





**FIVE YEARS
PERIODICAL
VOL.2, NO.1**

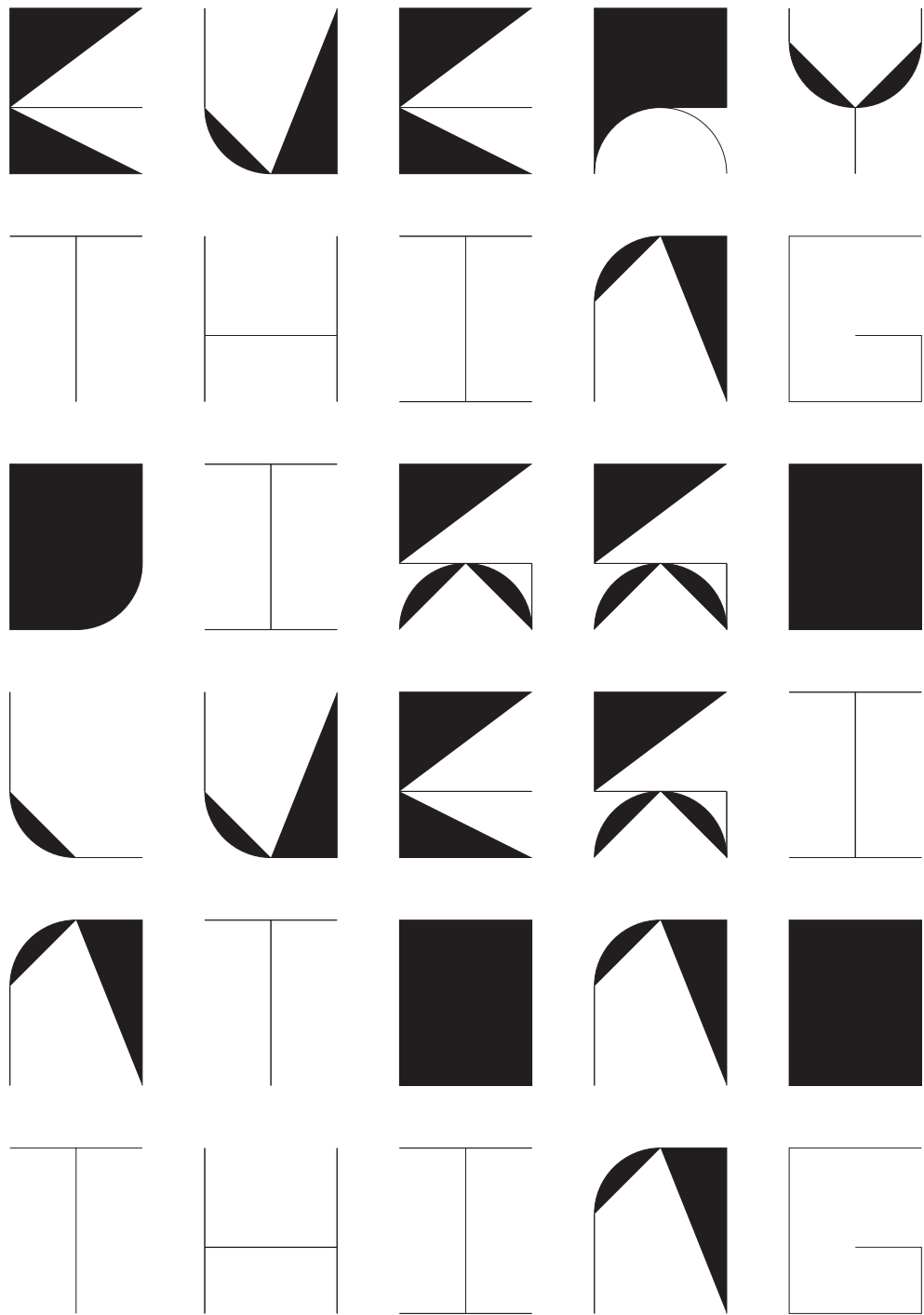
TANGERINE PINCH





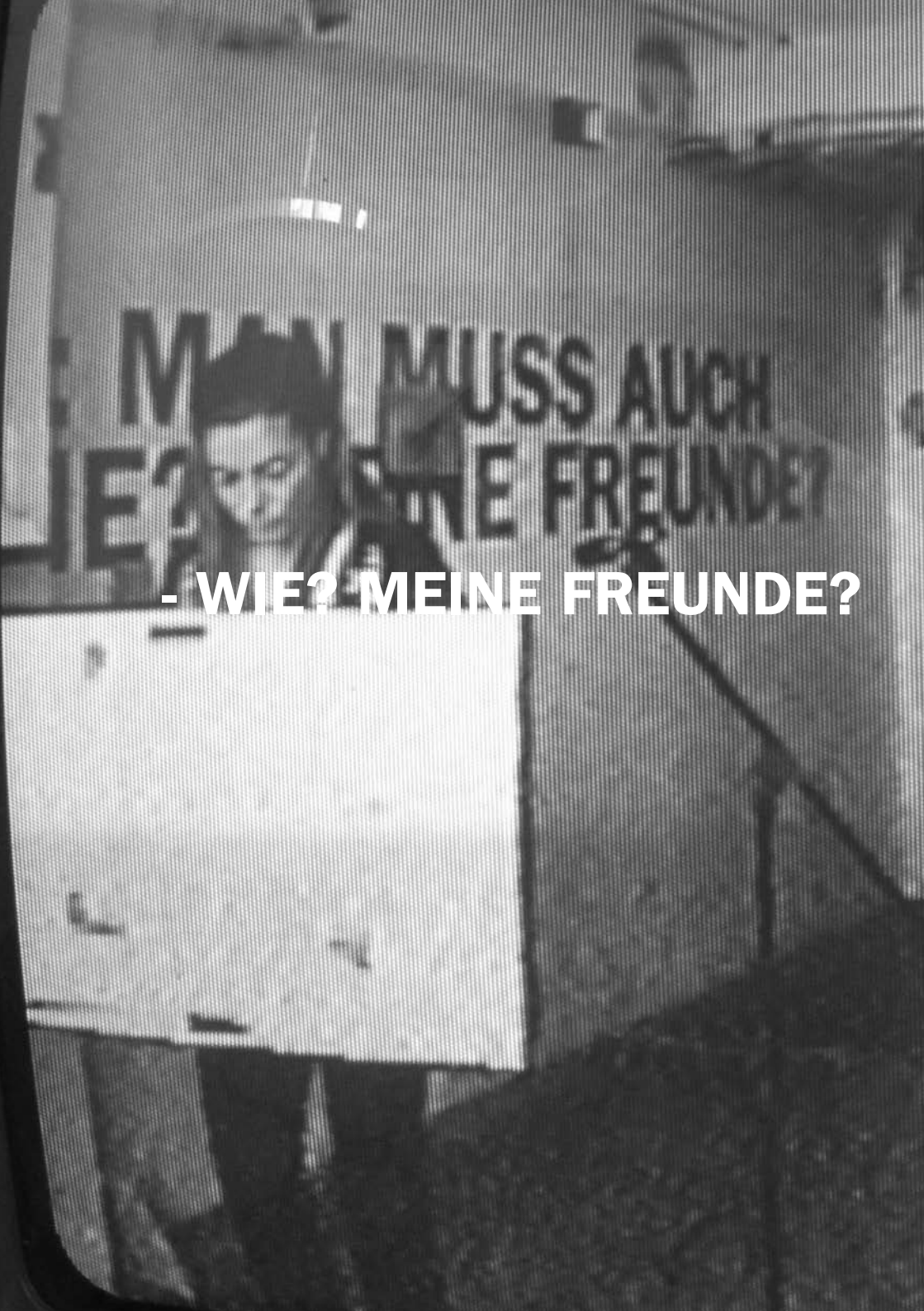


Tone O. Nielsen at Invitation, Closing Reception, 1999
Dustin Ericksen (photo credit - Berliner Studio)





