

ABALLÍ ★ VAN HARSKAMP ★ SNOW ★ MROZOWSKI ★ STORYCORPS

# THE LAST STAR-LEDGER

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# RANK AND FILE

## Ignasi Aballí on his 'Lists' series

**The Last Star-Ledger:** What was the origin of the 'Lists', when did you begin producing them and how does your working process operate?

**Ignasi Aballí:** In 1997 I decided to start cutting out each of the numerals that appeared in the headlines of the daily newspaper *El País*. The aim was to use part of an everyday object, which after twenty four hours would be replaced by another, providing new information, and so making

the previous day's data obsolete. I was interested in obtaining data that, taken out of its context, would become timeless and anonymous. I self-imposed some conditions, for example never use the same numerals (numbers) twice.

At the beginning I bought the newspaper every day. Three years ago I began to subscribe to it, because it's much cheaper. Every day, or every week at least, I cut the newspapers and once a month I separate the

material in different groups. When I have enough clippings in one group, I make the collage that will later be converted in a definitive 'List'.

**TLSL:** Although you make each work by cutting-and-pasting newsprint, their final presentation is as enlarged photographic prints – how did you come to this decision? Did you want them to be less about the craft and more focused on reproducibility or repetition?

**IA:** Yes, the original collages were made on sheets of A4 paper and then enlarged as photographic prints at 150 x 105cm. On the one hand, I wanted to eliminate the materialist appearance and the marks of the manual labor of the collage process, while on the other hand, I was interested in turning the text into an image, as if each was a photograph taken from a fragment of reality. The original collage becomes an equivalent to the negative in

analogue photography.

**TLSL:** Was there a reason why you choose *El País* (Spain's left-center-left daily paper) and not another? For example, was it a question of liking its typography, its political orientation or was that not relevant?

**IA:** I use *El País* simply because it's the newspaper that I usually read to keep informed. From this daily habit of reading the newspaper came the conception and execution of the 'Lists'

15 muertos  
1.200 muertos  
400 muertos  
70 muertos  
nueve muertos  
35 muertos  
1.467 muertos  
27 muertos  
221 muertos  
46 muertos  
67 muertos  
141 muertos  
20 muertos  
150 muertos  
350 muertos  
700 muertos  
Seis muertos  
500.000 muertos  
118 muertos  
34 muertos  
857 muertos  
59.000 muertos  
101 muertos  
66 muertos  
44 muertos  
213 muertos  
Dieciocho muertos  
105 muertos

20.000 muertos  
75 muertos  
46 muertos  
47 muertos  
220.000 muertos  
7.500 muertos  
157 muertos  
94 muertos  
55 muertos  
120 muertos  
800 muertos  
112 muertos  
113 muertos  
187 muertos  
5.000 muertos  
49 muertos  
57 muertos  
418 muertos  
97 muertos  
201 muertos  
72 muertos  
65 muertos  
217 muertos  
90 muertos  
100.000 muertos  
19 muertos

*List (Dead people)*, 1998–2005. Digital print on photographic paper, 150 x 105 cm. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Estrany-de la Mota, Barcelona

240 euros  
32,2 millones de euros  
600 euros  
17,4 millones de euros  
108 millones de euros  
300.000 euros  
1,1960 dólares  
500 millones de euros  
40.000 millones de euros  
1.400 millones de euros  
7.000 euros  
829 millones de euros  
64.700 millones de dólares  
0,4 euros  
134.000 euros  
27 dólares  
50 euros  
600.000 euros  
931.000 euros  
3.600 euros  
240 euros  
tres euros  
100 millones de euros  
48.000 euros  
625.000 euros  
2.900 millones de dólares  
28 euros

2.550 millones de dólares  
un euro  
600 millones de euros  
20 millones de euros  
1,2018 dólares  
35.500 millones de euros  
61 millones de euros  
11.000 euros  
300 euros  
32 dólares  
9.300 millones de dólares  
265 millones de euros  
8,78 euros  
500 dólares  
1,22 dólares  
Mil millones de euros  
51.000 euros  
40 millones de dólares  
607 euros  
13,16 euros  
8.671 euros  
1,2450 dólares  
71.000 euros  
10 millones de dólares  
90.000 euros  
680.000 euros  
400 dólares

*List (Money)*, 1998–2005. Digital print on photographic paper, 150 x 105 cm. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Estrany-de la Mota, Barcelona

series. I didn't take into consideration any aesthetic aspect such as the design or the typography, and only its political orientation through the fact that I was reading it anyway.

**TLSL:** Which other of your works were you making at the time or do you consider have a particular affinity with the 'Lists'? How have the 'Lists' changed since you started making them?

**IA:** I was working around the idea of recollection and the passing of time. Works such as *Materia Textil* (Textile Material) (2007–8) evolve from that period. For that particular piece, I used the lint accumulated in tumble dryer filters – so a long period of time was required to obtain enough material to produce something. During this period I also made works like *Malgastar* (Waste) (2001–3), which consisted of opening the top of paint containers and letting the paint dry, or the series *Papel Moneda* (Paper Currency) (2007), which are made with shredded euro notes.

