

THESIS  
THE ERA OF THE DECONSTRUCTED HERO:  
THE END OF NEW ART IMPERIALISMS  
+ THE RISE OF EXPOSED PROCESS

by li pallas

In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Art and the Book  
Corcoran College of Art + Design  
Washington, DC  
Spring 2013

Corcoran College of Art + Design

May 7th, 2013

We hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under our supervision by li pallas entitled THE ERA OF THE DECONSTRUCTED HERO: THE END OF NEW ART IMPERIALISMS + THE RISE OF EXPOSED PROCESS be accepted as fulfilling, in part, requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Art and the Book.



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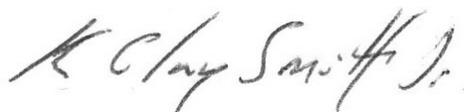
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Thesis Statement:

The narratives that govern how we value art in our society have systematically placed the artist as pawn and pauper in the profit industrial system; these narratives are adapting to new forms of information architecture (web based and book arts) which make their process more apparent. This shift away from idolatry and destructive practices is allowing more artists to pursue living wages while more beneficially dedicating artistic practice towards their communities.

## List of Figures and Illustrations:

1. Erin Wilson, “05”
2. Erin Wilson, “02”
3. Erin Wilson, “01”
4. Erin Wilson, “brainhurt”
5. Erin Wilson, “migrainesleep”
6. Erin Wilson, “00”
7. Ian Cozzens, “process\_cards02-500x375”
8. Erin Wilson, snowbird flowchart
9. Ian Cozzens, “show\_up\_06-500x368”
10. Ian Cozzens, “artsale02”
11. Ian Cozzens, “decision01”
12. Ian Cozzens, “with\_care\_04”
13. Ian Cozzens, “decision01art\_show05”
14. Ian Cozzens, “artsale01”
15. The Compound Gallery, “CompoundGallery Nov232012,”
16. Amos Paul Kennedy, instagram of the strong arm press
17. Amos Paul Kennedy, press set up on instagram
18. Johanna Drucker and Brad Freeman, *Emerging Sentience*, 1.1.1.13
19. Johanna Drucker and Brad Freeman, *Emerging Sentience*, 1.1.1.13
20. Johanna Drucker and Brad Freeman, *Emerging Sentience*, 1.1.1.13
21. Johanna Drucker and Brad Freeman, *Nova Reperta*, 1.1.1.28
22. Johanna Drucker and Brad Freeman, *Nova Reperta*, 1.1.1.51
23. Robin Price, “43-Fauna-spread-LoRez”
24. Robin Price, “43std-all\_parts-lorezsm”
25. Robin Price, “43-Bks-LoRez”
26. Robin Price, “as\_continue\_tubes4”
27. Robin Price, “calligraphy”

## Table of Contents:

Thesis Statement .....	ii
List of Figures .....	i
Introduction .....	1
Chapter One: How The Artist Gets Paid in Contemporary Art Economics .....	2
Chapter Two: Ayn Rand, Hero Protagonists, and Extroreflectivity .....	6
Chapter Three: Is the Semiotician in the Room? .....	11
Intermission: Tyranny of Structurelessness .....	15
Chapter Four: Snowbird and the Kickstarter Revolution .....	16
Chapter Five: Self Sufficiency, Technology, and the New Democratic Multiple .....	20
Chapter Six: Academia and the Artist Book .....	24
Conclusion: Speculation on Why + What the Narratives are Changing .....	29
Images .....	31
Citations .....	39

**Introduction:**

It is one's mission in life as an artist is to show the world as it is and as it can be. This concept of what an artist is and does is not incongruous with the philosophy of Ayn Rand or Felix Guattari, though the totality of their theories are in great odds. One believes that the artist role is creator and their visions should be unchallenged and unmitigated by outside influences. The other believes the artist is a servant meeting the needs of the community by offering an alternate narrative to dominant culture. Rand deemed ethics were necessarily normalizing, though the ethics of Guattari were about "contaminating" society for its own good. It can be argued both of these thinkers and others have shaped how artists view themselves and how the world values art. Both of their perspectives are problematic for two reasons: one, they both suggest the artist is a kind of hero, and heroes have a superior as well as an 'other' status in society at large; secondly, both perspectives create problems in how an artist is compensated.

Art and social justice are inevitably intertwined. Even the aesthetics of simple beautiful objects have transformative effects on our souls and society at large. But the artist is a pawn and often necessarily complicit in many of society's strongest defects as part of coping with economic conditioning. Galleries take up to 50% of sales that take place over a month for work the artist has spent possibly a year on. Grant funding often will only offer to cover supplies and/or provide a "stipend": meaning the overall time invested in a project will not be paid for at a living wage. Both of these systems favor artists who are already established in the arts community, which creates a winner-takes-all atmosphere where few artists do exceedingly well, while the vast majority suffers. Constrained economically, the artist is marginalized into being the first wave of gentrification, or sacrificing their aesthetic sense toward commercialism for the sake of profit. In either of these circumstances, the social justice element of art is undermined.

Looking more specifically to the art world, I am going to examine the narratives that drive how art economies function. On the one end Ayn Rand asserts artists should be unabashed egoists that generate culture in a way that should be economically revered. This is obviously problematic for many reasons. Art, as all things, should be tempered with a concern for the public, the greater good, and environmental soundness. On the other end post-marxist theorists look to semiotics and relational art situates the artist as a societal servant. This is also problematic, as semiotics is easily appropriated for commercial concerns and does not answer the troubling nature of simple eco-

conomic survival.

Artists are inevitably motivated by both narratives. To see oneself as a misunderstood lone wolf is to be caught up in a sort of Randian superiority complex. To see oneself as a servant to the greater good is to lose a sort of greater agency. Younger artists, armed with the internet, are trying different narratives: those that explain and illuminate their process. Academic based book artists also engage in a descriptive process often grounded in theory. This changes the way we value art because we develop an understanding for the time commitments it ultimately takes to execute a project start to finish. This is a superior narrative.

Exploring these narratives in this thesis provides a goal of offering new ways to value art that allow artists to produce the kind of art that is most beneficial to society. Artists don't deserve to be rewarded handsomely, but all people have a right to be paid a decent living wage for the work that they do. The way that artists are valued in society is inevitably in tension with their main goal of creating new realities. As artists create worlds to assist society in progressing to a better ecological aesthetic reality, being among the few who are rich or the many who are impoverished creates a dynamic of exploitation when exploitation should be the very thing to stamp out through visions. The narratives that govern how we value art in our society have systematically placed the artist as pawn and pauper in the profit industrial system; these narratives are adapting to new forms of information architecture (web based and book arts) which make their process more apparent. This shift away from idolatry and destructive practices is allowing more artists to pursue living wages while more beneficially dedicating artistic practice towards their communities.

### **Chapter One: How The Artist Gets Paid in Contemporary Art Economics**

In the Western model of art economics, art objects are bought and sold in ways very different than traditional retail markets. In a retail market, an object is bought at wholesale by the venue and resold at a profit margin, and the object is retained until sold or disposed of by the venue. If the venue fails to sell the object, the venue absorbs the loss. In the art market, the art object is traditionally loaned without deposit to the venue. If the venue sells the object, it retains 50% of the sale, which is comparable to the retail mark up, however, the variable of time should also be taken into concern. Art objects typically take time to produce—much more time than manufactured objects. A gallery show of an artist may contain work that took the artist six months to a year to

produce (and maybe much longer). What this means is the venue takes 50% of the profit over the course of a week to a month of what it took the artist 6 months to a year to produce. If the venue fails to sell the object, they return it at the end of the agreement period unharmed. In some cases, the gallery may offer insurance to cover damages if the art object is harmed, but often not. This is asking the artist to undertake a huge amount of risk. The objects may be damaged or go completely unsold over the course of the agreement, and the artists has no right to compensation for their time. In addition, they may have to pay an application fee, an exhibition fee, supply their own promotional material, install and take down the exhibition. It is not unheard of for the artist to have to do all these things themselves, especially at lower echelons of art market hierarchies, only to find that they have a net loss rather than a profit at the end of the contract.

Pricing becomes another issue. “After art school, most students tend to price their work too high,” says Hans Abbing in *Why are Artists Poor?* “They determine their prices based on costs it took to make a particular work including a fair remuneration for their labor”<sup>1</sup>. Pricing objects based on production costs plus labor hours is standard procedure for most fields, but especially entering artists must charge far less. In the example Hans gives, he suggests 40% less to a recent graduate. When taking into consideration that some of the pricing involves the cost of production, a 40% reduction usually means selling the object at less than minimum wage per hour of production.

Most arts income is thus not generated in the private sector. Most arts income is generated by nonprofits through grants and stipends. The New York based group W.A.G.E. (Worker Artists for a Greater Economy) ran numbers on how well artists were being compensated by nonprofits such as museums and art centers. The report asked 1000 artists to comment on their payments between 2005 and 2010, and found that 58.4% did not receive “any form of payment”<sup>2</sup>. Museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art (85.7% did not receive any form of payment), MOMA PS1 (66.7%), and The Whitney (47.1%) all had failed to compensate large portions of the artists they showcased. The Whitney was the sight of labor disputes during their Biennial last January, when they had 5 meetings with art handlers without budging on union negotiations (hyperaller-

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1 Abbing, Hans. *Why Are Artists Poor?: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands : Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 124.

2 Powhida, William. Hyperallergic, “Why Are (Most) Artists (So Fucking) Poor?.” Last modified April 23, 2012. Accessed Sept 8, 2012. <http://hyperallergic.com/50333/why-are-most-artists-so-fucking-poor-william-powhida-wage/>.

gic, Eliano). Furthermore, The Arts and Labor group at Occupy Wall Street wrote a formal letter asking for the end of the Whitney Biennial in 2014:

We object to the biennial in its current form because it upholds a system that benefits collectors, trustees, and corporations at the expense of art workers. The biennial perpetuates the myth that art functions like other professional careers and that selection and participation in the exhibition, for which artists themselves are not compensated, will secure a sustainable vocation. This fallacy encourages many young artists to incur debt from which they will never be free and supports a culture industry and financial and cultural institutions that profit from their labors and financial servitude.<sup>3</sup>

Other problems in the nonprofit sector include the notion of a stipend support system, rather than an actual wage. Stipends often cover the cost of materials and occasionally the cost of living, but rarely adequately compensate the artist for their time. In an article entitled, “Good Intentions and Big Ideas: Feel Good Grants That Exploit Artists and Reduce Arts Funding” Alexis Clements points out, “Using artists as cheap work-for-hire is a common theme among many of these large well-intention idea-focused organizations... The problem is that if you want artists to come up with realizable, positive solutions to real-world problems, it’s better not to ask them to make art about it and to instead treat them as consultants.”<sup>4</sup> The grant in question is a six month fellowship with ZERO1, sponsored by Google, which pays a mere \$10,000 to its grantee to come up with problem-solving solutions and generally engage with and act as consultants who are easily being paid 10 times as much and upward for the same work.

In a macro version of the art market, one can infer that there are multiple players and dealers beyond the artist and the art object. There are the funders—largely, the nonprofit sector—but sometimes private investors of other sorts. Then there are art handlers: gallery owners, museum directors, and so on. Lastly, there is the life and sale of a piece after the initial sale. This is where an art object separates itself economically from the artist. An art object is sold by the artists presumably for the cost of production and labor, perhaps reduced 40% if the artist is just beginning, the gallery takes 50%, and the new owner goes on to resell it at a profit. If the piece is good, the resale might happen several times, and each time the price of the object may increase exponentially. In a sense, the art object is like a stock, whose price fluctuates at the level of the market. In a growth market, the price continues to increase. In the United States artists currently have no

<sup>3</sup> Arts and Labor, “End the Whitney Biennial 2014.” Last modified February 13, 2012. Accessed October 12, 2012. <http://artsandlabor.org/end-the-whitney-biennial-2014/>.

<sup>4</sup> Clements, Alexis. Hyperallergic, “Good Intentions and Big Ideas: Feel Good Grants That Exploit Artists and Reduce Arts Funding.” Last modified July 13, 2012. Accessed Sept 17, 2013.

right to royalties on resale of their work. In 2001 the EU passed the *Droit de Suite* which entitled artists to 4% of any resale under 50,000 euro in the EU, with smaller percentages for art objects sold for larger prices topping out at 0.25% for objects sold at 500,000 euro and up<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, when we see an art piece in a museum with a price tag, we associate the price with wealth of the artists who produced it. This is simply not congruent. The type designer Goudy, we now know, for all of his fame, lived paycheck to paycheck most of his life, and most recently, Annie Leibovitz nearly lost her house and the copyrights to all of her photographs because of a default on a loan<sup>6</sup>. This is because the art market is set up in a manner to benefit art investors more than the artist themselves.

One last key thing to understand about art markets in how they differ from retail markets is that art markets are what economists call a “winner-takes-all” market. Hans Abbing writes, “There exists a number of markets where a large and often increasing part of the consumer spending ends up in the pockets of small number of producers, while the majority of the producers earn little or nothing.”<sup>7</sup> What this means is that while there are several hundreds of artists producing high quality art, the mass of spending goes to line the pockets of a handful, while the vast majority of artists cannot earn a basic living. This is because of a disconnect between production performance and *relative* performance. “Most remuneration in production is directly or indirectly based on absolute performance,” meaning that increased production usually means increased pay if the performance is good, but in winner-takes-all markets, the payouts are doled out in the fashion of a sports competition with the first, second, third perceived winners reaping the rewards<sup>8</sup>. In this way, “small differences in quality, talent, or effort lead to enormous differences in income”<sup>9</sup>. This happens because art income is dependent to some degree around the media hype of a particular artist, and there is a limit to what the general public can retain. Abbings calls this a “limited star capacity” in that there is a limit to how many stars can exist in the art world at any particular mo-

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5 Sotheby's, “What is the Artist's Resale Right (or Droit de Suite)?” Accessed Sept 22, 2012. [http://www.sothebys.com/content/dam/sothebys/PDFs/Droit de Suite.pdf](http://www.sothebys.com/content/dam/sothebys/PDFs/Droit%20de%20Suite.pdf).

