

Friday, 31 March 2023, 09:40 AM



THE SIGNAL.
THE TRACES.
SICKNESS, HEALTH, BEAUTY.
FORMATION, FORMATTING, INFORMATION.
MEMORIES.
WHAT GOES WELL AND WHAT GOES BADLY.
HOW IT GOES WELL.
HOW IT GOES BADLY.
AUSCULTATION AND DIAGNOSIS.
VAGUE THOUGHTS AND CLEAR IMAGES.

JEAN-LUC GODARD, CAHIERS DU CINÉMA #300 (1985)

THE IMAGE
IS A PURE CREATION OF THE MIND.
IT CANNOT BE BORN FROM A COMPARISON,
BUT FROM THE APPROXIMATION OF TWO REALITIES
THAT ARE MORE OR LESS DISTANT.
THE MORE DISTANT AND EXACT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TWO APPROXIMATED REALITIES, THE STRONGER THE IMAGE WILL BE
- THE MORE EMOTIONAL FORCE AND POETIC REALITY IT WILL HAVE.
TWO REALITIES THAT HAVE NO RELATION
CANNOT APPROACH EACH OTHER
IN A FRUITFUL WAY. THERE IS NO CREATION OF AN IMAGE.
TWO CONSTRUCTED REALITIES DO NOT APPROACH EACH OTHER.
THEY OPPOSE EACH OTHER.
RARELY IS A FORCE OBTAINED FROM THIS OPPOSITION.
AN IMAGE IS NOT STRONG BECAUSE IT IS brutal OR fantastical,
BUT BECAUSE THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS IS DISTANT AND EXACT.

PIERRE REVERDY, L'IMAGE (1918)

Image is everything

"ICON" + "AFFECTION" + "PROGRAM"

THE ICONOMIST
"TO CATALOGUE"

N°3 - VOL. 1 - 2023/1
THE-ICONOMIST.NET

THE CONCEPT OF "ICONOMY" ORIGINATED AS A NEOLOGISM COINED IN 2006 BY ECONOMIST GILSON SCHWARTZ. SCHWARTZ JUDGED THAT "IN THIS ICONOMY, THE NOMOS IS DEFINED BY THE ICON, BY SOMETHING THAT IS TANGIBLE, WHICH IS A VISUAL, IMMATERIAL, REAL, AND SYMBOLIC CODE AT THE SAME TIME...THIS ICONOMY THAT MESSES WITH OUR WAY OF THINKING, MEASURING, AND FEELING, LOOKS LIKE A GAME.

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Images . Are . everything

The observation that "IMAGE IS EVERYTHING" has usually been a matter of complaint, not celebration, as it is in Andre Agassi's notorious declaration (made long before he shaved his head, changed his image, and became a real tennis star instead of a poster boy). The purpose is to demonstrate that images are not everything, but at the same time to show how they manage to convince us that they are. Part of this is a question of language: the word image is notoriously ambiguous. It can denote both a physical object (a painting or sculpture) and a mental, imaginary entity, a psychological imago, the visual content of dreams, memories, and perception. It plays a role in both the visual and verbal arts, as the name of the represented content of a picture or its overall formal gestalt (what Adrian Stokes called the "image in form"); or it can designate a verbal motif, a named thing or quality, a metaphor or other "figure," or even the formal totality of a text as a "verbal icon." It can even pass over the boundary between vision and hearing in the notion of an "acoustic image." And as a name for likeness, similitude, resemblance, and analogy it has a quasi-logical status as one of the three great orders of sign formation, the "icon," which (along with C. S. Peirce's "symbol" and "index") constitutes the totality of semiotic relationships.¹ I am concerned here, however, not so much to retrace the ground covered by semiotics, but to look at the peculiar tendency of images to absorb and be absorbed by human subjects in processes that look suspiciously like those of living things. We have an incorrigible tendency to lapse into vitalistic and animistic ways of speaking when we talk about images. It's not just a question of their producing "imitations of life" (as the saying goes), but that the imitations seem to take on "lives of their own."

W.J.T. MITCHELL, in *WHAT DO PICTURES WANT? THE LIVES AND LOVES OF IMAGES*, published by The University of Chicago Press (2005)



MOOD DISORDER, 2012-22
SHRINE (WHITE), 2022
SECRETS OF THE MAGNOLIA TREE, 2021
UNLOCK LIFE, BERLIN, GERMANY, 2021
THE THREE MUSKETEERS, 1921/2021
UNTITLED (EXQUISITE CORPSE), 2021
NEW DRONE, 2021
DIAMOND STINGILY ENTRYWAYS, 2021
A MATTER OF IMAGE, 2021
MAY'S BLUE EYE, 2020
LEAVING A MARK THAT DESTROYS, 2020
SUNFLOWER SEEDS, 2020
ZACIMBA GABA, 2020
ZUMBI, 2020
JINGDEZHEN IMPERIAL KILN MUSEUM, 2016-2020
COLORING BOOK 63, 2020
MARGINALIA 7, 2019
SAD BY DESIGN, 2019
THE WILL & THE WAY ... FRAGMENT 1, 2019
YES!, 2019
THE VISITING ROOM #3, 2019
THE FUTURE IS PRESENT, 2019
IF I RULED THE WORLD, 2019
KNOW YOU'RE MAGICK BABY, 2019
FROM A TROPICAL SPACE, 2019
WHEN I PLAY THE DEAF CARD, 2019
BETWEEN YOUR HANDS INTO A HEARTH, 2019
CIRCLE SERPENT (SERPIENTE CIRCULAR), 2019
MAE (THREE DAYS AFTER), 2019
FULL OF SURPRISES FROM PULLED IN BROOKLYN, 2019
WOMEN & MUSEUMS II, 2019
PILOT WAVE INDUCTION III, 2018
AFTER GENERAL IDEA, 2018
ANATOMY OF AN AI SYSTEM, 2018
MAN FROM CONTACT SHEET 2 (DARKROOM MANUALS), 2018
TÊTE D'HOMME, 2018
IS THIS AN INVESTMENT, PIED-À-TERRE, OR PRIMARY RESIDENCE?, 2018
STUDIO/HOME, 2018
TERRI (TALKING ABOUT THE FREEWAY), 2018
THALIA (TALKING ABOUT US), 2018
PROJECTION ENCLAVE, 2018
RETURN OF THE OBRA DINN, 2018
DREAM SEQUENCE, 2018
YELLOW CHALK, 2017
LIVING ROOM VAPE, 2017
UNTITLED (FOR PARKETT, NO. 100/101), 2017
THE BAYFALLS, 2017
UNTITLED (PINNACLE), 2017
UNTITLED (CRISSCROSS), 2017
TARGET WITH FOUR FACES, 2017
MONUMENT TO THE BATTLE OF THE SUTJESKA, 2017
UNTITLED FROM ART AGAINST IMMIGRATION BAN LETTER, 2017
EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE OK, 2017
A CONSPIRACY, 2017
ABSINTHE, 2017
IT BEGAN AS A MILITARY EXPERIMENT, 2017
DREAM JOURNAL, 2017
APPLICANT PHOTOS (MIGRANTS) #1, 2013-17
WE HOLD WHERE STUDY, 2017
INCENSE SWEATERS & ICE, 2017
WATER/SKIN, 2017
BLACK AND WHITE, 2017
S FOLDING BLANKET, 2016
TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY, 2016
EMISSARY SUNSETS THE SELF, 2016
INTERVAL, 2014-2016
EVENING (LE SOIR), 2016
NECROPOLIS FOR THE VICTIMS OF FASCISM, 2016
SINGLE CHANNEL WITH RECEIVER, 2016
HUNT FOR GREEN HILL, 2016



UNTITLED (MASK OR AN ANIMAL WAITING FOR YOU WITH OPEN ARMS), 2023
Tripod, cardboard, brown adhesive tape, acrylic paint, fishing rod, USB cable, transparent adhesive tape.
Approximately 120x30cm.

VISIONS OF INVASIONS, 2023

View of installation. HD video, no sound, black and white, 25m10s.



