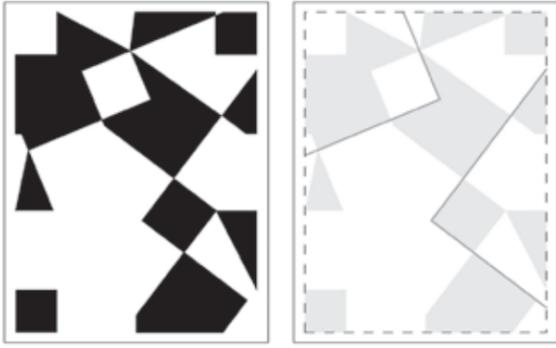
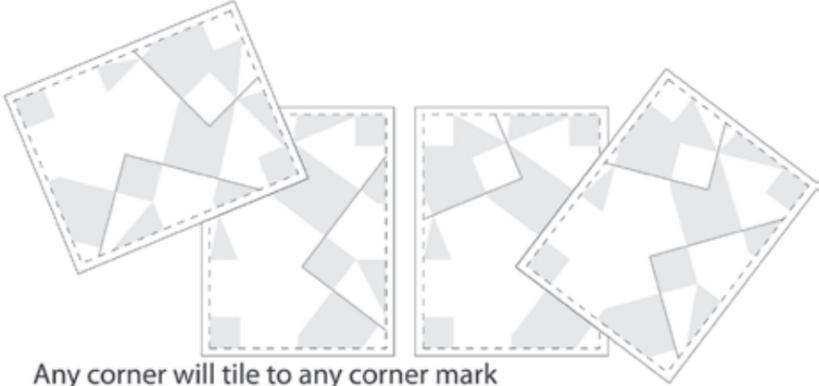


Pattern by ArandaLasch Architects

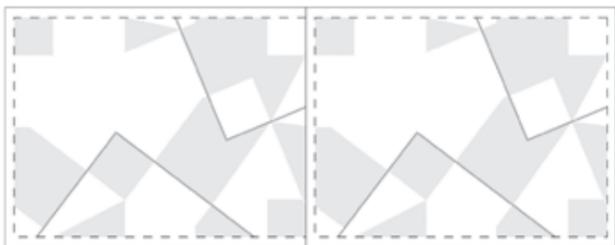
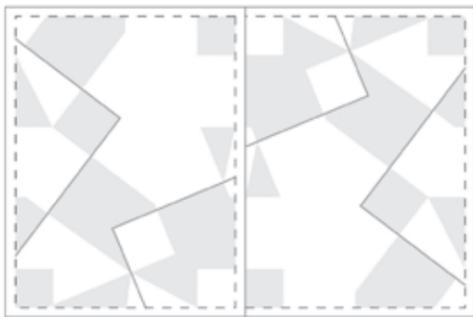
## Tiling Methods



Corner tile marks

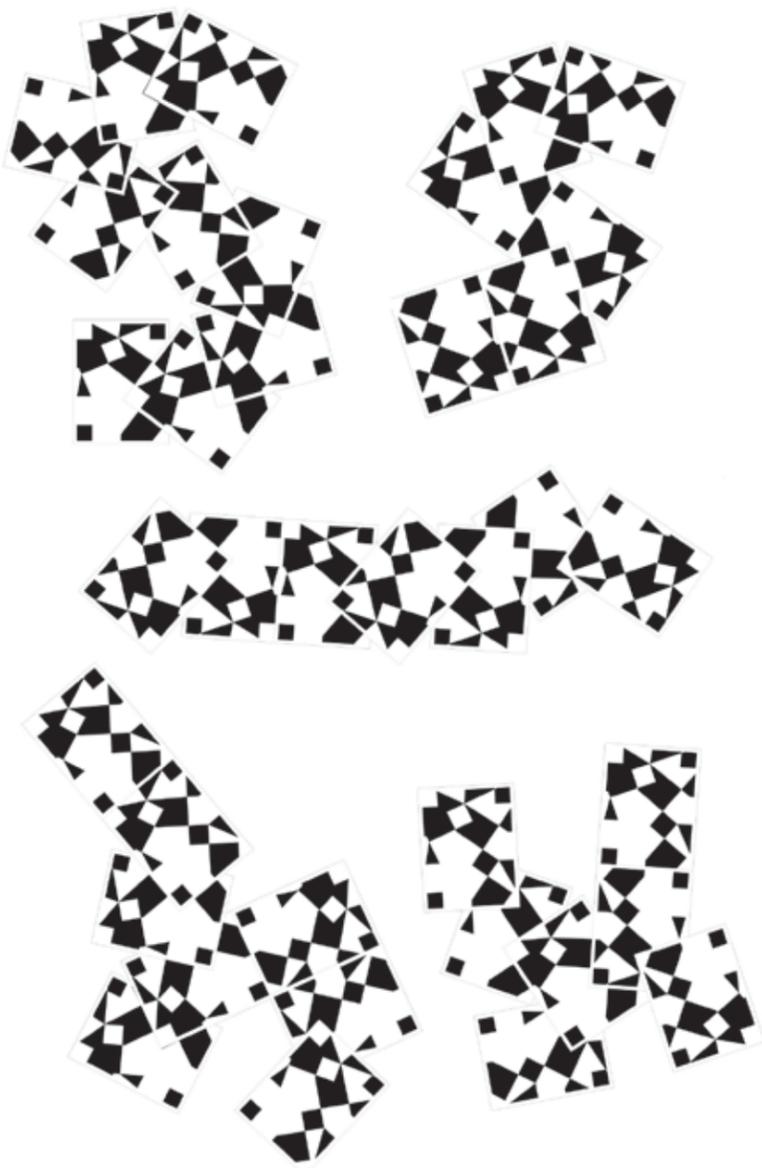


Any corner will tile to any corner mark



Long sides and short sides tile to each other (overlap border)

## Tiling Examples



# GENERIC MATTER AND THE CITY:

Notes, Pt. 1

Gean Moreno - Ernesto Oroza

1. A sign of a change in things is the sudden obsolescence of dominant metaphors. These either become commonsense truths or cease to function as elucidating mechanisms and wither. The Borgesian map that sought to be so precise that it became identical with the territory it represented--and the way in which it stood for some many things at once, from the inherent insufficiencies of representation itself to the ubiquity of the hyperreal--seems a tool of little use in understanding the Generic City. The traditional figures on maps have no correlation to the territories of the generic; they employ a language unable to describe urban spaces traversed and altered by its processes. Nevertheless, the map as a printed product, in its condition as an artifact produced according to a series of conventions, can help us approximate the Generic City. A map of Paris, for instance, produced in Shanghai, in a plant that produces millions of these maps at an alarming rate, according to a logic of standardized dimensions and efficient responses to economic pressures, and at such a distance from its users as to erase them from the horizon of considerations, sheds more light on contemporary Shanghai than a detailed drawing of the city's grid. It's the repeating and determinant physical qualities of the map's raw materials, the disorienting quantities in which it's produced, the global markets it's plugged into, rather than the information printed on it, that are significant here. From this perspective, the mass-produced map is the same as a letter-sized piece of paper from Office Depot. They both shed light on a new organization of the city.

We could exaggerate and propose that, rather than being gridded by blocks and axes, by urban mass and empty areas, the city is now organized by the flow of generic matter. If the industrial city was structured to enhance dominant modes of production, giving them hierarchical priority, now production and use, as well as storage and recycling, are leveled. The city's different spheres are flattened into a landscape that casts into high relief the unending circulation of generic matter. This movement becomes a centrifugal force--a massive belt of activity that slices across the neat geometries of the orthogonal city and its zoning distribution. Think of the continuous line that links cargo ship to port to truck to highway to assembly plant to truck to highway to warehouse to truck to highway to retail store to car to highway to living room to car to highway to thrift store or recycling drop-off center or landfill. This line cuts across the city's different spheres--productive, distributive, commercial, domestic--without making any distinction between them. The movement of generic matter becomes a dominant figure in any conceptualization of the city. There is an ineluctability to the way it courses through the urban environment that complicates any argument that continues to posit production and functionality as the elementary particles of the city.

2. Imagine the city less as a series of regulated lines--structured according to an urban plan, architectural objects, zoning distribution, and certain topographical features--than as a continuous plane in which the busy channels through which generic matter moves have been impressed. These channels produce an entirely new arrangement of axes that at times align with those of the geometric city (as in the case of the highway system, for instance) and that at times penetrate its solid structures. They scramble figure-ground logic and traverse the city's different spheres without making any real qualitative distinctions between them. Generic matter cuts with the same force across the sphere of production as it does the sphere of retail. In doing so, it alters, or demands an alteration to, the very conditions of these

spheres. It forces them to smooth themselves in order to maintain the flow moving at a steady clip. The ability of these spaces to respond to this demand determines their relevancy in the Generic City.

The supermarket, for instance, that can't accommodate the *entire* system of milk distribution, from having the refrigerated shelves that fit the particular shape of the containers and adjusting to specific schedules and routes of delivery to having an alley through which the trucks can pass and where the empty milk crates can be stored for retrieval, finds the Generic City inhospitable. The cost of attempting to function without coupling with this massive system of circulation--and others like it--is prohibitive. It cuts deep into the profit margin. In no time, this supermarket will have to rebrand itself as part of a niche market--organic food supplier, local farmers' distributor, gourmet supermarket, hippy co-op, etc. It will have to seek those remaining spaces that continue to function at speeds and dimensions that allow the individual consumer to remain the organizing principle.

3. The exaggerated proposal of the city as no longer partitioned according to its old geometries, which only seems hyperbolic to a viewpoint inherited from another century, is a first step in approaching a seemingly counterintuitive truth of the generic: the age of the industrial object is in the rearview mirror. The common use of the term "object" seems insufficient to name any state of the generic. The latter is not centered on optimized objects but on optimized systems. The objects that comprise these systems exist as no more than standardized metric and morphological assemblages that, like cells in a larger organism, couple with the rest of the objects in the system to keep things moving. These are objects as information, as codes within a larger genetic whole. They are replaceable and the relationships *between* them are as important as they each are.

