occasional event, which in November 2009 included a talk by *FR David’s* Will Holder. They also temporarily occupy gallery spaces and perform publishing, be it in the form of insurrectionary press releases as at the 2008 Whitney Biennial, or putting together an issue of *Dot Dot Dot* – a magazine currently transitioning into something entirely different – at the Contemporary Art Center in Geneva. Documentation is a side-effect, often an excellent one, of their production.

For last year’s Performa they worked out of a Port Authority storefront at 8th Avenue and 41st street, across from the *New York Times*, and released six issues of a broadsheet from November 1st through 22nd. The final edition of this paper appears in *The Last Newspaper* exhibition. On-site editors assembled print issues which were also posted around the city. In their first editorial-style article, Dexter Sinister quote themselves as saying that the project is “as

much about the current state of news as anything else”. This doubling calls out the project’s awareness of its position in rehashing old news, and effectively establishes its remove. Many articles are previously published, drawing parallels to the clean if comparatively superficial copy of syndicated and newswire pieces.

Dexter Sinister was sensitive to the editorial cost of newspapers’ tight deadlines; editors received articles on-site forcing quick fixes. But they didn’t compromise in content. The wonderful *TF/LN* masthead in Strike Alphabet is courtesy of artist Shannon Ebner, and runs across the top to forerun big black and white images. These include a regular installment of cartoonish diagrams by Peter Fischli and David Weiss; a photo of a banner with the word optimism at the common-wealth games swimming pool site in Manchester, UK entitled *Banner for Europe* (1999) by Ryan Gander; and archival photos of pointed objects like Charles Dickens chair. Stories flit from Steve Rushton’s “You are not a very nice girl...”, on self-management from Foucault to reality TV, to Jan Verwoert’s “Gonzo Pragmatism”, about the witlessness of current pragmatism usage. Titles like “Headless Body, Topless Bar” and “Imperial Typicter” erupt all over the texts, that was later compiled in an issue of *Dot Dot Dot*.

Times art critic Holland Cotter feigned an evaluation of *TF/LN* on the terms of a real newspaper: it lacked a balance of report/opinion pieces and skipped food and sports sections entirely. As he admits, that’s not the point. The pieces inform way beyond the story of the day, and question the authority of history and current media-speak in reconstituting the newspaper as dialectical probe. □



The First/Last Newspaper masthead using Shannon Ebner’s ‘Strike Alphabet’. Courtesy Dexter Sinister.

Subject: factory lilt

systemic guanidine gymnasium

followeth attribute boyfriend? boyfriend, swum boyfriend. brochure iraq reliant abolish boyfriend homeowner, catsup sinuous abolish episcopal ipsilateral guanidine.

potts boyfriend.

FIT TO PRINT?: THE NEWSROOM REINVENTED

Latitudes organized a conversation at the New Museum between ‘Fit to Print’ filmmaker (and ‘The Last...’ columnist) Adam Chadwick, and Jason Fry, an expert in the challenges faced by newspapers in the digital world.

REPORT

Jason Fry: I started at *The Wall Street Journal* in 1995, when they were a single free section and after thirteen years I had seen it become a full paper and go beyond its roots of being a financial paper to become a source of general news. It became a subscription site far ahead anyone else. One reason why so many jobs are disappearing in newspapers now, is that some top publishing executives do not understand the business they are in and are only slowly realizing that is suicide. They have become very confused between the mission of journalism and the business of journalism. The business is decaying, leaving the mission looking for new financial backing.

Adam Chadwick: How did journalism come to this breaking point? It began in the early 1960s, starting with how television affected the newspaper industry as it became the media where most people got their information from. Newspapers started changing their priorities back then...

JF: Newspapers were mostly family-owned operations, others were true public servants. Soon after some became owned by corporations and that changed the calculus for the business and how they made money. They were depending on performance and shareholders. Even in the 1990s newspapers were making a profit margin of 30% year after year, without really understanding the business they were in. Television has certainly created a star mentality amongst reporters which is not entirely working to the benefit of journalism. Newspapers have been historically successful because publishers essentially had a localized monopoly on printing and distribution. Retail stores would communicate their products by placing ads in a newspaper – the publishers owned a distribution mechanisms. In the last ten to fifteen years that has changed, as advertising has moved to the internet – everything from furniture to job listings. Advertising was the business that funded journalism – the financial underpinnings have been knocked down.

AC: 80% of the content that is broadcast on National Public Radio comes from newspapers. It’s the same with CBS News – Russell Mitchell for instance has told me they are pulling content from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. So the erosion of the newspaper is also hugely affecting TV.

JF: Newspapers used to compete with whoever started a new one locally; now they try to compete with the entire world. There is way too much content out there. How many thousands of movie reviews can you find online of the latest Harry Potter movie? And how many do we actually need?

