

She Hold Me Like a Conversation

-Lil Wayne, with Kelly Rowland

A judgement upon an object of our delight may be wholly disinterested but withal very interesting, i.e., it relies on no interest, but it produces one.. Only in society is it interesting to have taste — a point which will be explained in the sequel.

— from a translation* of Immanuel Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement

**Nothing, no thing, promises the possibility of translation. This is why translation is always tentative, approximate and incomplete, an unfulfilled promise...* (from Paul Ricoeur, "Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness", *On Translation*, excerpted from *The Subterfuge of Joshua Petherick*, Jan Bryant, 2012)

-So what is the best ending in all of literature? And don't say *Ulysses* because everybody says *Ulysses*.

-That's easy. *Sentimental Education* by Flaubert.

-What happens?

-Nothing really. It's just two old friends sitting around remembering the best thing that never happened to them.

-How do you remember something that never happened to you?

-Fondly. You see, Flaubert believed that anticipation was the purest form of pleasure. And the most reliable. And that while the things that actually happened to you would invariably disappoint, the things that never happened to you would never dim, never fade. They'd always be engraved on your heart with sort of a sweet sadness to them.

Oliver Stone misquotes one of his own films, two decades later recollecting a line in the script with a milder sensuality: *kissing [sic] her is like reading The Wall Street Journal*. The sequel was seemingly demanded by international financial narratives that were irresistible in comparative scale to the drama of the first movie and as such the story was invited to continue. (Why does everyone say *Ulysses*?) Interviewing author and filmmaker Chris Kraus, Martin Rumsby asks how complicit cinema is with capitalism. Chris turns the question around, asking how complicit *narrative* cinema is with capitalism. 'Narrative the great narcotic, Brecht and everyone else talked about that... Capitalism... forces us to hermiticise the small individual story so we never have to look at what's informing that story.' In *Wall Street, Money Never Sleeps*, resolution arrives as inexplicably as a *deus ex machina* when time jumps ahead and lovers celebrate their child's birthday on a Manhattan rooftop.

A message received from Helen Johnson: *In Lilli Promet's Primavera there are many facts of the story that remain unknown until the main character Saskia declares them over*. The desire to massage a story from one set of determinants to another is maybe the most exuberant condition of production, in that it always proceeds and precedes; or participates in what Robert Filliou describes as The Eternal Network, where the suppleness of cultural objects is exposed and the continuous work of the recipients of art is maintained as a practice not dissimilar to production, but distinguished by a greater invisibility in formal and physical space and an amorphous mode of prescription, flippant and also congealed, like thoughts that don't demand articulation or clarified references but acquire a density through an impossibility of separation. Helen's silk paintings drop sequentially from the ceiling in *Chinatown: the sequel*, and run through the space with no designs towards weaving a sequential or continuous subject. In her own words, *The dead metaphor is not something that has ceased to be, but something that has been rendered invisible through continuous use, taken as read. The subject matter of each work in this exhibition is derived from a different place and time, but each is connected through a narrative relation to the material on which it is painted. In this way these historical moments are 'levelled out' by their materiality. There is no sequential narrative to the arrangement, but a hovering set of traces, perhaps an attempt to imagine an amorphous, non-linear historical approach.*

The script excerpt at the top of this page, bubbling with the sweet repression of teacher-student paramour and sublimated through a shared awareness of literary narratives, is extracted from an episode of the television series Dawson's Creek which I located trying to find a film adaptation on youtube of the novel *Sentimental Education*, when instead I found this clip which was more thrilling, perhaps because it was my second viewing and removed from the television episode, supplanted into a search category where I was seeking dramatisation rather than quotation or narration. And of course, the retelling came through an unexpected channel, a television serial that borrows Flaubert's sense of nothingness, where everything feels at stake. The romantic technique at play between these two characters is to place a fictional story at the centre of their conversation, allowing the fiction to glow onto their 'reality' like a small transfusion or tacit acknowledgement of the locations where their desire might exist, without having to travel there themselves.

