

Big Square

The burner has a life that is useful, then useless. **Jenni Knight** turns on the pressure, transfers the pressure from compressor to tool, seizes out paint, and fills the siphon. In an attempt to locate points in space, she entangles them with other known anchors, completing the constellation. This is a project of making objects that do not need each other need each other; this is a project of cultivating dependence where there was none. Black paws once used to hold hats now hold each other, a triangle of them, propped up by cardboard. Having mistook a UTI for pregnancy the question becomes: whose child is this? The womb in question is a trompe l'oeil shadow or a strainer or a tennis racket, a host body for the conniving parasite. The womb in question is dependent on both floor and ceiling for its position in space. The womb in question pushes against the rectangle of the television, pushes against the line drawing, cast in flopping resin, becoming hair, invisible until colored in. Pushing against the literary imperative of the *I*, **Barrett White** makes logo salad. Collapsing shipping pallets in lieu of speaking, he speaks in logo only. Though he has evacuated the space of any human, he ends up finding an arrangement of gridded subjectivities; he ends up finding a dead shopping mall, lights off, paper over the windows, a place where once upon a time, objects came to be commodities, and the question becomes, where does the middle class family go now? Now he has a bunch of empty rooms. An empty *I* enters the empty rooms. The *I* speaks a brittle language. The brittle language breaks and thrills us because we want the shattering. But, I mean, there's a place in the world where everyone's equal, it's called the

Small Circle

sewer. **Sara Clendening** doesn't go to bars because her voice is what one would call *midrange*; she cannot speak loudly enough to be heard. She prefers her sculptures to be midrange as well, not miniatures, not monuments. Her sculptures are portable. Grab 'em and run. Or shatter them, send them through the mail, and glue them back together. You can't duplicate the magic of a real mess. *She took him to the cleaners*, means, I have learned, she got all his money. Who got the ring? The ring is a ring and Sara's the Magic Moves Barbie pushing her veil back over and over, deflower, reflower, deflower, reflower. Did you do it on purpose or by accident? On purpose or by accident. We chose *on purpose* because it is like *purple*. We chose the poster because it suited the image our adolescent self wanted to project. In a moment of fickle puberty, we tore the poster off the wall, leaving four triangles of glossy paper clinging to masking tape, leaving the sculpture, which is just big enough that we register it as bigger than ourselves. The sculpture is just big enough that **Ian Cooper** cannot move it himself, fanning out into imposed sociality. The sculpture is perfect in a sexy way, refusing to rest on the laurels of material alchemy. Here is nothing, it says. Here is nothing, but because we are babies we are the only beings to have ever touched the excruciating past and the excruciatingly distant future. We are the only beings to have ever hoped for pastel in leather, for primed wood, for something big but not intimidating.

One can utter with the grain, against the grain, or as **Dmitri Zurita** does in his work, lateral to the grain. In the context of phonetics, lateral refers to a consonant—for example,

4

the letter *l*—formed by partial closure of the air passage by the tongue, allowing breath to flow on either side of it. Dmitri's installations speak laterally, from the side, air flowing past. Language is a system so beautiful and elegant we fall for it without knowing. Like the Los Angeles subway in *Grand Theft Auto*, a space adjacent and subservient to the highway, it is a vehicle we clamber onto, allowing it to take us approximately where we want to go, but not exactly. When we locate the *l* on the page, as opposed to the screen, the *l* speaks from the blank space between facing pages. This utterance, this imposition of words on air, gestures towards the agential possibilities within language, the speaker traipsing through. **Cammisa Buerhaus** says that the American dream is a wish, and a wish, in psychoanalytic terms, cannot be fulfilled. Monica Lewinsky is an American loser. Monica Lewinsky was a chaste intern hugging the President, then she became known for the cum stain on her dress, now she is a stale punchline. Because she was an intern she was the only being to have ever blushed and giggled in the face of authority. Because she is a woman she is the only being to have ever crouched in the threshold of a theater. When Cammisa performs standup as Monica, she debases herself in order to reveal the conditions of women's debasement. We can only guffaw. There is no space outside of patriarchy but we can touch that little giggle, little bubble, little slip. The giggle should be genuine. Like beauty sleep, the giggle is inescapable. **Anastasia Kolas** is in drag as a tourist, walking around midtown Manhattan taking pictures with a point and shoot, in search of a wish pearl necklace. Her photographs document the bleak, dusty

stores that sell such necklaces, with their promises of love, luck, and protection from the evils of the world. Her photographs constitute images quickly accumulating. We are quick, but tearful at our lateness to the party. Because our skirts are heat creased, we can hope for better times. Because we wear clothes, our futures sit adjacent. A pearl, when it forms naturally, is a reaction of the mollusk to infection, and in this way is evidence of illness. A pearl is round, pushing against the rectangle of the photograph. Anastasia's photographs are the projected screen between retail environment and viewer, gesturing towards the wish for a path that elides the maps of this reality.

