

RUIZ • VEGA • GARCÍA • PIPER • ESQUIVIAS

# THE LAST REGISTER

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FREE



## EXHIBIT: EXPOSED!

- BEHIND-THE-SCENES SNAPS OF 'THE LAST NEWSPAPER' **PAGE 11**
- ARTISTS SPEAK! 'REGISTER' REPORTS **PAGE 2**



# REACTION DISTRACTION

Gwen Schwartz reports from the opening weekend talk of ‘The Last Newspaper’ with participating artists Nate Lowman, Aleksandra Mir and Sarah Charlesworth, moderated by New Museum Curatorial Associate Benjamin Godsill



The New Museum’s Theater is quiet. There is a small group: maybe twenty prestigious, well-dressed, patrons of the arts and visitors who paid for tickets to hear this Artists’ Talk. Benjamin Godsill is beaming with excitement. As the artists arrive, they all sit at a white table with their iced coffees and a large projection screen behind them. “I wanted these three artists in the show because of how their work relates to newspapers”, Godsill begins, “but they are a small part of a much larger show and even larger idea”.

Sarah Charlesworth is a confident older woman with long white hair and black-rimmed glasses. She has the presence of an artistic business woman – never pausing as she talks passionately about the ideas behind her artwork. Charlesworth’s contribution to the exhibition is titled *Movie-Television-News-History*, June 21, 1979 (1979) and focusses on newspaper reporting of the killing of Bill Stewart, a correspondent for ABC news, who was shot with his interpreter by Nicaraguan National Guard members. “I’m exploring the role of photography in contemporary culture”,

she explains, “my artwork is the newspapers’ placement of photos on the page but with the added technique of removing text. What I noticed when the words were removed was a pattern – on all of the different newspapers, the photos at the tops of the front pages would be predominantly male figures, and the photos beneath various images of war, death, bombs, and fire”.

Aleksandra Mir is introduced–she is small, refined, and quiet but nevertheless a strong speaker. She mentions her catalogue for sale in the bookstore multiple times and holds it up as a prop almost the entire time she speaks. Yet she makes sure to underscore how all of her work can be seen for free on her website. Godsill prompts her to introduce her contribution to *The Last Newspaper*. “I made this drawing series that consisted of 240 drawings, drawings of newspapers with Sharpie markers”, Mir explains, “I’ve been interested in newspapers forever. My interest in news precedes my interest in art. There’s a beautiful nostalgia with newsprint, it gets better with age”.

Nate Lowman is introduced by Godsill, but he has already

introduced himself physically. He has been squirming and distracted in his chair, constantly looking around the room, while his body language has been aimed towards the other speakers rather than facing the audience. His asymmetrical haircut hides half of his face, and he frequently touches, fixes, and flips it back and forth. It shines in the low lights of the theater with whatever product he’s using in it. Lowman seems to underscore the fact that he is younger than the other two artists by swearing multiple times and speaking his mind in an unfiltered way—he clearly doesn’t care about any ‘artists’ talk’ conventions. He even jumps up from his chair at one point to point out a detail of an image of his work on the projection screen.

“While I was a weirdo”, Lowman explains, “I collected a group of [newspaper] images of guys with beards after the World Trade Center fell”. He recalls one person in particular: “this guy was all over the news, he was like a Jim Morrison-Charles Manson love-child. This guy was a radical because of how he looked”. Godsill interjects and focusses in on Lowman’s contribution to the



Nate Lowman, *Black and White and Read All Over*, 2010. Mixed media on canvas. Courtesy the artist and Maccarone, New York. Photo: Latitudes

exhibition: “Why did you end up focusing on corrections [from the *New York Times*?]” He responds that it is a question of parameters, and working from the structure of the newspaper. The corrections are really mundane and stupid, but they’re so meaningful. He continues: “each painting is one week of news. I go back and revisit. I pick what’s the most...”, he trails off and begins new thoughts. Caravaggio’s bones. Tourism. One bone. Two bones. LeBron James. A Lumpfish in the Science section (“ugly animals”). “Fuck me! I painted *Avatar*!” Justin Bieber–“Ugh. I have to paint him?” Lowman continues talking about the relentless rhythm of newspaper production, and wonders about the person who has to come up with the headlines. Godsill then interjects with the factoid that the *New York Post* refuses to disclose information regarding who invents its headlines and then guides the conversation into the realm of the internet and what it means for newspapers and newsprint. “There’s a physicality to newspapers”, Charlesworth responds, while Lowman relates that when he wants to read “real news” he reads *The Guardian* online. “American news is comical. But it’s hard to focus on the web. It’s built on the idea of distraction. Everything’s one click away.” Godsill wants to talk about citizen journalism in reference

to the blogosphere and opens the talk up to possible questions from the small audience. Only two questions are forthcoming – one from the front row and one from me. I initially speak too loudly into the microphone and my voice reverberates throughout the room. I’m curious to hear more from Charlesworth and Lowman. Although they both talked a lot about process I felt they didn’t really disclose the intention of their artworks. I am a little confused. When someone responds to an image, it’s subjective: what resonates with you depends entirely on personal experiences. Do these two artists see themselves as some sort of messengers for the audience? Charlesworth responds that as an artist she is an explorer, a semiotician allowing the audience to “re-see” images again. “Sometimes I think I’m acknowledging ghosts”, says Lowman cryptically. “Art is late – it’s tardy... it’s a wretched thing. Why do I care? I made a painting of a dude. I dunno what it’s about”, he continues in fragments. For Lowman, images are a language that is up for interpretation and with which as an artist “you have an opportunity to re-edit and engage”. And as I am doubting whether any of this provides me with an answer, Lowman concludes triumphantly: “all you can do as an artist is open questions, I don’t have answers for anybody!” □

