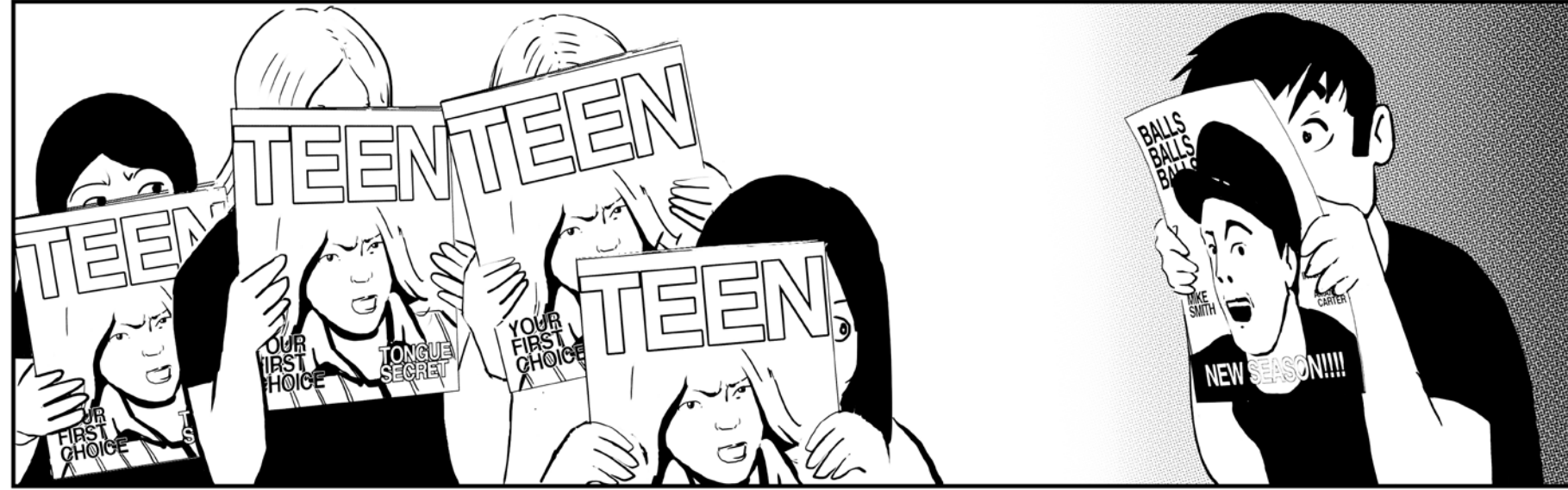


## THE WOODS: TEEN BALLS

FRANCESC RUIZ



### THE LAST POST Issue 1

*Edited by the Barcelona-based curatorial office Latitudes (www.LTTDS.org), and freely distributed from a micro-newsroom at the New Museum for ten weeks, 'The Last Post', 'The Last Gazette', 'The Last Register', etc., are hybrid weekly tabloids that are building incrementally into a surrogate catalogue for 'The Last Newspaper' at the New Museum, New York, 6 October 2010–9 January 2011. Latitudes and the volunteer news-team encourage you to pitch in with your suggestions for contributions.*

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**COVER:** Press room of *The Richmond Planet*, c.1899. Founded in 1883 and edited by African American businessman John Mitchell, Jr. until his death in 1922, the newspaper was known for its fearless reportage and campaigns against racist lynching. It was renamed *The Richmond Afro-American and Richmond planet* in 1938 and continued publishing until 1996. Photo: Library of Congress

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INAUGURAL EDITION! • BIRNBAUM! • BISMUTH! • VOIGNIER!

