

Ctrl+P

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Passing and Peril in the
Information Super Highway/P2
Kóan Jeff Baysa

Reflections of Contemporary
Chinese Society: Representations of
Chinese Identity in Cyberspace/P4
Jiayi Young

Kenkanryu (The Hate Korean
Wave): Images of Hatred and
Racism in Japanese Manga/P7
Mina Cheon

Self-representations of
Malaysian Bloggers/P10
Roopesh Sitharan

How We Have Represented
Ourselves as Ctrl+P thus Far/P14
Judy Freya Sibayan

Ana Prvacki/Interview/P17
Judy Freya Sibayan

Term: *Mehrwert*/P20
Marian Pastor Rocés

Snap/P22
Varsha Nair

Asian Contemporary
Art Fair Advertisement/P23

Review
Or/P24
Sara Haq and Olivia Altaras

Ctrl+P News
Ctrl+P12 Launched in
Edmonton Alberta, Canada/P27

Ctrl+P at the
Rotterdam Dialogues: The Critics/P27

**About Ctrl+P's Contributors
and Editorial Board/P28**

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Part one of this issue are papers presented at the International Symposium on Electronic Art invited-panel "Passing and Peril in the Information Super Highway" held in late July in Singapore. ISEA, "initiated in 1988, is the world's premier media arts event for the critical discussion and showcase of creative productions applying new technologies in interactive and digital media. Held biannually in various cities throughout the world, this migratory event is being held in Asia for the second time in its history..."¹

As "escalating numbers and increasing awareness of online sting operations, videogaming avatars, and social networking websites, have come under hard scrutiny," the panelists were tasked to discuss "issues of identity and race in cyberspace within the contrasting perspectives of their own diverse cultures."² The panel was chaired by independent curator Kóan Jeff Baysa, who invited the four panelists, three of whom decided to read papers. Often presentations given in such events are almost always never made public beyond the panel discussion itself. It is for this reason that these papers are being published in this issue. Jiayi Young reflects on Chinese contemporary society by focusing on representations of identity found in Internet games. Mina Cheon writes on "Kenkanryu, the Hate Korea Wave" First found in Japanese mangas, it is now deeply rooted and alarmingly gaining ground in cyberspace. Roopesh Sitharan focuses on self-representations of Malaysian political bloggers. Issue editor Judy Freya Sibayan also took part in this panel. Not having done any studies on self-representation and identity construction in Asian websites, Sibayan stayed close to home and discussed how Ctrl+P has represented itself thus far as an online art journal.

The second part developed around Ctrl+P's decision to accommodate an advertisement for the very first time. Silverlens, an art gallery in Manila currently participating in a good number of international art fairs, mentioned Ctrl+P to the organizers of the Asian Contemporary Art Fair New York as a possible publication open to advertising them. No payment was made for the one-page ad of ACAF NY in this issue. Instead they offered to do an exchange. For their one page ad in this journal, Ctrl+P gets a page in their catalogue and a booth in the fair. We first had second thoughts about the offer primarily because Ctrl+P is a not-for-profit enterprise. But since there was no financial remuneration and because we didn't want to forgo being promoted in the context of an art fair, we did the ad but not the booth. Finding the situation timely considering the current world financial crisis, we took it as an opportunity to address head on the problematics of the art market and the value of art.

Ana Prvacki talks on her art practice as an "act of functional benevolence,"—an act of gifting. While Varsha Nair offers an image to represent her deep sadness faced with the situation of losing close artist-friends who have compromised their practice in the wake of commerce co-opting their art-making. "Term: *Mehrwert*" is Marian Pastor Rocés' review of *On (Surplus) Value in Art* by Diedrich Diederichsen recently published by Witte de With and launched during the "Rotterdam Dialogues: The Critics," a symposium organized by Witte de With and attended by some thirty editors and writers of established and newly established art journals from all over the world. Not surprising, many of the discussions focused on the place of the critic now that the art market more than ever has circumvented critical discourse in the valuation of art. One of the editors of Ctrl+P was invited to take part in the panel on how new media is changing the readership of art criticism. Sibayan did not hesitate to make the point about Ctrl+P operating within a gift economy—publishing as cross-border goodwill hunting.

Finally, Ctrl+P in its promise to do reviews had Sara Haq and Olivia Altaras talk via Skype contributing the conversation as a review of *Or*, an exhibition by a group of artists called The Readymaids.

1. Retrieved from <http://www.isea2008singapore.org/index.html> October 18, 2008.

2. Retrieved from http://www.isea2008singapore.org/conference/conf_panels.html#koan October 18, 2008.

Passing and Peril in the Information Super Highway

KOAN JEFF BAYSA

Lisa Nakamura (Kolko, Beth E., Lisa Nakamura, and Gilbert B. Rodman, Eds. *Race in Cyberspace*, New York: Routledge, 2000), analyzed advertising strategies employed by hi-tech corporations that create concepts of cyberspace that replicate, restructure, and reinforce Anglo centric narratives of colonialism, consumerism and tourism, deeply embedded in the American dominant ideology.

Fast forward to ISEA Singapore 2008, where the panel addressed cyberidentity and racial “passing”—within Asia social networks, internet gaming—MMORPGs, sting operations, identity theft and internet gaming-associated deaths.

Text-based bodies created with keyboards and cursors perform in cyberspace through internet users who represent themselves in virtual mutations, ranging from physical trait augmentation to complete dissociation from their corporeal selves. The online visible presence, or avatar, can be an idealized projection of individual identity or the result of experimentation with a new identity. Fabricating personae in internet drag and passing are means to an end: taking a holiday from real identities and locales, lurking as a cyber tourist, or prowling the web for netsex.

MMORPGs (massively multi-player online role-playing games)

- Gamers don't necessarily go to virtual worlds to fly from reality
- John Sula (*Identity Management in Cyberspace*, 1996) believes that one must strive to gain some form of (positive) consciousness in the construction of identity to become a better person online
- Although some of the avatars are wholly idealised, a number also fairly resemble the player in real life

Refracting Rather Than Reflecting

- Racial difference are digitally representation of
- The new frontier of cyberspace forces the redefining of borders and what now constitutes the Other.
- Race and cyberspace are not biological creations but virtually constructed phenomena, shaped by sociopolitical and cultural interventions.
- The Internet more than “mirrors” ideology from the culture at large.
- Its interfaces “refract” more than “reflect” because of its distinctive aspects as a communication technology
- Its interfaces make some identity choices unavailable/less available

The Erasure of Race in Cyberspace?

- The perception of a default white well-educated middle class English-speaking heterosexual male.
- Profiles (e.g. neo confederate websites) are actively constructed.
- Kali Tai: “in cyberspace, it is possible to completely and utterly disappear people of color” in a phenomenon that she terms “whitining.” (*The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*; *Wired Magazine*, October 96).
- “Simulated killings of other races have become a form of ‘entertainment’ in computer games being sold via the internet.” (Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission)
- The presence of hate groups and community activism online proliferate and co-exist in the Internet.
- “The faith in colorlessness is one of the great racist conspiracies of the late twentieth century, and a vision of a raceless future is a racist future.” (Tara McPherson, USC)

In the arguably democratizing, levelled playing field of cyberspace in the West, the typical Internet user is white, male, middle class and well educated. Asia, China, Japan, South Korea and India lead the way in numbers of internet users. The new frontier of cyberspace forces the redefining of borders and what now constitutes the Other.

Changing Demographics

- Asian Americans are no longer classified as disadvantaged.
- Multiple surveys confirm that females outnumber males online in the US, with “no significant gender gap in Internet usage.”
- Asia, China, Japan, South Korea, and India lead the way in numbers of Internet users.
- After US Americans, the Chinese have become the second biggest user group.
- The majority of content on the net is no longer in English.

Through the escalating numbers and increasing awareness of online sting operations, identify theft, MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) avatars, social networking websites (My Space, Facebook), and virtual worlds (Second Life), the issues of social plasticity problematising identity and race in cyberspace strain prior definitions.

Facebook is a social networking website launched on February 4, 2004. Due to the open nature of Facebook, several countries have banned access to it including Syria and Iran. The Syrian government cited the ban was on the premise that the website promoted attacks on authorities.

MySpace is a popular social networking website offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos for teenagers and adults internationally. The 100 millionth account was created on August 6, 2006 in the Netherlands and a news story claimed 106 million accounts on September 8, 2006, and the site reportedly attracts 230,000 new registrations per day. The Chinese version of MySpace, launched in April of 2007, has many censorship-related differences from other international versions of the service. Discussion forums on topics such as religion and politics are absent, and a filtering system that prevents the posting of content about Taiwan independence, the Dalai Lama, Falun Gong, and other “inappropriate topics” has been added. Users are also given the ability to report the “misconduct” of other users for offenses including “endangering national security, leaking state secrets, subverting the government, undermining national unity, and spreading rumors or disturbing the social order.”

Second Life is an Internet-based virtual world video game launched on June 23, 2003. At the end of March 2008, approximately 13 million accounts were registered, although there are no reliable figures for actual long term consistent usage. In January 2008, residents spent 28,274,505 hours there; so on average about 38,000 residents were logged on at any particular moment. Second Life is currently available in several languages; the main ones at the moment are English, German, Japanese and Korean.

What hegemony? Which perspective?

The digital divide, created by differences in Internet access and computer literacy, is but one border. For example, a divided egalitarianism is created by the gap in computer skills between different users that results, for example, in the creation of either an inferior or formidable avatar, and consequent viability or elimination online.

The Digital Divide, Responsible Digital Media, and Requisite Skills for Internet Access and Use

- Access to the technology may not be as critical as having the skills of what to say, how to say it, and how to communicate it to others
- The internet is still a textual medium; poor reading skills are the primary barriers to access. One has to be a good reader, be verbally confident, and undaunted by pages of type.
- In the early 1980s, the maldistribution of computers in educational environments significantly shaped the Anglocentric orientation of the internet.

One Laptop Per Child

- Mission Statement: To create educational opportunities for the world's poorest children by providing each child with a rugged, low-cost, low-power, connected laptop with content and software designed for collaborative, joyful, self-empowered learning.
- OLPC was founded by Nicholas Negroponte with a core of Media Lab veterans, but quickly expanded to include a wide range of exceptionally talented and dedicated people from academia, industry, the arts, business, and the open-source community
- The laptops are sold to governments, [40] to be distributed through the ministries of education with the goal of distributing "one laptop per child". The operating system and software is localized to the languages of the participating countries.
- The Internet and the web have a role in building and maintaining minority communities
- There is always the challenge of providing greater access to digital media for disadvantaged groups in cyberspace.
- The gap in computer skills can result in result in the creation of an inferior or formidable avatar, and consequent viability or elimination online.

This is further complicated by the fact that real money can be made in MMORPGs. Morbidity and mortality have been reported related to prolonged playing periods, with real deaths in China and South Korea attributed to dehydration, exhaustion, with possible drug abuse and deep vein thrombosis; convulsions have been reported, as well as violence: suicide, murder, and child neglect.

Internet addiction is a common disorder that is proposed to be classified as an obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorder with its own DSM-V code (diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders).

Other issues to be explored:

- How does religious tourism manifest itself?
- When race is detached from the body, what is the utility of race as a category?
- How does cyber-racism manifest itself in Asia?
- What is the effectiveness of community activism on the internet?
- How is the Internet policed differently in Asia?

Reflections of Contemporary Chinese Society: Representations of Chinese Identity in Cyberspace

JIAYI YOUNG

This paper looks into Chinese identity representations in cyberspace, focusing on those found in Internet games—representations that are reflections of contemporary Chinese economic, social and political conditions. Despite extreme state control over the media, the Internet has become a medium of self-expression, and a way of realizing the dreams of those who engage in these cyber games.

According to the iResearch Consulting Group, the first professional market research company in China, the latest release of the "2008 Second-Quarter Chinese Internet Game Market Monitoring Report"¹ indicates that the second quarter of 2008 Chinese Internet game market size grew 66.6% over the same quarter last year, a 9.2% growth over the previous quarter breaking for the first time the 5 billion Yuan current earnings. The report indicates a rapid growth in comparison to the same period last year. The report further predicts that the Chinese Internet Game market size will reach 20 billion Yuan in the third quarter of 2008.

These astonishing figures are attributed to China's unique economic, social and political climate. Economically, the needs of China's huge population are increasing

demand and prices for energy and food around the world. The value of its currency is now again raising the value of the US dollar. Its embrace of capitalism has sent economic ripples across the country. One of the things one sees presently in the streets of China is that everyone seems to be engaged in some form of economic activity. This phenomenon is everywhere in major metropolitan areas in China. Teachers, artists, factory workers, officials, policemen, and students practically all have a second career in addition to their first occupation, or, as extensions to their first careers.