6 Goldman, Andrew. New York Times Fashion Magazine, “How Could This Happen to Annie Leibovitz?” Last modified August 16, 2009. Accessed Sept 22, 2012. <http://nymag.com/fashion/09/fall/58346/>.

7 Abbing, Hans. *Why Are Artists Poor?: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands : Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 107

8 Abbing, Hans. *Why Are Artists Poor?: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands : Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 107-8

9 Abbing, Hans. *Why Are Artists Poor?: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands : Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 108

ment<sup>10</sup>. Take into consideration the recent leverage of the global telecommunications media, and across the vast majority of the globe begins to focus on a narrowing few stars.

Because the art market mimics that of high-stakes competitions of a stock market on steroids, studying art markets illuminates certain trends which take hold in the greater market. To see this, one might reference Sarah Thornton's sticking points in her diatribe against writing about art economics such as, "You end up writing about paintings by white American men more than is warranted," and "Oligarchs and dictators are not cool"<sup>11</sup>. On the later she emphasizes, "amongst the biggest spenders in the art market right now are people who have made their money in non-democracies with horrendous human rights records." She also makes note that writing about the art market is "painfully repetitive" perhaps because such writing "never seems to lead to regulation." In this way by focusing in on the art market as a microcosm we see the exemplary flaws in dominant culture and the greater capitalist system. These value narratives about art can reinforce or challenge the current paradigm.

## **Chapter Two: Ayn Rand, Hero Protagonists, and Extroreflectivity**

At the heart of contemporary practices of capital and art economics is one Ayn Rand. A statue, though erected two decades before the book was published, referred to as *Atlas Shrugged* ties her free market and romantic beliefs in front of Rockefeller Center. Republican Vice President Nominee Paul Ryan most recently declared, "I grew up reading Ayn Rand and it taught me quite a bit about who I am and what my value systems are, and what my beliefs are"<sup>12</sup>. Having written philosophically about both art and economics, her precepts are far reaching and have shaped or perpetuated certain value judgments in our society. What exactly are those values and how do they impact the art world today?

"My own character is in the pages of *The Fountainhead*. For anyone who wishes to know me, that is essential"<sup>13</sup>. As such, *The Fountainhead* is an excellent place to begin our discussion of

10 Abbing, Hans. *Why Are Artists Poor?: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands : Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 108-9

11 Thorton, Sarah. "Top 10 reasons NOT to write about the art market." Last modified October 22, 2012. Accessed October 24, 2012. <http://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/53653050/THORNTON=10Reasons=MarketTAR.pdf>.

12 Bloomberg, . Huffington Post, "What Ayn Rand Taught Paul Ryan." Last modified August 21, 2012. Accessed Sept 14, 2012. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/21/ayn-rand-paul-ryan\\_n\\_1820479.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/21/ayn-rand-paul-ryan_n_1820479.html).

13 Johnston, Donald Leslie. *The Fountainheads: Wright, Rand, The FBI and Hollywood*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2005), 31.

Rand and how she values the artist. Her hero protagonist Howard Roark is an arrogant visionary who refuses to submit his designs to public regulation. Several such times, facing poverty, when asked to moderate his model by his clients, he wraps up his drawings and marches out. A key movement in the book is when Roark is asked to design a public housing project for a friend, Peter Keating, whose career is plummeting. Keating begs, “You would save my life” to which Roark replies, “Can you think of any reason I should want to save your life?”<sup>14</sup>. The negotiation also offers money and virtue, neither of which Roark is interested. He explains:

I’ve been working on the problem of low-rent housing for years. I never thought of the poor people in slums. I thought of the potentialities of our modern world. The new materials, the means, the chances to take and use. There are so many products of man’s genius around us today. There are such great possibilities to exploit. To build cheaply, simply, intelligently... The work, not the people. Your own action, not any possible object of your charity... I like to receive money for my work. But I can pass that up this time. I like to have people know my work is done by me. But I can pass that up. I like to have tenants made happy by my work. But that doesn’t matter too much. The only thing that matters, my goal, my reward, my beginning, my end is the work itself. My work done my way. Peter, there’s nothing in the world that you can offer me, except this. Offer me this and you can have anything I’ve got to give. My work done my way. A private, personal, selfish, egotistical motivation. That’s the only way I function. That’s all I am.<sup>15</sup>

This is the classic role of, and perhaps the very model for, the artist visionary. Rand is not arguing that giving itself is wrong (“to get things done, you must love the doing, not the secondary consequences,”<sup>16</sup>) but that to mediate the process with thoughts of charity would only hamper the end result. The best end result can only be manifested in complete dedication, freedom, and joy of its creator (and, as in the case of Roark, whenever you don’t get your way creatively, you must destroy the imperfect results.) Returning for a moment to Abbings, in a list entitled “The Mythology of the Arts Influences the Economy of the Arts,” he cites many thoughts which he believes restrict the economic survival of an artist. While some of them are repetitive, it is interesting to note nearly all of these points are reflected in *The Fountainhead* and Rand’s ideology, most specifically, points 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13: “Art is a gift,” “Artists are gifted,” “Art serves the general interests,” “Art is good for people,” “Artists are autonomous,” “The work of art is authentic and the artist is the unique creator of it,” “Creating authentic work gives one endless private satisfaction,” and “artists are selflessly devoted to art”<sup>17</sup>. Abbings spends the rest of his book showing how these values

14 Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead*, (New York: Plume Publishing 2nd Ed, 2005), 603.

15 Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead*, (New York: Plume Publishing 2nd Ed, 2005), 604, 606

16 Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead*, (New York: Plume Publishing 2nd Ed, 2005), 604

17 Abbings, Hans. *Why Are Artists Poor?: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands : Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 31

contribute to making the arts economy exceptional, and how that is disadvantageous to the greater majority of artists; that it does in fact create a great disparity in how artists are compensated.

Specifically, with regard to Roark, this can be clarified in his closing statements. Roark does design a housing complex for Keating, but when alterations are made to his blueprints, he hatches a plan to destroy them. Caught in the act of bombing what he believes is his own intellectual property, he must defend his actions. He explains to the court that the modes of production are implemented in two ways, “the creator” and “the parasite” and in doing so tries to make a distinction between true autonomy in art production and that merely mimics.<sup>18</sup> But is there any such thing as a true autonomous creator? Even Rand’s Roark had a mentor architect he looked up to and went to work for. His name was Henry Cameron.

Especially with Rand’s obsession with the word ego (*Anthem*, the novella she wrote on a break from *The Fountainhead*, ends with “The sacred word: Ego”<sup>19</sup>) it must be clear that Rand is borrowing from Freud’s concepts, though usually ignoring the id and the superego in her process. Freud said, “The hero was a man who by himself had slain the father”<sup>20</sup>. Cameron is, therefore, Roark’s father figure. In Freud’s Oedipal narrative, which has been adopted by Rothko and other artists, the father must die before the child can assert true freedom. Cameron does die, and in his process of dying shows Roark, somehow, through his neediness in Roark’s presence (he stays with Cameron, at his request, for 3 days) how to be an autonomous figure; “No reference was made to his staying there— nor to how long he would have to stay. His presence was accepted as a natural fact requiring no comment.”<sup>21</sup> It is only after Cameron does die that Roark can first woo the likes of Dominique and step into his rightful place as visionary hero creator of our Rand’s story, actively building his reputation and career. It is also, conveniently, the American Dream, whereby with enough hard work and dedication Roark assumes super-architect status.

Wooing Dominique is not entirely accurate. Originally in the text Dominique “tried to tear herself away from him,” once “tore herself free” and “fought like an animal.”<sup>22</sup> “She felt the hatred and his hands;” as “it was an act that could be performed in tenderness, as a seal of love, or in contempt, as a symbol of humiliation and conquest. It could be the act of a lover or the act of a

18 Rand, Ayn *The Fountainhead*, (New York: Plume Publishing 2nd Ed, 2005), 711

19 Rand, Ayn. *Anthem*. Digireads.com, 2011.

20 Van Herik, Judith. *Freud on Femininity and Faith*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles California: University of California Press, 1985), 189.

21 Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead*, (New York: Plume Publishing 2nd Ed, 2005), 175

22 Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead*, (New York: Plume Publishing 2nd Ed, 2005), 219-20

soldier violating an enemy woman. He did it as an act of scorn. Not as love, but as defilement. And this made her lie still and submit.”<sup>23</sup>

It might be asked what this has to do with economics and the value of art objects. It is interesting that Rand, as a woman herself, chooses to make her main character a male. This is not accidental or era relevant, but has to do with Rand’s personal sense of gender hierarchy. Rand believes, “the essence of femininity is hero worship” and clarifies that although this does not mean “dependence, obedience, or anything implying inferiority” that her role is nevertheless to “look up to man” and in doing so must be “worthy of it and the hero she worships.”<sup>24</sup> Clarifying, “Intellectually and morally she has to be his equal; then the object of her worship is specifically his *masculinity*, not any human virtue she might lack”<sup>25</sup> which is to say, be his equal in every way with the only deficiency being masculinity itself; that somehow in “worship” and “desiring to look up to” this ambiguous thing that you lack is in itself what defines you “woman *qua* woman.” This again sounds Freudian in nature, except Freud lays out the essence of womanhood as being receptive to a phallus which can only be conferred and given to her by a man. As such, Van Herik interprets Freud’s view to be that “femininity represents libidinal fulfillment, the temptations of the pleasure principle, and the psychological dangers of wish fulfillment to the male ascetic, culture hero, or theorist.”<sup>26</sup> What this means is that the feminine character, if she is feminine, cannot be the hero; she can only be the libidinal counterpart to him. In all other facets, Dominique is brilliant, talented, employed, and his equal, thereby worthy of this satisfaction.

When responding to the question was Dominique raped by Roark, Rand replied, “It was not an actual rape but a symbolic action which Dominique all but invited. This was the action she wanted and Howard Roark knew it.”<sup>27</sup> This reads like many arguments about what does and does not constitute rape in our culture. In this, the first sexual encounter between Dominique Francon and Roark, at no point does she utter the word “no” or “stop” but nevertheless resists him. It is relevant because, as Amanda Hess notes, “for young people with no practical experience with sex,

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23 Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead*, (New York: Plume Publishing 2nd Ed, 2005), 220

24 Mayhew, Robert. “Anthem: ‘36 & 46,” *Essays on Ayn Rands Anthem*, ed. Robert Mayhew (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2005), 47.

25 Mayhew, Robert. “Anthem: ‘36 & 46,” *Essays on Ayn Rands Anthem*, ed. Robert Mayhew (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2005), 47.

26 Van Herik, Judith. *Freud on Femininity and Faith*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles California: University of California Press, 1985), 107.

27 Berstein, Andrew. “Understanding the ‘Rape’ Scene in the Fountainhead,” *Essays on Ayn Rands The Fountainhead*, ed. Robert Mayhew (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2007), 201.

Rand doesn't provide any instruction on how exactly to seal the note. If your sex partner is biting you and beating you in the face, how can you be sure they've consented 'internally'? Between Rand's idealized heroes and heroines, why is the ideal sexual scenario a violent rape that the woman only privately desires?"<sup>28</sup> This can be interpreted further to say that by teaching our youth at a young age to "submit" to sexual repression, you are absolutely preparing them to accept an inferior value for their own self worth. In art as with all fields, far fewer women take up the select spotlight of our "limited star capacity." It is interesting to note that age also plays a role in gender discrimination, as a study in by the National Endowment for the Arts discovered "in 2003-2005, women artists aged 18-24 earned \$0.95 for every \$1 made by young men artists" which "fell to \$0.67 for 45-to-54 year-olds."<sup>29</sup>

Returning to Rand, nowhere in her books are stories about people who do not come from already (racially and financially) privileged backgrounds. In her world, whereas women are designed to worship and submit, people of color and people of initial small means are not even worth mentioning. She wrote one essay on the subject of racism where she prescribes (as she does to all things) freemarketeering as the solution to racial opportunity saying that, "It is capitalism that abolished serfdom and slavery in all the civilized countries of the world. It is the capitalist North that destroyed the slavery of the agrarian-feudal South in the United States."<sup>30</sup> This is of course, inaccurate. Government intervention is what ended the gross exploitation that was slavery in this country; exploitation which still largely exists in the form of lower wages and less desirable jobs offered to many of the countries people of color. Where government can intervene it has the moral obligation not to: "A man's rights are not violated by a private individual's refusal to deal with him. Racism is an evil, irrational and morally contemptible doctrine -- but doctrines cannot be forbidden or prescribed by law."<sup>31</sup> By refusing to explicitly regulate the violations on certain people's rights, Rand's suggestions inevitably favor the continuation of racial oppression.

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28 Hess, Amanda. Washington City Paper, "Internal Affairs: How Ayn Rand Followers Rationalize 'Welcomed' Rape." Last modified March 10, 2010. Accessed Oct 25, 2012. <http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/sexist/2010/03/10/internal-affairs-how-ayn-rand-followers-rationalize-welcomed-rape/>.

29 National Endowment for the Arts, "National Endowment for the Arts Issues Research Note on Women Artists: 1990 to 2005." Last modified December 2, 2008. Accessed October 24, 2012. <http://www.nea.gov/news/news08/WomenArtists.html>.