# VANILLA NIGHTMARES

## Doryun Chong, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA, New York, on Adrian Piper and her contribution to ‘The Last Newspaper’

Born in the Bronx, New York, in 1948, Adrian Piper came of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Minimalism and Conceptual Art were irrevocably transforming the topography of artistic practice and providing the young artist with crucial lessons. Her art has always sought to transform the strategies of direct address and physical presence devised by the neo-avant-gardes into those of social criticism and political confrontation. And confrontation, as the artist has stated in an interview with Maurice Berger, is “therapeutic and also catalytic”. In 1972, while a doctoral student in philosophy at Harvard, Piper began performing the “Mythic Being”, a male alter ego with an afro, a pencil mustache, dark shades, a villainous grin, and an incessant cigarette in his mouth. In resulting performances, photographic documentation, and drawings, the Mythic Being enacted variation of wild nature. In another, a scowling and fist-waving mob appears next to the headline “Affirmative Action Upheld by High Court as a Remedy for

an especially visceral turn in the *Vanilla Nightmares* series, which Piper began in 1986 and continued until 1989. There are a total of twenty-one pieces in the *Vanilla Nightmares* series, and three (#3, #9, #10) are in *The Last Newspaper* exhibition courtesy of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. In it, black figures drawn with charcoal and oil crayon emerge on the pages of the *New York Times* like spectres suddenly assuming physical forms to cross the threshold of visibility and invade the comfort zone of reason. They are summoned by headlines dealing with race and its perilous politics or by egregiously exoticist or sexist pandering to consumer desires in advertisements. In one work, a lone, black, “savagage” male figure creeps up on an impassive female model featured in a Bloomingdale’s ad titled “Street Safari,” an urban fashion supposedly inspired by the romantic colonial imagination of wild nature. In another, a scowling and fist-waving mob appears next to the headline “Affirmative Action Upheld by High Court as a Remedy for

Past Job Discrimination,” and letters spelling “What if ...?” are scrawled across the masthead. These disquieting, sometimes salacious, images tap into and give form to the enduring cultural fascination with slavery and black magic as well as racialized myths of miscegenation (consensual or otherwise) that are still seething just beneath the surface of our collective unconscious.

Another of Piper’s works *My Calling (Card)* #1 (1986–1990), a short message typed on a note card, closes with a twist: “I regret any discomfort my presence is causing you, just as I am sure you regret the discomfort your racism is causing me”. Irony and melancholia infuse the sentence, reminding us that it is precisely through discomfort that Piper’s art cuts into the fortress of our injured consciousness, and such discomfort just might help to cure it. □

*Adapted from text originally published in Bits & Pieces Put Together to Present a Semblance of a Whole: Walker Art Center Collections ©2005 Walker Art Center*



Adrian Piper, *Vanilla Nightmares* #9 (1986), charcoal, oil crayon on newspaper, 22 x 13 ¾ in. (55.9 x 34.9 cm). Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis: T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 2004.



Photo: Roman Mensig

## MEDIA HABITS: DORA GARCÍA

Dora García – who will represent Spain at the 54th Venice Biennale next year – on ‘Letterman’, ‘SpongeBob’ and social deviancy

**NEWSPAPERS** I mostly read the digital editions of *El País* (ElPais.com) and *ABC* (ABC.es). On paper, I read *La Vanguardia*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (this one I use mostly to learn German) which I buy at the kiosk or in airports. But I try to get them for free as much as I can. I usually read the front page stories, followed by the editorial, the opinion and culture sections, and browse the last page.

**MAGAZINES** I hardly ever read magazines, only when I travel, and then I buy “female magazines”, in German, to have the excuse that I buy them to learn German!

**ONLINE** I spend a lot of time on line. Really a lot. I answer emails mostly, and look up information but I don’t use social networks. I use Skype all the time to make phone calls over the internet. I don’t pay for any content except very occasionally for some articles I cannot otherwise get. Work and leisure is, really, the same for me. I use YouTube a lot to watch the *Late Show with David Letterman*, as well as television from the 1950s, 60s and 70s – all on YouTube.

**TELEVISION** I never watch TV. I am not proud of it, I simply don’t watch it because my children monopolize it. If ever, I’ll watch *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, *The Cleveland Show* or

*SpongeBob SquarePants* with them.

**RADIO** I used to listen a lot of Radio 3 (Spanish national radio) but since they fired one of my favorites, [the music journalist] Diego A. Manrique this summer, I don’t listen to it anymore. I listen to classical radio sometimes, mostly when I’m doing my accounting, and when I’m driving.

**BOOKS** I read mostly non-fiction based on the subject I’m researching at that moment for my work. So now a lot of books on social deviancy and anti-psychiatry. I have read a lot of novels by Roberto Bolaño lately – I really like them. □



# BROADCASTING

Joe Saltzman – the leading expert in the representation of journalism in popular culture – picks his top 10 newspaper journalists from television history.

Throughout the history of television there have been many portraits of newspapermen and women in series, individual episodes and movies-for-television. But there have been few TV programs that featured a newspaper office and its employees doing the job of journalism. Here are 10 TV programs that made newspaper journalism important to the plots and lifestyles of the principal characters.



**1. LOU GRANT (1977–1982)**  
Lou Grant was easily the best newspaper TV series ever made. Grant (Ed Asner) worked at the fictitious *Los Angeles Tribune* daily newspaper as its City Editor, a job he took after the WJM television station fired him. Although he was the station's TV news director on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, he often said that he began his career as a print journalist and would end his career as a print journalist. The main character was really the Tribune and the cast included General Assignment Reporters Joe Rossi (Robert Walden) and Billie Newman (Linda Kelsey); Managing Editor Charles Hume (Mason Adams), an old friend of Lou's who had persuaded him to move from Minneapolis to Los Angeles; Assistant City Editor Art Donovan (Jack Bannon), Photojournalist Dennis “Animal” Price (Daryl Anderson), Publisher Margaret Pynchon (Nancy Marchand), the widowed, patrician publisher, a character loosely based on real-life newspaper publisher Katharine Graham of *The Washington Post*.