This phenomenal profit-based activity drives the exploration of all aspects of economic enterprise. The Internet Game business is no exception. My first case study is the work of Ms. Anshe Chung in Second Life (SL). Second Life® is a 3-D virtual world created by its Residents. Since opening to the public in 2003, it has grown explosively and today it is inhabited by millions of Residents from around the globe. Currency used in Second life is called Linden dollar. Today, 1 US dollar is approximately 166 Linden dollars.²

Anshe Chung was born on March 26, 2004 in virtual China. Her salary is 2 million Linden dollars in 30 months. She is the first “Virtual Millionaire.” She operates in SL in real estate development, virtual currency exchange, and commodity production. Anshe is now one of the largest property developers in SL. She started from a modest business, operating a personal escort service. She then moved to the production and the selling of avatar animation files. She then used her earnings to start a real estate business and eventually owned hundreds of Sim-lands. Because of her success in SL, Anshe has been featured in mainstream media and in magazines such as *Fortune*, *Wired* and *Business 2.0*.

Anshe’s real world first name is Ailin. Ailin Chung was born in Hubei, China in 1973. Anshe Chung Studios recently opened a new office in real world Wuhan, China, where it employs 50 people full-time at, what she says, better-than local average wages. These 50 real world employees power her virtual exchange. At age 18, she was chosen to perform Communist party speeches.³ Today, Anshe Chung Studios expresses the following mission: “Above all, Anshe stresses the importance of community in her vision of the virtual worlds and work spaces that she and others are pioneering together. Her goal is not merely to build a corporation, but to foster the development and growth of online communities, and to help make the entry of real world corporations into Second Life and other regions of the metaverse as frictionless as possible. It is her philosophy that Second Life is above all a social space, and that corporate entrants that respect the community will be the most successful.”⁴

Not in his wildest dreams would Mao have envisioned China’s economic freedom found in recent years as vividly real as those in stories such as Ailin’s. Mao’s single-minded struggle to transform China has been achieved at a terrible cost. It is unknown how many people died in the aftermath of the Communist conquest in 1949, or during the oppressive Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. Intellectuals, along with landlords and bourgeoisie survivors have been the chief victims of these purges. In the 35 years following the end of the Cultural Revolution, under Mao dictatorship, China has enforced a simple dogma on its people: a great nation can survive without intellectual freedom.

There are terrible consequences in so bold an effort to create a “perfect,” homogeneous society; one of which is described by none better than Karl Marx—alienation—which he believed to be a systematic result of capitalism. There are signs of such alienation in Chinese society—in the form of finding surcease not in doctrine but in alcohol, crime, and today in Internet Games. China has relaxed and loosened its control over its people after the passing of its recent leaders, but the process of doing so has proven traumatic to the Chinese people who have been exposed to other ways of life, other modes of liberty.

Online gaming in China represents one of the largest and fastest growing Internet business sectors in the country. With 220 million Internet users currently active in the PRC, the country now has the largest online user base in the world.⁵ According to statistics provided by the China Internet Network Information Center, as of January 2007, 31 million Chinese Internet users engage in some form of online game play. The average online gamer in China is relatively young—18 to 30 years old, male, and has at least completed a secondary level of education.

The compulsive use of computer and video games is considered as a psychological addiction. Sometimes the addiction will manifest itself as part of excessive Internet use. Most notable is the use of Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs), which are one of the most prevalent forms of game playing in China. Instances have been reported in which users play compulsively, isolating themselves from society and focusing almost entirely on online-game achievements rather than on life events.

In Jinzhou, China, Xu Yan died after playing online games for over 15 days during the Lunar New Year holiday. An unnamed 30 year-old died in Guangzhou, China after playing for three days straight. During China's week-long National Day holiday last month, a young girl died after playing World of Warcraft for several consecutive days. Her nickname was "Snowy" and her passing was acknowledged in an online funeral service by fellow WoW gamers.⁶

The rising tide of Internet-addicted youth has prompted the government to install anti-addiction game systems and to ban new Internet cafes in 2007, which are seen as breeding grounds for social delinquency. According to the eight Chinese ministries including the General Administration of Press and Publication, these are measures taken to force teenagers to go offline to rest or study. But China's Internet addiction is not merely a product of an imperfect regulatory system.

2500 years of Confucius influence focusing on human morality places education as the most important method to reach a higher state of being. Chinese parents' expectations of their children are traditionally very high, sometimes too high. With education perceived by many parents as the only means of advancement in an ultra-competitive society of 1.3 billion people, some lock their children up to force them to study and ask teachers to assign their children extra homework. The pressure can be too much for some children, particularly if they fail. "They escape to the virtual world to seek achievements, importance, satisfaction, and a sense of belonging."⁷

With the recent economic boom in China, a complex psychology of "sense of belonging" coupled with "the long-awaited moment for redemption" has contributed to the recent social phenomena of *hai gui pai*—the phenomenon of foreign educated and naturalized citizens moving back to China to reside. Other than being able to claim "a piece of the pie," signs of patriotism are showing a strong comeback in Chinese society. This is in direct contrast to the post Cultural Revolution era of the late 1970s to the early 1990s. Confronted with politically controversial international issues, many Chinese citizens choose to side with the government and believe in its propaganda. The Internet has become a new vehicle to express their support.

The Senkaku islands are known in Japanese as the Senkaku islands and by China and Taiwan as the Diaoyu islands. These five tiny uninhabited islands, which lie between Taiwan and the southern Japanese islands of Okinawa, in the East China Sea, are claimed by all three countries and are believed to be rich in oil resources. On June 26th, 2007, a Second Life player "TGbus" published an article in Chinese Second Life titled "Diaoyu Island in Chinese Second Life." Here is a translated excerpt:

I purchased a private island in SL, I named it the Diaoyu Islands. I am not a narrow-minded democratic SARS patient. I only hope that through SL, I want to publicize the fact that the Diaoyu Islands belongs to the Chinese people. On Diaoyu Islands every inch of land will not be sold... Diaoyu Islands welcome the visit of Japanese friends. Japanese flag in any shape or form is forbidden on the islands.

We welcome your visit or use of the land on the Diaoyu Islands. We also hope that every member of the Chinese SL community would care and support the islands. Because she will always belong to the country of China, and will forever belong to the Chinese descendants."

It is said that Second Life was created while Philip Linden was soaking in the bathtub. He imagined a massive virtual landscape linked by computer servers. Chinese identity represented in Second Life, and in many other Internet games is not just an imaginary to the Chinese. It is a real way to freely express and actualize a self.

1. iResearch Consulting Group, 2008-7-14.

2. 2008 Linden Research, Inc.

3. The Herald Profile: Anshe Chung by Walker Spaight SLHerald on January 25, 2005.

4. www.anshechung.com/include/press/press_release251106.html

5. Statistics is according to Beijing-based research firm BDA, China.

6. Articles published by vnunet.com

7. www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-03/12/content_825231.htm

Kenkanryu (The Hate Korean Wave): Images of Hatred and Racism in Japanese Manga

MINA CHEON

The popularity of Sharin Yamano's hatred manga series known as *Kenkanryu* (The Hate Korea Wave) reifies racism that exists in neighbouring Asian nations and gives affirmation to the dissemination of hatred images in cyberspace. The theoretical contemplation of racism is nothing new nor are the manifestations of images of hatred generated in Asia, but more deconstructive work can be done in considering the context of the production of such images. While there is a cultural assumption that Asia is of one race (which in itself is also a stereotype), racism in Asia exists within rivalry nations such as Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan, while superiority complex spills over to other power relations such as sex, class, and national heritage within and beyond each country. Racial prejudice is expressed in cultural anecdotes, jokes, and popular images that is unique to each nation. Moreover, stereotypes regarding the history and culture of other nations are assigned the notion of truth that separates the virtuous self from the demonic Other.

Kirk W. Fuoss's text "Lynching Performances, Theatres of Violence"¹ documents the history of lynching mobs in the United States while theorizing the idea of "lynching as performance phenomena."² Fuoss writes about lynching in relation to American history

and how people and places have been marked off and framed as a part of a rigged lynching drama. All theatrics are certainly influenced by media of that time; newspapers and postcards are used as advertisement strategies to help create the hyperbolic image of the blackman. Today, mass media continues to present the black face, Arab face, yellow face as images of hatred and furthers the rhetoric of the enemy. And the Internet is no exception; it has become a forum of uncensored playground for generating more stereotypes, racist outlets, and fantasy about the other. Just as Fuoss writes about how "there is no before-racism in US history. Nor, unfortunately, is there an after-racism,"³ the same can be said about Asia. Certainly, techno-Orientalism, which is Orientalism that is intensified through technological means, only exacerbates existing problems that have to do with race and culture.

Since its conception as a Web-comic, Yamano's *Kenkanryu* series has stirred up much grievance and controversy in both Japanese and Korean blogs and Internet forums such as *2channel* of Japan and *Joins* and *Naver* blogs of Korea. Korean daily newspaper covered the story about the popularity of the comic books extensively. *Kenkanryu* literally translates as "The Hate Korea Wave" or "Hating the Korean Wave." The comic series was originally created as a response to the co-hosting of the 2002 World Cup by Japan and Korea where soccer fans of both countries were

in heated rivalry. The narrative begins with Korean players depicted as cheaters and get away with it. The story is told by teenagers in high school since the manga targets this age group. Further, the interactions depicting racial conflicts always take place in a high school setting in Japan.



Us and them in *Kenkanryu*. Retrieved from <http://londonkoreanlinks.net/2007/12/02/us-and-them-in-kenkanryu/>

The manga series depicts the Japanese frustration with Korea and the competition between the two countries in sports and in economic and technological developments of each country. The comic series is mostly readily available via Japanese Amazon.com, and there are three *Kenkanryu* series to this date—a manual on how to read them systematically; another is a racist edition about China entitled *Introduction to China*, and two Korean versions of *The Hate Japan Wave* in response to *The Hate Korea Wave* which obviously refers to the proliferation of Korean pop culture known as “The Korean Wave”—the current wave of Korean films, music, and soap operas that have hit the international market and ignited the attention of Japanese fans. As an example, the 2002 KBS TV drama *Winter Sonata* was a sensational hit when aired on NHK, the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation network.

In 2005, when *Kenkanryu* was published as a book by Shinyusha Co., Ltd, Norimitsu Onishi wrote an article entitled “Ugly Images of Asian Rivals Become Best Sellers in Japan” for *The New York Times*.⁴ Here, Onishi refers to Yukichi Fukuzawa’s 1885 text “Leaving Asia”⁵ as a way to comment on Japanese cultural supremacy which has its roots in Japan’s national propaganda towards modernity. The main ideology presented in “Leaving Asia” is a declaration that Japan must become Westernized to get ahead thus the necessity to “leave” the rest of Asia behind. While also commenting on how the Westerners are not fully equipped with the Japanese mentality, Fukuzawa insists that Japan’s supremacy is unlike that of any other Asian nation, hence it is the nation most capable of outdoing the West. Fukuzawa writes:

recent movement of westerner’s global rapid action is remarkable. Japan, as a national mind, despite the fact that the country is located in Asia, accepted the modern civilization of the West. However, an unfortunate thing for Japan is that it has the two neighbouring countries. One is Sino [China], another is Chosun [Korea]. It might possibly because we are just racially different from the beginning or the educational level is different. The difference of the national mind between Japan and the two countries is just tremendous... In this actively progressive era of the modern civilization, the education [there] is limited to Confucianism where they learn superficial knowledge, and in practice, their attitudes seem not only disregarding the scientific principles, but also morally collapsing while they have no self-examinations ut arrogance.

One can suppose that the ideas presented in “Leaving Asia” encouraged some of the violence during the Japanese colonization of Korea between 1910-1945 and cultural prejudice in Japan against Koreans or Chinese people remains to this day. Fukuzawa, who is currently revered as the intellectual father responsible for making Modern Japan is a household name in Japan; his face is imprinted in the 10,000 Yen bill. While there are extreme nationalists in both countries, there is also the other effect—people denying the conflict and simply problem all together. The case of Dokdo (an Island made of smaller Islands and also known as Takeshima in Japanese) is a good example of how national agenda is used to further the hatred between the two countries. The summer of 2008 was a time when Korean news and media coverage was all over Dokdo, which happened after the Koreans signalled their discontent over American beef imports and over the opening of FTA with the US. With over three months of non-stop demonstrations in Seoul, there was an overnight shift of focus with Koreans earlier expressing anti-American sentiments and now to anti-Japanese sentiments. The reasons for the demonstrations were many; from the beef problem to, the Koreans remembering the 2002 incident when US tanks accidentally ran over Korean civilians, all rekindling the old frustrations over Dokdo.

Furthermore, with the patronage of a Korean pop singer Kim Jang-hoon who sponsored a freelance Korean public relations expert Seo Kyong-duck, Dokdo campaigns appeared in The New York Times advertisement pages. The first advertisement published on July 9, 2008 headlines “Do You Know?” and continues with “For the last 2,000 years, the

body of water between Korean and Japan has been called the 'East Sea.' Dokdo located in the East Sea is a part of Korean territory. The Japanese government must acknowledge this fact." Part of the controversy is that Korea calls the body of water East Sea while the rest of the world knows it as the Sea of Japan.