30 Kramer, Bill. Daily Kos, "Ayn Rand was a clever racist." Last modified April 24, 2011. Accessed October 28, 2012.

31 Kramer, Bill. Daily Kos, "Ayn Rand was a clever racist." Last modified April 24, 2011. Accessed October 28, 2012.

In Rand's art writings she admits, "*Art is a selective recreation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value judgments*"<sup>32</sup> (italics hers). More specifically, "*Art is the indispensable medium for the communication of a moral idea.*"<sup>33</sup> As such, we should assume that what she has written in the pages of *The Fountainhead* represent her value judgments. In the end, Roark blows up the buildings that were not made to his specifics, and, when explaining to the courts his dedication and pureness of creative vision was defiled in their mediated adjustments, he even has the charges of property damage dropped. The problem of Rand's work then becomes quite circular:

to consider oneself so great, to be obsessed with one's individual substance, must entail being against others, and thus invites the conceit that, alas, no one else can be his equal. Self means division, and division means superiority-inferiority hierarchies. This is the junction at which all of Rand's roads—the reality principle, the violent interpersonal domination, the extroflexion, and the "objective rationalization"—converge and lead to exactly what her hated collectivists propose as their final solution, a ruling elite.<sup>34</sup>

More on this dilemma as the opposing camp of semiotics is examined.

### **Chapter Three: Is the Semiotician in the Room?**

Nicholas Bourriaud contradicts Ayn Rand's philosophy of the creative individual in every way possible. In his seminal work *Relational Aesthetics* he places community participation and involvement as central to all contemporary art practices. Relational art is a responsive adaptation to the service economy, shifting the emphasis of art making from creating a tangible product to creating the basis for personal connection. These kinds of art pieces are co-created by their spectators as their actions and reactions are the focus of piece itself. "This inter-human game which forms our object... nevertheless goes beyond the context of what is called 'art' by commodity" (19). It is, in this way, an expansion upon conceptual art; it is, more specifically, conceptual art adapted for the service economy. To illustrate this point, Borriaud contrasts the work of two artists, one from the sixties and one from the nineties:

In 1962, Ben lived and slept in the One Gallery in London for a fortnight, with just a few essential props. In Nice, in August 1990, Pierre Joseph, Phillipe Parreno and Phillipe Perrin also "lived in" the Air du Paris Gallery, literally and figuratively, with their show *Les Ateliers du Paradise*. It might be hastily concluded that this was a remake of Ben's performance, but the two

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32 Rand, Ayn. *The Romantic Movement*, (New York: Signet, 1971), 19.

33 Rand, Ayn. *The Romantic Movement*, (New York: Signet, 1971), 21.

34 Gordon, Philip. "The Extroflexive Hero: A Look at Ayn Rand." *Journal of Popular Culture* 10.4 (Spring 1977): 701-710. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski. Vol. 30. Detroit: Gale Research, 1984. Literature Resource Center. Web. 15 Mar. 2011.

works refer to two radically different worlds, which are as different in terms of their ideological and aesthetic foundation as their respective period can be. When Ben lived in a gallery, it was his intent to signify that the arena of art was expanding, and even included the artist's sleep and breakfast. On the other hand, when Joseph, Parreno and Perrin occupied the gallery, it was to turn it into a production workshop, a "photogenic space" jointly managed by the viewer, in accordance with very precise rules of play.<sup>35</sup>

Bourriaud is explaining the differences not only of the artists conceptions, but also of the change in period work from a private to an inclusive art (the sixties, more private; and the nineties more public respectively). He later asserts, "Every artist whose work stems from relational aesthetics has a world of forms, a set of problems and a trajectory which are *all his own*"<sup>36</sup> (italics mine) which addresses the nature of the artist mind as an individual as it manifests itself into an installation. More importantly he asserts, as he quotes Ramo Nash Club, that "*art is an extremely co-operative system. The dense network of interconnections between members means that everything that happens in it will be a function of all members*"<sup>37</sup> (italics his.) He similarly references David Graham Cooper's work in anti-psychology, saying "madness is not 'inside' a person, but in the system of relationships of which that person is involved" and extends this to the art world in saying, "No one writes or paints alone. But we have to make the pretence of doing so"<sup>38</sup> since "Ideology exalts the solitude of the creative person and mocks all forms of community."<sup>39</sup> Bourriaud therefor asserts that, "quite apart from its commodified nature or semantic value, the artwork represents a social interstice. The term interstice was used by Karl Marx to describe trading communities that escaped the framework of the capitalist economy: barter, selling at a loss, autarkic forms of production, and so on. An interstice is a space in social relations which, although it fits more or less harmoniously and openly into the overall system, suggests possibilities for exchanges other than those that prevail within the system. Exhibitions of contemporary art occupy precisely the same position within the field of the trade in representations. They create free spaces and periods of time whose rhythms are not the same as those that organize everyday life, and they encourage an inter-human intercourse which is different to the areas of communication that are forced upon us.

Another notable example of relational art is Felix González-Torres' candy piles. The piles begin as the average weight of an adult male and are often paired; the spectator is then invited to

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35 Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon, France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1981), 38.

36 Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon, France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1981), 43.

37 Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon, France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1981), 27.

38 Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon, France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1981), 81.

39 Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon, France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1981), 84.

take a candy or two with them. As the spectators take, the body dwindles representing the weight loss of an AIDS patient. The candies are sweet and bright, representing the human spirit. The spectator must be thoughtful of her role because if they were greedy, the piece would disappear too quickly. It is also breaking the rules of convention: you are taking candy from a stranger. These levels and more display the depth of González-Torres' thought process.

Part of the divergence of conceptual and relational art is that the newer art form sought to break the fabric of maladapted narratives. Bourriaud attributes this to Félix Guattari's work, initially with Gilles Deleuze and then later on his own; beginning with their landmark work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, a trilogy whose first book is *Anti-Oedipus*. To understand this work one must know that Ayn Rand, much like many late modern artists like Mark Rothko, believed deeply that the Oedipal conflict exists in all of us; that one must resolve this by, in one's own way, killing your father and marrying your mother. They believed deeply if one does not resolve these "instinct" desires guilt will riddle one neurotic.

Guattari and Deleuze broadened their perspectives. Rather than look at one's relationship to your parents and authority figures, one could look at the problems of the world systematically and realize that it is all very absurd. Deleuze and Guattari were postmarxists, which meant they read Marx critically; holding on to some tenets, disregarding others within reason, and in general using the framework Marx had laid out to explore other disciplines such as psychology. They believed that this world absurdity problem could be understood as the general trappings of capitalism and, as Rand would put it, "rational self interest": the idea that you must put economic interests above the concerns of other's welfare. More than that, because the world is absurd, in somewhat knowable ways, the natural reaction is stress. In reacting to that stress, there are two options: one can either blame oneself for, say, not adequately confronting their Oedipal crisis; or can admit that the world is inherently flawed and invent new realities (new stories) as a means of coping. The former of these methods is Freudian and leads to neurosis, and the latter is Deleuze and Guattari's counter argument for schizophrenia.

Following Guattari's work and broadening it to the field of contemporary art in the 1990's, Bourriaud believes creating spaces that engage a community in a utopian fashion is the crux of relational art: "Social utopias and revolutionary hopes [that] have given way to everyday micro-utopias and imitative strategies, [since] any stance that is 'directly' critical of society is futile, if based

on the illusion of a marginality that is nowadays impossible, not to say regressive.”<sup>40</sup> For example, “When Jens Haaning uses a loudspeaker to broadcast jokes told in Turkish on a square in Copenhagen (Turkish jokes, 1994), he instantly produces a microcommunity of immigrants who have been brought together by the collective laughter that inverts their situation as exiles. That community is formed in relation to and inside the work.”<sup>41</sup>

González-Torres acknowledges the relationship between authentic creation and the falsehood of “having to undermine your ancestors, of ridiculing them, undermining them, and making less out of them. I think we’re part of a historical process and I think that this attitude that you have to murder your father in order to start something new is” false because “we are part of this culture, we don’t come from outer space, so whatever I do is already something that has entered my brain from some other sources and is then synthesized into something new.”<sup>42</sup> Herein is the first problem of relational art: that inventing truly unusual and divergent realities unaffected by the systematics of how society actually exists is difficult; often paradoxically so. Since Bourriaud explains that relational art is an extension and appropriation of the service economy, that which itself has grown out of the perils of capital exploitation, how exactly does service art step outside of that paradigm? And because the work is generally semiotic in nature, the room for dominant narratives to slip in is vast.

Take for example Kirsha Kaechele, the artist and founder of Life is Art Foundation / KK-Projects. Kaechele moved to New Orleans in 2000, and in the wake of Katrina bought up several vacant houses in the St Roch district. She invited artists to do 3 month residencies in the houses, most notably Mel Chin who created the infamous Safehouse: “a massive bank safe door amending its fragile facade”<sup>43</sup> as described by Kaechele’s website. Kaechele also held banquets in the impoverished community for community members and wealthy stars such as Uma Thurman and Brad Pitt, using Bourriaud’s principle of conviviality as art. In 2011, after being denied grant funding because her work failed to provide educational opportunities, as well as after trying to farm medical marijuana to support her excessive spending habits, Kaechele declared bankruptcy on the houses and moved to Tasmania. She claims the houses have “gone back to the way I found them. ... It was

40 Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon, France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1981), 31.

41 Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon, France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1981), 17.

42 Storr, Robert. ArtPress, “Felix González-Torres.” Last modified January 1995. Accessed November 5, 2012.

43 Life Is Art Foundation, “Safehouse.” Accessed November 6, 2012. <http://lifeisartfoundation.org/art/safehouse>.

always about the intersection of creativity and chaos.”<sup>44</sup> Though Mel Chin made several improvements to the house before installing, and replaced the hole he cut out for the safe door with boards and a door, Kaechele, for unknown reasons, removed them and the house now has a gigantic circular vacancy out front. The following winter that area experienced a related or unrelated spike in crime.

### **Intermission: Tyranny of Structurelessness**

Claire Bishop points out, “the relations set up by relational aesthetics are not intrinsically democratic, as Bourriaud suggests, since they rest too comfortably within an ideal of subjectivity as whole and of community as immanent togetherness.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, just because a piece is participatory and open ended doesn’t guarantee a mini-utopia will occur; in fact these may add to the chaotic spectrum of results. With regards to Kaechele, her ability to exploit the principles of relational art to add to her popularity and perhaps personal wealth without effectually providing educational opportunities that might have otherwise gained her grant funding is no doubt due in part to her privileged background. The willingness to leave a series of buildings in disrepair without seeing a responsibility to the community, on the other hand, reeks of Randian “rational self interest.” Kaechele says Life as Art “takes a collective approach, with a touch of totalitarianism.”<sup>46</sup> The idea that these two contradictory terms could coexist is the subject of Jo Freeman’s brilliant essay *Tyranny of Structurelessness*.

In *Tyranny of Structurelessness*, Freeman uses her experience in the women’s liberation movement to explain how systems without clear hierarchy develop them anyway. The problem begins with the fact that structures that want to avoid hierarchy often want to avoid rules. This leads to implicit rather than explicit guidelines for decision making, i.e. conversational rather than voting processes, in which dominant voices inevitably win out over passive ones. The situation gets compounded when those dominant voices etch out an elite, which Freeman describes as “nothing more, and nothing less, than groups of friends who also happen to participate in the same political

44 MacCash, Douglas. Times Picayune, “New Orleans Kirsha Kaechele Projects is now mostly in ruin.” Last modified April 3, 2011. Accessed November 6, 2012. [http://www.nola.com/arts/index.ssf/2011/04/new\\_orleans\\_kirsha\\_kaechele\\_pr.html](http://www.nola.com/arts/index.ssf/2011/04/new_orleans_kirsha_kaechele_pr.html).

45 Bishop, Claire. Marginal Unity, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics.” Last modified October 2004. Accessed November 8, 2012. [http://www.marginalutility.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Claire-Bishop\\_Antagonism-and-Relational-Aesthetics.pdf](http://www.marginalutility.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Claire-Bishop_Antagonism-and-Relational-Aesthetics.pdf).

46 Life Is Art Foundation, “Life is Art Foundation / KKProjects” Accessed November 6, 2012. <http://lifeisartfoundation.org/about>

activities.”<sup>47</sup> The trouble furthers the private nature of decision making and shields it away from the group as a whole. As the situation develops we move onto “The ‘Star’ System” wherein, because of the expectations of the greater public to have a spokesperson for the movement, a leader emerges to fill the need. This echoes Abbings “limited star capacity,” and is the reason relational aesthetics is co-opted by individuals like Kaechele or perhaps Maurizio Cattelan (an Italian prankster, the wealthiest member of the Relational Aesthetics group, well known for exploiting his ties to RA). Suely Rolnik, when describing how certain artists have abused disadvantaged communities to earn their fame in participatory structures suggests this principle be upheld, “Whatever the means of expression, we think/create because something in our everyday lives forces us to invent new possibilities, in order to incorporate into the current map of meaning the sensible mutation that is seeking passage in our day-to-day experience. All of this has nothing to do with the narcissistic demand to align oneself on the ‘trend’ of the moment, in order to obtain institutional recognition and/or media prestige.”<sup>48</sup>

Artists like Kaechele get involved in art to be a star. Perhaps that’s why, after a run of bad press and not being invited to exhibit in Prospect 2’s contemporary art fair, she bought up a series of billboards alongside the fair picturing herself in a party dress surrounded by a red circle with a slash drawn through it.<sup>49</sup> Recognition is the site of exploitation. Several times artists are offered notoriety in lieu of payment, so it is very possible for an artist to be established and still not viable. While the ability to purchase several billboards and yet not be able to reseal the Safehouse remains questionable, Kaechele’s notoriety is unquestionably as real as her ability to declare bankruptcy.