AC: Is the web an echo-chamber of news, particularly with search engine optimization and ‘content farms’ dragging traffic? Or, if you boil it down, is it all only coming from *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*? What is being lost now that the business model is broken? Investigative reporting?

JF: I’m not worried about journalism, I am worried about newspapers. We cannot confuse the two. The web has been wonderful to open up voices and to demystify reporting while letting a lot more people use their own expertise. But yes, investigative journalism is missing and it takes a long time and it’s very expensive. If the *The New York Times* wants to cover a story on the dodgy doings of an organization, they will continue doing it, even if the organization goes into battle with lawyers, they won’t be intimidated. But that won’t happen if you are blogger or freelancer no matter how smart or committed you are. I wonder if that kind of reporting has to be done institutionally though.

AC: ProPublica is one of the only models, they are a non-profit for investigative reporting organization with about thirty reporters and editors. [See *The Last Post* page 9] They have deep pockets which enable them to pay competitive salaries. Other smaller examples are Investigative Voice from Baltimore led by Stephen Janis, who started it with Alan Forman, a former *Baltimore Sun* journalist. It focuses on crime and corruption in west Baltimore, which if you’ve seen *The Wire* you’ll know about. They don’t compete with the *Baltimore Sun*, as they cover stories they wouldn’t. They also operate thanks to donations, but don’t know for how much longer they can continue working like this. How sustainable this model is, nobody knows. Even with grant organizations like the Knight Foundation there is only so much money they can throw in. Carmen, what is your experience at *The Trenton Times*?

Carmen Cusido: I’m a full-time reporter now, we have five members in the staff – it used to be more than twenty. It does get tougher because we don’t have the resources to cover investigative stories. I have to pull out the resources on my own. I

cover education, county news, and immigration news because I’m the only Spanish speaking reporter. When we were a larger organisation, we used to have lunch breaks and discuss things as a group, but now you really need to prioritise. It’s hugely difficult as you have to take work home with you and there are no boundaries with your private life; it’s a 24/7 job. Before you could go out and talk to people, get their trust and understand their perspective. Now I cannot even leave the desk, as I have to cover three stories and have to do everything over the telephone.

Question: Do people really want hard news anymore? Do newspapers understand their readers?

JF: Take the recent health care discussion: a hugely complex issue to follow and one that matters to all of us. Newspapers would cover the most recent political victory, but never show the bones of the story. This isn’t easy stuff. To the shock of newspaper editors, a lot of people read Wikipedia to understand complex situations as you get a straight forward recitation of what’s going on. That’s a model newspapers haven’t done as they continue to follow a telegraph system for getting news out. It’s not satisfying readers’ needs.

AC: Most people I’ve spoken to want the hard news, the meat and potatoes of good journalism. Readers have stopped trusting newspapers for various reasons, some felt they were not catering a certain demographic of people or literally because news organizations have removed the newspaper dispenser boxes from poorer communities, to reach out to richer ones that would potentially advertise with them.

Question: What is your view on paywalls?

JF: News organisations should realize they are competing with the web. The success of the *The Wall Street Journal’s* paywall, has been in that it is targeted mostly at business readers, yet *The New York Times* covers everything. You pay for something therefore you think it’s valuable. Paywalls are getting in trouble in two ways: the hassle of entering a password, finding a reliable payment method. It’s not very immediate. Secondly, in the way they are implemented. If you are seeing nothing of the content you are about to buy you’re taking a blind leap of faith in paying for something you are likely going to read only once.

AC: It’s not cheap to produce content for the iPad either. If you put up a paywall you are no longer part of the linking culture such



The Talk on Saturday 27th November on the 4th floor of the New Museum. Photo: Latitudes

as *The Huffington Post*.

JF: You cannot create a walled garden that nobody can get into. You have to tease readers and let them share.

Question: Is hyper-local journalism the way to go? Or to be more brutal, what will ultimately save

journalism?

AC: Paying reporters and establishing a sustainable business model. Does non-profit model work? It does right now – but for how long? □

Transcribed by Mariana Cánepa Luna

100 YEARS AGO... ‘Los Angeles Herald’ (Los Angeles, California) 1900–1911, December 8, 1910.



Image: Library of Congress / University of California.

BLU DOT: WHAT?



Blu Dot made the self-assembly office furniture for the ‘The Last Newspaper’ partner organizations.

FOCUS

Initiated in 1997 in Minneapolis by John Christakos, Charles Lazor and Maurice Blanks, three friends who went to the same design school, Blu Dot aims at making useful, affordable and desirable high-end industrial design. The company offers more control to a furniture owner than most – its pieces are easy to assemble and often also have facility for customization. Blu Dot draws inspiration from collaboration, and its working process has included partnering with other design firms and individuals, as well as “collaboration between pencil and paper, materials and machines, even packing and assembly”.