The content of the 'Lists' has evolved considerably since the beginning. I have developed a large variety of lists focusing on different aspects of reality: numbers of people, dead, wounded, money, immigrants, time, missing, drugs, animals, violence, artists, books, music, sex, movies, ideologies, etc.

The latest lists I have made are composed only of words, with no numbers at all. These refer to 'isms', or colours and other words which are repeated such as 'light', 'doubt', 'end' or 'invisible'. I also began to cut and to organise other elements of the newspaper, mainly photographs, or parts of them, with which I have made works such as *Calendarios* (Calendars) (2004) or the series *Demonstrar* (Demonstrate) (2005–8).

**TLSL:** Have *El País* ever had a problem with you using their newspaper? In relation to your work *Calendario*, for example, how did you solve the copyright?

**IA:** The 2004 *Calendario* piece was exhibited in my 2005 solo exhibition in Barcelona at MACBA. It includes all 365 cover photographs which *El País* printed in 2004 organized in a single composition. During the press conference a photographer from *El País* told me that I had used his and others' images without permission. From then we agreed to put a caption alongside the work with the names of all the photographers and news agencies that collaborated with the newspaper. Having said that, the newspaper itself has never shown much interest in this work.

**TLSL:** In *Calendario* and in 'Lists' each fragment is isolated and cut away from its context – the details of the stories are taken away – do you see these pieces as abstract works in this sense, and also because in many cases the numbers involved (e.g. money) are so large that they somehow become incomprehensible?

**IA:** Yes, I'm interested in

135 inmigrantes

282 inmigrantes

19 inmigrantes

500.000 inmigrantes

800 inmigrantes

153 inmigrantes

29.000 inmigrantes

619.598 inmigrantes

93 inmigrantes

Cuatro inmigrantes

21 inmigrantes

72 inmigrantes

16 inmigrantes

200.000 inmigrantes

254 inmigrantes

13 inmigrantes

85.000 inmigrantes

un inmigrante

112 inmigrantes

49 inmigrantes

152.000 inmigrantes

37 inmigrantes

10.791 inmigrantes

Siete inmigrantes

71 inmigrantes

Dos inmigrantes

how this data, as a real fragment of reality, is converted into an abstract image of that same reality. It is very important to me that the data is not invented, but has been drawn from reality

85.019 inmigrantes

271 inmigrantes

16.000 inmigrantes

44 inmigrantes

2.033 inmigrantes

50 inmigrantes

90 inmigrantes

220 inmigrantes

558 inmigrantes

70 inmigrantes

26.000 inmigrantes

144 inmigrantes

1.850 inmigrantes

1.000 inmigrantes

173 inmigrantes

15 inmigrantes

280 inmigrantes

11 inmigrantes

528 inmigrantes

400 inmigrantes

cinco inmigrantes

36 inmigrantes

40.000 inmigrantes

10.000 inmigrantes

40.131 inmigrantes

*List (Immigrants)*, 1998–2005. Digital print on photographic paper, 150 x 105 cm. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Estrany-de la Mota, Barcelona

# “A NEWSPAPER IS NEVER COMPLETE, BECAUSE NEWS IS NEVER COMPLETE”



The StoryCorps booth on Foley Square, New York. Photo: Dalton Rooney. All images courtesy: StoryCorps.

**Mr. Ed Pierce started working for newspapers in the 1940s and was managing editor at the ‘Miami News’. In a 2008 interview recorded in Gainesville, Florida, by ‘The Last Newspaper’ partner organization StoryCorps he talked with his grandson Scott Cole about his journalistic adventures.**

**Ed Pierce:** I worked my way up from photographer to sports editor to managing editor. I enjoyed editing a newspaper and putting out a newspaper everyday. It was a lot of fun, and there were a hell of a lot of opportunities to do good and to try to print the news and do it accurately and do it honestly.

**Scott Cole:** You worked your way up to manager of the *Miami News* – and you were there during the height of the movie stars and the Cuban Missile Crisis – so what that period was like?

**EP:** I covered the Orange Bowl in 1950, and I couldn't believe there was anything on Earth like Miami Beach. Those gals in bikini bathing suits running up and down the beach. I came back and said, "We've got to move to Miami!" and packed up my wife Clyde and my three-year-old daughter in a station wagon with everything we owned. And we drove down

to Miami, Florida and I went to work for the paper.

We used to put out a hurricane section and this was very important in Miami. There's a 'double truck', which is two pages, and we had a big map of Florida and all of the islands and Mexico, and so on. And you didn't have computers then so the only way you could get all those names on was to paste them. Cuba went on here, and on like that through the whole Caribbean. 80 percent of the Sunday paper was printed on Thursday – so that hurricane section was printing and some of the guys were looking through it and they called me and said, "We have a problem – there's about eight spots on this map that have got the wrong names on the islands". Of course we already printed 500,000 newspapers and you can't do anything. Then I came up with my greatest achievement as managing

editor. I sat down and wrote a story. "The hurricane is such an important event and today we have a hurricane section, and it's so important that you study this map and the path of the hurricane. We have made a number of mistakes in this map and will give a 100 dollar prize to whoever finds the mistakes!" And a sonbitch found six more mistakes than we thought we had! But that was one of my great moments.