**2. THE WIRE. SEASON 5 (2008)**  
The fifth season of *The Wire* focused on *The Baltimore Sun* – “what stories get told and what don't and why it is that things stay the same”. One of the most



realistic depictions of a newspaper in action, this series deals with hard-core journalism issues such as the quest for profit, the decreasing staff, and the corruption of a reporter who committed the cardinal sin of journalism – making up the story. Throughout the episodes, the *Sun* faces severe budget cuts and the newsroom struggles to cover the city with a smaller, overworked staff. The star of the show is City Editor Augustus “Gus” Haynes (Clark Johnson) who is suspicious of Reporter Scott Templeton (Thomas McCarthy), a young reporter with a limitless ambition that leads him to falsify a major story. He works with corrupt policeman Jimmy McNulty (played by Dominic West) on a story about a fake serial killer. The other editors, eager to have a story that will build circulation, applaud Templeton and give

him free rein to cover the story, which gains momentum with each issue. Haynes attempts to expose Templeton, but the managing editors ignore the fabrications and demote anyone critical of their star reporter, who ends up winning a Pulitzer Prize.



**3. DEADLINE (2000–2001)**  
Wallace Benton (Oliver Platt) is an old-school, alcoholic, tough and dirty reporter for a New York tabloid magazine called the *New York Ledger* who in better days was Pulitzer Prize-

winning columnist. Si Beekman (Tom Conti) is the powerful and eccentric owner of the *Ledger*; Nikki Masucci (Bebe Neuwirth) is Benton's bright and ambitious editor; Brooke Benton (Hope Davis) is the journalist's estranged wife and an award-winning, cutting-edge journalist in her own right and Hildy Baker (Li Taylor) is the aggressive gossip columnist who teams up with Benton to fight the powers that be at the newspaper. The obnoxious Benton character proved too hard to take for the majority of viewers and the series – which effectively explored the fast-paced and high pressure world of tabloid journalism – died after one season.

**4. THE DAILY PLANET – IN THREE SPECIFIC TV SERIES:**  
The *Daily Planet* staff consisting of Editor Perry White, Reporters Clark Kent and Lois Lane, and



**THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN (1952–1958)**  
Reporters Clark Kent (George Reeves) and Lois Lane (Phyllis Coates, then Noel Neill) of the *Daily Planet* staff. Editor Perry White (John Hamilton). Cub Reporter-Photographer Jimmy Olsen (Jack Larson).

Photojournalist Jimmy Olsen remain pretty much the same in all three TV incarnations of the DC Comics character Superman.



**LOIS & CLARK (1993–1997)**  
Reporters Clark Kent (Dean Cain) and Lois Lane (Teri Hatcher) of the *Daily Planet* staff. Editor Perry White (Lane Smith). Jimmy Olsen (Michael Landes).

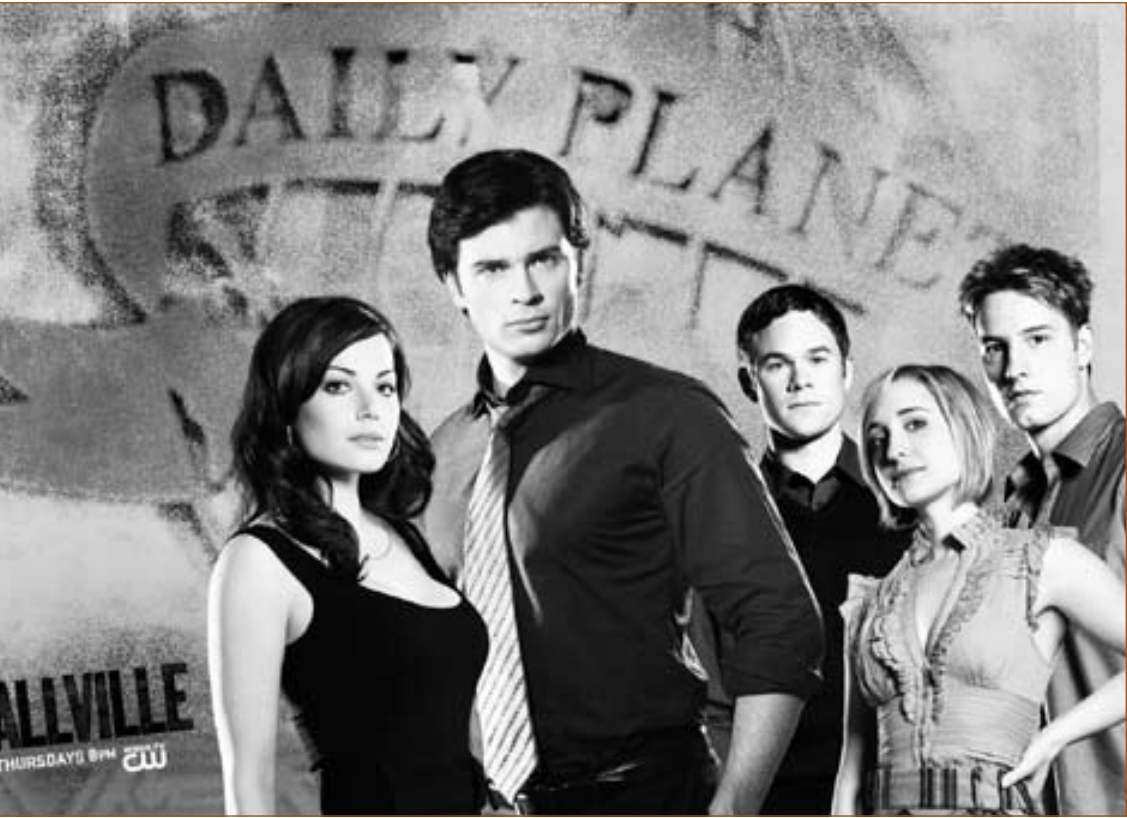
**SMALLVILLE (2005–2010)**  
Reporters Clark Kent (Tom Welling) and Lois Lane (Erica Durance) of the *Daily Planet*. Perry White (Michael McKean) is mentioned but only seen in one seminal episode early in the series, and again in 2010 when Lois and Perry team up to do a dangerous story. The *Daily Planet* is said to be one of Metropolis' oldest and most respected newspapers. In 2005, Pauline Kahn (Carrie Fisher) was the Editor-in-Chief. Franklin Stern (Blu Mankuma), the new publisher, also portrayed the Editor-in-Chief.