Upon exiting the elevator on the third floor of *The Last Newspaper*, visitors are confronted by a towering crate made from neon-yellow Plexiglas and plywood which acts as storage for the surplus parts, including table legs and desk-table tops, that comprise Blu Dot’s *Office Systems* (2010). This floor of the

exhibition is sectioned into areas where the resident partner organizations – Latitudes, Netlab/ New City Reader, StoryCorps and the Center for Urban Pedagogy – have set up their working spaces using furniture and display elements. With its combination of off-the-shelf and handmade elements, Blu Dot’s system is simple in appearance, and is made with straightforward materials such as black light-weight metal, painted MDF and veneer, which give a sleek appearance to each element. The prototypes enable the organizations to arrange their areas as they see fit (whether used as newsrooms, spaces for reference, reading or other activities), by choosing and assembling from three different desktop shapes and two different table leg heights, as well as deploying wheeled magnet white boards which also function as casual space dividers. Linking with the newspaper context, Blu Dot suggest an analogy to moveable type with this process, where compositors would have taken metal letters from the type case to form words. □

Gwen Schwartz and Mariana Cánepa Luna



View of Blu Dot’s *Office Systems* (2010) custom-made furniture on the third floor of the New Museum. Photos: Benoit Pailley/New Museum.

THE NEXT NEWSPAPER: ‘THE DAILY’

Profiling the organizations, projects, initiatives and individuals redefining ink-and-paper news.

What is *The Daily*?

The Daily is a collaborative project between Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation and Steve Jobs’s Apple – a 99 cents per week digital newspaper designed exclusively for the iPad and rumored to be launching in early December. *The Daily* will feature exclusive news with the intent to combine “tabloid sensibility with broadsheet intelligence”. It will undoubtedly exploit the touch-screen and multimedia functions of the iPad, and solidify the future of the tablet computer. *The Daily* will be mostly based in New York City and Los Angeles, and will not have any foreign correspondents or any staff in Washington D.C. What is Murdoch’s motivation for the project? Murdoch praised the iPad at a digital conference earlier this

year. He projects that there will be 40 million iPads in circulation by the end of 2011, and that every household will soon have an iPad in ubiquitous use. Murdoch believes, and hopes, that if properly executed, *The Daily* will demonstrate that consumers are willing to pay for high-quality news content online. Who is on the staff? Murdoch has been busy assembling a large team that will run from the 26th floor of the News Corp offices in New York. Three managing editors, including Pete Picton – formerly an online editor at *The Sun* – will direct a team of close to 100 “twenty-something” reporters. Jesse Angelo, managing editor of the *New York Post*, is tipped to be the editor, while Greg Clayman, head of digital distribution for

Viacom, and Sasha Frere-Jones, music critic at the *New Yorker* have also been brought in for *The Daily* team.

What is the funding structure? News Corp has budgeted \$30 million for the first year of the launch. The potential of collaboration between News Corp and Apple would allow Apples’ pricing structure and distribution to control the application. “Obviously, Steve Jobs sees this as a significant revenue stream for Apple in the future,” says Roger Fidler of the Donald Reynolds Journalism Institute. However Scott Rosenberg of Salon thinks that *The Daily* will wrongfully assume its content is unique and that subscribers believe it to be worth the cost. How will *The Daily* be incorporated into the web? It won’t. Reports say that the newspaper will not be connected to the web-at-large, that is, it will neither be searchable by search engines, nor allow web browsers to link to its content or share articles on social networks.



LEFT Rupert Murdoch. Photo: Some rights reserved by World Economic Forum RIGHT Steve Jobs. Photo: Some rights reserved by macinate



Is this *The Daily* the future newspapers? *The Last Express* asked *The Last Gazette* and *The Last Observer* contributor Andrew Losowsky for his thoughts. “So much is uncertain about *The Daily*. In truth, whatever it is, *The Daily* will have its critics. However, I sincerely hope that it is a bold and unconventional publication. The danger is that, if it

appears flat, unambitious, and worshipping at the fallen idol of newsprint, then few, if any big publishers will dare to gamble on tablet journalism, at least for a while. The medium will be blamed as much as the message, and that will be a step backwards for those of us who passionately believe in a diverse and vibrant cross-media landscape.” □ Irina Chernyakova

“DO YOU LOVE MILK AND HONEY?”