In continuity with James Deutscher's recent sculptural work, which is driven by a desire to commit ideas to the mechanisms of high-quality fabrication, the two sculptures in *Chinatown: the sequel* transfuse single moments in culture into singular objects. The artist locates himself at the collision point of contemporary cultural fables (*Twilight*, *Vanity Fair*) and the narrative of his own life, which is of course informed by the language, spirit and images of the colossal pool of cultural production. It's a curious seduction played out with movies and magazines, that we seek direction from these sources to elaborate on the romances we enter and exit. The emotive forces of Bella Swan's vampire eyes and Scarlett Johansson's magazine eyes are calcified in James' coated, extruded, outsourced (in the fabrication and in the identification with what one has not produced but what one feels produces something significant within the self) and robust objects. Like a poet, he is interested in producing a highly individual output from the most universal sensations of love, story and beauty. His process reminds me that before exhibition, artworks are the unborn children of an economy of desire. (*It can be stated that culture is a means of converting the impact of such energies as love, sex or aggression.* — Marlie Mul, 2010, writing for the exhibition *Kiss You Through the Phone*).

There is nothing that James' objects resemble except for an image of their own potency. *Twilight* is now the doyen of the sequel, particularly because the books mean the story is already available and what is played out is an obsessive exercise of proliferation. 'When will you ever see yourself clearly?' Edward Cullen, *Breaking Dawn*, Chapter 39, p.744: An image of Bella Swan's eyes, the last frame of *Twilight: Breaking Dawn*, is printed onto a silk Dries Van Noten scarf, which is then draped from a red pole, extending from the structure beneath which hosts it, a box fabricated with deep (red) intent in powder-coated steel, that shares the exact dimensions of the box that the Dries Van Noten scarf was originally packaged in. A story as circuitous as *Twilight*, returning to itself continuously, an island with residents that can't expatriate but that does have views to other islands. Another island: No.616 VANITY FAIR DECEMBER 2011 ("Raffaello Follieri, Scarlett Johansson vs Emily Blunt in Ironman, Shiro Kuramata, Predator, Weezy F Baby, YSL, Martelli and Neytiri Na'vi etc, etc...") An image of Scarlett Johansson's eyes, cropped from her second *Vanity Fair* cover appearance and scaled-up, is printed onto a pair of Yves Saint Laurent jeans once owned and worn by the artist, a reproduction or multiple of a design manufactured to make the individual participate in an economy of choice. A copper tube hoists the jeans, from the small pocket designed for the purpose of housing small copper coins. The copper tube assumes Scarlett Johansson's standing height, and is anchored by a perfect-red base, which rests on a solid copper plate that has been inscribed along its spine as the corresponding issue of *Vanity Fair* would have been inscribed - No.616 VANITY FAIR DECEMBER 2011. There is always a driving and calculated logic in James' fabricated sculptures, which is often invisible, yet contributes so heavily to their outcome. Like the HBO series *Entourage*, so deeply interesting as it reveals the embedded logic and colossal drama within the story-lines which produce more story-lines. Or, a mask, to reveal mask, atop a mask, etc.

"I know my best angles" "They were sent to my husband" "There's nothing wrong with that. It's not like I was shooting a porno." "Although there's nothing wrong with that either"

"we're all guilty of being idealistic, I and everyone who voted for him" "It would be irresponsible not to" "He shakes a lot of hands" "I'll squirt some in my hand and then squirt in his." "The only reason why Woody and I are still friends is because I've diagnosed all kinds of his skin tags, lesions, ailments. I've prescribed things for Woody that he's then asked his doctor to prescribe for him"

"I don't think anything's played out. I'm waiting for him to write my *Citizen Kane*"

"completely took me over in every way. I'd spent four months bleeding all over the stage, completely exposed. I felt I was forever changed by that experience. It was unbelievable holding that Tony." "I didn't really know what to do with myself. It was such a strange time. There was nothing that was interesting to me. I had a very public separation. It was difficult. I felt very uncomfortable"