GENUG: MAN MUSS AUCH EURE ERLAUBNISS DAZU HABEN,



THE PLACEBO OF LOVE

A Great Mistrust in the immediacy of the senses saturates Western minds, at the same time as the desire for sensory seduction wells up with great force through the entertainment machines. Artists also know that the timelessness of rational schemes have been somehow challenged through the ongoing revolt against metaphysics in postmodern thought. Yet it seems at times that what survives this ongoing revolt is a firm belief in a rationality grounded in a commonsense belief in materiality. All the theories that postulate something factual about the external world are grounded in causality. As long as something can be described through the division of cause and effect, there is the tendency to believe that it is rooted in something objective. Magically this belief also extends beyond the perception of the sensory world to be applied with great conviction to the world of (meta-physical) ideas. Countless times I've heard artists themselves review exhibitions with a total rejection of affect in favour of rational semiotics. It is somehow seen as safe to admit to be affected by renaissance paintings of sacred motifs, but is seen as a dangerous departure from secular scepticism to recognise a similar affect in contemporary work. There is the idea that artists making work with a malleable effect on the sensory realm, in a way that is not immediately recognised against a historical backdrop, are somehow tricking the audience. It is as if the artists were seen as playing with mirrors and light. We feel the urge to say that of course we knew all along that it wasn't real, that we were being seduced, but luckily we were able to recognise the semiotic signifiers that allowed us to read the work as representative of certain ideas.

But ideas are nothing but interchangeable metaphysical belief structures validated by consensus. Affect on the other hand, is at least what it is; we have an experience, a sensation of undeniable phenomenal immediacy. Feelings or sensations are not 'fake' just because they do not stand in for a heavenly transcendental realm or are grounded in objective criteria. They are what they are: the reality of fleeting experiences registered by conscious minds. An artist uses a light bulb in a way that alters our sensory continuum, and people say she is using the seductive tactics of the sacred in a secular way. If we can further remove ourselves from our experience by saying that the artist is representing the sublime, i.e. a historical idea, we can stay safely within the frames of rationality. But what's so wrong with experience? It is the basis for all causal theories, without really proving the

existence of spiritual realms nor the existence of any absolute materiality. We use a similar value judgement when we talk about 'the placebo effect' in medicine. It is estimated that the placebo effect in conventional medicine must be quite high. But from a 'physicalist' point of view, the term placebo denotes something a bit fake, something without real causal properties. Of course, even if we endorsed the idea of placebo as more worthy, we could not make a pill that could guarantee a 'placebo effect'. Placebo denotes a multiplicity of factors, the relations between interdependent processes, in short everything in the world that falls outside of 'properties' and in a true sense, the scary thing is that there doesn't exist an entity in the entire world that has any absolute properties. Properties are only effects, only relational and relative, because there are no independent entities. Cause and effect can be imputed precisely because there are no absolute causal properties, only symptoms of processes. The word 'placebo' stems from the line *Placebo Domino in regione vivorum*, 'I shall please the Lord in the land of the living'. In the 14th century, professional mourners at funerals would chant this line from the ninth verse of psalm CVIVcxiv in the Latin Vulgate. The idea of the professional mourner faking it, or standing in for a family member gave rise to the connotations of 'placebo'. When I was a teenager, my mum used to suggest that the fun I got from drinking beer with my mates at the weekends, was not real, but artificial fun. Already at that time, this made no sense to me. If you're having fun, you're having fun I would say to my mum. I could extend this a little now, by saying that phenomenal experience is what it is regardless of what causal processes we impute upon it. If a trained actor in a movie is able to cry in a given scene, who is to say that the tears are not real, that the experience of sadness the actor is able to guide herself into is unreal? Normal emotional responses work no differently from this; they are not a set of representational devices to stand in for something concrete, something with real properties. They are what they are in the moment, which does not render them valueless. Who would say that their loved ones are just a collection of semiotic signs standing in for an idea of love? The idea of love might be eternal, but not anymore nourishing than the idea of a biscuit. At the same time, 'real' love is often fleeting, depending on a multiplicity of circumstances. The word seems to promise something singular and unique, when in a sense it often covers a variety of complex emotional responses and processes, a forest of placebos or possibly an alluring overgrown garden saturated by slumbering potential? Is there anything that presents itself to the senses that is not a

