

*Eoghan Ryan, Hannah Heilmann, Justė Kostikovaitė,
Pakui Hardware, Rory Rowan, Rózsa Zita Farkas*

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Pakui Hardware, Rory Rowan, Rózsa Zita Farkas.

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Pakui Hardware, *Lost Heritage*, 2015. Plaster, resin, silicone.
Exhibition view (detail), kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga,
2015

*"Prometheanism" in #ACCELERATE. Falmouth,
UK: Urbanomic Media LTD, 2014, 478*

Ray Brassier

The sin of Prometheanism then consists in destroying the equilibrium between the made and the given – between what human beings generate through their own resources, both cognitive and practical, and the way the world is, whether characterised cosmologically, biologically, or historically. The Prometheanism trespass resides in *making the given*.

RETROGRADE EJACULATION IS WHEN, AT ORGASM, THE EJACULATE IS FORCED BACK INTO THE ~~THE~~ BLADDER RATHER THAN THROUGH THE URETHRA AND OUT THE END OF THE PENIS. RETROGRADE EJACULATION IS ALSO THE NAME OF MY NEW SITE-SPECIFIC MULTI-MEDIA INSTALLATION, WHICH PROPOSES TO TRANSFORM THE GALLERY INTO A PALE PINK PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE REMINISCENT OF A SUMERIAN ZIGGURAT. "SUMERIAN ZIGGURAT - A TYPE OF RECTANGULAR TEMPLE TOWER OR TIERED MOUND ERECTED BY THE SUMERIANS, ACADIANS AND BABYLONIANS IN MESOPOTAMIA. THE TOWER OF BABEL IS THOUGHT TO BE ON OF THESE. I WILL MAKE THE STRUCTURE FROM PLASTICINE FIRST, MANHANDLING IT TO PROVOKE UNEXPECTED PATTERNS OF THICK AND THIN, SMOOTH AND ROUGH, EXPOSED AND HIDDEN. I WILL REMOVE ANY EXCESS BITS WITH A POWER SAW, I WILL THEN CAST IT IN BRONZE DYED PINK SO THAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE FLESH BUT SMELL LIKE PENNIES, A KIND OF CONTRADICTION - ALSO BECAUSE BRONZE OXIDIZES SUPERFICIALLY; ONCE THE COPPER OXIDE LAYER IS FORMED, THE UNDERLYING METAL IS PROTECTED FROM CORROSION SO IT WILL LAST FOREVER.

THE INTERIOR MANIFESTATIONS OF THE WORK IS DESIGNED TO HAVE THREE METAPHORICAL FUNCTIONS: THE URINARY, THE PROPOGATIVE, AND THE AMATIVE, IE, THE CONDUCTORS, FIRST OF TH URINE, SECONDLY OF THE SEMEN, AND THIRDLY OF THE SOCIAL MAGNETISM. ATTACHED PLEASE FIND DETAILED MEASUREMENTS WITH FAUX SCIENTIFIC PRECISION AS A KIND OF JOKE GESTURE ON THE LITERALNESS ~~OR~~ OF MINIMALISM. THE STRUCTURE WILL BE SEALED SHUT, INACCESSIBLE TO YOU - THE VIEWERS

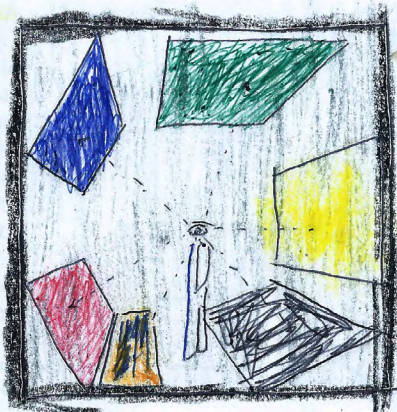
HOW HAVE THEY ~~NOT~~ NOT EXPLODED YET?? WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON IN THERE?? WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE THAT SEEMS SO CONCERNED?? IT JUST MAKES ME CRY: C I AM PRAYING

THAT SOMEONE FEELS MY PAIN AND CAN OFFER SOME ADVICE. (THESE ARE POSSIBLE REACTIONS FROM YOU, THE VIEWERS)

THE INSTALLATION WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY A HUGEY COMPLEX PERFORMANCE IN TWO PARTS. IN THE FIRST PART, I WILL BE ALONE. I WILL UTILIZE THE ZIGGURAT TYPE STRUCTURE AS A MOUNT UPON WHICH I WILL SYSTEMATICALLY RECONSTRUCT A PAINTING, PERHAPS BY THE VAN EYCK BROTHERS (TBA)

WHILST I DO THIS I WILL START TO THINK - JUST WORKING THOUGHTS UP AND RIDING THEM OUT; JUST THINGS THAT ARE OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD, STRAIGHT OFF THE PRESS LIKE DO NOT EAT BREAD! BREAD IS INFLAMMATORY AND DIFFICULT TO DIGEST, NO MORE GRAINS!!! FLOUR, ESPECIALLY

WHITE FLOUR, ACTUALLY, SO CONVENTIONAL BREAD, PASTA, COOKIES, CAKE, BAGELS, MUFFINS, TORTILLAS, AND ANY OTHER WHITE FLUFFY THING YOU MAY LOVE YOU MUST NOT EAT. PALEO ADVOCATES THAT WE SHOULD EAT THE WAY WE ATE WHEN WE WERE HUNTING AND GATHERING. THE AVERAGE PERSON BACK THEN WAS TALL, MUSCULAR

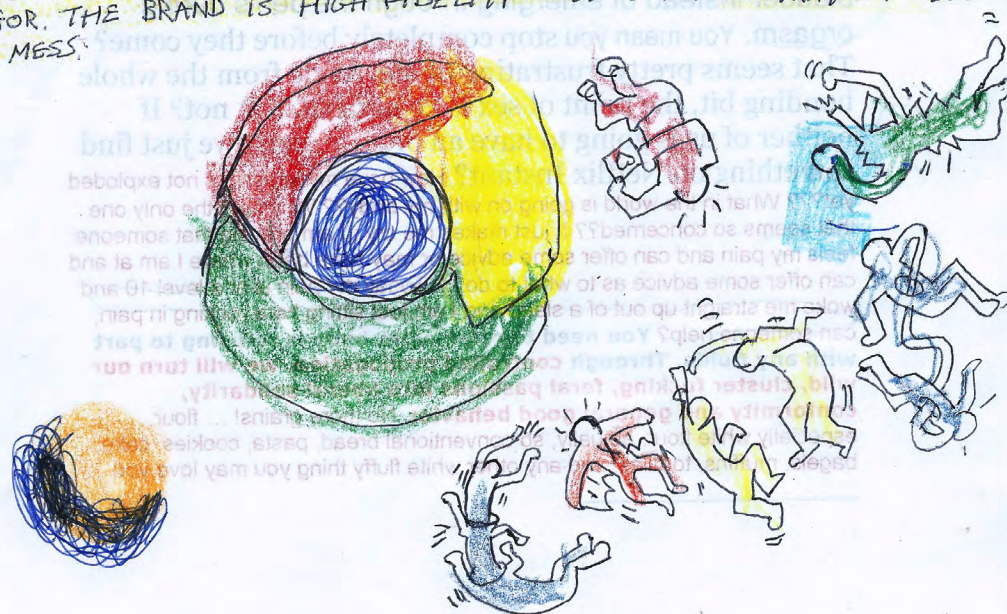


HERBERT BAYER. EXTENDED FIELD OF VISION - 1935

AGILE, ATHLETIC, AND INCREDIBLY VERSATILE. THE AVERAGE PERSON NOW IS OVERWEIGHT, OUT OF SHAPE, STRESSED OUT, UNHAPPY, SLEEP DEPRIVED AND DYING FROM A MYRIAD OF PREVENTABLE DISEASES; DISEASES OF CIVILIZATION. IN JUST UNDER 4 WEEKS I'VE PUT ON 7.5 LBS AND STILL AROUND ABOUT 8%. GOTTA LOVE HEAVY LIFTING #GAINZ THAT HORRIBLE FEELING WHEN YOU BREAK ~~FOR~~ YOUR DIET, EVEN IF IT WAS JUST A PROTEIN BAR #OHYEAH#EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES; QUESTION; WHEN YOUR PALEO AND A CHRISTIAN, WH DO YOU USE AS SURROGATE FLESH?

THESE THOUGHTS WILL PROVIDE THE GROUNDWORK FOR PART 2 OF THE PERFORMANCE WHICH I WILL BEGIN WHEN I FEEL READY AND DON'T FEEL PATHETIC/PHYSICALLY WEAK/LOW ON BODILY INTEGRITY. FOR PART 2, I WILL STAND HALF WAY UP THE MOUNT AND I WILL INVITE YOU, THE VIEWERS TO MAKE ONE ECSTATIC CHOICE, A SACRIFICE ENABLING YOU, THE VIEWERS TO ADDRESS ALL HUMAN THOUGHT AS INDEXICAL THROUGH ME. YOU WILL BEGIN TO CIRCUMNAVIGATE AN MOVE CLOSER TO THE STRUCTURE AND YOU WILL FEEL LIKE A SMALL STREAM MERGING WITH A BIG RIVER, CARRIED BY A WAVE YOU LOSE TOUCH WITH THE GROUND. SUDDENLY, YOU FIND YOURSELF FLOATING, CARRIED ON BY THE FLOOD. AS YOU APPROACH THE CENTRE, THE PRESSURE OF \$THE SURROUNDING CROWD SQUEEZES YOU SO HARD THAT YOU ARE GIVEN A NEW LIFE YOU ARE NOW A MAN, ALIVE AND ETERNAL... THE STRUCTURE IS THE WORLDS SUN WHOSE FACE ATTRACTS YOU INTO ITS ORBIT. YOU WILL BE ABSOLUTE LOVE AT ITS PEAK.

THE SECOND HALF OF THE PERFORMANCE WILL SPAN THE LENGTH OF YOUR LIFETIMES. TOGETHER, MYSELF AND YOU, THE VIEWERS WILL ACTIVATE THE WHOLE INSTALLATION AND SLOWLY FALL INTO CONTROLLED PROPOGATION, TURNING OUR WILD, CLUSTER FUCKING, FERAL PASSIONS INTO LIBERAL SOLIDARITY, CONFORMITY AND GENERAL GOOD BEHAVIOR. THE BRAND IS HIGH FIDELITY MEETS DIY CASTRATION MEETS ZERO MESS.



Interview with Neringa Černiauskaitė and Ugnius Gelguda (Pakui Hardware)

Justė Kostikovaite

What is your favourite brand of sneakers?

Nike Flyknit, not just because it reveals the abilities of computer weaving technology.

Do you select the brand according to colours, brand undercurrents – such as *Nike* being an ironic brand which denotes the idea that in a capitalist society we can select a "fair" and "original" brand – or simply the true beauty of sneakers?

In a private conversation with Josh Kline we've agreed that *Nike* simply makes flawless design.

Do certain sneakers remind you of some sort of 3D dinosaur foot design?

They certainly do look like that on Haim Steinbach's shelves.

Some objects which you recently exhibited were in collaboration with Dovilė Gudačiauskaitė, Jeannine Han, Lukas Miceika, Daniel Terna. Tell us more about the nature of these collaborations.

It seems that collaborations with other artists and creators are simply unavoidable in New York: one is constantly surrounded by a variety of professionals with whom sharing ideas and skills becomes a natural way of working. With Jeannine Han, who is an amazing textile and fashion artist, we made a synthetic clothing piece that functioned both as a sporty piece of clothing and as a "canvas" for motives derived from the web. Daniel Terna, who is a photographer, was behind the camera in the documentation session of our show at 321 Gallery in Brooklyn, where a sportswoman exercised in the exhibition space, using some of the show's objects. After coming to Vilnius, we continued the exchange at the level of skills and ideas with Dovilė Gudačiauskaitė, a fashion designer and textile artist, who helped to create part of the structures in the show *The Metaphysics of the Runner*, held at the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius and Lukas Miceika shared his 3D design skills to create the *After Effects* video.

When I Google *Pakui Hardware*, after several links that lead to your show at CAC Vilnius, very soon a link pops up for a shop called *Paku Hardware* in Malaysia, as well as links to Pakistani companies which offer their services on the screen. Have you considered that there will be an immediate Pakistani sound link in the title of your collective *Pakui Hardware*?

We asked Alex Ross to create and become the copy-left owner of our brand name, which he titled *Pakui Hardware*. The title refers to *Pakui*, special attendant of Haumea [Goddess of fertility whose children were born of various parts of her fragmented body] at Kailua, who could circle Oahu six times in a day. Thus *Pakui* is high-speed and brand politics as mythic semio-commodity, while *Hardware* stands for the desire to transcend material limitations. The brand functions both as a description and as a direction for us to move. We were truly happy to find that *Pakui* hadn't already been taken by any company so far and that the word *Pakui* sounds unfamiliar for most people. The "i" at the end of the word is like the difference between *Adidas* and *Abidas*. Those who produce *Abidas*, know it very well. The "goal" of the runner, or rather of our works in general, is to emphasize this material part of the semio or virtual capitalism or visions of the future in general. The enormous amount of hardware and energy that is required to "mine" the "virtual" currency of *bitcoins* is another great and simple example of this discrepancy. We walk in the middle of this discrepancy and collect pieces from both sides to put them together and show them again and again and again.

Why sports? Sports and gym and digitally recreated body forms seem to have been exhausted by the art scenes of NY and Berlin. Screens, poles and casts of body parts have become the *normcore* of the contemporary. Is it giving up the mastery, once again?