UNTITLED (WRONGLY MADE BARBER'S CHAIR), 2016
NOVEMBER 5, 2016
LIGHTS OUT IN EUROPE, 1940/2016
WATER TO SKIN, 2016
S.O.S. SMOKE SIGNALS FROM UNDERGROUND, 2016
ART IS/ALWAYS/HAVING TO SAY/GOODBYE, 2017
JEANNETTE, L'ENFANCE DE JEANNE D'ARC, 2017
INTAKE FACILITY FOR AN ANONYMOUS CLIENT, 2017
KARLA IVONNE, PISTA DE BAILE DEL CLUB 'RUV', 2016
STRENGTH IN HONOR, 2016
MIRROR GROUND STUDY (_1990600), 2016
ORANGE COUNTY FAIR (GIRLS KISSING), 2016
KING OF BOYS (ABATTOIR OF MAKOKO), 2015
BITMAP GRADIENT RAY III, 2015
THE INFINITE HAPPINESS, 2015
MOBY DICK, 2015
LO QUE PUEDE UN SASTRE FROM RECURRENT GOYA, 2015
YA VAN DESPLUMADOS FROM RECURRENT GOYA, 2015
MODDED SERVER-RACK DISPLAY, 2015
REVOLT, THEY SAID, 2015
AND ON A DIFFERENT NOTE, 2015
MINIME (FOUR TUNNELS OF EXPLORATION), 2015
HAPPY HOUR, 2015
REVISITING THE SPACE BETWEEN, 2015
SOME MAY LIKE A SOFT BRAZILIAN SINGER FROM THE 1950S, 2015
HERITAGE STUDIES #9, 2015
PAINTING WITHOUT WALLS, 2015
BUSINESS CARD FOR METRO PICTURES, 2015
DEAR DATA, 2015
AF-FIXING CEREMONY: FOUR MOVEMENTS FOR E
CAPTURED TERRITORY C, 2015
UNTITLED FROM KEYS, 2015
FAMILY VACATION, 2015
CROSSED CONFECTIONS, 2015
A SITTING FOR MATTHEW, 2015
IMAGE OBJECT TUESDAY 7 JULY 2015 12:09PM
TRAGEDY, 2015
PORTRAIT OF A MAN WITH CAT EARS, 2014
WHAT ARE THESE STRANGE FEELINGS, WITH FORMER FROM UNTITLED
PAINTING, 2011/2014
THEATRE, OR CAVE, 2014
CORINTHIAN COLUMN (PLASTIC CUPS), 2014
BATTLE OF ORGREAVE, 2001
SHE DIDN'T HAVE FRIENDS, CHILDREN, SEX, RELIGION, MARRIAGE,
SUCCESS, A SALARY OR A FEAR OF DEATH. SHE WORKED, 2013-14
BERLIN STARTUP CASE MOD: ROCKET INTERNET, 2014
MORE POETRY IS NEEDED, SWANSEA, 2014
KEEP AWAY FROM THE WINDOW, 2014
1 MONTH AGO, 2014
PAST PRESENCE 025, BICYCLE WHEEL, MARCEL DUCHAMP, 2014
POST-MILITARY CINEMA, 2014
HOW WE SEE/LOOK 1/DARIA, 2014
THE CRITIC LAUGHS, 1971-72/2014
I AM SITTING IN A ROOM, 1969/2014
TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION, 2014
THE NOVEL THAT WRITES ITSELF, 2014

“DEAR DATA”



Multiples. EXPRESS

ECONOMY OF MIRAGES, 2023
Multiples. Digital print on soda cans. 3+1 AP.



TESTIMONY-IMAGE, 2023
View of installation. HD video, sound, color, 15m7s..



INVENTORY, 2023
Wooden support and stacked clothing pieces. Approximately 170x60cm.

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST WHEN YOUNG, 1987-2023
 Digital print on fabric. 59x84cm. Edition of 5+1 AP.



A ROOM (FOR ABY WARBURG), 2023
View of installation, variable dimensions.





STOP ART; to

Making START BREATH

Difficult to work with?

AN ARTIST'S GUIDE TO STOP BEING AN ARTIST

is based on one simple argument; that it doesn't take willpower not to do something that you don't want to do. I understand if this idea makes you nervous. You may think that far from something that you don't want to do, you like the idea of being an artist and love making art. But on the other hand perhaps you hate being an artist.

One of the problems that many artists have when they think about dropping out is the fear that they will never be happy as a non-artist. Of course understandably they think they will have to go through the rest of their lives feeling deprived, wanting to make art but not having a place to exhibit. This is a scary thought, no question about that.

But if you think about it, this fear is not created by art, but by artists working conditions and the beliefs we have. For instance, we know that being an artist is bad for us in many respects but we think it's good in others. We seem to think that we are stuck at the bottom of art's supply chain. That it's hard to stop and that dropping out is extremely brutal. Before we even know how the art field operates - we are convinced that we are either going to make it big or fail. And it gets worse. These beliefs are also reinforced, not only through our own story but through the horror stories we hear from other artists who has testified to the misery of going down the artist career path. These artists experience terrible mental and emotional conflict from the quick turnaround in art. They want to drop out but they still want to make art. This is the conflict that grinds you down every time.

Every now and then you bump into a curator at an opening, who says 'that artist is difficult to work with'. Chances are that, that artist was using this guide. This guide introduces a way to remove the conflict between wanting to make art and wanting to drop out based on the realization, that the desire to be an artist is based on an illusion. Over time, the cumulative effect of thousands and thousands exhibitions causes artists' brains to make what can be described as a mental filter with respect to being an artist. This filter tricks our brains into thinking that being an artist is in some way beneficial or desirable. For example that eventually the hours of unpaid labour will lead to some level of recognition and you will be able to do art full time. We know that these are illusions, even if they are very clever and subtle ones, because if these things were real, of course ALL artists would be compensated fully for their time. And they aren't. Now, you might ask yourself, why don't they pay us? Do you believe that patrons, directors, gallerists and curators even, could meet at their own demands, flat broke, working a day job, without a team to support them? No. To stop being an artist, you have to switch off the mental filter that creates the desire to professionalize as an artist, thereby effectively un-tricking your brain. This is the shift that enables an artist to become difficult to work with. Removing the filter, enables you to see the art field, the way a non-artist would, someone who has absolutely no desire to work for free. It doesn't take them willpower not to work under these conditions.

So why should it take you?

YOUR

Monologue by SIDSEL MEINECHE HANSEN for the work An Artist's Guide to Stop Being an Artist, 2019

Survival is NOT GUARANTEED

There is another way of posing the question, of displacing things. Another style, another tempo. Namely, to lose—or rather seem to lose—one's time. It is to proceed along the edges of an issue, to act by impulse. It is to bifurcate, to branch off all of a sudden, to no longer put anything off. It is to directly confront the differences involved in the matter. It is to start out, as it were, at ground level (...) But to bifurcate is something else: it means moving toward the terrain, traversing the ground, and accepting the existential ordeal provoked by the questions one raises.

GEORGE DIDI-HUBERMAN, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms* Any Warburg's *History of Art*



PHANTOMS

MOMENT AS INTERVAL, 2023
Ceramic pieces and artificial flowers on wooden stand, dimensions variable.
Installation view.