This leaves two very big questions unanswered: what structures can be implemented to ensure artists are held accountable for their actions and what structures can ensure that artists are paid adequately and in proportion to their efforts and ideas?

#### Chapter Four: Snowbird and the Kickstarter Revolution

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47 Freeman, Jo. “The Tyranny of Structurelessness.” Accessed November 8, 2012. <http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm>.

48 Rolnik, Suely “The Geopolitics of Pimping,” *Critique of Creativity*, ed. Gerald Raunig, Gene Ray, and Ulf Wuggenig (London: Mayfly Books, 2011) <http://mayflybooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/9781906948146CritiqueOfCreativity.pdf> (accessed November 8, 2012), 24.

49 MacCash, Douglas. Times Picayune, “New Orleans Kirsha Kaechele Projects is now mostly in ruin.” Last modified April 3, 2011. Accessed November 6, 2012. [http://www.nola.com/arts/index.ssf/2011/04/new\\_orleans\\_kirsha\\_kaechele\\_pr.html](http://www.nola.com/arts/index.ssf/2011/04/new_orleans_kirsha_kaechele_pr.html).

In December of 2011 Erin Wilson went to Kickstarter.com with the idea of funding time to write her dream graphic novel explaining the tragedies and triumphs of a particularly difficult winter in New Orleans. Her video, by Nicola Krebil, was playful, funny, and stimulating though surprisingly long. Most interestingly, it emphasized the difficulty in taking on such projects: she would need time, she would need resources such as a local printer to publish the book, and if she were to complete the book in six months, she would need food and shelter covered as well. For this she was asking for a total of \$7000, which, considering her living expenses seems very reasonable. For this she offered access to the web comic as it was unfolding, a zine version of the first ten pages, patches, the printed book, and higher levels offered a celebrity spot in the book or matching tattoos perhaps. In this way, many funders were really investors in the project. Hrag Vartanian wrote on Kickstarter campaigns:

Looking at my own behavior and why I choose to support certain projects and not others I noticed that there is a very personal process I tend to follow, which is probably true of most other backers. It goes something like this: 1. Will the new idea/project improve the world in some way? Or better yet, will it make it suck less? If I decide it will and I can afford to give, I donate. 2. Is there a great prize/gift I want (cool tshirt, great product . . . ) in the reward list? If there is, I give and don't really consider this a donation. 3. Will this encourage the artist/maker — and this is particularly true when I know the person — into growing and developing as an artist/writer/etc.? If yes, I donate.<sup>50</sup>

Wilson had the extraordinary insight to hit on all three of these for many people. Though she had made comics for several years, has a undergraduate background in both theater and art, and had for several years worked with the renowned politicized graphic design activist organization, The Beehive Collective, she had yet to establish a name for herself as a career artist. As her website bio explains “Erin is doing her best to survive in life doing the things that she loves, although she is also a really good barista when she needs to be.” Her appreciation for the time she now has to focus on her work (Wilson’s project was funded at 135%) as helpful to her in building her skills as an illustrator are always emphasized in her Project updates. #1 on her check in list of August 25th, 2012 is “my drawings are getting better!” She explains:

I don't know if you guys can tell, but my drawings are getting better. They're not only getting better- but for the first time in my life... how do i explain this? These drawings look exactly like they do in my head. My whole life I have always been disappointed in my ability to translate what is in my imagination to what is on paper. Almost as if there is some sort of filter inside of

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<sup>50</sup> Vartanian , Hrag. Hyperallergic, “Only 25% of Projects Deliver on Time and Other Kickstarter Stats You Should Know.” Last modified July 18, 2012. Accessed November 17, 2012. <http://hyperallergic.com/54433/kickstarter-stats-infographics/>.

my arm that prevents things from traveling from my brain to my hand. But right around page 40 I broke through whatever glass ceiling that was above me. Now i'm feverishly drawing- like I've been thirsty this whole time and drawing is the tastiest cold drink that I've ever had. It's not that I haven't been enjoying my drawings... but now there is a level of delight and joy that bubbles out of me every single time I draw ANYTHING.<sup>51</sup>

The project promised to be “a hauntingly honest graphic novel depicting the winter of 2010 in the radical artist and musician community of New Orleans.”<sup>52</sup> Wilson's graphic novel, as promised, illuminates dynamics of race and gentrification as part of the difficulty which contributed to the hardships of living each day to it's fullest in one of the most dangerous and complicated cities in the US. Her video emphasize the economic need, where the full cost would be applied (food, shelter, printing, time to draw) as well as the emotional need; with the emphasis on the right to heal through expressing the full spectrum of events and how they engaged her soul that winter.

During Wilson's Kickstarter campaign, the news of her graphic novel inspired several people to reach out to her. Members of the community, the parents of people who had been killed (some in a fire, others through shootings), and friends far and wide gave her extra information and critical feedback. Largely due to this, Wilson felt the need to revise everything:

But also some people have strong critiques and concerns about my story's subject matter, which was a time of community trauma here in NOLA. There are big questions about appropriation, the role of art in conversations about grief, and personal stories being shared with me about some folk's personal experiences during last Winter.

After all these conversations, my story has completely changed. It's going to be a MUCH better graphic novel now. If I had written this book all alone and in secret, it would be a lot less well rounded. Thank you, again, kickstarter.<sup>53</sup>

She drew up an image to visually articulate the learning process her exposure gained her. The revision of the storyboard combined with several other stresses caused the book to be delayed. Not only did Wilson let her backers know, but she created several visuals to help them understand:

Wilson is not alone in taking more time than usual to meet her deadline and goal. According to info collected by Professor Ethan Mollick at UPenn Wharton, only 25% of Kickstarters deliver on time, and only 75% deliver within 8 months of their perceived deadline.<sup>54</sup> This is likely

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51 Wilson, Erin. Kickstarter, “PAGE FIFTY! I'm kicking this into high gear.” Last modified August 25, 2012. Accessed November 18, 2012.

52 Wilson, Erin. Kickstarter, “Snowbird: a graphic novel.” Last modified December 31, 2011. Accessed November 18, 2012. <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel>.

53 Wilson, Erin. Kickstarter, “One month in!!! Where 'yat?.” Last modified January 27, 2012. Accessed November 18, 2012. <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel/posts/167238>

54 Jeanne. Apsblogger, “The Untold Story Behind Kickstarter Stats [INFOGRAPHIC].”

because making a project through Kickstarter invites a very intimate level of exposure which, as happened to Wilson, shifts the focus of the end product. Because funders are essentially investors, they feel entitled to have a say in the vulnerable, not yet completed work. Sometimes this is for the best, some times it interferes with the creative vision, but it always delays the end product. As founding member of the Just Seeds Collective Josh McPhee says, “any time there is a suggestion of free money, we should get suspicious.”<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, the costs are not entirely transparent. Even if the Kickstarter campaigner is aware that there is a 10% cut (5% for Kickstarter, and 5% for their payment system provider Amazon.com) the illusion on the campaign website is that all the money is for them. Shipping costs for the various awards are also automatically included and not “profit” for the individual artist. There is a tremendous amount of time that goes into running a campaign, watching the donations roll in, and constantly promoting it so that it meets the intended goal:

All in all you’ve taxed your community to a bending (if not breaking) point, and spent a good 150–200 hours—not on your project, remember, but on raising money in hopes of eventually getting to work on the project. If you were to pay a reasonable wage for that labor, you’re looking at another \$2,500 in costs... And suddenly a day spent on a grant application doesn’t seem so bad.<sup>56</sup>

It should not be surprising that Kickstarter stands to gain more than 5% off the top of one’s income. It has also mined one’s extended social network for research and bought the email list to mine for future profits. “The true product for sale on Kickstarter is not your art project, but your community and networks. It’s no surprise this reality is hidden: Who wants to see their exciting, new brand-selves as reincarnated Tupperware salespeople?”<sup>57</sup> And if you are one of the 54% of Kickstarter campaigns that fail<sup>58</sup>, those contacts are still saved and stored in the megadatabase.

Kickstarter, in a systematic way that mimics grant funding and has a tendency to work better for more popular artists. Friends of Facebook Followers is a term developed by Mollnick to describe the phenomena of facebook popularity with successful Kickstarter Campaigns. “For that

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Accessed November 18, 2012. <http://www.appsblogger.com/behind-kickstarter-crowdfunding-stats/>.

55 MacPhee, Josh. Baffler, “Who’s the Shop Steward on Your Kickstarter?” Accessed November 23, 2012.

56 MacPhee, Josh. Baffler, “Who’s the Shop Steward on Your Kickstarter?” Accessed November 23, 2012.

57 MacPhee, Josh. Baffler, “Who’s the Shop Steward on Your Kickstarter?” Accessed November 23, 2012.

58 Jeanne. Appsblogger, “The Untold Story Behind Kickstarter Stats [INFOGRAPHIC].” Accessed November 18, 2012. <http://www.appsblogger.com/behind-kickstarter-crowdfunding-stats/>.

\$10K project, holding everything else constant, if you had 10 Facebook friends, you would only have a 9% chance of succeeding. If you had 100 Facebook friends, your chance jumps to 20%. And if you have 1,000 Facebook friends? Your chance of succeeding is now 40%.<sup>59</sup> This trend has been considered abused by many big name artists. An article in Hyperallergic called *Do Jay-Z and Jeff Koons Really Need \$1 Million for Water Tank Art?* reveals much in the title and goes on to say,

While the Water Tank Project's self-proclaimed goal with the Kickstarter fund is to "be the first public art show that would be funded by you, the people," the plea for individual donations seems to raise questions when compared to the roster of art stars and Jay-Z. Don't Jay-Z or Jeff Koons individually have enough money to spare to contribute to the project? Couldn't they find funding through their collectors, galleries and other connections? Even without relying on the artists' personal fame, the Water Tank Project seems connected with enough big names that they clearly have access to public art grants and foundations.<sup>60</sup>

In essence, the whole system, yields to the greater narrative of our hero artist and the limited star capacity. On the notion of bootstrap libertarianism and the American Dream, it reinforces the notion that artists who work harder are more likely to meet their goal. On the positive side, it has forced Wilson and others to be increasingly vulnerable, and, through sharing and documenting their own artistic process, are able to garner more support because they have effectively communicated the depth of labor required to make an object. Secondly, the fame generated through Wilson's Kickstarter project has expanded her fan following greatly, and should lay groundwork for expanding her career in the future.

### **Chapter Five: Self Sufficiency, Technology, and the New Democratic Multiple**

Kickstarter is not the only means of online vulnerability. Wilson herself has a facebook page for her art, a tumblr and twitter account (which are linked), and a couple of websites that deal with various aspects of her work. Many artists look to various facets of the internet to promote their work. Two artists this paper examines in particular, Ian Cozzens and Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. employ internet dialogs to support their work in democratic multiples. This, combined with a willingness to live and work without certain luxuries such as health insurance, allows both of them to be relatively self-sufficient, without need for a second job. Both of them subsidize their income

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<sup>59</sup> Jeanne. Appsblogger, "The Untold Story Behind Kickstarter Stats [INFOGRAPHIC]." Accessed November 18, 2012. <http://www.appsblogger.com/behind-kickstarter-crowdfunding-stats/>.

<sup>60</sup> Colucci, Emily. Hyperallergic, "Do Jay-Z and Jeff Koons Really Need \$1 Million for Water Tank Art?." Last modified June 15, 2012. Accessed November 23, 2012.

by teaching small workshops, but are not university professors.

A look at the website of Ian Cozzens ([secretdoorprojects.org](http://secretdoorprojects.org)) says volumes about his work. A heady intellectual who studied architecture at the Rhode Island School of Art and Design, his website follows a meta structure that references his attention to detail. On the home page, navigation pages are clearly labeled with both text and imagery in neatly arranged cells. The site demonstrates an aesthetic cohesion, using Cozzens' imagery and color scheme unite it. His site alternates between a narrative blog and titled image cubes designed for navigation. Having both text and imagery navigate to the same information is a clear way to give the navigator a greater sense of freedom and agency. The work in many ways speaks for itself, but wherever you might have questions, Cozzens readily embeds live text to describe his process.

If one navigates to Cozzens' blog by clicking "right now,"<sup>61</sup> there is no obvious link back to the homepage except to "go back" in the browser. Perhaps because process is crucial to Cozzens', or perhaps this is because the [wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org) virtual codex tends to favor blog formats. When one tries to click on the central navigation "secret door projects" it reroutes back to the blog page. This is not true for any of the other pages in the site (where clicking on the heading "secret door projects" will bring one back to the homepage.) One can, however, navigate to other subnavigations available on the homepage through the top navigation bar. This gives the sense that the blog is very important to Cozzens'; that things are meant to end there. He updates maybe once a month, but the updates are lengthy and show many different process images. The titles, such as "giving all of my (rubylith) secrets away"<sup>62</sup> are as true to the post as they are to the class they are meant to document.

A few other pages have subtle difficulty navigating back. When one clicks on "other projects" and then "participatory and collaborative"<sup>63</sup>, all of the navigation clicks will open a new tab. It is not entirely obvious, but it in the upper left hand corner of each of these pages is a small image that reads "secret door projects" that will in fact navigate back to the home page. Each of these pages is dramatically different from the rest of the site, and it feels nerve racking to have the

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61 Cozzens, Ian. secret door projects, "right now" Last modified March 7, 2013. Accessed March 28, 2013. <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/updates/>.

62 Cozzens, Ian. secret door projects, "giving all of my (rubylith) secrets away..." Last modified February 06, 2013. Accessed March 28, 2013. <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/updates/2013/02/06/giving-all-my-rubylith-secrets-away/>.

