

Certain forms of social life and modes of consciousness fall outside the scope of history, not due to repression or negligence, but because they exceed the logic of representation. It is possible to shed light on what is radically illegible while avoiding its assimilation into established structures? Walter Benjamin wrote: "there is in political action a sphere reserved one hundred percent for images". To me images are distinct figures of thought, and I am interested in accessing the capacity to both embody and produce social relations. Accordingly, they can be made into sites of contestation. The liminal area described by Benjamin, where aesthetics envelops the political, where things can be shown rather than said, is precisely where I situate my practice as an artist. My work puts into play conflicted images that signal affections and struggles otherwise unclassified for lack of proper names.

My contribution to the Whitney Independent Study Exhibition 2013, *Life start—and Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven*, is the media archive of a collaborative film initiated in 2012 with artist Lily Benson. Centering around early 20th Century artist Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, this project seeks to revisit the grand narrative of feminism from a variety of contemporary viewpoints, culminating in a collectively-authored experimental biodrama. Like many women who participated in the aesthetic and social revolutions of modernity, Freytag-Loringhoven's contributions have been structurally excluded from that history. Her case stands in for numerous individuals, and to a certain extent, the movements and discourses of feminism as a whole. *Life start—and (Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven)* is a response to this absence.

The undertaking mobilized more than fifty filmmakers and artists for over a year, each participant adapting a fragment of Freytag-Loringhove's biography, free to interpret and represent on their own terms. Like a game of exquisite corpse unfolding in time, the production process gave shape to a conflicted picture of desires and fears surrounding identity politics today. Eventually, forty-nine passages were completed and assembled into a feature-length film called *The Filmmall of MAMADADA*. It's various authors projected fictions upon vacancies of the past in an effort to re-imagine the present. Their voices consent to one another, but ultimately proclaim the shared desire to participate in a renewed, collective narrative.

Contributors to this project include Leslie Allison, Raoul Anchedo, Mauricio Arango, Doug Ashford, Harold Batista, Gregory Benson, Lily Benson, Caitlin Berrigan, Clara Carter, Lea Cetera, Joanne K. Cheung, Abigail Childs, Abigail Collins, Cecilia Croning, Michael DeAngelis, Alex Decarli, EASTER, Chitra Gandhi, Alex Golden, Cassandra Graham, John Jonasson, Prudence Jones, Joyce Latta, William Lee, Alexandra Lerman, Thomas Love, Kirby Marks, Markes Moore, McWeath, Erin Jane Nelson, Anne Marte Overaa, Michale Paludan, Leah Pires and Ming Lin, Sunita Prasad, Joanna Quigley, Will Rahilly, Amy Reid, Isaac Richards, Saki Sato, Frances Scholz, Dash Shaw, Sydney Shen, Bae Sievers, Shelly Silver, Ursula Summers, Jim Strong, Aaron Vinton, and James N. Kientz Wilkins.

There is a preview screening of *The Filmbal-lad of MAMADADA* on June 15 at 7 pm.