In an article *2011: Art and Transmission* at Artforum (Summer, 2013), Michael Sanchez describes the current symptoms of contemporary art, such as you mention in your question, terms

found on the Internet, for example, a “meme”. Sharing of images and entire shows becomes almost instant, the works of different artists from across the globe become incorporated into each other, are multiplied or reproduced. One could add phenomena such as reblogging to that too – no one is worried about originality anymore, and even less about mastery. In the words of Brad Troemel, “The long-derided notion of the “masterpiece” has reached its logical antithesis with the *aesthlete*: a cultural producer who trumps craft and contemplative brooding with immediacy and rapid production.” (see Brad Troemel’s *Athletic Aesthetics* (The New Inquiry)).

In the description of your collective, you say that your aim is to transcend material limitations, but your exhibition (*Metaphysics of the Runner*) seems to do the opposite – it is as though it is trying to play with materiality itself, devoid of the subject which is failing to ‘tie things up’.

The brand does not aim to transcend material limitations but rather explores the constant desire to do so. Today this desire is not only fictional but about to become factual. In our video *After Effects*, for example, one hears the sonic imagination of Ray Kurzweil, the main futurist and singularitarian, whose programmatic strives to transcend biological limitations. It is both fascinating and frightening. But in the synthesizers that he produced in the 80s and 90s, the sonic imagination of the future still seems quite naive.

Why bring in Franco “Bifo” Berardi and Maurizio Lazzarato and the precarious labour term *semio-capitalism*?

Semio-capitalism is only one half of *Pakui Hardware*, while the other is the *materiality* of capitalism, which is often overlooked. By using such easily recognizable vocabulary we cut short long explanations about current conditions and move further. This word is nothing else but a brand itself, so we just used one brand to incorporate it into ours. To capitalize it.

The evolution of human society has been linked to scientific progress. If you could imagine the next conference (after synthesized elements are inserted directly into plants which were then consumed by humans for 20 years) what new forms of fear could appear for the ever complicated and fragmented biotechnologies? Where is the horizon of fear? Is it “bio-shock” or “rupture”?

It is difficult to answer this question as we are neither scientists nor can we reply from a future subject’s perspective. Yet, as for artists and general people with fears living on the verge of some kind of “rupture”, it’s quite clear that the main fear is the inability to distinguish between the given and the created/man-made/designed. This is an uncanny feeling, total paranoia regarding everything that surrounds you. This kind of fear seems to persist throughout the history of humanity – the fear of something/someone who is so capable of pretending to be more real than the real. Just think of *Blade Runner* and the motto of the *Tyrell* corporation describing their androids (or replicants) as “More human than human”... But this inseparable symbiosis is exactly what interests us most as artists – it opens the horizons for speculation, imagination, awe and fascination, because any programming, any new creation, is open for unpredictable mutations.

It seems that human life is increasingly extended and re-combined by artificial minds and limbs, or the extended nervous system via gadgets. Death itself becomes marginalised and virtual, almost like an exclusive hybrid experience. The possibility and inevitability of death slice, generate, transform and feed superstition holes. What is the ultimate effect of escapism (of the body?)

Poverty.

If Ray Brassier wiggles his territory into the goal to “push nihilism to its ultimate conclusion”, how is this push manifested in your practice? Perhaps, through a ‘stop talking – start making’ approach?

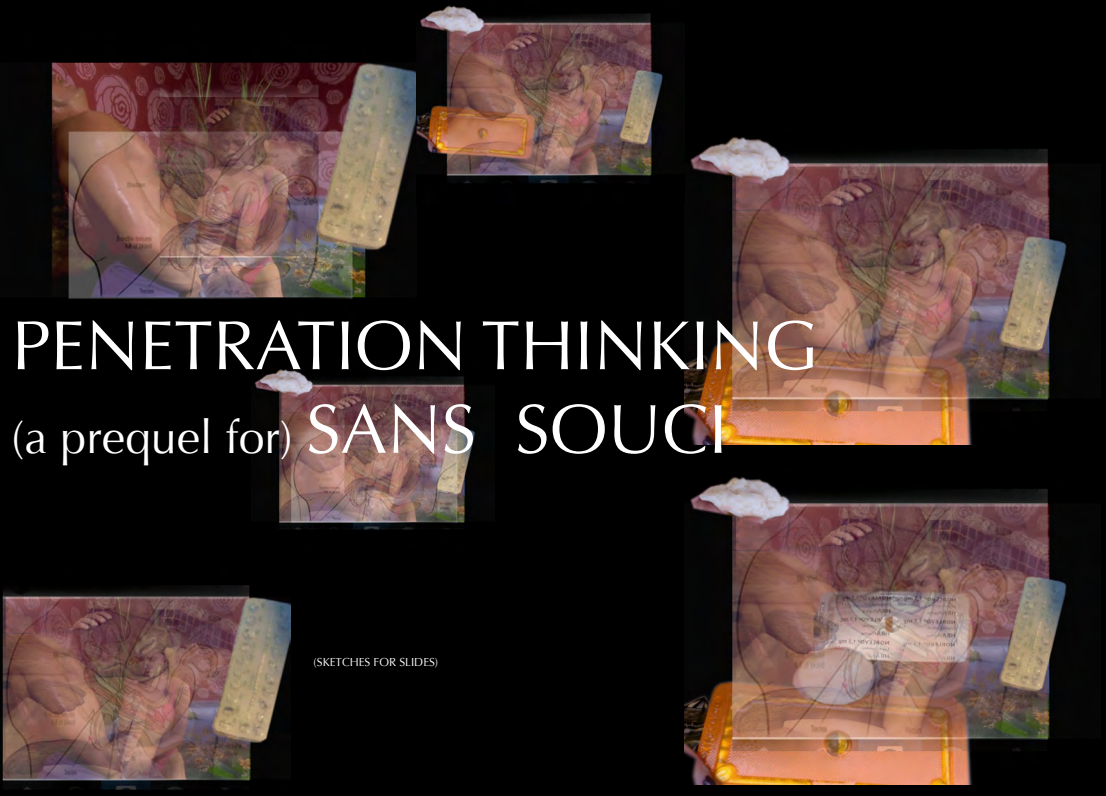
We’re certainly not the biggest talkers in our art practice. We prefer to let the semantics appear through the convergence of materials, the combination of the synthetic and “natural”, through specific shapes and surfaces. As for Brassier, we’re mostly interested in his recent writings and ideas about

Prometheanism, where he attempts to resurrect the Prometheanistic project, to question the dogmatic and irrational approach towards such given things as death or sickness as something that should not be changed or challenged. Nature is among such given objects and the fragile equilibrium between the given and the made for most people is something that should be preserved. Yet, as we can already observe, this equilibrium has long been broken and there is almost no “natural” object that has not been affected by the activities of humans. Therefore, the ideas and research by movements such as synthetic biology, which aims to save nature by creating synthetic organisms, seem to be more rational, albeit scary, projects towards saving nature. Yet, they are Prometheanistic in the sense that in such a case humans would take the position of deleting the difference between the made and the given.

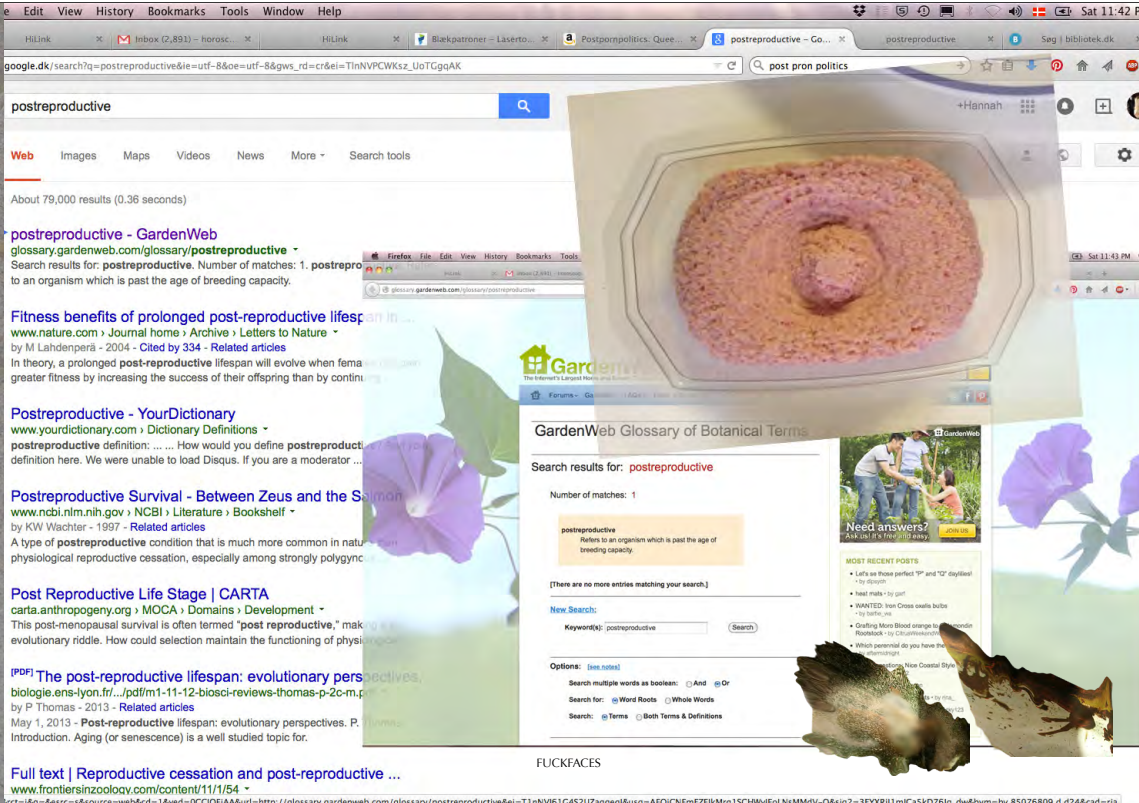
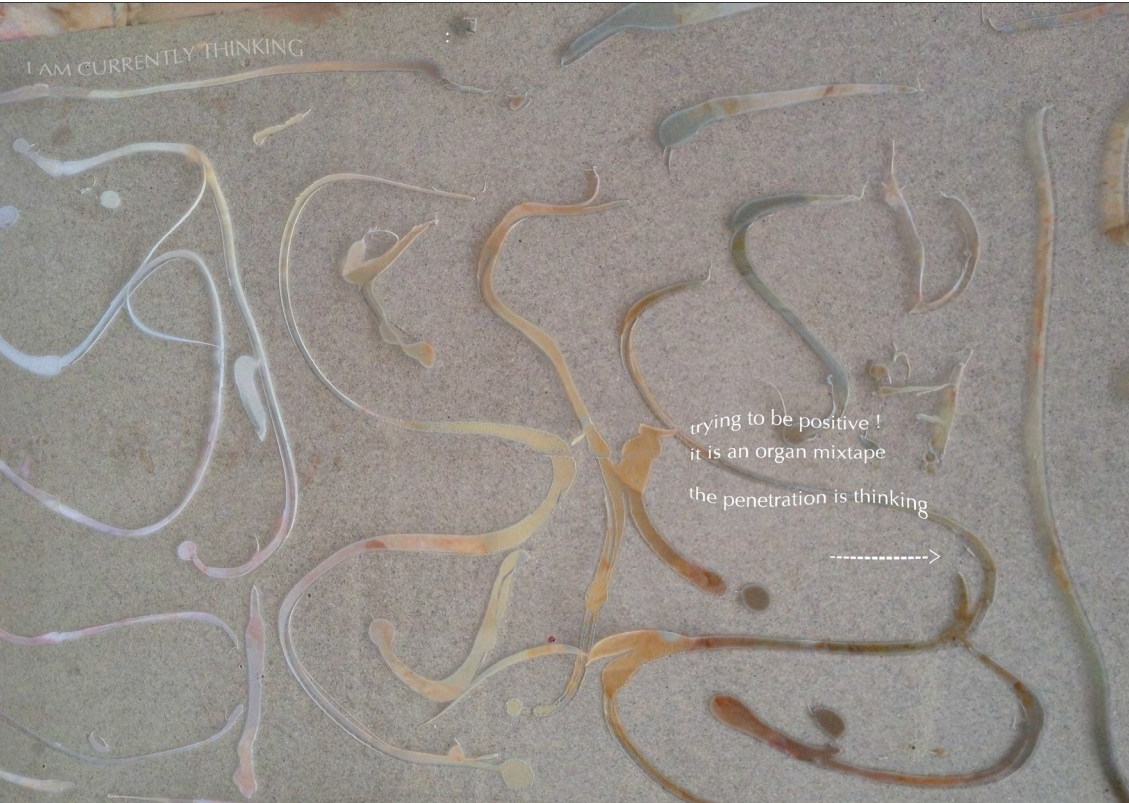
The only thing one actually owns is oneself – a writer (Joan Didion) once said. *The Century of the Self* was the name of a series of documentaries directed by Adam Curtis which focused on how the work of psychoanalysts influenced the way corporations and governments (re)produced identities and selves. Thomas Metzinger says that the self does not exist at all, it’s just a brain reaction, a phenomenon that allows us to live and survive. What is your take on the self?

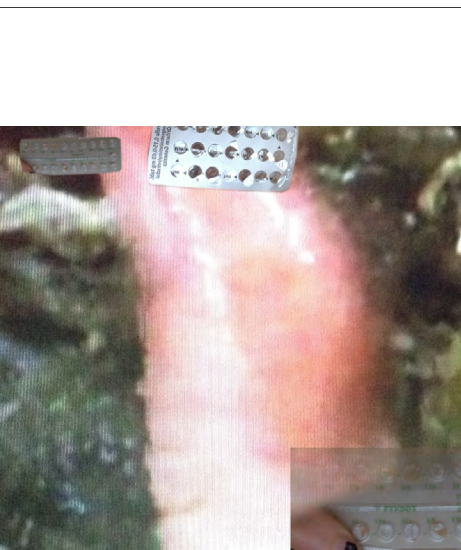
Oh, this is way too broad a topic to cover in one question-answer section. Each field and theory has a different answer to this subject. Perhaps the only common thing would be the obvious merging of the physical and virtual realities where the self is constructed. Personally, we are more interested in corporate selfconstruction, in being a courtesy of someone else, as a multi-headed, multidirected subject. And construction through virtual presentation is equally if not more important than through a physical one. Just like for any single person today. It seems that today corporations are not mimicking the self construction of individuals, but vice versa – individuals function as brands. So it’s better to actively work with it, rather than pretending that one is not affected by this kind of economy.