Dokdo, covered by all the Korean broadcasting news is also the topic of TV special features that tell stories of occupancy and travel as a way to campaign for nationalism in relation to the issue of territorial rights. The Internet provides a virtual tour of the island and Korean flags are planted in Metaverse of Second Life. With such explosive media coverage, the patriarchal and masculine conservatism that exists in Korea is perpetuated by origin theory, rediscovery, and the taking of ownership of Dokdo. The types of media produced reflect Korea's imperialistic and colonizing interests.

Further, ever since Seoul's local slogan has been "The World to Seoul and Seoul to the World" the national campaigning for increasing its international profile has been done through sporting events which is another way of outdoing other nations. Hence, Korean nationalism with the thrust to be international stimulates imperialistic national sentiments and project which is often done through sporting, technological, and economic competitions.

Edward Said writes in his book *Culture and Imperialism*⁶ on America's world dominance. He describes how America is founded on imperialistic principles and that its recent intervention in other nations was undertaken for the sake democracy and freedom. Said writes: "American 'greatness,' to hierarchies of race, to the perils of other revolutions...have remained constant, have dictated, have obscured, the realities of empire, while apologies for overseas American interests have insisted on American innocence, doing good, fighting for freedom.

Likewise, Japanese racism towards Koreans fuels nationalistic pride not only in Japan but also in Korea. The relationship between the countries in conflict is echoed and reifies racial hierarchies that keep Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan apart, not to mention the racial tensions between the northern and southern regions of Asia. But when we consider cyber culture and the Internet, we assume that everyone is connected transcending all kinds boundaries. Lisa Nakamura writes in her book *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet*⁷ about cyberculture as being marked as normatively white.⁸ And, the essentialist global-villager rant that cyber technology has brought about multi-cultural unity and democracy giving license to what Nakamura points out as "false sense of racial equality—or post-racial cybermeritocracy—*cosmetic multiculturalism*."⁹

The new culture of flexibility via technology and virtual travelling heightens the tourist gaze, which is the male gaze of voyeurism as well as the colonizer's gaze. While the Internet expands virtual exotica, racial and sexual stereotypes on the Internet keep the phallogocentric master narrative active and alive. Even prior to the Internet, Rolf Olsen's 1974 *Shocking Asia* documentary film epitomized the voyeurism of exotic Asia. The film is narrated by a man with a deep voice and walks the viewer through the far East showing places of wonder and people engaged in sexual perversion. While gratifying the viewer's desire to know the unknown, the film reifies hegemonic European culture as being civilized in comparison to the "Orient's" culture which shocks the viewer. Footages of sex change operations, S&M, primitive rituals and sacrifice are all pronounce as being things that happen over *there* (the Orient.) Today's image of pan-Asia has been taken over by rhetoric of Asian culture in relation to Zen-preciseness and gangster criminality as represented in techno-futuristic sci-fi and cyber films such as *Blade Runner*, *Black Rain*, and the *Matrix*, and even in the recently released animation film *Kungfu Panda*. Whether or not the past or present imaging of Asian culture is produced in the East or in the West, at the moment, they are being consumed and exploited globally.

1. Kirk W. Fuoss, "Lyching Performances, Theatres of Violence" in *Text and Performance Quarterly*, Volume 19, Number 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association, January 1999), 1-37.

2. *Ibid.*, 201.

3. *Ibid.*, 200.

4. Norimitsu Onishi, "Ugly Images of Asian Rivals Become Best Sellers in Japan" in *The New York Times* (Nov 19, 2005). <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/19/international/asia/19comics.html>

5. Yukichi Fukuzawa, "Leaving Asia," in Yukichi Fukuzawa: Datsu-a Ron, Sparking Korea. <http://koreasparkling.wordpress.com/datsu-a-ron/an-argument-for-leaving-asia-or-datsu-a-ron-translation-attempt-part-1/>

6. Edward w. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1993), 8-9.

7. Lisa Nakamura, *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (New York; London: Routledge, 2002).

8. Nakamura writes about how on the Internet the dismissal of race is an assumption of whiteness as the norm. She writes that Internet games and role playing that "the decision to leave race out of self-description does in fact constitute a choice: in the absence of racial description all players are summed to be white," in *ibid.*, 38.

9. *Ibid.*, 21.

Self-representations of Malaysian Political Bloggers

ROOPESH SITHARAN

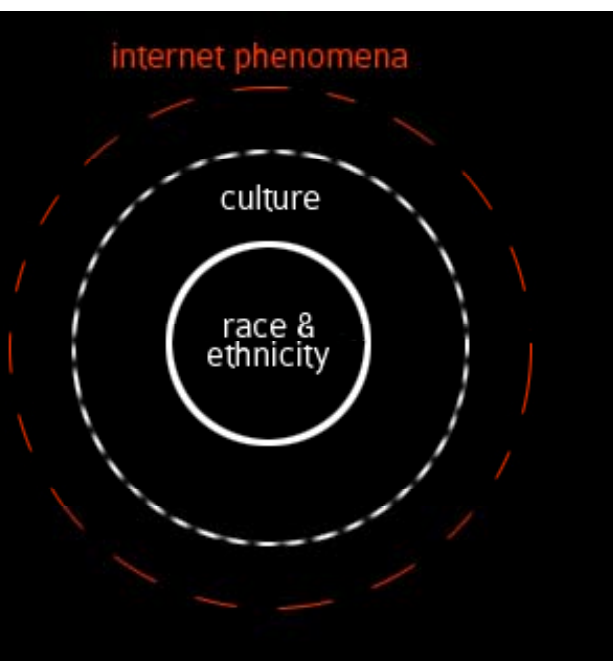
In 1993, the New Yorker published Peter Steiner's comic strip to epitomized the Internet experience. In this comic strip, an image of a dog is seen browsing the Internet while in conversation with another dog seated nearby. This image is accompanied with a phrase that states, "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog." Steiner drew the comic strip to envision the ability of the Internet to conceal the attributes of individuals engaged in online communication. Such concealment obscures identity and self-representation allowing for anonymity to emerge. The Internet does not impose any protocol of self-identification although the access point of any individual could be traced.¹ Such traces will only enable the geographical location to be revealed but not the identity of the individual accessing the World Wide Web. This particular characteristic of the Internet has forced certain nations to implement laws that require mandatory identification of individuals accessing the Internet.²

Although the Internet was created with no one able to control it, some countries are enforcing laws with the intention to diminish the obscuring nature of the Internet as it provides for a secure space for individuals to share, distribute and acquire information online.³ Here I use the word "obscurity" to mean a condition of one being concealed in terms of one's identity.⁴ Indeed the unknown identities of two individuals communicating online is constantly scrutinized and examined by each other in an attempt to figure out each other's identity and to render the other less obscure. These uncertain conditions stimulates their imagination as they attempt to predict and unveil each other's identity. The serendipitous accessing of information in the Net also sparks the imagination of Internet users. Thus the Internet is perceived as a medium that transcends culture and identity barriers amongst individuals, nations and in the case of Steiner's comic strip, even amongst species.

In the context of Malaysian society, race and ethnic distinction is crucial for the construction and possession of very specific identities as formulated in the Malaysian constitution. The society functions by recognizing each citizen's race and ethnic identity in order to distinguish each other as being either Malay and non-Malay citizens. Consequently such identification allows for certain groups of citizens to gain benefits from the government.⁵ This is due to the legally constituted social contract agreed upon by the different races in Malaysia when it gained its independence from colonial rule.⁶ Such

formulation of identity has been the backbone of modern Malaysian society as every aspect of citizenship and sovereignty is governed on the distinction between who is of Malay and non-Malay descent. As a legally multi-cultural society made up of three major races, namely Malay, Chinese and Indian, the races mingle and live peaceably as a single nation.⁷ But now it could be argued that with the advent of the Internet in the 90s,⁸ the concrete identity formation of the Malaysian society could possibly be superseded by the obscuring of identities allowed by medium.

I offer a chart of what I consider the three tiers of Malaysian identity formation. At the very core is the solid identification of an individual through physical appearance such as race, ethnicity and skin color as written in our constitution. Second is a loosely-intact communal identity as a nation that multi-cultural and pluralistic and third is our online identities that are formed and appear completely fragmented and obscured when citizens engage in online communication. Returning to the idea of obscurity stimulating the imagination, such potential of the Internet is clearly articulated by Arjun Appadurai as he explains that now "ordinary people have begun to deploy their imaginations in the practice of their everyday



lives.”⁹ Appadurai argues that images generated by technology and media sparks our imagination as we are now made to believe in possibilities.¹⁰

The phenomenon of the Internet powering the imagination was made apparent during the recent Malaysian general elections.¹¹ The *Malaysia Surf Magazine* reported, “Over the last few years, the same level of playing field has reached the area of human discourse. Individuals have created and occupied space in the area previously the sole domain of traditional media. Through the use of medium like blogs and related new media tools, they have become increasingly important voice in society.”¹² Indeed the alternative platform for information dissemination created by Malaysian bloggers had a huge impact in the outcome of the recent general elections.¹³ Extending the theoretical framework of Arjun Appadurai, the influence of blogging is what I would call as the “voice of imagination.” Online blogs have become a core alternative news source for the Malaysian citizen.

As a consequence it is now valuable, thus essential for bloggers to accurately represent themselves online. One of the major blogging site that gets a high number of visitors is the *Malaysia Today*.¹⁴ Raja Petra Kamaruddin, a member of the Selangor royal family maintains the blog. What he started as personal entries of political commentary evolved overtime due to massive response to his writings. Today the blog has evolved to become a portal that nests his writings as well as those of others. He serves as a facilitator for open discussions on Malaysia’s political and social issue. He is an active member of the Parti Keadilan Rakyat better known as PKR¹⁵ and still writes critically regarding the current political developments in Malaysia.

Simultaneously Marina Mahatir, daughter of the ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahatir Mohammed also gets plenty of visitors to her blog named *RantingsbyMM*.¹⁶ She is well known as someone who leads many non-govermental organizations such as the Malaysian AIDS foundation. She also writes for a column in a Malaysian local newspaper. Most of her commentaries are based on the article published by the Malaysian mainstream newspaper, where she would go line by line in dissecting the article and elaborating on the meaning and context of the particular text. Her approach is casual as she formulates questions regarding texts published in the daily newspaper developing a more critical readership. On the other hand, Ooi Chuan Aun better known as Jeff Ooi started a blog called *Screenshots*.¹⁷ Initially an IT consultant, he started blogging to discuss general issues relating to Malaysia. Overtime, he wrote more on politics as he moved from being a tech-consultant to a politician. His blog received the Freedom Blogs Award¹⁸ in the Asian category. He is perceived to be a pioneer in the Malaysian blogosphere.

By examining how these bloggers represent themselves online and offline, it is clear that politics is the central point of engagement that contributes to their presence in the blogosphere of Malaysia. My diagram of identity formation will help us examine how the bloggers cast themselves online as they engage in the Malaysian political landscape. Blogs reside in the outermost ring, as identities constructed in the Net can be concealed—obscured, but the blogger has the option to reveal his “constitutional” identity—his race and ethnicity indicated as the center or the innermost ring of the diagram. In this view, the blogger has the option to reveal his or her identity as defined in the Malaysia constitution—the core legal identity of Malaysian citizen based on race and ethnicity. In the case of the Malaysian blogosphere, the unveiling of one’s constitutional identity legitimizes his writing which consequently gains a wider readership. This in return reveals the inward movement from obscurity to the core of race politics.

Indeed, the juncture of unveiling one’s true blogging identity is turned into a grand occasion of

Political bloggers Marina Mahatir and Jeff Ooi





Blogger Raja Petra with Minister of Parliament YB Dato' Mukhriz Mahatir of Jerlun

meeting their public/readers. These events event are organized and announced officially in all the blogs.¹⁹ Ministers from the government bodies were also invited to participate and interact with the bloggers and the public.²⁰ Images from the event were later posted on the blogs and were vastly distributed online. Jeff Ooi put his credibility as a blogger to the test as he ran for a ministerial post in Jelutong, Penang in the general elections.²¹ He joined the opposition party Democratic Action Party (DAP) and used his blogger persona to engage, communicate and to convince voters to elect him to office. The Internet became a tool for gaining the needed support. He was accepted to be a responsible citizen who openly criticizes the government through blogging. Today, he blogs live from the parliament.