If we've used the term "object" in the past, it was as an effort to mark its disintegration, its tendency in the economies of the generic to dissolve into metric data that is produced by and, at the same time, constitutive of massive systems of circulation. What the word "object" usually designates feels archaic. In its traditional sense, it's understood as a sedentary grouping of materials, forms and functions that can acquire cultural value; an autonomous body designed for artificial differentiation; an entity with a ridiculous impulse to emulate the human drama inherent to the inviolable sequence of birth, life and death. It even begins to tap the human drama of reincarnation and that ultimate pop cultural fetish--the second act--if we add to the life of the object its afterlife in the physical and discursive spaces devoted to recycling. The dramatic arc of its lifecycle is Aristotelian.

The non-generic industrial object plays a similar role today as the one played by the religious object in Western industrial culture. Each in their own time and context sought to acquire a rarefied condition. In the religious object, this was justified by its connection with the divine, which underwrote an ascension above the mundane knickknacks of the household and the marketplace. In the industrial object, this differentiation was justified by connection to the future. It was fueled by, and in turn fueled, innovation and development. This type of object manifested itself as an instrument for the betterment of either its citizen user (in a utopian vein) or its capitalist producer (in a commercial vein). If this differentiated, industrial object feels archaic today, it's not because anything in it has changed, but because industrial culture around it has. It now

(continued on page 7)

# Tabloid No. 11 Miami Art Museum

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This publication comprises an artists' intervention into the brochure for the exhibition *New Work Miami 2010*, at Miami Art Museum (July 18-October 17, 2010). The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Miami Art Museum.

PARTICIPATION

## THIS IS ART. What is art to you?



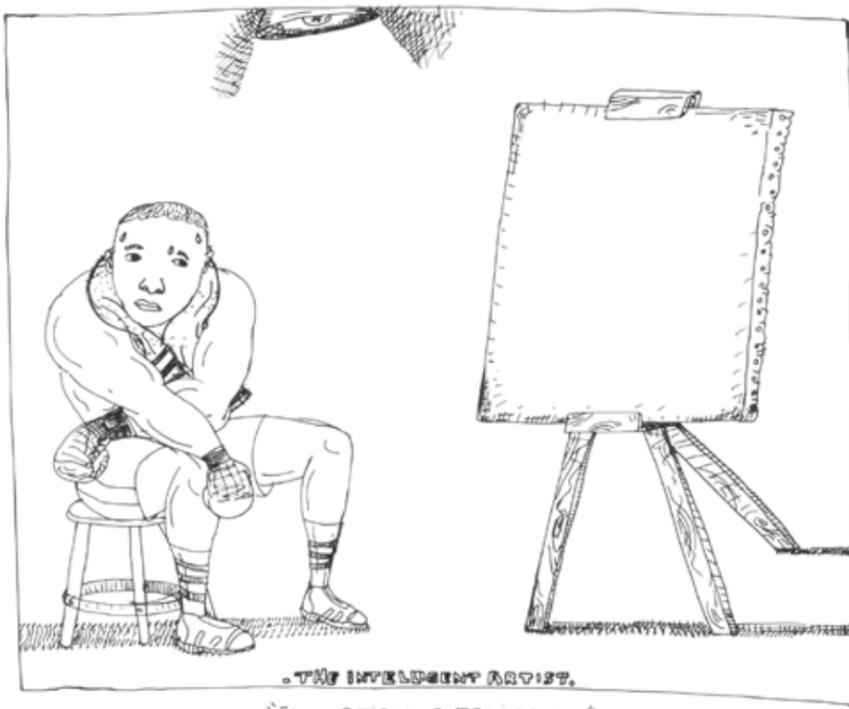
Take a photograph of anything around Miami that you consider art, and bring it to MAM's front desk. You'll receive free museum admission and your photograph could become part of a compilation in *New Work Miami 2010*.

QUESTIONNAIRE

## Have a say



Visit [miamiartmuseum.org/MyMAM.asp](http://miamiartmuseum.org/MyMAM.asp) to provide feedback and to comment on art in Miami.



Tonel, *The Intelligent Artist*, 1995. Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich, Switzerland. Courtesy of the artist.

### ART@WORK

1245 SW 87th Avenue, Miami, FL 33174  
**Marionettes and Workshop Drawings**  
Pablo Cano  
On view September 6th through October 29th, 2010

### BASS MUSEUM OF ART

2121 Park Ave. (in Collins Park)  
Miami Beach, FL  
305-673-7530 or [www.bassmuseum.org](http://www.bassmuseum.org)  
**Human Rites**  
Marina Abramovi, El Anatsui, Rirkrit Tiravanija, César Trasobares, Ai Wei Wei and others  
JUNE 25- OCTOBER 3, 2010

### CENTRO CULTURAL ESPAÑOL

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Coral Gables FL 33134  
PH. 305 448 9677  
[www.ccemiami.org](http://www.ccemiami.org)  
[info@ccemiami.org](mailto:info@ccemiami.org)  
**Dibújame un cuento**  
Exhibit on children's books illustration. Gabriel Pacheco, Isidro Ferrer, Antonio Santos, Cecilia Afonso, Pep Montserrat, Javier Zabala, Javier Serrano, Pablo Amargo, Emilio Urberuaga, Noemí Villamuza, Isol, Javier Sáez Castán, Fífna Ordiozola, Jesús Gabán, Javier Olivares  
SEPTEMBER 17 - OCTOBER 29, 2010  
Visit hours Mon-Fri 10 am to 5 pm

### DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION

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### EDGE ZONES ART CENTER

47 NE 25th St., Miami  
305 303 8852  
Curated by Anonymous Curators  
**Off the record**  
PavelAcosta/ James Bonachea/ Carlos Caballero/ Celia &Yunior/ AnaTeresa Fernández/ NúriaGüell/ Glenda León/ Yasser Piña/ Ernesto Oroza/ Katuska Saavedra/ T10  
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1305 SW 87th Avenue, Miami, FL 33174  
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101C West Flagler Street  
Miami, FL 33130  
305-375-1492  
**Crime in Miami**  
On display through August 29, 2010  
**Natural Disasters of the Caribbean,**  
1495-2010  
JUNE 28 - AUGUST 29, 2010

### LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38 Street #100 Miami FL 33137  
305.576.8570  
**The Lab (Locust Arts Builders)**  
Omar Alvarez, Leslie Chavez, Jason Flores, Luna Goldberg, Kevin Hobbs, Ximena Izquierdo, Vanessa Lacayo, Asher Mones and Christina Quinlan.  
JULY 10th THROUGH AUGUST 2010

### LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Drive  
Coral Gables, FL 33146  
305.284.3535  
**The Jaguar's Spots:**  
**Ancient Mesoamerican Art**  
JUNE 26- OCTOBER 31, 2010

### MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Main Library, 2ND FL. Exhibition Space, 101 W. Flager ST., 305.375.2665  
**Florida Arcane**  
From the society for the preservation of lost things and missing time  
JUNE 24 -SEPTEMBER 19, 2010  
MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Miami Beach Regional, 227 22ND ST., 305.535.4219

### Nature Reflected

Kari Snyder and Helen Webster  
AUGUST 11- SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

### MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Main Library, Auditorium, 101 W. Flager ST., 305.375.2665

### Driftwood

Gean Moreno and Ernesto Oroza  
JUNE 10 - SEPTEMBER 7, 2010

### MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Main Library, 1ST FL. EXHIBITION SPACE, 101 W. Flager ST., 305.375.2665

### Paredolia

Derek Buckner  
JUNE 24 - SEPTMBER 26, 2010

### PATRICIA & PHILLIP FROST MUSEUM

Florida International University, University Park  
10975 SW 17th Street  
Miami, FL 33199  
305.348.3892

### Volf Roitman: From MADI to The Ludic Revolution

MAY 26 THROUGH AUGUST 29, 2010

### Paul Strand in Mexico

MAY 26 THROUGH AUGUST 1, 2010

### Tap-Tap: Celebrating the Art of Haiti

MAY 26 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 5

### Spiritual Healing - Shamans of the Northwest Coast

MAY 26 THROUGH OCTOBER 3

### RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th Street, Miami, FL 33127  
305 573 6090

### Beg Borrow and Steal

74 international, contemporary takes on the theme of appropriation  
JUNE 1 - DECEMBER 1

## TITO MY FRIEND



Milutin Gubash, *Tito My Friend*, 2010. Courtesy of the artist.

BY MILITIN GUBASH (GRANDSON OF MILITIN GUBASH)

PT. 2 OF 3

# Nicolas Lobo interviews Domingo Castillo, Patti Her and Kiwi Farah,

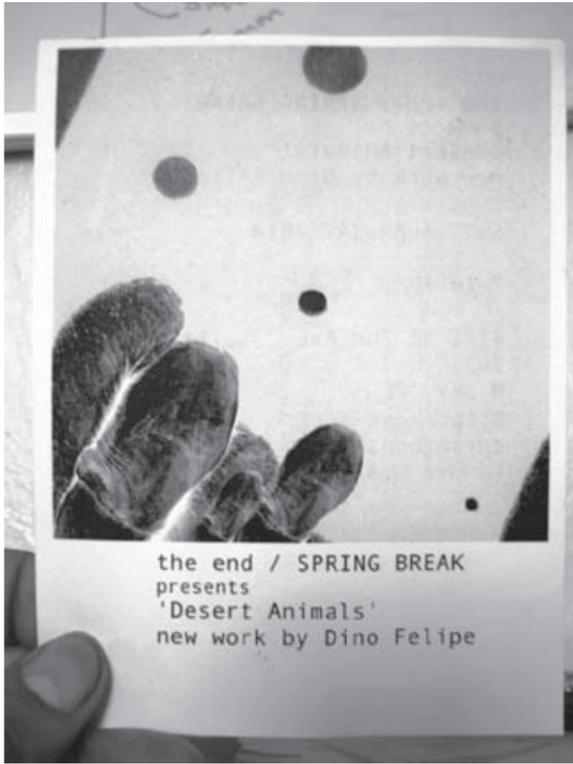
organizers of a nomadic project designed to develop new modes of approaching contemporary art and culture within South Florida communities.