'bronze in the mirror of the form, wine of the mind'

The system of Astrology depends on a marriage between real objects (stars) and the narratives that have been extracted from their existence (star-signs). It points in a similar direction to films, and how they may be entirely composed of objects present in reality, yet still enter the imagination through fictional threads, producing new truths. Film so effectively manufactures itself that we envy its loose participation in time and space and the ability to cast somebody in a role and complete a story before boredom is allowed to breathe.. Pushing a malleable substance into an established form feels analogous to the casting of actors to play characters: the dynamic between the substance and the form, the director's manipulation of how one fills another and the result which invariably transcends the limits that have been put in place. This is the plot of so much of Hany Armanious' work, which pours new objects into the world while listening to the songs of forms that have already claimed to exist. (*To be liberated is to pierce the future with a destructive gaze that vanquishes omens and exposes the future as nothing but an illusion. What can be yet to come in a world that is absolutely full, where everything that has ever been still is, and where everything that will ever be, is already here? Let the fire of love devour the future and past and deliver me into the jaws of a perpetual present.* – Roger Gilbert-Lecomte, read in David Rattray's *How I Became One of the Invisible*) What casting means in Hany's work and what it means in terms of casting roles in films has a stronger relationship than I had imagined until the artist offered a set of ashtrays to this exhibition. They are the disposable, cheap, lightweight variety of ashtrays, bought by bars in the assumption that most things are eventually ruined or stolen, formed from folded and crinkled aluminium, manipulated into a bowl shape which receives the final burning embers of cigarettes, or a place for a cigarette to lean in the moments when fingers are disinterested or otherwise occupied. Hany cast two of these ashtrays in sterling silver. Like props, the weight of the objects and actual materiality is inconsequential when being captured as an image in film; the surface and shape is meant to *describe*, rather than *be*. (The economics and allowances of making films would mean a 'poorer' object typically stands in as a visual substitute for the 'richer' object, the inverse of the scenario in this work.) And of course ashtrays are necessitated by smoking, a gesture that is practiced most perfectly in film, when it is formal, choreographed and scentless.

That anticipation and unfilled space (beyond) is more pleasurable or less compromised than new interferences makes the sequel a suspicious object; in the film industry, the sequel is readily accused of being motivated by money-lust, or appealing to the weakened imagination that craves the familiar rather than the piercing of the new; or, that it is retroactively damaging to the original work. For a mixtape this assumption is irrelevant. Gucci Mane & DJ Drama, *The Movie Part 2: the sequel*. Without plot, more an impression that the documentation suddenly began and then, within time, finished, every work could be considered a sequel to *Sentimental Education*. A result, consequence, or interference; a literary work, movie, etc., that is complete in itself but continues the narrative of a preceding work.

Matt Hinkley digs drawings into receptive surfaces with a Dremel and presses factory-coloured polymer clay into the small moulds, forming something between a drawing and a sculpture, antithetical to so much sculpture because the moment the object is realised is the most casual moment of production. The minute scale of the drawn image resembles the scale of pixels, and the volume of sculptures in the exhibition *Chinatown: the sequel* shares a similar pixelated mode of operating, where the work is achieved by an accumulation of many components. and extraordinary capacity to replicate the pixel-sized mark-making of printers, air-brushes and incidental gestures. For the last 18 months, Hinkley has been developing small, wall-mounted sculptures that are the result of Dremel-drawings onto a clay surface, then pressed with coloured polymer modeling clay which receives the relief-form. They are both perfectly precise and insouciant - the drawings are immaculate, bombastic displays of geometry while the way the clay is pressed often has an air of chance or incident. They force the audience to adjust their optics and demand a recalculation of scale, drawing people into their obsession of detail.

Isabella: Once I had a fortune, it said: "Leave now. Life is short. Time is luck".

Det. James 'Sonny' Crockett: You got assets somewhere? Insurance?

Isabella: Why?

Det. James 'Sonny' Crockett: Things go wrong. The odds catch up. Probability is like gravity: you cannot negotiate with gravity. One day... one day you should just cash out, you know? Just cash out and get out.