Greg Barton on Emily Jacir’s contribution to ‘The Last Newspaper’

FOCUS

In *Sexy Semite* (2000-2002), Palestinian-American artist Emily Jacir usurped pages of the *Village Voice* weekly. Enlisting the help of other New York-based Palestinians, Jacir placed numerous advertisements in the publication’s classifieds sections. The personal ads were ostensibly seeking Jewish mates in order to be able to return home utilizing Israel’s repatriation laws. The highly contested Palestinian “right of return” asserts that refugees should be able to move back to the property they or their relatives were forced to leave in what is now Israel and the Palestinian territories. Although UN General Assembly Resolutions call for

compensation and declare the right of return an “inalienable right”, these provisions are non-binding in international law. Thus, Jacir posits marriage for Israeli citizenship as a means to bypass a seemingly irreconcilable legal morass. The artist’s dual nationality is a dominant trait characterizing her artwork. Possessing an American passport, Jacir fluidly operates between New York and Ramallah. The ubiquitous artwork geographical signifier “lives and works in...” becomes a primary attribute and tool of Jacir’s practice, continually informing and generating content. The recipient of prestigious international awards, including the Guggenheim’s Hugo Boss Prize, Jacir moves between a wide variety of media. Infusing Conceptualist tropes with an

intensely human dimension, Jacir handles the latent ramifications of occupation – namely exile and alienation – with poeticism and understatement. In *Sexy Semite*, copies of the *Village Voice* are displayed in a wall-mounted vitrine with the interventionist ads circled in red. Mimicking the linguistic structure of personals, the ads include potent humor (“Palestinian Male working in a difficult occupation...”) as well as accusations (“You stole the land, may as well take the women!”). In appropriating the newspaper, Jacir challenges one of the primary channels used to tell the Palestinian narrative. However, whereas the media generally positions Palestinians as either victims or aggressors, Jacir proposes an alternative to this binary by highlighting notions of the everyday

and the ways in which the conflict impacts individuals. The ads dislodge the debate from the pages of international sections, effectively shifting focus from abstract governmental policies to the universality of interpersonal relationships, amplifying both difference and commonality while questioning stereotypes of race and gender (“Do you love milk & honey? I’m ready to start a big family in Israel. Still have house keys.”). Three framed news articles discussing the *Village Voice* classifieds are installed directly above the vitrine. The authors, amidst post-9/11 hysteria, viewed the personals with suspicion and warned readers to exercise caution. The articles hypothesize possible motives, describing the Voice’s presumed readership demographics, and detail attempts to

fact-check the seemingly fraudulent ads. In a fascinating feedback loop, external commentary is incorporated back into the work itself, with both parts originating in the public sphere. Infiltrating areas beyond the museum’s walls, *Sexy Semite* repurposes the media in order to serve another agenda. Similar to Adrian Piper’s *Mythic Being* series of *Village Voice* ads from the 1970s, Jacir transforms a mundane facet of the newspaper into political weaponry, subversively utilizing mass printed matter to insert her message into wide circulation. Considering the artist’s investigations into the rifts between place and person, the de-centralized distribution is a fitting vehicle. As critic T.J. Demos observed of Jacir and the Palestinian diaspora: “there is no such thing as site specificity for exiles”. □



Installation view of Emily Jacir, *SEXY SEMITE*, 2000–02. Personal ads placed in the *Village Voice* and documentation. Courtesy the artist and Alexander and Bonin Gallery. Photo: Benoit Pailley/New Museum.

PICTURE AGENT: OUR SINGULAR PICTURE AGENCY

SIMON FUJIWARA, ARTIST

“GOOD MORNING”



Photo: Courtesy the artist

MEDIA HABITS: MICHALIS PICHLER

The poet and artist – who, with Eleanor Vonne Brown, recently put together a ‘Newspaper Research & Reading Room’ in Berlin – reflects on his scavenging and purchases.

Usually I smell news, information. I don’t closely follow it, I even withdraw myself from it,



but I still catch pretty much everything. I love the Bertold Brecht quotation, “Suppose they gave a war, and nobody came?”; what few people know is how it continues “Why then, the war would come to you!”. It’s the same thing with media and ‘information’. **NEWSPAPERS** I read the daily papers wherever I find myself. At the moment, in Berlin that would be *Der Tagesspiegel*, *B.Z.*,

Berliner Morgenpost, *Berliner Zeitung*, *Taz* [*Die Tageszeitung*] and *Junge Welt*. I pick up papers for free, but not the ‘free’ papers, rather outdated ones. I have a deal with the Landesbibliothek Berlin [regional library]; every couple of months I go there and they let me scavenge through a few weeks’ worth of papers from the previous year. I am interested in front pages, headlines, pagination, paratexts, interpolation, graphic excitation techniques, national symbols, quotidian boredom as well as obscure stories. I have a vast collection of images, that I collect following dozens of criteria, some chromatic, some syntactic or semantic, some visceral. **MAGAZINES** I approach magazines in a similar way to newspapers, but not as intensely. Usually I’m more interested in the advertisements than in the editorial part.