**5. KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER (1974–1975)**  
Carl Kolchak (Darren McGavin) is an investigative reporter who follows the bizarre and supernatural. Wearing a straw hat and seersucker jacket, Kolchak hates authority and can't get anyone to believe his unbelievable stories. His editor, Tony Vincenzo (Simon Oakland) puts up with Kolchak when no one else will, but is constantly fighting with him over covering real stories, not tabloid monsters. Another reporter is Ron Updyke (Jack Grinnage) who is envious of Kolchak even while he hates his unorthodox approach to journalism.



**6. THE TWILIGHT ZONE. 'PRINTER'S DEVIL' EPISODE (1963)**  
Doug Winter (Robert Sterling) is the dedicated editor of the *Danzburg Courier* who is being driven out of business



avoids an eternity in hell. Smith is banished and Winter gets rid of the linotype machine.

**7. THE NAKED TRUTH (1995–1998)**  
Reporter-Photojournalist Nora Wilde (Tea Leoni) won a Pulitzer Prize. After losing her job, she accepted a new job at the only place that would hire her – the *Weekly Comet* tabloid where she haunts celebrities and becomes a paparazzi. Her editor is Camilla Dane (Holland Taylor) and her new colleagues include Reporter Jake Sullivan (Tom Verica) and Photographer Suji (Amy Hill).



by the *Gazette*, which is owned by a big newspaper syndicate. Linotype operator Andy Praskins (Charles Thompson) resigns, deserting the Courier for the *Gazette*. Winter, sensing all is lost, gets drunk and contemplates jumping off a bridge, but he is interrupted by Mr. Smith (Burgess Meredith), an ironic, cigar-smoking man who offers to work as both reporter and linotype operator for free. Jackie Benson (Patricia Crowley), Winter's girlfriend and devoted employee, is suspicious of Mr. Smith, who creates sensational stories causing readership to soar. When a mysterious fire destroys the *Gazette* building, the *Courier* reports the story within 30 minutes causing Winter to suspect that Smith may be doing more than just reporting. Smith then produces a contract – his services in exchange for Winter's soul, and Winter signs it. Smith goes out to create disasters to fill the front page. Whatever Smith types on the linotype machine comes to pass. Winter writes a story saying his contract with Smith is null and void and



**8. JOURNEYMAN (2007)**  
Newspaperman Dan Vasser (Kevin McKidd) works for the *San Francisco Register* and suddenly finds himself jumping through time, unable to stop or control the jumps. He has a son, Zack, with his wife of seven years, Katie – his brother's ex-girlfriend. His frustrated boss and friend is Hugh Skillen (Brian Howe) who is Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper.



Mike has become one of New York's larger-than-life journalists, Kate's hard-nosed reporting from around the world has earned her an impressive reputation. When Kate accepts a job offer that's just too good to pass up, she becomes the first female Managing Editor of the *New York Sun*—and she's now Mike's boss as well. Her staff also includes no-nonsense, seen-it-all Police Reporter Ernie Trainor (Charles Robinson); intense Financial Reporter Alan Mesnick (Saul Rubinek); “On the Town” Columnist Belinda Carhardt (Christine Ebersole), and the newsroom's jaded Editorial Assistant Donna French (Genica Bergere).

**10. EIGHT IS ENOUGH (1977–1981)**  
Tom Bradford (Dick Van Patten) worked as a columnist for the *Sacramento Register*, although the star of the program was the Bradford family, which included eight children. One of his daughters, Joanie Bradford (Laurie Walters), started as a researcher, and then became a reporter for KTNS-TV, Channel 8 in Sacramento. There were two reunion programs, one in 1987 and one in 1989, in which Bradford buys the newspaper to prevent its sale to a media corporation. □

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DIRT SHEET

JANINE ARMIN  
WRESTLES WITH  
TRUTH AND FICTION



Earlier this month at the Creative Time Summit, a series of polemics interrupted by bursts of throat-singing, Julia Bryan-Wilson gave a wonderful keynote about air. Her description of air’s capacity to circulate everything from art to capital to oil fumes called to mind both traffic jams and parking lots. If this is the space of interference in which print is transmitted, it helps explains newspapers’ informational fits and starts.

Like its production and distribution, even a newspaper’s believability is currently up in the air. The knowledge that what we’re reading may or may not be true is unpleasant and not all that fruitful. This is where I’d like to suggest grabbing hold of a move called ‘Kayfabe’, a World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) term for staying in character to ensure events don’t seem ‘worked’, while defending the organization’s storyline. Grafted onto the newspaper, Kayfabe is the belief in the truth an article lays out.

The parallels between the newspaper and the WWE are many if we dissect the newspaper’s sustainability on the level of entertainment. The WWE has followed a similar cycle, with online information making it impossible to get away with Kayfabe. The audience doesn’t want to suspend disbelief, they want their heroes to let them in on the institutional conceit. More than anything, they want their heroes to ‘Break Kayfabe’.