63 Cozzens, Ian. secret door projects, "participatory projects" Accessed March 28, 2013. <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/collaborative/collaborative.html>.

browser create new tabs that appear outside of the context of Cozzen's site. One can feel lost. The first navigation of "prints and posters"<sup>64</sup> has a much clearer logic. Clicking on this give a small sum of images underneath a series of years to work through which, when clicked on, will show a detailed image of the poster print. As this happens, on the left hand side a series of years appear. If one clicks on them a second navigation bar of images appears next to it allowing one to view the images for each year. It's this kind of meta-structure that makes Cozzens' site so appealing. It's navigation feels intuitive, and it's intuitiveness encourages you to navigate it.

Clicking on "practice and process" will give you a second navigation bar of four options; clicking on any of these leaves the two navigation bars along the top, so you may navigate to any of the pages you would be able to navigate to on the homepage as well as any that were under practice and process.

It is curious why the "secret store" isn't more embedded into the website. It too feels like a tab browser opening into a new page, separate and estranged (though it opens within the same browser tab.) It seems that the prints/posters portion of the site should at some point direct you to the store itself, if that poster is available for sale. Cozzens has a clear preference for narrative, and the end point of any image clicking from "prints and posters" is in fact the blog page written describing the process of how the print was created. It might be wise to then also have the ability to buy the piece without navigating out of the narrative to the store page and have to find the print all over again. It seems as though there could be a sort of lowest common denominator gravitational point where by the entire site could be subsumed into 3 categories that intermingle: Prints/Stories/ and Sales.

Cozzens is supported by the infrastructure of Providence. Having been a graduate at RISD, he is allowed to sell in the Alumni Sale twice a year. There are several locations about town that carry his prints, most notably Craftland: a large showroom of handmade goods most of which are crafted in Providence itself. Cozzens is also often commissioned to make posters for events around town, which he typically agrees to keep a portion of posters to sell himself post event.

Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr.'s website is not as comprehensive, but his facebook can tell you volumes about his life and work. He instagrams his letterpress setup and frequently is tagged in photos of his artwork. Amos does all of this on his personal facebook, whereas Cozzens keeps

<sup>64</sup> Cozzens, Ian. secret door projects, "prints and posters" Last modified March, 2010. Accessed March 28, 2013. <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/printsandposters/prints.html>.

both a personal profile and an artist page (under secret door projects.) Kennedy also keeps folks engaged with his page by tagging other artists and sharing posts of political relevance. Kennedy's and Cozzens' both work closely with social justice issues; those of queer politics, race, gender, and the prison industrial complex. Since folks seek out those topics in Kennedy's artwork, it is wise for him to show his interest while also educating those that follow him about the topics that concern and inform his work.

Kennedy gained nationwide recognition as an artist by allowing the Chicago based video company Brown Finch Films to make a short documentary about his work and personal philosophy called *Proceed and Be Bold*. The trailer was featured on Etsy's blog, and the film showed in printmaking programs and alternative spaces around the country. While Kennedy has benefited greatly by this recognition, sadly, the film company seems to no longer exist. All of Brown Finch's websites cease to have any information on them.

Kennedy also used Indie-a-Go-Go, a platform much like Kickstarter, to fund his move and undertaking "The Detroit Printing Plant." The primary difference between Indie-a-Go-Go and Kickstarter is that with the former, one gets to keep their pledges regardless of whether or not one meets their goal. Because of this, the pressure is less, and many Indie-a-Go-Go projects do not get fully funded through the site (though Kennedy did meet his goal.) However, when people start an online campaign for funding, many times this helps them get recognition for the work that they are doing and they receive additional funding from grants or by check; neither of which they are capable of counting on the online platform. Additionally, the various fees associated with Indie-a-Go-Go are slightly lower. "The Detroit Printing Plant" will help Kennedy's future as an artist by allowing him to intern and educate individuals at a low cost.

The concept of a democratic multiple, according to book artist and art historian Johanna Drucker, "comes into its own in the post-1945 era of art and literary activity."<sup>65</sup> The idea was that by proliferating the printing of ideas one can gain wider circulation and keep costs down. It is usually used with regard to Artist Books such as Ed Rucha's *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*. Keeping prices low is important to both Kennedy and Cozzens. Though both make artist books—and Kennedy has made some very elaborate ones at that—they both work largely in prints which they tend to produce in high volumes, hovering around 200. This allows them to set prices that, while

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65 Drucker, Johanna. *A Century of Artist Books*, (New York, NY: Granary Books, 2004) 69.

not in competition with say, photo prints from Ikea, it does make them affordable to very young people who may desire a print simply to decorate their dorm room. This allows their artwork to be viewed by a large volume of people, which is crucial to their work as artist/activists.

Kennedy has no official statement on his work, aside from the movie *Proceed and Be Bold*. Cozzens, however, has an impressive artist statement on his site contextualizing his place in social justice work and orientation in the world:

My name is Ian Gilpin Cozzens; I'm a queer & trans artist, organizer, and human. (pronouns: he, him, his.) I'm white & grew up with some class privilege in various locations in the eastern states of the USA. Now I live and work in the Olneyville neighborhood of Providence, RI, silkscreening posters, drawing buildings and letterforms and occasionally people, introducing people to each other, and putting together events in Providence's queer community. I'm sustained by bike riding, farming, trying to ask really good questions, and staying up all night by myself working & thinking. I aspire to more multiplicity, more contradiction, more self-actualization...<sup>66</sup>

## Chapter Six: Academia and the Artist Book

Artist Books from Ed Ruscha forward has been a loved format to employ by academic artists. Perhaps this is because it allows the juxtaposition of art theory and practice by combining narrative progressions with the visual form. Of big names in Artist Books, Johanna Drucker, Brad Freeman, and Robin Price all teach at the university level and derive much of their income from this. Their books often reference other books as much as they hint at their own process.

Drucker and Freeman collaborated on four books over the course of their marriage. Glossing over the whole of their work, a few things are apparent about their style. Drucker and Freeman have grounding in social justice—their work often undermining thoughts about mechanization and the patriarchy. Drucker, especially when working with Freeman, often employs cascading formats to her text. It is at once chaotic and structured: everything has its place, but everything is also defying a set of visible rules. Freeman talks about how his work is about constraint, and their work together shows this dance of boundaries: what the rules are, and how much they can be broken. Freeman's own imagery repeats itself in many of his works in such a way that you can see more or less of a particular image as it over or underlays several others (as is highly visible in *Emerging Sentience*). This is a way of exposing his process: both that of how images overlay each other, but also many of the photos are of his process; pictures of his desk, his computer, of Druck-

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<sup>66</sup> Cozzens, Ian. secret door projects, "about me" Last modified June, 2012. Accessed March 28, 2013. <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/updates/about-2/>.

er, etc. He often also shows the black frame around a photo which is intentionally cut, so as to show that the whole of an image was not used, that it was pasted together through digital means.

Johanna Drucker and Brad Freeman take man as object/architecture as the hallmark of their collaboration *Nova Reperta*, based on Stradanus work of the same name. This book explores the nature of the patriarchy from its literal power source to the end product of food politics and consumer culture. “The scaffolded metal works, iron struts, and outlived build forms etch nostalgic outlines against the horizon”<sup>67</sup>says Drucker, playing with the language of energy production to emphasize its over-masculinization, “CAGED RHYTHMS... AS A MEANS OF PROCESSING FOOD. The heavy machinery was less than perfect. Dust got into everything and spread a weeping mildew into the grain. INVISIBLE ARCHITECTURE STRUTS UPON the plain, while the muscular pimp declares a victory over the reticent soil.”<sup>68</sup> Loosely translated, the title means “Modern Inventions.”<sup>69</sup>

Drucker’s word play as transfixed by Freeman’s digital prints are utter genius, pointing out the detrimental effects of objectifying the modern man. It begs the question ‘are men also objectified?’, though not as a sex object as women often are, but as a lifeless object. Neither of course is ideal, and both are highly problematic. The result of an objectless, soulless man is the willingness to exploit the land and people of the global south (a line used to designate socio-economic status) for the sake of profit is ultimately positioning us towards the obliteration of the species homo sapiens.

Robin Price also discusses structure and chaos in books such as *43*. The premise for *43* was decided upon the eve of her 43rd birthday in 2005 at performance celebrating the saxophonist Anthony Braxton on his 60th birthday. Braxton and Price share an admiration for John Cage. *43* and an earlier book *Slurring at Bottom* (2001) quoted Cage, and the only text for her most recent book *As You Continue* is a single quote from him, “As you continue, which you will do, the way to proceed will become apparent.”<sup>70</sup> Indeed book art historian Johanna Drucker also exclaims, “Cage’s influence over late 20th Century Art was as important and far reaching as that of Duchamp’s was

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67 Drucker, Johanna and Brad Freeman. *Nova Reperta*. (New Haven, CT: Journal of Artists Books Books, 2000), Rare Books and Special Collections at The Library of Congress

68 Drucker, Johanna and Brad Freeman. *Nova Reperta*. (New Haven, CT: Journal of Artists Books Books, 2000), Rare Books and Special Collections at The Library of Congress

69 Drucker, Johanna. artist books online, “Project Statement.” Accessed March 30, 2013. <http://www.artistsbooksonline.org/works/nora.xml>.

70 Price. Robin. *As You Continue*, (Middletown, : Robin Price, 2012)

for the earlier half” because “Both were artists who re-conceptualized the parameters of what constitutes the work of art.”<sup>71</sup> “Cage had a love of “calculated chance”, a term he developed to describe how to remove “one’s likes and dislikes”<sup>72</sup> through choosing a specific set of constraints which allow for unpredictable serendipitous results to occur. His most famous piece as a composer is 4’33, in which he set forth detailed notes for the player to open up the piano and sit quietly while the audience erupts into a series of noises; the noises the audience makes, rather than what the player plays, becomes the piece itself. Price sought about a way to apply this into her own work. She selected 86 texts (43x2) that spoke to her as an artist, many of them by fellow book artists, and sought various calculations (4+3=7, 4x3=12, 43+43+43, etc) to arrive at the 43rd sentence, paragraph, or phrase. She then collated them into several categories which appealed to her such as “Flora”, “Maps”, “Time”, “Silence”, and “Water”.

The book itself is a double accordion. Its texture, a double accordion (like a double helix), is a combination of vellum overlapping found maps, which feels like skin. The text is structured but unstructured, cascading down the page in both a large point Kabel in green and a small pt Garamond in black. There is a legend as a means to reach the bibliography of all the text cited, as well as understand how they were attained (what method of counting). On the legend there is an option [C] for “cheating or conniving”<sup>73</sup> which I believed might have been proof of free will, assuming cheating implies agency. A river flows through the background (printed on the vellum’s reverse) which seems to imply freedom, as water is often cited as a source of chaos principles. Everything about the book speaks of a rhythm of order and chaos to order again.

But Betty Bright, in her essay accompanying Price’s 25-year catalogue *Counting on Chance*, said that the imagery in 43 reminds us “order exists even in chaos.”<sup>74</sup> It can be found bothersome that the goal behind Price’s work would be to stamp out chaos entirely and with it agency. Three strong pieces of evidence to suggest that perhaps Price did not believe in free will. The first was a tip-off from *Counting on Chance* to another one of Price’s books *Altar Book for Górecki* published in 1996. Touched by Henryk Górecki’s Symphony #3, as well as aspects of her own life, specifi-

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71 Drucker, Johanna. *A Century of Artist Books*, (New York, NY: Granary Books, 2004), 310.

72 Price, Robin & Betty Bright, *Counting on Chance*, (Middletown, CT: Davidson Art Center, 2010), 81.

73 Price, Robin. *43, According to Robin Price, with Annotated Bibliography*, (Middletown, CT: Robin Price, 2007-8), legend.

74 Price, Robin & Betty Bright, *Counting on Chance*, (Middletown, CT: Davidson Art Center, 2010), 100.

cally feelings attached to her Polish heritage and her search for her mother 19 years after being adopted. For this book, Price decided upon the image of a phoenix repeated in several different poses. Bright writes, “the phoenix is a mythological bird - also known as the firebird... the phoenix symbolizes hope for eternal life and the indomitability of the human spirit - in a word, resurrection.”<sup>75</sup> The phoenix is also trapped in a circle of fate, doomed to repeat its resurrection. Pulling the broadside announcement from the John Hay library at Brown, one is confronted with an image of the phoenix with its hands tied behind its back—an image which is used in the book itself.

Secondly, the book preceding *Altar Book for Górecki* is Price’s *The Book of Revelation* (1995), a collaboration with Barbara Benish. Price’s contribution is the layout and arrangement of text, which is retained. Bright says, “The association of books with containers for the spirit is as old as the Bible or the Torah Scroll...”<sup>76</sup> and, by not altering the text, Price herself is something like the vessel the text passes through. Price jokingly referred to herself “as a maker of books that were ‘generally text based.’”<sup>77</sup> In Johanna Drucker’s taxonomy, her work fits best well into self-reflexivity as it describes things that unite us as humanity. *The Book of Revelation* is, in this way, an inescapable document that all of Western Culture, if not all humanity, reckons with in some way.