NL: When did "The End" start?

DC: April and May of this year we took 2 or 3 weeks to organize everything and then we started with a screening of *Rosemary's Baby* and then went from there.

NL: So what is it? The End I mean.

DC: Basically it's a nomadic space for the presentation of ideas, screenings, shows, lectures, etc., etc., and



moving from one location to the next because every place has a different influence on what we do there and we always want to find different ways of working around new spaces.

KF: I would say what we are most interested in is constant programming; we want to have things happening all the time. We also want the project to move constantly to keep the ideas fresh.

NL: Ok, I want to go back to that but I want to ask first how the project came about.

KF: Well, Domingo and I were living in New York... actually it began really with a space we did a few years ago with Carlos Azcurra here in Miami called La Cueva, which was a gallery space, and we did workshops, lectures and things like that. Patti participated in what we were doing then. We have always been interested in making spaces where dialogue happens.

NL: Yes, I remember it was above "El Gato Tuerto" liquor store.

KF: Right, so Domingo conceived the idea and asked me to be part of this new project. But New York didn't seem like the right place; we wanted to do it in Miami because there is more opportunity for mobility here and more access to people in a way. Once we got back here Patti joined and we started.

NL: So what's the idea behind the dual names? The End/Spring Break?

DC: Well, it changes back and forth every six months.

NL: So it's a seasonal name.

DC: Yes.

NL: Is the name change connected to the way the project works?

DC: Yes, the name like the project reflects how this city works, how people use this city. Now it's summer and we are at the end, usually nothing happens here; later when the weather gets better the city becomes more active, people come for entertainment and recreation.

NL: I see... the project is conceived as a cell within the activities of the city?

DC: Yes, that's one of the ideas.

KF: What I like about the juxtaposition of those two names is how it reflects two approaches, The End being an over-analysis, critical theory type of mentality and Spring Break is the love affair with kitsch.

NL: Two of the main threads in art right now kind of...

KF: Yeah, I think the painter Steven Parrino's work kind of sits like that on both sides. I'm into that.

NL: So all three of you have your own practices separate from this project?

DC, KF, PH: Yes.

NL: And would you describe it as an art project of yours or more of a peripheral organizational activity?

DC: I think it changes for everyone. This is part of my practice, my train of thought... so to me there is no difference.

NL: Ok, let me ask it this way: If an institutional space asks you to bring the project there, do you treat it as just another temporary place for the project? Or do you try to consolidate and make a display of the project in a kind of past tense?

KF: No.

DC: Definitely take over the space in an active way.

KF: And just run The End in that space.

NL: So The End and... Spring break, how should I refer to it? I'll just call it The End. As you said the name and project are very connected to this city... So what happens if you are invited to bring it to another city or country? How would it operate?

DC: Well, it can operate in both cities at the same time, it would not stop functioning here. It would just develop itself there as well.

NL: So the geographic boundary of the city of Miami is not much of a concern?

KF: No, not really.

NL: So is there an agenda, a program in a gallery sense or is the program not to have a program?

KF: We are kind of on the edge of that because we are now in the process of preparing to apply for grants.

NL: Ok, that leads to my next question, what is the furthest planned evolution of the project?

PH: Right now we are just looking at the next six months.

NL: So six months at a time, and that seems to be part of the program for the space, the fluidity of it?

PH: Yes, that's the beauty of it. If someone is fascinated by a strange subject and they want to share it, we can respond quickly to that. And I think that's why we wouldn't want to become more institutional.

💡

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PLEASE YOUR EYES  
PLEASE YOUR MIND WITH  
THESE THOUGHTS OF MINE**

**"576-ORGY" BY: CRISTINE BRACHE & "BEGINNING ANIMAL COMMUNICATION" BY: ALYSE EMDUR**

**AT 'THE END' 2210 NW 1ST PL ON MAY 20TH 2010  
TWO SHOWINGS 7:30 PM & 9:00 PM FREE**

**"576-ORGY" IS A 27 MINUTE AND 18 SECOND VIDEO I MADE, THE STARS OF IT ARE MARITZA A. ROSA, ROBERT ESTLINBAUM, AND MYSELF. COME AND SEE IT AT 'THE END' ON MAY 20TH 2010. THE ADDRESS IS 2210 NW 1ST PLACE AND I WILL SHOW IT ALONGSIDE A VIDEO MADE BY ALYSE EMDUR CALLED "BEGINNING ANIMAL COMMUNICATION" AT 7:30 PM & 9:00 PM ON THIS NIGHT ONLY. YOU SHOULD COME AND SEE IT BECAUSE THERE IS NO ONE ELSE EXACTLY LIKE YOU.**

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**ALL DESIRES WILL BE HONORED. I WILL ALSO GIVE YOU SUGAR, CHAMPAGNE, AND GOOD CONVERSATION.**

NL: Well, I meant institution in the looser sense, not some kind of museum but more like a non-profit - something like Locust Projects or Light Industry in New York, spaces that came out of activities like what you are doing now, and the activities lasted 10-20 years and they are now a more fixed part of the city.

DC: I don't know... I wanted to start with *Rosemary's Baby* because I wanted to focus on the birth of pure evil. Then I wanted to continue with films that featured women in power. After that I think one thing will just lead to another.

KF: We want to work with different people who have different types of extreme tastes, that way it will cover a lot of ground.

NL: So this is kind of like the new model for art spaces right now because it focuses on activity. I think maybe 20 years ago the idea of an alternative space was very popular. It was clearly defined as a space for art outside of a commercial context. This is now defined by activity, a framework for activity. I see other cities doing this, I can think of Cleopatra in New York and other projects in Los Angeles. Not to mention other countries.

DC: There is a lot going on like this elsewhere especially in Europe right now...

NL: Is The End anti-academic?

DC: The End is sponsoring all the things that academic institutions don't do. When people give lectures, we are not interested in having them lecture about their art practice. We want the lecturers to impart a bulk of knowledge they have outside of their practice. So for example if an artist has researched Gregorian chants and has a lot of knowledge on that subject, that's what we would like them to talk about.

NL: So it's not so much anti-academic as it is post academic? Does it try to fill a graduate school void here



in any way?

KF: It would be cool to think of it that way...

DC: It kind of depends because... well we've had Abel Folgar doing this four part series on the history of punk music and underground music in South Florida. Anyway people we have been inviting have been dealing with South Floridian topics.

PH: Have you heard of Skwee?

NL: Well, I've been following the lecture program and I saw you had one on that subject..

DC: Timothy used to do the Electric Kingdom radio show on 90.5 WVUM...

KF: I think who will make a really good example was when we had a workshop with Denise Delgado from the Miami-Dade Library system. She is actually in grad school and this workshop she presented was a lesson plan for a class she teaches at her school about charged objects in fiction. She was sort of testing out the lesson plan with us. Kind of a writers' workshop without the writing, more just a conversation about the subject matter.

NL: So it had more of an educational position...

DC: Yes, but it's important that it remain open for everyone to come and participate in any aspect of it. Even if it's a loose idea, let's get together and figure it out. Denise approached me about two and a half weeks before she did her workshop and everything just kind of fell into place.

KF: With that being said, one thing that we find interesting and that we want to do is reach out beyond the usual suspects in the art circle. I mean we find it really rewarding when people who are outside of the art circle come and participate. With Denise a group of writers showed up and it was just me and Domingo and a lot of people we had never seen before. We've had that happen in a few instances.

PH: Actually with every event we usually get a different group of people.

NL: It's funny because people go to MFA programs to get connected in the art industry but when you talk about what makes this project tick, one of the things seems to be a connection to those outside the art circle.

KF: Yes, we are tired of regurgitation on the subject of art. At some point you have to try and start fresh.

Photos courtesy: The End/ Spring Break.





# NEW WORK MIAMI 2010

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Maria José Arjona  
Kevin Arrow  
Beings  
Jenny Brillhart  
Felecia Chizuko Carlisle  
Jim Drain  
Flash Orchestra  
Frozen Music

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Oscar Fuentes & the Gipsy Catz  
Lynne Golob Gelfman  
Michael Genovese  
Jacin Giordano  
Guerra de la Paz  
Adler Guerrier  
Jacuzzi Boys  
Don Lambert

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Gustavo Matamoros  
Beatriz Monteavaro  
Gean Moreno/Ernesto Oroza  
Peggy Nolan  
Fabian Peña  
Christina Pettersson  
Poem Depot  
Vickie Pierre

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Manny Prieres  
PsychicYouth (dir. by Ana Mendez)  
Bert Rodriguez  
Christopher Stetser  
Talking Head Transmitters  
Robert Thiele  
TM Sisters  
Mette Tommerup

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Humberto Torres  
Frances Trombly  
Tatiana Vahan  
Marcos Varella  
Michael Vasquez  
Viking Funeral  
Michelle Weinberg

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## NEW WORK MIAMI 2010: EVENTS SCHEDULE

### **Saturday / July 17 / OPENING NIGHT**

6-9pm

MAM members free, non-members \$20

New performance by **TM Sisters**, "With Out You, Babe. " Also featuring spoken word poetry & music by **Oscar Fuentes and the Gipsy Catz**, plus a live AM radio broadcast in the gallery by **Talking Head Transmitters** (segment on curatorial practices).



AVELEDA



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### **NWMM2010 AFTERHOURS** / In conjunction with the exhibition

*New Work Miami 2010*, Miami Art Museum presents a summer's worth

of high-energy performances, artist talks and special presentations.