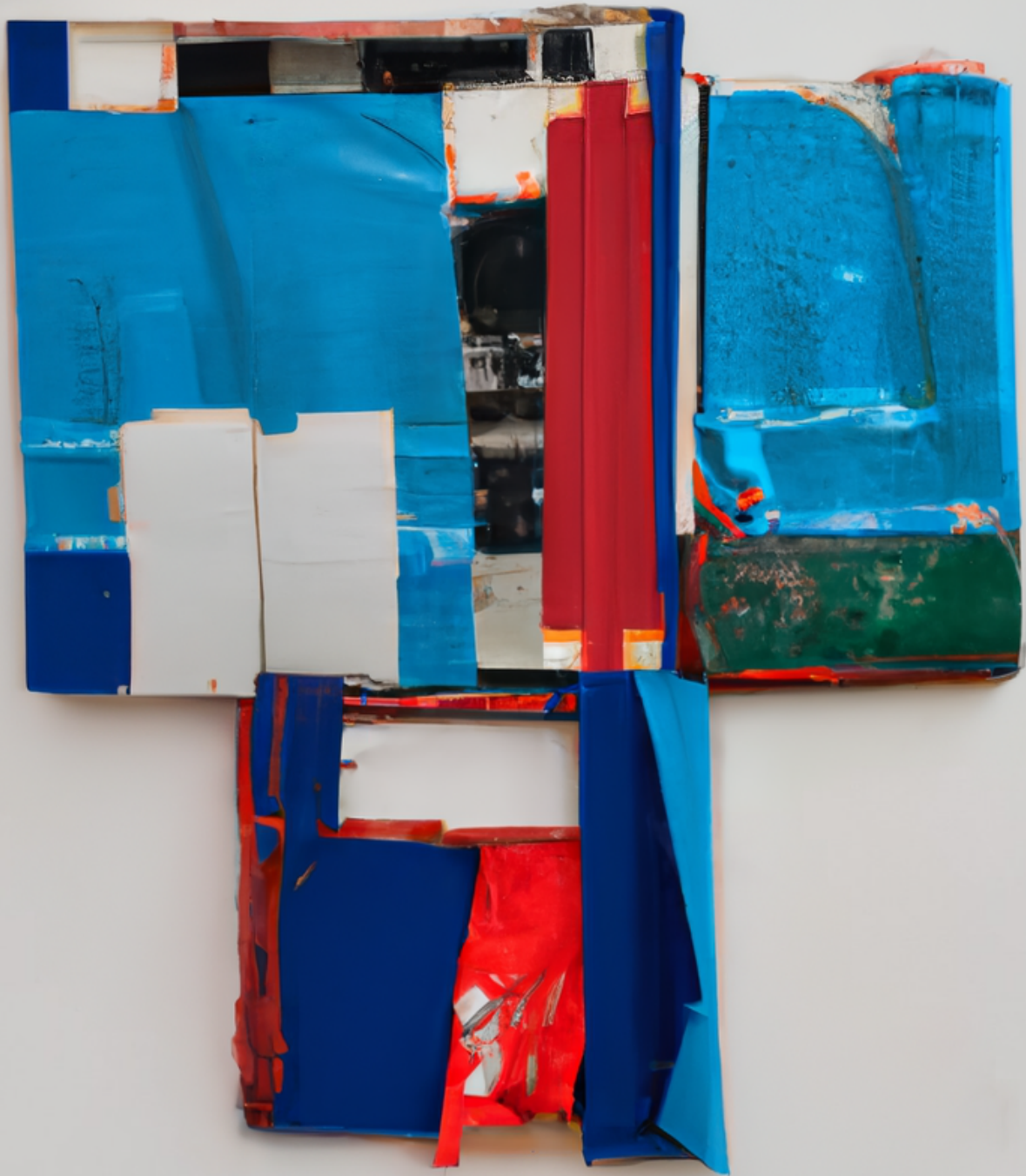


0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z





Life of objects



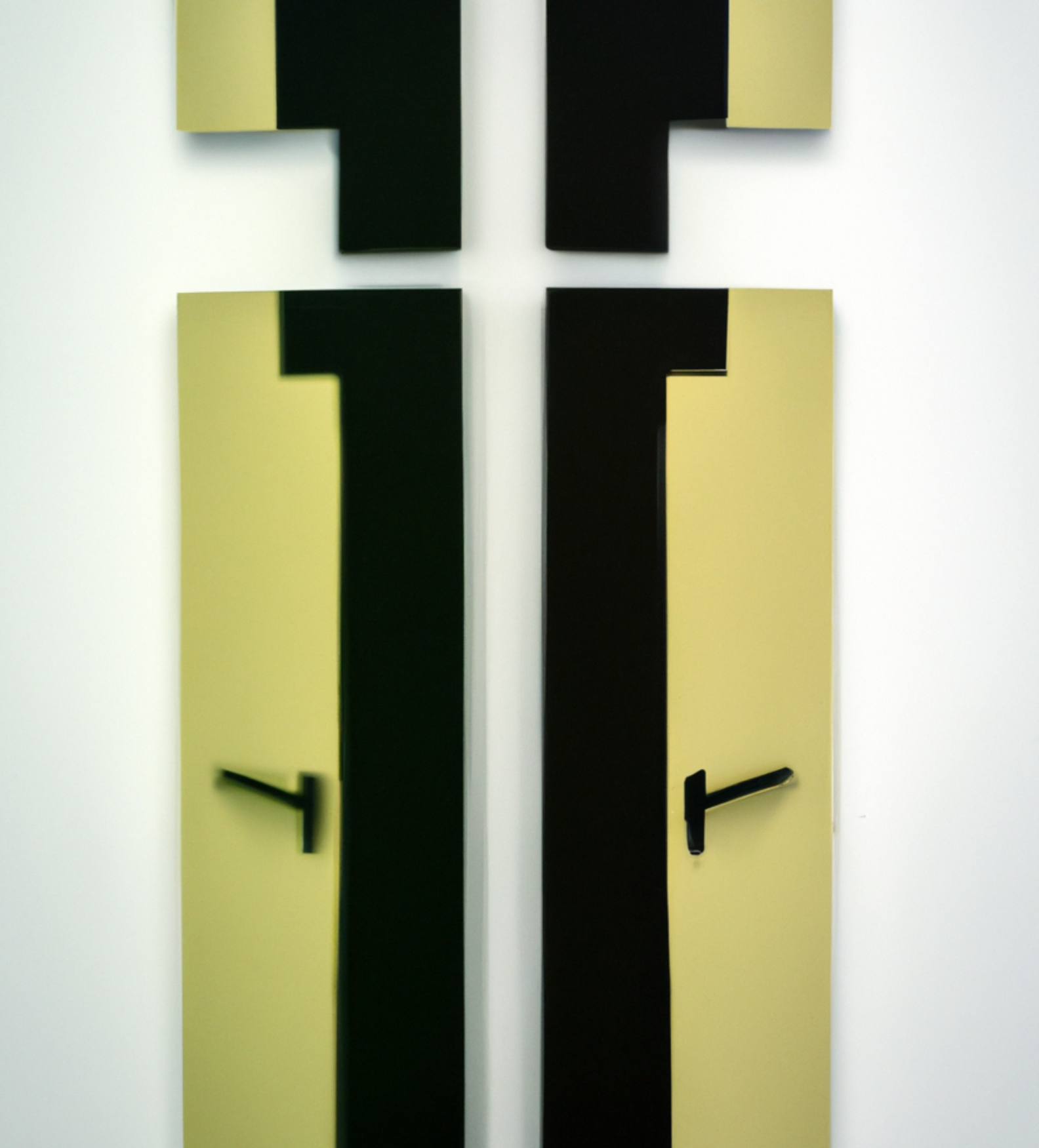
"There's someone who has a problem and tries to resolve it by making an object, and the person who looks at it has more or less the same problem and is also going to resolve it a little bit while looking at it. The danger of art today is of losing this notion with their own individual... If the artist is only someone who has beautiful ideas and who resolves situations in different places and is involved in a sort of activity "in situ" as one says, this had no interest. The artist has to be – and this is a very Romantic Idea – someone who resolves his own problems, speaks more or less about himself, and who, as much as this is possible, is able to resolve the problems of others, is able to pose questions to others. He shouldn't be the sort of person who's able to respond to situations and no longer have a life of his own."

CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI in conversation with HANS ULRICH OBRIST

*CAR - - - *FRIENDSHIP



Star friendship. We were friends and have become estranged. But this was right, and we do not want to conceal and obscure it from ourselves as if we had reason to feel ashamed. We are two ships each of which has its goal and coursed; our paths may cross and we may celebrate a feast together. as we did-and then the good ships rested so quietly in one harbor and one sunshine that it may have looked as if they had reached their goal and as if they had one goal. But then the almighty force of our tasks drove us apart again into different seas and sunny zones, and perhaps we shall never see each other again; perhaps we shall meet again but fail to recognize each other: our exposure to different seas and suns has changed us. That we have to become estranged Wi the law above u-; by the same token we should also become more venerable for each other-and the memory of our former friendship more sacred. There is probably a tremendous but invisible stellar orbit in which our very different ways and goals may be included as small parts -of this path; let us rise up to this thought. But our life is too short and our power of vision too small for us to be more than friends in the sense of this sublime possibility. -Let us then believe in our star friendship (...)