**SC:** And when someone would write to you and complain about something in the paper, how would you normally respond to these types of questions or letters?

**EP:** I was always nice to everybody, always had a policy. I had this Colonel, who was writing scathing letters, he had filthy language. So I finally looked him up and I found out he was retired and had been wounded in the war. And so I wrote him this nice letter: "I thought you should like to know, somebody is using your name and writing letters to the paper. And I got back: "You dumb sonbitch, I been writin' all those letters!" I said, "Colonel, keep 'em coming".

**SC:** What was the worst predicament you ever had to get a reporter out of?

**EP:** Ha, well that's easy! Back during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and after Castro took over, he was gonna let us send a reporter in. But the CIA came to me and said, "We would like to interview Bill when he gets back". I made a stupid mistake of telling Bill and then he started snoopin' around. The next thing you know, he was arrested and was tried and sentenced to seven years. But we finally got him out. Yeah, that was the worst thing because his wife was crying, his daughters were there – hah, that was Bill! He became a minister. He really did!

**SC:** I mean, did he think that he would become James Bond?!

**EP:** That's exactly right! Castro had allowed him to come over and just report and take pictures. That was it. But he started to try to snoop around and ask questions and that was not the thing to do. That was a trying moment.

**SC:** How did you explain to his daughters and wife that you

had allowed their father and husband to be taken by Castro and communists in Cuba – that you allowed this to happen? What was your excuse, what could you say?

**EP:** I didn't say anything. I didn't tell 'em that he should never have tried to do more than he should've. I should've never told him that the CIA wanted to debrief him!

**SC:** Wait, so you blamed him?

**EP:** No, I blame me for ever telling him that the CIA wanted to debrief him. That was a mistake. So he wanted to give 'em

something he really wanted to be debriefed about. And that's not good. That's not good.

**SC:** Was there a certain aspect of the newspaper that you liked more than the other?

**EP:** I just loved the idea of getting out a paper every day, it was a challenge every day. When my father asked me if I'd ever put out a perfect newspaper, and I said no, we couldn't have done a better job if we had another two hours on that deadline. A newspaper is never complete, because news is never complete. ★

*Transcription by Gwen Schwartz.*

## STORYCORPS KEY FACTS

Founded in 2003, StoryCorps allows ordinary people to record their stories, both remarkable and seemingly unremarkable, so that "conversations become family heirlooms", as well as part of the story of America. Participants receive a CD

of the recording and duplicates are transferred to the Library of Congress every 3 months. Over 31,000 40-minute interviews — between friends, partners, or family members — have been created so far. While the service is available to anybody, specific initiatives have targeted African Americans, residents of Alaska, and Latinos. The stories from the latter demographic alone now comprise the largest collection of Latino oral histories in America, with around 1,400 interviews.

The soundproof recording booths in New York (formerly at Grand Central Station and now at Foley Square near City Hall), Atlanta, and San Francisco — as well as two touring airstream trailers — are probably the most well-known aspects of StoryCorps, alongside the regular interview excerpts which are broadcast no National Public

Radio. Yet StoryCorps' vast ever-growing archive offers an invaluable and unique resource.

The organization's participation in *The Last Newspaper* is concerned with discovering and prototyping new ways of accessing and using the archive in the context of StoryCorps' work being understood as a form of news gathering (though not mediated by anyone) and social history. During the exhibition, visitors will have public access to a portion of its archive (3 digital databases out of the total 17) for the first time in New York City.

The organization, which today has a staff of around 100, was the brainchild of David Isay, whose Sound Portraits Productions company made the award-winning 1998 radio documentary *The Sunshine Hotel*, about one of the last of the Bowery's "flophouses" — cheap hotels with cell-like rooms for men with nowhere else to go. The Sunshine Hotel is literally next door to the New Museum — a juxtaposition which speaks volumes about the dramatic changes that have taken place in the Bowery over the last decade. ★

# EXECUTION, EJACULATION, EXHIBITION

Collin Munn unravels the story behind Dash Snow (1981–2009) and his contribution to 'The Last Newspaper'.



*Nest*, Dash Snow and Dan Colen's 2007 installation at Deitch Projects, New York, in which they recreated their infamous 'hamster nests', was my first introduction to Snow's work and the legend that surrounded his rather unusual life. For those of you unfamiliar with the hamster nests, the basic idea is that lots of people convene in a hotel room, and then shred as many newspapers and phonebooks as possible while trashing the room to a degree unfathomable to most – meanwhile taking multiple drugs – until they "feel like hamsters".

Besides hearing about *Nest* from friends, and occasionally coming across Snow's Polaroids in New York's trendier galleries, my knowledge of Snow's work and life was minimal before

seeing his piece *Untitled* (2006) included in *The Last Newspaper*. The work on paper is definitely one of the more sensationalist pieces in the exhibition, in that it consists of a series of New York tabloid newspaper covers showing the downfall of Saddam Hussein, with the added touch of a mixture of Snow's semen and glitter being splattered across the surface. Seeing *Untitled* (2006) immediately made me want to look further into Snow's turbulent life, and to try to better understand why his work has garnered so much attention.