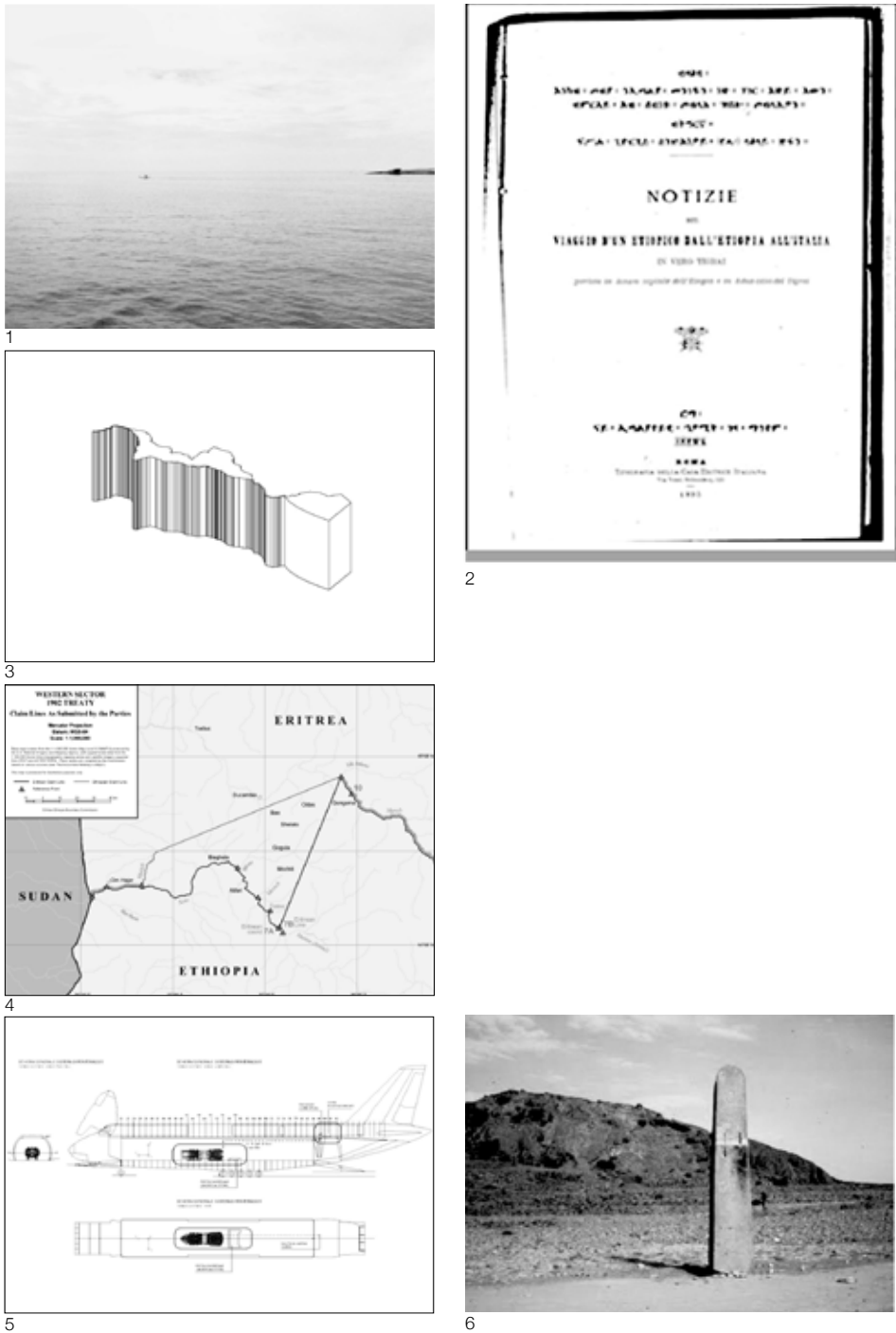


It is not credit we seek nor even debt but bad debt which is to say real debt, the debt cannot be repaid, the debt at a distance, the

debt without creditor, the black debt,
the queer debt, the criminal debt.
Excessive debt, incalculable debt, debt for no

reason, debt broken from credit, debt as its own principle. You can't pay me back, give me credit, get free of me, and I can't let you go when

you're gone. If you want to do something, forget this debt, and remember it later. -Stefano Harney & Fred Moten



Strategic Withdrawal

The small east African nation of Eritrea's origins are rooted in the crucible of anti-colonial transformation and articulated through the modernist language of sovereignty and revolutionary nationalism. Its complicated relationship to the 21st century world is the product of a specific historical trajectory that began in the 19th century and moved through Italian colonialism, British occupation, a failed federation with Ethiopia and a 31-year war for independence. The short post-independence era of the 1990's was marred by a boundary dispute culminating in the second Eritrea-Ethiopian War (1998-2000).