Lastly, Price based *43* on the 50-volume *Zweite Enzyklöpadie von Tlön*, by Ines v. Ketel-hodt and Peter Malutzki. Jorge Luis Borges, in his story *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, had written that he believed the encyclopedia of Tlön should come into existence in 100 years, and so Ketel-hodt and Malutzki took it upon themselves to produce it. After research, Borges’ opinion on free will was discovered:

I remember when I read a biography of Oscar Wilde by Hesketh Pearson. Then there was a long discussion going on about predestination and free will. And he asked Wilde what he made of free will. Then he answered in a story. The story seemed somewhat irrelevant, but it wasn’t. He said — yes, yes, yes, some nails, pins, and needles lived in the neighborhood of a magnet, and one of them said, “I think we should pay a visit to the magnet.” And the other said, “I think it is our duty to visit the magnet.” The other said, “This must be done right now. No delay can be allowed.” Then when they were saying those things, without being aware of it, they were all rushing towards the magnet, who smiled because he knew that they were coming to visit him. You can imagine a magnet smiling. You see, there Wilde gave his opinion, and his opinion was that we think we are free agents, but of course we’re not.<sup>78</sup>

75 Price, Robin & Betty Bright, *Counting on Chance*, (Middletown, CT: Davidson Art Center, 2010), 53.

76 Price, Robin & Betty Bright, *Counting on Chance*, (Middletown, CT: Davidson Art Center, 2010), 36.

77 Bright, Betty. *No Longer Innocent: Book Art in America 1960-1980*, New York, NY: (Granary Books, 2005), 249.

78 Dutton, Denis “Merely a Man of Letters” Jorge Luis Borges: an interview, Baltimore, MD:

An immediate counter, however, would be the quote Price uses from *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*:

To begin with, Tlön was to be nothing more than a chaos, a free and irresponsible work of the imagination; now it was clear that it is a complete cosmos, and that the strict laws which govern it have been carefully formulated, *albeit provisionally*.<sup>79</sup>

(italics mine.) This phrase “albeit provisionally” suggests that chaos and agency can in fact interfere.

Of spreads in 43 one can be particularly attracted to THE UNKNOWN. This is also the chapter of Bright’s essay which includes *The Book of Revelation* and *Altar Book for Górecki*. In 43, there are two quotes from James Trissle’s *Daedalus*: “It is the pure joy that all of us who cannot fly covet and this may be why the gods have kept flight from humans except in dreams” and “I had heard of other mazes.”<sup>80</sup> It is interesting that Price decides to repeat two quotes from the same book, especially as they seem to contradict each other. First, the implication that one can only fly in dreams suggests what Borges said through Oscar Wilde: we think we have free will, but we do not. Second, if there are other mazes then perhaps there are ways to get to them. In this, one begins to see the rhythm of order and chaos. On the same page, from Borges’ *Ficciones* (the book *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* can be found in) Price transcribes, “Such was the first intrusion of the fantastic world into the real one.”<sup>81</sup> Here, the bridge between mazes is perhaps found.

The pure fact that there is a spread such as THE UNKNOWN suggests there are things that can be unknown. The question remains whether or not things unknown can be known (just not yet) or whether or not they completely lack knowingness.

Cage continues to be relevant, as several volumes by and about him are quoted in 43, *Counting on Chance*, and in an academic pamphlet *By Chance: Serendipity and Randomness in Artists’ Books*, which she wrote with Jae Jennifer Rossman. In the pamphlet they write, “Apparently he [Cage] abhorred the idea of improvisation,”<sup>82</sup> again a line which seemed to obliterate the possibility for chaos. Cage is also quoted in THE UNKNOWN spread:

In Cage’s number pieces such divisions between harmony and counterpoint or between

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The Johns Hopkins University Press., 1977 [http://denisdutton.com/jorge\\_luis\\_borges\\_interview.htm](http://denisdutton.com/jorge_luis_borges_interview.htm) (accessed March 17, 2013).

79 Price, Robin. 43, *According to Robin Price, with Annotated Bibliography*, (Middletown, CT: Robin Price, 2007-8), first pages.

80 Price, Robin. 43, *According to Robin Price, with Annotated Bibliography*, (Middletown, CT: Robin Price, 2007-8), THE UNKNOWN.

81 Price, Robin. 43, *According to Robin Price, with Annotated Bibliography*, (Middletown, CT: Robin Price, 2007-8), THE UNKNOWN.

82 Price, Robin & Jae Jennifer Rossman. *By Chance: Serendipity and Randomness in Artists’ Books*, the jenny press, 2004), 7.

harmony and melody are not unlike the phenomenon of the wave / particle duality in physics. An electron acts like a wave in some circumstances, a particle in others. But it is, in actuality, neither; it is something that cannot be envisioned or described; it is a way of being with various manifestations. Because of the uncertainty principle, you can't actually pinpoint an electron, so we picture it as a cloud or wave, but we think of it as an individual. Like the electron, each sound for Cage is itself a distinct point, yet it can be indistinguishable as part of something greater.<sup>83</sup>

This was the first sign that perhaps free will or fate were not what interested Price. Perhaps there was in fact “something greater.” I recalled something the musician Ryan Seaton wrote for NPR on the significance of Cage’s 4’33”:

Through a lifetime of wrenching people away from their assumptions and into the present moments existing within performances, John Cage consistently provided occasions for listeners to shed their preconceptions regarding purpose, order, musical sound and silence. As the frame surrounding his work continues to expand and recede into the distance, we benefit not only from an ever-growing palate of sound but also the potential for our lives to more closely resemble our art, and vice versa.<sup>84</sup>

This presentness is what Price is attempting to point out. In *By Chance* she insists, “Random moment and synchronism happen constantly. Our awareness of and reactions to them vary greatly,”<sup>85</sup> that calling our attention to the awareness is significant in and of itself. This is why, Bright, finds it necessary to quote an earlier interview with Price, “It’s all about relinquishing your own work and control, and [about] acceptance and responding to what’s in front of you, starting all over again.”<sup>86</sup> It is why, perhaps, the double accordion binding at the tail end of 43 is intentionally left open: a style repeated in the housing box. “The reader is near the end of the enclosure’s opening--which is of course the book’s beginning.”<sup>87</sup> How else would you be able to go back through and really notice the underlying map beneath?

### **Conclusion: Speculation on Why + What the Narratives are Changing**

Artist Books exist at a crossroads of technology and literacy. At the advent of photography, painting was freed from technical realism to explore other realities: economic, emotional, spatial,

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83 Price, Robin. 43, *According to Robin Price, with Annotated Bibliography*, (Middletown, CT: Robin Price, 2007-8) THE UNKNOWN.

84 Blau, Max. “33 Musicians On What John Cage Communicates,” (Washington DC: National Public Radio, September 05, 2012) <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/30/160327305/33-musicians-on-what-john-cage-communicates> Last accessed March 18th, 2013.

85 Price, Robin & Jae Jennifer Rossman. *By Chance: Serendipity and Randomness in Artists’ Books*, the jenny press, 2004), 11.

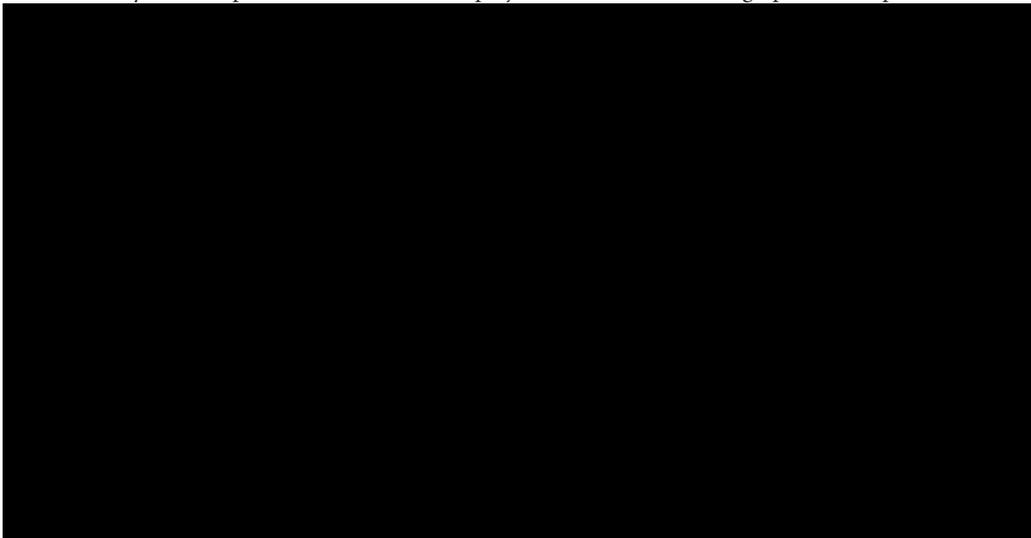
86 Price, Robin & Betty Bright, *Counting on Chance*, (Middletown, CT: Davidson Art Center, 2010), 81.

87 Price, Robin & Betty Bright, *Counting on Chance*, (Middletown, CT: Davidson Art Center, 2010), 99

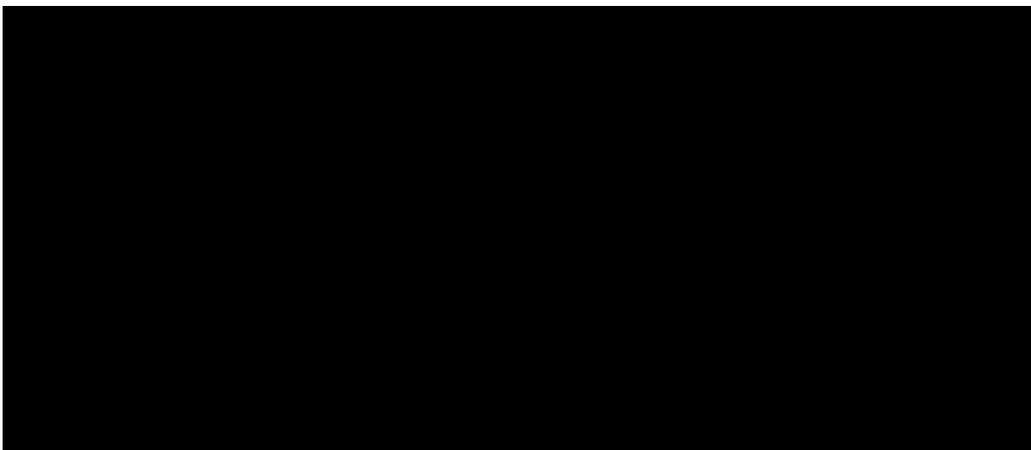
etc. With the advent of the internet, literacy is freed to explore information: visual, emotional, spatial, etc. This is impacting the narratives that drive the art economy in two ways. One, the internet is no longer allowing for people to look like iconic heroes. Because there is so much information available on each other's lives—especially the lives of stars—figures are forced to admit to certain truths. Blogs now inform us of process, of collaboration, and of all the mistakes that are made from concept to completion. Two, with the freedom of books to explore new literacies, book artists are also juxtaposing their process theories with their art. Perhaps this is also because the purchasers of Artist Books tend to be rare collections libraries of municipalities with the added bonus that they will be available to the general public. The end result is we are becoming more aware of what was previously hidden: the work inside the artist factory. Heroes are being demystified, and local artists are able to make their work available and affordable while still staying true to their craft. Art is not universally good. Artists need to position themselves in the social justice paradigm in order to make their work relevant to the greater public. Now, more than ever, in a recession economy, it is necessary for them to reach out and explain themselves. In this way we make ourselves available to the criticism that makes our art great, as well as make our art available to those who need aesthetic betterment in a way that is applicable to them. It is extremely fortunate that this is the inevitable direction it will take. The star artists may make a little less money, but also suffer less stress of maintaining such status, and in the wake of their slip from the podium, the ship of art activism will float on. The future is bright.



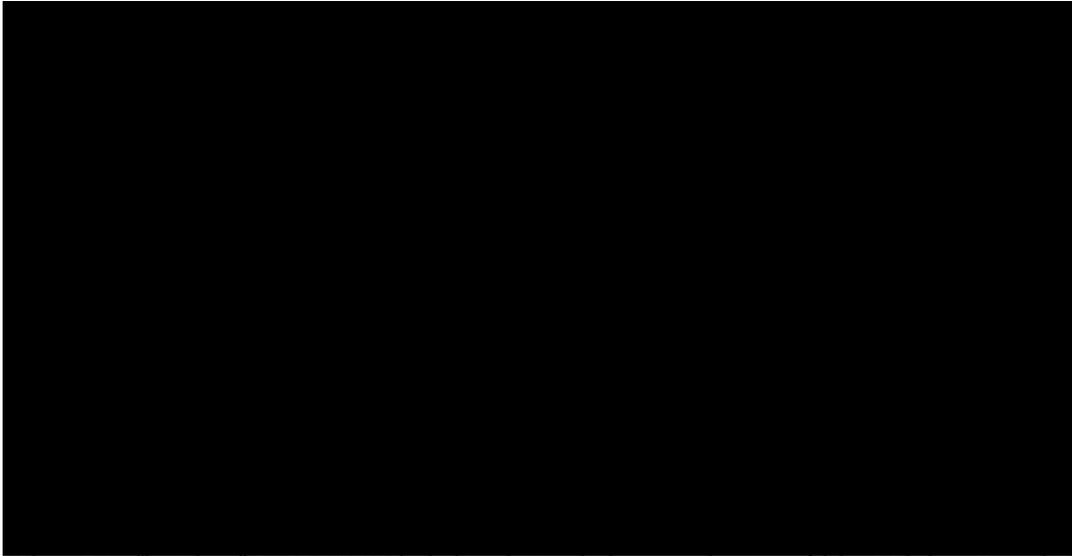
Wilson, Erin, "05," *CHAPTER ONE COMPLETED!! (only chapter one??! what's going on!) WELL I'LL TELL YOU.*, explanation of delay, Web, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel/posts/221033>.