# THE LAST POST

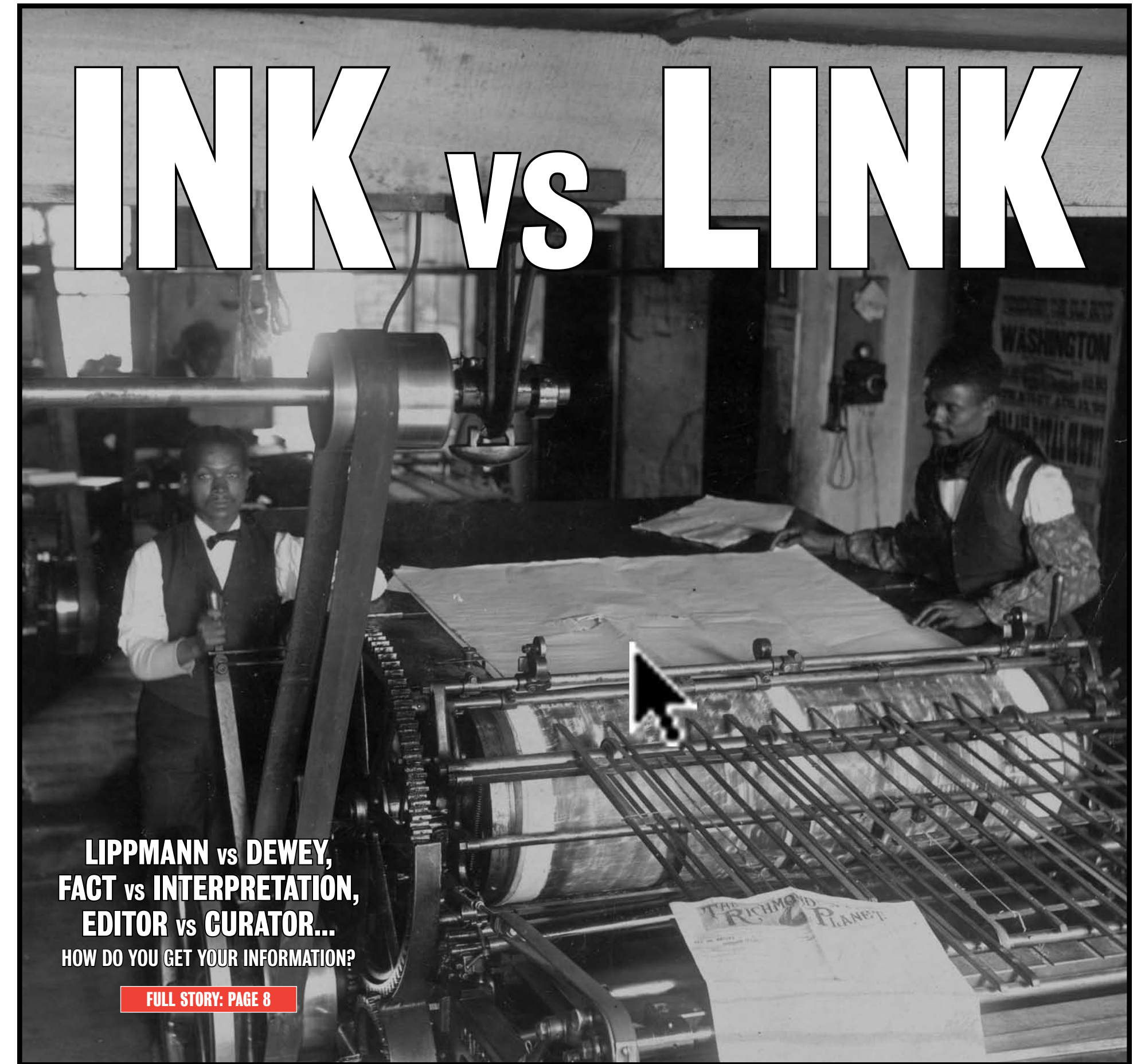
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FREE

# INK vs LINK



LIPPMANN vs DEWEY,  
FACT vs INTERPRETATION,  
EDITOR vs CURATOR...  
HOW DO YOU GET YOUR INFORMATION?

FULL STORY: PAGE 8



# WELCOME TO ‘THE LAST POST’, ‘THE LAST GAZETTE’, ‘THE LAST REGISTER’...

**EDITORIAL:** As Latitudes takes the helm of this in-house newspaper of the New Museum’s ‘The Last Newspaper’, the curatorial office offers a roadmap for the following weeks of reportage, commentary, opinion and analysis – and seeks your participation.

By MAX ANDREWS and  
MARIANA CÁNEPA LUNA

Distributed from the New Museum from this inaugural week and for the following nine weeks, each edition of this newspaper will bear a different title. *The Last Post*, *The Last Gazette*, *The Last Register*, etc., will build incrementally into a surrogate catalogue. It is a programming and discussion space, an archive in formation companioning *The Last Newspaper’s* artworks, organizations, and events, as well as a platform for critical reflection on the agency of art and artists, the information industry and its public – you, us – with respect to the news and the newsworthy.

As dramatist Arthur Miller once suggested, “A good newspaper, I suppose, is a nation talking to itself”. Although we have never run a newspaper before, we are speculating that a good micro-newspaper might be formed by a museum or exhibition talking to itself. And our motivation to explore such a notion was encouraged by the revolution in the role and function of the traditional newspaper which we are currently witnessing. As a bundle of ink and cellulose delivered to one’s door, the newspaper is a dying format haemorrhaging readers and money in the face of a reality in which publishing and distribution have ceased to be physical or financial barriers. Yet because of, not in spite of, the internet, in our times newspapers are in the midst of a chaotic reconstructing and reinvention of their core values and societal relevance. Today, as journalist and industry observer Jeff Jarvis has put it, it’s all about the economy of “ink versus link”.

We see the re-birth of the newspaper as a lens through which an exhibition-and-publication format can attempt to institute new organizational forms, to reconsider its relevance to its public, its readers, and its visitors. And to consider anew how its contents are constituted, and by whom.

As newspapers are questioning the kind of business they are in (that is, no longer (just) the print business), *The Last Post...* hopes to extend the contemporary museum’s reflection on a similar provocation. How is a museum, such as the New Museum, no longer (just) in the artwork display business? Is it a producer, a publisher, or a distributor? Is it a knowledge enterprise or an opinion enterprise? About what? Should a museum or a newspaper be a community, a platform or a network, for example? Given that most people would now accept that the world is too big and too complex for an individual to master, then what position should an organizational form take? The newspaper has been struggling for centuries with this fundamental issue which the exhibition format seems to have only tackled comparatively recently.