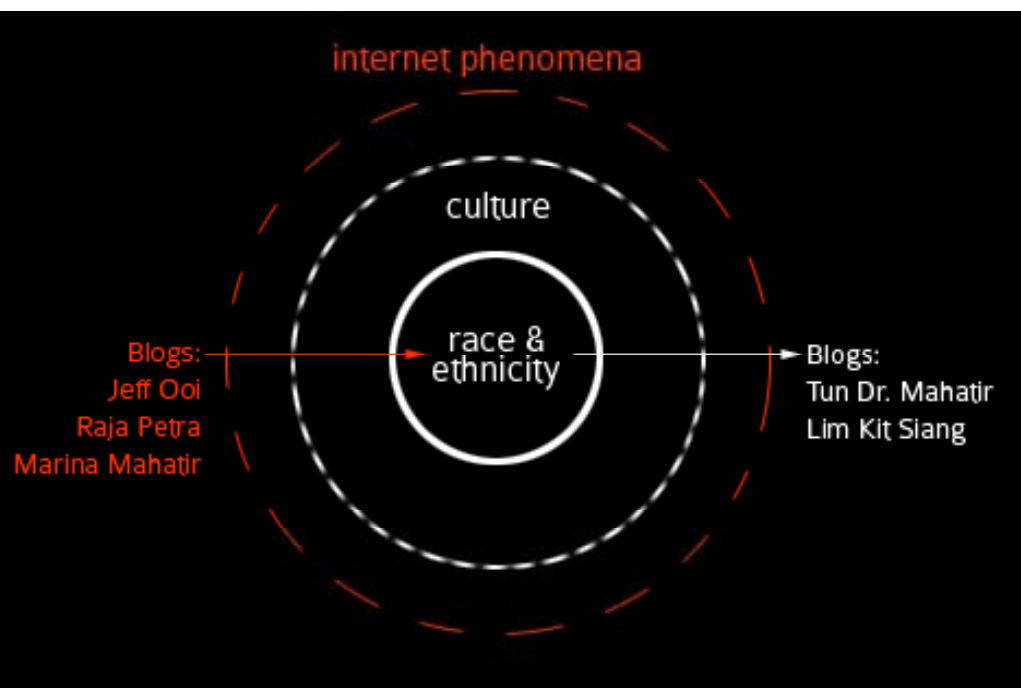
There is however the case of Raja Petra who was arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA)²²

for publishing various statements on his blog that allegedly ridiculed Islam.²³ The arrest was made because Raja Petra openly declares his constitutional identity on his blog enabling the police to track his activities. This open declaration of his identity could arguably be perceived as having backfired on him. Conversely opinions about the harshness of the government action against him were mixed. They wondered why the harsh action if the information he published were false. Marina Mahatir on the other had also uses her blog to comment on the current ruling government. Her writings are perceived as to be neutral based on her identity as the daughter of the Ex-Prime Minister. Obscurity provided by the Internet platform is used by these bloggers to reiterate and even to reaffirm their own personal identity be it in the form of racial and political association or their rights as Malaysian citizens.

One might wonder why obscurity has such strong influence in establishing the identity and credibility of a blogger. Credit should be given to the ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia- Tun Dr. Mahatir Mohammed and the opposition party (DAP) Chairman Lim Kit Siang. These two prominent politicians have embarked on the journey in utilizing the blog as a platform to discuss, critique and voice their opinion regarding Malaysian politics. Tun Dr. Mahatir Mohammed runs a blog named “chedet” and constantly writes about the National Front party, the current ruling government that was once led by him.²⁴

Meanwhile Lim Kit Siang reports the debate that takes place in the parliament as well as other articles on a blog that is named after him.²⁵ In this instance, we see the outward movement from the core of race politics to the outer obscuring-space of the Internet by turning to the blogosphere to voice their opinions. In order for them to gain attention, both politicians openly declare their identity on their respective blogs. By doing so, the act of declaration is established as a necessary step in gaining credibility and recognition.

These two distinct groups of bloggers coexist in the Malaysian political scene. One group moving outward from the core race based identity politics to the obscuring space of the Internet with the other group moving the op-



posite direction. In this environment, both groups have understood the function of the obscurity provided by the Internet and how it has served them. The reason why these bloggers declare their identity is highly debatable, but they have decided to reveal themselves to the public. Given such declaration, it must be concluded that the caption “On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog” must be rewritten particularly in the context of the Malaysian political blogger. It should read: “On the Internet, you want everyone to know you’re a dog.”

Notes:

1. Lawrence Lessig suggests “no one knows” really who the Internet users are because Internet protocols do not force users to identify themselves, although local access points such as a user’s university may; but this information is privately held by the local access point and not part of the Internet transaction itself. Lessig, Lawrence “Code: Version 2.0” Basic Books, 2006, p. 35.
2. In China, the Rules on Internet Security Protection Technology Measures issued by the Ministry of Public Security in December 2005, obligate Internet Service Providers and work units that use certain technologies to develop the capacity to track and record the movements of individuals using their service to go online. “Rules on Internet Security Protection Technology Measures”, *Article 13*. Translated by CECC. How Censorship Works in China: A Brief Overview. August 2006. <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/china0806/3.htm>>
3. I am referring to the statement by John Gilmore that elaborates the potentials of the online medium to liberate an individual from gender, race, age and appearance thus providing the freedom for creative expression, be it legal or illegal. Jordan, Tim. “The virtual individual,” *Cyberpower: The Culture and Politics of Cyberspace and the Internet*. Routledge, 1999, p. 66.
4. *Webster Dictionary* s.v. “Obscurity” <<http://www.dictionary.com>>
5. When Malaysia gained its independence, its economy was owned by almost 29 percent by the Chinese; less than 2 percent by the Malays, who were largely outside the money economy; less than 1 percent by the Indians and about 69 percent held mostly by the British and other foreigners. (Malaysia introduced the 20 years 1070-90 New Economic Policy in late 1969. The NEP pledged to eliminate the identification of race with economic function and place of residence; eradicate poverty irrespective of race, color and creed; and ensure that the Malays and other indigenous races own control and manage at least 30 percent of the nation’s corporate economy by 1990. Fernandez, Joe. *Revisiting Malaysia’s Social Contract*, 01 July 2008. <http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1295&Itemid=159>
6. The contract, a simple unwritten arrangement fostered between Malays and non-Malays by the founding fathers, brought about a rare unity among the multiracial peoples of British Malaya and expedited the advent of independence on August 31, 1957.
7. I am referring to Nobel Laureate in Economics winner Joseph Stiglitz. He writes: “Malaysia’s success should be studied both by those looking for economic prosperity and those seeking to understand how people live together, not just with tolerance, but with respect and working together. *Malaysian success story provides inspirational lesson for all*, 20 September 2007. <<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2007/09/20/2003379625>>
8. BBC online news reports “Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammed, has opened a new multimedia garden city known as Cyberjaya which he says will be the nerve centre of the country’s high-technology development. The latest of Malaysia’s prestigious mega-projects will have cost an estimated \$15bn by the time it is completed in the next millennium. Designed to be the Malaysian answer to Silicon Valley, it will be intelligent, high-tech, low density and environmentally friendly.” “Cyberjaya opens for e-business” *BBC News, UK- World: Asia-Pacific*, 8 July 1999 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/388795.stm>>
9. Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimension of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 5.
10. As mentioned by Arjun Appadurai “What this means is that audiences throughout the world experience the media themselves as a complicated and interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screens and billboards. The lines between the ‘realistic’ and the fictional landscapes they see are blurred, so that the further away these audiences are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct ‘imagined worlds’ which are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other ‘imagined world’.” Appadurai, Arjun *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, <http://www.intcul.tohoku.ac.jp/~holden/MediatedSociety/Readings/2003_04/Appadurai.html#Media>
11. I am referring to the 2008 Malaysian General Election that was held on March 8, 2008. Refer <<http://www.spr.gov.my/>>
12. *Will the Internet decide the next election?* Malaysia surf magazine, issue 08, March 2008 <<http://www.surf.com.my/cms/>>
13. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said remaining silent was no longer an option. He acknowledged that the government had overlooked the need to engage the new media, which was a new dimension in shaping public opinion, in the recent general election. Shahanaaz, Habib “Government to engage bloggers in cyberspace” *thestar.com.my*, 28 May 2008 <<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/5/28/nation/21376112&sec=nation> >
14. Refer <<http://www.malaysia-today.net>>
15. Parti Keadilan Nasional (now Parti Keadilan Rakyat)—the party was set up in response to the arrest of former Malaysian deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in 1998. This party leads the opposition coalition called Pakatan Rakyat against reigning party, Barisan Nasional made up of major race based political parties such as UNMO, MCA and MIC.
16. Refer <<http://www.rantingsbyymm.blogspot.com/>>
17. Refer <<http://www.jeffooi.com>>
18. Reporters Without Borders gave this award to Jeff Oii for his brave move in allowing a comment on his blog for discussing issues related to Islam in spite of being threatened with imprisonment. *Blogs lauded in ‘freedom awards*, 17 June 2005 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4099802.stm>>
19. On 28th June 2008, an official event was held at a place called “BlogHouse” to gather all the bloggers to interact and meet the general public, along with the newly elected Ministers.
20. Refer <<http://zorro-zorro-unmasked.blogspot.com/2008/06/celebrating-100-days-with-our-elected.html>>
21. From Jeff Oii’s campaign blog, <<http://parliament.jeffooi.com/>>
22. The ISA was enacted under Article 149 of the Malaysian Constitution, which allows for a law so enacted to be legal even if it contravenes various other constitutional provisions, which guarantee liberty of the subject under Article 5. Under Section 73 of the ISA. The police may detain anyone for interrogation for 60 days on the suspicion that “he or she acted or is about to act or is likely to act in any manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia or any part thereof.” Saravanamuttu, Johan, *Report on Human Rights in Malaysia* <<http://www.aliran.com/oldsite/hr/js1.html>>
23. Raja Petra reportedly incited Muslims with a commentary on the article “I promise to be a good, non-hypocritical Muslim” which contained sentences that ridiculed Muslims besides allowing a commentary which ridiculed Islam and Prophet Muhammad with reference to the article “Not all Arabs are descendants of the Prophet” published in the “Malaysia Today” blog. *Raja Petra Detained Under ISA*, nsonline, 12 September 2008 <http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Friday/Frontpage/20080912144550/Article/index_html>
24. Refer <<http://www.chedet.com>>
25. Refer <<http://blog.limkitsiang.com>>

How We Have Represented Ourselves as Ctrl+P thus Far

JUDY FREYA SIBAYAN

This paper focuses on how we at Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art have represented ourselves thus far both in our website of and in the journal itself. Ctrl+P is the online journal I publish and co-founded two years ago.

Thirteen years ago Mark Poster in his essay “CyberDemocracy: Internet and the Public Sphere” observed “Many areas of the Internet extend pre-existing identities and institutions.... The Internet then is modern in the sense of continuing the tradition of tools as efficient means and in the sense that prevailing modern cultures transfer their characteristics to the new domain.”¹

Thus, we might ask, in publishing Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art in the Net, are the pre-existing identities of our editorial board members and contributors or the institutional practice of publishing art discourse merely being extended by and within the Net?

Or are there new identities being constructed, new assemblages of self-constitution being inscribed or a new publishing/discursive praxis being evolved now that this new technology as Poster concludes, “puts cultural acts, symbolizations in all forms” and the production of meaning “in the hands of all participants thus radically decentralizing the positions of speech, publishing, filmmaking, broadcasting, in short radically decentralizing the apparatuses of cultural production.”² Poster further points to the development of new individual and collective voices and interactivities which are the building blocks for new groupings, and asks what kind of subject speaks or writes or communicates under these new conditions?

On the release our third issue, Ctrl+P was cited in artconcerns.com by Australian arts writer Gina Fairley. And I quote her, “...void of cool interface gadgetry, Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art is a clean and simply designed site and I would recommend it to anyone interested in sinking their teeth in for a good chew of Filipino art...I am terribly excited about this initiative—to publish quality writing from a place that economically struggles to sustain”³ critical art writing. And in artshub.com.au of which Fairley is editor, she writes “I want to introduce you to a fabulous zine out of the Philippines. Ctrl+P steered by the dynamic Judy Freya Sibayan and delivered as a pdf. Where there is no arts publishing, local art magazine or funding for such activities, this is a serious journal for local writing that takes a global perspective.”⁴

Fairley now a Ctrl+P contributor herself noted three important things about how we represented ourselves: 1) that we can exist with very meager financial resources; 2) that we can exist producing locally but circulated and framed globally; 3) that we are serious in our goal to produce art discourse in response to the dearth of critical art writing in the Philippines.

In our first issue we wrote that “while the writers of Ctrl+P are largely academe-based, we also take care not to write in an esoteric “artspeak” jargon which only a few can understand. On the other hand, we also do not want to water down our criticism and sacrifice rigor for comprehensibility. By writing in Ctrl+P, we wish to achieve a balance between these two equally elitist tendencies (artspeak and writing reductively so we can be understood), knowing fully well that this negotiation is one fraught with peril. But as we walk this perilous tightrope, we also focus on the promise and premise of this negotiation.”⁵

Ctrl+P is what I fondly refer to as a zero-funded online art journal published as a cross-border goodwill-hunting that takes full advantage of a technology that makes possible publishing that is almost effortless and without any cost in terms of reproduction and instantaneous in terms of circulation and dissemination. Produced in Manila and published on the Web six times a year, its editorial board members multi-task as publishers, editors, writers, proofreaders and all try to promote it whenever given the opportunity.