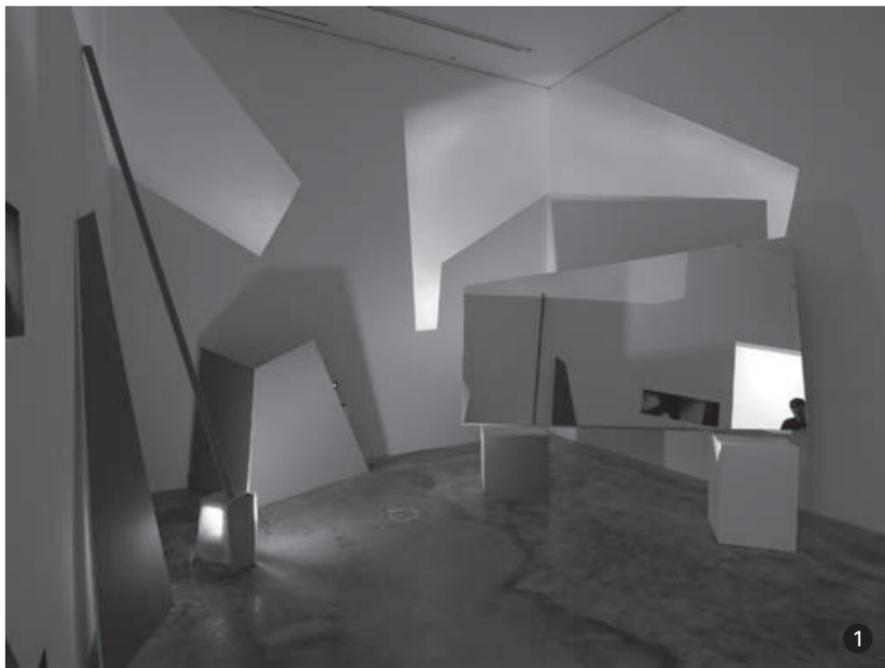
All Afterhours programs:

# NWM2010

July 18 - October 17, 2010  
Miami Art Museum

*New Work Miami 2010* is conceived as an exuberant salute to Miami's dynamic art scene. It is not a survey exhibition but a snapshot, a passing glance at advanced local art production at this precise moment, based on a sampling of what the organizers encountered in process in the studios or freshly concocted in the minds of Miami-based artists, over the course of the past six months or so. Like any snapshot this one is limited in scope, though it is enough, we hope, to serve as a marker for the robust wave of creative activity that is being generated right now by a vibrant and *growing* community of dedicated artists.

While the works in this exhibition do not share an overriding theme or display a single style, it would be wrong to assume they have nothing in common. The network of artists here is cohesive, and many of its most active members know each other well, or they at least know each other's work. They live all over, but many of them work amid the same part-industrial, part-blighted, part-residential areas that pocket the amorphous neighborhoods along Miami's easternmost north-south axis, from downtown and the Miami River through Overtown, Wynwood, Edgewater, Little Haiti, and further north. Many of these artists frequent and occasionally exhibit in the progressive art venues that have arisen incongruously along this same trajectory. Further, Miami offers a limited number of art supply stores, darkrooms, and fabricators willing to create strange, non-utilitarian objects at deep discounts. In other words, these works were all created by individuals who work in the same city, and whose perspectives are each affected by some combination of the same conditions that artists experience as they go about doing what they do in Miami.



And yet, the complexity of this setting at this moment is hard to overstate. It leads to a wild variety of conditions that affect how each artist lives and works very differently. Add to that a second, important variable: the wide diversity of art forms and working methods from which artists everywhere can choose to dedicate themselves to today; and we are left with a situation in which any non-thematic grouping will inevitably be both interlinked and disparate.

While their broader implications may not be obvious from day to day, this complexity of setting and diversity of art forms both have much to do with Miami's paradigmatic status with respect to globalization, the issue that defines our time. The highly contested term "globalization" encompasses a panorama of competing definitions and issues. Its most quantifiable dimension involves a world that is becoming increasingly integrated by virtue of the relatively free flow of capital and the tapping of cheaper labor markets across national and regional boundaries. This economic process has been inseparable from an equally accelerated trend toward cultural globalization, which has been greatly augmented by expanded travel and especially new forms of instant digital communication.

The cultural side of the debate has generally revolved around what some believe to be the inevitable prospect of global domination by Western popular culture, at the expense of local traditions and diversity – the supposed "Disneyfication" of the world. In recent years, however, a more complicated view on the power dynamics at play in this operation has emerged, in light of the unambiguous rise of China, India, Brazil, and other countries as major economic powers; the murkiness of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and various backlashes from groups around the world that seek to assert and retain their independent cultural identities. The sharp economic downturn that the US and the EU have been slogging through since 2008 has made the situation even hazier.

Moreover, while fears of homogenization are not moot by any means, today it is becoming increasingly clear that local cultures are simply too strong a force to yield



in any uncomplicated way. As Erla Zwingle has pointed out (along with numerous commentators, in different words): "When cultures receive outside influences, they ignore some and adopt others, and then almost immediately transform them."<sup>1</sup> Saskia Sassen writes that "a good part of globalization consists of an enormous variety of micro-processes that begin to denationalize what had been constructed as national."<sup>2</sup> The seemingly uniform molecule of world culture that appears to be developing is an unstable one; it atomizes and regroups into different types of hybrid matter as it forms. It is a bone that is continuously fracturing into a million pieces, simultaneously as it is resetting.

A related facet of globalization involves the way in which it has changed the experience and physical character of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century city. This topic is hotly debated in architectural circles, and new perspectives continue to arise. The architect Rem Koolhaas, for example, sees homogenization as an indication of once "peripheral" sites (e.g., Mumbai or Miami) actually tearing themselves away from the "center": In the process of capitalizing on the recent outflows of money from traditional financial hubs (e.g., New York, London, Zurich), they are liberating themselves "from the straightjacket of identity" while breaking "the destructive cycle of dependency."<sup>3</sup> This account of globalization describes a process that is nowhere near as directed and conspiratorial as economic or cultural neo-imperialism. Per Koolhaas, the explosions of uniform building activity that we have seen in recent decades are purely the consequence of sudden accumulations of treasure combining with the 21<sup>st</sup>-century needs of high-density, high-energy populations, which if anything are more independent than ever; the "generic city" is almost entirely pragmatic, "nothing but a reflection of present need and present ability."<sup>4</sup>

The stakes of these intertwined aspects of globalization – economic integration, cultural heterogeneity, and urban development – are as high in Miami as they are anywhere in the US. The so-called Crossroads of the Americas is of course geographically positioned to serve as a major trade center, port, and travel hub between the US, Latin America, and Europe. It is also of course a key center for mass immigration, which has resulted in a wide diversity of residents and a constant degree of cross-cultural interaction among them. Miami is a sprawling city with no discernible edges and no real center.<sup>5</sup> In this sense as well it parallels the unbounded, de-centralized character that may turn out to be the ultimate condition of a truly globalized world.

These predispositions to the effects of globalization are certainly amplified by Miami's relative newness. Precisely mirroring both the overheated growth and the chronic disarray that characterize the age of globalization, Miami is a city whose youth makes it seem for the moment to be locked in perpetual transition, perpetual potential. At present it is notable for bearing a kind of dynamic malleability, which makes it more receptive and more subject to powerful new forces of change like globalization. This in turn may make the everyday, lived experience of these forces seem more attenuated here than in older, more developed cities. In combination with its economic permeability, cultural flux, and "generic" urbanism, Miami thus serves as a telling case study in globalization, one that is only more revealing because it is located not in Asia or Latin America or Africa or the Indian subcontinent, but in the United States.

The field of art bears a special place within these debates, for many reasons. Globalization (and the separate but related issue of cultural identity) has been a major topic of conversation within art circles for years. The various terminologies and concepts that have been developed to describe the current age ("hybridity," "neoliberalization," "transculturation," etc.) have deeply infiltrated contemporary art theory and jargon. The art world has emblemized globalization – both its positive aspects and its myriad problematic ones – through the rise of numerous international biennials and trade fairs, which today create busy travel schedules for collectors and curators who hop from Gwangju (South Korea) to Istanbul to Johannesburg to Sydney in the struggle to keep up with the insights that these venues are generating in real time.

Leaving aside the question of travel budgets, the act of person-to-person communication that comprises a fundamental (if not necessarily *the* fundamental) *raison*



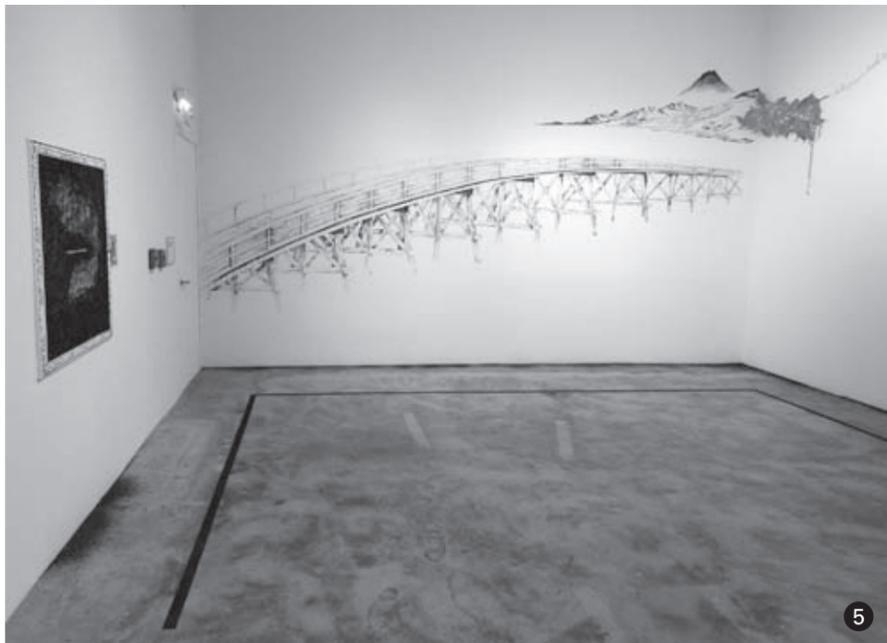
(NWM2010/ rené morales)

*d'être* for art-making has been naturally facilitated by the amazing expansion of humanity's ability to converse with itself across borders and great distances through both images and text, thanks to the invention of JPEG, TIFF, DOC, PDF, HTML – the acronyms that enable the second lives we lead on the internet. Most essentially, there is the basic fact that a given artwork is, at heart, a vessel for ideas, and that of all the commodities that are currently in frenzied circulation transnationally, it is ideas that are being most contagiously transmitted and most vigorously transformed.