From its carnival beginnings when ‘Kay Fabian’ meant to withhold trade secrets, the shift in its use shows just how much audiences want to see the machinations behind the glossy

finish. Value is in the exposure of untruth, the entrance of secret information into public domain. Take the success of WikiLeaks, the website which offers unedited and sensitive documents unmediated by journalists, or the soon-to-be Cursor, a literary site featuring authors like Lynne Tillman, that will show work not just in completion, but in stages of editing.

The Last Register, set-up within a gallery space devoid of coffee cups and decaying celluloid, both Kayfables and breaks Kayfabe. It’s up to the audience to choose their place in the belief/suspension-of-disbelief continuum.

“The Last Register’ both Kayfables and breaks Kayfabe”

A new book by Sheila Heti that asks *How Should A Person Be?* does away with the concerns of fact or fiction, preferring the hiatus between the two. In a recent interview she mentioned that this gap is where culture enters. The bridge between the Kayfabe and the breaking of it can be thought of as similar to Heti’s fissure into which culture seeps. It’s a good place to reflect on the verifiability of reports, to activate the motivation behind, for example, Robert Gober’s *Newspaper* (1992) in *The Last Newspaper* exhibition in which news has no distinction between the real and the imagined. □

- Sensory disturbances (including electric shock sensations)
  - Somnolence (sleepiness)
  - Sweating
  - Tinnitus
  - Tiredness
  - Tremor
  - Unpleasant mood
  - Vomiting
- Hypomania
  - Impaired coordination
  - Insomnia (trouble sleeping)
  - Loss of appetite
  - Nausea
  - Nervousness
  - Nightmares
  - Seizures
- Agitation
  - Anxiety
  - Confusion
  - Diarrhea
  - Dizziness or vertigo
  - Dry mouth
  - Fasciculation (muscle twitching)
  - Headaches



PICTURE AGENT:  
OUR SINGULAR  
PICTURE AGENCY  
SERGIO VEGA, ARTIST

Socialismo Mágico: In 1991 I was looking for portraits of communist leaders to make Christmas ornaments when I found this photograph at the New York Public Library in 1991. The Soviet Union had just ceased to exist and the American media were addressing its demise in a trivial tone, as if everybody knew all along it would happen sooner or later. The press coverage characterized the former evil empire as just another unrealistic utopia, a dream that was never meant to work out. Following that logic I started working on a project to relocate the Soviet Union in the realm of popular myth. Marx turned into Santa Claus would now live alongside the Easter Bunny, etc. Back at home I was pondering whether this depiction of Fidel would look good printed on a red ball when my wife at the time, peeking from over my shoulder, said: “That guy looks just like you!”

There I was, one more among the leaders of the revolution, the most mythical figures of Latin America’s history. The photo suddenly confused me, for it could no longer sustain its indexical integrity as a document. Instead, it appeared as the embodiment of my most intimate fantasy, something I had never even dared to visualize.

When photography neglects its unspoken contract with reality and makes a leap of faith into the imaginary, it often lands in uncanny territories, disclosing unforeseen constellations of meanings and responses. This photographic image had a perverse effect on me because I not only identified my own physical features, posture, and facial expression, but I also recognized my own eyes in the piercing gaze of a stranger. Today I still cannot believe I was not really there. Every time I look at the photo I can only see myself.

LEFT Fidel Castro and top members of his revolutionary staff in Sierra Maestra, June 1957. Clockwise from Fidel: his brother Raúl, kneeling; Sergio Vega, Argentinian artist; Dr. Ernesto (Che) Guevara; another Argentinian who became Fidel’s closest advisor; and Universo Sánchez, his adjutant. Photo: UPI

THE NEXT NEWSPAPER: American Independent News Network

‘The Last Register’ asked Paul Schmelzer, Editor of the Minnesota Independent, about his employers.



**What is the American Independent News Network?**  
Founded in 2006, the American Independent News Network (AINN) is a nonprofit network of 10 websites doing original investigative reporting in the realm of politics and public policy. Based in Washington, D.C., the group runs the flagship sites the Washington Independent and the American Independent, as well as programs in Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina and Texas. Each site is charged with the organization’s mission

to investigate and disseminate news that impacts public debate and advances the common good.

**What sets its work apart from other news organizations?**  
Our model of “impact reporting” – which seeks results in the areas of transparency and government accountability – is where our organization is unique. Many of these stories prompt action by those in legal or advocacy groups (who may file complaints or spearhead campaigns) or in government (where lawmakers may introduce legislation or

ordinance changes to address problems).

**What are some examples of this ‘impact reporting’?**  
The municipality of Bernalillo, New Mexico, for example, stopped using a controversial (and expensive) water filtration system after we reported that the system was failing to curb rising arsenic levels – and, instead, was dumping aluminum sludge in the town’s drinking water. Earlier, the town fired the water system engineer who had recommended the system after the New Mexico Independent exposed corruption by individuals involved in the bidding.

In Iowa, a seven-part series on the struggles of individuals sickened during work for the government’s wartime nuclear

programs to get statute-dictated compensation resulted in action from Sen. Tom Harken, who has vowed to author legislation to address problems in the reviews of such cases.

And in Michigan, following the Michigan Messenger’s multimedia report on a ‘white pride’ rally in Jackson, the Southern Poverty Law Center announced it had opened an investigation into Battalion 14, a new neo-Nazi group that participated, to determine if it should be considered a ‘hate group’.