Isabella: Yeah?

Det. James 'Sonny' Crockett: Yeah. As far and as fast as you can.

Isabella: Would you find me?

Det. James 'Sonny' Crockett: Yes, I would.

-

Dear...

Today the air was noticeably warmer and it seemed to be announcing something. Spiders pressed into edges of windows, spiders so large they probably have feelings. Already the first sentences of this letter are more like distant cousins than close friends - I'm sure my attention span is shrinking because this computer is infected with boredom. Evidently, I'm not yet very capable at writing letters, always looking for locution when I should probably try just to say what I mean. (Unfortunately intent is rarely a place arrived at first..) Hotel letterheads are a successful conduit for this writing-of-aversion because they encourage an air of distant place, an affectation of a position. Marc Camille Chamowicz used hotel stationery as his recording device while he prepared for an exhibition at the Vienna Secession. The resulting publication is as floral as a novel..

To exist is one thing, to be perceived another.

-Susan Howe *Peirce Arrow*

There has been a lot of work around in Melbourne, in the recent years collected in my memory, that takes quotations from neat domestic scenarios (in speaking recently I used the expression 'domestic formalism'), always potted plants, rugs and tiles, plants on rugs, water vessels, work very low to the ground, a seat for neither sitting nor display. Products from the factory of vague feelings. Here, I'm cautious not to say this milieu of work is reverting back to the language of the home and studio as it lacks a sense that it ever left. Surely there is enough innocuous domestic space available to most of these artists, most of their audience, that it doesn't require transcribing to galleries.. Chamowicz in a sense invented this form, termed it the 'scatter environment' and is probably a source of inspiration for a lot of this work. So what exists in an exhibition of MCC that isn't part of this trend towards conglomerating domestic material that seems to be quite popular among artists, here, right now? *Fauconnier (1994) defines mental spaces as domains of 'backstage cognition,' abstract mental constructs that are generally set up on the basis of general scenarios.* 'Backstage cognition' is a beautiful expression to sit against MCC's exhibitions as they take on the appearance of theatre as it occurs on the front of the stage - moments of scripted prose and the truncated poetry of display - while the motivating forces welling up behind the stage, spill over and seep into the scene, rendering the stage infused and wet.

The dying swan witnessed by James Nares in Sagaponack last summer writhed like a white Hercules in the shirt of Nessus. The other swans formed a cortege and escorted it to shelter out of sight behind a clump of reeds. Its contortions having swallowed something it could neither get down nor get up seemed an allegory of the predicament of one whose business, pleasure, and religion it is to make art. — David Rattray, How I Became One of the Invisible

For months I've been picking up novels that depict the artist in a crystal tower processing visions, and women writing pamphlets, floating in the poverty of prophesying new ideas. When I'm picking up another kind of book, it's often clever and august collections of episodic art writing describing the perpetual dance that choreographs artwork, people and money to flow in and out of real estate and magazines; that has turned thinking into a currency and correspondence into an activity of production. Books give such infallible accounts of how the system of art is operating now that it seems a little foolish to participate in it. Dearest F, I think of Kiki de Montparnasse and how her mystique evaporated when she penned her memoirs.. Demystification can be a scary thing to encounter. That brilliant analogy of a Loony Tunes character who runs off a cliff, and continues running in defiance of gravity, until the character looks down (is it coyote?) and understands their impossible situation; in this moment, of course they fall..

Most of the day I'm writing to people or hoping to hear from them. Correspondence feels so advanced now that a conversation is never really an isolated event, no, the conversation is somehow always simmering and boils when heat is placed against it, when an exchange of words actually takes place. A little discomfort is usually translated in the question 'how are you?' If I mean to ask this quite properly, I'll usually borrow another accent or language, as it sounds too improbable in my own. As a strategy for seeking an answer, 'how are you?' is quite ineffective as it rarely invites a response commensurate with what's being asked.