This brings us back, then, to the issue of art in Miami at this moment. The ideal that art can serve to embody the transnational transmission of thought and experience constitutes one of the primary organizing principles of MAM's exhibition program and permanent collection. It comprises the overall theme of *Between Here and There* – the first long-term installation of the museum's holdings – which is on view concurrently with *New Work Miami 2010*. While the relationships between the two presentations may not be immediately apparent, they are threaded together by an interpretation of this city that factors in its special position vis-à-vis globalization, and by a belief that this position can be clarified through art.

If there is anything that unifies the diverse production of the artists included in *NWM2010*, it is that they indicate a community that has clearly embraced the range of artistic approaches that are currently in development across the world: from research-based strategies that cross over into disciplines beyond the field of art (commerce, science, urban studies, archival history, etc.); to methods that tap into the energies of non-art subcultures, from the improvisatory dynamics of economic survival in Little Haiti to the anarchic spirit of punk rock. The participation of Miami-based artists in internationally relevant art conversations is equally evident in selected works that are fully relational (participatory) and ultimately ephemeral. It can be seen just as well in the new ways they have developed to tackle the old challenge of image-making, involving new media as well as new, critical takes on ones as familiar as paint on canvas. In so doing, these individuals and the broader population of artists they represent are encapsulating the most recent chapter in the ongoing cultural history of Miami's progress out from its swampy, provincial origins and into a new world marked by patterns that are playing out globally – from Shanghai to Berlin, Dubai to Bogotá.

This paradoxically global local outlook has been nurtured in part by the significant degree of support and exposure to international art production that this community has received through local private collectors (who travel widely) as well as from Miami's public institutions. The institutions in question include not just the non-profit collecting museums and *kunsthalls* (non-collecting institutions), and not just the for-profit galleries (which play a crucial role), but also a phenomenon exemplary enough of this city that it bears the term "The Miami Model" – whereby local collectors open buildings for the public display of their possessions.<sup>6</sup> The community has been nourished as well on a steady diet of overwhelming numbers of high-quality artworks that are shipped to Miami from all over the world for the annual Art Basel Miami Beach trade



fair, which simultaneously provides an audience of thousands of members of the global art crowd, who descend upon the city en masse for a few short days every December, like clockwork.

At a farther remove along this chain of support, but unequivocally the most important, is the general audience for art in Miami. With respect to art in this city, the question of the general population sometimes feels like an elephant in the room. From the beginning Miami audiences have sent mixed messages on the subject: On one hand, there has always been a nebulous but deep hunger for art and culture. On the other, this potential audience is so fragmented as to make it challenging to serve. But while it has tended in the past to float above and outside the local "art world," today it is more steadily flowing through it. So much is evident in the growing number and diversity of visitors to the "Second Saturday" gallery walks in Wynwood, which include swelling numbers of new collectors and others clearly interested in engaging actively with Miami's art scene. This increasingly cosmopolitan audience is on track to build into the critical mass that will in turn empower the degree of participation in global cultural currents that this city seems to yearn for.

As important as it is, this network of support (taken as a whole) can be inconsistent, in part because it is highly sensitive to the state of the overall economy. In Miami it remains critically fragile, and it has undoubtedly been bruised by this recession.<sup>7</sup> But while it has seen painful losses, overall it is clearly pulling through. Indeed, there are signals that it is poised to become more than it was as the economy recovers. Regardless, the last two sobering years have forcefully presented this support structure with an opportunity to pause and reconsider its perspectives. Above all, they have clarified the importance of its mandate.

For while recessions are difficult times for everyone, they can be downright awful for artists. At the same time, historically they have been, if not bright, then at least special times for art. For one thing, they have a way of opening up subject matter, especially for artists whose interests coincide with social issues and issues of urbanism. Artistic approaches with a political bent take on greater sharpness, if not



greater effectiveness. And of course, there is the issue of art's basic function as a collective escape valve, and as a way to not just divert ourselves from but to better understand and cope with our daily problems.

To suggest that these supportive factors should have a motivating effect on artists working amid a recession, even a positive effect on their morale, is to risk speculation. It is never wise, in any case, to overstate their relevance to the everyday realities of art-making. To do so is to underestimate the depths of self-sufficient research and concentration into which artists typically immerse themselves in the process of carrying out their projects. Many artists will hold up the gratification that occasionally results from this kind of focus (and even its occasional agonies) as their primary motivation; it is an important support mechanism in its own right – if not *the* most important, for some. It suffices to note in passing that as a group, artists have proven time and again to be impressively resilient. To quote the playwright Arthur Miller: "The artist is a weed that can survive in the cracks of a pavement."<sup>8</sup> Given the clouds of economic uncertainty that are still hanging over us, this observation may well be the most pertinent way of describing the state of art in Miami in 2010.

We all stand to benefit from this resilience, because it is the artists – the producers – who are on the frontlines of the charge to build a more humanistic culture for this city. They do so from the ground up, in parallel to the more spectacular macroeconomic forces that are hard at work building it from the top down. This microeconomic level comprises the true undertow of a city's creative activity, and provides the most reliable way of gauging the solidity of the ground upon which more official institutional endeavors are to take root. It is for the artists that the issues and stakes involved in establishing a balanced relationship between the local and the global, as well as the inestimable importance of making and exhibiting good art in hard times, are so deeply internalized as to be instinctive. It is this artists' instinct that has best equipped us as a city to participate in the global arena of art-making, at last.

–René Morales, Associate Curator

<sup>1</sup> Erla Zwingle, "Globalisation," *National Geographic* (August, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, NJ: 2006).

<sup>3</sup> See Rem Koolhaas, "The Generic City," in Koolhaas, Bruce Mau, and Hans Werlemann, S, M, X, XL (Monacelli Press, New York: 1997). The reference to Koolhaas is indebted to Gean Moreno and Ernesto Oroza.

<sup>4</sup> Koolhaas' ideas are particularly germane to cities that are new and/or poised to grow. In an evocative passage Koolhaas actually makes subtle reference to Miami, citing "the collision or confluence of two migrations – Cuban émigrés going north and Jewish retirees going south..." Elsewhere he states that urban homogeneity "tends toward the tropical – converging around the equator..."

<sup>5</sup> When one speaks of "Miami" what one generally means is a contiguous urban area that stretches far beyond the City of Miami's technical boundaries, from lower Broward to Kendall and points south, and from Miami Beach to Doral, Westchester, and points west.

<sup>6</sup> Particularly relevant to the present conversation is the recently opened de la Cruz Collection, which is already notable for its frequent programming – lectures and so forth – as well as the way in which it has been presenting local artists' work in a space in the back that could have been devoted to storage. Notable also is the Rubell Family Collection, which has had a demonstrable impact on the work of several Miami-based artists through its forward-looking installations.

<sup>7</sup> While the same could be said about cultural support networks throughout the world, it is worth noting that Miami has been one of the worst victims/perpetrators of the same national housing crisis that helped trigger the much larger ruptures in the global financial industry. Consequently, the first waves of the recession were felt earlier and more severely here than in much of the country.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Miller, "Letter to Mr. Gingrich." *The Nation* (July 31/August 7, 1995).

Images: 1) Felecia Chizuko Carlisle; 2) Kevin Arrow; 3) Christina Pettersson, Michael Genovese, Guerra de la Paz, Lynne Gelfman, Adler Guerrier, Robert Thiele; 4) Jacin Giordano, Viking Funeral, Adler Guerrier; 5) Beatriz Monteavaro; 6) Fabián Peña; 7) Jacin Giordano, Bert Rodriguez, Don Lambert; 8) Mette Tommerup, Marcos Varella, Viking Funeral, Michael Genovese, Jim Drain, Manny Prieres, Adler Guerrier, Christina Pettersson, Guerra de la Paz, Lynne Gelfman. Photos by Sid Hoeltzel.



6-9pm  
MAM members \$5, non-members \$15

**Thursday / August 5**  
Performance artist **Maria José Arjona** challenges visitors to find a way to take a diamond from her mouth; the victor of this power struggle becomes the stone's owner.

In the gallery, meet artists **Michael Genovese** and **Gean Moreno/Ernesto Oroza**, plus **Talking Head Transmitters\*** (segment on the environment: "The Big Spill").

**Thursday / August 19**  
Experience an experimental performance choreographed and performed by **Ana Mendez**, in collaboration with **Aja Albertson** and **Richard Vergez**.

In the gallery, meet artists **Kevin Arrow** and **Manny Prieres**, plus **Talking Head Transmitters\*** (segment on contemporary dance). Additionally, *Mapping Miami* and LegalArt will be on hand with information about their organizations.

**Thursday / September 2**  
Bring on the bands! Celebrate Miami's rich crossover of art and music, as local bands **Beings** and **Jacuzzi Boys** headline a night of rock at the museum.

Special interactive performance by **Bert Rodriguez**, plus **Talking Head Transmitters\*** (segment on 80's rock).

**Thursday / September 16**  
Explore auditory sensations with sound art collectives **Frozen Music** and **Flash Orchestra**.

In the gallery, meet artists **Adler Guerrier** and **Mette Tommerup**, plus **Talking Head Transmitters\*** with **PDMD Music Ensemble**. **Poem Depot** will also be on hand to create personalized poems on demand. *This evening of sound is generously supported by Lin Loughheed.*

**Thursday / October 7**  
Video art screening (location to be announced)

*\*This schedule is subject to change. To receive event updates, invitations and reminders, please visit [miamiartmuseum.org](http://miamiartmuseum.org) and sign up for MAM e-news; or find Miami Art Museum on Facebook.com. MAM yearly memberships: Individual \$45, Dual \$60, Artist \$35*

**Saturday / August 14 / SECOND SATURDAYS ARE FREE FOR FAMILIES**  
"We're in Stitches"

**1-4pm**  
Free of charge  
Weave the day away and take home a colorful yarn creation. Do you knit, crochet or embroider? Bring in your own stitchery to show off! Special guest artist: **Frances Trombly**.

\*To be interviewed on live AM radio by **Talking Head Transmitters**, please go to [www.talkingheadtransmitters.com](http://www.talkingheadtransmitters.com) and sign up in advance.