This project concerns multiple narratives of departure the complex history has generated; a series of strategic withdrawals. The first is the 19th century account of an Ethiopian scholar's journey to Italy, the earliest written in Tiginya, an important literary language of the Horn. The text is emblematic of historical movements and the complex interplay of different directions; indicative of the interdependent relationship of modernism and colonialism. The other departures are contemporary crossings across the Mediterranean towards Lampedusa, Italy and other access points into Fortress Europe. These current migrations point to irresolvable entanglements of unstable boundaries, which continue to produce political instability, economic crisis and large scale departures. Strategic Withdrawal challenges the dominant narrative of antagonism embedded within Eritrean policy. Photography, temporary pigments, and three dimensional cartographic forms are utilized to render precarious these competing historical narratives and spatial configurations. The stele's form that pre-exists each nation's boundaries and used for funerary and territorial

demarcation functions—is purposed as an object of resistance; to memorialize all lives lost in the second Eritrea-Ethiopian War (1998–2000) and in the subsequent migrations to Lampedusa and other destinations.

Dawit L. Petros thanks the following for their support to this project. Scott Cartwright, Jamil Hoskins, Sarah Hospelhorn, Maaza Mengiste, Ghirmai Negash, John Tona and WAC Design Studio.

1. *Strategic Withdrawal (Lampedusa, Italy)*, Archival digi. print, 10x12", 2013, Photograph by Mazyar Meneghe
2. *Pescegia by Giorgia, About the Author's Journey from Ethiopia to Italy and the Impressions Made on Him by His Stay in that Country, 1895* (Photocopy of book cover).
3. *Strategic Withdrawal, Central Sector 1930 Italo-Ethio- p/a Treaty, Claim Lines As Submitted by the Parties*, Silk Screen with Henna, 20x24", 2013.
4. *Western Sector 1902 Treaty, Claim Lines As Submitted by the Parties to Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, 2000.*
5. *Figure shows the position of the Axum State on the aircraft during repatriation to Ethiopia from Italy, 2005*
6. *Stele in Matera, Eritrea*, artist's archival image, 1999.



Roxlex, Rolex. Fendi, Louis, Coach, Chanel. We buy Gold. Good price, come on inside, take a look. What up? Come on stop in and check it out. Handbag, handbag. Could end up being genetic and a tree line to her family. Does that cause issue it? That is a first. Handbag, Louis Vuitton. Rolex. Undeipherable. Uptown? Where are you trying to go? Handbag. Watches, perfume. Rolex, handbag. Handbag, handbag, Chanel, Louis Vinton, Gucci; Undeipherable; Watches, watches, watches, Undeipherable. Mama. Ray-ban. Watches, watches. My friend. Ok, ok are they falling a bit for you? What's up? Glasses, Rolex. There she is. Where? Right there. Ok, use to have this on lock down kid. Handbag, handbag, purse. Louis Vuitton, Coach, Chanel. My ladies, perfume, perfume? Handbag, handbag, Louis, Coach, Chanel? Hello, Miss. Louis? Handbag. Undeipherable; I'll keep it in mind. I'll keep it in mind. Oh. Maybe but alright. Alright, Alright. Wait. Coach, Chanel, Louis Vuitton Louis Vuitton, Louis Vuitton. You know what I love? That is good. Make it solid. That looks nice. Yea me too. Miss. Handbag? Walk. Step inside, step inside don't be shy. We buy gold diamonds and jewelry. Handbag, handbag, watch. Most likely then. Tiffany jewelry, handbags, watches; Undeipherable; Past the street. This side. I was going that way. That is why they don't have trains running. Watches I love



We start from an uncertain terrain. Precarity (Prekariat) – as a neoliberal condition and a comprehensive mode of subjectivity – simultaneously refers to the insecurity of all areas of life and work, as well as to the possible invention of new forms of resistance and alternative assemblages. How do we want to work? How do we want to live? Through a manifold of conceptual/affective orchestration, *Notebooks on Precarity* (2009+) sketches a diagram of access points: a precious frame of reference which allows us to share stories, tools, and tactics; and experiment with new ways of relating to the world, to our practices, our bodies, and desires, our modes of questioning, learning, and traversing. It is part of a search for relations.