A judgement upon an object of our delight may be wholly disinterested but withal very interesting, i.e., it relies on no interest, but it produces one.. Only in society is it interesting to have taste-a point, which will be explained in the sequel. Joshua Petherick sent work to an exhibition in a beach-front bureau styled momentarily as a gallery, in Malibu. Without pointing too heavily to its slight strangeness, the site was an impressive prompt for the work. Maybe even perfect for Joshua: buried in the mechanics of stationary-induced production, with a view towards the recreational sublime. His video was projected into a cavity, a short and narrow corridor leading to a dead-end, a white wall and returning back again. It would be surprising if that sort of non-space would ever be used as effectively by another tenant. The projection of a sticky sunset slipping towards a cool waiting ocean (much larger ocean over the right shoulder) is interrupted by a circle of Macintosh rendering dots clicking over in their unique coupling of aggravation and ambivalence. An attractive and erratic montage of barely-traceable footage plays out and an abrupt jazz sound predicts the end of the video. *Which will be explained in the sequel.*

I've tried reading Mallarmè but I find his visions terrifying; horror movies. In a message from Leah Jackson: *The entry to Satan's annual ball: 'scarlet breasted parrots with green tails perched on lianas and hopping from branch to branch uttered deafening screeches of "ecstasy! Ecstasy!"'*

-

Brenda: How do you go from this tranquility to that violence?
Sonny Crockett: I usually take the Ferrari.

-

He loved logic

-Juliette Pierce from Susan Howe *Peirce Arrow*

In *Chinatown: the sequel*, Simon Denny revisits and reconstitutes the exhibition *Introductory Logic Video Tutorial*, a sculpture installation posing as a video installation, describing a video tutorial about philosophical logic. Here, he has returned the work to the format of video and pushed it into a single sculpture. The closeness of painting and television, the point at which they nearly touch, is described like a concrete metaphor in the 2010 exhibition *Introductory Logic Video Tutorial*, where flat-screen canvases were mounted to gallery walls. When the micro-technology in television monitors finally enabled televisions to be slim and flat, they competed for the same place that a painting traditionally occupied in a private residence. The historical dance between television and art around questions of format and content now also had to account for their shared display in home interiors. Inevitably, this new display mode rouses thoughts of residents sitting around watching a painting, or inversely, the television becomes newly invigorated as an object, as a the possibility of all images, a digital portal which can display any image and any image of any artwork in a digitised form. Of note, the advertising campaigns for flat-screen displays have been largely arranged around this similarity to painting and the 'chic-ness' of contemporary art; while also benefiting from a deep atemporal sympathy that humans generally feel towards images hung on walls.

Dear L.,

Interior scenes, backstage cognition, death, art: Someone just emailed me Samuel Beckett's one-room, one-character, one-act play, 'Krapp's Last Tape'. (They thought I would connect with its economy, with the progressive editing out and paring down of detail through its successive stagings.) The play takes place in a late evening in the future; a weary man sits at a desk in his den, eating bananas and listening to tapes of his younger self (who is in turn listening to random tapes of a yet younger self). It is the man's habit to record himself as each birthday draws to a close, sitting in that same den. It has been said that Krapp 'has nothing to talk to but his dying self and nothing to talk to him but his dead one', and that the disgruntled old man (whose greatest achievement over his last year was selling 17 copies of a book, 11 at trade prices to free libraries) is a proxy for the gloomy future self that Beckett anticipated becoming. (The playwright insisted his work did not depend on his experience, still, a couple of years before this play was drafted, he had remarked that he felt all dried up, with nothing left but self-translation.)

A seat, a potplant and a rug - as opposed to MCC, I think what we have been seeing has often been lazy art: and here I mean laziness as content, not necessarily (though possibly) absentminded or ambivalent making. Laziness as opposed to engagement; a retreat from political positions and from obsessive, brooding introspection. An invitation to belong to a tribe satisfied with their rugs and collective aesthetic. An absence of plot and probably also of character, an emptying of cognition.