placebo? Undeniably we have a sensory register and we also have judgement, analysis and thinking. Observed a bit more closely, perhaps these faculties are not so different in the way they present themselves to our conscious register? All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, said Marx, but added that our 'sober senses' and our 'real condition' would remain. Perhaps he was getting things the wrong way around a little? It seems to me that the fleeting nature of experience is the closest thing we can observe about our condition, and that even the sober structures of rationality melts away. Personally I'm more inclined to feel I'm being manipulated by mirrors and lights when I'm isolating a set of ideas than when I'm observing my immediate experience. But in either case, whether being seduced by a garden of ideas or a garden of sensory delights, who knows, I might be rigging the mirrors and lights myself according to my own desire?

From the micro-gestural to the macro-gestural, *Garden of the Sleep of Love* seduces the viewer to a point beyond seduction, where it's no longer possible to say that one knows one is being seduced or that the experience of the work is only the product of transparent manipulative schemes. Of course, there is the translation of information taking place, in the sense that we register that the work on display has been filtered through a series of mediated forms. In new speculative cosmology it is suggested that if this old universe collapsed, perhaps the information contained in it could be smuggled through a black hole and into another dimension, where somehow something could be restored. This is as incomprehensible to me as the idea that information is transported digitally through computers. It seems to me that a string of binary units of plus and minus only makes sense if there is someone conscious there to interpret the material. Unless there is a code for how something is preserved, the translation from one medium into another irrevocably alters the thing itself. Rather than a process I could hope to trace, the mediation going on in these works are interesting to me because they do not separate or prioritise between internal and external, mental and physical; these are all planes and dimensions, folds and crevices within the same world. There is no point in separating between the sacred and the profane if there is only one world. What then does it matter if we call all that exists matter or spirit? In this context, introspection is not confined to the subjective sphere, it is just a word for a thing folding in on itself and the fabric of reality from which it springs. A critique levelled against the more conscious act of introspection has been that by the time we observe a mental