By now, the name Dash Snow has taken on near mythic proportions within both the contemporary art world, and among young 'subversive' urbanites. This is not meant to imply that he is necessarily well-liked, yet

his depictions of his lifestyle of unbridled debauchery do have wide appeal as both objects of disgust and as the ultimate, largely unreachable, icons of anti-establishment living. In the 2000s Snow started to receive a lot of mainstream media attention, as he began to gain more clout within the art world by being included in both the 2006 Whitney Biennial in New York and, for example, *USA Today* at The Saatchi Gallery in London the same year. The most widely read media profile of the time was Ariel Levy's 2007 article 'Chasing Dash Snow' in *New York* magazine, which painted a very critical view of Snow as a person and artist.

While Levy's article may have been very scathing in her construction of Snow as a general

fuck up, her in-depth look at his antics really only helped to increase the legend surrounding Snow. Dash, as the author refers to him, came from the de Menil family, who own one of the biggest private art collections in U.S. While Levy tried incessantly throughout her article to create a narrative of how his family background had influenced or caused his destructiveness, she was largely unsuccessful due to Snow's commitment to remain as ambiguous as possible. Snow makes it nearly impossible to 'explain' his life, because he so ardently refused to share anything personal, therefore we are left to make our own understanding and artistic production.

What became very clear to me from reading Levy's

article, as well as many others that came out surrounding his insurgence into the art world, was that Snow and his other artists friends like Dan Colen, were extremely successful in creating a 'branded' lifestyle. Snow's gritty Polaroids are very reminiscent of work by artists like Nan Goldin, in that he purports to be providing an unfiltered, 'real' glimpse into his world; one of absolutely no rules and seemingly complete disregard for anything. His life is dangerous, violent, and most definitely self-destructive, just like how many people imagine New York City itself. Or, as Levy aptly pointed out in her profile article, "the art world loves infamy. Downtown New York City loves infamy – needs it, in fact, to exist".



**FACING PAGE AND ABOVE** Dash Snow, *Untitled*, 2006. Mixed medium collage. Sender Collection. Photos: Gothamist / Katie Sokolor.

When I look at Snow's photographic work, I see the kind of schizophrenic energy that drew me to this city in the first place, and therefore as New York slowly slides closer and closer to being a sanitized playground for the wealthy, Snow's images claim hold of an alternative. In conjunction with his photographs he also started producing other works, like *Untitled* (2006), which act as tangible ephemera to his craziness. While I see *Untitled* (2006) as a leftover from his life, it is clear from its inclusion in several gallery and museum shows, that people must be reading something broader into semen covered newsprint.

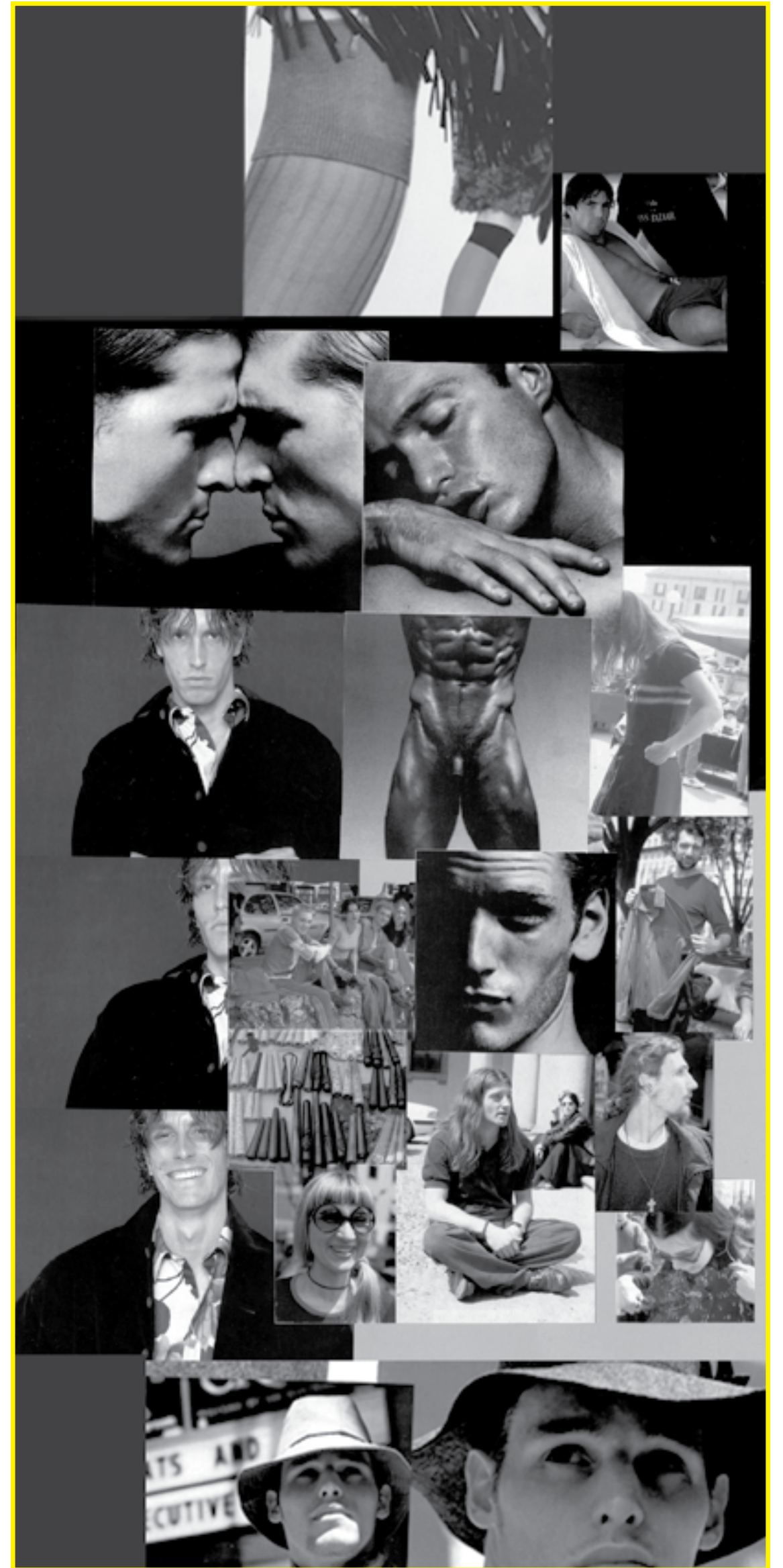
Statements from Snow about the intention behind his work are difficult to come by, and it is unclear if they actually reflect his creative process. They usually do not make any sense. With *Untitled* (2006), most critics site Snow as claiming that he created them because he loves Saddam Hussein and hates the U.S.. Another equal possibility is that he had the tabloid covers in his apartment, and decided, in one of his many drug-induced states, to ejaculate on and then glitter Saddam Hussein's face just for kicks. Finding the 'truth' in this instance seems unlikely – and unnecessary.