I in particular also act as art director, circulations manager, layout artist, and production staff. And from our site one can download for free the PDF files of all the 12 issues published since April 2006. The blurb found in our masthead and in our homepage reads, “A journal of contemporary art published digitally for easy reproduction and circulation by anyone and everyone around the world.” As to our contributors and the work we do, perhaps the most overused description of who we are is that we publish gratis. All these are institutional inscriptions that Ctrl+P is produced and circulated for free.

Ctrl+P works within a global gift economy. It is an economy that allows Ctrl+P to be unabashedly “a journal of contemporary art” positioned to engage globally no matter its condition as a small-scale, zero-funded not-for-profit backyard enterprise. This insistence on working within a global gift economy has enabled Ctrl+P, to use what Saskia Sassen writing for our March 2008 issue describes as “computer centered network technologies to represent and/or enact politico-artistic projects” towards an engagement in a “new type of cross border work, one centered in multiple localities yet intensely connected digitally, globally.” She points to “the possibility of constructing forms of globality that are neither part of global corporate media or consumer firms, nor part of elite universalisms or ‘high culture’... It is the possibility of giving presence to multiple local actors/projects/imaginaries in ways that can constitute counter-globalities.”⁶

Indeed as we turn two with our recently published 12th issue, we would like to think that as we develop and are developed by a community of collaborators—a network of writers, curators, and artists now numbering 71 and coming from 18 different localities all over the world—the outcome of their contributions is the “formation of alternative networks, projects and spaces.”⁷

Early last year, taking part in the *documenta 12 magazines* project, a network of 97 journals from all over the world, Ctrl+P contributed two issues with its 6th issue focusing on one the project’s inquiry: What needs to be done in art and education? In this all-women issue, co-founding editor of Ctrl+P, Flaudette May Datuin, wrote on the editorial board and our issue contributors as “women artists, curators and organizers who are telling their own stories through narratives of presentness, (re)presence and representation. Gathered in Ctrl+P to speak and write, they do so from now/here—a place, a point of view, a frame of reference and a state of now/hereness that implicates not just geography, but also emotional, spiritual, social and psychological dis/positions. Neither center nor periphery, neither exclusively here nor there, now/here is also a platform, a source of intervention that can possibly transform the “center” through difference, dialogue, and working together in communities that may be peripheral to, but still ultimately linked to the wider world.”⁸

She continues: “When women form coalitions, travel through different time zones and realities (virtual, hyper, actual) and journey across the globe, they do so with a keen awareness of the perils of such negotiations and the need for vigilant auto-critique and reflexivity. Such a state of perpetual inquiry and debate compels us to maintain a permanent outsider status, no matter which geographical location we come from or find ourselves in. As Varsha Nair, our third editorial board member insists, “to become insiders, in many ways means to become stereotypes, to conform and pander to what’s expected, and in the process compromise the most vital tool of artistic enquiry—experimentation as a way of seeking and presenting.”⁹

Also in this same issue, all three women members of the editorial board wrote about how they have directed and continue to direct their curatorial, critical and creative energies towards initiatives that critique and challenge traditional art institutions and practices, with Ctrl+P as one concrete example of how indeed frames and sites of cultural production can be expanded.

Recently I got an email from a Filipino artist friend temporarily based in London but permanently living in Paris and who was informed about Ctrl+P by a few of her French friends in Paris because it was “of the Philippines.” Ctrl+P is thus a translocal initiative. Writing on “Decolonizing Identity in Cyberspace” Carrie Gates quotes Andreas Broekman on the translocal:

Rather than by globalization, our situation is characterized by translocality in which different local agents, individuals and initiatives, operate within a networked environment. Translocal means you are dealing with individual local situations but they are distributed within a larger geographical and cultural system. The global is locally embedded. In the best case the global is a learning process. If we want to understand the global as something that we can work with, we have to understand its forces and layers and also to understand how it is connected to the local.¹⁰

Indeed what have we learned in doing this cross-border work, centered in multiple localities yet intensely connected digitally, globally and how have we responded in turn to what we have learned by way of who we have become after two years of publishing? Precisely because of the ease, immediacy and fluidity of networking with many around the world, instead of publishing the works of mostly those from the Philippines, we fell into quite easily, working with our friends in different localities around the world and with those we found and who found us in the Net inadvertently making us work with those beyond the Philippine academic community.

Also, acutely aware that new media art hardly gets taken up and discussed in critical art journals and because Ctrl+P is a digital journal, we can and have slowly developed Ctrl+P as a space for the exhibition of and critical writing on this particular art form.

But we have yet to make this journal into a testing ground for a whole new culture and praxis of publishing that addresses very specifically the difficulties of publishing art writing and criticism in the Philippines a claim we made as one of our primary goals in establishing Ctrl+P.

Finally beyond what Mark Poster concludes as the Internet's ability to seemingly "discourage the endowment of individuals with inflated status since the formation of canons and authorities is seriously undermined by the electronic nature of texts,"¹¹ on the matter of the production of discourse as privilege, status and authority conferring, I would like to cite what we did in our *And Now China?* issue, our 11th published March this year. A year ago, guest editor Erika Tan and I attended a roundtable discussion entitled "Europe: Land of the Setting Sun?" held at the newly opened Louis T. Blouin Institute in London. Scholars and curators of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art at TATE Liverpool and Battersea Power Station "discussed the extent of artistic interaction between Chinese and European artists, the role of the Chinese Diaspora, the new geography of art and the question of a shift in cultural power eastwards in the wake of this art's much publicised market boom coinciding with an increase in institutional attention." A comment/question arose from the floor locating the global currency of contemporary Chinese art within a New World Order premised upon an era of global capitalism.

Erika and I decided to put together a special survey issue in response to the fact that with China looming as a world leader with tremendous influence over international financial markets, contemporary Chinese art, now a commodity fetish, is being made instrumental to a new hegemonic order being built by global network capital based on power that is structured by cultural capital and access to information.

In light of China-as-hegemonic force, it has become crucial to uphold the idea of the production of culture as site of struggle over power and meaning: as site of discursive formations and closures by dominant forces and by cultural producers marginalized and excluded precisely because of their project to resist, contest, evade capture and assimilation by such dominant forces. Oppositional-meaning making is now the lot and responsibility and perhaps a fatal space of those who continue to be consigned to the margins.

But while no new epistemic change has occurred, independent voices are much more difficult to sustain with China on everyone's horizon. Rejecting assimilation or eluding capture means devising a whole new language of resistance. How is this language to be shaped? Who will now speak from the margins when margins and centres are already a too-appropriated site?

We approached artists, writers, curators, scholars, critics, and cultural administrators to respond to these questions. One of the respondents art historian Thomas Berghuis reluctant at first to participate in the survey, eventually realized that because "the call for

Notes:

1. Mark Poster. *CyberDemocracy: Internet and the Public Sphere*. http://a-r-c-uk/a-r-c_Two/print_mark.html
2. Ibid.
3. http://www.artconcerns.net/2007feb1/html/essay_asian1.htm
4. <http://www.artshub.co.uk/uk/news.asp?sc=&sId=154345&sType=column>
5. http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/pdfs/CtrlP_Issue1.pdf
6. http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/pdfs/CtrlP_Issue11.pdf
7. Ibid.
8. http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/pdfs/CtrlP_AnniversaryIssue6.pdf
9. http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/pdfs/CtrlP_Issue7.pdf
10. Carrie Gates. *Decolonizing Identity in Cyberspace*. http://homepage.usak.ca/~cdg118/essays/cyber_decolonize03.html
11. Poster.
12. http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/pdfs/CtrlP_Issue11.pdf
7. Ibid.-
13. http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/pdfs/CtrlP_AnniversaryIssue6.pdf

debating what place is there for critical voices within current hegemonic interest in China and contemporary Chinese art with the debate disseminated through the open structure of an online publication, the actual shaping of the new language of resistance that is sought after in the survey has to be found in projects such as Ctrl+P.”¹²

As to the future of Ctrl+P and how it can remain a vital discursive site for the not-so-dominant, not-so-well-endowed agencies and individuals to able to take part in the crucial project of production and circulation of meanings and ideas in this era of globalization, I cite a series of questions articulated by Yong Soon Min, one of our contributors—questions that will guide us to go on doing our work: “How can we be strategic without being doctrinaire or overarching? How do we balance a self-reflexive awareness in the work, so that we are aware of the contingent nature of knowledge and subjectivity and don’t claim an omnipotent voice but, at the same time also embody a confidence and agency so that we embrace the possibility to affect change through our work?”¹³

International Symposium on Electronic Art invited-panel “Passing and Peril in the Information Super Highway.” July 28, 2008. International Symposium for Electronic Art, Singapore. Left to right: Mina Cheon, Jiayi Young, Judy Freya Sibayan, Roopesh Sitharan and Koan Jeff Baysa.



Ana Prvacki/Interview

JUDY FREYA SIBAYAN

Judy Freya Sibayan: Your work entitled “At the Tips of Your Fingertips (Towards a Clean Money Culture)” was one of the works cited by Steven Henry Madoff in his article in the September 2008 *Artforum* issue to illustrate a category of artworks which he calls ‘service aesthetics.’ He described your work: “The video is a conceptually based commercial for wet wipes that ‘launder’ money clean of germs, which was a component of a performance—a service piece, Prvacki calls it—held in the headquarters of the financial company UBS in New York.” He goes on to say that “the execution of such a work is generally intended to frame a sincere transaction with the priority of rendering an actual service—a giving something of real use to the client as an act of functional benevolence. Ana Prvacki captures this attitude perfectly.” And he quotes you: “What I do in my work responds to the scarcity of spirit, to a real generosity. It’s perfectly logical to use the methodology of the service industry. Personalization, customization, lifestyle, these are all words of generosity.” Tell us how you got started doing this kind of work.

Ana Prvacki: I am wondering how to start answering your question and this interview. I recently saw an interview of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad. He started by reciting verses from the Holy Quran in Arabic. And then went on to greet the people of America. Here is a short passage translated in English: “In the name of God, the compassion of the Merciful, hello. Hello to the people of America. The message from the nation and people of Iran is one of peace, tranquillity and brotherhood. We believe that viable peace and security can happen when it is based on justice and piety and purity. Otherwise, no peace will occur.”

I found myself moved by the gesture, even if only for the sheer protocol of it. I think service manifests as a kind of protocol, a kind of choreography of action. Services differ according to necessity and where they are needed but also according to the level of sincerity and generosity and the manner in which the various services are carried out. For me, it all started with the desire to make people happy and figuring out the best ways to promote a sense of joy and wellbeing via my art practice.

JFS: Can you elaborate on your practice of art as giving, of art as “an act of functional benevolence.”



“At the tips of your fingertips (towards a clean money culture)” installation/ service, 2007 opening of *25 Years Later: Welcome to Art in General*, UBS Art Gallery, New York, August 2007. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

AP: I notice more and more that people are shocked if they are offered something for free, whether it be a product, a gesture or a service. It is a curious phenomenon - people being shocked by benevolence! I am starting to think that benevolence could be the new revolutionary, a kind of reactionary altruism! Both in and out of the art world we seem to be falling out of practice when it comes to sharing, giving, caring, loving. It could even be problematic to use such terms within art discourse. In my conversations with Steven Henry Madoff, we discussed sincerity and generosity within art practice. It was rare and liberating for me to address such an issue with him and to articulate the lack and need for such a practice.

JFS: Who are the artists who have influenced you or have the same attitude about art as a form of giving?

AP: Jacqueline Du Pre continues to influence me over the years. From my music and theatre training

to my service-based work, she never fails to give! Of course Marina Abramovic I refer to a lot, especially the works she produced after 1989, the service and self improvement pieces using Brazilian minerals, baths, shoes, beds for thinking and dreaming with the goal of facilitating healing. Lately Cesare Pietroiusti is someone whose work I have been thinking about a lot. I relate to his practice both in terms of service as methodology and the level of generosity with which he offers it. I think he is making work that is quite seminal. And then there are some obvious parallels I think with the work of Christine Hill and Andrea Zittel, with regard to the rigor and discipline, and the methodology of their daily practice.

JFS: With the art market now circumventing critics and as Hal Foster puts it “critique is no longer needed: the commodity is its own ideology (Adorno), the market is its own accreditation,” would you consider your kind of art as perhaps a form of resistance to the commodification of culture?

AP: This question came up most recently during my participation in the recent Sydney Biennale. Tracy Clement of the *Sydney Morning Herald* brought it up and I thought that Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, the artistic director of the biennale gave a very precise answer: “....Prvacki tackles consumerism head on...Rather than complaining about it, she enters into it.”