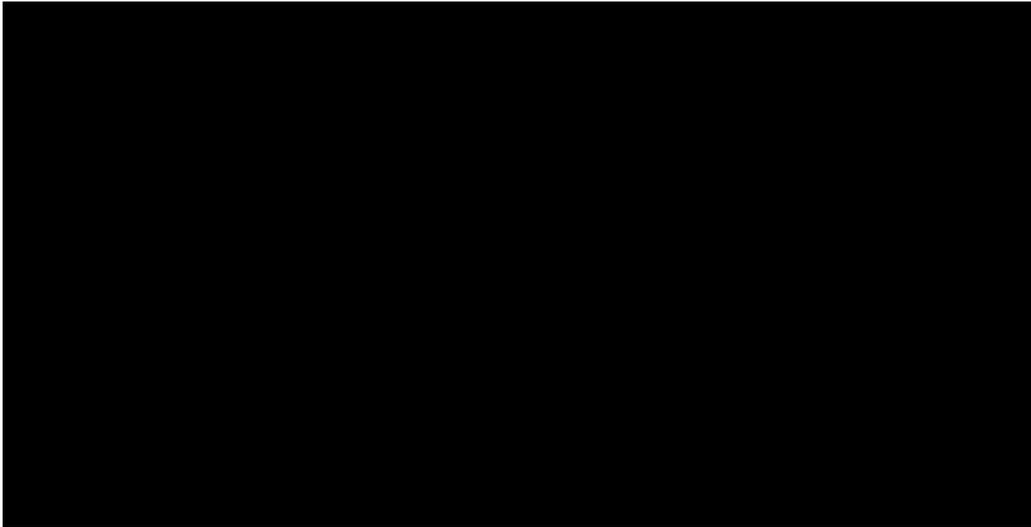
Wilson, Erin, "02," *CHAPTER ONE COMPLETED!! (only chapter one??! what's going on!) WELL I'LL TELL YOU.*, explanation of delay, Web, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel/posts/221033>.



Wilson, Erin, "01," *CHAPTER ONE COMPLETED!! (only chapter one??! what's going on!) WELL I'LL TELL YOU.*, explanation of delay, Web, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel/posts/221033>.



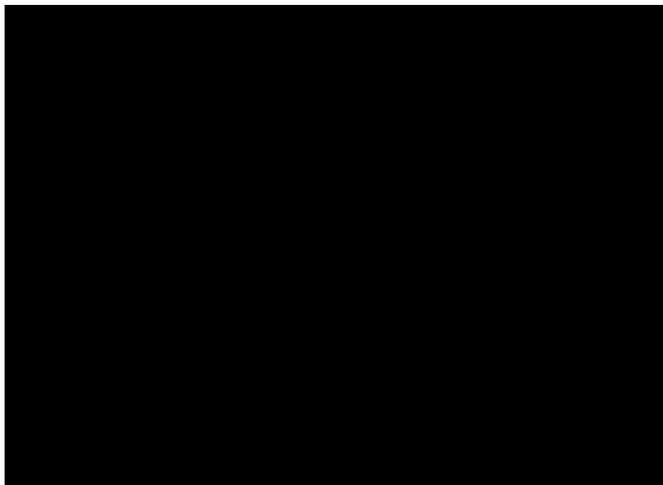
Wilson, Erin, "brainhurt," *PAGE FIFTY! I'm kicking this into high gear*, explanation of delay, Web, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel/posts/295542>



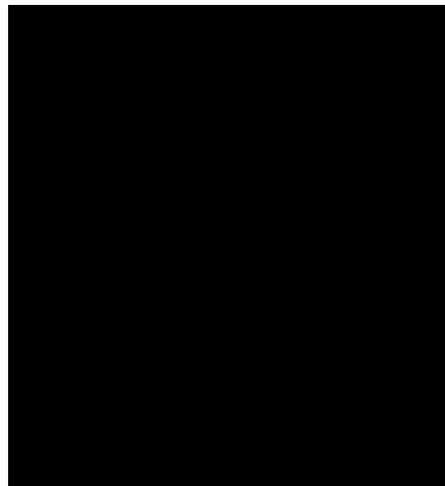
Wilson, Erin, "migranesleep" *PAGE FIFTY! I'm kicking this into high gear*, explanation of delay, Web, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel/posts/295542>



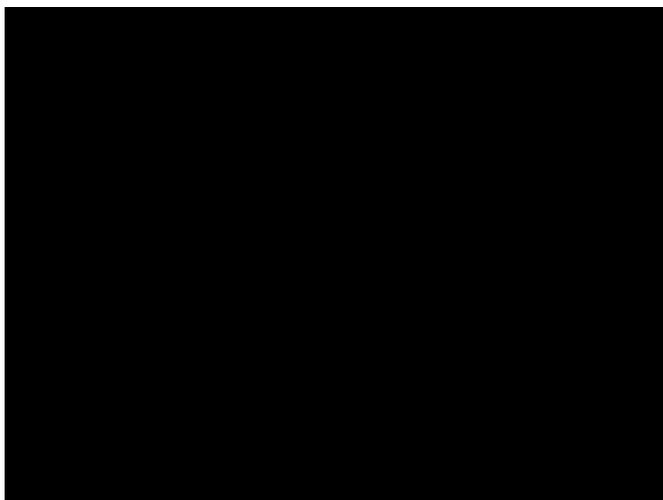
Wilson, Erin, "00," *CHAPTER ONE COMPLETED!! (only chapter one??! what's going on!) WELL I'LL TELL YOU.*, explanation of delay, Web, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/erroar/snowbird-a-graphic-novel/posts/221033>.



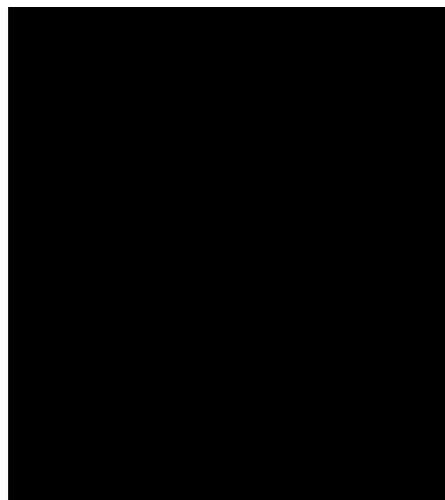
Cozzens, Ian, “process\_cards02-500x375,” *infinity of possible choices about letterforms*, “desk scenario — I’m referencing years of collecting ephemera & hundreds of pictures I’ve taken of fonts for letterform generation, and mining writings that I was doing (for performances this past fall) for text generation...,” Web, <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/updates/2013/01/05/infinity-of-possible-choices-about-letterforms/>.



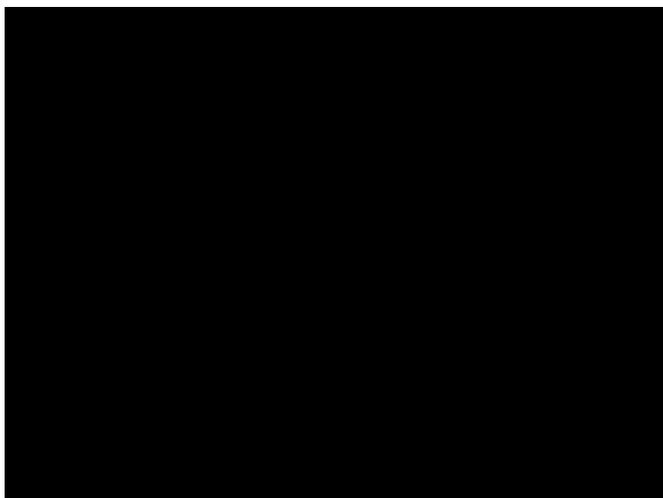
Wilson, Erin, “05,” snowbird flowchart, Web, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10101461886235113&set=a.10100314826367283.2921683.5204555&-type=1&theater>.



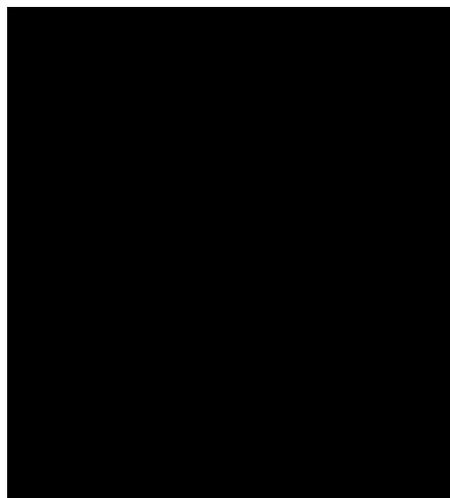
Cozzens, Ian, “show\_up\_06-500x368,” *practical tools for shifting reality* – *snapshots & statement*, “The “word prints” (the ones in white frames, two of which are in the photos below) are a group in which there are no mistakes. Each one is different; every print that gets made is part of the continuing whole, and any strange or unexpected color layer simply presents a challenge to figure out what the next layer and color on that print will be, and/or a (parallel) challenge to understand the existing combination as complete and unified.” Web, <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/updates/2013/02/07/practical-tools-for-shifting-reality-snapshots-statement/>.



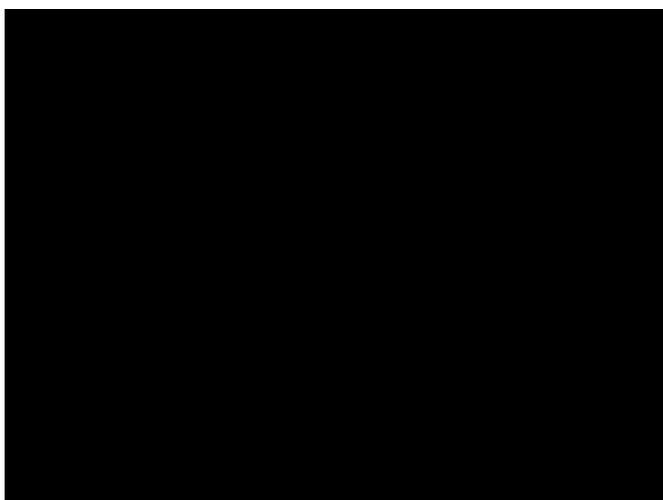
Cozzens, Ian, “artsale02,” *art sale season is (almost) over...*, “... at least the part of the season where I stand around near a table & have all my prints on display for people to look at. yeah!!!” Web, <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/updates/2012/12/17/art-sale-season-is-almost-over/>.



Cozzens, Ian, “decision01,” *this is what a decision looks like*, “I harnessed the momentum of that decision into another one — the two central colors here will (more or less) be the background colors for the two colorways of the “dissonance” print...,” Web, <http://www.secretdoorprojects.org/updates/2013/01/06/this-is-what-a-decision-looks-like/>.