Instead, I view the piece as both an artifact left behind, adding to his project of self-documentation and commoditization, as well as a commentary on the absurd spectacularization of violence. It is already obscene that images of the dictator being executed were on tabloid covers, so why not cover them in semen-glitter, amplifying the absurdity of the media in general? Why is

it that seeing a nation's leader at the gallows on the cover of a newspaper is largely unremarkable, yet add a splash of glitter and some ejaculate and suddenly the image is 'controversial'? Dash's obsession with the abject confronts the viewer with offensive material, behaviors, and attitudes, which forces a questioning of personal as well as societal values.

What is so great about Dash Snow's work is its complete ambiguity. It is really easy to look at his gritty photographs, or his multiple newspaper projects that usually include his bodily fluid, and call it utter crap. On the other hand, it is easy to look at his work as an intentionally articulated critique of the art world, of mass media, of New York, and of subversiveness in general. I'm still not sure how I feel about Dash Snow as a person or an artist, but I do not know if that really matters. His pieces are messy and visually poignant, and definitely allow for important discussions in how and who determines taste within the art world, which has clearly deemed Dash a 'real' artist, worthy of a place in the New Museum.

In one of Dash Snow's obituaries, his good friend Gavin McInnes from *Vice* magazine summarized Dash's artistic power. "The best part of living in New York is the feeling that you're in the center of everything... when you were partying with Dash Snow you felt like you were in the center of New York. He was the kind of thing people move to New York for." For those of us who won't party with Dash, we have his pictures and other works to bring us to the center of everything. ★



# THE NEXT NEWSPAPER: i

Michigan native Nick Mrozowski is the Creative Director of Portugal's newest newspaper — simply called 'i'. He stopped by 'The Last Star-Ledger' newsroom fresh from a weekend putting together a 40-page paper for the society of News Designers conference in Denver.



Nick Mrozowski. Photo: Latitudes.

**The Last Star-Ledger:** Tell us about the origins of *i* (pronounced 'ee') — was there a lot of research done into what people wanted from a newspaper in 2009? Was it independently started?

**Nick Mrozowski:** The guys who launched the paper are seasoned pros in the Portuguese market. They've been directors of other newspapers so they're well-versed in the economy and business. *i* was started by a public-works construction company in Portugal. They happen to have

a publishing branch — they publish regional newspapers — and wanted a national newspaper. Innovation Media Consulting, started in Spain, consulted on the editorial ideas and design before it launched. Even more than their knowledge or research of the market, they tried to create a newspaper based on their instincts and ideas that was totally different to anything else. The staff we hired is very young and capable of serious journalism, but with a lot of spirit, energy, and humor. That

naturally found its way into the newspaper and because of that our audience is even younger than we initially thought.

The newspaper has about 55 or 60 people in the newsroom now. I'm the sole art director, though I didn't design the initial project. The graphic model was done by Javier Errea, who is the most famous Spanish newspaper designer now. He just won the Society for News Design's Lifetime Achievement Award at forty-three years old! In the

last fifteen years that his studio has been going, they've probably been involved with most of the newspapers in Spain and Portugal.

**TLSL:** The design is obviously a critical part of the newspaper. To what degree did the staff have either design or press backgrounds which came together in its visual journalism?

**NM:** We have reporters and designers of different functions. My degree is in journalism, but I focused on design. In all the

newspapers I have worked on, I've been asked as much to be an editor as a designer. Our newsroom at *i* is a total open-plan. We work in the same room without cubicles or dividers but with zones designed for communication. In the center are the top editors and then spiraling out are the various news desks, designers, and photographers.