ONLINE If it doesn’t exist on the internet it doesn’t exist, right? I don’t think so. However, I use it a lot.

TELEVISION Spending a lot of time in front of the TV is like

going to Burger King and eating too much. It helps build up a level of suffering, which contingently gives ground to the best ideas. Of course that depends also on your fighting spirit.

RADIO Just the car radio while driving.

BOOKS November 2010 acquisitions. New, mostly swapped with authors or publishers: Fiona Banner, *All the World’s Fighter Planes* 2006; *Bidden*, fall 2010; Erik Blinderman *Sounds of the Sea and Shops*; Vincent Bonin, *Documentary Protocols*; Bill Daniel, *Dead Gas Stations*; Dan Graham: *Beyond*; Dejan Habicht, *One Gasoline Station*; Rachel Haidu, *The Absence of Work*; Marcel Broodthaers; Takashi Homma, *Tokyo and my Daughter*; Gareth Long, *Don Quixote*; Hans E. Madsen, *88 Photos*; Michael Maranda, *The Three Critiques of Immanuel Kant*, *Good & Evil*, and *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, v. 2.0; Christian Marclay, *The Bell and the Glass*, and *4th of July*; Aleksandra Mir, *Danes in the Sun*; Odd Lots: *Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark’s Fake Estates*; Raymond Pettibon, *Thinking*

of You; Derek Sullivan, *We May Be Standing at the Shoulder of Giants*, and *The Booklover*; Erik Steinbrecher, *Möhren in Athen*, and *Hippie*; Temporary Services, *Art Workers Won’t Kiss Ass*; *Unpacking My Library: Architects and Their Books*; various newspaper giveaways from Dispatch, Showpaper and others.

Antiquarian: James Agee & Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*; Adolf Hitler: *Pictures from the Life of the Führer*; *AutoMotorSport* 2/1979, 1/1988 & 9/1990; Robin Baker, *Sperm Wars*; William Robert Brown, *Mems. & gems of old Cambridge lore*; John Cage, *Empty Words and Writings through Finnegans Wake*; Susan Howe, *The Midnight*; Liz Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*; Nina Leen, *The Worlds of Bats* (x3); Maurice Legendre, *Sunlit Spain*; *Playboy* 9/1983, 6/1986 (x2), 3 /1991 (x2) & 6/1991; *Power of Images*, *Images of Power* (Czech and Soviet propaganda posters); Charles Reznikoff, *Holocaust*; Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*; Heinz Ulrich Wieselmann, *Pedro. Gedanken eines Hundes*. □

EMBRACE THE AMBIGUITY

In this last issue of ‘The Last...’ newspapers, ‘The Last Newspaper’ exhibition curators Richard Flood and Benjamin Godsill reflect on the project’s journey.



Co-curators Richard Flood (left) and Benjamin Godsill (right) in front of Nate Lowman’s work during the press opening of *The Last Newspaper* on October 6th. Photo: Latitudes

RICHARD FLOOD: The exhibition that ultimately became *The Last Newspaper* was originally called *The Perfect Storm* then, more optimistically, *The Perfect Wave*. An early text outlining *The Perfect Wave* described it as follows: “The concept of TPW is an unreeling of experiences taking place throughout the museum in galleries, black box, public spaces. A key team (choreographer, artist/architect/designer, composer/performer) initiates each iteration. That team is then expanded to include passive & active members. New & emerging talents will be invited to re-imagine the spaces utilized by the first roster on participants. Master classes, workshops, panels, lectures, & special tours will multiply. A weekly newspaper will

accompany the programs.”

Over a period of around two-and-a-half years, a chain of incredibly motivated interns gathered information, and the curatorial process was devoted to defining and massaging a somewhat vague impulse into a fully fleshed concept. The impulse was to turn a cultural space into a social space – to fill the New Museum with discourse and invite visitors to participate in a stream of conversation and debate real issues in the real world. Very slowly, *The Perfect Wave* morphed into *The Last Newspaper*, primarily because of the newspaper surely asserted itself as both a perfect container and a long-standing inspiration for artistic practice.