Curating *per se* – of content or people – could be seen as one of several parallel models of editing and vice-versa. As previously paper-only newspapers are opening up to the active contribution of their users through comment threads, discussion platform, live blogging, Facebook, Twitter, and so on, and thereby actively encouraging new authors – an exhibition-publication such as this one might also be more fully engaged in reciprocity, enabling and developing talent with similar less formalized formats.

Like the newspaper, an exhibition is at its core premised on making information available to the public, and in turn this implicates fundamental questions about the value of and access to knowledge in the formation of a democracy. In 1920s America, an intellectual sparring between journalist-sociologist Walter Lippmann (1889–1974) and philosopher-educator John Dewey (1859–1952) formed the crucible of a debate about the function of the media, communication, governance and citizenship. Lippmann regarded newspapers as overly vulnerable to convenience and sensationalism,



**TOP** Walter Lippmann between c.1939 and 1941. Photo: Louis Fabian Bachrach / American Memory from the Library of Congress.  
**BOTTOM** John Dewey. Photo: Public domain.

simply presenting the irrational reader with events without explaining their complexity and context. His solution was that power should be invested in the formation of professional knowledge-based elites to prepare and filter information – endorsed and authorized facts could be presented and democratic decisions made accordingly. Dewey (who was also a crucial influence on the Black Mountain College) by contrast saw the

press as having an active and crucial role in helping to define an individual and a society – where open communication and participatory debate were critical to a public’s understanding of itself, of current affairs and of the actions of government. Whereas Lippmann lamented the relativity of knowledge, Dewey celebrated its vitality and interaction, interpretation, facilitation and mediation.

Although this flattened summary of the so-called ‘Lippmann-Dewey’ debate ignores the more subtle terrain of both men’s positions, their argument continues to resonate today.

This duality, when imperfectly mapped onto the role and function of a museum or exhibition-publication with respect to its publics and the presentation of ‘facts’ and ‘opinion’, can present us with new possibilities for approaching them as democratic, communicative, educational and political forms. The Lippmann model would seem to point towards the curator-editor as a professional insider-pundit, identifying most strongly with the artist and presenting exhibitions as a proprietary form of information endorsement. The Dewey model, on the other hand, offers a model formed like a range of debates and conversations which are hosted through a shared enterprise between editor-curators, artists and publics. In this case the notion of a single narrative or an agreed upon set of facts has been abandoned, and instead it is a matter of refereeing or moderating diverse interests within the architecture of public knowledge in order to generate ideas and where there is no single model.

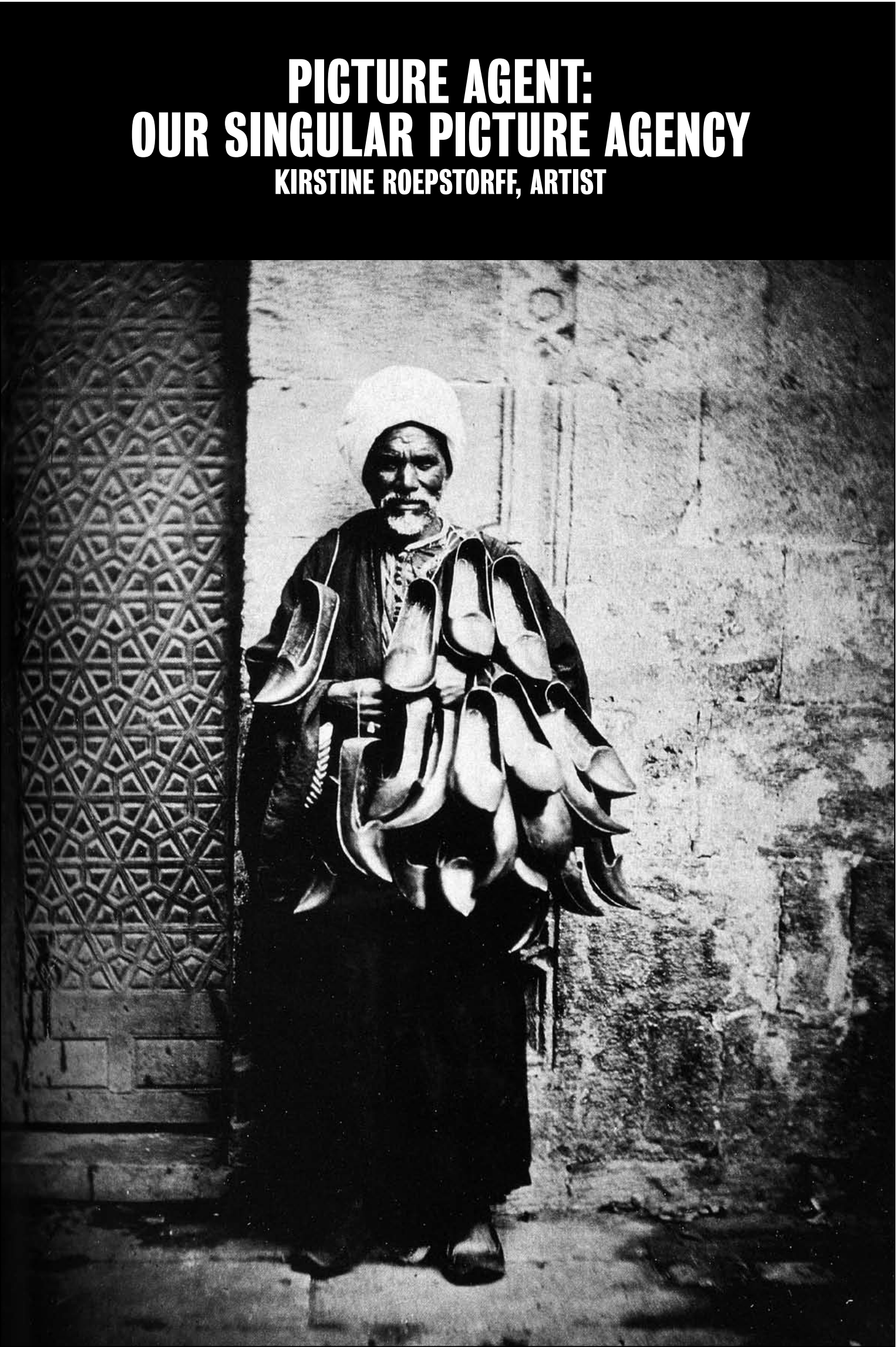
Who decides what is reported, or what is included? Or to put it in other ways: From where do you get your information?; What is fact and what is interpretation? Such considerations prompt profound questions about the logistical and intellectual role of the editor-curator, and the financial, operational and proprietary role of an