MOMENT AS INTERVAL, 2023

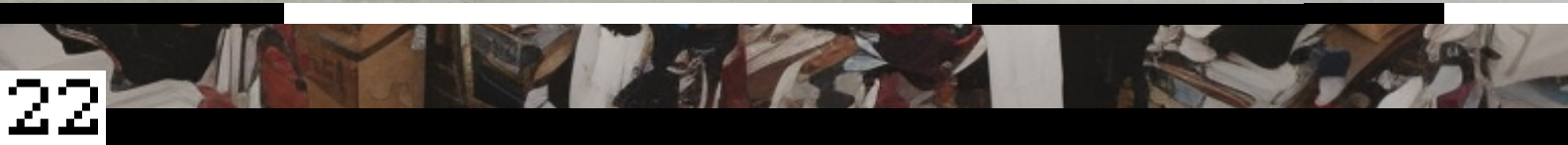
Ceramic pieces and artificial flowers on wooden stand, dimensions variable.
Installation view.



If we begin to call a particular period dark or desperate or lost, or whatever word we choose, this word has two edges: with one edge it cuts into the past, with another it cuts into the present and future, it acts upon us. Words have magic powers, just by their sheer presence, and today when we read them – yes, the words, the names, acts upon us, they cut into us. That's what I am thinking about. It is not that these works aren't true. They are true. What counts, however, is what we do about it, once we know the truth. (...) The terms we invent to describe our spiritual attitudes, states and conditions when they are correct (even when our analyses are correct) boomerang back at us and we sink still deeper. The words that describe our present (or immediate past) we take as our guides into the future. We confuse words with reality."

JONAS MEKAS, On Alban Berg and Anna Sokolov (1954).

ROOM FOR THE HEADS, 2023
View of installation.



KNOWMING ME, KNOWING YOU (SURPLUS), 2023

Transparent plastic tarpaulin on metal frame, adhesive tape, leather strips, hot glue, and spray paint. 71x129cm.







WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE WITH CLOUDS, 2023

Metal support, spray paint, various white and transparent plastic packaging, steel wires, black adhesive tape.



UNTITLED/UNKNOWN, 2022
Oil on canvas. 100x160cm.



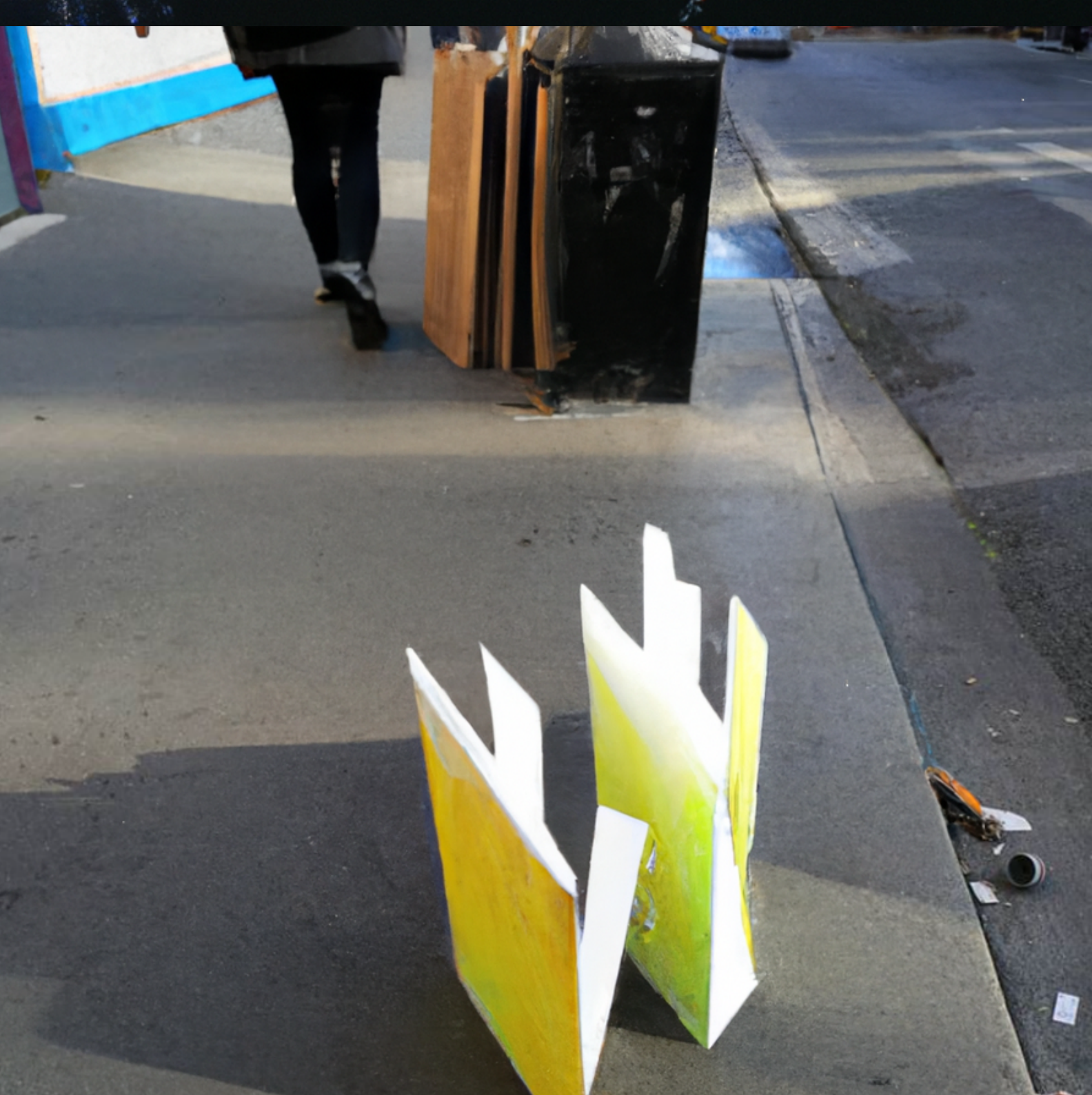
UNTITLED (AGAINST THE SUN), 2023
Inkjet print on canvas. 90x55cm each

PIECE N°32 (FOR JG BALLARD), 2022

A piece of car door painted with red, white, and blue spray paint. 48x32cm.







every IMAGE is the



result of MOVEMENTS



UNTITLED (PUBLIC ACTION II), 2023
Fragments of cardboard boxes, hot glue, staples, tape, and a street garbage can. 50x20cm.

(...) Now, one can argue that it is not so much the digital image itself as the image file that can be called strong, because the image file remains more or less identical through the process of its distribution. But the image file is not an image—the image file is invisible. Only the heroes of the movie *Matrix* could see the image files, the digital code as such. The relationship between the image file and the image that emerges as an effect of the visualization of this image file—as an effect of its decoding by a computer—can be interpreted as a relationship between original and copy. The digital image is a visible copy of the invisible image file, of the invisible data. In this respect the digital image is functioning as a Byzantine icon—as a visible copy of invisible God. Digitalization creates the illusion that there is no longer any difference between original and copy, and that all we have are the copies that multiply and circulate in the information networks. But there can be no copies without an original. The difference between original and copy is obliterated in the case of digitalization only by the fact that the original data are invisible: they exist in the invisible space behind the image, inside the computer.

So the question arises: How can we possibly grasp this specific condition of the digital image, the data, inside this image itself? The average spectator has no magic pill that would allow him or her like the heroes of *Matrix* to enter the space of the invisibility behind the digital image—to be confronted directly with the digital data itself. And such a spectator has no technique that would allow him or her to transfer the data directly into the brain and to experience it in the mode of pure, nonvisualizable suffering as is done in another movie—*Johnny Mnemonic*. (Actually, pure suffering is, as we know, the most adequate experience of the Invisible.) In this respect, how iconoclastic religions have dealt with the image could probably help. According to these religions the Invisible shows itself in the world not through any specific individual image but through the whole history of its appearances and interventions. Such a history is necessarily ambiguous: It documents the individual appearances or interventions of the Invisible (biblically speaking: signs and wonders) within the topography of the visible world—but at the same time it documents them in a way that relativizes all these appearances and interventions, that avoids the trap of recognizing one specific image as the image of the Invisible. The Invisible remains invisible precisely by the multiplication of its visualizations. Similarly, looking at digital images we are also confronted every time with a new event of visualization of invisible data. So we can say: The digital image is a copy—but the event of its visualization is an original event, because the digital copy is a copy that has no visible original. That further means: A digital image, to be seen, should not be merely exhibited but staged, performed. Here the image begins to function analogously to a piece of music, whose score, as is generally known, is not identical to the musical piece—the score itself being silent. For music to resound, it has to be performed. Thus one can say that digitalization turns the visual arts into a performing art. But to perform something is to interpret it, to betray it, to distort it. Every performance is an interpretation and every interpretation is a betrayal, a misuse. The situation is especially difficult in the case of the invisible original: If the original is visible it can be compared to a copy—so the copy can be corrected and the feeling of betrayal reduced. But if the original is invisible no such comparison is possible—any visualization remains uncertain. Here the figure of the curator arises again—and it becomes even more powerful than it was before, because the curator becomes now not only the exhibitor but the performer of the image. The curator does not simply show an image that was originally there but not seen. Rather, the contemporary curator turns the invisible into the visible. By doing so the curator makes choices that modify the performed image in a substantial way. The curator does this first of all by selecting the technology that should be used to visualize the image data. The information technology is constantly changing nowadays—hardware, software—simply everything is in flux. Because of this the image is already transformed with every act of visualization using a different, new technology. Today's technology thinks in terms of generations—we speak of computer generations, of generations of photographic and video equipment. But where there are generations, there are also generation conflicts, Oedipal struggles. Anyone who attempts to transfer his or her old text files or image files using a new software will experience the power of the Oedipus complex over current technology—much data gets destroyed, lost in darkness. The biological metaphor says it all: Not only life, which is notorious in this respect, but also technology, which supposedly opposes nature, has become the medium of non-identical reproduction. But even if the technology could guarantee the visual identity of the different visualizations of the same data they would remain non-identical because of the changing context of their appearances.