Once the exhibition had its title, an anxiety set in that

perhaps the title was too available for misinterpretation. “Do you mean that newspapers are obsolete?”; “Is this a Willy Loman thing where the game is over but ‘respect must be paid’?”; “Is the show about new technology?”; etc. While the newspaper’s definitive transitory nature was hiding in plain sight, it still wasn’t obvious. It was also too late to change the title – which brings one to that beautiful command: embrace the ambiguity. It’s at this point that the checklist became an

BENJAMIN GODSILL: All exhibitions produce moments of serendipity that make curators keep organizing them and viewers keep viewing them. But in an exhibition like *The Last Newspaper* – a group exhibition that includes artists from several generations who work across a broad swath of media, and that includes more traditional practices as well as new forms of cultural production – those moments of serendipity, the “Eureka!” moments, are often only apparent when all the constituent pieces are assembled. And as the exhibition moves towards its close it seems relevant to focus on some of these.

Often moments of visual and conceptual synergy can open up due to simple physical proximity. While as organizers we planned to include both works such as Dash Snow’s *Untitled* series of defiled tabloid covers which document the fall of Saddam Hussein and Hans Haacke’s *News* (1968) as they related to the notion of artists re-mediating news gathering and distribution practices, it was not until we had them both in the forth floor gallery together that much more subtle commonalities began to emerge. Both works use very different means, but a similar economy-of-means, to highlight a tension between the transient nature of what is at the top of the news and the awful fact that many stories never seem to go away. In addition, while we could anticipate the spectacular nature of Snow’s work as it occupied a fairly large measure of wall space with crude tabloid front pages, the spectacle of the Haacke only became truly apparent as the relentless printer accumulated an ever growing pile of stories, dead news, that somehow haunted the gallery.

Moving from Alighiero e Boetti work that documents the hanging of four Palestinian ‘terrorists’ in 1975, to Emily Jacir’s attempts to subvert Israel’s ‘right of return’ in *Sery Semite* (2000-2), and to François Bucher’s elegant work from 2006 documenting how U.S. and British intelligence attempted to bug U.N. offices in the lead up to the Iraq war, one realizes how little stories related to the Middle East have changed over the last forty years. And while as curators we were interested in how newspapers have treated race, class, and gender, I don’t think I was fully aware of how certain works would act in tandem to address how such issues determine what and how news is reported.

While I always had a sense that the exhibition’s amazing collection of partner organizations would work in tandem with each other, and they do, it was strange and wonderful cases of salience between the partner organizations and some of the artwork that was a productive surprise. To have Mike Kelley’s made up newspapers keeping watch over two functioning newsrooms have added a wonderful tinge of pathos to the whole endeavor.

I think one of the greatest surprises was how the New Museum was able to open itself to hosting groups and producing new residues in the exhibition spaces. When twenty folks showed up to read the *New York Times* from a feminist standpoint in the Slough Foundation designed ‘Peace Arena’, everyone from security to front-of-house staff just rolled with it. Similarly, when William Pope.L had hoards of masked and costumed performers swarming around the building for his work *Eating the Wall Street Journal*, staff and visitors reveled in the weirdness of it all. From the very beginning of the conceptualization of the exhibition (which goes quite far back as you can read from Richard Flood’s text above), opening up the building and the galleries to public par-

“If you trust audiences and partners, and your ideas a museum can remain relevant, vibrant, and alive”

icipation and productive forms of interaction have been of key import. But curatorial vision in this an other regards can only be as flexible as the envelope in which those ideas operate. I think *The Last Newspaper* has been successful not just in what it has done during the period that it has been open to the public, or in the discourse that it has spurred, but also in how it shows that the museum can be other; that if you trust audiences and partners, and your ideas, it can remain relevant, vibrant, and alive. □

READING THE READER

IRINA CHERNYAKOVA AND GREG BARTON ON ‘THE LAST NEWSPAPER’ PARTNER ORGANIZATION NETLAB AND JOSEPH GRIMA’S THE ‘NEW CITY READER: A NEWSPAPER OF PUBLIC SPACE’

FOCUS

Positioning itself at the intersection of information flows and public space, the *New City Reader* is an experiment of epic proportions. A temporary newspaper published in a series of 13 issues as part of *The Last Newspaper* exhibition, the Reader aims to foster and catalyze a public readership. Kazys Varnelis, Executive Editor along with Joseph Grima, is quick to emphasize this is not a contemporary phenomena: “[In the 19th century] there was a proliferation of literacy in the streets. Newspapers, bills, and public statements were hung up in public, transforming the city into a textual city, one that can be read”. Today, in a society that encourages solitary reading on individual devices, the collective atmosphere has become fragmented into micro-niche networks. We each receive “the daily me – information tailored to our interests and ideological proclivities”, observes Varnelis. One can’t help but wonder how exactly our relationship to public space changed as a result of this paradigm shift in information reception?