**MAM'S ANNUAL EXHIBITION FUND**  
May 1, 2009 – June 15, 2010

100,000 and up  
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# MAM 2010

## July 18 – October 17, 2010

*New Work Miami 2010* is organized by Miami Art Museum and supported by MAM's Annual Exhibition Fund, with additional support provided by Lin Loughheed. It is curated by Peter Boswell, assistant director for special programs/senior curator and René Morales, associate curator.



**Miami Art Museum**

101 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL. • (305) 375-3000 • [miamiartmuseum.org](http://miamiartmuseum.org)

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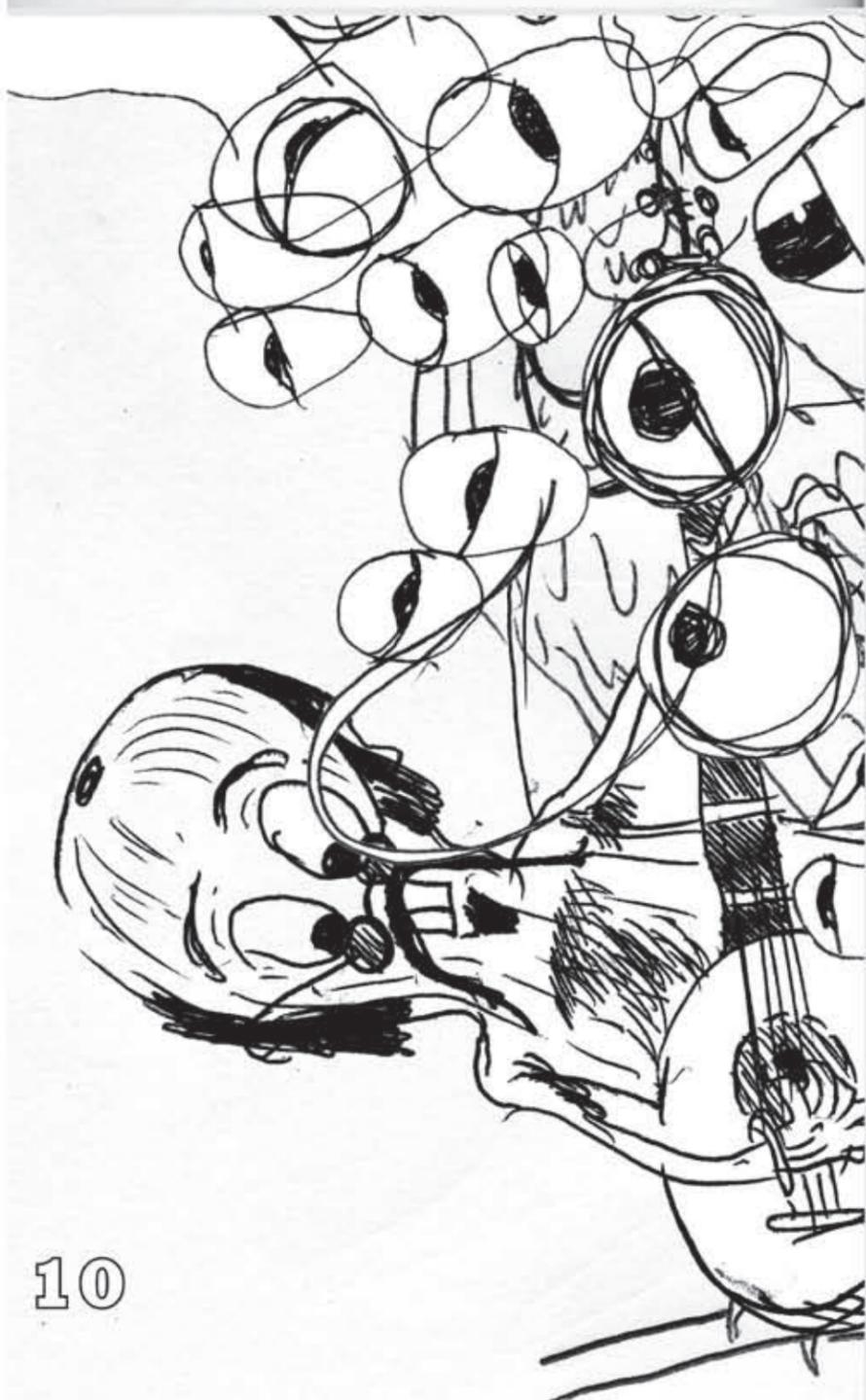


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## The Artist's Neighborhood

By Thorstein Veblen and Joe Scanlan

You thought first footstep? Something new? I am very sorry. We are discovered.  
—Saul Bellow, *Henderson the Rain King*

The artist's neighborhood of the great international urban center is the perfect flower of ambition and greed, standardized on the globalization plan. Its name may be Mitte or East London or Williamsburg, it may be Culver City or Factory 798 or Moganshan Lu. The pattern is substantially the same, and is repeated several thousand times with a faithful perfection that suggests there is no stopping it, that it is worked out by uniform circumstances that are beyond our control, and that it wholly falls in with the spirit of things and adheres to the enduring aspirations of the art world. The artist's neighborhood is one of the great cultural institutions; perhaps the greatest, in the sense that it has had and continues to have a greater part than any other in shaping public sentiment about art and giving character to what artists do.

The location of any one artist's neighborhood has commonly been determined by collusion between "interested parties" with a view to speculation in real estate, and it continues hitherto to be managed as a real estate "proposition." Its cultural affairs, its civic pride, and press coverage of its real estate values are so invariably of a speculative nature that all its property owners are intent on "boosting"—that is to say, lifting property values still farther above the actual values—as measured by the uses for which the properties have been renovated. The speculative values of artists' studios consistently exceed their use value by at least 100 per cent, and they exceed their actual values by at least 200 per cent; likewise, the property owners never cease their endeavors to raise rents still farther out of touch with reality. An artist's neighborhood that does not answer to these specifications is "a dead one," one that has failed to "make good," and need not be accounted for, except as a warning to the unwary "hipster." Real estate is the one interest that binds the neighborhood with a common bond; and it is highly significant (perhaps pathetic, perhaps admirable) that artists who have no real estate holdings—and who never hope to have any—will nonetheless do their best to inflate the speculative values by adding the unpaid clamor of their comings and goings to the paid clamor of the developers and publicists, increasing their own cost of living so that their landlord's costs can be met.

Real estate is an enterprise in "futures" designed to get something for nothing from unwary tenants; and as far as the ready supply of such clients is concerned, experienced real estate brokers believe "there is one born every minute." Consequently, landlords and developers throughout the surrounding area are pilgrims of hope looking forward to the time when the neighborhood's advancing needs will enable them to realize the inflated values of their property, or looking more immediately to the chance that one or another of those who are born every minute" may be so ill-advised as to take them at their word and actually pay the amount they say their real estate is worth. The purpose of loft buildings and storefronts, and of multi-family dwellings to a lesser degree, is to profit from them. This is the common bond of exploitation and gullibility that animates the creative destruction of any artist's neighborhood. In this enterprise there is concerted action and a spirit of solidarity, as well as a thriving business of everyone continually maneuvering to get the better of everyone else. Consequently, eternal salesmanship is the price of inhabiting an artist's neighborhood, whether one wants to be "salesman" or not.

Because of this common contribution to inflated real estate, artists are engaged in a vigilant rivalry, competitors in the concentration of their own demographic. The neighborhood is a wholesale production district, where art is bought and art supplies are sold, and there are always many more producers than are necessary to supply the marketplace, so that every artist is looking to increase his or her share in the trade at the expense of their colleagues and neighbors. There is always more or less active competition, often underhand. But this does not hinder collusion between the competitors, nor their ability to maintain a collective hold on their mythical contributions to art and culture.

From an early point in the life history of such a neighborhood, be it Montparnasse or Soho, collusion habitually becomes the rule,



and there are no ethical codes of conduct or competitive courtesies to restrain a reputable artist's actions. In effect the competition among artists is kept well in hand by a common understanding, whereby artists direct their collective efforts to getting what can be got out of their landlords and gallery representation. It is on this dog-eat-dog trade—and on the increased volume of it, past and present—that the up-to-the-minute vitality of the neighborhood rests. As one consequence, the socio-economic value of the presence of artists is commonly overstated, with a view to enhancing the district's trendiness. It is standard business practice, then, that the artist's neighborhood arranges itself under such regulations and usages as to encourage competition—not between the landlords themselves, but between long-time residents and artists, between local cafes and Starbucks. Quite as a matter of course, too, the number of artists making art in any one neighborhood greatly exceeds what is necessary to meet demand; with the result that while the total profits from the rents in any artist's neighborhood are inordinately large for the work done, the profits of any given artist are likely to be modest enough. The more successful ones among them do extremely well and receive large returns on their outlay. But the average returns per artist are quite modest, and the less successful ones are habitually working within speaking-distance of bankruptcy. Failures are numerous, but they are habitually replaced by newly minted MFA graduates who still have something to lose. The habitual overstatement of hipness also continually draws tourists into the neighborhood, for the boutique and restaurant trade also gets its quota of such persons who are born every minute, persons who, by osmosis, become supernumerary ambassadors of the neighborhood as well. Many fortunes are made in the artist's neighborhood, very respectable fortunes indeed. But many smaller fortunes are lost.

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Neither the causes nor the effects of this state of things have been expounded on by the economists, nor has it found a place in the many formulations of theory that have to do with the art world; presumably because it is all, under the circumstances, altogether unavoidable and "natural." Exposing the obvious is a tedious employment, and reciting commonplaces usually does not hold the interest of readers. Nonetheless, it seems necessary to go a little farther into the details and reasoning for the peculiar arrangement of the artist's neighborhood. However obvious and natural it may be, it is, after all, serious enough to warrant the attention of anyone interested in the current economic situation, or in finding a way out of it; which is just now (2009) quite perplexing, as the futile endeavors of the contemporary art market abundantly demonstrate.