In his famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" Walter Benjamin assumes the possibility of a technically perfect identical reproduction that no longer allows a material distinction between original and copy. Nevertheless at the same time, a distinction between original and copy remains valid. According to Benjamin, the traditional artwork loses its aura when it is transported from its original place to an exhibition space or when it is copied. But that means that the loss of aura is especially significant in the case of the visualization of an image file. If a traditional "analog" original is moved from one place to another it remains a part of the same space, the same topography—the same visible world. By contrast, the digital original—the file of digital data—is moved by its visualization from the space of invisibility, from the status of "non-image" to the space of visibility, to the status of "image." Accordingly, we have here a truly massive loss of aura—because nothing has more aura than the Invisible. The visualization of the Invisible is the most radical form of its profanation. The visualization of digital data is a sacrilege—comparable to the attempt to visualize or depict the invisible God of Judaism or Islam. And this act of radical profanation cannot be compensated by a set of rules that would enforce the iterability of the visual on the results of this profanation as, for example, happened in the case of the Byzantine icons. As has already been said, modern technology is not capable of establishing such homogeneity. Benjamin's assumption that an advanced technology can guarantee the material identity between original and copy has not been validated by further technological developments. The actual development of technology went in the opposite direction—in the direction of the diversification of the conditions under which a copy is produced and distributed and, accordingly, the diversification

ANI
ANIM
APNG
ART
AVIF
BMP
BPG
BSAVE
CAL
CIN
CPC

CPT
DDS
DPX
ECW
EXR
FIT
FLI
FLIF
FPX
GIF

HDR
HEVC
ICER
ICNS
ICO
ICS
ILBM
JBIG
JBIG2

JNG
JPEG
JPEG-LS
JPEG-2000
JPEG-XL
JPEG-XR
JPEG-XS
JPEG-XT

KRA
MNG
MIFF
NRD
PAM
PBM
PPM
PCX
ORA
PGF
PICTOR

PNG
PSD
PSB
PSP
QOI
QTVR
RAS
RGBE
LOGLUV

SGI
TGA
TIFF
TIFF/EP
TIFF/IT
UFO
WBMP

CUR

PGM

PNM

TIFF

UFP

WEBP
XBM
XCF
XPM
XWD
CIFF
DNG
AI
CDR
CGM
DXF

EVA
EMF
EMF+Z
HBM
I
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U
V
W
X
Y
Z

XADP
WEBM
MKV
FLV
VOB
OGV
DRC
GIFV
GIFV
MNGV
AVIS
MTS
M2TS
TS
MOV
QT
WMV
YUV
RM
RMVB
VIV
ASF
AMV
MP4
M4A
M4V
MPC
MP2
MPEG

MP3
MPE
MPV
MPG
M2V
SVI
3GP
3GP2
MXF
ROQ
NSV
F4V
F4P
F4A
F4B

BERBER



FOUR POLES, 2023

Three wooden supports, black adhesive tape, steel wires, blue adhesive, orange adhesive, hair strands, plastic packaging, yellow plug, black electrical tape, and black acrylic paint. 40x25cm.

of the resulting visual images. The central characteristic of the Internet consists precisely in the fact that on the Net, all symbols, words, and images are assigned an address: They are placed somewhere, territorialized, inscribed into a certain topology. This means that even beyond the permanent generational differences and corresponding shifts, the fate of digital data on the Internet is essentially dependent on the quality of the specific hardware, server, software, browser, and so on. The individual files may be distorted, interpreted differently, or even rendered unreadable. They may also be attacked by computer viruses, accidentally deleted, or may simply age and perish. In this way, files on the Internet become the heroes of their own story, which, like any story, is primarily one of possible or real loss. Indeed, such stories are told constantly: How certain files can no longer be read, how certain Web sites disappeared, and so on. The social space in which digitalized images—photographs, videos—are circulating today is also an extremely heterogeneous space. One can visualize videos with the aid of a video recorder, but also as a projection on a screen, on television, within the context of a video installation, on the monitor of a computer, on a cell phone, and so on. In all of these cases, the same video file looks different even on the surface—not to mention the very different social contexts within which it is shown. Digitalization, that is, the writing of the image, helps the image become reproducible, to circulate freely, to distribute itself. It is therefore the medicine that cures the image of its inherent passivity. But at the same time, the digitalized image becomes even more infected with non-identity—with the necessity of presenting the image as dissimilar to itself, which means that supplementary curing of the image—its curating—becomes unavoidable. Or to put it in another way: It becomes unavoidable to bring the digital image back into the museum, back into the exhibition space. And here, each presentation of a digitalized image becomes a re-creation of this image. Only the traditional exhibition space opens up the possibility for us to reflect not only on the software but also on the hardware, on the material side of the image data. To speak in traditional Marxist terms: The positioning of the digital in the exhibition space makes it possible for the viewer to reflect not only on the superstructure but also on the material basis of digitalization.

This is especially relevant for video, because the video has meanwhile become the leading vehicle of visual communication. When video images are placed in the art exhibition space, they immediately subvert the expectations we generally associate with this space. In the traditional art space, the viewer—at least in the ideal case—has complete control over the duration of his or her contemplation: He or she can interrupt contemplation of a particular image at any time to come back to it later and resume viewing it at the same point it was previously interrupted. While the viewer is absent, the unmoving image remains identical to itself. The production of identity of the image over time constitutes what we refer to in our culture as “high art.” In our usual, “normal” lives, the time dedicated to contemplation is clearly dictated by life itself. With respect to real-life images, we do not possess sovereignty, administrative power over the time of contemplation: In life, we are always only accidental witnesses of certain events and certain images, whose duration we cannot control. All art therefore begins with the wish to hold on to a moment, to let it linger for an indeterminate time. Thus the museum—and generally any art exhibition space in which as a rule unmoving images are exhibited—obtains its real justification: It guarantees the ability of the visitor to administer the duration of his attention. However, the situation changes drastically with the introduction of moving images into the museum, as these begin to dictate the time the visitor needs in order to view them—and to rob him of his traditional sovereignty.

In our culture, we have two different models that allow us to gain control over time: The immobilization of the image in the museum, and the immobilization of the audience in the movie theater. Both models, however, fail when moving images are transferred into the space of a museum. In this case, the images go on moving—but the audience also continues to move. One does not remain sitting or standing for any length of time in an exhibition space; rather one retraces one's steps through the space again and again, remains standing in front of a picture for a while, moves closer or away from it, looks at it from different perspectives, and so on. The viewer's movement in the exhibition space cannot be arbitrarily stopped because it is constitutive of the functioning of perception within the art system.

In addition, an attempt to force a visitor to watch all of the videos or films in the context of a larger exhibition from beginning to end would be doomed to failure from the start—the duration of the average exhibition visit is simply not long enough.

It is obvious that this causes a situation in which the expectations of a visit to a movie theater and a visit to a museum conflict with each other.