organizing institutional structure. For example, analogous to the potential threat to journalistic ‘heavy lifting’ posed by cuts to bureau staff (i.e. the risk to deep, often expensive commitment to specialist investigative reporting) – what are the challenges to a museum that hopes support large scale or long duration artistic productions? How does the argument about whether blogs based on collating existing stories from other sources are denigrating or reanimating the journalistic landscape translate to the ‘aggregation’ of artworks in the presentation of an exhibition-publication?

The aim of *The Last Post...*, within this seemingly old-fashioned format, is to get our collective fingers inky one more (or last?) time, and to negotiate directly and indirectly with such questions and the Lippmann-Dewey debate today.

*The Last Post...* team hope to explore with you the relationship between expert knowledge and democracy, between the exhibition-publication as a static presentation of facts and a comment thread discussing, for example, current affairs, trust, accountability, governance, distribution, documentary and editorial forms, information transparency, archives, micro-histories, campaigns, and so on.

In doing so, we invite and need your participation! A section of the newspaper will be put together in collaboration with the New Museum’s social network community, and we welcome and encourage you to contribute to these threads as well as by pitching us your suggestions and feeding us your comments: about the exhibition, its artists and organisations, as well as your experiences and thoughts in relation to what we are attempting to do and the news and information industries. We will be working Wednesday to Sunday, when we are not out reporting, on floor 3 of the New Museum and you can also email us at newspaper@LTTDS.org. □



In this picture you see a man leaning against a wall relief and an oriental door to the left. He is carrying a dress of shoes: a shoe seller. Imagine – the job of this man is to carry the potential paths of strangers. Image: Courtesy the artist.



## MEDIA HABITS: DARA BIRNBAUM

The New York artist whose work has addressed the medium of television since the late 1970s reveals her reading, browsing and viewing habits.

**NEWSPAPERS** I have basically stopped reading newspapers, except when traveling. Then I read the *International Herald Tribune*. I will look through the Sunday *New York Times*, as it is available once a neighbor has discarded it. Basically I scan *The New York Times* news and read the ‘Arts & Leisure’ section, etc. I will pick up free papers and look through them, such as *The Village Voice*.

**MAGAZINES** I use magazines mainly for listings, such as *New York* magazine and *Time Out New York*. For *New York* magazine I also do the crossword puzzle. News is gleaned through TV and the radio. There are only very few magazines I subscribe to, such as *Astronomy*, that of the Natural History Museum and the Audubon Society. I used to read *National Geographic*, but recently stopped it as I found I wasn’t reading it thoroughly enough. All are read at home, mostly late at night when it is quiet.

**ONLINE** I do spend considerable time on-line daily, mostly for research and communication. I use YouTube mostly for great archival footage – and that is my entertainment as well – concerts, interviews, etc. I use Facebook marginally. Mostly I answer when someone wants to be a friend or posts a message to me. Basically I am consumed by keeping up with email, mostly for work.

**TELEVISION** As for television, I can barely watch it. However, I am addicted to *Criminal Minds*, which I find is well written and well acted. It reminds me of a favorite film: *The Silence of the Lambs*. I haven’t exactly analyzed why. I can watch some public television, such as *Mystery* and sometimes watch films on TV, or the *Late Late Show* on CBS. Most television simply annoys me.

**RADIO** I listen to radio constantly, mostly Wyoming National Public Radio on my computer. Then there are just two stations I listen to on my regular radio by my bed – the two public broadcast stations that we have in New York City.