JFS: How does your work “tackle consumerism head on” or deal with “entering consumerism”? What are some of your other works that do this? How are they a form of giving?



Music Derived Pain Killer.
Ana Prvacki. Performed at the
Sydney Biennale 2008,
Photo courtesy of the artist.

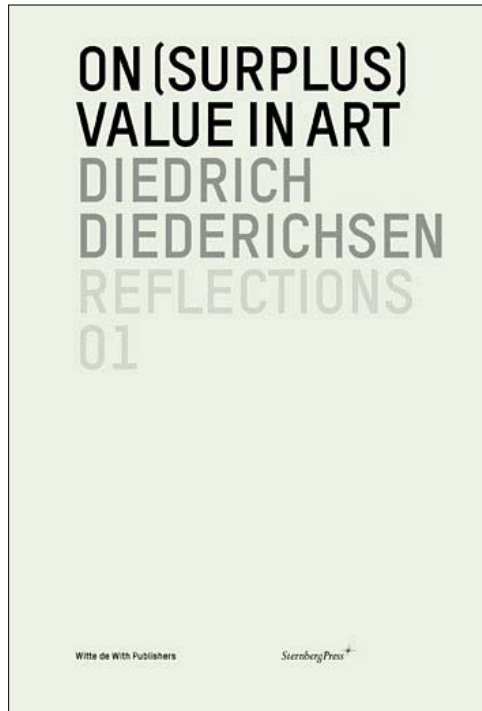
AP: All of my works have an element of free distribution. I make a “product” or perform services free of charge. I consciously use the methodology of advertising, marketing and product design in all my projects which makes for a friendly entrance into consumerism! I was just discussing this with Amy Mackie with whom I worked with on the money laundering project at the UBS bank (we distributed 5000 money laundering wet-wipes for free and offered free laundering service). She remarked that I am “providing tools” to the audience. I like the idea of enabling someone to be actively productive. From the start that has been the aim of Ananatural Production—to offer recipes, instruction and guidance for experiences.

Tent, Quartet, Bows and Elbows was meant as a challenge to a quartet by placing it inside a small tent and restricting their movement as a way to embody music and literally contain and visualize it. Physicality of music is something I have been obsessing about for the last 20 years. *Music Derived Pain Killer* is part of the that body of work. The tent proposal ended up in the second Ananatural Production catalogue and Eugene Tan who was one of the co curators of the Singapore Biennial 2006 proposed to have it performed at the opening. I was very lucky that the Singapore based Tang Quartet accepted the challenge and we did a performance and a video. *Music Derived Pain Killer* is a simple alchemical process. The saliva produced during practice is collected and transformed into a special music-derived pain killer. I performed it at the recent Sydney Biennial.



Tent, Quartet, Bows and Elbows.
Ana Prvacki. Performed by the Tang
Quartet at the opening of the Singapore
Biennale 2006. Photo courtesy of
the artist.

To view performances mentioned in this interview please click on these links:
<http://ananatural.com/projects/project08-01.php>
<http://open-player.com/blog/2007/11/12/video-pick-of-the-week-ana-prvacki-tvc-for-money-laundering-wet-wipes/>



On (Surplus) Value in Art
 Diedrich Diederichsen
 Reflections01 Series
 Witte de With Publishers
 2008 Rotterdam
 Language: Dutch, English, German
 123 pages

“But really, what’s a measly \$18 million in exchange for the chance to display a formaldehyde-soaked bull in your living room?” observed the American network ABC News the day after the Sotheby’s auction, engineered by Damien Hirst, to vend a sizable number of his (mostly freshly-made) works. The auction took place at the cusp of the global financial collapse of the last quarter of 2008, which occasioned an eruption of severe commentary—with many reporters unable to resist remarking on the latest Hirst spectacle. Peter Aspden, an arts writer for the Financial Times, concluded that the exhibition sales are “evidence that there are those who are insulated from the real world.” These remarks are germane to the book by Deidrich Deiderichsen, *On (Surplus) Value in Art*, though not so much as examples of the instructive banality that art is special and everyone takes this specialness, in stride, as normative; nor as illustration of the dynamic that Deiderichsen articulates as “the normality of the exceptionalism that determines the everyday life of art.”

The remarks are, rather, quotable because funnier than the journalists intended, especially alongside reading *On (Surplus) Value in Art*. On a near-macabre comic register, Hirst’s dead animals could well be Deiderichsen’s “hardened” form of living labor, transmogrified into value, that speculators vest with ever-greater future worth. From dead shark, it is a short walk to dead fetus—that which one Zhu Yu claimed to have consumed as a conceptual art project during a parallel event to the first Shanghai Biennale in 2000. In this case, the original material is transformed into metaphysical index either by the artist’s perfect grasp of auraticization, or, more plausibly, his utter lack of a better idea. The operations Deiderichsen anatomized with exquisite skill in *Reflectiosn 01* are, in the flesh, as atrocious as they are awesome, and are in turn hilarious and transfixing. And it should be added, quickly, that this laugh-reflex is itself essential to the aura-fashioning that Diederichsen deconstructs.

Nonetheless it is a sense of humor, indeed, that erupts when considering this volume, published by the Witte de With in October 2008. This bears remarking in the same breath one says of *On (Surplus) Value in Art* is impeccably written, and—especially in having been produced tri-lingually—politically important. The varying grain of languages in juxtaposition complicates the predisposition of Marxist analysis towards universalist explanation. In essaying the Dutch word *mehrwert*—at once surplus, bonus, extra, auratic, metaphysical stream—there is a good ring of the local that should be much appreciated in the myriad elsewheres struggling over the political import of the local. Still, this updating of Marxist theory of art as commodity, in the seamlessness that is the very form of Marxist theory, does not gesture towards any possible theoretical value in a skepticism over universally-variable explanation. It is a global tract. And incontestably so, particularly as Deiderichsen assumes a deterritorialized world as the context of his grammatology.

Incontestable, that is, but also too calmly elegant to encompass the chaos with and in which the promise of surplus value in art is created in too many elsewheres. The reader yields to nervous, perhaps morbid laughter at a tidy language that is untouched by, because distrustful of, notions of indeterminate fields: for instance, by the context-specific *mehrwert*-overkill contrived for souping up the logic of capitalism possibly actualizing capitalism’s prodigious mutability into slippery forms; by utterly futile deferrals held out for the promise of transubstantiation of art-into-money that go unrealized, not temporarily, but permanently, for *most* would-be artists in the world; by the links between *mehrwert* and greed that could well originate tribalisms rather than capitalisms; by the proposition that capitalism thrives beautifully at the lunatic fringe; by surplus as paradoxically naturalized as spiritual stuff, as transcendence, and in this respect metamorphosing ecstatic states into wretched excess in postcolonial sites.

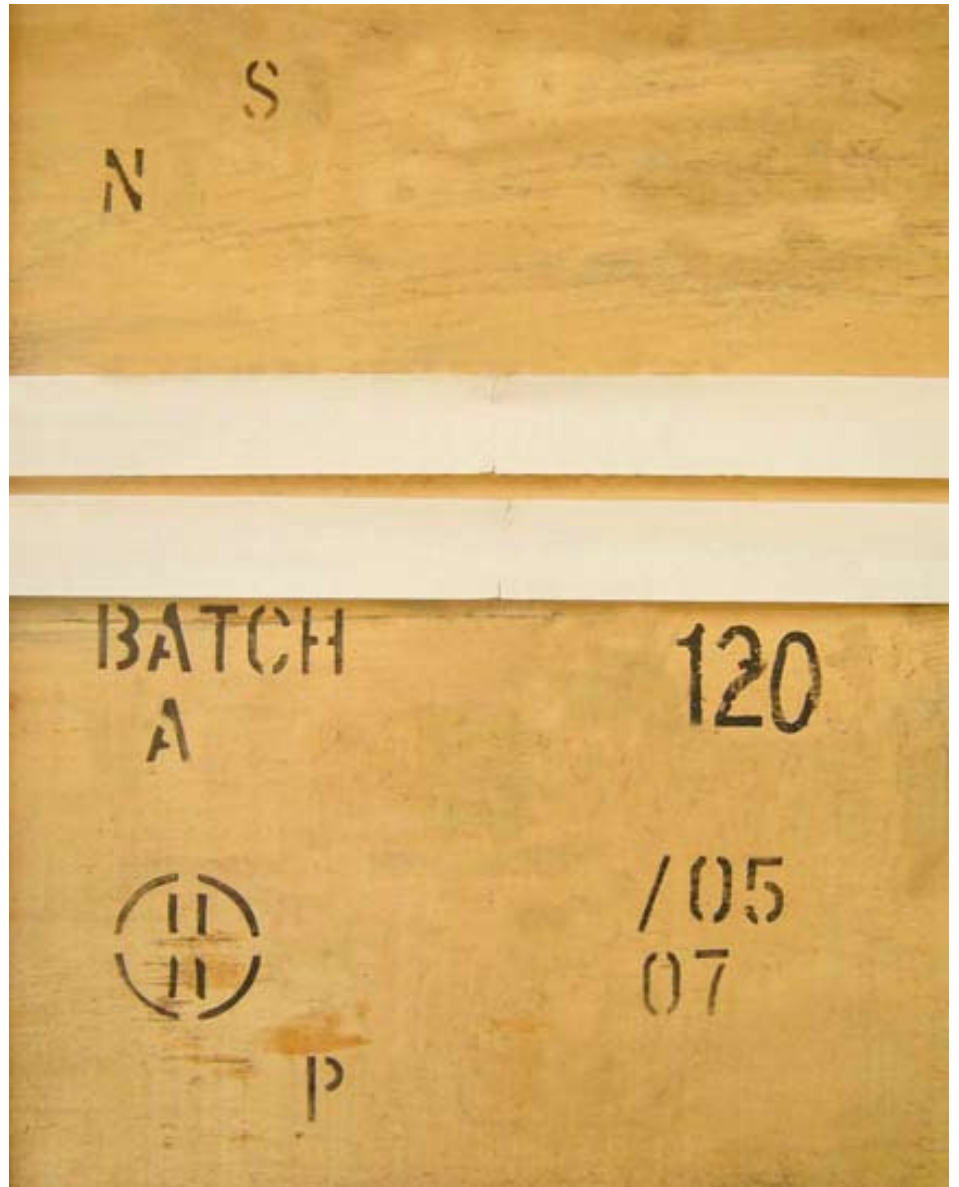
Put another way, the book's *mehrwert* is, ironically, bound up in this laughter it inadvertently triggers—indeed among readers who agree with Diederichsen, notably about the naturalization into amiable form of monster acts in art. The reader's is not a disdainful humour; certainly not one addressed at the book itself. It is folly to be indifferent to Diederichsen's careful analysis, particularly as it is shaped by an intent to demystify popularly held ideas about the inscrutability of artwork prices—ideas predicated on "...something like an antecedence of materials, genres, and discourses and in which artists merely inscribe themselves." By focusing on the realm of the speculative rather than on the "activities of recipients and producers" (which, as Diederichsen points out, are the staple of most academic work on this topic), the volume mitigates against the latter-day mysticism of a transcendent art market. The doubling maneuver of enjoying but declining to buy into this and any other mystical tradition, however secular in its features, may well-nigh be essential to anyone hoping to parse through the complexities of the 21st century.

However: Diederichsen's refined Marxist model, anchored on oppositions (between living and abstract labor, use value and exchange value, value and price), does not appear to register the possibility of formative or undetected categories that may not be quite so opposable; "categories" suggested by, say, the artist from somewhere in the world's multiple modernities, who is absorbed into world art rather like raw material, instead of labor, for meta-art curatorial productions. Or by the conflation of use value and exchange value in, say, site specific art, often climate-sensitive earthworks, produced for secretive patrons. Or by artists parlaying the scent of ethnic origin and the bloody material substances of wars to—cynically or naïvely or merely astutely—collapse value and price into each other. Most instances are staged, in which the artists' often ghastly humor is the most striking indication of agency. And, in sometimes managing to merge market and catastrophe, their (heterogenous post-bourgeoisie) consumers gain ever greater fondness for, and ability to laugh with, this "powerful monster who" in Diederichsen's description, "shares the old artist's enthusiasm for acts of liberation but is far removed from all political or critical commitments."

On (Surplus) Value in Art refreshes critical regard for the auratic, which is simultaneously, paradoxically, *sui generis* and commonplace. Diederichsen gives a concluding sketch of a trajectory in the direction of a "crisis of value," where the line from tendency to total regimes may be expected to fork. But it will not be a Y fork at this pass. We may not even anticipate a Y imaginable along a single plane. The possibilities will be (and have always been) capillary-like, or ricocheting states, and switches will be (and have been) triggered by energies slightly beyond the radar of theorists—even those who hold great store by indeterminacy. What is transpiring may not even be called a crisis, in the same way that the recent sinking of global financial institutions may only be called catastrophic, by being disinterested in complexities that have always been around, undetected, and thus far under-scrutinized in theoretical work. Within those complexities, the theoretical value of the notion *mehrwert* could be restricted to its origin language or family of languages. The critique of capitalism, enormously more urgent now that its institutions and apologists have been exposed to be quite thoroughly powerless to restrain avarice, could be progressed with a multitude of efforts like *Reflections 01*, isolating and re-charging theoretically potent words from a long list of languages. But at a certain point, or once in a while, words may have to yield to the discharge of laughter; impolitic, self-mocking, satiric, inelegant crackling.