However natural and legitimate the use of artists to gentrify derelict neighborhoods may be, the arrangement as it runs today imposes on artists an annual overhead charge that runs into ten or twelve figures, and all to the benefit of no one. This overhead charge of billions, due to duplication of work, personnel, equipment, and traffic in an artist's neighborhood is, after all, simple and obvious waste. Which we might complain about except for the fact that it is the simple and obvious outcome of those democratic principles of ambition and greed on which the commonwealth is founded—and in which artists willingly participate. These prin-



ciples are fundamentally right and good—so long as popular sentiment runs to that effect—and they are to be accepted gratefully, defects included. The whole arrangement is doubtless worth its cost; indeed it is of paramount interest for mayors' offices the world over to cherish and maintain it.

In addition to this understanding of the artist's neighborhood and its effect on the economy of art production, it should be noted that the landlords and shopkeepers in a given artist's neighborhood have a virtual monopoly on the cost of living there. This monopoly is neither complete nor indisputable; nor does it cover all commerce equally or exclude competition from other neighborhoods. Nonetheless, the broad statement is quite sound: that within the domain of the artist's neighborhood, the property owners and shopkeepers have a virtual monopoly on the business in which its residents are engaged. By crowding into the same narrowly prescribed streets and performing, on a daily basis, the look and feel of an artist's neighborhood, artists ensure this virtual monopoly stays in place.

Under such a monopoly and quite as a matter of course, the cost of everything adjusts itself to what the traffic will bear. It has no other relation to the price or the use value of the real estate in question, be it a studio apartment or 5,000-square-foot loft. Instead, "what the traffic will bear" is something to be determined by experience and continually revised, with the effect of keeping the cost of living as unremittingly high as possible. Indeed, there is reason to believe that landlords are habitually driven by cupidity to push rents over the maximum; that is to say, beyond the prices that would cover their mortgage payments, their maintenance costs and property taxes. And since there are still too many derelict spaces, they all feel that they never make enough money no matter how much they gouge their tenants. And, should occupancy slack off due to their exorbitant prices, their response is to raise rents rather than lower them. What the traffic will bear is basically whatever artists will put up with, without breaking away and finding their studios elsewhere, in some other neighborhood, through itinerant wandering, by word of mouth, through illegal live/work arrangements, and the like. The two most dangerous outside appeals are adjacent, less-gentrified neighborhoods and inexpensive, far-away places; of these the cheap draw of Berlin, Beijing and Mexico City are more menacing and more dreaded. Indeed they are quite cordially detested by local landlords. The adjacent artist's neighborhoods are not really a grave menace to their exorbitant rents, since they are all in the same position, and none of them fails to charge all comers the highest rents possible.

There is another limiting condition also to be considered in determining what people will pay to live in a trendy artist's neighborhood, though it is less, or at least less visibly, operative. It is the point at which high rents cause artists to move elsewhere; that is to say, the point at which the livelihood of artists will be pinched so severely that they decide to give up and move out. This breaking point is rarely reached in ordinary commerce—groceries, bars, hardware—probably because there are enough grocers, bars and hardware stores nearby. In the business of studio spaces, however, and subletting by persons other than landlords, the breaking point is often reached and passed. Here the local monopoly is fairly complete and rigorous, which feeds the persistent impulse to overreach.

And then, too, the bars and restaurants deal in trendiness and trendiness is transient, at the same time that the fortunes of artists are subject to the vicissitudes of the art market. This competition drives both shopkeepers and artists to base their economic outlooks on the lucky chance of what might happen, not on what is likely to happen, barring a feature spread in *Time Out*. And the bar and restaurant owners are under the necessity—"inner necessity," as the Hegelians would

say—of getting all they can and securing themselves against all risk by stipulating whatever it takes to guarantee their profits, no matter whom it may concern. It follows, under the common sense of business as usual, self-help and greed, that those eager to do business on a good margin will continue to crowd into the artist's neighborhood until the number of concerns among whom all profits are to be divided is so large as to leave each a barely "reasonable" net gain. So that while the underlying artist population continues to pay inordinately high costs, the bar and restaurant owners earn no more than the minimum necessary to encourage them to stay in business.

All artist's neighborhoods, always and everywhere, run on very much the same plan of inordinately high prices and, consequently, the same extravagant multiplication of artists, bars, restaurants, condominiums, publicity, equipment, and credit. It is the same the world over. And to the extent that artists and art production can be seen as just another part of the consumer economy, making art is an integral part of any artist's neighborhood, where something like three-fourths to nine-tenths is idle waste to be subtracted from "normal" commercial activity. And so long as the atmosphere of working artists is perceived as benefiting the local economy, then artists are welcome; when developers, blogs and other publicity agencies speak of the meritorious presence of artists, it is this sort of friction with business as usual that they are talking about. But as soon as that atmosphere can be provided by some more profitable equivalent, no matter how ersatz—an Urban Outfitters store, a café with exposed brick, some "funky" bistros—then the presence of artists becomes a hindrance.

The retail trade—in other words, the diluted and homogenized version of the artist's neighborhood—has been the breeding ground of American culture and the nerve center of public sentiment throughout the twentieth century, ever more securely and unequivocally as the century came to its close. In American parlance "The Public," so far as it can be defined, has meant rank and file consumers and the people in trade who earn their income from them. The road to success has never run through the artist's neighborhood, but rather its adulterated equivalent in Hollywood or on Madison Avenue, and the habits of thought engendered by the preoccupations of artists have never shaped popular sentiment and popular morals, nor have they dominated public policy in terms of what was to be done and what was to be left undone, locally and globally, in politics, government, society, religion, and education.

It is an unhappy circumstance that all this plain speaking about the artist's neighborhood, its animating spirit and its traffic, its standards of merit and its transformation, unavoidably has an air of finding fault. This appearance is unavoidable, since no objective view of the facts can be content with anything short of plain speech. Plain speech has an air of disparagement because it is normally avoided at all costs, especially when it comes to talking about the role artists play in the rejuvenation and demise of their own neighborhoods and, in the course of this discussion, touching precisely on these substantial topics, the motives, aims, principles, ways and means and achievements of artists in relation to their ambitions and their fates. But for all that, these artists and their friends, in fact, are no less substantial and meritorious. Indeed one can scarcely appreciate the full measure of their stature, substance, and achievements—and more particularly the moral costs of their great work in developing the neighborhood and taking over its resources in



the first place—without putting it all in plain, salesman-like terms, instead of the romantic parables that usually couch the make-believe of art.

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Toward the close of the last decade, and increasingly during this one, the artist's initiative as change-maker has been supplanted by the great chain brands that move into the artist's neighborhood, with artists having fallen into the position of poster children for the distribution of their ersatz, cutting-edge goods. Whether androgynous, gothic, funky, or trucker-capped, the communications and styles that were the domain of artists and musicians are more and more extensively attributed to Stella Artois and Urban Outfitters. Wittingly or not, artists increasingly represent "packaged goods" bearing the brand of a status maker, their primary connection with the brands being a kind of consumption "by association." Whether an artist drinks Stella Artois or wears Urban Outfitters makes no difference, since their branding (and many others) gets reinforced every time an artist walks down the street. Content, and images, are made for the artists, which they can take or leave. But leaving, in this context, will commonly mean leaving the neighborhood. Should they choose to stay, the artists work by affiliation with and under surveillance of their peers, who are similarly under the influence of the creative directors in the great advertising agencies. Artists duly behave under the brand of "rebel" or "cynic," or some such apocryphal token of merit.

All this reduction of the artist's neighborhood to simpler terms has by no means lowered the overhead charges of the chain brands and rents as they bear upon the underlying artist population; rather the reverse. Nor has it hitherto lessened the duplication of hipsters, realtors, publicity and personnel that goes into promoting the neighborhood; rather the



reverse. Nor has it abated the ancient spirit of self help and greed that has always animated the retail trade and the artist's neighborhood; again, rather the reverse, inasmuch as their principals in the jungle of Big Business cut into the initiative of the artists with luxury brands, advertising and real estate agency contracts, which irritates the artists and provokes them to retaliate where they see an opening, that is, through their constant and open expression of contempt for the situation, or worse, through theft and vandalism. Even when the burdens that can be brought to bear on artists are negligible, there was never much generosity to be had there in the first place, so their contempt is just the same.

The best days of the artist and the artist's neighborhood are past. The artist is dancing under the hand of Big Business and so is ceasing to be able to perform the look of independence, let alone take control of his own destiny and help to rule his corner of the world. Circumstances are prescribed for him and have been changing in such a way as to leave him no longer fit to do business on his own, even in collusion with his fellow artists. The retail trade and artistic production are each an enterprise in reproduction, of course, and reproduction is a matter of selecting from a low context and re-positioning in a high one; all of which is simple and obvious to any retailer, and holds true all around the neighborhood from artist to vintage store and back again. During the period when the artist's neighborhood flourished and grew into the texture of a vibrant economy, the characteristics which made that possible was a matter of personality and skill that gave the artist an advantage in meeting his clients person to person. It was largely a matter of ingenuity, patience, and hubris; those qualities, in

short, which have esteemed the rustic artist and cast an air of glamorous adventure over bohemian life. In this sense it is worth recalling that the persons engaged in the protean commerce of an artist's neighborhood have in the main stepped forward from the artists themselves, predominantly from the more established sections of the neighborhood where the traditional animus of the struggling artist is older and less troubled.

The artist's neighborhood, of course, still has its uses, and its use so far as it effects the daily life of artists is much the same as ever; but for the chain stores and for those remote landlords and classes who draw their profits from its tourists and residents, the neighborhood is no longer what it once was. It has been falling into the position of a way station in the global economy, instead of a local habitation where an artist of principle and ambition might reasonably hope to come in for a reliable "way of life"—that is, a sustainable free livelihood—and bear his or her share in the control of local affairs without having to answer to any "higher ups" in the hierarchy of business. Barring accidents, Bolshevism—or acts of God or the United States Congress—such would appear to be the drift of things in the calculable future; that is to say, in the absence of some cataclysmic disturbance.