Dear (as in expensive): I just came from the vet where S and I in tandem had to hold down our cat whilst a nasty infection was released from his foot. The vet said that if the cat gets into another scrimmage and sustains a wound we must try to ensure it stays open (the wound). If it closes, though it may appear to be healing from the outside, it is actually trapping the infection underneath. So your computer is infected with boredom – possibly it has been closed off in some way? It is hard to imagine these days that this would be on account of its not having recourse to an internet connection. Though I agree with Chris Kraus vis-a-vis the internet as a form of mental pollution. Social networking in particular as a special form of socio-cerebral pollution in its insistence on funnelling everything, discreet, intimate and otherwise, through presentation. But perhaps it is a more palpable sort of closing off that your computer faces. Uploading its entire contents onto the internet might be a strategy, but as far as the metaphor is concerned that might amount to, say, shovelling up all the topsoil in the area of land that constitutes the cat's territory and throwing it into the wind. Perhaps a more effective measure would be to hook it up to a fax machine and allow an expurgation via that medium. Lance it with an Ethernet cable (my computer just auto-corrected ethernet to Ethernet; respect for elders).

It is only in society that a judgement of taste can constitute the seed of a debate.

Chaimowicz (speaking of domestic formalism) appeals in part for his absolute nuance. It warmed me to read of him telling some design collaborators that black is out of the question – 'just go out and buy a bar of 90 per cent dark chocolate, and that'll be your colour reference.'

When I was in my late teens I went to a lot of outdoor raves. At one, my best friend had donned an acrylic jewel-encrusted, fire-themed outfit (to my water – prescient of a split, I'm sure you can imagine). Deep into the night I encountered her on a dancefloor, and as she walked away I glimpsed one of her red jewels glittering in the dust at my feet. Being at that stage quite significantly impaired of motor skill, I bent down and very slowly and carefully picked up this jewel and brought it up to my face to look at it. It took me about ten seconds to complete this action, and as I did I realised that what I was holding was not a plastic jewel but the burning ember from the end of a cigarette. At that moment I dropped it with a start, but because I had believed it was plastic, it had not burnt me even slightly.

As a counterpoint to the question of 'how are you?' I have also been thinking today about the rounding off of the communique; someone from Germany who I don't really know emailed me the other day and closed off with 'All my very best,' which I enjoyed, but it also made me think – if you take that literally, it is quite a commitment! Likewise, my friend Adam received an email the other day from a French philosopher who ended his missive with 'All my friendship,' which is also rather a statement. I had thought this was a strictly European phenomenon, because I know in German at least the traditional and formal ways of opening and closing can be quite extravagant: 'Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,' 'Herzliche Grüßen.' I started to notice, however, that Australians do this too – I think it has become the norm.

When you say, L, that you borrow another accent, do you mean that you put on, say, a French accent, or do you mean that you accent your words in a singular way, as a means of sort of dodging the inherent feeling of disingenuousness that comes with any homogenised statement? I think I do that. There are a whole series of social codes and mores that dictate how frankly the question 'how are you?' can be answered. But it must always be asked.

In the whole of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, the only mention Kant makes of ugliness is when he writes of art's possessing the capacity to represent ugly things beautifully. *People do not understand how that which is at variance with itself agrees with itself. There is a harmony in the bending back, as in the cases of the bow and the lyre.*

Souls take pleasure in becoming moist.

The hidden harmony is better than the obvious.
(Heraclitus)

-

A Constructed World: *The autonomy of art has ended because it was never actually there before, it was induced to obscure a widely collaborative practice. The loss of autonomy protects us from realising the dream fantasy of alienation, the dream of being so famous that you will suspect everyone's motives towards you and lack the privacy to enjoy life's simple pleasures and tasks.*

Drake, in response to the lyrics addressing Kobe Bryant's soon-to-be-ex-wife, Vanessa Kobe 'bout to lose a hundred fifty M's Kobe my nigga I hate it, had to be him Bitch you wasn't with me shooting in the gym': *That line had everything to do with me and what goes on in my head as a 25-year-old man with this much income flowing in. Kobe is and always will be a friend and an icon to me.* (Or, the reality of being so famous that you will suspect everyone's motives towards you.)