PENETRATION THINKING
(a prequel for) SANS SOUCI

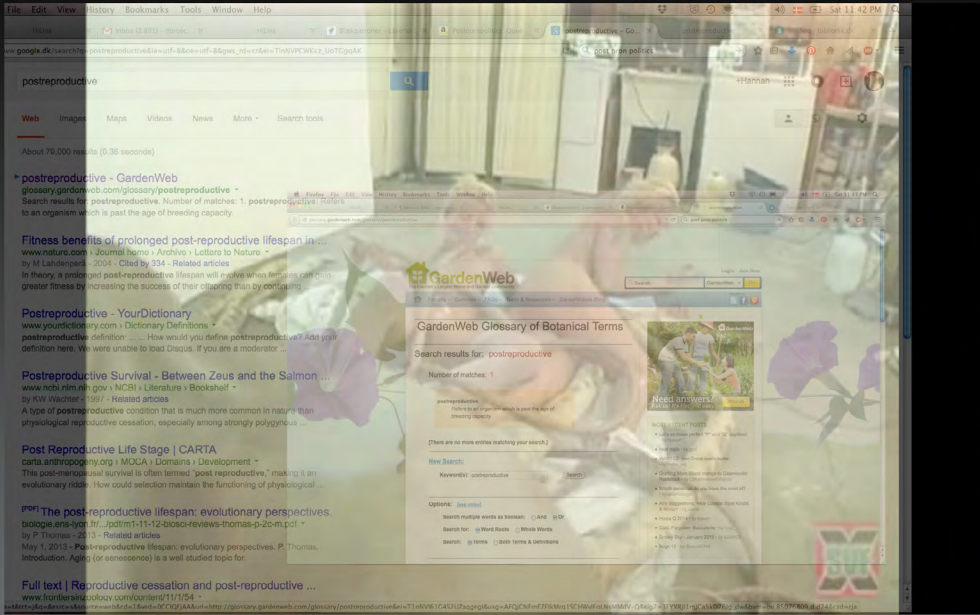


IIIIIIII THINK MY VAGINA IS HAUNTED









Rózsa Zita Farkas

contemporary culture... It's really a radical shift, where now we are all photographers all the time and we are all now photographers of ourselves, as if we were authoring ourselves in a new and fascinating way.²

In 1979 Rosalind Krauss defined sculpture's shift into the postmodern condition as an 'expanded field'. Rather than what sculpture was not, as per modernism, sculpture became everything it could be. The ubiquity of web 2.0 both as a means of production and self presentation has obliterated Krauss' expanded field – not only by walking out on Postmodern methodology for art objects – but also by explicitly engaging in the quotidian power structures that traverse sociality. Contemporary practices increasingly address making and authoring as a craft, one which attempts to speak of something beyond the art object-condition in itself.

These images are a selection of screenshots of blog posts, tweets and Facebook status updates by artists and poets I admire, and who have online identities that place the personal into the public sphere as a new form of exhibitionism.

In 1979, Rosalind Krauss wrote:

The new is made comfortable by being made familiar, since it is seen as having gradually evolved from the forms of the past. Historicism works on the new and different to diminish newness and mitigate difference. [...] And we are comforted by this perception of sameness, this strategy for reducing anything foreign in either time or space, to what we already know and are. [...] Never mind that the content of the one had nothing to do with, was in fact the exact opposite of, the content of the other.¹

This sentiment was my point of departure for selecting images under the rubric "exhibitionism". I have attempted to avoid easy assumptions of exhibitionism or its assumed historicization within art (such as looking at the #selfie and discussing self-portraiture, for example). Instead, I have continued conversations I have been having surrounding the definition, or ontology even, of representation within a networked society. To put my proposition for this slideshow more simply: the image today consists of affect and narrative, which are not reducible to a representation of the self-body.

In a recent article for *Bomblog*, Amy Adler is quoted:

The shift toward compulsive self-documentation that has come to characterize

What I am keen to highlight is that, bound within photographic self-representation, artists are increasingly utilizing performance and distribution to challenge hierarchies and subvert norms of representation. The act of speech is intrinsic to the image today. The body speaks.

This collection of images contains examples of different models and functions of self-authoring. These blogged images and screenshots of status updates are, for some, ways to publish or document poetry; for others, they are images or artworks. For artists, such as Rosa Aiello, the images are not a part of an art practice, but are valuable for how they behave (online). This process nonetheless informs artist identity and cultural capital, syphoned through the streams of *communicative capitalism*, yet maintaining something still non-complicit to it. For Jennifer Chan, and many artists alike, self-authoring via social media exhibitionism, is a condition that is truly post-Fordist, where implicit emotion cannot be separated from work-life.³

Most understand the screenshots presented here as moments within an expanded art practice, one that constructs its own web-like layers across the platforms of self-publishing, and, further, to generate meaning and inoculate narrative into the art object. Continuing from Krauss, if sculpture began as a monument, or commemorative representation of something other than itself as object *of art*, then through modernism sculpture became "a self-referential form that was what it wasn't (defined as being not landscape, nor architecture, etc.)."⁴

Krauss goes on to describe postmodern sculpture and its creation of an *expanded field* that includes what modernism deemed sculpture was not. In this expanded field sculpture is a game. Under postmodernism it is almost logical, its definition as 'sculpture' is achieved "in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms" instead of through its relation to its given medium.⁵

As these cultural terms expand, aided by faster and newly accessible technologies, art is less postmodern, less a game, and more one's life. The cultural terms to traverse now (to create logical operations and produce work from) are maybe too plentiful. Perhaps the artist would never produce if she tried to construct the expanded field after the Internet. Or maybe (and I think this is more the case), as the increasingly impossible separation between work and life proliferates into global economies of scale, there are more important things to communicate through

art, as opposed to de-lineating the definition of sculpture itself. There is increasing comment on conditions: the expanded field is social, not logical – *it feels*. Contemporary emerging artists are not naïvely applying sociality into their practice in a pseudo-altruistic operation of Relational Aesthetics. Many of these artists’ practices are personal, individualistic perhaps, responding to their lives the art becomes a mirror of context, because increasingly through its distribution (through social media), it is context. The hangover it has from Krauss’ contextualization of the expanded field is clear:

*Our culture had not before been able to think the complex, although other cultures have thought this term with great ease. Labyrinths and mazes are both landscape and architecture; Japanese gardens are both landscape and architecture; the ritual playing fields and processions of ancient civilizations were all in this sense the unquestioned occupants of the complex. Which is not to say that they were an early, or a degenerate, or a variant form of sculpture. They were part of a universe or cultural space in which sculpture was simply another part – not somehow, as our historicist minds would have it, the same.*⁶

And it is in regard to this suggestion, I posit that we are in the midst of the final rejection of postmodernism, which from my generation’s experience (of being born at its zenith) could too often be quantified by an ironic challenge to the terms of sculpture as defined by modernists; whilst, at times, postmodern sculpture was just as self-referential to the art-object-as-monument, as modernist predecessors. More artists are losing interest and concern with 20th century foundations of what constitutes art-objects, and are more interested in making, as modes of expression and communication. To go against Krauss’s warnings of overly historicizing, I would say that artists are in the midst of re-crafting practice. In a tweet, we can see the artist’s hand, and making-as-marker for place or event, and too, we are witnessing this form of “exhibitionism” inflect external narrative (built from online identities) into handmade craft objects, which continue to find a place in fine art after centuries of being sidelined (such as Amalia Ulman’s recent piece at Martos Gallery *27 Roses, 9 Butterflies, 6 Girls*). This resurgence of ‘the artist’s hand’ is less monumental, less certain, more bound with the wavering confidence of precarious workers becoming adults in the midst of global recession.

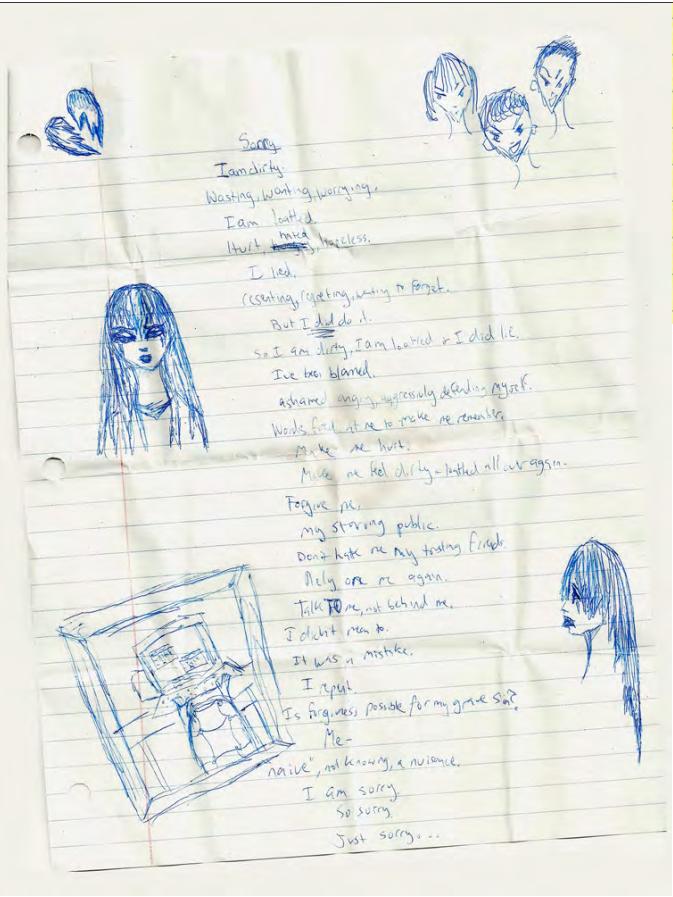
For Amalia Ulman, her status updates are published furiously even though she notes how difficult these things are to monumentalize, to archive: “One important part of all this ‘exhibitionist’ thing is geo-tagging; it’s the most and least revealing thing. It’s TMI⁷ as much as it is uber-confusing. Especially moving so much – it is a little bit ‘catch me if you can’.”⁸

We are told that images are so abundant, so mutable, and moving that we do not really look or even see anymore. And, yes, so much of this self-representation that these selected images are a part is also adding to a form of presencing – that is, continually visible, shared, re-blogged, and part of the image’s velocity. Just as the same social hierarchies show themselves online (we follow certain people more), to a degree, Twitter is a chosen network of our own; and those within it – their statements – help form our own identity and opinions, even if at times simply reinforcing them and allowing for the vanity of preaching to the converted.

Artists creatively engaged with their use of social media are employing narrative and affect as they are subjects of their conditions, which *are* societal and not solely located in the art object itself, and – just as Krauss noted of earlier shifts – this is blowing apart now normalized definitions of sculpture. These images are pertinent updates, the moments amongst presencing that stuck on me.

NOTES

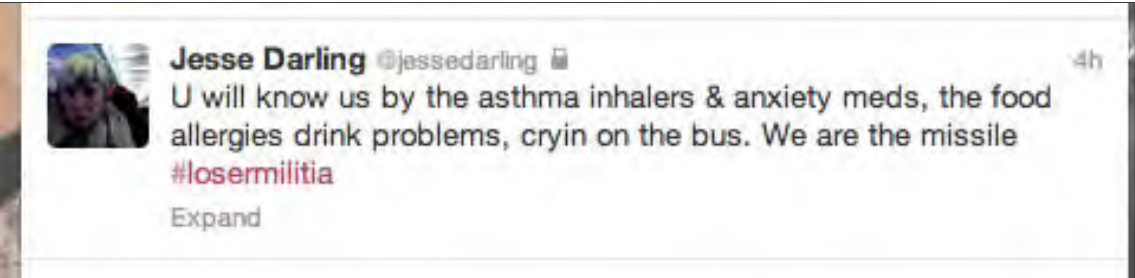
- ¹ Rosalind Krauss. “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” *October 8* (Spring, 1979): 30-44.
- ² Legacy Russell. “Amy Adler”, Bomblog, March 2013, (Accessed September 28, 2013)
- ³ Jodi Dean. “Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics.” *Cultural Politics* 1:1 (2005): 51-74.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Too Much Information.
- ⁸ Amalia Ulman, personal communication, October 7, 2013.



1

Dull of hate and self loathing
meaning even in the greatest song
slipped under the sun's dramatic
shut up.