The visitor to a video installation basically no longer knows what to do: Should he stop and watch the images moving before his eyes as in a movie theater, or, as in a museum, continue on in the confidence that over time, the moving images will not change as much as seems likely? Both solutions are clearly unsatisfactory—actually, they are not real solutions at all. One is quickly forced to recognize, though, that there cannot be any adequate or satisfactory solution in this unprecedented situation. Each individual decision to stop or to continue on remains an uneasy compromise—and later has to be revised time and again. It is precisely this fundamental uncertainty that results when the movement of the images and the movement of the viewer occur simultaneously that creates the added aesthetic value of bringing the digitalized moving images into the exhibition space. In the case of a video installation, a struggle arises between the viewer and the artist over the control of the duration of contemplation. Consequently, the duration of actual contemplation has to be continually renegotiated. Thus the aesthetic value of a video installation consists primarily in explicitly thematizing the potential invisibility of the image, the viewer's lack of control over the duration of his attention paid in the exhibition space, in which previously the illusion of complete visibility prevailed. The viewer's inability to take complete visual control is further aggravated by the increased speed at which moving images are currently able to be produced. For the viewer, formerly the investment in terms of work, time, and energy required for consuming a traditional work of art stood in an extremely favorable relation to the duration of art production. After the artist had to spend a long time and much effort on creating a painting or a sculpture, the viewer was then allowed to consume this work without effort and with one glance. This explains the traditional superiority of the consumer, the viewer, the collector over the artist-craftsperson as a supplier of paintings and sculptures which had to be produced through arduous physical labor. It was not until the introduction of photography and the readymade technique that the artist placed himself on the same level with the viewer in terms of temporal economy, as this also enables the artist to produce images almost immediately. But now the digital camera, which can produce moving images, can also record and distribute these images automatically, without the artist having to spend any time doing so. This gives the artist a clear time surplus: The viewer now has to spend more time viewing the images than the artist has to produce them. And again: This is not an intentionally lengthened duration of contemplation that the viewer needs to "understand" the image—as the viewer is completely in charge of the duration of conscious contemplation. Rather it is the time a viewer needs to even be able to watch video material in its entirety—and the contemporary technique allows producing a video work of considerable length in a very short time. That is why the basic experience had

by the viewer of a video installation is thus the experience of the non-identity and even nonvisibility of the exhibited work. Each time someone visits a video exhibition, he or she is potentially confronted with another clip from the same video, which means that the work is different each time—and at the same time partially eludes the viewer's eye, makes itself invisible.

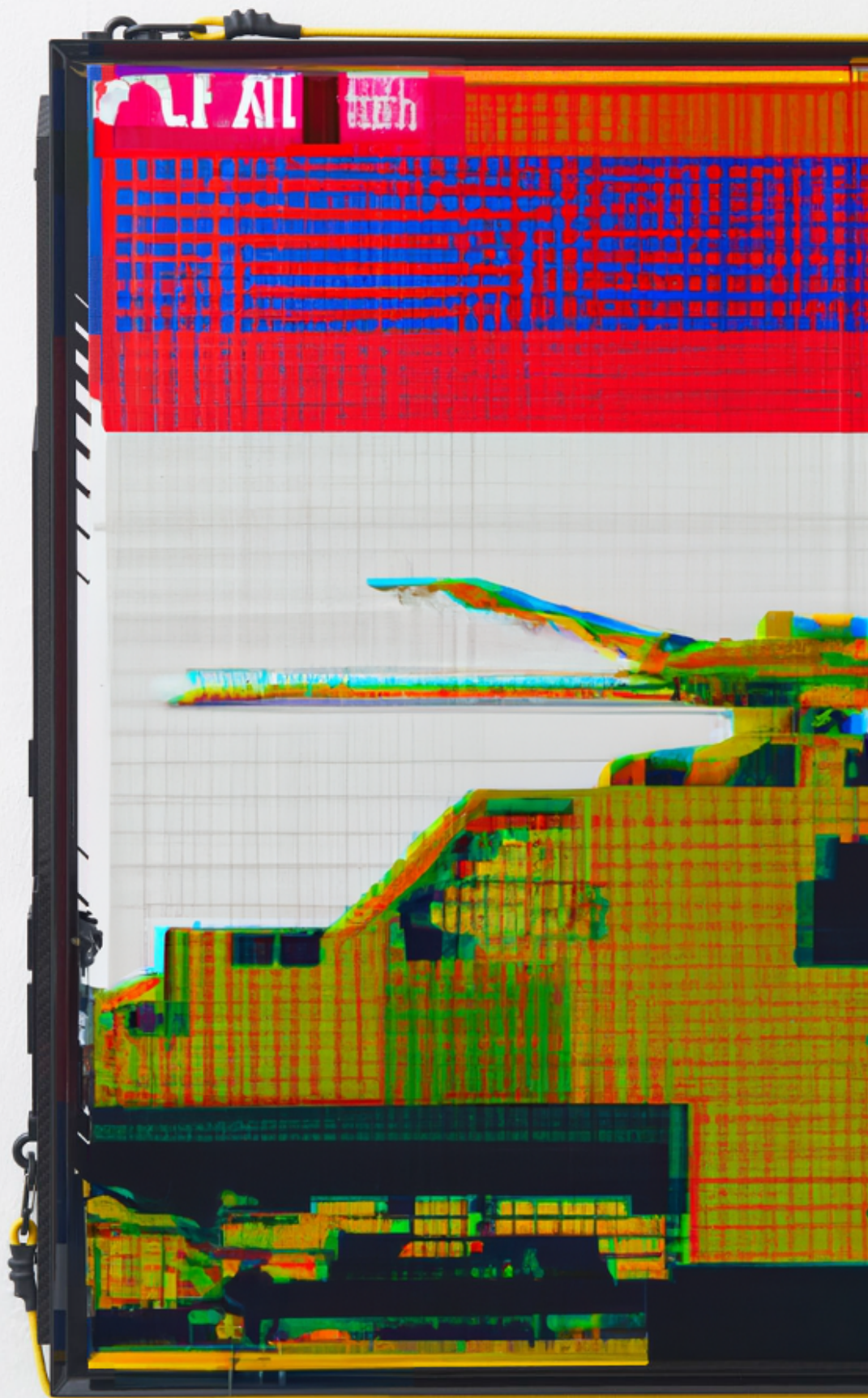
The non-identity of video images also presents itself at another, as it were, deeper technical level. As has already been said: If one changes certain technical parameters, one also changes the image. Can one perhaps preserve something of the old technology so that the image remains self-identical through all the instances of its display? But to preserve the original technology shifts the perception of a specific image from the image itself to the technical conditions under which it was produced. What we primarily react to is the old-fashioned photographic or video recording technology that becomes apparent when we look at old photographs or videos. The artist did not originally intend to produce this effect, however, as he lacked the possibility of comparing his work with the products of later technological developments.

Thus the image itself may possibly be overlooked if it is reproduced using the original technology. And so the decision becomes understandable to transfer this image to new technological media, to new software and hardware, so that it may look fresh again, so that it becomes interesting not merely in retrospect, but rather appears to be a contemporary image. With this line of argumentation, however, one gets caught in the same dilemma out of which, as is generally known, contemporary theater is unable to extricate itself. Because no one knows what is better: to reveal the epoch or the individuality of the play by the means of its performance. But it is unavoidable that every performance reveals one of these parameters by obscuring the other one. However, one can also use the technical constraints productively—one can play with the technical quality of a digital image on all levels, including the material quality of the monitor or the projection surface, the external light, which as we know substantially changes the viewer's perception of a video image. Thus each presentation of a digitalized image becomes a re-creation of the image.

This shows again: There is no such thing as a copy. In the world of digitalized images, we are dealing only with originals—only with original presentations of the absent, invisible digital original. The exhibition makes copying reversible: It transforms a copy into an original. But this original remains partially invisible and non-identical. Now it becomes clear why it makes sense to apply both cures to the image—to digitalize it and to curate it, to exhibit it. This double medicine is not more effective than the two cures taken separately; it does not make the image truly strong. Quite the contrary: By applying this double medicine one becomes aware of the zones of the invisibility, of one's own lack of visual control, of the impossibility of stabilizing the identity of the image—of which one is not so much aware if he or she is dealing only with the objects in the exhibition space or the freely circulating digitalized images. But that means that the contemporary, postdigital curatorial practice can do something that the traditional exhibition could do only metaphorically:

Exhibit the invisible

VISOR #1 (A TANK), 2023
Collage reproduced on a digital monitor of 60x80cm.