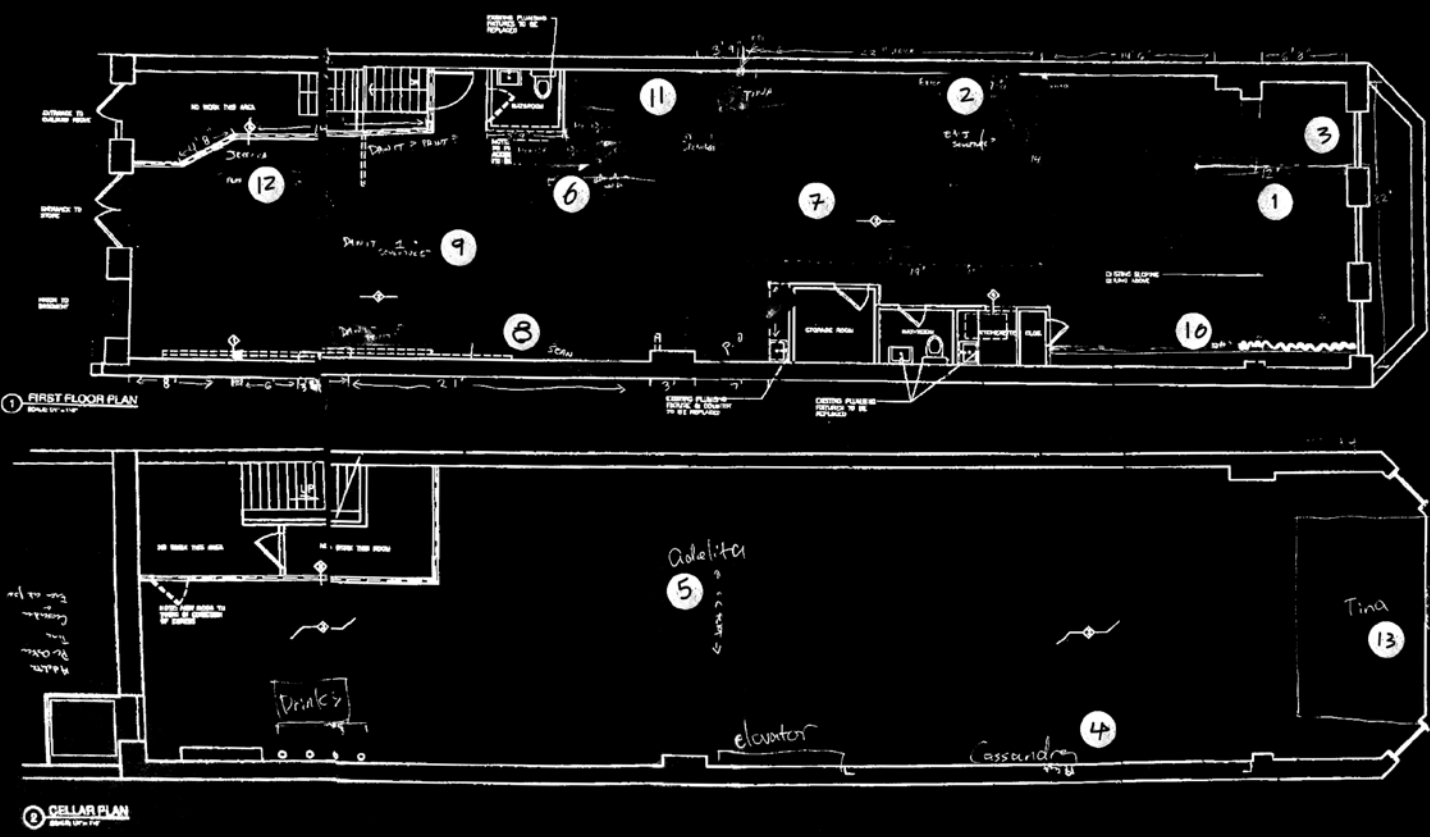
Collaborators in the project are: Ben Thorp Brown, Ryan Garrett, Cassandra Guan, Adelita Husni-Bey, Ryan Jeffery, Caroline Key, Monica Rodriguez, Jason Waite, Geoffrey Wildanger and Constantina Zavitsanos, among others.