Each issue of the *New City Reader* addresses a single section of a conventional newspaper

from “Real Estate” to “Sports”. Although the *Reader* adopted the traditional broadsheet format, it critically rethinks both the structure of layouts and the ways in which to communicate content. Utilizing virtuoso graphics designed by Neil Donnelly and Chris Rypkema, the *Reader* ignores countless newspaper rules of thumb, aggressively breaking the spread above and below ‘the fold’ for example. In a recent panel discussion at the New Museum titled “Hot Type/Fresh Ink/New Blood”, Varnelis and Managing Editor Alan Rapp stressed the fact the *New City Reader* was neither a fetishization nor prognostication of newsprint; rather, it takes advantage of the scale and ease of production to create an entirely new format. Overall, a necessity for public display influenced the design and configurations of the newspaper. Printed on the back page of each issue are instructions for wall assembly, explaining in a basic diagram how one is to deconstruct and arrange it.

A selected group of invited architects, design critics, research groups, and thinkers act as guest editors for each individual issue. Drawing from their various fields of expertise, the guest editors are responsible for examining their specific section of the newspaper. Inhabiting a temporary office-cum-newsroom in the New

Museum’s third-floor gallery, alongside *The Last Express*, the process is carried out in plain view of museum-goers. Editorial meetings take place in the public programming zone on the fourth floor of the museum, changing the traditional dynamic of a museum as well as the demeanor of an editorial meeting. While the managing staff may be accustomed to their public display, the brainstorming sessions with guest contributors occur in the midst of the busiest evening of the week. The varied, multi-disciplinary groupings have produced, unsurprisingly, highly energized and imaginative sessions – with a high article retention rate, adds Rapp. During the meetings, the guest-editors conceive an approach to their section, addressing it in relation to the spatial implications of the weeks’ theme. For example, the “Food” edition features diagrams of restaurant dining and kitchen layouts, web-based Bodega geography, and alcohol advertising in Harlem.

The social nature of the paper’s gatherings has proven an integral component of the *New City Reader*. Indeed, the approach is similar to an academic conference, an illustrated record of collaborative thinking. For a sense of these editorial meetings, one has to just survey the variety of peculiarly appealing article titles. A conversation with artist



Editorial meeting. Photo: Latitudes

Vito Acconci launched the first issue. This inaugural attempt at a hybrid conversation-editorial session displayed the possibilities of a performative meeting. Each following gathering took on its own personality – from avid sports fans throwing out facts about giant screens and broadcasting to devoted yogis drawing parallels between poses and architects. Always dynamic and unique, the public display of the paper’s formative stages has proven beneficial to both the audience and groups involved. This is especially true for some of the blogger guest-editors, giving them an opportunity to harness a physical platform and immerse themselves in print-based media.

The playfulness and investment of the writers is visible in the emergence of personal interests. It would be fair to say that the majority of designers or academics are hardly enthusiastic about mainstream sports. However, the opportunity to engage readers in the socio-political and cultural relationships among sport and space led to an engrossing form of journalism, certainly more imaginative and compelling than box scores or reports of player injuries. The graphic-architectural lens appears to provide at times eccentric analyses of normative topics. The *New City Reader*, representing a synthesis of content and design, or collapse of subject and object, explores alternative strategies to the medium in a similar fashion as fellow newspaper-innovators *San Francisco Panorama* or *i*.

The public agenda of the *New City Reader* is equally important. As the editors write: “Taking inspiration from a custom of hanging entire newspapers on

boards in the streets or pasting them on walls in public places so they can be read collectively, this newspaper will be affixed in a multitude of locations around Lower Manhattan”. Among others inserted into the urban fabric, the issues being installed on the ground-level of the New Museum’s Bowery street facade act as social condenser case studies, invoking the “universal citizenry” of Jürgen Habermas.

The *Reader*’s true test could possibly lie outside of New York. An audience member at the panel discussion asked about an afterlife of the newspaper: could it be reproduced elsewhere? According to the editors, it appears there has been discussion of a traveling *Reader* – a primer that could pop up in Moscow or Turin. These cities would require the newspaper to again take on hyper-contextual roles per each context: assembling editors, breaking down sections, holding meetings, and liaising with printers, while at the same time being conscious of local cultural conditions and laws, such as freedom of press. Certainly one of the strengths of the paper is its ability to reveal facets of the city, by way of an interview or historical flashback that tells a secret or story.

As a first run, and one still in progress, the *Reader* has thus far consistently produced issues that scatter outside the museum’s walls; a distribution mechanism with a broad audience intent on inculcating a collective readership. If the newspaper is a locus where information meets the city, it’s safe to say the *New City Reader* has staked out a claim in today’s environment of networked publics. Until then, we anxiously await the next issue. □

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

THE WIRES

Janine Armin talks to ‘The Last Newspaper’ artist Hans Haacke.