INTERNATIONAL * * * * *
* * * * * disco - SAT * *

LET'S START WITH SOMETHING ELSE. EVER HEARD OF THE ENGLISH DISCO LOVERS? A fantastic online project trying to outgun (or rather outlove) their acronym twin—the racist English Defence League, also abbreviated as “EDL”—on Facebook and Twitter. For this they use the bilingual slogan “Unus Mundas, Una Gens, Unus Disco (One World, One Race, One Disco).” The English Disco Lovers’ name is, of course, a deliberate misreading of the original, a successfully failed copy coming into being via translation.

Likewise in the case of many exhibition press releases—or so Alix Rule and David Levine claim in their widely read essay “International Art English.” International Art English, or “IAE,” is their name for the decisively amateurish English language used in contemporary art press releases. In order to investigate IAE, Rule and Levine undertake a statistical inquiry into a set of such texts distributed by e-flux.² They conclude that the texts are written in a skewed English full of grandiose and empty jargon often carelessly ripped from mistranslations of continental philosophy. So far so good. But what are they actually looking at? In the unstated hierarchies of publishing, press releases barely even make it to the bottom. They have the lifespan of a fruit fly and the farsightedness of a grocery list. Armies of these hastily aggregated, briefly circulated, poorly phrased missives constantly vie for attention in our clogged inboxes. Typically written by overworked and underpaid assistants and interns across the world, the press release’s pompous prose contrasts most acutely with the lowly status of its authors. Press releases are the art world’s equivalent of digital spam, vehicles for serial name-dropping and para-deconstructive waxing, in close competition with penis enlargement advertisements. And while they may well constitute the bulk of art writing, they are also its most destitute strata, both in form and in content. It is thus an interesting choice to focus on this as a sampling of art-speak, because it is not exactly representative. Meanwhile, authoritative high-end art writing is respectfully left to keep pontificating behind MIT Press paywalls. So what is the language used in the sample examined by Rule and Levine? As the authors incontrovertibly prove, it is incorrect English. This is shown by statistically comparing press releases against the British National Corpus (BNC), a database of British English usage. Unsurprisingly, this exposes the deviant nature of IAE, which derives, the authors argue, from copious foreign—mainly Latin—elements, leftovers from decades of mistranslated continental art theory. This creates a bastardized language that Rule and Levine compare to pornography: “We know it when we see it.” So, on the one hand, there is the BNC usage, or normal English. On the other, there is IAE, deviant and pornographic. Oh, and alienating too. But who is it that is willingly writing porn here? According to Rule and Levine, IAE is, or might be, spoken by an anonymous art student in Skopje, at the Proyecto de Arte Contemporáneo de Murcia in Spain, by Tania Bruguera, and by interns at the Chinese Ministry of Culture.

At this point I cannot help but ask: Why should an art student in Skopje—or anyone else for that matter—conform to the British National Corpus? Why should anyone use English words with the same frequency and statistical distribution as the BNC? The only possible reason is that the authors assume that the BNC is the unspoken measure of what English is supposed to be: it is standard English, the norm. And this norm is to be staunchly defended around the world.

As Mladen Stilinović told us a long time ago: AN ARTIST WHO CANNOT SPEAK ENGLISH IS NOT AN ARTIST.

This is now extended to gallery interns, curatorial graduate students, and copywriters. And even within our beloved and seemingly global art world, there is a Standard English Defence League at work, and the BNC is its unspoken benchmark. Its norms are not only defined by grammar and spelling, but also by an extremely narrow view of “incorrect English.” As Aileen Derieg, one of the best translators of contemporary political theory, has beautifully argued, “incorrect English” is anything “not phrased in the simplest, shallowest terms, and the person reading it can’t be bothered to make an effort to understand anything they don’t already know.” In my experience, “correct” English writing is supposed to be as plain and commonsensical as possible—and, unbelievably, people regard this not as boring, but as a virtue. The climax of “correct” English art writing is the standard contemporary art review, which is much too afraid to say anything and often contents itself with rewriting press releases in compliance with BNC norms.

However, the main official rule for standard English art writing is, in my own unsystematic statistical analysis: never offend anyone more powerful than yourself. This rule is followed perfectly in the IAE essay, which ridicules the fictive Balkan art student who aggregates hapless bits of jargon in the hopes of attracting interest from curators. Indeed, this probably happens every day. But it’s such a cheap shot.

This is not to say that one shouldn’t constantly make fun of contemporary art worlds and their preposterous tastes, their pretentious jargons and portentous hipsterisms. We are indeed lacking authors attacking or even describing, in any language, the art world’s jargon-veiled money laundering and post-democratic Ponzi schemes. Not many people dare talk about post-mass- murder, gentrification-driven art booms in, for example, Turkey or Sri Lanka. I certainly wouldn’t mind a lot of statistical inquiry into these developments, whether in IAE or Kurdish, satirical or serious.

But this is not Rule and Levine’s concern. Instead, they manage to prove beyond a statistical doubt that IAE is deviant English. Fair enough, but so what? And furthermore, doesn’t this verdict underestimate the sheer wildness at work in the creation of new lingos? Alex Alberro has demonstrated that advertising and promotion crucially created a context for much early conceptual art in the 1960s. The intricacies, undeniable fallacies, and joys of contemporary digital dispersion and circulation are not, however, Rule and Levine’s focus. Nor are the politics of translation and language. Their aim is to identify non- standard English (or patronizingly praise it as involuntary poetry). But we should not underestimate their analysis as just a nativist disdain for rambling foreigners. In an admirable essay, Mostafa Heddaya has pointed out the undeniable complicity of IAE art jargon with political oppression in a multipolar art world where contemporary art has become a must-have accessory for tyrants and oligarchs.⁸ By highlighting the use of IAE to obfuscate and obscure massive exploitation—such as the contested construction by New York University and the Guggenheim of complexes on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi—Heddaya makes an extremely important intervention in the debate.

Whatever comes into the world through the global production and dispersion of contemporary art is dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt, to quote Karl Marx, another foreign forerunner of IAE. This certainly includes many instances of IAE, whose spread is fueled, though by no means monopolized, by neo-feudal, ultraconservative, and authoritarian contemporary art rackets. IAE is not only the language of interns and non-native English speakers. It is also a side effect of a renewed primitive accumulation operating worldwide by means of art. IAE is an accurate expression of social and class tensions around language and circulation within today's art worlds and markets: a site of conflict, struggle, contestation, and often invisible and gendered labor. As such, it supports oppression and exploitation. It legitimizes the use of contemporary art by the 1%. But much like capitalism as such, it also enables a class and geographical mobility whose restrictions are often blatantly defied by its users. It creates a digital lingua franca, and through its glitches it starts to show the outlines of future publics that extend beyond preformatted geographical and class templates. IAE can also be used to temporarily expose some of the most glaring aspects of contemporary art's dubious financial involvements to a public beyond the confines of (often unsympathetic) national forums. After all, IAE is also a language of dissidents, migrants, and renegades.

Again, none of this is of interest to Rule and Levine. Fair enough. I doubt political economy matters much in the BNC. But their essay perfectly expresses the backside of Heddaya's argument. Because, as Rule and Levine correctly state, after IAE has become too global to intimidate anyone, the future lies in a return to conventional highbrow English. And indeed, this is not a distant future, but the present, as evidenced by a massive and growing academic industry monetizing and monopolizing accepted uses of English. UK and US corporate academia has one major advantage over the international education market: the ability to offer (and police) proper English skills. No gallery in Salvador da Bahia, no project space in Cairo, no institution in Zagreb can opt out of the English language. And language is and has always been a tool of empire. For a native speaker, English is a resource, a guarantee of universal access to employment in countless places around the globe. Art institutions, universities, colleges, festivals, biennales, publications, and galleries will usually have American and British native speakers on their staff. Clearly, as with any other resource, access needs to be restricted in order to protect and perpetuate privilege. Interns and assistants the world over must be told that their domestic—and most likely public—education simply won't do. The only way to shake off the shackles of your insufferable foreign origins is to attend Columbia or Cornell, where you might learn to speak impeccable English—untainted by any foreign accent or non-native syntax. And after a couple of graduate programs where you pay \$34,740 annually for tuition, you just might be able to find yet another internship.