On (Surplus) Value in Art book launch at the Rotterdam Dialogues: The Critics. Left to right. Nicolaus Schafhausen, Director of Witte de With; Monika Szewczy (Publications, Witte de With); Diederich Diederichsen, Author. Photo credits: Judy Freya Sibayan





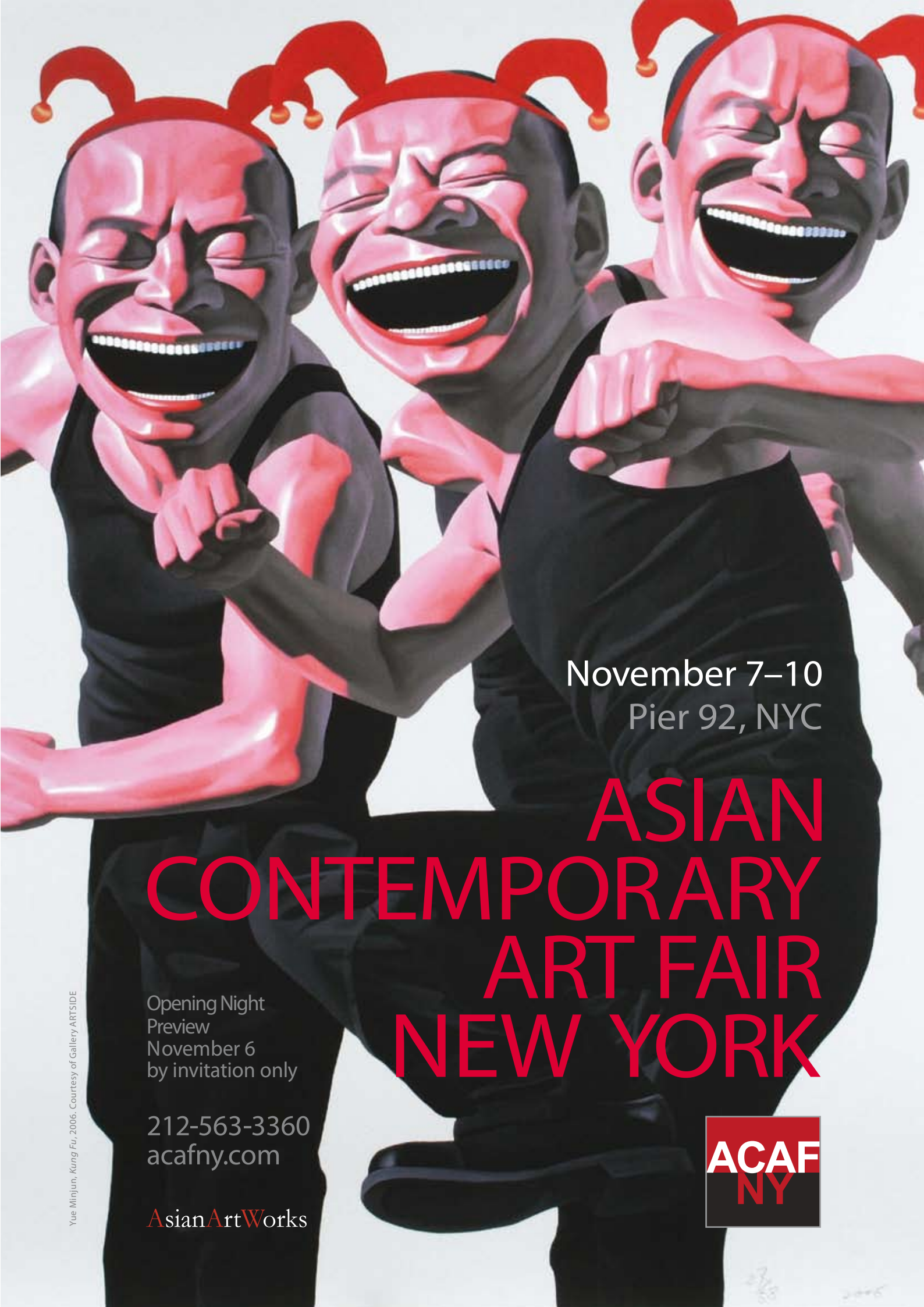
Snap. Digitally manipulated photograph of the remnants of a packing crate with masking tape. Varsha Nair, 2008.

The impact of the recent art boom particularly in India and how the art market/system is leading artists to compromise on their thinking and art-making processes by adhering to the dominant forms of production, is yet to be addressed. In meeting commercially driven expectations set by galleries, art-fund managements, art fairs and auction houses, instead of reflecting on their own position vis-à-vis these power system, artists are complicit with it.

With art-making now becoming a business, a brand, many artists are no longer able or willing to think outside the commercial arena. The promotion of artists and their work can be seen as being reduced to a batch or lot number—framed, crated and ready to be shipped out, becoming part of investment portfolios—a tradeable commodity to be snapped up by the highest bidder.

This also leads to a breakdown in relationships between artists, their collaborative partnerships and within artistic communities. Artists no longer communicate with each other, nor do they meet to discuss and exchange ideas, or critique and debate the nature of things, in and out of the art world, that impact upon them.

According to one professional art-fund management firm in India, “Institutions know the ‘art’ of making money”.



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London collective The Readymaids presented their second exhibition *Or*, which took place in an art space at 99 Hoxton Street, London from August 28 to the 31st, 2008. The Readymaids Collective is a group of four emerging artists who met at Wimbledon School of Art, London, UK: Takako Jin, Nicola Jones, Matthew Mark Roberts, and Alice Rolfe. The group invited viewers to participate with a curious request to visit the gallery in pairs. The following is a conversation done via Skype between Sara Haq and Olivia Altaras after visiting *Or*.

Sara Haq: So Libby, let's talk about the exhibition *Or*.

Olivia Altaras: The Readymaids is a London collective of artists that met at Wimbledon School of Art. This is their second exhibition.

SH: When asked to view their show, which we were invited to do in pairs, it made sense to also review it "conversationally." Arriving early at the gallery, we were invited, though rather loosely, to choose left or right space. You took the right. You were stamped with the Readymaids collective stamp in red and I was stamped in black. We were instructed that we could only view one room each and once we had seen it, we could not go to the other room, but were encouraged by the attendant artists to talk to each other about our experiences

OA: I enjoyed the performance element, branding the audience in contrasting colours gave the sensation of involuntary segregation prohibiting further movement or choices.

SH: Yes being branded reminded me a bit of standing in a passport queue at the airport: European passports one way and all other passports the other. A particular type of bureaucratic process.

OA: Yes, it underscored the ceremony, which was heightened by the clinical whiteness of the space.

Photo credits: Frances Bowman



Or



SH: And enforced by artists not uniformed officials. Somewhat gently done, perhaps too gently. The collective seemed to have a tentative relationship to asserting authority. The work felt more like an experiment. Though in the articulation of their idea they used words like “carefully planned show” and “the Readymaids have dictated,” which is almost paradoxical. “Maids” dictating things for us to do is kind of interesting and playful. Subverting power relationships is fascinating. But in this case, it’s something that could have been explored more thoroughly.

OA: Yes I agree. On entering the gallery the artist seemed to take a very submissive, relaxed attitude to the audience which, for me, jarred with the concept of an enforced choice. Although there was a presumption that we were already prepared for the ritual which sat uncomfortably with the theme of dictatorship.

SH: And their idea of “deprivation”—the word for me conjures ideas about the denial of basic human rights. I’m thinking about prisoners of war. But can one ever be truly deprived in an art context set up like this? Perhaps we experienced a sense of denial but deprivation seems too strong a word.

OA: Though this ambiguity and consequent anticlimactic outcome may have been another device to encourage further discussion.

SH: To quote one of the artists, Matthew Mark Roberts, he says “conversation equals the creation of a new piece of art.”

OA: At the most I felt a tepid curiosity about the work warmed by the brilliance of the concept of the work.

SH: I agree.

OA: In the room on the right I was confronted by a sterile space coupled with a lingering smell of paint—which, maybe unintentionally, re-enforced my reactions to that room. For me the whole room playfully re-contextualised familiar domesticity

SH: Going back in my mind, on entering the room on the left, after being hit by the smell of paint and getting through that heavy curtain, I was confronted with four modest works in a small conventional white cube space. This left me feeling that the concept of the show was far more provocative than the actual artworks.

OA: I think that on first glance I found it all slightly unremarkable. Again was this intentional? In retrospect I liked the playfulness of the works exhibited which managed to evoke a jarring dynamic in juxtaposition to each other.

SH: I did wonder if the works were reiterated in the next room with either a slight variation. It didn’t surprise me in the slightest that you had a similar set of works to experience, a bit like a game of “spot the difference.” A few days later I still remembered all the works. But the one that stayed a little magical for me was Takako Jin’s charming *Flying Chair* with feathered wings. It’s funny though. I don’t feel like talking about the works. I’d rather talk more about the experience.

OA: Perhaps that was the point. The work was there to underscore the experience. It is an inversion of the usual design of an art exhibition.

SH: I think it may have been intentional, but I can’t help but feel the works were almost an afterthought. Any works would do.

OA: Perhaps that’s too harsh. I think an understated sense of meticulousness went into the works.

SH: Maybe “gentle” works were needed to make the concept work.

OA: They do complement each other and there is a sense of a laboratory experience generated through the works of art as well as the concept.

SH: The works seemed far more casual than perhaps they actually were. However despite what I may have come away with from the works, I did feel excited at the potential of this way of viewing works—in pairs and through discussion.

OA: Yes this was a very innovative and brilliant way of creating a forum for critical thinking.

SH: It’s perhaps a generosity of the artists to give us that experience and allow it the freedom to exist outside the gallery space where they could have been capturing, recording and collecting those experiences. So although it was demanding of the viewer, it was demanding in an entirely consensual way.

OA: Whenever viewing art, the experience is always so subjective. And there should be no wrong and right interpretation. This method of only seeing one side meant that the other viewer’s interpretation could never be judged or perceived as wrong.

SH: Viewers had the choice whether to take it further into conversation or not. But if we had not been tasked to review the exhibition, would we have had this conversation? Which is an important point to consider because the level of engagement would then be completely different. Then one can start talking about whether it was a pleasurable experience or not.

OA: Yes, and by not recording the conversations, the collective had no demand or expectation of the audience. They invited the audience but there was no pressure to discuss the work.

SH: Which is good. But in re-reading their statement “Through this carefully planned show, the Readymaids have dictated what the viewer is and is not allowed to see and how it should be seen. The deprivation is intended to provoke another work between the pair of visitors in the form of discussion, thus instigating viewer participation in a way that allows the artwork to expand and continue to be created after the viewer has left the exhibition.” However, I feel the work does not expand but the viewers’ depth of experience of the work might as they discuss the work after viewing it.

OA: True.

SH: And here it seems that the conversations afterwards are the artwork according to Matthew Mark Roberts. Therein lies the paradox.

OA: Perhaps we have unearthed the crux of the exhibition!

SH: And we come back full circle. Without the curatorial strategy and concept, would those works have held their own? Clever strategy. I look forward to seeing what they come up with next.



Ctrl+P Issue No. 12 launched at the FAB Gallery, College of Art and Design, University of Alberta, Edmonton Canada, September 18, 2008. Christopher Grignard (left) and Pamela Baergen (right) talk about their writings in Ctrl+P 12, an issue on art archives and archiving particularly on works and projects in Edmonton. All the contributors were from Edmonton.

CTRL+P AT THE ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES: THE CRITICS

This event organized and hosted by Witte de With in Amsterdam is the first instalment of a three-part project *Rotterdam Dialogues: Critics, Curators, Artists*. Exploring the current expectations, positions and contexts of art critics, the three days (October 9-11, 2008) aimed to create a range of moments for discussion, amongst the invited speakers.

In selecting the people invited to speak, Witte de With tried to include a range of voices, from different geo-political backgrounds, with different degrees of experience, from some long-established publications and other emerging platforms for art criticism. It sought out also a broad variety of different media. Speakers were not just from the printed field, but also those working in television, and those exploring the options provided by the Internet. Recognising the situation in the Netherlands—which is also echoed in many other small European countries—where arts coverage is less frequently communicated via the daily press, instead being concentrated in art and culture magazines, Witte de Witt invited just a handful of newspaper journalists and editors. Also invited were speakers from the world of academia, as well as several practicing artists who also include writing and criticism as key elements of their practice.