**BOOKS** I read constantly, but I skip around a lot – not very concentrated. However, I just finished *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave and Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man* and his *Point Omega*. □



# DOUBLE TROUBLE

## Our London correspondent Lorena Muñoz-Alonso caught up with 'The Last Newspaper' artist (and Oscar winner) Pierre Bismuth on a café terrace in Belleville, Paris

### EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



Lorena Muñoz-Alonso: You are taking part in 'The Last Newspaper' at the New Museum in New York with several of your pieces from the 'Newspaper' series that you made between 1999 and 2001. Is the series still ongoing?

Pierre Bismuth: The 'Newspaper' series is definitely an ongoing project. I actually never finish a series; I never close a period, which is kind of complicated because it is somehow like having lots of children and having to be a good father to all of them. I still have a newspaper piece that I need to do, and I very often buy two newspapers because I feel there is always the potential for a piece there.

LM-A: So tell me a bit about the principle of the series.

PB: The 'Newspaper' series is all about the duplication of the image. Duplication is an important method because I think it completely warps the moment of understanding. The images do not refer anymore to reality but they refer to each other, as if one image was copying the other. As a viewer you tend to forget they are addressing some real matter, you just wonder, why are there two of these? So it is a short circuit in

your head.

LM-A: Does this isolation of the image from reality account for why you always focus on really iconic social or political news, like the Sarah Payne murder or the first clone of a human embryo, for example? Is it to make even more blatant this rupture with understanding?

PB: The reason why I started to do this series was that I was at a moment of my life when I had been doing lots of film and I really wanted to stop using video or film for a while, even though I still wanted to explore the idea of duration, of time-based work. So I thought, okay, if I put two images together, I am addressing the idea of duration as well. Two images are frames, anyway, I like this idea of suspending a moment.

LM-A: At the same time, I think that this series very openly tackles recurrent concerns of your practice, LM: like issues of perception, how we perceive and process information and how to complicate those paths.

PB: Agreed. At the same time I realized, in a more formal kind of way, that one image on top of other refers to a sequence in a film, and one image next to the other refers to stereoscopy. The sequence is the idea of the same moment with a fraction of second of difference. Stereoscopy is the same moment with a slight difference in angle.

Also what excited me a lot about this work was having to look at reality, having to have contact with it, because when you are an artist you tend to live very much in your own world. So to me this series is also the perfect excuse to keep in touch with what is going on in the world. And when you look at the work, it also gives you information about the context in which the piece was made, and I find that very interesting.

LM-A: It becomes a sort of time capsule, which is something that interests me a lot, the idea of preserving and retrieving time. But speaking of time, you started this series in the late 1990s, when the



'Newspaper' series ready for hanging at the New Museum. Photo: Latitudes

internet was not used on the same scale as nowadays. We can definitely say that the way we access and consume information has changed due to the internet, and because the New Museum show is called 'The Last Newspaper', I am wondering if you think the newspaper as such is in decline?

PB: Do you think the curators have titled the show like this, implying it is in decline?

LM-A: I'm not sure about that, I am just wondering...

PB: I don't believe it is the end of an era for newspapers, I don't think they will be that quickly replaced. It seems that the internet it is killing television at a faster rate, because I think somehow that newspapers will always do a different job at informing people than a website. Did television kill the newspaper? I don't think so.

LM-A: You might have a point there. But going back to your practice, why is the idea of repetition so important in your work?

PB: I see repetition as a disappointment device that forces you to deal with what was already there. I'm fighting against this idea that artists have to present something new every time.

LM-A: And why are you so interested in disappointment?

PB: Because I think it has a real potential for emancipation. When you stop believing that something is going to save you from something, you have to start dealing with what you have and making something out of it, rather than thinking that something is going to come and change everything for you.

LM-A: That is quite interesting because as an artist this anti-idealist attitude pretty much puts you in the position of questioning everything. The agency of art, to begin with.

PB: True, but is that a bad thing?

LM-A: No, I don't think so.

PB: I just don't like art that tries to take you somewhere else. I have a problem with art that aims at providing entertainment and dreams. People don't need art to dream. Everyone is dreaming already. Everyone is already creative. The artist doesn't have the exclusivity of being creative in society.

LM-A: So what is the privilege of the artist then?

PB: The artist has a special way of addressing questions with a special ability with form. Even if contemporary art has moved on from appraising technique like it was in the Classical period, I still think that an artist is someone who knows how to deal with things formally. An artist is someone who knows how to do things. An artist has to make questions about reality within a particular historical and artistic context. And an artist also has probably a particular logic and irrationality in the way he or she addresses his or her own questions about reality.

LM-A: So which would be your own set of questions?

PB: How to extract freedom from systems that seem to be closed and regulated? How to find room for manoeuvre in situations that seem already determined?

LM-A: Your newest work,

presented at Bugada & Cargnel gallery, in which you copy the gallery desk and put it on a stage, is that some form of institutional critique?

PB: Yes, in a certain way it is.

LM-A: Are you interested in Institutional Critique?

PB: Well, I was interested the some of the artists that were doing it back in the days, yes.

LM-A: How successful do you think it was, and I am thinking of Hans Haacke or Michael Asher for instance, in terms of gradually being co-opted by the institution itself?