2



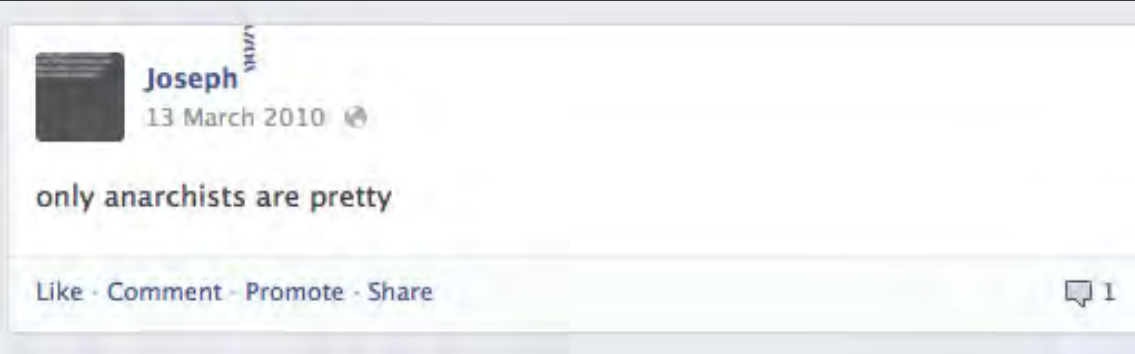
3



4



5



6



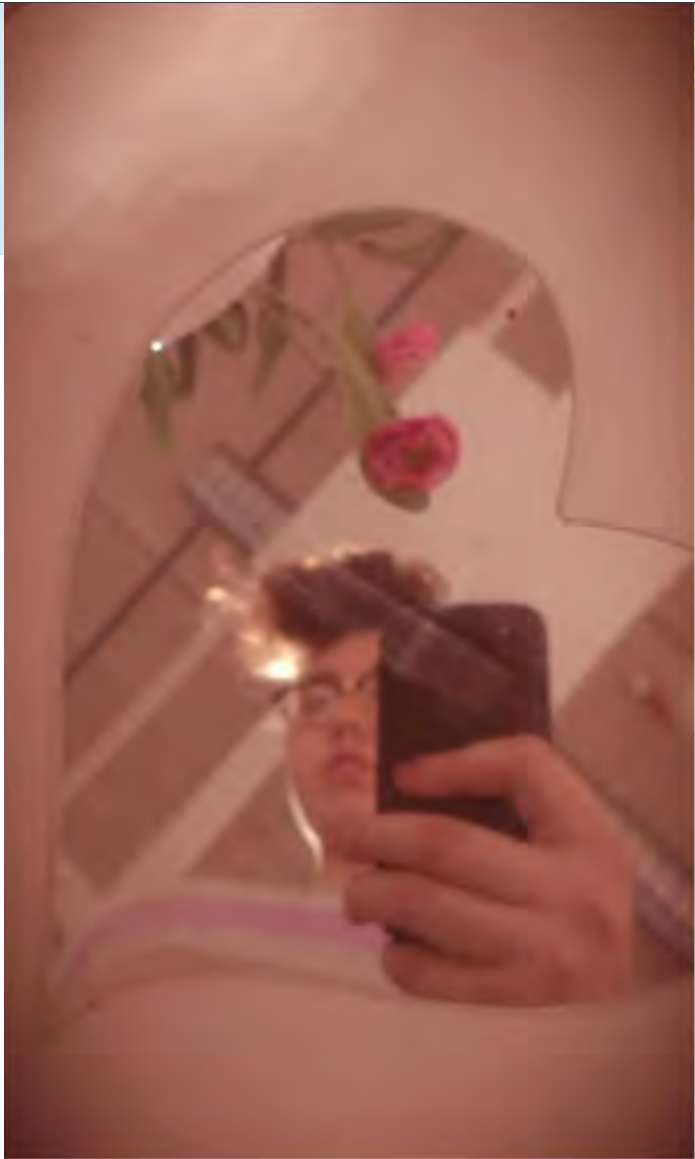
Jennifer Chan @jenninat0r

5 Oct

I'm going to pick the world up and drop it on your fucking head if you ask me to smile

Expand

7



Despair Selfie in a Loveheart in IKEA, 2013

just before i took this my mum told me not to buy black sheets because they show cum stains and then a woman walked past wearing a 'KEEP CALM AND LOVE LIFE' t-shirt, which is either the most or least considerate thing anyone has ever worn to IKEA.

4:27 pm • 21 August 2013 • 11 notes



Megan Rooney @TheModernBitch

16 Jul

Have a great desire - my desire is great

Expand

9

Tweet

Thea Smith

@rodothea

Pulling my hair is NOT the way to get me to dance with you.

3:21 AM · 27 Apr 13

Reply to Thea Smith

140

TWEET

Leslie Kulesh

@lesliekulesh

Hello, I'd like to exchange some of my cultural capital for bitcoins, please.

Expand

15 Mar

11

Amalia Ulman

16 August via Mobile

unimpressed — at Monte Carlo Monaco



Like · Comment · Promote · Share

14 4

12





hannah fb @nanpansky

8 May

i cant talk about all the things that cleave-land means without saying too much about myself, thats the internet, i want to, i can't

Expand



hannah fb @nanpansky

8 May

cleave is word famous for meaning its opposite, everyone knows this, love is a word famous for...etc (sometimes)

Expand



hannah fb @nanpansky

8 May

cleveland: veneration, violence, vagina, virtue / cleave-land

Expand



hannah fb @nanpansky

8 May

cleveland: houses are prisons

Expand



hannah fb @nanpansky

8 May

cleveland, centre of all mysteries, including, why do (some) men hate (most) women

Expand



hannah fb @nanpansky

8 May

the cleveland thing is bothering me on at least 6 different levels

Expand



13



Melika Ngombe Kolongo

21 November 2012

your__ guilt is part of your__ privilege

Unlike · Comment · Share

10 3

14

Jun 16, 2013

Princess Dirty Bun Emergency Bunvival guide

Your age doesn't really matter to this point.

Black pudding is pig blood.

Look im sick of u perverted men falling in love with me.

and expecting mountains in return.

u bore me.

if u arent a drug dealer u are useless and therefore repulsive.

I close my eyes and think back to Grandma ROgers brook and raspberries.

I dip my feet in the cold water.

very out of character, I know

SKipping.

chirping.

drug hunting

15

18

17



19

20

- 1 Ann Hirsch, [https://paddle8.com/work/annhirsch/21202-](https://paddle8.com/work/annhirsch/21202-sorry-my-starving-public)
- 2 sorry-my-starving-public
- 3 Bryan Morello, https://twitter.com/_LeBry
- 4 Jesse Darling, <https://twitter.com/jessedarling>
- 5 Ben Vickers, <https://twitter.com/vickersnet>
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- 10 Aimee Heinemann, <http://angstravaganza.tumblr.com/>
- 11 Megan Rooney, <https://twitter.com/TheModernBitch>
- 12 Thea Smith, <https://twitter.com/rodothea>
- 13 Leslie Kulesh, <https://twitter.com/lesliekulesh>
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Rory Rowan

Below, introduced to the reader, are excerpts from Rory Rowan's text "So Now!: On Normcore", originally published by e-flux online journal #58, 10/2014. In the article Rowan elaborates on the relationship between difference and normativity and how it is understood. He analyzes and addresses the critique of the recently coined concept of "normcore" and also distinguishes it from another concept "acting basic". Both of them originated in "Youth Mode: A Report on Freedom", a 2013 text by K-Hole, a New York based "trend forecasting group". The text was first presented as part of the Serpentine Gallery's "89plus Marathon" in October 2013. After differentiating normcore from the common misinterpretations, Rowan argues that normcore fails to accommodate the sociological realities of power and overlooks the obstacles to K-Hole's utopian proposition of continually blending in.

Unspecial: Normcore

K-Hole contrasts Acting Basic to Normcore, which appears to be a more intriguing concept even as it is slippery and ambiguous.¹ It's hard to shake the impression that it's difficult to grasp simply because it lacks clear definition, but K-Hole welcomes this ambiguity, covering their tracks by claiming that Normcore "capitalizes on the possibility of misinterpretation as an opportunity for connection." This conceptual opacity lies in part with the fact that with the shift from Acting Basic to Normcore, K-Hole departs the domain of analysis and diagnosis for the world of speculation and prognosis, moving from an examination of contemporary sociocultural conditions (Mass Indie) and existing responses (Acting Basic) to the trickier task of pitching new cultural strategies to face them. At the crux of this change of perspective between Acting Basic and Normcore is a different understanding of the relationship between difference and sameness, and indeed a different conception of normal. As noted above, K-Hole considers Acting Basic to have "approached" but "not mastered" sameness, Normcore presumably being successful where Acting Basic fails. Yet, what conception of sameness, what normal, does Normcore suppose?

To be "truly Normcore," K-Hole claims, "you need to understand that there's no such thing as normal." Hence, unlike Acting Basic, Normcore does not assume there to be an identifiable normal that can be aestheticized. However, if there is no such thing as normal, what does "sameness" mean and how might it be mastered? Here lies the core of Normcore: a paradoxically normless sameness. Sameness, for K-Hole, is not defined in relation to a dominant mainstream, an identifiable normal, but is a plural, "situational" category. Being Normcore means adapting to the specific norms of each context one encounters, rather than assuming that one sameness fits all, or that all roads lead to Normal. Hence, K-Hole claims, "Normcore understands the process of differentiation from a non-linear perspective." Rather, it assumes an adaptable attitude that "cops to the situation at hand." As one of the group's members said when clarifying the concept in an interview with the Huffington Post, "At K-Hole we think it's all about being situationally appropriate."² It means accepting others for who they are and going with the flow, getting into it: "You might not understand the rules of football, but you can still get a thrill from the roar of the crowd at the World Cup." Being "truly Normcore" requires one to cultivate a chameleon-like capacity to adapt to any situation and empathize with anyone, just as Woody Allen's Zelig takes on the character of those he encounters.³

In K-Hole's articulation of the concept, Normcore is thus "about adaptability, not exclusivity," and marks a shift from "a coolness that relies on difference to a post-authenticity coolness that opts into sameness."⁴ K-Hole insists that this change of attitude opens up the possibility for connection, for forms of belonging that escape the trap of isolation laid by Mass Indie's demand for differentiation.

Mass Indie (and hence Acting Basic) creates cliques of people in the know, while Normcore knows the real feat is harnessing the potential for connection to spring up... Normcore seeks the freedom that comes with non-exclusivity. It finds liberation in being nothing special, and realizes that adaptability leads to belonging.

Hence, for K-Hole, in emphasizing sameness over difference, Normcore values connection over individuation and marks a break with the entire logic of Mass Indie and its demand for differentiation. "Normcore," they write, "doesn't want the freedom to become someone. Normcore wants the freedom to be with anyone." It is grounded in an ethos of *being with* as opposed to *being special*. This, they suggest, is a more effective response to Mass Indie than merely appropriating normality as the last frontier of differentiation, given that contemporary sociocultural conditions make a coherent, and supposed "authentic," individuality harder

and harder to maintain at a higher and higher cost:

It used to be possible to be special - to sustain unique differences through time ... But the Internet and globalization fucked this up for everyone [...] Individuality was once the path to personal freedom – a way to lead life on your own terms. But the terms keep getting more and more specific, making us more and more isolated.

In contrast to the isolating differentiation of Mass Indie and the pseudo-sameness of Acting Basic, in Normcore “one does not pretend to be above the indignity of belonging.”

However, K-Hole insists that jettisoning outmoded models of individual “authen-ticity” and embracing the opportunities for belonging opened up by sameness doesn’t mean that the self is eclipsed by the norm. As Emily Segal, one of K-Hole’s founders, noted in interview with *New York Magazine*: “It’s not about being simple or forfeiting individuality to become a bland, uniform mass [but about seeing sameness] as an opportunity for connection, instead of evidence that your identity has dissolved.”⁵ For K-Hole, one does not lose connection to oneself in sameness, but instead finds belonging with others. Indeed, at the very heart of K-Hole’s conception of Normcore is the idea that the relationship between self and others has undergone a fundamental transformation, of which Acting Basic is a symptom, but to which Normcore offers a solution: “Once upon a time people were born into communities and had to find their individuality. Today people are born individuals and have to find their communities.”

Normcore is the name K-Hole gives to this individual labor of finding communities. Hence, although Normcore is a product of individualizing conditions, it sees in them not the confirmation of inevitable alienation but an opportunity to forge new connections, nurture new feelings of belonging, and find new communities. Of course, the idea that there is no longer a single, monolithic sociocultural mainstream that gives expression to a dominant set of cultural norms, but rather multiple sets of situationally specific normals, reflects to some degree the increasingly complex social realities that have accompanied globalization in all its permutations. Needless to say, however, dealing with the relationship between difference and sameness, individuality and community, belonging and isolation in complex societies is a lot more difficult than simply enjoying sports when you don’t know the rules. And thus the problems.



Channel4 news interviews President Alexander Lukashenko in this segment on the dictatorship in Belarus, titled Undercover in Europe’s last dictatorship, 2014.

A Different Normal?: Yes Please

As interesting, and in some ways attractive, as the analysis advanced in *Youth Mode* is, a number of fundamental problems immediately present themselves. Perhaps the most striking limitation is that whilst *Youth Mode* presents a concise, PowerPoint-ready breakdown of various pop-cultural formations - Alternative, Mass Indie, Acting Basic, and Normcore - it approaches pop culture as if it were an autonomous sphere, immune to broader social, economic, and political dynamics. Yes, globalization and the emergence of the internet are mentioned in the opening lines, and the recent financial crisis is hinted at via references to Boomerang kids and exasperated Subway employees with PhDs, but the key categories are largely discussed as if they existed in a social vacuum. A sociologically shallow account of pop culture might not in itself be much of a problem, given the context in which the text appeared, and K-Hole of course does not present *Youth Mode* as an academic study with all the bells and whistles of rigor, let alone as a work of political theory. But they do set out to engage major sociological questions about the changing relationship between difference and sameness, individuality and community. In light of the concerns they take on, and indeed their own characterization of their practice as quasi-sociological or anthropological, their failure to engage with

social forces, even superficially, or to even show an awareness that they exist, is a disappointment. It takes much of the steam out of their often-alluring provocations.

One of the most significant consequences is that the image of society that emerges from *Youth Mode* is almost totally emptied of power; the only hint that social power exists at all appears indirectly when mention is made of competition to accrue social status. Needless to say, an account of sociocultural differentiation - and indeed its changing relationship to individuality and sameness - that does not engage with the existence of social power and the way in which it structures the conditions in and through which such differentiation takes shape, will have little purchase on its object. *Youth Mode* is particularly notable in its absence of any discussion of differences that take antagonistic form. Granted, K-Hole focuses on pop-cultural formations that have emerged in the wake of Alternative - and hence major oppositional pop-culture movements - but of course the effects of social antagonism upon the domain of pop culture are by no means limited to the sepia-tinted dead horse of punk. They continue to structure pop culture fundamentally, albeit in new ways. K-Hole presents an account of society from which all antagonism seems to have been ironed out, where all differences are peaceful, bar the minor frictions involved in the competition for social status or the boundaries of cliques - and even these can be soothed by empathy, Normcore's primary affect. Only by excluding social power and antagonistic difference from their account of the social field is it possible for K-Hole to assume that individuals can float freely from situation to situation, adapting to the norms of each, without encountering the rifts, fences, and stratifications that play such a fundamentally structuring role in our societies.