**TLSL:** Is there a typical way an article is put together?

**NM:** An editor or reporter decides there is going to be a



story about something. They would then come and speak to one of the designers about what they're going to have for the page. We have our own jargon for types of stories or design elements to make it faster. That's pretty standard. The thing we do that's a little bit different is how we start a page. Throughout the course of a day we change it a million times, not only because an article comes in longer or shorter, we change it because somebody has a new idea. There are five designers, one design editor, and myself for the design portion.

**TLSL:** And you have four sections which are not at all based on traditional newspapers...

**NM:** *i* is 25 x 35 cm (9 8/10" x

13 8/10") x with 48, 56 or 64 pages. It starts with 'Opinion' on the first four pages to get you thinking. The following short section 'Radar' is all the news you need to know from the last 24 hours in different formats: a few briefs, a portion of quotations, a photo that tells a story by itself, an info-graphic that has no text accompanying it. The big 'Zoom' section is more in depth, more analytical, with longer format, bigger stories, mostly two-page spreads. At the end we have a section called 'Mais' (meaning 'more') which has culture, sports, and lifestyle. We don't have this feeling that we need a 'national' or 'international' section with a set number of pages or stories

with a certain length, the editing is much more fluid. Although we have developed some habits over time, nothing is set in stone. It changes from one hour to the next, making it harder to work but producing a better result. For some newspapers, it's a way forward: to be more aggressive, not just in reporting, but in the way we think about how we report.

**TLSL:** You must hear people talking about the decline of the traditional newspaper all the time?

**NM:** I see what's happening but I don't believe it. I think there are a lot more to come. They're going to change, they have to change, but it's good change. Obviously the internet is not

going anywhere. We talk about it a lot in the industry. Everybody has different points of view and every couple of months there is a prevailing strategy, idea, or criticism. News used to be a printed newspaper — it's not anymore — but a newspaper isn't necessarily an online thing. I read the online version of the *New York Times* all the time in Lisbon because you can't buy it (you can only get the *International Herald Tribune*), so I read it in the morning before I go to work, I read it during the day.

**TLSL:** Yet in a traditional newspaper you find things you wouldn't otherwise read.

**NM:** When I go online I read a lot of stories because there's

little investment in clicking a link, if a headline caught my eye, or an illustration. Funnily enough, now that I've been reading the *New York Times* on printed format here these last days, I find it really strange to navigate as an object.

**TLSL:** Can you give our news team any advice?

**NM:** A good newspaper should have texture and a feeling of some immediacy. Try to highlight the liveness of it. Save yourself one part each time and only do it in the last thirty minutes so you have no idea what it's going to be. Desperation is a reality of newspapers! ★

*Interview by Latitudes. Edited by Greg Barton.*



Selection of *i* covers between July–October 2010, courtesy of *i*

# DIRT SHEET

## JANINE ARMIN ON FRANÇOIS BUCHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO 'THE LAST NEWSPAPER'.



ancestral memories of World War II. For the sake of rounding out this international perspective, I decided to check up on the policies in Columbia, where New-York-based artist François Bucher was born. My quick Google search folded back on itself and sent me into the whirligig of the District of Columbia's whistleblower protectionism. Maybe that's the right angle given that Bucher manages to show up the U.S.' hotline-friendly policies as mere simulacra covering up their absence.

Telephone tip-off hotlines and helplines are supposed to have an endemic relationship to freedom in the U.S.. So much so that companies that don't have them, even if their only function is to employ a 17-year-old to stare at a phone, get fined heavily by the Securities and Exchange Commission. It's the opposite in France, where informants spark painful

Two films and newspaper-filled vitrine comprise Bucher's *Forever Live: The Case of K. Gun* (2006), included in the *The Last Newspaper*. Gun was a U.N. translator who in 2003 let slip a poorly kept secret, that the Iraq war was knowingly illegal. As an employee of the U.K. Secret Service, she discovered the U.S. and U.K. governments'

plan to tap delegates in order to make the U.N. invade Iraq, and promptly exposed her findings. Gun was acquitted for lack of proof. Given that there was proof, maybe it had less to do with her innocence, and more to do with the culpability of the U.S. and the U.K. in generating a war on artificial grounds. The story got almost no coverage in the U.S., something Bucher marks as suspect. As part of the exhibit, above one of the monitors he placed a vitrine of newspaper covers – all from the U.K. – that address the case. The absence of comment stateside contrasts the U.S.'s vigorous upholding of whistleblower rights, and turns the line of questioning to the

position of the newspaper's superstructure. The two monitors jammed into a corner of the New Museum's third floor, next to *The Last Star-Ledger's* news room, show films that, with license, recapitulate Gun's betrayal by taking it literally into the Kafkaesque. One is shot by a camera at calf-height, perhaps concealed in a flag pole like the ones that show the stripes of varied nations across the hall. Presumably it's U.N. delegates who pass by. The video is accompanied by a voiceover of Kafka's 'Before the Law', which is, we are told in the wall text, being translated live over a tapped phone line by Gun. On the other screen, we see the

back of a static figure seated in a hotel room before a window. The outline of headphones around his cocked head, listening in, maybe tapping into the content of the other screen, and the distinctly clear reference to Watergate, completes the marauding spy atmosphere. This depiction of eavesdropping takes me back to pre-teen espionage equipped with a borrowed 'Whisper 2000', an uncanny device that my friends in second grade purchased to find out what people were saying, hopefully about us. In many ways it doesn't seem that the purpose behind these devices has advanced. But the context has, and as Bucher counters, so should the reporting. ★



François Bucher, *Forever Live: the Case of K. Gun* (2006). Courtesy Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City.