PB: Well, I recently read an interview with Pete Townsend where he was being asked about political music and songs, and if they'd had any practical effect, and I really liked his answer. He said, "I am not sure how successful it was in terms of actually changing things, but the music was definitely reflecting the fact that people had those issues", and I think it is exactly the same with art. It's already good enough if art can simply show that some people have some problems with some issues. It records the fact that a problem was addressed at a certain time, which is quite something already.

LM-A: Repetition and questions of perception are concepts very often employed in music theory. Is music a discipline you are interested in?

Music was my first love. I should have been a proper musician. I think I didn't study music early enough in life. But when I am not doing art most of my time is devoted to listening to music

and reading about music. And I think that popular music has not been historicized to the same degree as contemporary art, so there is lots of room there for research and discussion. It is not an overcrowded territory.

LM-A: Yes, definitely, and there is also lots of links between the two fields, like all that happened in New York in the 1960s, with Fluxus, John Cage, Tony Conrad...

PB: Yes, fantastic! I love that entire scene.

LM-A: Are you working again with film? [Pierre Bismuth won an Oscar with Charlie Kauffman for the script of 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind']

PB: Yes, I am working on a film right now, but it is difficult to find the right people to work with. Are you sure your machine is working? [Pointing at the digital recorder]

LM-A: Well, I hope it is. I love this recorder. It's new and works great.

PB: I have one as well. I use it to record my wife's dreams. She has amazing dreams and, moreover, an amazing and funny way of remembering them and telling them. I myself have two strange recurring dreams. One happens when I am sleeping in hotels but I think-dream I am at home. I wake up and, because I don't recognize the room, I think someone has changed all the furniture while I was asleep.

LM-A: That sounds like one of your works!

PB: Yes! And the other dream is exactly the other way around: I sleep at home and I wake up being sure I am somewhere else and that someone has recreated my very own room while I was asleep. There is always this moment in which I wake up and I marvel about the whole repetition. Again, it's all about repetition, the repetition of my own space. And it is also funny how the brain works. If it looks like home, why do you have to think it is somewhere else? But you do. It is extremely complicated.

LM-A: It's like when you travel a lot and for a minute you don't know where you are when you wake up the morning. It is quite disturbing. Let's wrap up by talking about patterns. Your practice seems to be very focused on patterns, somehow imposing on yourself a set of instructions, restraining the options, if you like.

PB: Yes, I don't like having to make choices. I prefer when there are limitations. It's probably because I don't know what I want. What I surely know is that, on an ethical level, I don't want to be part of the culture industry. It seems that nowadays art is more and more considered as a form of leisure industry, which is not at all why I started making art. If I can avoid that, even ending by doing an extremely boring exhibition, I will be happy to do that. It is not my job to amuse you. □

Pierre Bismuth's exhibition at Bugada & Cargnel, Paris, continues until 6 November.



Pierre Bismuth, *Newspaper: First human embryo is cloned, say scientists, The Daily Telegraph, 26th November 2001, 2001, Newspaper collage, 25 in x 16.14 in; 63 1/2 cm x 41 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Bugada & Cargnel, Paris*





Lights, Camera... Banality: Kolja Reichert on Marie Voignier [ARTICLE ON PAGE 8](#)

**FACING PAGE AND ABOVE** Marie Voignier, *Hearing the Shape of a Drum*, 2010. HDV video, 17 min. Coproduced by the 6th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art and the Centre d'Art Contemporain de Brétigny, France. Courtesy the artist and Marcelle Alix galerie, Paris.



# Lights, Camera... Banality

In a text recently published in the catalogue of the Kathrin Rhomberg-curated 6th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, entitled *what is waiting out there*, Berlin-based writer Kolja Reichert analyses Marie Voignier's film witnessing – or not – the 2009 trial of the notorious Josef Fritzl, the Austrian man found guilty of raping and imprisoning his daughter for more than two decades.