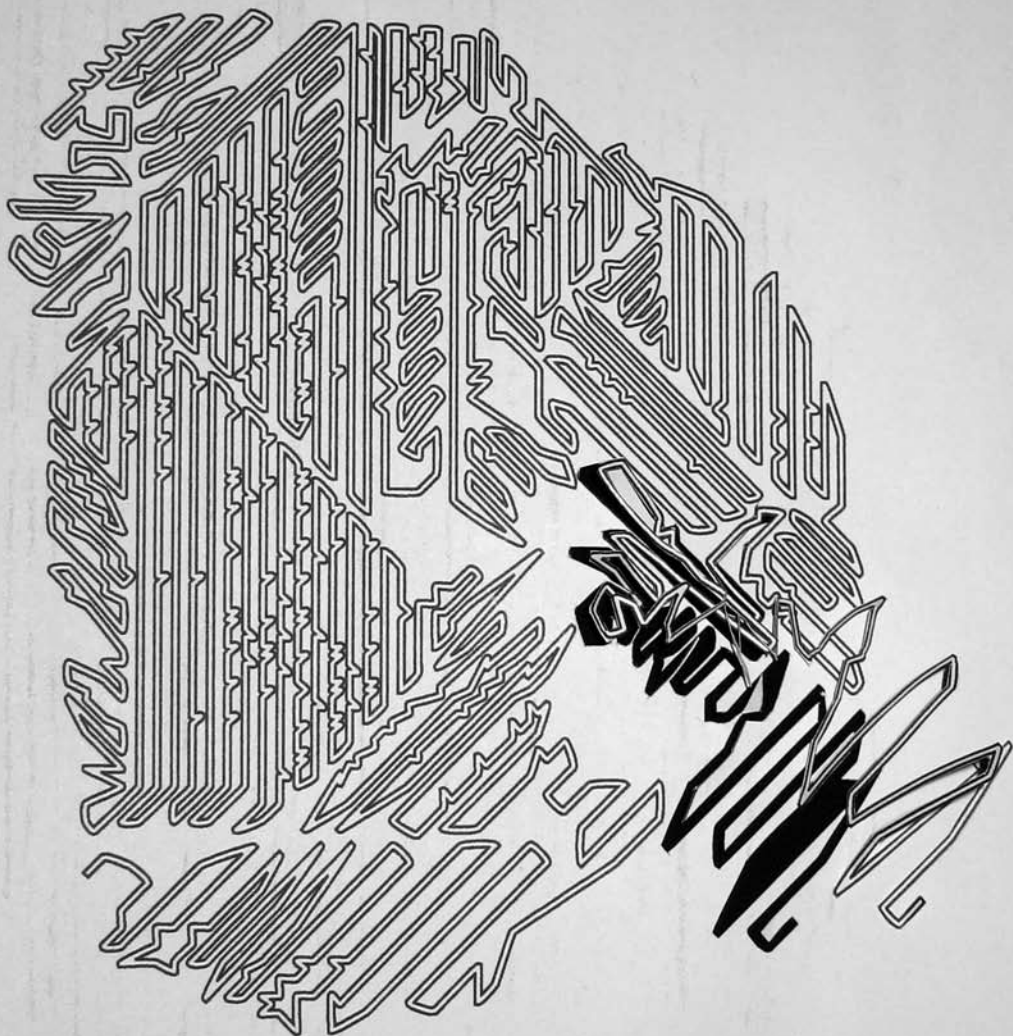
content, or by the observation itself it will be altered. But if there is no original form, no fixed content of information to be communicated, is this attention to the transitory nature of experience not equal to the act of introspection itself? In any case, even if experiences are fleeting and information depends on some interpretive apparatus, the exercise of introspection is still an exercise in focus. The work in this exhibition seems to me to be *exercises in focusing* in the sense of the pushing and pulling of a lens. It is only in the particular distance from the motif determined by the limits of the canvas that Dan Hays' oil painting becomes a landscape. This is not the story of a paintbrush, but rather the story of a calculated chance encounter between fragments, where the artist is just one such fragment. The crypto-narratives of Roderick Harris' water colours seems to me akin to the story of a process of emergence closer to that of photographic film, where a moment's over-exposure could dissolve the recognisable image. In Marc Hulson's work we are witness more to a shift in focus where the emergence of a thought or feeling takes the form of a bodily, gestural surface like the cross-point of a hypnagogic image. In Peter Lloyd Lewis' image the blur of the image and the blur of our attention to the image become interchangeable. All this is held together by the grey walls which set the ambience for the exhibition space. Atmosphere is something which carries affect beyond the isolation of confined bodies, as it permeates a space. In this particular space the atmosphere is that of a type of sensory chamber with different invisible lenses dividing the attentive dimensions of the space. But there is no room for the neutral observer here. We are already participatory investors in the quest to chase some form of desire, if by desire we mean a type of basic connectivity. Whether it is the origin of the trace or the obliteration of the trace we most long for, the original feeling of love or the new love that will replace it, there is cause and effect. But if we're attentive enough we might notice that it's the focus that determines the motif, and give up the idea of grounding cause and effect in objective criteria. A self-luminous doughnut shape is afloat in the psychedelic vista of Peter Lloyd Lewis' photograph. There is nothing there to decidedly help me pull the focus either towards subjective vision or objective reality. The only hope of ecstasy beyond definitions of the banal or the sublime seems to be to lose myself in the immediacy of the out of focus experience itself.