The limitations of this account of the social field of course impact K-Hole's analysis of the contemporary problems with differentiation and the solutions they present to them. The Mass Indie problems that are central to *Youth Mode* - that differentiation has become compulsory at the same time as its capacity to generate individuality/social status has declined, leaving people exhausted and isolated - are themselves symptoms of wider social processes, but no engagement is made with the wider context, so they appear to be the result of purely internal pop-culture dynamics. Yet, even if Mass Indie problems are second-tier problems, this doesn't mean they are without sociocultural interest, or indeed that they are not real problems. The argument that differentiation has become complicit with the status quo, with forces of domination, is of course not new (despite the persistence of the idea in so much Left theory that institutional power and difference are necessary enemies). Many analyses that focus on the changing forms of subjectification that have accompanied the spread of neoliberal economies - notably in relation to the increasingly important role played by precarious forms of affective and cognitive

labor - have made precisely this point in one way or another. Whether we look to Deleuze on control societies, Federici on social reproduction, Boltanski and Chiapello on artistic labor and the entrepreneurial subjectivities, or Berardi and Fischer on cognitive labor and mental health, there is a common thread: an engagement with the ways in which capital operates through the production of subjectivities and thrives on extracting surplus value from the generation of social difference and individualization, not to mention the important ideological role played by self-actualization over and against collective identifications.⁶ However, insofar as they fail to contextualize Mass Indie in relation to broader socioeconomic or political forces, K-Hole misses an opportunity to examine the demand for differentiation in the domain of pop culture in relation to wider patterns of neoliberal subjectification, something that may have provided greater traction on the phenomenon and allowed for more persuasive responses to emerge. Indeed, by defining Normcore in relation to adaptability and empathy - both admirable traits in and of themselves - K-Hole risks framing their solution to chronic differentiation in terms that replicate rather than challenge the ideological Trojan horses of neoliberal subjectification. It is, after all, the same ideological framework that insists on an adaptive labor force and the economic importance of affects such as empathy, that channels subjectification into the isolating vectors of differentiation. Hence, even if Normcore were to provide some respite from Mass Indie strain, tweaking the meat grinder of subjectification for comfort, it would remain subject to much the same set of social forces that knead contemporary lumpenbourgeoisie.

The image of the social chameleon finding both individual liberty and group belonging in drifting between situations is surely an appealing one, but it betrays a conception of difference from which power has been purged. This Normcore nomadism seems to assume that an individual will be welcomed into every situation if they are willing to be adaptable and empathetic. However, social differences and group identifications are hardly the product of individual self-fashioning alone but are shaped by the power dynamics between groups. No individual is likely to find belonging in every situation regardless of how adaptable and empathetic they are. Whilst a lot of this might come down to the individual's character, much might likewise depend on race, gender, sexuality, and other such factors around which power congeals. Normcore seems to assume that such factors will have no bearing on the ability of individuals to immerse themselves in a multiplicity of different normals. K-Hole's conception of Normcore assumes the valuable insight that there are different versions of sameness, but it doesn't address the fact that not all differences are the same. This is a point perhaps less pressing for those who less frequently find themselves on the wrong side of the subjective tracks in the view of others. Normcore smuggles in the backdoor an implicit idea of what is normal

(white, middle class) even as it shuts the front door on the mainstream.⁷

These limitations and blind spots are hardly surprising given that *Youth Mode*'s account of contemporary society remains focused on the individual. Community is virtually ignored despite its changing relationship to individuality supposedly being a key. Although K-Hole claims that today, individuals must find their communities - and K-Hole associates Normcore with this process - no details of the forms of community that might be found or produced through this individual search are offered. The only collective subjects that seem to be considered worthy of mention are exclusionary Mass Indie cliques. The last line of *Youth Mode* perhaps sheds some light on this almost exclusive emphasis on the individual: "Normcore is a path to a more peaceful life." Normcore thus seems to be conceived above all as a self-help strategy for ensuring individual peace of mind. Hence, Normcore is best understood as a coping mechanism to help individuals deal with the stresses of differentiation, rather than a means to address the wider social conditions that demand it. In such an individualist account of social relations, there is not much need to address the contents of social norms. This perhaps explains the lack of discussion of this topic. Yes, adaptability, empathy, and a lack of concern for authenticity may all be virtues, but they hardly constitute a set of norms in and of themselves, no matter how useful they may be in facilitating a sense of belonging. In neither challenging existing norms nor positing others, K-Hole seems happy to accept existing social norms, or to assume that they don't exist. This contributes little to addressing the very real problems that shape the present, including neoliberal subjectification in all its forms. Nor can it do much to guarantee a peaceful life.

By ignoring questions of power and framing the social field in individualist term, K-Hole ends up sharing considerable conceptual space with mainstream conservative opinion. This is no doubt an accidental neoconservatism. Perhaps in a rush to flush out the calcified critical theory they were exposed to in art school, K-Hole opted into mainstream conservative provocations: *too much difference is the problem, individual responsibility is the solution*. Or perhaps it's fairer to say that *Youth Mode* settles on something closer to the sort of inclusive liberalism envisaged by Richard Rorty, where everyone gets along because they've swapped out authenticity for ironic detachment. There is of course something to be said for ironic detachment as a strategy for individuals navigating complex societies, where one might pass through various different situations in the course of a day or even a few blocks. But this likewise assumes that the social field is a neutral public meeting place equally open to all rather than an unstable terrain rent with power. The world envisaged in Normcore, where sameness is celebrated, is ultimately a realm of consensus, where difficult difference is pushed to the side even if sameness is plural.



Gisele Bündchen shouts out to other models on the runway at a staged protest for the Chanel SS15 Collection. Signs read for instance "Tweed is better than tweet," and "Be your own stylist" as well as "History is her story." Photo: DailyMail

"Perhaps," as Benedict Seymour suggests, "beyond normcore is another normal altogether."⁸ Perhaps, too, other conceptions of normativity with a fuller grasp of social reality are emerging in these "post-critical" times. Elizabeth Povinelli's recent work, and the quote with which this essay began, offer one important instance worth noting by way of contrast.⁹ Povinelli forcefully rearticulates the need to go beyond critiquing existing norms - *the way things are* - and make commitments to alternative norms - *the way things ought to be* - if social thought is to have traction on social reality. She rightly notes that this is something much critical theory has shrunk from, preferring instead the security afforded by anti-normativity. Yet, to refuse to engage with questions of normativity is either to fail to engage the realities of social power, or to vacate the terrain of political efficacy in favor of intellectual purity. In too often happily settling for the latter, critical theory has been complicit in ceding ever more ground to the forces of reaction. Intervening in social power complexes affords few clean hands and no pure outside: one must always start in the

shit, in the middle of a social field cut through with power and antagonism from which difficult difference cannot be wished away. Making a commitment to one set of norms against another - whether defending existing “arrangements of existence” or trying to pull new arrangements into being - involves engaging in struggle and, as Povinelli’s language makes clear, exercising one’s force: “I shove here rather than there ... I put my shoulder here rather than there.”¹⁰ Hence, for Povinelli, engaging in struggle means taking responsibility for the fact that, if successful, the arrangement of existence we seek to make normative may well “extinguish what existed before.” Indeed, for her, the anti-normativity that defines so much radical social thought can be - if perhaps not always - a “refusal to accept this responsibility.”¹¹

Povinelli’s articulation of normativity offers no exit from this conflicted terrain of struggle, but this is precisely its appeal. In contrast to the flat, neutral, depoliticized social world of Normcore, Povinelli’s conception of normativity confronts social power and the realities of antagonism. In Povinelli’s analysis, social norms are bound to struggles between groups who have made active commitments to contending conceptions of how things ought to be. And no matter how provisional, temporary, strategic, or conflicted those commitments might be, they must be defended or forced. If radical social thought is to help shape social realities, it needs to engage once again with questions of normativity. It mustn’t be satisfied with simply wagging fingers at what’s wrong with the world, but must also generate visions of how it might be otherwise. Following Povinelli into the shit would be a good start. You can wear sneakers if you like.

References

¹ In what follows I will capitalize “Normcore” to indicate that it is K-Hole’s conception of the term rather than the wider understanding, which will remain as “normcore.”
² “The ‘Normcore’ Fashion Trend,” interview with Sean Monahan, HuffPost Live, March 6, 2014
³ I owe thanks to Suhail Malick for the comparison to Zelig.
⁴ Adaptability and empathy are key virtues for such an outlook, and these terms recur throughout *Youth Mode* in a variety of forms, like branded keywords.
⁵ Duncan, “Normcore: Fashion for Those Who Realize They’re One in 7 Billion,” *New York Magazine*, February 26, 2014
⁶ In fact, even older models of social thought, such as Freud’s “narcissism of small differences,” may offer some insight on the bubble economy differentiation that characterizes Mass Indie. Indeed, even Thorstein Veblen had long ago noted that “David Riesman and Vance Packard ... have shown that even the vast American middle class, which is as free from want and even more uniform than the circles described by Proust, is

also divided into abstract compartments. It produces more and more taboos and excommunications among absolutely similar but opposed units. Insignificant distinctions appear immense and produce incalculable effects. The individual existence is still dominated by the Other but this Other is no longer a class oppressor as in Marxist alienation; he is the neighbor on the other side of the fence, the school friends, the professional rival. The Other is more and more fascinating the nearer he is to the Self.” Quoted in Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994). Thanks to Eva Kenny for this point.

⁷ This doesn’t even factor in the other side: the fact that there may be very many individuals, even adaptable and empathetic specimens, that do not wish to find belonging or embrace sameness in every situation, whether because they just like to keep to themselves or because some situations are built around social norms that they cannot empathize with or don’t want to adapt to. You don’t have to be a hater to not chill with racists. Not everyone is always happy to chant for the other team.

⁸ Seymour, “Notes on Normcore,” *Mute*, May 29, 2014

⁹ Another powerful instance of the contemporary return to normativity is to be found in the work of the philosophers Ray Brassier and Reza Negarestani. Brassier and Negarestani are both engaged in an attempt to develop a rationalist project of universal emancipation based around a concept of collectively generated and revisable norms that govern behavior along the lines of commitments to rational experimentation, testing en route the very limits of the human as such. As fascinating and persuasive as their abstract accounts of rational normativity are I need to do further work to grasp their implications for the processes of political subjectification, and vice versa, before I can discuss their political value with confidence.

¹⁰ Needless to say, force here should not be solely or even principally understood as physical force, even if this language evokes it. Rather, this terminology is used to highlight the fact that society is not a neutral sphere, and acting in it means engaging with a play of other forces, some of which will offer resistance, whether symbolic, physical, ideological, legal, and so on.

¹¹ Povinelli talks of “extinguishing others,” indeed “without reason,” and even notes that extinguishing forms of existence can be equated with killing forms of existence. I would rather not affirm the language of extinguishing other social groups, given the history of this idea. I nonetheless take Povinelli’s point that unless we accept the power in our actions and take responsibility for putting our shoulder into what we think ought to be over and above other forms of existence—without any transcendental or ultimate regulative ground - we will be petrified in discourse, paralyzed in disdain for those who dare do (an all too recognizable malaise today).

[illegible]

Rózsa Zita Farkas

Nenumaldomas potraukis dokumentuoti save tapo išskirtine šiuolaikinės kultūros savybe... Tai išties radikalus posūkis: dabar visi mes visą laiką esame fotografai ir taip pat – nuolatiniai savęs fotografai, tarsi nauju žavingu būdu kurtume patys save.²

1979 m. Rosalind Krauss skulptūros virsmą postmodernia įvardijo kaip „lauko išplėtimą“. Modernizmas skulptūrą apibrėžė per tai, kas ji nėra, – dabar gi ji tapo viskuo, kuo tik galėjo. Visa apimantis *Web 2.0*, kaip gamybos ir savirodos priemonė, sunaikino Krauss „išplėstą lauką“ – ne tik atsisakydamas postmodernios meno objektų gamybos metodologijos, bet ir akivaizdžiai įsitraukdamas į kasdienes galios struktūras, išraizgiusias sociumą. Šiuolaikinės praktikos į gamybą ir autorystę vis dažniau žvelgia kaip į tam tikrą amatą, kuris stengiasi kalbėti apie kažką kitą nei pats meno objektas.

Šią atvaizdų kolekciją surinkau iš savo mėgiamų menininkų bei poetų įrašų tinklaraščiuose, *Twitter* tinkle ir būsenos atnaujinimų *Facebook* paskyrose. Savo internetines tapatybes jie kuria it kokią naują ekshibicionizmo formą – viešindami tai, kas asmeniška.

1979 m. Rosalind Krauss rašė:

Su naujovėmis apsiprantame pavertę jas pažįstamomis, nes galvojame, kad jos pamažėle išsivystė iš praeityje buvusių formų. Istorizmas užsiima tuo, kas nauja ir skirtinga, siekdamas prislopinti naujumą ir sušvelninti skirtumus. <...> Įžvelgę ką nors vienodo, nusiraminame – ši strategija paverčia bet ką, kas mūsų laikui ar erdvei svetima, tuo, kas mums jau žinoma ir kuo patys esame. <...> Ir visai nesvarbu, kad [dalyko] turinys neturi nieko bendra su juo pačiu, o veikiau yra tikra jo priešingybė, kito [dalyko] turinys.¹

Šis požiūris man tapo atspirties tašku, kai rinkau atvaizdus „ekshibicionizmo“ kolekcijai. Stengiausi vengti bet kokių skubotų prielaidų, kas tai yra ekshibicionizmas, ar dirbtinai įrašyti jį į meno istoriją (pavyzdžiui, žiūrinėjant asmenukes (*#selfie*) diskutuoti apie autoportreto žanrą). Užuoat taip dariusi, ir toliau domėjausi, kaip apibrėžti reprezentaciją įtinklintoje visuomenėje – ar netgi jos ontologiją. Trumpai tariant, ši atvaizdų rinkinį grindžia tokia hipotezė: šiandien atvaizdą sudaro afektas ir pasakojimas, kurių negalima redukuoti vien iki asmens kūno reprezentacijos.