The display will change during the course of the exhibition, as new conversations will be initiated, new fragments recorded, and different constellations tested.



*We have the whole of social space in which
to find each other / Sharing the same
questions (and sometimes the same
answers) – Notebooks on Precarity
(Fragments 05/13)*

HD video, multi channel, 16:9, stereo sound,
40 min, installation variable, 2013.



WHITNEY INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM STUDIO EXHIBITION 2012-13 MAY 31-JUNE 16, 2013

The exhibition remains on view from May 31–June 16 at [TEMP], 57 Walker Street (between Broadway and Church). Gallery hours are Wednesday–Sunday, 12–6 pm. Admission is free.

PARTICIPANTS EXHIBITION KEY

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THE PASSAGE OF
A FEW PERSONS
THROUGH A RATHER
BRIEF UNITY OF TIME



Open Outcry

HD Video, 15 min, 2013.

BEN THORP BROWN

"Language may be seen as the highest level of mimetic behavior and the most complete archive of nonsensuous similarity: a medium into which the earlier powers of mimetic production and comprehension have passed without residue"

-Walter Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty", 1933

A price is a thing. Like all prices, those to which the trader is responding are physical entities – patterns on computer screens and spoken numbers transmitted by telephone. The forms of embodiment of prices are various – the sound waves that constitute speech; pen or pencil marks on paper; the electrical impulses that represent binary digits in a computerized system or encode sound over a telephone line; hand signals in "open-outcry" trading pits that are too noisy for voices to be heard; and so on – but are always material. If a price is to be communicated from one human being to another, or from one computerized trading system to another, it must take a physical form.

Amongst the physical entities involved in the performance of arbitrage are arbitrageurs' bodies. For example, electronic trading on a futures exchange involves placing 'bids' (offers to buy) or 'asks' (offers to sell) for the asset in question. Normally, this done by using a computer mouse to click on a screen that shows, for each price level, the numbers of bids and of asks. If an arbitrage opportunity persists only for seconds (as is often the case), constant attention and rapid physical execution are needed.

The bodily aspects of arbitrage are most prominent when it is performed in open-outcry trading 'pits': stepped amphitheatres, traditionally octagonal. Dozens or hundreds of traders stand on the rungs of a pit, making deals by voice or by eye contact and an elaborate system of hand signals.

- Daniel Buenza, Iain Hardie, Donald MacKenzie "A Price is a Social Thing: Towards a Material Sociology of Arbitrage", 2006



Book scan of photograph by Ezra Stoller, The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1966.

JOÃO ENXUTO & ERICA LOVE

In December 2022, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, under financial stress from the economic crisis of 2020 decided not to renew its eight-year lease on the Marcel Breuer Building. Google ultimately stepped in to purchase the Breuer building for \$500 million. Shortly after buying the Breuer Building, Google announced that the old structure was too expensive to update. The building was razed and replaced with an exact replica mapped with 3-D scanners and digitally modeled with the aid of Marcel Breuer's original blueprints.

The museum provided a landmark structure to physically interface with Google's *Art Project*. *Art Project* was originally launched in 2011 with online access to high-resolution images of artworks from partnering museums and in subsequent years was expanded to include 3-D scans of over 40,000 individual artworks from around the world. This expansive database became an interchangeable collection available to users inside the museum. A pair of Google Glass and a Google profile could manifest virtual artworks, walls, pedestals, and docents.

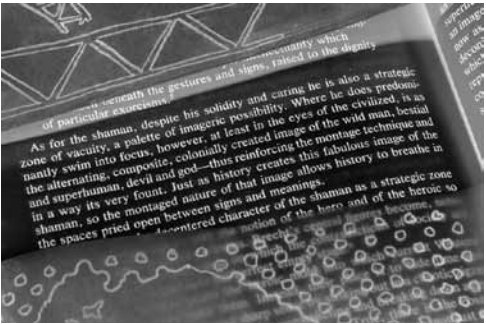
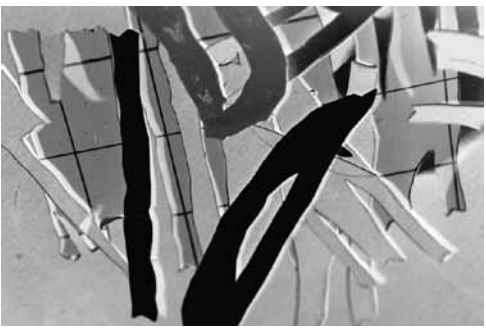
In November 2023, a special issue of *Artforum* was dedicated to the future of art museums. Significant screen space was given to content addressing the *Art Project* museum. The most notable contribution was a Passages commission by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh in remembrance of the Whitney Museum's former landmark building. The essay began with an epigraph from comments by Marcel Breuer at the presentation of the proposed Whitney Museum in 1963:

It is easier to say what [the museum] should not look like. It should not look like a business or office building, nor should it look like a place of light entertainment...



Material Prolegomena

35mm slide projection, variable runtime, continuous, 2013.



RYAN GARRETT

Material Prolegomena is a slide projection developed from the research and production materials of an imagined narrative film called "Wildman." Referring to an array of cultural artifacts and historical narratives, from mid-century movie posters and the Hollywood Star System to the miracle of twin Ss. Cosmas and Damian and cultural notions of the author/shaman figure, these materials emerge as a series of dispersed fragments, refabricated and photographed in situ. Arranged in sequence, the resulting images document the site of production suggesting at once the associative work of the filmmaker/researcher/viewer/artist and the constellated field of the missing film.

PER-OSKAR LEU

The body of Argentine-born revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara on public display, one day after his execution on October 9, 1967 in Vallegrande, Bolivia. Photo: Marc Hutten.

Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, Komsomol partisan and a Hero of the Soviet Union, executed by the Nazis on November 29, 1941. Photographer unknown (photo found on the body of a dead German officer at Smolensk, USSR).

Corpses of executed Communards, Paris, May 1871. Photographer unknown (attributed to André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri).

LIFE, weekly picture magazine published in New York City from 1936 until 1972. The magazine re-emerged as a monthly from 1978–2000. A final attempt to revive LIFE in 2004, lasted less than three years.

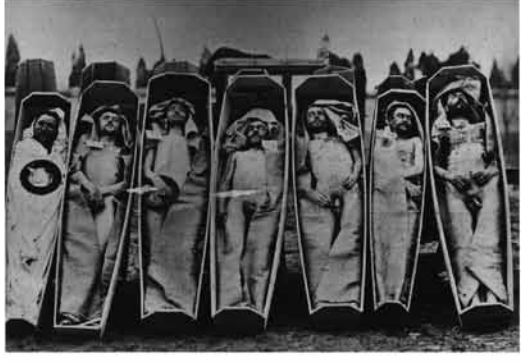
Per-Oskar Leu gratefully acknowledge the following for their financial support of his participation in the Whitney Independent Study Program: Ingrid Lindbäck Langaards stiftelse and OCA.

OCA

Office for Contemporary Art Norway

Vie et mort de l'image (1995)

Manipulated historical photographs, digitally printed on cotton sateen fabric, mounted on bedding. Wooden bed frame, CCTV clock-radio, TV monitor, 2013.



ADELITA HUSNI-BEY

The Day After

Adelita Husni-Bey in collaboration with Danilo Carreale

Founded on the idea of a potential socio-political collapse, *The Day After* is a film installation which sets out to investigate subjective visions of an imminent global meltdown. Through a series of interviews, the installation conjures up an interweaving of perceptions and personal mythologies brought together by one question: what will the end of the world look like?

These micro-narratives become the hub of a call for a profound cultural change. Survivalists, neo-primitivists and conspiracy theorists who appear in the film have already experienced and explored survival strategies in extreme conditions, or – in cinematic terms – post-apocalyptic environments. They have thus set themselves the task of practicing and spreading the employment of sustainable, co-operative practices, in which the idea of the unlimited consumption of goods and accumulation are considered untenable concepts. This vision is completed through the eyes of yet more presences: misfits, astronomers, forest rangers, who describe clashing planets, galaxies melting into one another and forest fires capable of devouring mountains. All these characters have chosen a specific 'terrain' upon which and through which to envision 'the end of the world'; a telescope, a watchtower, the bare ground, an ideological terrain, a political position.