# PATRICIA ESQUIVIAS ON... COMMUNISM

In a text written in 1989 when she was 10 years old, the artist gives her personal accounts of the political movement which aimed for the end of wage labour and private property.



Tiananmen Square: gate to the Forbidden City

**ROMANIA**  
When I lived in Romania I had three children. When they were little I couldn't give them four times milk because when I went to buy it there were 100 people in line. I could only buy one bottle of milk and that wasn't enough. In seven years you could see yellow cars everywhere. For the meat, you have to wait for 200 of people and then it was your turn. I was tired. One night I took my children and I escaped to the U.S. There I was free.

**CHINA**  
One day I went to China. I saw that people were yellow. Most of the people were Buddhists. It is a very busy country. They grow rice and tea. They were making houses under the ground. You could find Panda bears. The Panda bears ate sugar canes.

They were very cute. They are black and white.

**MAO'S REVOLUTION**  
One day Mao said "You can go into the directors house and take a red hat and put it on and take him out to walk with it". Everybody laughed at him, but they didn't fight. They were very friendly. The loved Mao Tse Tung. He was president for 30 years. They had a picture of him in the plaza.

**CONFUCIUS**  
One day I went to the beach. There was Confucius. He said "You must not go into the water or a shark will bite you and eat you in the biggest bites that he can take". I ran away. I didn't go anymore to that beach. Then I changed schools to a Chinese school. They had a picture of Confucius hanging on the wall. ★

## 100 YEARS AGO...

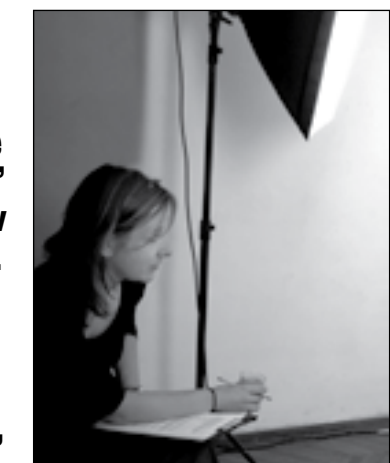
'The Tacoma Times' (Tacoma, Washington) 1903–1949, October 27, 1910.



Image: The Library of Congress / Washington State Library

## MEDIA HABITS: NICOLINE VAN HARKAMP, ARTIST

The Dutch artist's theatrical work 'Expressive Power Series Part 1: Max Bonner on the Phenomenology of Speech' was presented at the New Museum in June this year. "I'd never really given my media habits much thought, but looking at this right now, it seems that I am a print person."



**NEWSPAPERS** I read the Dutch *De Volkskrant*, a supposedly left-wing, slightly populist daily. Ideally, I read it in bed. One day I hope to have a ground floor apartment, get a subscription and be able to pick it up from the doormat. Right now, I walk five floors down, cross the square, and buy it at the kiosk. Weekdays after 4pm, I buy the *NRC*, an afternoon daily that has higher quality writing. In cafés I like to pick up *De Telegraaf*, the national tabloid that I grew up with. My parents however recently confessed that they have subscribed to *De Volkskrant* themselves, which was a major shock to my system. When in England I buy *The Guardian*, a quality daily, and *The Daily Telegraph*, a tabloid. I don't like *The Guardian's* European edition, so I tend not to buy newspapers outside Holland or England.

**MAGAZINES** I buy the Dutch *De Groene Amsterdammer*, the only independent weekly in the country. As such it is

internationalist and non-populist, something that is hard to come by in the Netherlands these days. Abroad, I buy *The New Statesman* or *The Economist*. I tend to read magazines only when traveling.

**ONLINE** I do spend a lot of time online, but probably not nearly as much as most people. I have a daily routine of checking one left-wing blog, one right-wing blog, a Dutch art blog, an international art blog, and then Facebook. This habit has not changed for over 3 years. I regularly watch documentaries and TV series online, most recently Douglas Coupland's *JPod*, that only ever came out in Canada. I am exceptionally bad in downloading things so I 'order' downloads with a friend.

**TELEVISION** Television is either for news – CNN, BBC World and Dutch state television – or for leisure. I watch TV like a teenager: not for the programming but for zoning out. There's

a 'women's channel' in Holland – complete with pink titles and cosmetics commercials – that broadcasts all the American HBO series, and I tend to spend a full night every couple of weeks, watching whatever they put in front of me. Very effective.