Pokalbyje, kuris 2013 m. buvo publikuotas žurnalo „BOMB“ tinklaraštyje, teisės teoretikė Amy Adler teigia:

Noriu išryškinti tai, kad menininkai, suvaržyti fotografinės savirepresentacijos, vis dažniau naudojami atlikimu ir sklaida tam, kad kvestionuotų hierarchijas ir griautų reprezentacijos normas. Šiandien šnekos aktas yra neatskiriama atvaizdo dalis. Kūnas kalba.

Į šią atvaizdų kolekciją surinkau skirtingų savikūros modelių ir funkcijų pavyzdžius. Vieniems tinklaraščiuose bei socialiniuose tinkluose viešinami atvaizdai ir būsenos atnaujinimai yra būdas publikuoti ar dokumentuoti poeziją. Kitiems – atvaizdai ar meno kūriniai. Tokie menininkai, kaip Rosa Aiello, šių atvaizdų nelaiko meno praktika – jai svarbu tai, kaip jie funkcionuoja (internete). Ir vis dėlto šis procesas veikia menininko tapatybę ir kultūrinį kapitalą – nors ir perpumpuotas per *komunikatyviojo kapitalizmo* sistemą, jis vis tiek išsaugo kažką su juo nesuderinamo. Jennifer Chan ir daugybei panašių menininkų ekshibicionizmas socialinėse medijose, kurį jie naudoja savikūrai, yra pats tikrasis postfordizmas – kai žodžiais neišreikšta emocija tampa neatskiriamama darbo kaip gyvenimo dalimi.³

Dauguma atvaizdus, kuriuos čia rodau, supranta kaip išplėstą meno praktiką: savipublikavimo platformose sukloti tinkliški sluoksniai vėliau panaudojami kuriant reikšmę ir pasakojimą meno objektui. Grįžtant prie Krauss minties: jeigu skulptūra prasidėjo kaip paminklas, arba memorialinė kažko kito nei ji pati reprezentacija, tapusi *meno* objektu, tai modernizme skulptūra virto „savireferentiška forma, reiškiančia tai, kas ji nėra (apibrėžiama kaip ne kraštovaizdis, ne architektūra ir t.t.).“⁴

Toliau Krauss aprašo postmodernią skulptūrą ir jos sukurtą *išplėstą lauką*, aprėpiantį tai, ko modernizmas nelaikė skulptūra. Tokiame išplėstame lauke skulptūra yra žaidimas. Postmodernizmo kontekste kone logiška, kad skulptūrą kaip tokią apibrėžia „loginės operacijos su tam tikrais kultūriniais terminais“, o ne santykis su nustatyta medija.⁵

Atsiradus greitesnėms ir lengviau prieinamoms technologijoms šių kultūros terminų aprėptis plečiasi, ir menas tampa mažiau modernus ir paremtas žaidimu, bet virsta kieno nors gyvenimu. Kultūros terminų, kuriuos šiandien tektų peržiūrėti (tam, kad sukurtume logines operacijas, o iš šių – kūrinių) yra, ko gero, pernelyg daug. Greičiausiai menininkas niekada nieko nesukurtų, jeigu interneto laikais dar mėgintų suformuoti išplėstą lauką. O gal (tai man regisi arčiausiai tiesos), kai vis siaurėjanti atskirtis tarp darbo ir gyvenimo tampa globaliosios masto ekonomikos aspektu, esama tikrai svarbesnių dalykų, kuriuos turėtų pasakyti menas, užuoat

mėginęs apibrėžti skulptūrą kaip tokią. Tokioje situacijoje vis dažniau išgirsi teigiant, esą išplėstas laukas yra socialus, o ne loginis – jis *juntamas*. Dabartiniai savo karjeras pradedantys menininkai nebesinaudoja socialumu taip naiviai, kaip pseudoaltruistinė santykių estetika (*Relational Aesthetics*). Daug šių menininkų praktikų yra asmeninės, netgi individualistinės – reakcija į jų pačių gyvenimus. Menas tampa konteksto veidrodžiu – juk vis dažniau dėl kanalų, kuriais yra skleidžiamas (socialinių medijų), jis ir yra kontekstas. Čia aiškiai girdėti atgarsis to, kaip Krauss pagrindė išplėstojo lauko sampratą:

Iki šiol mūsų kultūra nepajėgė suvokti sudėtinių reiškinių, nors kitos kultūros šį terminą buvo apmąsčiusios be jokio vargo. Labirintai yra ir kraštovaizdis, ir architektūra. Japoniški sodai yra ir kraštovaizdis, ir architektūra. O ritualinių žaidimų laukai, ir senųjų civilizacijų procesijos – tikri kompleksiskumo įsikūnijimai. Tai nereiškia, kad jie buvo ankstyvoji arba prastesnė, ar apskritai viena iš skulptūros formų. Jie dalyvavo tame pasaulyje arba kultūrinėje erdvėje, kurioje skulptūra buvo tiesiog kita dalis – o ne, kaip būtų linkęs manyti mūsų istoristinis mąstymas, vienas ir tas pats.⁶

Remdamasi šia mintimi, aš teigiu, kad dabar postmodernizmas yra galutinai atmetamas. Postmodernizmas, kuris, kaip rodo mano kartos, gimusios pačiam jo zenite, patirtis, pernelyg dažnai būdavo tapatinamas su ironišku iššūkiu modernistiniam skulptūros apibrėžimui. Nors kartais postmoderni skulptūra lygiai taip pat nurodydavo pati į save (meno objektą kaip paminklą), kaip ir jos modernistiniai pirmtakai. Vis mažiau menininkų domisi ir remiasi XX amžiuje paklotais meno objekto pamatais: dabar jiems rūpi gamyba, kaip išraiškos ir komunikacijos metodas. Aš, nepaisydama Krauss įspėjimo pernelyg neistorizuoti, pavadinčiau tai amato grįžimu į menininkų praktiką. Viename *Twitter'io* įrašė matome menininko ranką – gamybą kaip vietos ar įvykio ženklą. Galime paliudyti, kaip tokia „ekshibicionizmo“ forma išorinį (iš internetinių tapatybių sukurtą) pasakojimą paverčia rankų darbo objektais, kurie – šimtmečius išėję iš rikiuotės – vėl atranda savo vietą aukštajame mene (kaip Amalios Ulman kūrinys „27 rožės, 9 peteliškės, 6 merginos“ (*27 Roses, 9 Butterflies, 6 Girls*), rodytame *Martos* galerijoje Niujorke). Šįkart „menininko rankos“ atgimimas nebe toks monumentalus ir nebe toks užtikrintas – jis pagrįstas nuolat svyruojačiu pasitikėjimu, kurį išreiškia visuotinės recesijos akivaizdoje auganti laisvai samdomų darbininkų karta.

Amalia Ulman savo socialinės paskyros būseną atnaujina su nepalaujamu užsidegimu, nors ir pastebi, kaip sunku šiuos dalykus įamžinti ir archyvuoti:

„Svarbi tokio „ekshibicionizmo“ dalis yra geografinės žymos (geo-tagging) – jos atskleidžia labai daug ir tuo pačiu nieko. Toks informacijos perteklius žiauriai trikdo. Ypač, kai tiek daug keliaujama – it žaistum gaudynes.“⁷

Nuolat girdime, esą atvaizdų yra tiek daug, jie tokie nepatovūs ir judūs, kad mes iš tikrųjų nebežiūrime į juos ar netgi nebematome. Be to, didelė dalis šios savirepresentacijos (kuriai priklauso ir pastarasis atvaizdų rinkinys) yra ir įdaba tinimo – buvimo be perstojo matomu, dalijamu, atkartojamu kituose įrašuose, neatsilikant nuo atvaizdų srauto, – forma. Ir nors internete ryškėja tos pačios socialinės hierarchijos (kai kuriuos žmones sekame daugiau), vis dėlto tam tikru mastu *Twitter* yra mūsų pasirinktas tinklas. O žmonės jame (t. y. jų teiginiai) padeda mums suformuoti savo tapatybę ir nuostatas, net jeigu kartais paprasčiausiai jas sutvirtina, pasidWuodami tuštybei pamokyti mokyta.

Menininkai, kūrybinėje praktikoje tiriantys savo naudojamą socialines medijas, naudojami pasakojimu ir afektu, nes tai jie yra savo būklės subjektai – *socialinės* būklės, kurios neriboja vien meno objektas kaip toks. O tai – taip Krauss kalbėjo ir apie anksčiau vykusius posūkius – suskaldo į šipulius šiandien jau įprastas sampratas, kas yra skulptūra. Šie atvaizdai yra savalaikiai atnaujinimai, įdarbartinimo mirksniai, lipie prilipę prie manęs.

¹ Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field”, October 8 (Spring, 1979), pp. 30-44.

² Legacy Russell, “Amy Adler”, Bomblog, March 12, 2013, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/7068/amy-adler>.

³ Jodi Dean, “Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics”, Cultural Politics 1:1 (2005), pp. 51-74.

⁴ Krauss, op. cit.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Amalia Ulman, iš asmeninio pokalbio, 2013-10-07.

Rory Rowan

Apačioje galite pamatyti Rory Rowano “O dabar – apie Normkorą” teksto, publikuotą e-flux internetinio žurnalo numerįje #58, 2014-ųjų spalį, vertimą. Šiame straipsnyje Rowanas analizuoja skirtingumo ir normatyvumo (normos) santykį. Rowanas paliečia neseniai nukaltą ‘normkoro’ sąvoką ir atskiria ją nuo Elementaraus elgesio (Acting Basic) sąvokos. Abi šios sąvokos kilo iš Niujorkiečių K-Hole - save vadinančių “kolektyvu, užsiimančių tendencijų prognozėmis”- teksto “Jaunimo mada: pranešimas apie laisvę” („Youth Mode: A Report on Freedom“), parašyto 2013-ais metais. Pirmą kartą šis tekstas buvo pristatytas 2013-ųjų spalį “89plus Marathon” vykusiam Serpentine galerijoje, Londone. Savo tekste Rory Rowanas atkreipia dėmesį į neteisingas normkoro interpretacijas bei nepavykusį normkoro diskurso norą sutalpinti socialines galios realijas bei išvardina K-Hole’ utopinio siūlymo pastoviai susiliesti su mase trūkumus.

Neišskirtinis: Normkoras

Elementaraus elgesio (Acting Basic) poziciją „K-Hole“¹ priešina Normkorui – ši sąvoka pasirodo esanti dar įdomesnė, nors ir slidi bei daugiaprasmė.² Sunku nusikratyti įspūdžio, kad ją sudėtinga suvokti tiesiog todėl, kad nėra aiškaus apibrėžimo – tačiau „K-Hole“ mėgaujasi šiuo daugiaprasmiškumu ir bando sumėtyti pėdas teigdami, kad Normkorui „galimi nesusipratimai – tai galimybė užmegzti ryšį“. Sąvoka iš dalies regisi miglota ir dėl to, kad nuo Elementaraus elgesio pasukę prie Normkoro, „K-Hole“ analizę ir diagnozę išmaino į spekuliaciją ir prognozę: išnagrinėję šiuolaikinę sociokultūrinę būklę, kurią charakterizuoja masinė individualumo gamyba (Mass Indie), ir egzistuojančius atsakus į ją (Elementarų elgesį), jie imasi keblesnės užduoties – pasiūlyti naujas kultūrines strategijas, kaip su tuo susidoroti. Perspektyvų kaitės tarp Elementaraus elgesio ir Normkoro ašis yra kitoks požiūris į skirtumo ir vienodumo santykį ir, aišku, kitokia normalumo samprata. Kaip minėjau anksčiau, Elementarus elgesys, pasak „K-Hole“, „priartėja“ prie vienodumo, tačiau jo „neįvaldo“, o Normkorui, regis, pavyksta tai, kas nesiseka Elementariam elgesiui. Ir vis dėlto, kaip vienodumą ir normalumą apibrėžia Normkoras?

Kad būtum „tikrai normkorinis“, teigia „K-Hole“, „turi suprasti, kad normalumas neegzistuoja“. Taigi, kitaip nei *Elementarus elgesys*, Normkoras nesivadovauja mintimi, kad esama atpažįstamo normalumo, kurį galima estetizuoti. Tačiau jeigu normalumas neegzistuoja, ką reiškia „vienodumas“ ir kaip jį įvaldyti? Štai čia glūdi Normkoro esmė: paradoksaliai benormis vienodumas. Vienodumą, pasak „K-Hole“, apibrėžia ne santykis su vyraujančia tendencija, atpažįstamu normalumu, – tai daugybinė, „situacinė“ kategorija. Būti normkoriniu reiškia prisitaikyti prie savitų bet kokio konteksto, su kuriuo tenka susidurti, normų, užuot apsimetus, kad tas pats vienodumas tinka visiems, kitaip tariant – kad visi keliai veda į Normalumą. Taigi, tvirtina „K-Hole“, „Normkoras diferenciacijos procesą vertina iš netiesinės perspektyvos.“ Jam artimesnis elgesys, prisitaikantis prie „situacijos čia ir dabar“. Kaip yra pasakęs vienas iš grupės narių, aiškindamas šią sampratą naujienų portalui „Huffington Post“, „K-Hole“ požiūriu, tai reiškia būti tinkamu konkrečiai situacijai“. ³ Kitaip tariant, priimti kitus tokius, kokie jie yra, ir leisti pasroviui, įsiliesti: „Net jei nežinai futbolo taisyklių, Pasaulio futbolo čempionate gali užsikrėsti minios įniršiu.“

Kad būtum „tikrai normkorinis“, teks išsiugdyti chameleono gebėjimą prisitaikyti prie bet kokios situacijos ir įsijausti į kiekvieną, panašiai kaip Woody Alleno Zeligas perima savo sutiktųjų bruožus.⁴

Taigi, „K-Hole“ supratimu, Normkoras reiškia „ne išskirtinumą, o prisitaikymą“ ir žymi posūkį nuo „skirtumu paremto šaunumo prie postautentiško šaunumo, kuris teikia pirmenybę vienodumui.“ ⁵ „K-Hole“ tvirtina, kad toks elgesio pokytis atveria kelią į ryšį ir bendrumo formas, leisiančias išvengti izoliacijos žabangų, kurias paspendė Mass Indie kultūros iškeltas reikalavimas diferencijuotis.