Ole Hagen

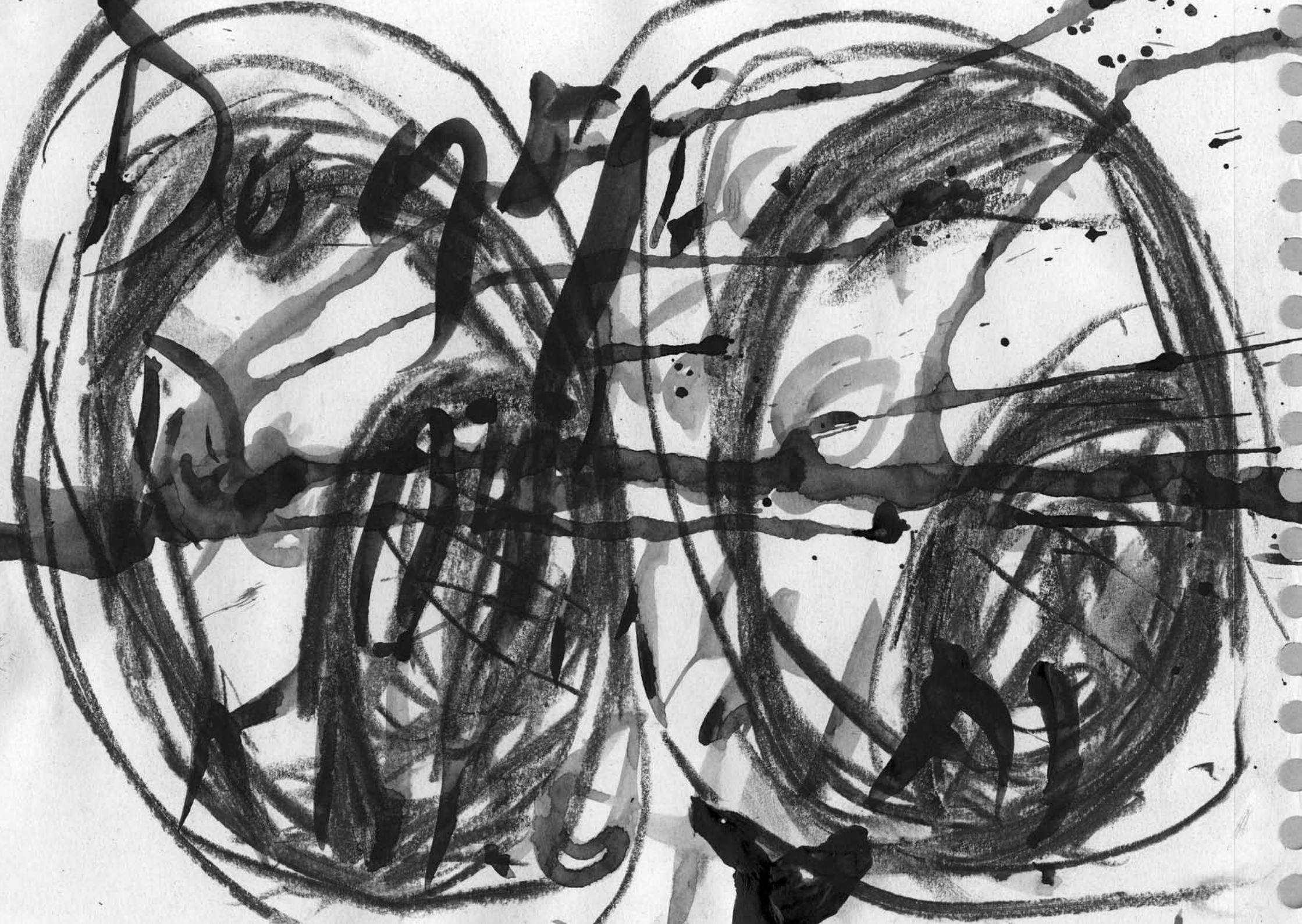














DONALD
&
BRENT

By Claire J. Nichols

Fuck, Donald. Donald I -

I dropped it.

Look- oh God, it's dark.

I'm sorry

I don't know. Give me your knife. Or your yo-
gurt spoon

Freak. Just give me your utensils, we'll find a
way

Thanks. Right, here goes. Argh, that's my back. Jeez,
Right, this ain't workin' wrist?
they could do with makin' us some
triangular spoons.

I'm just trying to help.

Get yourself down
Tell me if you can see it.

We'll have her back - she's got a job to do.

Things ain't that bad, Marfa loves you.