**RADIO** Since I sold my car I haven't listened to the radio.

**BOOKS** I read fiction in quantities that people have described as extravagant. I read everywhere and all the time and always carry a book around. It helps me in my own writing. There's this literary rule that an author should read more than she writes, and I'm trying to stick with that. I enjoy buying randomly from the 3 for the price of 2 stacks at Waterstone's. I also have reading fads, like reading everything by a single author in one go, or reading autobiographies. Most recently I rediscovered plays. Theory and politics I do read but admittedly it tends to feel like homework. ★



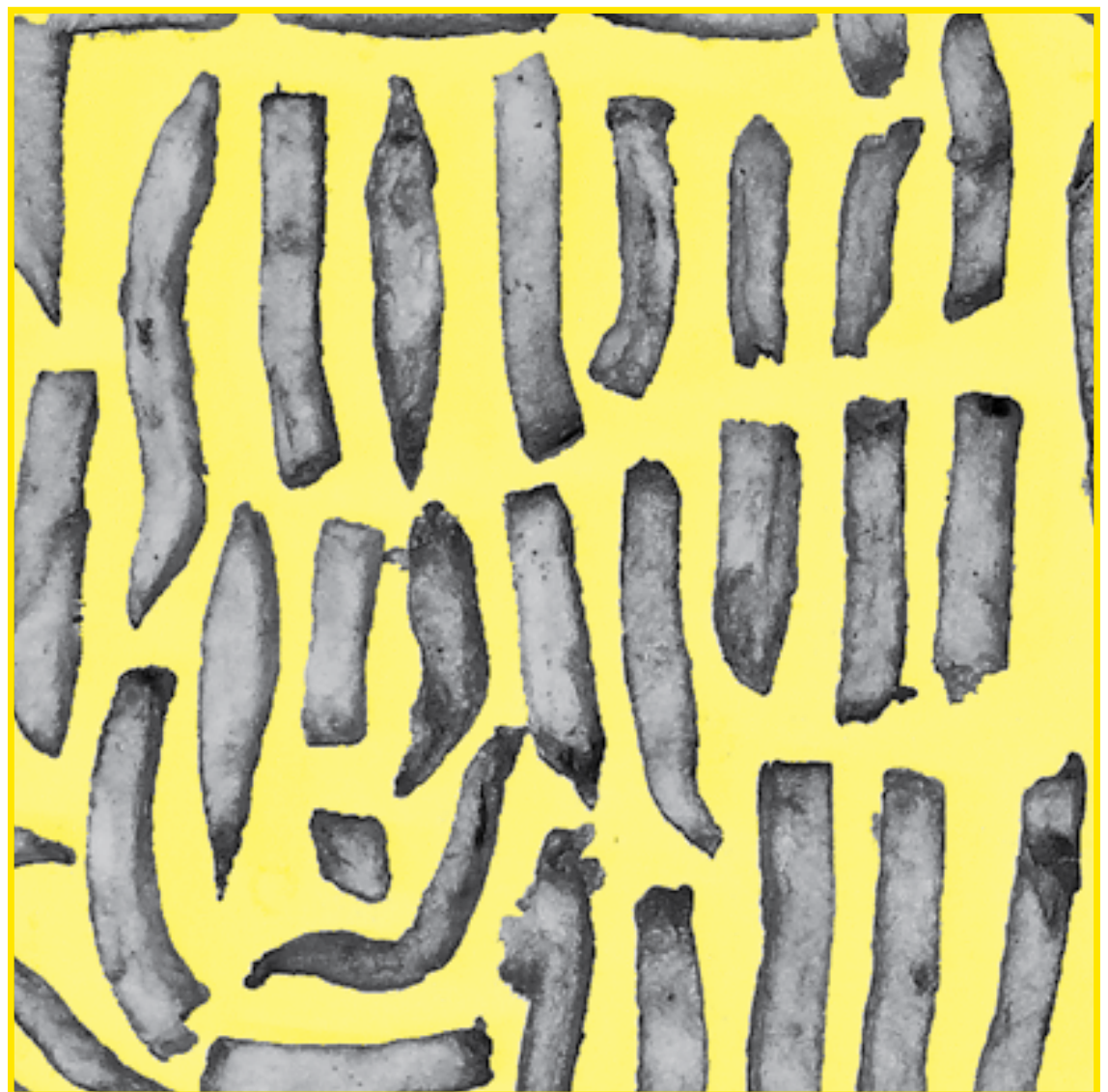
# PICTURE AGENT: OUR SINGULAR PICTURE AGENCY

HAEGUE YANG, ARTIST

HAEGUE YANG PRODUCED THE COVER IMAGE OF THIS WEEK'S EDITION ESPECIALLY FOR 'THE LAST STAR-LEDGER'.

Suppression and distraction: The starting point for this image was a condition in which you usually can't be productive. In order to work one has to somehow be 'sober', and I wanted to put myself into a situation in which I question if I can still produce. What I tried with the Xerox machine was a situation in which I'm portraying myself but not really representing myself – I couldn't really have control over it. In front of a mirror you have this control, you can check and get ready. Yet the Xerox light beam that captured me prevented me from looking at myself. I really had to get in touch with the glass plate otherwise the image would just become black, but the flatter my face the more it became distorted.

*Voice and Wind: Haegue Yang continues in the Lobby Gallery of the New Museum until 23 January 2011.*



## THE LAST STAR-LEDGER Issue 4

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