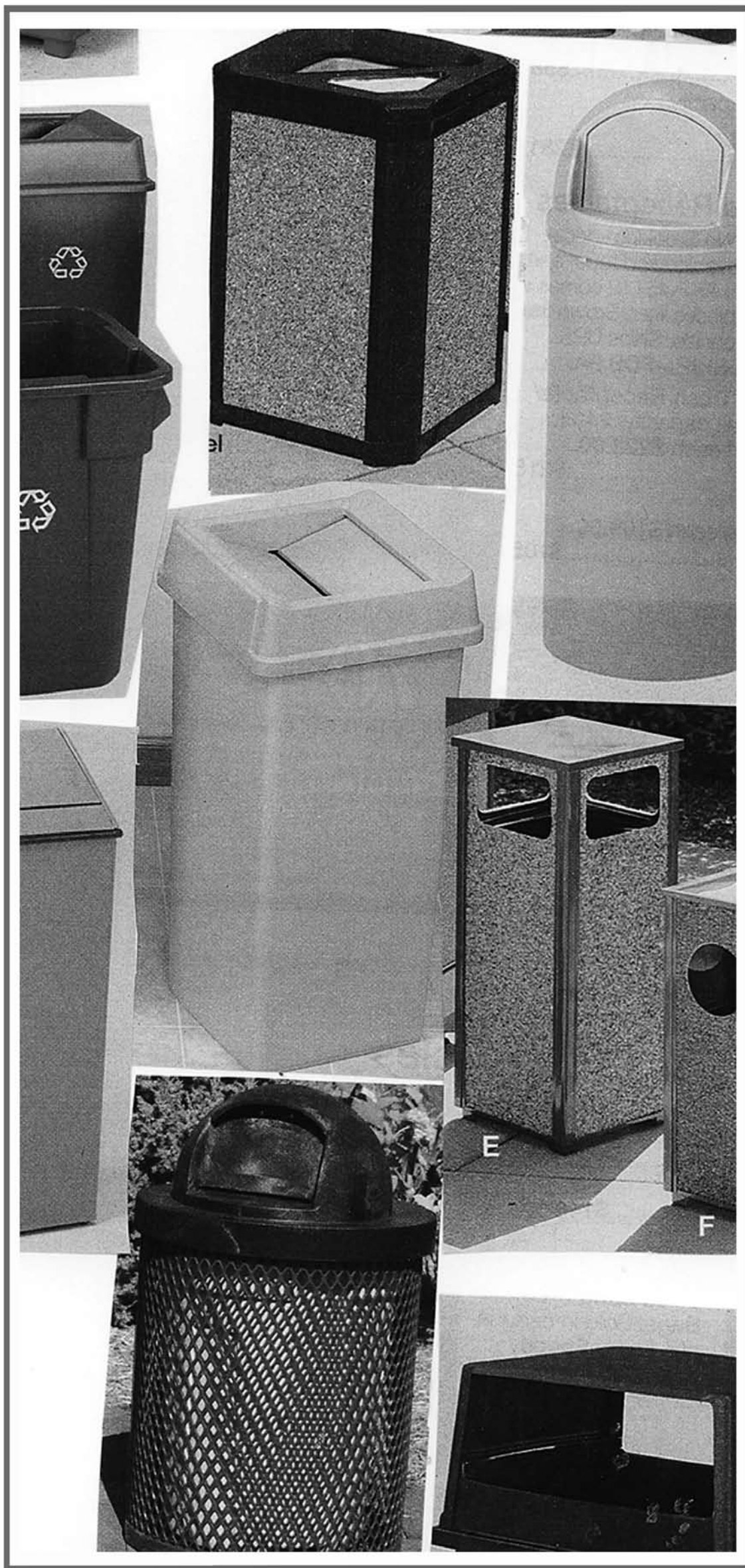
By KOLJA REICHERT  
The reason why everyone is here is seen briefly once: Josef Fritzl, “the monster of Amstetten”, in the dock. Reporters from all over the world have gathered outside the district court in Sankt Pölten for his trial in March 2009. But the proceedings take place in camera. The only glimpse of the object of so much interest comes from archive material the artist films from a news team's monitor in a double fracture of reality: the accused hiding his face behind a folder.

Marie Voignier's film *Hearing the Shape of a Drum* (2010) explores the construction of a global media event that also participates in inventing its object. The entire arsenal of the image industry has been drawn up outside the law courts: cameras, tripods, microphones, spotlights, production trucks. The battle can begin at any time. But the enemy is in hiding. So the reporters have no alternative but to interview each other and to film each other filming. The hysterical curiosity is thrown back on itself and so are the projections that

fuel it. The journalists' ever-renewed efforts at summoning up the profound banality of evil for the cameras have all the senselessness of Beckett's theater of the absurd. The only person producing really significant images is the artist. She depicts a news industry treading water.

Voignier conducts her camera with therapeutic patience. It is left to the subjects to reveal themselves, aided by careful work at the editing desk. Her films *Hinterland* (2009) and *Western DDR* (2005) use the tropical islands simulated in a Zeppelin factory in Brandenburg and a bankrupt Western leisure park outside Berlin to tell of global migration of (historical) images, projections, and worlds of experience driven by business models.

In *Hearing the Shape of a Drum* Voignier, who shares the journalists' venue as well as their tools, also reflects the conditions of her own artistic practice: “Does not media critique equally apply to artists, especially when they make use of journalistic practices?” As artist she is a model example of the freelancer as created by the news economy. Under pressure of having to provide employers with material, the reporters evince a truly artistic inventiveness. It becomes clear they have the same everyday cares as their audience in front of their screens, and that they are sometimes as much in the dark. But they must produce authoritative images. Even when nothing happens they must at least feign events, devising realities with the tools of fiction. Marie Voignier shows the absurd media theater that takes place backstage. □



# WORKING WITH UTOPIANS

‘The Last Newspaper’ co-curators Richard Flood and Benjamin Godsill ask themselves about the origins of the exhibition.

**Benjamin Godsill:** I know that part of how this exhibition developed for us was our interest in finding a new way of thinking about what audiences might encounter in a museum gallery. In short, how is this exhibition going to be different and why?

**Richard Flood:** Our thinking was completely driven by the New Museum's mission. We have a unique heritage that is about challenging the norm and embracing experimentation. Creating an environment that combines an exhibition with ongoing social discourse became a very tempting goal. And, once the concept was clear, the topic of the newspaper naturally asserted itself. Artists have created so much extraordinary art in response to newspapers, and that art, in and of itself, provides a collage of the history of our time. As you know, when we started preparing a checklist, the work that was inspired directly by a newspaper and contained that newspaper in its final realization became key to the exhibition checklist. That kind of immediate artistic response also suggested the project's title *The Last Newspaper*.