The panel on “Are There New Audiences for Art Criticism” at the Rotterdam *Dialogues: The Critics*. Left to right: Koen Kleijn, Judy Freya Sibayan, Mark Rappolt and Ho Tzu Nyen. October 11, 2008 at Witte de With. Photo Credits: Sara Haq.

The following took part in the dialogues: Jennifer Allen (Artforum), Andrew Berardini (The Expanded Field), Achille Bonito Oliva (art historian); Martijn Boven (8weekly), Matthew Collings (artist, BBC), Ingrid Commandeur (Metropolis M), Diedrich Diederichsen (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna), Edo Dijksterhuis (Het Financieele Dagblad), Dominic Eichler (frieze), Isabelle Graw (Texte zur Kunst), Tim Griffin (Artforum), Melissa Gronlund (Afterall), Eva Karcher (Vogue), Koen Kleijn (De Groene Amsterdammer), Sven Lütticken (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam), Sina Najafi (Cabinet), Ho Tzu Nyen (Art Asia Pacific), Chantal Pontbriand (Parachute), Dirk Pültau (De Witte Raaf), Mark Rappolt (ArtReview), Dieter Roelstraete (Afterall), Margriet Schavemaker (Prof.), Edgar Schmitz (Kunstforum International), Simon Sheikh (Malmo Art Academy), Judy Freya Sibayan (Ctrl+P), Nick Stillman (Bomb), Richard Streitmatter-Tran (diacritic.org), Jordan Strom (The Phillip Review), Pelin Tan (Muhtelif), Jan Verwoert (frieze), Michal Wolinski (Piktogram).

The event was organized by Witte de Witt’s Artistic Director Nicolaus Schafhausen, and Assistant Curators Zoe Grey and Ariadne Urlus.



About Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art

Ctrl+P was founded in 2006 by Judy Freya Sibayan and Flaudette May V. Datuin as a response to the dearth of critical art publications in the Philippines. It is produced in Manila and published on the Web with zero funding. Contributors write gratis for Ctrl+P. Circulated as a PDF file via the Net, it is a downloadable and printable publication that takes advantage of the digital medium's fluidity, immediacy, ease and accessibility. Ctrl+P provides a testing ground for a whole new culture and praxis of publishing that addresses very specifically the difficulties of publishing art writing and criticism in the Philippines. It took part in the *documenta 12 magazines* project, a journal of 97 journals from all over the world (<http://magazines.documenta.de/frontend/>)

About Ctrl+P's Contributors

Olivia Altaras graduated from the University of Leeds with a bachelor of arts in History of Art and English. Since then she has worked extensively in the arts, and is co-founder of the company Paper Doll Theatre. Olivia has experience as a freelance propmaker and scenic artist and was moulding and casting supervisor in Punchdrunk's 2007 *The Masque of The Red Death*. Recently she lived in Cambodia, where she was involved in archiving contemporary cambodian art. Olivia co-curated the exhibition 'Reflections:Democratic Kampuchea and Beyond' at Tuol Sleng, Cambodia. She hopes to take this exhibition to London in 2009. She is currently involved in organising a touring exhibition of 'Rendez-vous with the Khmer Rouge' with the NGO Documentation Center of Cambodia. ● **Kóan Jeff Baysa** is an independent contemporary art curator, writer, critic, physician, Whitney Museum ISP - Helena Rubinstein Curatorial Fellow, and is a member of AICA, the association of international art critics. A contributing writer for the online publications, he has written for Art Asia Pacific, is the Pacific editor for d'Art International (Toronto), contributing writer and editor for contemporary culture periodicals, aRUde, SVSV, The Royal, savant, and a member of the KDU. KJ Baysa has curated shows for the London Biennale, LA International Biennial, Whitney Museum, Canon Corporation, The United Nations, and has organised and participated in art events throughout the US and in Paris, Cork, London, Abu Dhabi, Beijing, Bandung, Hong Kong, Manila, Santiago, Singapore, Cologne, Seoul, and Yokohama. On the boards of The Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School University, Art Omi International Artist Colony, the Asian American Art Centre, The Center for Photography at Woodstock, he has presented lectures at the Whitney Museum of American Art and MoMA in New York. He is an associate of The Daily Brand, a multi-disciplinary communications agency based in Los Angeles. The critic-in residence for the 2006 Art Omi International Artist Colony in Ghent, New York, he received a Ford Foundation grant to lecture on contemporary curatorial practice at the Hanoi University of Culture in Vietnam and conducted a survey of contemporary art in south and north Vietnam. Dr. Baysa divides his time between New York and Los Angeles. ● **Mina Cheon** is a Korean-American media artist, scholar, and educator who lives and works between Baltimore, New York, and Seoul, Korea. Currently an interdisciplinary Professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art, she has shown her media installation artworks internationally, written essays for several publications such as NY Arts Magazine, WolganMisool, and Artist Organized Art, and is now working on her book on shamanism and cyberspace. Respectively, she received her doctoral degree in philosophy in media and communication at the European Graduate School (EGS) of European University for Interdisciplinary Studies (EUFIS); her M.F.A. in digital arts from University of Maryland; another M.F.A. in painting from the Maryland Institute College of Art; and B.F.A. from Ewha Woman's University, Seoul, Korea. Cheon's website is: www.minacheon.com ● **Sara Haq** is a visual artist and photographer with a passion for the values of cultural and social capital. Committed to research, creativity and education, she devises, facilitates and delivers 'Creative Research' led workshops for young people and adults often via the Museum/ Gallery sector. She has worked with Tate, British Library, inIVA, National Portrait Gallery, Museum of London amongst others, whilst also undertaking commissioned photographic work as well as maintaining her practice as an artist. Sara is also a curator & cultural consultant who has done a lot of project management & fundraising over the years. On a recent overland journey from London to Thailand for the i-Genius World Entrepreneurship Summit, Sara has been researching the role of the artist as a social entrepreneur and potential agent for triggering positive social change... she has a solo exhibition resulting from the journey in London in January 2009. ● **Ana Prvacki** lives and works in Singapore and New York. In 2003, She founded Ananatural Production, an innovation and lifestyle consultancy that combines conceptual concerns, contemporary issues and various methods of communication. (<http://www.ananatural.com>) ● **Marian Pastor Roces** has been developing a critique of international art exhibitions, that analyzes the spaces currently being constructed to present and produce these events. Arguing that these spaces and events are conservative creations, ideologically tied to the 19th century universal expositions. Pastor Roces seeks to expose the structures by which the libertarian and avante-garde claims of artmaking are rendered inutile. The essay *Crystal Palace Exhibitions* in the anthology *Over Here* (MIT Press, 2005, and the 2005 Power Lecture, Sydney University, entitled *Biennales and Biology*, pursue her interest in the subtle domains where art is absorbed in tenacious imperial imperatives. Her recent curatorial work includes the major contemporary art exhibition *Science Fictions* which investigated truth systems validated by science, in four venues in Singapore: Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore Art Museum, Earl Lu Gallery and the Esplanade. *Sheer Realities: Power and Clothing in the 19th century Philippines*, was presented by the Asia Society of New York City at the Grey Art Gallery of New York University. The corporation which she founded – *edge* – develops social history museums with the involvement of conceptual artists. In 2006, she convened an international roundtable discussion on *The Politics of Beauty*, funded by the Prince Claus

Fund. ● **Roopesh Sitharan** is an educator, researcher, curator and an artist. His area of specialization is Malaysian Net art, Net cultures and New Media theory. He is currently operating independently from San Francisco, California and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He represented Malaysia at the 2004 Thailand New Media Arts Festival. He has curated, co-curated and organized several national and international exhibitions and events including *UploadDownload* (with Hasnul Jamal Saidon); he exhibited at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum winning the ASEAN New Media awards 2nd place; Thailand/Malaysia Online Media Arts event organized in the National Art Gallery of Malaysia and Raffles Design school in Thailand; he was granted a residency program with Sun Microsystems as part of the San Jose Zerone/ISEA 2006 Electronic Arts Symposium. His writings have been published in several local and international journals and magazines such as Leonardo Electronic Almanac (LEA) and *Sentap* (documenta 12 magazines edition). ● **Jiayi Young** has been focusing on large scale/site specific installations incorporating digital and traditional media for the past eight years. As an artist who is actively working and exhibiting, she is particularly sensitive to contemporary issues surrounding the post-modern world. Young began her art career as a Chinese traditional painter with an interest in its philosophies and history. In addition to her MFA in multimedia, she also holds a Master of Science in Atomic Physics. This strong science background allows her to fully take advantage of technology as new means of artistic expression. Working in between the two seemingly far apart disciplines stimulates interdisciplinary research bridging the two fields. Thematically, her installations explore topics in finding and legitimizing an identity under today's fast evolving social, political climate.

About Ctrl+P's Editorial Board Members

Flaudette May V. Datuin, is Associate Professor, Department of Art Studies, University of the Philippines (UP). Co-founding editor of *Ctrl+P*, she is also author of *Home Body Memory: Filipina Artists in the Visual Arts, 19th Century to the Present* (University of the Philippines Press, 2002). The book is based on her dissertation for the PhD in Philippines Studies (UP, 2001-2002). A 2008 Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Research Center, Australian National University, Datuin is also recipient of the Asian Scholarship Foundation and Asian Public Intellectual fellowships, which enabled her to conduct research on contemporary women artists of China and Korea (2002-2003) and Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Japan (2004-2005). She is curator and organizer of an international art project called *trauma, interrupted*, which was launched through an exhibition held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in June 2007 (www.trauma-interrupted.org).

Varsha Nair lives in Bangkok, Thailand. Her selected shows include *Still Moving Image*, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, 2008; *A Proper Place*, Ryllega Gallery, Hanoi, 2007; *Art as Environment: Cultural Actions on Tropic of Cancer* 2007, Taiwan; *Exquisite Crisis & Encounters*, NYU, New York, 2007; *Subjected Culture-Interruptions and resistances on femaleness*, venues in Argentina 2007-2008; *Sub-Continent: The Indian Subcontinent in Contemporary Art*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy, 2006; *In-between places, meeting point*, Si-am Art Space, Bangkok, 2005; *Video as Urban Condition*, Austrian Culture Forum, London, UK, 2004, *With(in)*, Art In General, New York, 2002; *Home/Dom*, Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina, 2002; *Free Parking*, Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 2002. She performed at *On the Move*, Hong Kong, 2008; *Khoj Live Performance Festival*, Delhi, 2008; *Saturday Live*, Tate Modern London, 2006; *National Review of Live Art*, 2006 and 2004; *National Review of Live Art Midland*, Perth, Australia, 2005. Since 1997, Nair has also curated and organized Womanifesto (www.womanifesto.com) and other art related activities, and been invited as speaker at various international symposia. She was the Bangkok curator for *600 Images/60 artists/6 curators/6 cities: Bangkok/Berlin/London/Los Angeles/Manila/Saigon*, an exhibition that was simultaneously exhibited in all 6 cities in 2005. Born in Kampala, Uganda, Nair has a BFA from Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayaji Rao University, Baroda, India.

Judy Freya Sibayan, co-founding editor of *Ctrl+P*, has an MFA from Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design. She is former director of the erstwhile Contemporary Art Museum of the Philippines. She performed and curated *Scapular Gallery Nomad*, a gallery she wore daily for five years (1997-2002), and is currently co-curator and the *Museum of Mental Objects* (MoMO), a performance art proposing that the artist's body be the museum itself (<http://www.trauma-interrupted.org/judy/writing1.pdf>). Although Sibayan's major body of work is an institutional critique of art, she has also exhibited and performed in museums, galleries and performance venues such as Latitude 53, Edmonton, Canada; PEER Gallery Space, London; Privatladen in Berlin; The Tramway, Glasgow; the Vienna Secession; the Hayward Gallery, PS1 Contemporary Art Center, The Farm in San Francisco; Sternersensemuseet, The Photographers' Gallery, London; ArtSpace Sydney; The Kiasma Contemporary Art Center, The Mori Art Museum, The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Nikolaj Contemporary Art Center, Fukuoka Art Museum; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Hong Kong Art Centre; and at the capcMusée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux. She has participated in two international art biennales, the 1986 *3rd Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh* and the 2002 *Gwangju Biennale*. Also an independent curator, she curated *The Community Archives: Documenting Artists Collectively, Openly* held at Latitude 53 (Edmonton, Alberta Canada). She also conceived and was lead-curator of *xsXL Expanding Art* held at Sculpture Square, Singapore in 2002 and *600 Images/60 Artists/6 Curators/6 Cities: Bangkok/Berlin/London/Los Angeles/Manila/Saigon* in 2005. The latter two projects investigated the possibilities of developing large scale international exhibitions mounted with very modest resources. She currently teaches as an Assistant Professor of the Department of Communication, De La Salle University (www.dlsu.edu.ph) where she has taught for some twenty years.