-

Unheard music is better than heard — Greek proverb of late antiquity

That music be heard is not essential – what it sounds like may not be what it is — Charles Ives 'Essays Before a Sonata'

Béla Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* is a series of 153 progressive piano pieces, which the artist describes in entirety as 'a synthesis of all the musical and technical problems which were treated and in some cases only partially solved in the previous piano works.' They begin with simplicity and incrementally develop complexity with each progressive piece. Marco Fusinato's *Mass Black Implosions* is a series of ink drawings on archival facsimiles of existing musical scores, where a single point is marked on each score and a single, straight line is drawn from each musical note to the zero point, or every sound played at a single moment, or an implosion of sound, or white noise.

Kiki, everything (excerpts with Fiona Connor)

THE RAIN JUST CAME THROUGH THE WINDOW AND I CAN FEEL IT ON MY BACK

...

Then Kiki well you know I was thinking about Kiki and yeah - L and I where driving along Pacific Ave after going for a swim and L said (it was funny cause you all of a sudden decided to figure out why Kiki why now), you where like I can see why you like Kiki because of this craving for a really dynamic social scene. I was not really in the head space to get what you where getting at but yeah I guess you got it. I really like the framing in that book, it is like a micro history where people get introduced as they come in and out of the scene and there art is presented as just as one of the many activities they do

...

It is now the next morning and I just got back from a walk in the woods with midnight. The south so hot. It started to rain and it did not even change my body temperature. For some reason I want to add at the end of this letter long footnote that when I was talking to Jill Climent who was in the first post studio class she said everything changed in terms of everything when John Lennon died and Ronald Reagan got elected. This was a turning point for her when all the things that she thought made sense did not make sense any more. This is also when George Van Dyne the scientist in AWOBMoLG#2 who did those field experiments where they counted every leaf that everything ate died. That footage is so fucking amazing to me - of the grad student studiously chatting to the audio recorder. Anyway this moment is also alluded to in the Ian/Adam short films and when I put this all together I realise that this was the moment I was born and that every waking moment in my life has been in a disillusioned martini.

...

Is all the text inside us all the time? F, you have always been very good at asking questions and this one is kind of big. H was buying fossils on ebay on her iPhone the other day. H is an artist devoted to painting and now instead of meeting for coffee to rendezvous we meet in the cosmetic sections of department stores playing with pigments and textures. One of the ebay fossils had 'Condition: NEW' and she wondered if this was some kind of Kant-ian statement, did the retailer believe as Kant did that things only come into being when they enter the consciousness of humans? So this ancient fossil is also new. Maybe.

Dear (another) F,

..music's still playin' in the background.

There is a flaw in this exercise of correspondence, which I'm happy to live with but which you recognised much earlier than me. To achieve elegance, a measure of casualness is required. A conversation in the midst of champagne-flavoured effusiveness is inevitably more striking than the result of me punching pressure onto a stale keyboard, trying to connect what Bruce Hainley describes as 'the glamour of thinking' with the lacquered darkwood chair at Starbucks that provides me with an immediate locale. (Coffees here are too large and as our shared proclivity for counting time and encouraging productivity is measured in coffee units, rather than volume, it has offered an unexpected problem to my daily life in Los Angeles.) In a recent episode of *Californication* a client shouts to his writer, 'shouldn't you be at Starbucks now writing me some funny shit?' That's funny, perhaps the line was written in Starbucks.

When Joshua Petherick took a residency in upstate New York last year, the director Jason Reitman was also in residence - he directed Juno and Thank You for Smoking and is the son of Ivan Reitman who produced or directed most of the first films that I ever watched, and their attending sequels. (The brain is particularly supple to fiction in youth and for a time I recall believing the only films that existed were the ones that I'd seen; and in believing so was keeping the philosophical company of John Locke at an early age). From anecdotal memory, Jason Reitman would leave the residence, which was set up for writers and artists to work, and drive to Starbucks to write everyday, where I find myself now, writing and surrounded by other writers who are practicing the pursuit of fiction from the coffee world's equivalent of Chinatown.