**BG:** Our primary fascination was with artists who were using and often deconstructing the format of the newspaper – they were not just pulling apart the physical properties, but were interested in confronting forms of top-down power that seemed to have the agency to say “this is what the news is”. The artwork included in the exhibition is always an assault on the newspaper but also an homage. At the same time we had been discussing new ways of making the galleries socially active spaces and learning from previous New Museum exhibitions – specifically Jeremy Deller's *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq* (2009), and, to a degree, *Urban China* (2009), which were simultaneously on view. Those shows gave us the opportunity to see what it looked like and how it felt to really foster dialogue and exchange in the gallery spaces, to envision the twenty-first-century museum as a site for the production of ideas as well as for the display of objects. Now of course, with a title like *The Last Newspaper* there can be a misunderstanding that we are presuming to hold a vigil for

the death of the newspaper, or even that we are as presuming that some of the practices we have gathered will supplant the newspaper. However, we were always more interested in the seriality of news, in both the static artworks and in the active participants who will inhabit the galleries and produce our own newspapers. What art do you think most easily illustrates why we chose this title, and why it is not reliquary?

**RF:** Well, when it comes to an artwork, Luciano Fabro's *Tautologia-Pavimento* (Pavement Tautology) was my starting point. Fabro created the work in 1967 and it really encapsulates a number of issues in the exhibition, both conceptually and literally. Every morning, one mops the floor and then lays out yesterday's newspaper to absorb the moisture. It's a very old custom and definitively addresses the nature and disposability of *The Last Newspaper*.

**BG:** In the exhibition we have artists dissecting the newspaper and, in most cases, attempting to illustrate how the information (or news) they report is always compromised by time,



LEFT TO RIGHT Richard Flood, Chief Curator, New Museum; Benjamin Godsill, Curatorial Associate, New Museum



by ideology, by space, etc. In all of the groups we have assembled and who will be inhabiting ‘offices’ in the exhibition, we have partners working to find new possibilities for reporting and structuring what is going on in the world.

**RF:** I feel particularly lucky that so many of the people we are working with have more than matched our enthusiasm for the project. Both the artists and organizations are looking

at newspapers and information dispersion through new lenses. I actually get the feeling that the ‘global campfire’ isn't that remote a concept. Obviously, we are working with utopians but they're turning out to be very practical ones who lead with their survival skills. At its core, *The Last Newspaper* is about people and their need to communicate. If that need remains intact, then civilization stays alive. □

# THE NEXT NEWSPAPER: ProPublica

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



**WHAT IS PROPUBLICA?:** ProPublica is an independent, non-profit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest. Our work focuses exclusively on truly important stories, stories with ‘moral force’. We do this by producing journalism that shines a light on exploitation of

the weak by the strong and on the failures of those with power to vindicate the trust placed in them. Unless otherwise noted, you can republish articles and graphics for free. We're licensed under Creative Commons, which provides the legal details.

**WHO IS INVOLVED?:** ProPublica is led by Paul

Steiger, the former managing editor of *The Wall Street Journal*. Stephen Engelberg, a former managing editor of *The Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon and former investigative editor of *The New York Times*, is ProPublica's managing editor. Richard Tofel, the former assistant publisher of *The Wall Street Journal*, is general manager.

**WHY WAS IT SET UP?:** Profit-margin expectations and short-term stock market concerns, in particular, are making it increasingly difficult for the public companies that control nearly all of our nation's news organizations to afford—or at least to think they can afford—the sort of intensive, extensive and uncertain efforts that produce great investigative journalism.

It is true that the number and variety of publishing platforms is exploding in the Internet age. But very few of these entities are engaged in original

reporting. In short, we face a situation in which sources of opinion are proliferating, but sources of facts on which those opinions are based are shrinking. The former phenomenon is almost certainly, on balance, a societal good; the latter is surely a problem.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?:** We have a newsroom of 32 working journalists, all of them dedicated to investigative reporting on stories with significant potential for major impact.

Each story we publish is distributed in a manner designed to maximize its impact. Many of our “deep dive” stories are offered exclusively to a traditional news organization, free of charge, for publication or broadcast. We published 138 such stories in 2009 with 38 different partners. One of these was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. Each story is also published on this site. This site also features

outstanding investigative reporting produced by others, sometimes with our annotation and follow-up, thus making our site both more of a destination and a tool to promote more good work in this field.

**WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF ITS INVESTIGATIONS?:** ‘Law and Disorder’: In the chaotic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, NOPD officers shot 11 civilians, five of whom died. ‘Gulf Oil Spill’: We have focused on BP's safety and cost-cutting record, environmental and health effects of the spill, the efforts at cleanup, and how it all is affecting workers and the communities in the region. ‘Eye on the Stimulus’: The U.S. government's stimulus package has been a challenge to spend both quickly and effectively, and it has sometimes been vulnerable to waste and fraud.

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