When I met Hans Haacke for lunch late last month in Soho, he was carrying a bicycle helmet. The helmet was a recent purchase, but he has been riding the same bicycle since before moving to the West Village in the 1970s. After a conversation surprisingly filled with levity amid heavier subjects, from museum politics to biennial culture, we headed out into the street.

Rusted Raleigh in tow, Haacke gave me an exquisite micro-tour of recent changes in New York’s Lower East Side: the curated graffiti wall on Houston at Bowery, the gentrifying condominium machines at Houston at Second Avenue. He spoke of gentrification without cynicism, something I didn’t expect from one of the founders of institutional critique. His art includes such important conceptual pieces as *MoMA Poll* (1970), in which two Plexiglas ballot boxes contain the responses to the question: “Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon’s Indochina Policy be a reason for you not voting for him in November?” Or, *On Social Grease* (1975), a series of plaques with quotes from business executives and art world figures that exposes the exchange between art institutions and corporations. At the New Museum’s *The Last Newspaper* exhibition, Haacke’s *News* (1969/2008) is on view, in which a newswire feed froths over a table into a voluminous mass on the floor. [See *The Last Gazette*, p.3]

Janine Armin: How has *News* (1969/2008) changed since its inception?

Hans Haacke: One of the aspects is when the outside world enters the normally secluded halls of the fine arts, and that was also during the Vietnam War. So the Vietnam War was brought into the gallery. The sources were interesting. Primarily in the beginning it was the news agencies such as AP or UPI. These reports came over the wire in the offices of the newspaper, they would print them for the next day’s paper; you could see what would be coming out. In a way, it was breaking down the imagined walls between one and the other because the two have always been connected.

JA: How does that change in a show like *The Last Newspaper*, where the external is brought inside, often in real time?

HH: It feels much closer, with everybody walking around with news in their pockets. That of course didn’t exist at all. So it is on the one hand historical, as with many of the works in the show, but like some of the things that actually take place during the show it’s also alive.

JA: In terms of the ability to be constantly abreast of the news, do you think people are more conscious of the news? Or is it that there is a surplus of information and they’re drowning in it?

HH: They may know the latest news. Whether that is conducive to understanding what this is all about, making connections, and then coming up with an informed opinion that could effect an election result, I’m not sure. There’s almost an intoxication with the immediate and the fear that if one does not get the message or

is not in contact with a whole slew of people that one is going to be alone and ostracized from one’s peers.

JA: Andrea Fraser modified her premise of institutional critique saying it’s now about an institution of critique. Do you think that museums are becoming more self-critical? How might you go about criticizing a museum in this context?

HH: At a level where it does not endanger career or funding. They may incorporate self-critical attitudes, but when the financial survival of the institution is at stake, they simply can’t afford it. The people from the outside world also have a say in what happens in museums.

Picking up on the term institutional critique, that was originally referring to art institutions. Thinking about the context in which art was excluded. There art many other institutions – the government is an institution, the army is an institution, Wall Street is an institution. To focus exclusively on the art world separates it in a way from the rest. You know if you criticize the chairman, the president or the trustees, your promotion is at stake.

JA: There’s certainly been an increase in socio-political art that critiques financial institutions. The newspaper is another institution. Can it be separated from its ideologies? Where do you get your information?

HH: There are many newspapers and many different cultural contexts. I read the *New York Times*, occasionally I pick something up from *The Guardian* and other information I stumble across.

Each one of them represents a particular point of view. When it comes to the *New York Times*, I read the real thing, and I enjoy that. With breakfast. And I do buy *Der Spiegel* every week.

JA: I was wondering if you could talk a little about your work in the 1970 Information show at MoMA.

HH: The show’s purpose was to be the first museum-level exhibition of what then was called Conceptual art. My work asking visitors to the museum about David Rockefeller’s view towards the Vietnam War was an attempt to collect information. Since the results were posted right there and you could see the ballot boxes, it also reminded participants of their effect; they were working at a collective self-portrait. There was a gap,

if not a conflict, between those who participated in the poll and the leadership. Most recognized it. I know that Rockefeller did recognize it. Somebody pointed out to me a page in his autobiography: he wrote that this and other things that the new director allowed to happen made it impossible to continue having him there and he was fired.

JA: *News* is in high demand. On a personal level, is there any reason why you would consider to renew this work?

HH: Depending on where it is installed I like to have news sources in the language. Depending on issues that are important at the moment, I would also like to tap news sources because where they are located they provide a point of view that one would not normally get. □



Detail of Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2008. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Photo: Latitudes



Installation view of Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2008, in early October 2010. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Photo: Benoit Pailley/ New Museum



Installation view of Hans Haacke, *News*, 1969/2008, in early December 2010. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Photo: Latitudes