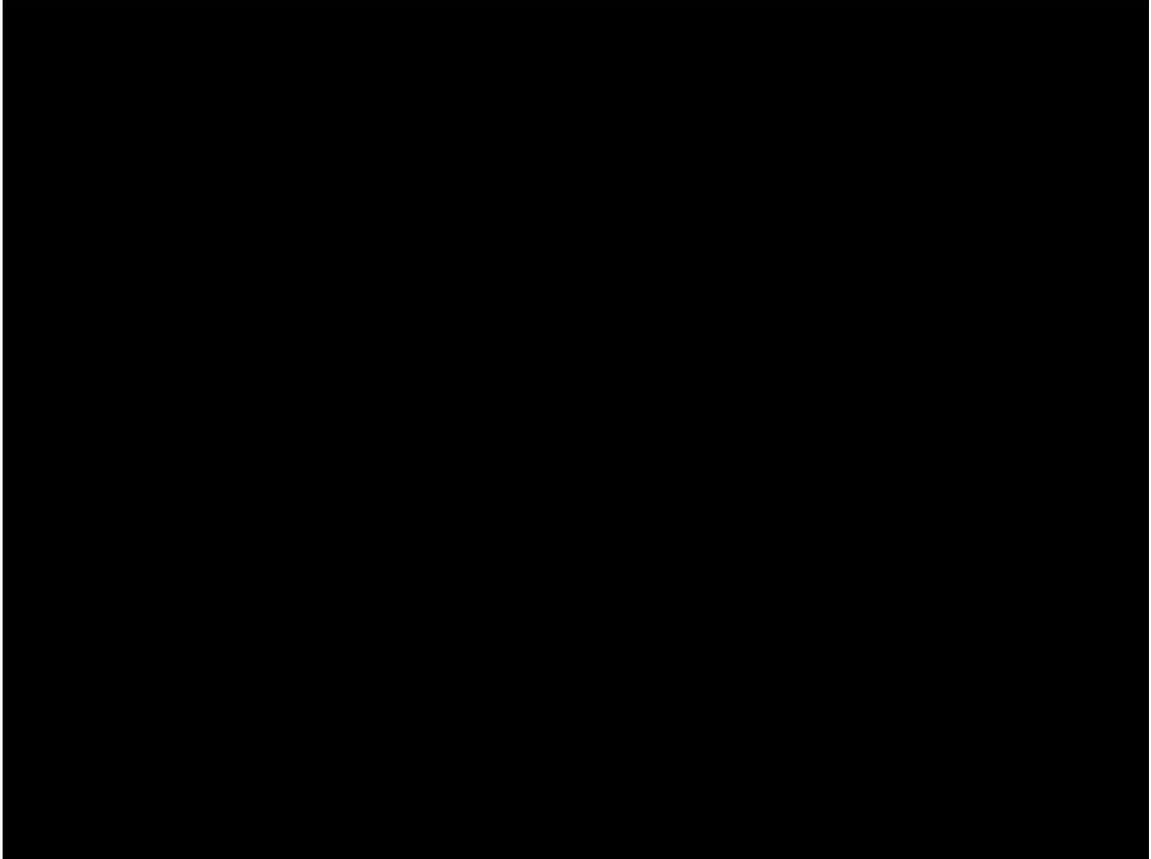
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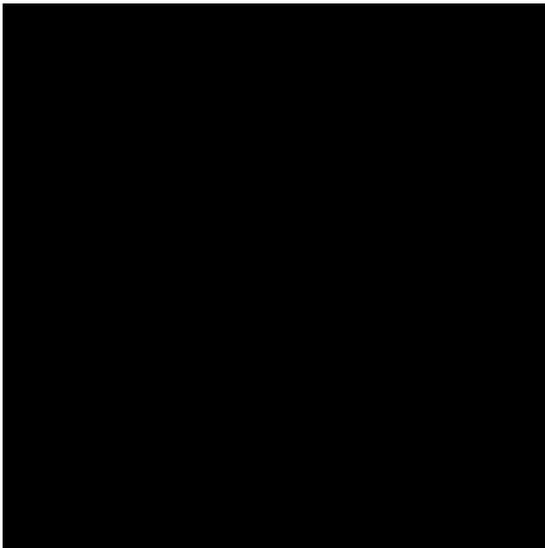
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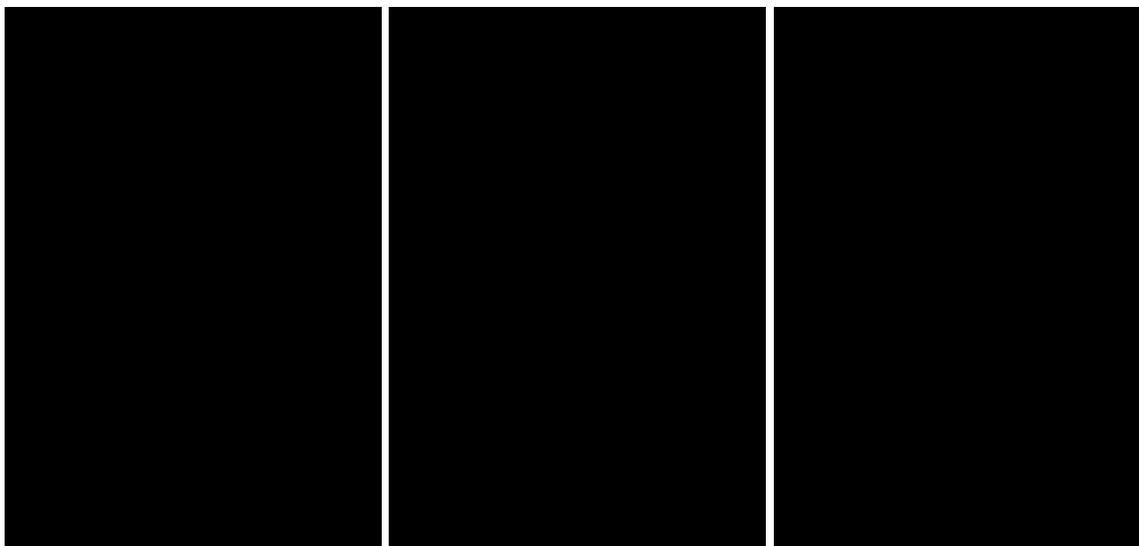
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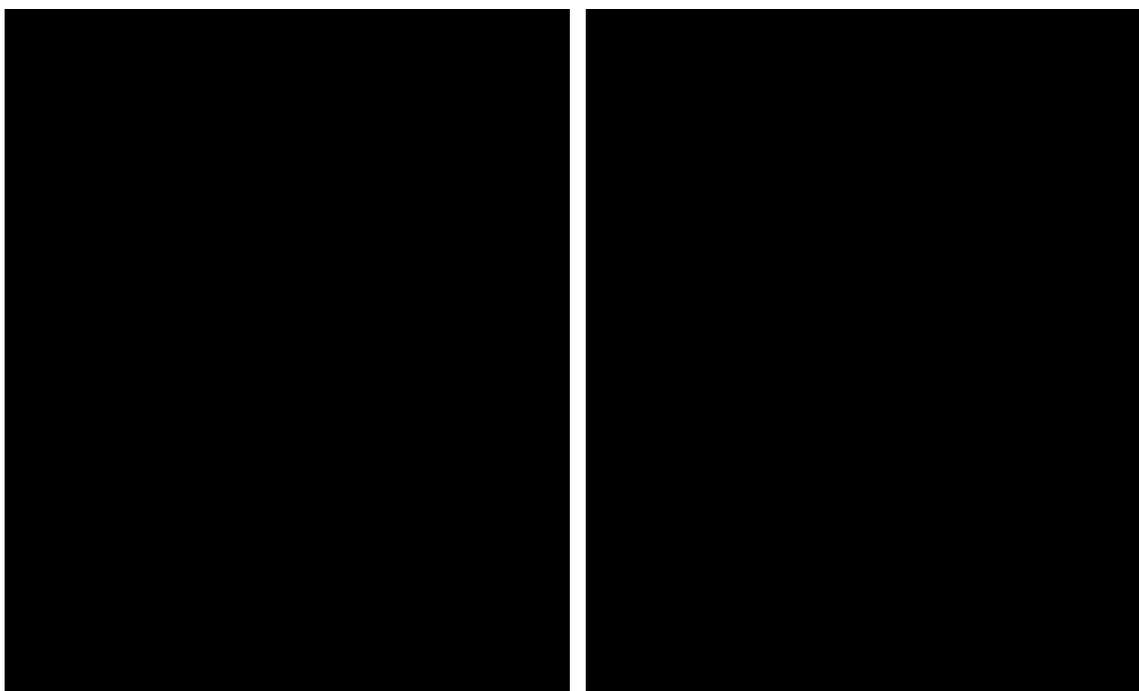
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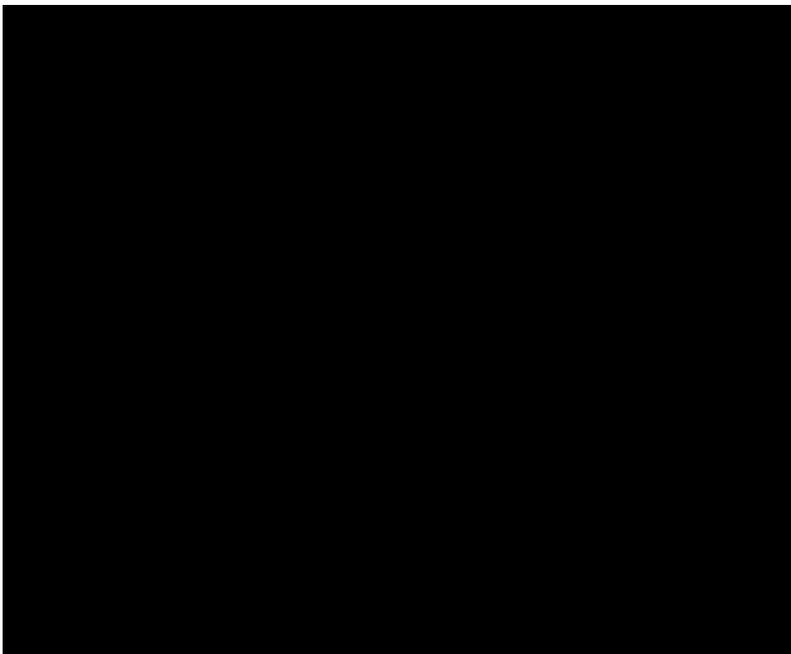
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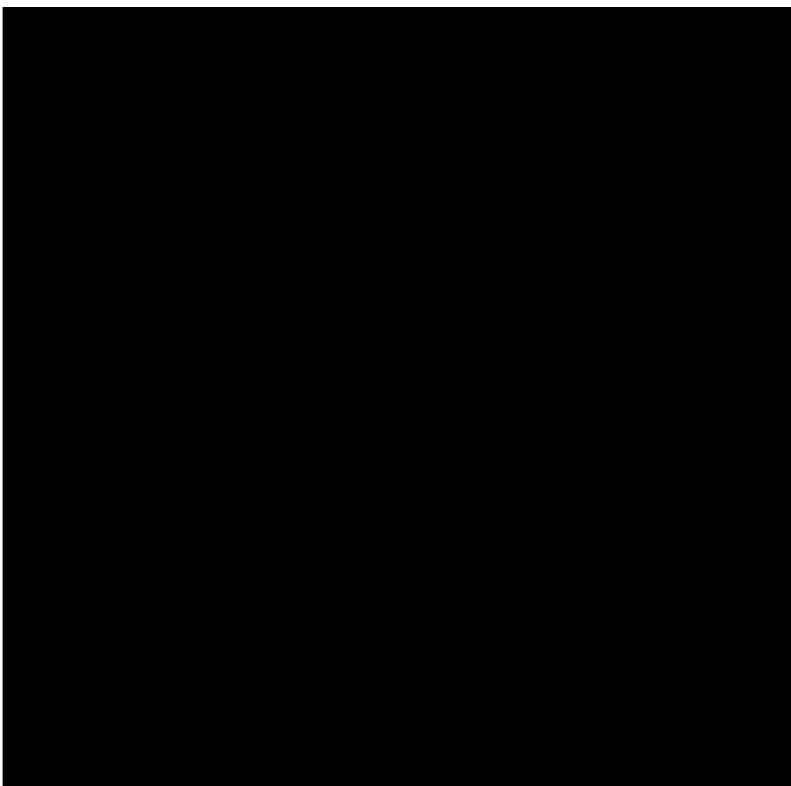


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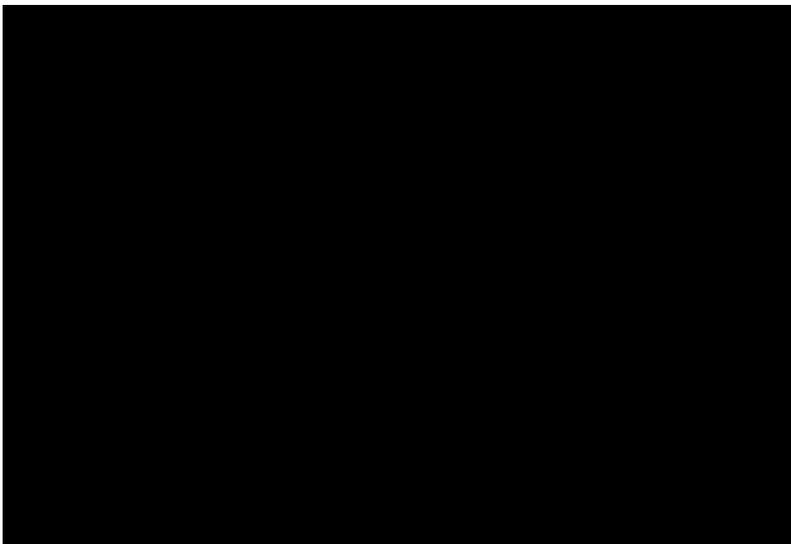
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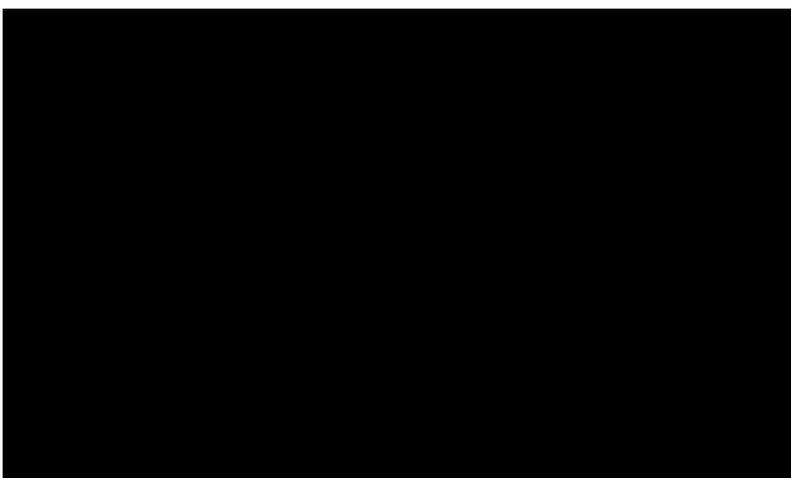
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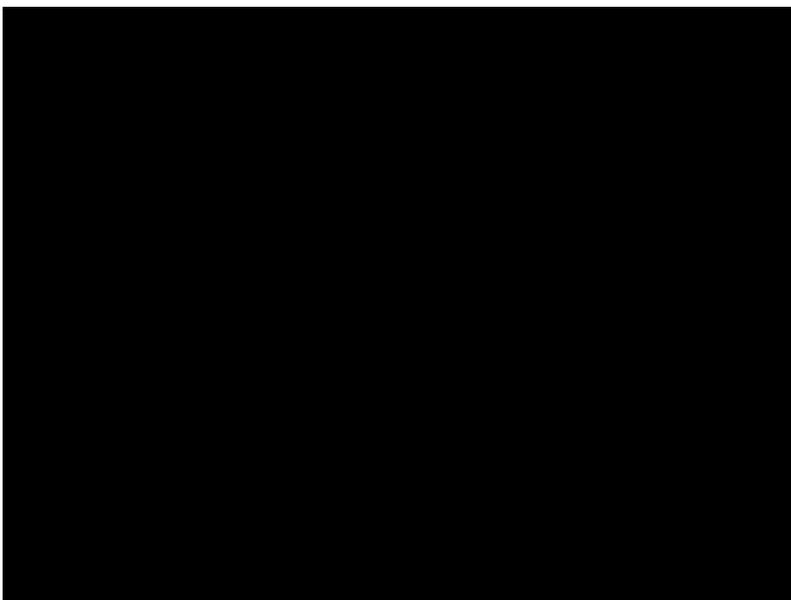
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