**What are some of your successes?**  
While impact is our main measure of success, AINN sites have received many awards for our reporting – more than 35 in four years. This month the New Mexico Independent was awarded the

First Amendment Award from the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) for “critical, nonpartisan coverage of state politics; its efforts to bring legislative decision-making directly to the public through web streaming and live blogging; and its efforts to revive meaningful investigative reporting.” We can also measure success in advancing the careers of young reporters. Minnesota’s Abdi Aynte, for instance, reported for the Minnesota Independent before going on to work for the BBC World Service, the Voice of America, and now Al Jazeera.

**How is it funded?**  
As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, AINN is funded by contributions from individuals and more than 40 philanthropic foundations. □



# “BEFORE THE INTERNET, NEWSSTANDS WERE THE CLOSEST THING WE HAD TO WEB BROWSING”

Barcelona-based artist Francesc Ruiz is creating ‘The Woods’, a specially-commissioned cartoon strip for the back cover of each of ‘The Last...’ newspapers. ‘The Last Register’ caught up with him as he prepared for an exhibition in Cairo.



**The Last Register: Is ‘The Woods’ a family, or is it a place?**  
Francesc Ruiz: They’re kind of a family or a community, as well as a place. The name was inspired by the last part of François Truffaut’s 1966 film based on Ray Bradbury’s 1953 novel *Fahrenheit 451*. It’s set in a totalitarian society in which books have been made illegal and are being burned. A group of people go into hiding in the woods and decide to memorize great works of literature. They create a community that transmits books orally from generation to generation. Each of them incorporates a different book:

there are five ‘Moby Dick’s, four ‘Don Quixote’s, and so on. It talks about the power of human knowledge to adapt to difficult and new situations, which is something that – although under a completely different perspective – is happening right now with the threat to printed matter and the adaptation of content to new formats.

In ‘The Woods’ I’m using the city newsstand, magazines and newspapers, as a way of talking about different lifestyles, about specialization and ideology. I want to create a kind of masquerade ball in which everybody is represented or at least plays

a role in the social architecture, something also very related to web 2.0 and platforms such as Facebook.

**TLR: Where if anywhere do you draw the lines between art and design, or artists and designers?**  
FR: It’s all about self-consciousness and a critical perspective. As long as cultural object producers (which is what I consider both artists and designers to be) look at their work as something critically produced, to me it makes no sense to establish differences. Looking at it from a slightly different angle, someone asked me recently if I’d ever produced a ‘mainstream’

comic. I think comic books and design can be understood in different ways, just as both experimental cinema and popular cinema coexist. I try to work on the experimental side, but whether this work is read as art or not depends entirely on the context in which it’s received.

**TLR: Can our readers follow the cartoon strip as an ongoing narrative?**  
FR: No it doesn’t follow a linear narrative – each issue shows a situation. The whole cartoon strip creates a series of scenes which build on my recent experiences working with a newsstand scenario before in Philadelphia,

**FACING PAGE AND RIGHT** *Philadelphia Newsstand* (2010), installation at Temple Gallery, Philadelphia. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Estrany-de la Mota, Barcelona.



and now in Cairo. I did consider creating something more narrative led using characters that keep reappearing, but decided against it.

**TLR: Specialist magazines target a public that has already been identified, yet they can also create new and perhaps unexpected followings. How does the newsstand feature in this relationship?**  
FR: Before the internet, newsstands were the closest thing we had to a web browsing experience. You could go there, buy specialist papers and magazines, check out the contacts sections, the classified ads, and see all the niches you could initiate yourself into. Through the printed press you were able to discover new things, it was the main knowledge distribution channel. With most of this now moving online the fetishistic element is not the same. Although there are some web-based attempts to create a similar interface to the newsstand, its visual power of the newsstand is unique.

For me a newsstand is a form of information architecture, a superstructure or a special building with inhabitants that change periodically. It’s an amazing tool with which to analyse the world and contemporary society. The matter of what will happen to newsstands as printed material begins disappears is something that is already visible: they’re converting into lottery card

retail points, as well as beverage and snack stands. But maybe they will have a different use in the future? I’m thinking of creating ‘The Newsstand Museum’, a museum with different newsstands from different countries and periods. Every stand will show the content exactly as it was in a specific time and place. For example September 10, 2001.

**TLR: Can you tell us more about the Philadelphia project you mentioned, made for the Philagrafika 2010?**  
FR: I presented a newsstand for which I created all the printed content: a magazine formed by 120 covers and a newspaper which reproduced 12 different front pages. With these two publications I was able to build the ‘skin’ of the newsstand. I added speech bubbles to the covers, and recreated some important characters of the city mixed in with references to different neighborhoods, institutions, shops and bars.

My idea was to create an analogy of the city and my experiences, initial reactions and

perhaps prejudices about Philly after having been there for just a short residency period. I added a narrative layer around three main subjects: the city as the place where graffiti culture started, the city through which the AIDS crisis was imagined in the 1993 film *Philadelphia*, and finally the city’s Mural Arts Program, a (successful to some) anti-graffiti initiative. Through the different layers of newsstand I attempted to approximate the complexities of the city, as well as race, gender and class issues.

I’m now creating a new newsstand for the Contemporary Image Collective in Cairo and it will take the form of a typical Egyptian street newsstand, only it will be made with newspapers covers that I’ve modified with a dialogue between the stones that are used as paperweights.

**TLR: What difficulties and luxuries has this very particular format of the serial cartoon strip presented to you as an artist?**  
FR: I made a comic strip series with artist Pauline Fondevila in which we explored the bars of a

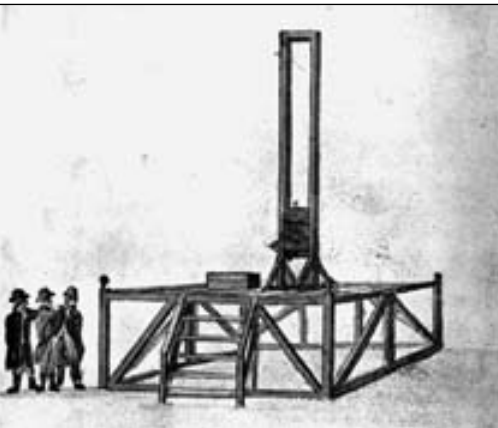


*Cairo Newsstand* (2010), installation at the Contemporary Image Collective, Cairo. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Estrany-de la Mota, Barcelona.