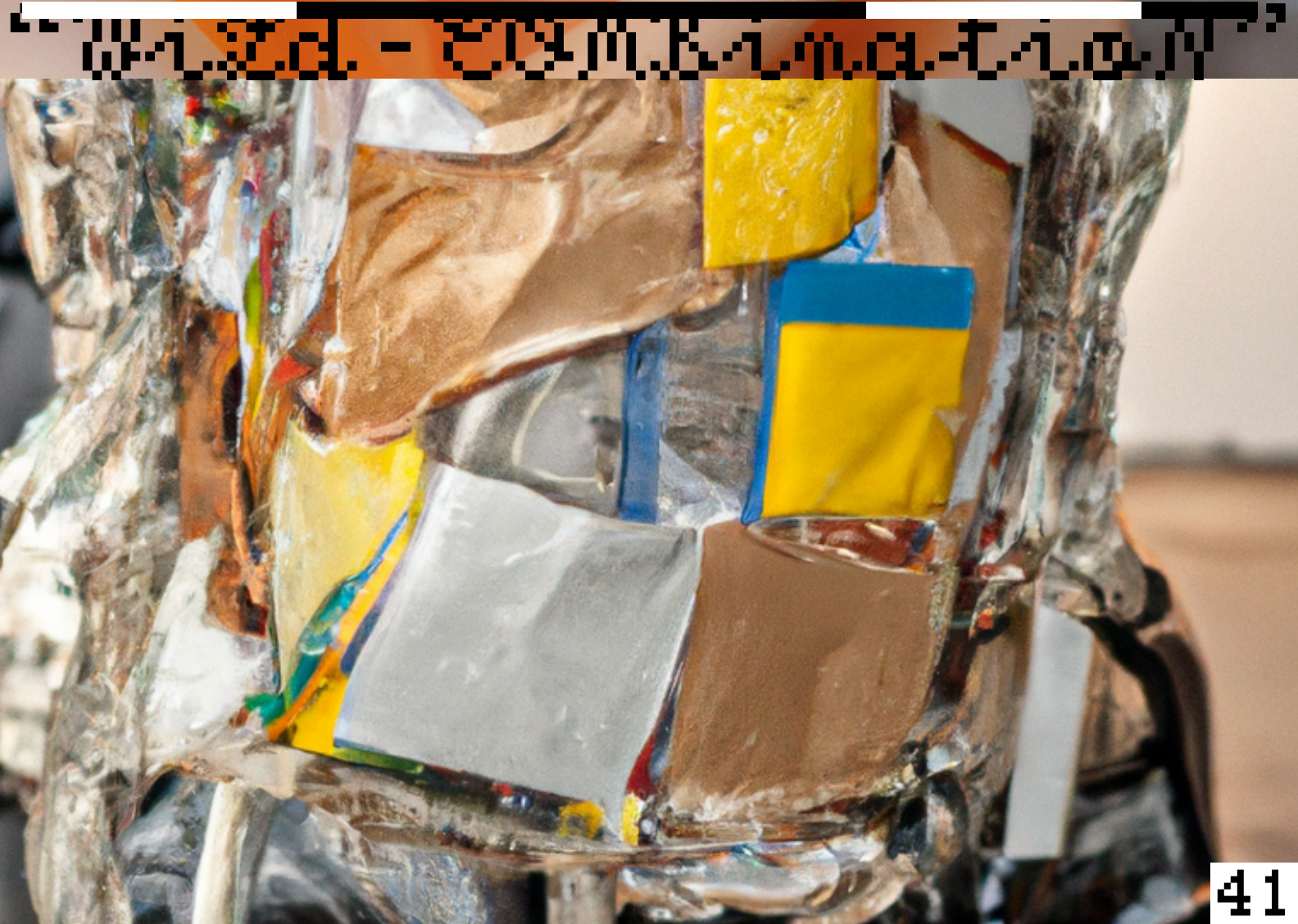
But here is my point: chances are you will be getting this education on Saadiyat Island, where NYU is setting up a campus, whose allure for paying customers resides in its ability to teach certified English to non-native speakers. In relation to Heddaya's argument, Frank Gehry's fortress will be paid for not only by exploiting Asian workers, but also by selling "correct" English writing skills. Or you might pay for this kind of education in Berlin, where UK and US educational franchises, charging students \$17,000 a year to learn proper English, have slowly started competing with the city's own admittedly lousy, inadequate, and provincial free art schools. Or you might pay for such an education in countless already existing franchises in China, where oppressive art speech will soon be delivered in pristine BNC English. Old imperial privilege nestles quite comfortably behind deconstructive oligarchic facades, and the policing of "correct" English is the backside of IAE-facilitated neo-feudalism. Such education will leave you indebted, because if you don't pawn or gamble your future on acquiring this skill, you will be shamed out of the market for unpaid internships just because you aggregated some critical theory that monolingual US professors translated wrongly decades ago. For the art student from Skopje, it's no longer "publish or perish." It's "pay or perish!" That's why I couldn't care less when someone "unfolds his ideas," or engages in "questioning," or in "collecting models of contemporary realities." Not everyone is lucky enough, or wealthy enough, to spend years in private higher education. Convoluted as their wordsmithing may be, press releases convey the sincere and often agonizing attempt by wannabe predators to tackle a T. rex. And as Ana Teixeira Pinto has said: nothing truly important can be said without wreaking havoc on the rules of grammar. Granted, IAE in its present state is rarely bold enough to do this. It hasn't gone far enough on any level. One reason is perhaps that it took its ripping off of Latin (and other languages) too seriously. IAE has clung to preposterous claims of erudition and has awed generations of art students into dozing through Critical Studies seminars—even though its status as aggregate spam is much more interesting.

So we—the anonymous crowd of people (which includes myself) sustaining and actually living this language—might want to alienate that language even further, make it more foreign, and decisively cut its ties to any imaginary original. If IAE is to go further, its pretenses to Latin origins need to be seriously glitched. And for a suggestion on how to do this, we need look no further than the EDL's ripped-off slogan: Unus Mundas, Una Gens, Unus Disco (One World, One Race, One Disco). Let's ignore for a moment that the word "disco" could sound so foreign that Rule and Levine might sensibly suggest renaming it "platter playback shack." Because actually EDL's slogan is hardly composed of Latin at all. Rather, it's written in IDL: International Disco Latin. It is a queer Latin made by splashing mutant versions of gender across assumed nouns. It's a language that takes into account its digital dispersion, its composition and artifice.

This is the template for the language I would like to communicate in, a language that is not policed by formerly imperial, newly global corporations, nor by national statistics—a language that takes on and confronts issues of circulation, labor, and privilege (or at least manages to say something at all), a language that is not a luxury commodity nor a national birthright, but a gift, a theft, an excess or waste, made between Skopje and Saigon by interns and non-resident aliens on emoji keyboards. To opt for International Disco Latin also means committing to a different form of learning, since disco also means "I learn," "I learn to know," "I become acquainted with"—preferably with music that includes heaps of accents. And for free. And in this language, I will always prefer anus over bonus, oral over moral, satin over Latin, shag over shack. You're welcome to call this pornographic, discographic, alienating, or simply weird and foreign.

But I suggest: Let's take a very fucking English lesson!

HITO STEYERL, in DUTY FREE ART (2nd ed., pp. 135–142),
published by VERSO BOOKS (2017).



TOTEM AS TAB00, 2023

Four bundles of plastic packaging, spray tin, and wooden and metal support.





PIECE N°32 (FOR JG BALLARD), 2022
A piece of car door painted with red, white, and spray paint. 48x32cm.

MOBY DICK (PROPOSAL FOR MONUMENTA), 2023
View of the installation at the Musée D'Orsay.

THREE ARTISTS (PROPOSAL FOR DOCUMENTA), 2023
View of the installation in a field in the interior of Basel.



PROPOSAL N° 2

An original is a creation
Motivated by desire.
Any reproduction of
an original
Is motivated by necessity.
The original is the result of
An automatic mental process,
The reproduction,
of a mechanical
Process. In other words:
Inspiration then information;
Each evaluates the other.
All other considerations are
Beyond the scope of these
statements.
It is marvellous that we are
The only species that creates
gratuitous forms
To create is divine,
to reproduce
Is human.

MAN RAY, Originals graphics Multiples, published in 1973.





AFTER-MARKET, 2023

Metal clothesline, clothespins, black plastic bag, spray paint, adhesive tape. View of the installation.





02

Friday, 31 March 2023, 09:40 AM

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