This does not mean that the artist's neighborhood is on the decline in terms of its popularity, but only that the once pioneering artist has been sacrificed on the altar of commerce, and that the retail trade is being rebranded on behalf of the massive vested interests that move obscurely in the background. These vested interests now have first dibs on the "income stream" that flows from the artists through the artist's neighborhood. Nor does it imply that

that spirit of self-help and collective greed that made and animated the artist's neighborhood at its best has faded away; rather, it has only moved upward and onward to higher duties and wider horizons. It is only that the same stock of men with the same traditions and ideals are doing Big Business on the same general plan on which the artist's neighborhood was built. And these men, who know the artist's neighborhood "from the ground up," now find it ready to serve them, ready to be made profitable according to the methods and principles bred in their bones—or more accurately, bred into the ground up bones of artists. The mindset of business as usual is the same, whether the balance sheet runs in the thousands or the millions.

This is what is meant by democracy in the parlance of globalism, and it is this pattern of democracy through denial that inspires the WTO to make the world safe. In the meantime democracy, at least in America, has moved forward and upward to a higher business level, where larger vested interests dominate and bulkier profit margins are in peril. It has come to be recognized that the artist's neighborhood of the twentieth century is now being left behind. It is now accepted wisdom to be acted upon that the salvation of twenty-first-century democracy is best worked out by making the world safe for Big Business and then letting Big Business take care of people in trade and the artists, together with much else. But it should not be overlooked that, in and through all this, the soul of the artist's neighborhood marches on.

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This essay and these images are reprinted with permission from the book *Red Flags: Four Essays on Art and Economics* (Paraguay Press, Paris: 2009), by Joe Scanlan (designed by Francesca Grassi).



the artist's neighborhood by thorstein veblen and joe scanlan

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(generic matter and the city: notes pt. 1/ gean moreno/ ernesto oroza)

inhabits the same level as the spheres it once towered over as the city settles into its generic phase.

To provisionally mark a distinction, we'll pit "product" against "object"--and characterize the former as being made up of nothing more than generic matter. As a first step, we can say that generic matter is a state of convergence between materials and conventions. It manifests itself in products that are configured exclusively by norms and conventions (technological, commercial, hygienic, urban, social), and that respond to the demands of the systems from which they are generated and through which they move before they respond to the demands and needs of the consumer. In their unwavering fidelity to these systems, a certain autism is revealed. The product, unlike the archetypal object, aims to be something other than a sedentary and autonomous grouping of materials and forms that can acquire symbolic value. It seeks, instead, to dissolve back into the generic matter it is produced from by adhering to particular and strict metrics and morphologies that give it a specific place in its systems of production and distribution. It performs its own disappearance while never ceasing to execute its function. It is looking, then, for the opposite of an artificial and anxious differentiation, of that extra value by which it may be infused if it carries the identity markers of a rarefied design language. And it obviates the Aristotelian arc of the object that seeks value in emulating the lifecycle of animate beings. The product, in fact, may be closer to the epic, in Brecht's sense--it's the un-tragic hero in a secular play that is little else than an exhibition of the astonishing social conditions against which it is staged. No catharsis, no empathy demanded.

4.

The figure of the product serves only as a comparative conceptual tool vis-à-vis an older conception of the object, as a way to ease into what we think is at stake in thinking the Generic City: a need to speak in terms of generic matter, an amorphous "substance" that extends beyond its individual manifestations in the artifacts that we bump into in our everyday lives. It extends beyond or exceeds this manifested condition because the situation in which we encounter generic products is related only tangentially to their natural ecosystem, which is in the flows of the systems for which they were made and which they make up. It's a little like catching a headline stamped on the morning paper and confusing it with the endless ribbons of data that incessantly circulate throughout the globe. In other words, the generic carves its own autonomous routes in the city. The artifacts we encounter and designate as generic are always "out of place" in some sense.

Generic matter is material organized by the convergence of different conventions. The easiest place to locate it is in its most obvious effect: the traffic of a nearly infinite amount of indistinct products moving in unison in massive systems that, in turn, determine their qualities. That is, generic matter is as much in the contiguity and relations between these products as in the forms they take. A bucket has the shape it does because it makes it an element that optimizes movement--its own and that of all the other parts--within a system of circulation. These products are so committed to the systems in which they function, and they are such a fundamental and indivisible part of those systems, that to speak of them in terms of the singular and the particular is to obviate something important. Generic matter, in complicating the very dialectic of the single artifact as a close universe and products indivisible from larger systems, begins to propose a possible understanding of the relationship of generic production to the city, of the state of the generic in all the spheres through which it courses--those of production, storage and distribution, use, and recycling.

5.

Generic matter is conditioned to flow endlessly. Its traits respond unequivocally to the inscription of codes of production, commercialization, and recycling that make them efficient in each of the spheres traversed. It is expected, above all, that this matter be slippery, that it slide without any obstacles through all the spaces in which it is introduced. And this, in turn, raises expectations regarding the spheres of production, storage, consumption and recycling through which it courses. These spheres, too, adjust so that the flow passes through them unimpeded. Their new purpose becomes to handicap as little as possible or not at all the movement of generic matter, and they are reorganized to fulfill this task.

In contrast to the object, which follows that arc from the design on a computer screen to the arrival at the point of recycling that delivers it to another system or back into the same one, the generic seems to function as a continuum without any of the high or low points that signal stasis (fulfilled identity) or depletion. Its "life" as metric manifestation is homogenous: one note, steady and recurring.

6.

In attempting to work through what is at stake in this shift from object to flow, using the prism of the domestic (as a negative instance or retardant in the process) may be helpful. As it traverses the manufacturing plant and the storage facility, the flow of generic matter cuts right through the home. Or perhaps it's more accurate to propose that generic matters' inherent condition as flow is stalled by the domestic. Spaces of habitation slow its movement. They stand in contradiction to its proclivities, as it is there where affective bonds, for instance, for which the generic makes no room, are established. A product all of a sudden is endowed with the ability to elicit an emotional connection. Nondescript things become significant. Their precise morphologies and metric qualities, organized to couple with the other elements in systems of circulation, are divested of their primary function in the product. As the very opposite of the generic artifact within its native systems, where it is always flowing and serving a function that is structured by the product's very mobility and dissolution into the metric and morphological regimes that are impressed through the entire system, in the home generic material settles down into a scenario organized by needs--those of the individual and the family--that are foreign to the generic.

If flow is the most coherent condition within the Generic City, then static merchandise is recast as accident or anomaly. The city is so focused on movement that an object in a domestic situation presents itself as an obstacle, a moment to be surpassed, matter that should be expelled by the very inertia that the system generates. The object stalled in domestic space, kept from the routes of circulation, shrinks the circuit of circulation that cuts through the house. In this case, each house is merely a synecdoche of the way that flows traverse through, and are stalled by, the domestic realm of the city. The object in this situation is like calcified plaque, a kind of urban cholesterol that hinders flow. The tableaux that provide the archetypal arrangements of the habitat are a kind of blockage in the Generic City.

If the domestic is a space of friction that interrupts the flow of the generic, then definitions of the home as an area of calm and organization, or as the epicenter from which demands are emitted toward productive systems, are archaic. They belong to a different city. They are rendered inoperative or obsolete in the Generic City. That is to say, the home is the least important moment (no longer the space) for the Generic City. Compared to other zones through which generic matter flows, the passage is marked here by inefficiency, loss and chaotic rearrangement. The Generic City is not a city of the domestic. Habitat, one of the most important functions in the traditional city, has ceased to be not only indispensable but faces off with the logic of the generic flow, becoming a space of accumulation, of back-ups and interruptions, of a retentive nostalgia.

7.

Rather than spaces, in the Generic City we inhabit processes, a sequence of actions that accommodate us. The Generic City supplies locations for sleeping, eating, and engaging in leisurely activities. These, too, are the result of different convergences (of conventions and resources). And they are in motion all the time. A condo tower that rises with a wave of gentrification only to be vacated and demolished with the recession that follows adheres less to the traditional notion of the home than to a proliferating logic of constant flow. But it's not the transience of the architecture that we should look at here. It's, rather, that the condo tower is planned according to a series of conventions and standards that stretch far beyond the sphere of construction. The standardization of raw materials, from the plywood and the sheetrock to the moulding and the tiles, for instance, determine the morphologies not only of the apartments in that tower, but of the apartments in most of the towers that will emerge during that wave of gentrification. In fact, if we take a step back, the condo tower itself is only a convergence of matter that belongs to a number of flows--from building materials to capital--that begin somewhere else, consolidate in the tower for a finite amount of time, and return their circulation routes or become detritus and loss.

Most current design and construction adhere to a series of conventions and protocols, and can more easily be understood in relation to a series of standards, from the dimensions of building materials to building codes, than to the special skills or vision of the architect. (A handful of over-mediated celebrity architects notwithstanding.) In this sense, the fast-food or coffeehouse franchise building is probably more emblematic than the parametric blobchitectures in the magazines. It's certainly more emblematic when considering the generic, as it illustrates rather well how a certain series of resources come together--capital, demand, fashion, etc.--to produce a scaffolding around which generic matter warps itself. The more food and beverage franchises, or condo

towers, want to engrave their identity into the actual structure of the building, by pulling it away from the generic condition of standardized materials and metrics, the larger the investment of money has to be. Only this extra investment can curtail the process of ending up with a building that, beyond its differentiating surface traits, is ultimately generic. And this pull of the generic--and the increasing amounts of capital that it takes to steer away from it-- explain why identities are usually constructed as shells over generic buildings, through cladding, paint jobs, and signage. Identities are increasingly thin films precariously anchored to the generic.

8.

Generic matter, then, rises from an undifferentiated plane, wraps around a scaffolding erected by pooled resources, and afterwards returns to its condition of anonymity. This is why a shutdown fast-food establishment, with its original signage replaced and its walls repainted, can open as part of a different franchise, with no vestige of the original restaurant anywhere. Generic matter is a "memory material"--it has its original condition as anonymous and malleable substance ingrained in its genetic code and returns to this condition after the scaffolding that holds it up is removed. The building may remain erect, but only as a hard blank surface. From the papers on which its maps are printed to its buildings, it is the recurrence and circulation of generic matter--that convergence of standards and materials that spreads from letter-size papers and plywood sheet to milk crates and the concrete beams of its bridges--that begins to help us explain the Generic City. ■

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