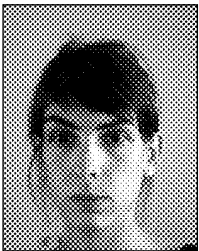
# PATRICIA ESQUIVIAS ON... THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

In a text written in 1989 when she was 10 years old, the artist gives her personal accounts of some of the most tumultuous years of European history.



**GUILLOTINE**  
A long time ago in France there was a poor man. In his family they couldn't eat. Then he went to a shop and stole a piece of bread and ham. They killed him with the guillotine. Then they had the French revolution. They cut him in little pieces and they threw him to the trash.

**NOBILITY**  
One day I was a noble woman. I



LEFT The Guillotine at Chalon-sur-Saône / Gutenberg.org

had beautiful dresses and jewels. The peasants lived like rats but I lived like a queen. I ate big pieces of bread with meat and salad and always I had dances with the king. There were not many nobles but more than five thousand peasants. They ate the food that the nobles threw away from their tables.

**PEASANT**  
One day I was a peasant. One day they said that the French

nobles that were in Austria had lost their lands. It was fun. I could hunt. I quickly turned into a noble. I could eat anything I wanted. Now the nobles were poor and the peasants were rich.

**MARIE ANTOINETTE**  
I was Marie Antoinette. One day my husband took me and my children. We looked like peasants to escape but a man saw a coin and he knew we were the king and queen so they chopped our heads off. I didn't like the king. I wanted to kill him. My hair turned grey in one day. I hated it. I looked like a stupid old woman at 81 years old.

**NAPOLEON**  
Napoleon made himself king. He lived in Versailles. All his army loved him. He died of stomach cancer, the same as his father. He died on an island in the south Atlantic and twenty years later they brought him back with his skin. □

# 100 YEARS AGO...

'New York Tribune' (New York, New York) 1866–1924, October 20, 1910.

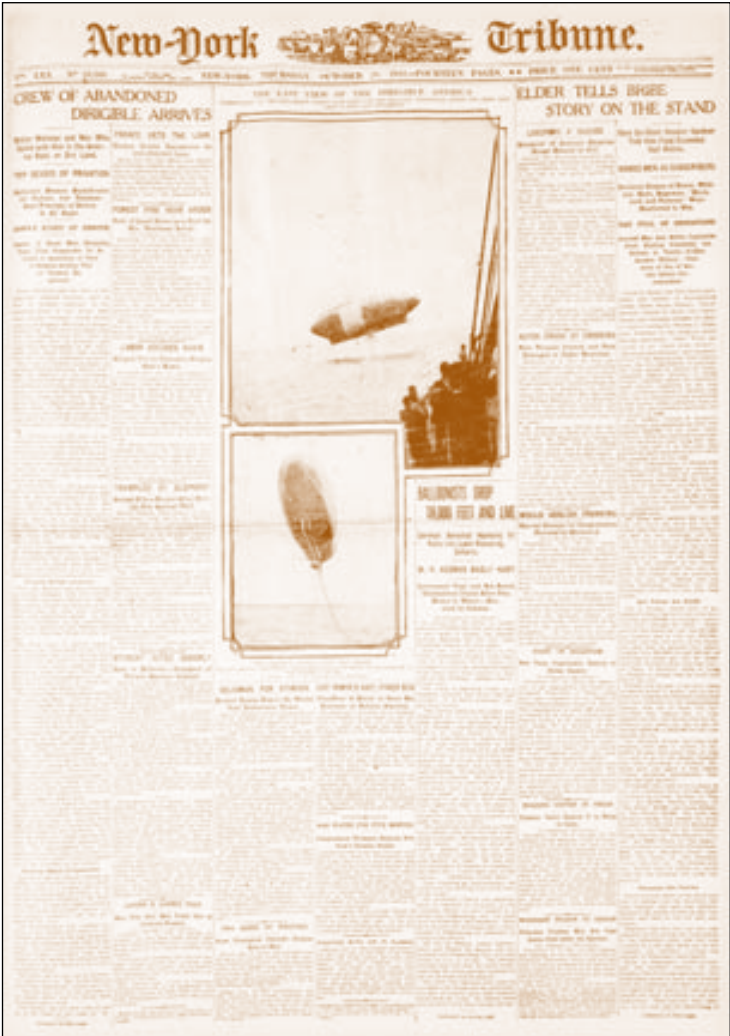


Image: The Library of Congress

# HYPHEN- ATED

Since 2004, Stephen Spretnjak has been compiling all the hyphenated words written by the arts critics of the *New York Times*. The terms are stacked in the order in which they appear. Here words from the 15 October edition accumulate after “loosey-goosey spirit” from Holland Cotter’s 8 October review of ‘The Last Newspaper’.

loosey-goosey spirit  
/things-to-do/  
contemporary-art  
of such-and-such  
by-so pointment-only  
of young, up-and-coming  
of the 3-D Google SketchUp  
everything-and-the-kitchen-sink  
as three-dimensional  
costume-department  
Post-Minimalist that she is  
Post-Minimalists messed  
gallery-museum-market  
paste-up  
consumer-marketing  
youth-market  
different-than-expected  
on-the-ground  
inter-vention-style  
AIDS-related  
—the welded-steel pieces themselves—  
engine-like, heart-like  
monument-before-the-fact  
—found and made—  
up-down  
19th-century  
hard-edged  
dizzying, sometimes de-materializing