Mass Indie kultūra (o drauge – ir Elementarus elgesys) kuria „žinančiųjų“ klikas, o Normkorui tikrasis žygdarbis – tai užvaldyti ryšių užmezgimo potencialą... Normkoras siekia laisvės, kurią suteikia neišskirtinumas. Čia išsilaivinimas – tai niekuo neišsiskirti ir per prisitaikymą pasiekti bendrumą.

Taigi, „K-Hole“ požiūriu, išaukštindamas vienodumą, o ne skirtumą, Normkoras ryšį vertina labiau nei individualizmą ir nutraukia bet kokias sąsajas su visa Mass Indie logika ir diferenciacijos poreikiu. „Normkoras“, rašo jie, „nenori laisvės tapti kuo nors. Normkoras nori laisvės būti su bet kuo.“ Jį grindžiantis etosas – tai *būti kartu*, užuot *buvus ypatingu*. Toks atsakas į Mass Indie, pasak „K-Hole“, yra veiksmingesnis nei tiesiog pasisavinti normalumą kaip kraštutinę diferenciacijos ribą, turint omenyje, kad šiuolaikinėmis sociokultūrinėmis sąlygomis nuoseklų ir tariamai „autentišką“ individualumą palaikyti darosi vis sunkiau ir reikalauja vis daugiau ir daugiau pastangų:

„Kadaise buvo įmanoma būti išskirtiniu ir išlaikyti unikalius skirtumus bėgant laikui... Bet internetas ir globalizacija viską sumovė <...> Individualumas anuomet buvo kelias į asmens laisvę – būdas gyventi gyvenimą kaip nori pats. Tik tie norai darosi vis labiau specifiniai ir kuo toliau, tuo labiau mus izoliuoja.

Kitaip nei Mass Indie izoliuojanti atskirtis ir Elementaraus elgesio pseudo-vienodumas, Normkoras „nesideda esąs aukščiau žeminančio bendrumo.“

Nežiūrint to, „K-Hole“ tvirtina, kad atsikračius pasenusiais individualaus „autentiškumo“ modeliais ir pasirinkus bendrumo galimybes, kurias suteikia vienodumas, asmenybė nenublanksta prieš normą. Viena iš „K-Hole“ steigėjų Emily Segal interviu žurnalui „New York“ pastebėjo: „Tai reiškia ne būti paprastu ar atsisakyti individualumo tam, kad taptum prėska, vienu ar keliu, [bet priimti vienodumą] kaip ryšio galimybę – o ne kaip požymį, kad praradai savo tapatybę.“ Anot „K-Hole“, vienodumas ne nutraukia asmens ryšį su pačiu savimi, bet paskatina bendrumą su kitais. Ir iš tikrųjų, *Normkoro* sampratos, kaip ją apibrėžia „K-Hole“, šerdis yra esminis santykio tarp manęs ir kitų pokytis – *Elementarus elgesys* yra jo simptomas, o *Normkoras* – sprendimas: „Kadaise žmonės gimdavo bendruomenėse ir turėdavo atrasti savo individualumą. Šiandien žmonės gimsta individais ir turi atrasti savo bendruomenes.“

Normkoru „K-Hole“ vadina tokias individo pastangas surasti bendruomenes. Vadinas, Nors Normkoras yra individualizuojančių sąlygų produktas, „K-Hole“ tos sąlygos reiškia ne susvetimėjimą, bet galimybę užmegzti naujus ryšius, puoselėti naujus bendrumo jausmus, atrasti naujas bendruomenes. Be abejo, mintis, kad nebėra vienos, monolitinės sociokultūrinės srovės, suteikiančios išraišką vyraujančioms kultūros normoms, bet greičiau – daugialypiai nuo situacijos priklausantys normalumai, tam tikru mastu atspindi vis sudėtingėjančias socialines tikroves, lydinčias visus globalizacijos derinius. Tačiau nereikia nė sakyti, kad perprasti santykį tarp skirtumo ir vienodumo, individualumo ir bendruomenės, bendrumo ir izoliacijos daugialypėse bendruomenėse yra gerokai sudėtingiau nei mėgautis sporto šakomis nežinant jų taisyklių. Štai čia ir prasideda problemos.



TV kanalas „Channel4“ ima interviu iš Prezidento Aleksandro Lukašenkos, šioje dalyje – apie diktatūrą Baltarusijoje, pavadinimu „Slaptai apie paskutinę Europos diktatūrą“, 2014, <http://www.channel4.com/news/undercover-in-europes-last-dictatorship-belarus>; titrai kadre: „...kai girdžiu apie tai kalbant, galvoju, kad geriau būti diktatoriumi nei gėjumi.“

Kitokio normalumo? Taip, ačiū

Kad ir kokia įdomi, dažnai – patraukianti būtų „K-Hole“ plėtojama analizė, ji iškart sukelia gausybę esminių problemų. Ko gero ryškiausias trūkumas yra tai, kad nors tekste „Jaunimo mada: pranešimas apie laisvę“ glaustai, it *PowerPoint* prezentacijoje pristatoma įvairių popkultūros darinių klasifikacija – *Alternatyva*, *Mass Indie*, *Elementarus elgesys*, Normkoras – čia į popkultūrą žvelgiama it tai būtų autonomiška sritis, apsaugota nuo platesnės socialinės, ekonominės ir politinės dinamikos. Žinoma, teksto įžangoje kalbama apie globalizaciją ir interneto suklestėjimą, randame nuorodų ir į pastarųjų metų finansinę krizę užuominose apie Bumerango kartą ir pasipiktinusių mokslų daktarus, dirbančius greito maisto restoranuose „Subway“, – tačiau pagrindinės kategorijos daugiausia aprašomos it egzistuojant socialiniame vakuume. Sociologiniu požiūriu paviršutiniškas pasakojimas apie popkultūrą pats savaime nėra problema, turint omenyje, kokiame kontekste pasirodė šis tekstas – juk „K-Hole“ nelaiko „Jaunimo mados“ akademine studija su jai deramu griežtumu ir juo labiau – politine teorija. Ir vis dėlto, jie ryžtasi kibti į pagrindinius sociologijos klausimus apie kintantį santykį

tarp skirtumo ir vienodumo, individualumo ir bendruomenės. Žinant, kas jiems rūpi ir kad jie patys, beje, savo praktiką vadina kvazisociologine ar antropologine, nesugebėjimas atsižvelgti, kad ir paviršutiniškai, į socialines jėgas ar bent parodyti suprantant, kad jos egzistuoja, nuvilia. Dėl to dažnai viliojančios provokacijos praranda didelę dalį jėgos.

Vienas ryškiausių padarinių – tai, kad „Jaunimo madoje“ piešiamas visuomenės vaizdas yra kone visai nepalietas galios sąvokos. Tai, kad socialinė galia apskritai egzistuoja galime suprasti tik iš vienintelės netiesioginės užuominos, kai paminimos varžybos dėl socialinio statuso. Nė nereikia sakyti, kad sociokultūrinės diferenciacijos – ypač jos kintančio sąryšio su individualumu ir vienodumu – aptarimas, kuriame neimama domėn socialinė galia ir tai, kaip ji struktūroja sąlygas, kuriomis ir dėl kurių tokia diferenciacija įgauna formą, iš savo objekto turės menkai naudos. Ypač krenta į akis tai, kad „Jaunimo madoje“ nediskutuojama apie skirtumus, kurie įgyja priešiškas formas. Tiesa, „K-Hole“ sutelkia dėmesį į popkultūros darinius, atsiradusius *Alternatyvos* aušroje, – vadinasi, pagrindinius opozicinius popkultūros judėjimus. Vis dėlto socialinio antagonizmo atgarsiai popkultūroje nesibaigia vien nostalgiskai paspalvintu nudvėsusiu pankroko arkliu. Antagonizmas ir toliau iš pamatų veikia popkultūros sanklodą, kad ir naujai. O „K-Hole“ aprašomoje visuomenėje priešiškus regisi išlygintas, visi skirtumai taikūs, išskyrus nedidelę trintį varžybose dėl socialinio statuso ar ribas tarp klikų – ir netgi šias galima sušvelninti empatija, pagrindiniu *Normkoro* afektu. Tik apvalę savo socialinio lauko aprašymą nuo socialinės galios ir antagonistinių skirtumų, „K-Hole“ gali tarti, esą įmanoma laisvai klajoti nuo vienos situacijos prie kitos ir prisitaikyti prie jų normų nesustabdytam proplaišų, kliūčių ir sluoksnių, tokių ryškių mūsų visuomenių sanklodose.

Toks ribotas požiūris į socialinį lauką, be abejo, veikia ir „K-Hole“ plėtojamą šiuolaikinių diferenciacijos problemų analizę bei siūlomus sprendimus. *Mass Indie* problemos, kurioms tenka pagrindinis dėmesys „Jaunimo madoje“ (tai, kad diferenciacijai tapus priverstine, jos nauda kuriant individualumą ar socialinį statusą sumenko, o žmonės liko išvargę ir izoliuoti), pačios yra platesnio masto socialinių procesų simptomai, tačiau kai platesnis kontekstas neimamas domėn, jos atrodo kaip vien vidinės popkultūros dinamikos rezultatas. Net jeigu *Mass Indie* problemos yra antraeilės, nereikia, kad jos neturi sociokultūrinės reikšmės ar juo labiau – kad jos yra netikros problemos. Be abejo, teiginys, kad diferenciacija tapo *status quo* ir dominuojančių jėgų bendrininke, nėra naujas (nežiūrint daugelyje kairiųjų teorijų tebegajos minties, kad institucinė galia ir skirtumas yra nesutaikomi priešai). Daugelyje analizių, skirtų subjektyvacijos formų pokyčiams, kurie lydėjo neoliberalios ekonomikos išplitimą, – ypač kalbant apie vis svarbesnį vaidmenį, tenkantį afektyvaus ir kognityvinio darbo rizikingosioms (*precarious*) formoms, –

šis aspektas buvo vienaip ar kitaip išryškintas. Ką beskaitytume – Deleuze'ą apie kontrolės visuomenes, Federici apie socialinę reprodukciją, Boltanskį ir Chiapello apie meninį darbą ar verslą, ar Berardi ir Fischerį apie kognityvinį darbą ir psichinę sveikatą – visus sieja bendra gija: dėmesys tam, kaip kapitalas funkcionuoja, gamindamas subjektyvybes, ir tarpsta, išsunkdamas pridėtinę vertę iš socialinio skirtumo ir individualizacijos, jau nekalbant apie svarbų ideologinį vaidmenį, tenkantį savęs aktualizavimui, išaukštintam ir supriešintam su kolektyviniu identitetu.⁷ Tačiau nesugebėję aprašyti *Mass Indie* platesniame socioekonominių ar politinių jėgų kontekste, „K-Hole“ praranda galimybę popkultūrinį diferenciacijos poreikį išanalizuoti platesnių neoliberalios subjektyvacijos modelių kontekste – o tai savo ruožtu galėjo sukelti didesnę susidomėjimą šiuo fenomenu ir paskatinti įtikinamesnes reakcijas. Iš tiesų, apibrėždami *Normkorą* per santykį su prisitakymu ir empatija – savaime puikius bruožus – „K-Hole“ rizikuoja savo pasiūlymą pasmerkti lėtinei diferenciacijai vartodami kalbą, kuri greičiau daugina neoliberalios subjektyvacijos ideologinius Trojos arklius, o ne kovoja su jais. Juk pagaliau ta ideologija, kuri primygtinai reikalauja prisitaikančios darbo jėgos ir skelbia ekonominę afektų, tokių kaip empatija, svarbą, kaip tik ir kreipia subjektyvaciją izoliuojančios diferenciacijos linkme. Vadinasi, net jeigu *Normkora*s ir padės šiek tiek atsipūsti nuo *Mass Indie* sukeltos įtampos prijaukinės subjektyvacijos mėsmalę, jis vis tiek liks priklausomas nuo socialinių jėgų, labai panašių į tas, kurios minko šiuolaikinę liumpenburžuaziją.