No need to be so rude Don.

Remember all you gots
there's a whole heap o' history between you
that ain't got nothin' to do with that thing
in there.

What?

What do you mean?

Jesus, Brent.

How we gonna get it out?

My what? This man hole cover ain't a piece of
Ma's old pie!

Okay okay, they must be here somewhere.
Okay, here.

Yea, then we'd cut our tongues. Great idea,
superhero.

Fuck, my knee. Oh jeez, oh there she is. Woa,
she kept her shape!

Yea, without this baby, I'm afraid it's over.

Brent, shut your mouth. This gutter's got
all of my dreams inside it
and you're gonna help me get them
if it's the last thing
you do.

That's the real thing
She's wanted that from
the beginning. And now you've gone and messed it
up. Big time.

ON THE EVENING OF THE NINETEENTH
OF NOVEMBER 1967, BRENT WAS HELPING
DONALD JUDD A-FIX SOME PLASTIC AND
SOME STAINLESS STEEL AS PART OF AN
"UNTITLED" SCULPTURE TO BE HOUSED
ON THE GROUNDS OF HIS CHINATI
FOUNDATION IN MARFA, TEXAS. THIS
FATEFUL EVENING THEIR FRIENDSHIP
WENT TO POT, OVER THE LOST CUSTOM
SCREW.

1 Front image: Patricia Ellis Research Material

3-6 **SPITTING DISTANCE:**

MICK FINCH & GUILLAUME PARIS

3. Guillaume Paris, sampled from Speaking in Tongues, 2007, black and white, permanent video, silent. 4. Mick Finch sampled from Taken As Read (Eagles), 2008, 116 x 73cm, acrylic on canvas. 5. Guillaume Paris, sampled from Excrossiance (Post-Partum II), 2006, black and white, permanent video, silent. 6. Sampled from Planche 6 (Maps), 2007, primary archival material, photoshop file.

7-10 **PAPER:** VANESSA BILLY, DUSTIN ERICKSEN & GILES ROUND. CONCEPT: ROCHELLE FRY

11-14 **FREE SHOW:** LULU ALLISON/ INGRID BERTHON MOINE/ SARA CAMPBELL/ MICHAEL CURRAN/ MARY CRENSHAW/ EDWARD DORRIAN/ ROBERT ELLIS/ CHARLIE TUESDAY WINNER GATES/ KIRSTY HARRIS/ TESSA HEWSON/ DENISE HAWRYSIO/ RONEE HUI/ PIERS JAMSON/ JAMES LANDER/ GEORGIE MANLY/ IAN MARSHALL/ PETER MARRIS/ DESPINA MEIMAROGLOU/ LOUISA MINKIN/ CLAIRE NICHOLS & MIRIAM CRAIK-HORAN/ ASIA NOWICKA/ MARK PAWSON/ DAVID PORTER/ SHANE WALTENER/ ANDREA LUKA ZIMMERMAN

15-18 **GARDEN OF THE SLEEP OF LOVE:** DAN HAYS, RODERICK HARRIS, MARC HULSON & PETER LLOYD LEWIS

Text: The Placebo of Love by Ole Hagen. Background images: 15. Marc Hulson 16. Roderick Harris 17. Dan Hays 18. Peter Lloyd Lewis

19-22 **TALENT SHOW:** PATRICIA ELLIS

23-26 **IN THE MIGHTY, A SEED TERRIBLE SOWS**

ANA ČAVIĆ & SALLY MORFILL

27-30 **MASKWORK:** ESTHER PLANAS & MARC HULSON

27. Marc Hulson 28. & 29. Marc Hulson & Esther Planas 30. Esther Planas

31-35 **DONALD & BRENT:** CLAIRE NICHOLS

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The purpose of this periodical is to provide a parallel space to the gallery at Five Years: artists who have exhibited at Five Years are invited to publish new work relating to their gallery show. Five Years will publish four times annually. Each issue will cover three months in the exhibition programme and will include a written piece by a guest contributor. For further information and documentation of the exhibitions programme please refer to the website and blog.