12-foot-long,  
Asian-inspired  
pen-and-ink  
Post-Im precisionism  
Pop Artists, 1956-1968  
neo-Pop art  
buzzing black-and-yellow-checked  
cast-Lacite cubes  
silhouette silk-screened  
neon-light  
O’Keefe-like  
many-petaled  
of liquor-bottle labels  
folk-art spin  
16-foot-wide  
self-consciously  
basketball-size  
12-foot-wide  
anecdote-rich  
so-called  
fish-in-formaldehyde  
for high-priced  
British-born  
74-year-old  
manga-derived  
dead-ending in  
haves from the have-nots  
facereaching

floor-to-ceiling  
pre-fabricated  
cut-and-paste  
Urban-Think Tank’s  
jerry-built  
Urban-Think Tank’s  
high-density, low-rise  
government-built  
20th-century works  
wood-worker  
rough-edged  
built-in  
four-poster  
over-looking  
neo-Classical  
half-dome  
1960s stained-glass  
1,306-square-foot  
mid-20th-century  
Flushing Meadows-Corona  
nub-shaped First  
four 18th-century  
fragile full-size  
half-dome  
fourth century  
500, and a ninth-century  
New York-isms  
normal-looking

well-known  
lightning-quick  
lesser-known  
late-18th-century  
brother-in-law  
ink-covered  
of early-18th-century  
as load-bearers and as  
tacked-up

# BEHIND THE SCENES: INSTALLING ‘THE LAST NEWSPAPER’

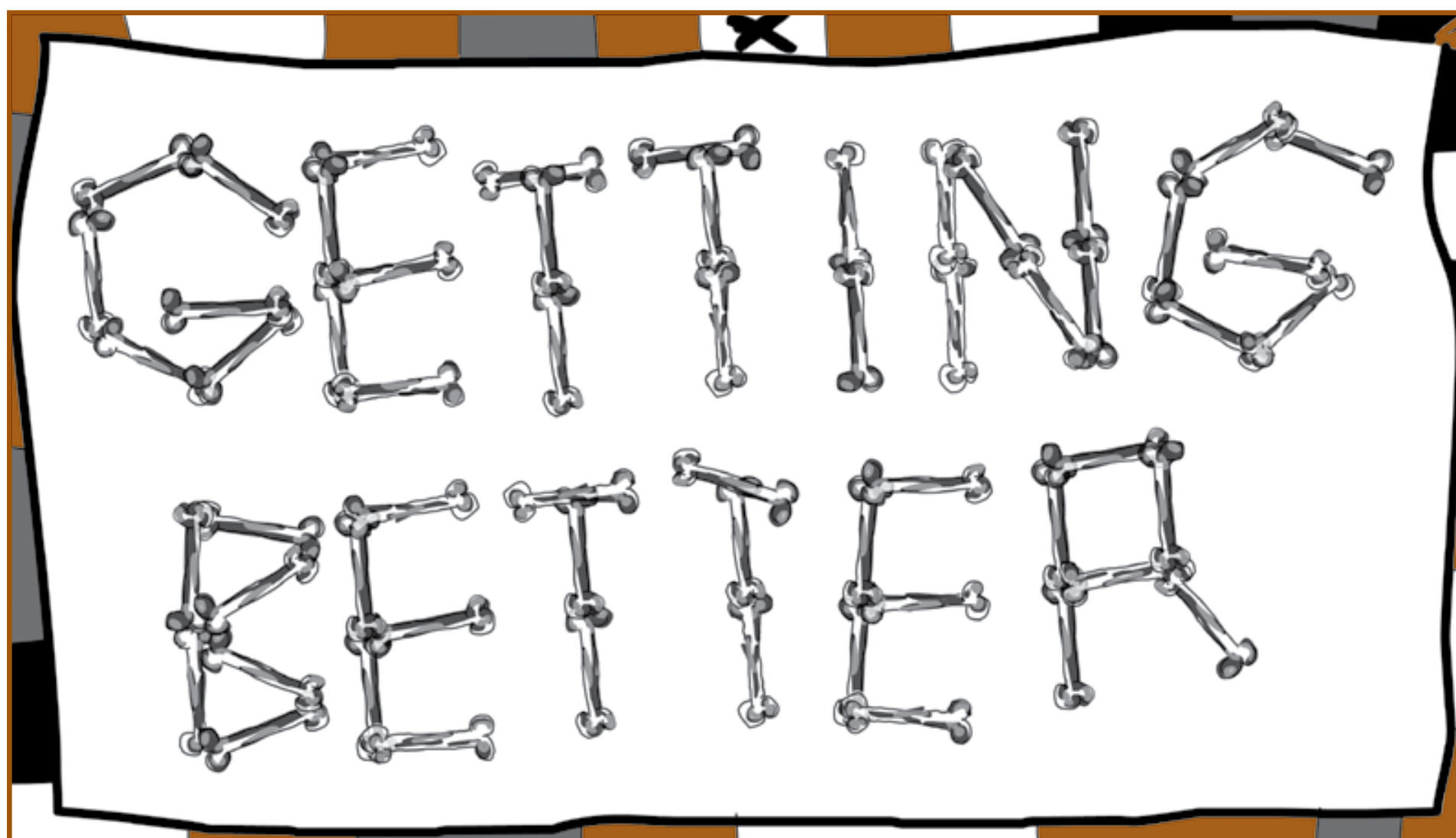


LEFT TO RIGHT FROM TOP Ruppertsberg, Bowers, Gober, Jacir, Mir, Harrison, Johnson, Bucher, Charlesworth, Curators, Floor 3, Hirschhorn All images: Latitudes



## THE WOODS: SCRATCH LOTTERY

FRANCESC RUIZ



### THE LAST REGISTER Issue 3

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