These narratives travel along parallel paths towards the limit, towards the catastrophe that, according to some, has already occurred. They, insist on the fact that one day there will be a 'wildfire too big to tame'; that certainly,

in millions of years, our galaxy will disappear. Some believe that otherworldly powers may come to the rescue, or that it will be us, in a not too distant future, who will lead our own race to extinction unless debates on ecological, economic and political issues converge on the unsustainability of our current system.

This work is part of a larger traveling project which includes a cumulative mobile library and a series of workshops and panels which attempt to analyse the current collapse, seen from the perspective of the places where it is shown. The project addresses the premise that we find it easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism, as it is this system itself which denies the existence of a credible social, political and economic alternative.



CAROLINE KEY

Article 21 (Penal Provisions)

1) Anyone who trades sex shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than 1 year or by a fine, detention, or penalty not exceeding 3,000,000 won.

2) Anyone who violates Article 7 paragraph shall be punished by a fine not exceeding 5,000,000 won.

One day we're going to close. But that's not going to happen right away. That's what people are calling our "grace period." What we want is this... we're not saying that we're not leaving... Just to a point... Let us stay to a point... where we have enough time to go out into society and become self-reliant. Just for a moment. If they could look away... for just a moment. I know that they can't do that legally, but they know how to look the other way...

If they could only look away for a year or two we can become independent. But they keep coming every few months... If a brothel is raided the fines for the owners and the women... it's no joke the women get fined several thousand dollars. If you give them that money you have to start all over again. That little money that you saved up once you pay that fine there is nothing left in your pocket. I just want them to be patient for just a moment

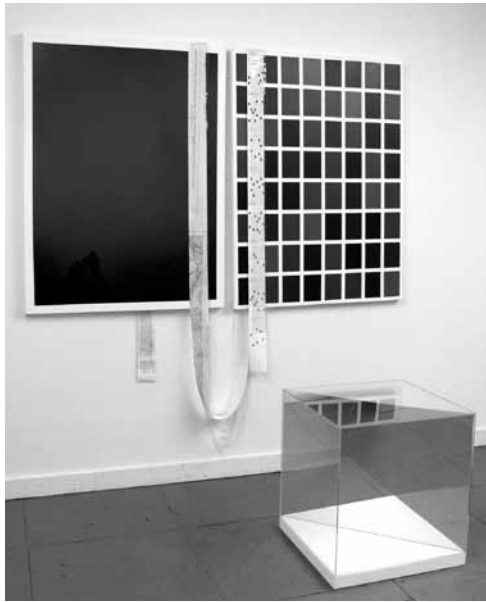
then I will obediently leave, the way they all want me to.

—Anonymous, sex worker Yeongdeungpo Brothel District, Seoul

A contradiction appears: the society that illegalizes their work does so not to protect them, or their bodies, but rather to render the systems that have generated their circumstances, invisible.

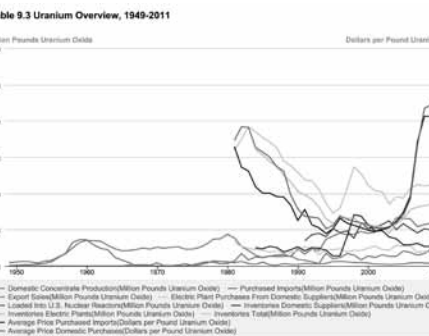
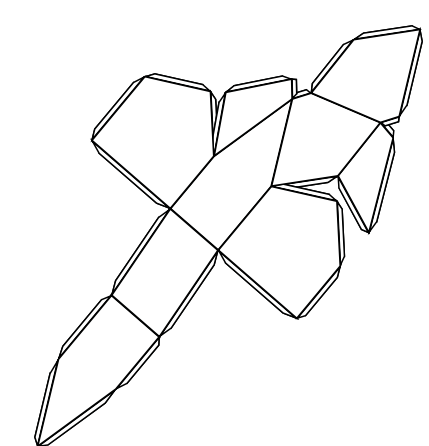


MONICA RODRIGUEZ *None of the Above*. 1967, 1993, 1998 and 2012 Puerto Rico status referendum ballots and ballot boxes, 2013.