Consideration of perfume and sensory translation, in light of Raimundas Malašauskas' contribution of a fragrance/perfume/smell to be distributed on letterheads, a curatorial inflection, an enduring/fading document to entrap the exhibition upon its closure, or: indeterminate determinacy.

Life smells like a rose / someone to paint / someone to pose - Miss Piggy

Kant proposed that it is impossible to find a word devoted exclusively to smell. He called it 'taste at a distance.' (The past has never been present.)

Parfum exotique

*Quand, les deux yeux fermés, en un soir chaud d'automne, Je respire l'odeur de ton sein chaleureux, Je vois se dérouler des rivages heureux Qu'éblouissent les feux d'un soleil monotone;
Une île paresseuse où la nature donne Des arbres singuliers et des fruits savoureux; Des hommes dont le corps est mince et vigoureux, Et des femmes dont l'oeil par sa franchise étonne.
Guidé par ton odeur vers de charmants climats, Je vois un port rempli de voiles et de mâts Encor tout fatigués par la vague marine,
Pendant que le parfum des verts tamariniers, Qui circule dans l'air et m'enfle la narine, Se mêle dans mon âme au chant des mariniers.*

— Charles Baudelaire

Parfum exotique

*when with closed eyes I drink the halcyon warm autumn evening, on thy burning breast, I see unfurl the atolls of the blest, blazing in flame from an unchanging sun;
an isle of rest, where Nature's benison breeds trees unique and fruits of savoury zest; tall men who stride in vigour manifest; women whose eyes of candour startle one.
I drift, thy fragrance bearing me afar, into a port where every sail and spar sway, wearied by the sea's beleaguering,
— where tamarinds bloom and draughts of perfume winging through widening nostrils, blend in me to bring the wind-blown chanteys mariners are singing.*

— Lewis Piaget Shanks, *Flowers of Evil* (New York: Ives Washburn, 1931)

The Exotic Perfume

*When, with both eyes shut, on a close autumn evening, I breathe the perfume of your heated breast, I see happy shores unfold themselves Dazzling in the flames of a monotonous sun;
A lay island where Nature bestows Peculiar trees and savory fruit; Men with bodies slim and virile, Women with eyes of astonishing candor.
Led by your odor to climates of charm, I see a harbor full of sails and masts Still tired by the waves of the sea,
Whilst the perfume of green tamarind-trees Circles the air and fills my nostrils, Meets in my soul with the song of the seamen.*
— Geoffrey Wagner, *Selected Poems of Charles Baudelaire* (NY: Grove Press, 1974)

Nothing, no thing, promises the possibility of translation. This is why translation is always tentative, approximate and incomplete, an unfulfilled promise, necessarily trailing in its wake the 'remainder' of its past, no longer accessible. It is the translation, not the 'original' that promises translatability.

(all read at a time concurrent to reading Lydia Davis' translation of *Madame Bovary*, the second translation I've devoured, in which Davis uses the word slut in the first 10 pages and a critic called 'the English translation it deserves.' Flaubert lived with venereal diseases for most of his life, and wrote: 'Nothing is worth breaking a heart for.')

..and when we're done, I don't wanna feel my legs..

She Hold Me Like a Conversation composed by Liv Barrett on the occasion of the exhibition *Chinatown: the sequel* at ltd los angeles, 2012
writing largely authored by the curator of the exhibition and includes several unsolicited sources as well as significant contribution from Helen
Johnson, Faye D'Evie and Fiona Connor

Chinatown: the sequel

Hany Armanious | Damiano Bertoli | Fiona Connor and Tahi Moore | Simon Denny | James Deutscher | Marco Fusinato | Matt Hinkley | Leah
Jackson | Helen Johnson | Raimundas Malasauskas | Joshua Petherick | A Constructed World | Frances Scholz and Mark von Schlegell

10 February - 31 March 2012