Socialinio chameleono, kuris klajodamas nuo situacijos prie situacijos randa ir asmeninę laisvę, ir bendrumą su grupe, įvaizdis, žinoma, yra patrauklus, tačiau jis išsiduoda, kad remiasi nuo galios apvalyta skirtumo samprata. Šis *normkorinis* nomadizmas, regis, teigia esą prisitaikyti pasiruošęs ir empatiškas individas bus palankiai priimtas bet kokioje situacijoje. Tačiau vargu ar socialiniai skirtumai ir grupiniai tapatumai yra vien asmeninio stiliaus kūrimo produktas – veikiau juos formuoja galios svyravimai tarp grupių. Vargu ar atsirastų bent vienas individas, pritampantis bet kokioje situacijoje, kad ir koks prisitaikantis bei empatiškas jis būtų. Nors daug kas priklauso nuo asmenybės, lygiai taip daug lemia ir rasė, lytis, lytinė orientacija bei kiti galią sutelkiantys veiksniai. O *Normkora*s, panašu, remiasi prielaida, kad tokie veiksniai neturės įtakos individo gebėjimui įsilieti į skirtingų normalumų įvairovę. „K-Hole“ *Normkoro* sampratą grindžia vertinga įžvalga, kad esama skirtingų vienodumo versijų, tačiau nepaisoma to, kad ir skirtumai ne visi yra tokie patys. Šis aspektas turbūt mažiau jaudina tuos, kuriems ne taip dažnai tenka atsidurti, kitų akimis, ne toje subjektyvių barikadų pusėje. *Normkora*s, užšovęs paradines duris vyraujančioms tendencijoms, pro užpakalines prastumia žodžiais neišreikštą nuostatą, kas yra normalu (balta oda, vidurinė klasė).⁸

Šie teksto trūkumai ir silpnosios vietos vargu ar turėtų stebinti, turint

omenyje, kad šiuolaikinės visuomenės aprašymo ašis „Jaunimo madoje“ išlieka individas. Bendruomenė čia iš esmės ignoruojama, nežiūrint to, kad kintantis bendruomenės santykis su individu čia turėtų būti pagrindinis. Nors „K-Hole“ teigia, kad šiandien individai turi surasti savo bendruomenes – o „K-Hole“ su šiuo procesu sieja *Normkorą* – kokios bendruomenės formos galėtų būti atrastos ar sukurtos šiose individualiose paieškose, smulkiau neaptariama. Panašu, kad vieninteliai kolektyviniai subjektai, laikomi vertais paminėti, yra uždarnos *Mass Indie* klikos. Paskutinė „Jaunimo mados“ eilutė šiek tiek paaiškina tokį kone išskirtinį dėmesį individui: „*Normkoras* – tai kelias į taikesnį gyvenimą“. Taigi, panašu, kad *Normkoras* visų pirma laikomas saviauklos strategija, užtikrinančia asmeninę sielos ramybę. Todėl jį lengviausia suprasti kaip mechanizmą, padedantį individams susidoroti su įtampa, kurią kelia socialiniai ir kitokie skirtumai, o ne kaip būdą reaguoti į platesnę socialinę situaciją. Tokiam individualistiniam pasakojimui apie socialinius santykius ne itin reikalingas socialinių normų turinys – veikiausiai todėl tekste apie tai ir nekalbama. Taip, galbūt prisitaikymas, empatija, abejingumas autentiškumui yra vertybės, bet vargu ar jos pačios savaime gali būti laikomos normomis, kad ir kaip skatintų bendrumo jausmą. Nekvestionuodami esamų normų ir nenustatydami naujų „K-Hole“, regis, su džiaugsmu priima egzistuojančias socialines normas – o gal net apsimeta, kad jų nėra. Tai vargiai padeda spręsti tikrąsias dabarties problemas, tarp jų – ir neoliberalią subjektyvaciją visomis įmanomomis formomis. Ir juo labiau negarantuoja ramaus gyvenimo.

Ignoruodami galios klausimus ir aprašydami socialinį lauką individualistinėmis sąvokomis, „K-Hole“ galiausiai lieka toje pačioje idėjinėje plotmėje kaip ir dominuojanti tradicinė nuomonė. Aišku, šis neokonservatizmas yra atsitiktinis. Galbūt skubindamiesi nuplauti sukalkėjusią kritinę teoriją, su kuria susipažino meno studijose, „K-Hole“ pasirinko populiarias konservatyvias provokacijas: *problema kyla iš pernelyg didelių skirtumų, jos sprendimas – individuali atsakomybė*. O gal teisingiau teigti, kad „Jaunimo mada“ apsistoja ties kažkuo panašaus į įtraukiantį liberalizmą, kokį įsivadavo Richardas Rorty, – kai visi sugyvena, nes autentiškumą yra pakeitęs ironiškas abejingumas. Žinoma, ironiškas abejingumas turi privalumų – kaip strategija, reikalinga individams naviguoti po daugialypes visuomenes, kuriose per vieną dieną ar vos paėjus keletą kvartalų tenka atsidurti gausybėje skirtingų situacijų. Bet ir čia remiamasi panašia prielaida, esą socialinis laukas yra neutrali vieša susitikimo vieta, vienodai atvira visiems, o ne nepastovi teritorija, kurią reikia užimti jėga. Vienodumą šlovinantis *Normkoro* pasaulis yra konsenso karalystė, kurioje sudėtingi skirtumai nustumiami nuošalėn, net jeigu vienodumas yra daugybinis.



Gisele Bündchen šaukia kitiems modeliams, bėgdama kolekcijos „Chanel SS15“ pristatymui inscenuotame proteste. Ant transparantų galima perskaityti, pvz., tokius užrašus: „Tvidas geriau nei tvidas“, „Pats būk savo stilistas“ ir „Istorija yra ir jos istorija“. Fotografija: DailyMail

„Galbūt“, kaip teigia Benedictas Seymouras, „anapus *normkoro* esama visiškai kitokio normalumo.“⁹ Galimas daiktas, kad šiais „postkritiniais“ laikais atsiranda ir kitokių normatyvumo koncepcijų, giliau perprantančių socialinę realybę. Elizabeth Povinelli paskutinioji knyga ir citata, kuria pradėjau šią esė, išryškina vieną svarbų aspektą, kurį aptarsiu kaip atsvarą.¹⁰ Povinelli ryžtingai deklaruoja, kad jeigu socialinė mintis nori daryti poveikį socialinei tikrovei, turi liautis kritikavusi egzistuojančias normas – *už tai, kokios jos yra* – ir imtis atsakomybės už alternatyvias normas – *kokios jos turėtų būti*. Ji taikliai pastebi, kad socialinė kritika gana dažnai to vengia, pasilikdama saugioje antinormatyvumo užuovėjoje. Tačiau atsisakyti kelti klausimus apie normatyvumą – tai arba nesugebėti analizuoti socialinės galios valdomų tikrovių, arba politinį efektyvumą išmainyti į intelektualinį grynumą. Kritinė teorija pernelyg dažnai tenkinasi pastaruoju pasirinkimu, taip prisidedama prie reakcinių jėgų įsigalėjimo. Įsiterpus į socialinės

galios darinius neverta tikėtis, kad liksi švariamomis rankomis ar išsaugosi išorinę poziciją: pradėti visada tenka mėšlino socialinio lauko vidury, kurį dalija galia ir antagonizmas ir kur nėra vilties, kad sudėtingi skirtumai išsispręs savaime. Stojus vienu normų pusėn ir prieš kitas – nesvarbu, ar gintumei egzistuojančios „būties konfigūracijos“, ar mėgintum įtvirtinti naujas – teks grumtis, kaip aiškiai įvardija Povinelli, ir pasinaudoti jėga: „Verčiau stumdysiuos čia nei ten... Verčiau pakišu petį čia nei ten.“¹¹ Vadinasi, Povinelli požiūriu, stoti į kovą reiškia imtis atsakomybės už tai, kad sėkmingai įgyvendinta būties konfigūracija, kurią mes siekiame padaryti normatyvine, gali „sunaikinti tai, kas egzistavo anksčiau“. O antinormatyvumas, būdingas tokiai didelei socialinės minties daliai, jos nuomone, kaip tik ir gali reikšti – o gal net visuomet reiškia – „atsisakymą priimti šią atsakomybę“.¹²

Povinelli normatyvumo samprata nenumato jokio išėjimo iš konfliktinės kovos teritorijos, bet tuo ji ir yra patraukli. Kitaip nei plokščiame, neutraliame, depolitizuotame *Normkoro* socialiniame pasaulyje, Povinelli normatyvumo koncepcijoje socialinei galiai ir antagonistinėms tikrovėms žvelgiama į akis. Jos analizėje socialinės normos neatsiejamoms nuo kovų tarp grupių, įsipareigojusių ginti viena kitai prieštaraujančias pasaulio tvarkos sampratas. Kad ir kokie parengtiniai, laikini, strategiškai ar prieštaringi būtų šie įsipareigojimai, juos reikia ginti arba primesti. Kad prisidėtų prie socialinių tikrovių formavimo, radikali socialinė mintis turi grįžti prie normatyvumo klausimų. Nepakaks pagrąšinti pirštu pasaulio negerovėms – reikia kurti vizijas, kaip galėtų būti kitaip. Pradėti galite sekdami paskui Povinelli į mėšlyną. Jei norite, galite avėti sportbačius.

¹ Šis tekstas yra ištrauka iš Rory Rowano straipsnio „SO NOW!: On Normcore“, publikuoto žurnale *e-flux*, Nr. 10 (58), 2014, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/so-now-on-normcore/>. Didelė straipsnio dalis skirta Niujorke įsikūrusios mados prognozavimo grupės „K-Hole“ teksto „Jaunimo mada: pranešimas apie laisvę“ („Youth Mode: A Report on Freedom“) ir jame pristatomų sąvokų aptarimui ir kritikai – *vertėjos pastaba*.

² Toliau tekste terminą *Normkora*s rašysiu iš didžiosios raidės, norėdamas pabrėžti, kad kalbu apie tai, kaip jį supranta „K-Hole“, ir atskirdamas nuo plačiosios vartosenos, kurią reikš *normkora*s iš mažosios raidės.

³ „The ‘Normcore’ Fashion Trend“, interviu su Seanu Monahanu, *HuffPost Live*, 2014-03-06, <http://live.huffingtonpost.com/r/archive/segment/5318afacfe344420bc0009fb>.

⁴ Už palyginimą su Zeligu dėkoju Suhailui Malikui.

⁵ Pristatymas ir empatija yra pagrindinės tokios išvaizdos vertybės – „Jaunimo madoje“ šie terminai vis sugrįžta įvairiomis formomis, kaip „prekiniai“ raktiniai žodžiai.

⁶ Fiona Duncan, „Normcore: Fashion for Those Who Realize They’re One in 7 Billion“, *New York Magazine*, February 26, <http://nymag.com/the-cut/2014/02/normcore-fashion-trend.html>.

⁷ Net ir senesniuose socialinės minties modeliuose, kaip Freudo „mažų skirtumų narcisizme“, galime atrasti įžvalgų apie ekonominės diferenciacijos burbulą, būdingą ir *Mass Indie* reiškiniui. Thorsteinas Veblenas jau išties senokai pastebėjo, kad „Davidas Riesmanas ir Vance Packardas... parodė, kad net ir plati amerikiečių vidurinioji klasė, tokia pat nieko nestokojanti ir dar tolydesnė nei Prousto aprašytieji rateliai, irgi turi savo sekcijas. Tarp visiškai vienodų, tačiau supriešintų vienetų atsiranda vis daugiau ir daugiau tabu ir atskirties. Nereikšmingi skirtumai pasirodo besą milžiniški ir sukelia neprognozuotus padarinius. Individualią būtį vis dar valdo Kitas, bet šis Kitas – tai nebe klasinis engėjas, kaip marksistiniame susvetimėjime. Jis – tai kaimynas anapus tvoros, mokyklos draugas, profesinis varžovas. Kitas juo patrauklesnis, kuo jis arčiau Paties.“ Cituojama pagal Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994. Už citatą dėkoju Evai Kenny.

⁸ Nereikia pamiršti ir kitos aplinkybės: kad gali būti iš tiesų daug žmonių, netgi prisitaikančių ir empatiškų, kurie nenori ieškoti bendrumo ar susitapatinti su bet kokia situacija – arba dėl to, kad apskritai yra linkę laikytis nuošaly, arba todėl, kad kai kurios situacijos grindžiamos tokiomis socialinėmis normomis, į kurias jie negali įsijausti arba su kuriomis nenori taikstyti. Nebūtinai esi nekenčėjas, jei negali smagiai leisti laiko su rasistais. Ne kiekvienas ir ne visada su džiaugsmu sutiks skanduoti už priešininko komandą.

⁹ Benedict Seymour, „Notes on Normcore“, Mute, May 29, 2014, <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/fifth-column/notes-normcore>.

¹⁰ Kitas reikšmingas šiuolaikinio grįžimo prie normatyvumo atvejis – tai filosofų Ray Brassier ir Rezos Negarestani darbai. Ir Brassier, ir Negarestani mėgina sukurti racionalistinį visuotinės emancipacijos planą, pagrįstą kolektyviai kuriamų ir tikslinamų normų samprata – jos valdo elgesį panašiai, kaip racionaliuose eksperimentuose, drauge testuodamos žmogaus kaip tokio ribas. Šių teoretikų glaustos racionali normatyvumo sampratos atrodo patrauklios ir įtikinamos, tačiau man dar reikės gerokai įsigilinti, kad suprascčiau jų reikšmę politinės subjektyvacijos procesams ir atvirkščiai – tik tuomet galėsiu užtikrintai aptarti jų politinę vertę.

¹¹ Nereikia nė sakyti, kad jėga čia neturėtų būti vien ar iš esmės suprantama kaip fizinė, nors kalba ir verstu taip manyti. Tokia terminologija veikia norima pabrėžti, kad visuomenė nėra neutrali ir veikti joje reiškia įsitraukti į lošimą su kitomis jėgomis, iš kurių dalis gali priešintis – simboliškai, fiziškai, ideologiškai, teisiškai ir pan.

¹² Povinelli kalba apie „kitų išnaikinimą“, dargi „be priežasties“, ir netgi teigia, kad būties formų išnaikinimas gali

būti sulygintas su būties formų žudymu. Aš pats nepritardčiau tokiai kalbai apie kitų socialinių grupių išnaikinimą, turėdamas omenyje šios idėjos istoriją. Tačiau aš sutinku su Povinelli mintimi, kad nepripažinę galios savo veiksmuose ir nepasiryžę prisiimti atsakomybę už savo indėlį į tai, kas mūsų požiūriu turi būti greta kitų būties formų — be jokio transcendentinio ar pirminio reguliuojamojo pagrindo — mes įstrigsime diskurse, paralyžiuoti paniekos tiems, kurie išdrįsta taip elgtis (kokia pažįstama šiandien ši negalia!).