SEAN MICKA

1. *Geology, Structure and Uranium Deposits of the Shiprock Quadrangle, New Mexico, U.S.*, Oil on canvas, vellum, foamcore, vinyl, mirror, wood, plexi, cadmium pigment, printed-matter, 2013.
2. *Monoclinic System, Sphenoidal Class, Crystallography of Uranophane (40-59 % UO₂)*.
3. *Shiprock, Tse Bit'a'i, Navajo Territories*, 1914.
4. *Trinity nuclear test*, July 16, 1945.
5. *Uranium Markets overview, U.S. Energy Information Administration*.



I. Shiprock is composed of fractured volcanic breccia and black dikes of igneous rock (i.e., minette). After aeons of erosion it is the remnant "throat" of a volcano, and the volcanic breccia formed in a diatreme. The geologic formation dates back 27 million years, formed during the Oligocene Epoch of the Paleogene Period. It is located in the Intermontane Plateaus Province of the Colorado Plateaus, (intersecting with the Morrison Formation and Grants District), containing major mineral ores with high concentrations of the element uranium.

II. Shiprock is a monadnock in the sovereign territory of the Navajo reservation of San Juan County of New Mexico. The Navajo name, *Tsé Bit'a'i*, "rock with wings" or "winged rock", refers to the legend of the great bird that brought the Navajo from the north to their present lands. The Anglo-American name "Shiprock" is derived from the peak's resemblance to a 19th-century clipper ship. Uranium was first discovered in 1918 in the regions sandstone deposits. At that time the Navajo Reservation was closed to prospecting and mining. But on June 30, 1919, a congressional act changed this law.

III. Shiprock is a significant geological site in a crystalline-like narrative concerning the mining of uranium in North America. In what Marx describes as "primitive accumulation," the originary move integral to the capitalist mode of production, is the theft and exploitation of earth's raw materials, its metabolic processes, and its' sovereign territories. At the expense of ecological development and uneven socio-economic development, capital is accumulated by the primitive accumulation of land as property wherein value is created via the exploitation of forms of labour and rent. Surplus-value is thus produced via unregulated labour and by the appropriation of land. In short, through the exchange and circulation of commodities pro-

duced by deep temporal geological processes, appropriated territories and the exploits of labour, the capitalist achieves an accumulation of wealth. Multi-dimensional, Shiprock is also layered in geopolitical strata, as it's specifically integral to the formation of the nuclear arms race during the Cold War (i.e., Manhattan Project) and consequently radiation poisoning (i.e., the 28.8 yr. half-life of Strontium-90). From 1943-89 the U.S government mined over 4 million tons of uranium under the agency of the Atomic Energy Commission (A.E.C., est.1947), and was the sole purchaser of uranium in the U.S. until 1971. Production and consumption declined in the late 1960's due to over-accumulation while scientific intelligence grew about the irreversible effects of radiation on the ecosystem, atmosphere and it's pathways into the human body. Commercial purchases later rose from the 70's and 80's, then declined as knowledge of radiation poisoning became more accessible to the general public through education, political activism and acts of environmental law and legislation (i.e. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and her investigations into the Monsanto Corporation). Previously under the hegemonic rule of the nation-state and ideological positioning of a national security emergency (i.e., "a state of exception"), the majority of intelligence was produced and controlled by an elite few, private corporations contracted by the U.S. government.

Uranium is not traded on an organized commodity exchange; rather it is exchanged through contracts negotiated directly between a buyer and a seller. Uranium concentrations in mineral ore must be greater than 0.075% (750 ppm) to be profitably recoverable. Processed ore is made into Uranium-235, which is used to manufacture the product "yellowcake", an intermediate step for commercial use in nuclear fission energy and weaponry. The market value as of 2.27.2013 is priced at \$42.00 lb USD.