Many are the mold makers, the hoop makers, the laminators of wood, the gluers, the sanders. A personal narrative of monotony and momentum, community and anonymity, the rhythm and chaos involved in political organizing sets the stage for fifteen marching drums. With help from a network of friends, family, organizers, artists and musicians, **Or Zubalsky** designed and constructed loud and lightweight drums. They were made to be used in political action with the group Decolonize This Place, who works around issues of indigenous struggle, black liberation, Free Palestine, global wage workers and de-gentrification. The drum smooshes sound into the street, into cobblestone, pavement or air. In the morning, sound is alit. In the morning, **Tanya Zamirouskaya** writes scary stories, mechanisms of consolidating the terror of being alive, and translates them for slurping Anglophones eager to imbibe ghosts and talking coffins. Tanya's translations acknowledge the substance that gets in the way,

leaving us happily swaddled in the gap between what is being said and what the speaker wants to say. In the afternoon, Tanya encounters identical twins, *The Silences of Those Who Tell The Truth* and *The Silences of Those Who Lie*. Like her translation, her fiction acknowledges its own conceit, which brings it closer to whatever we might locate as honesty than fiction enamored of its own wool pulling. In the evening, she encounters identical twins, *That Which Did Not Happen* and *That Which Was Erased*. The difference between the two dissipates quickly. Language, spinning something from nothing, always exhales a new reality. The language is a mother's mother tongue. The sound is a sibling and a weapon. **Colin Self's** sounds hand us a map of how we might be with others in the world as fellows or rabble rousers. We, audience or assembly, listen to the state apparatus, shaking our heads *no*; we hope for trembling. In speaking, the words fall somewhere between being heard and being listened to, they fall close to the haphazardly assembled troublemakers, and then, like hair, these words proliferate. Like hair, we have been straightened or curled, taking the breath into ourselves. There are four of them: the firebrand, the full blown story, the weather, the Tandy girl. We, audience or assembly, sip on sound, desirous of crooning through the night. Then it's morning and the light is rectangular. The rectangle of light borrows needs or sleeps time away. The rectangle of light is Super 8, hi-8, 16mm, or digital. In order to exhale a movie, **Katrina del Mar** scavenges, taking Kembra Pfahler's conception of availabism—a practice of creation that involves making the best use of whatever is at hand—and

7

running with it. Katrina has engaged in the time-honored tradition of rerouting employer's resources for her own use. Working at a copy shop, shy slyly photocopied her zines and those of her friends, and made proofs of her slides on the color copier. In making a movie that draws from her father's archive, she makes the best use of what is available: the paintings, drawings, film and manuscripts that have been lying around for years. The rectangle of light becomes an apparatus of filial piety. The rectangle of light glances backwards, glances at time behind time. Glancing at the present, **Am Schmidt** is painting a self portrait or Am Schmidt is painting herself pregnant but not showing. She sculpts bagels or she sculpts donuts. She sculpts avocados or she sculpts potatoes. Am's sculptures are like furniture with sheets draped over it: the messy world made neat by smooth soothing plaster. She sucks into tidiness: the bagels, the donuts, the avocados, the potatoes, along with USB sticks, dishes, a pillow, and a boogie board. Cast in plaster these objects become piqued or peaking, dehierarchized, their identity reduced to objecthood. In the least embarrassing sense of the term, Am's work is conceptual, in drag as having an orientation towards craft. It never matters whether the sculpture is good. It matters only that Am made it. The verb is part of the project. Because we are dogs, we are the only beings to have ever had our portrait painted for an aunt. We paint a square, the corners being: spending money, making money, loaning money, being loaned money. To eat in a restaurant is to go into debt, briefly, between the time one orders one's meal and the time one pays the bill. **Zoran Starcevic**

makes paintings of restaurant checks, and in these paintings, the embodiment of the waiter is preserved forever: the gesture of tearing sheets off the notepad, the idiosyncrasies of handwriting and abbreviation, the worker dragging hand against paper. In these paintings, daily sludge inflates and becomes catalogued. Zoran paints restaurant checks or Zoran paints on loan letters, scribbling alongside a smaller hand, using debt as a canvas. The paintings make up and are made up by what is loaned, what is speculated upon, and what is borrowed.

What is speculated upon is the triumphant traffic of cosmetics. In **Monalisa Gharavi's** videos, expressivity is emphasized by absence: covered faces result in a fixation on charismatic hands; the black void surrounding two pairs of lip-sticked lips leads us to focus on them all the more. The lips kiss each other over and over, lipstick smearing into skin. Each time the lips come together, the kiss mark shifts with smears of red spreading further from the mouth. Lipstick is reapplied and the kissing begins again. The enacted repetition motions towards the expression of care this waged labor reroutes: the work of caring is never done; the feminized subjects who often perform this work find themselves doing it over and over. We encounter the intersection of waged work and caring labor, twinned history tearing at what is to come. Tearing at what is to come, **Ana Ratner's** small waste and self archive warped or wept into the object where the box push pins come in is push pinned to the wall. Note the ontological implications of push pin rather than thumbtack: a push pin sticks out from the wall, inserting

1

its shape into the landscape. Here is what I wish for: a pair of bra cups from the bathing suit of a girlfriend of a brother, sewn together, four years after the theft had taken place, a cake requiring a parasol to protect itself from the cruel gaze of the sun, toilet paper, steel wool spray painted the color that it is, a slice of carpet resigned to its shade of pink, snake waste, human waste, fire waste, car waste. A scavenger finds treasure but soon discovers someone else has gotten to it first, an ant colony, for example, or the weather. Because we are ants we are the only beings to have ever spun our own solitary fiction. To make fiction is to make a world. All **Joe Proulx** wants is to go home and write sentences. Like his characters—activists, well dressed drug addicts, tortured agnostics, narcissistic artists, believers, doe-eyed club kids—he wants a world to escape to. Writing a sentence means venturing into the unknown. You never know where you're going. The path is not lit. Joe pushes against the structure of the sentence, pushes against prose, making sentences that are obscene in their length, titillating in their punctuation, giving rise to piles of clauses and participles. In doing so, he steers the breath of the reader, even when the reading is internal. The sentence is taken into the body, not just the mind. The sentence is roused by the slip of its own sloping structure. Collapsing photographs in lieu of speaking, **Ruth Höflich**, too, rouses them by the slip of their own structure. In displaying photos, she allows the paper to be paper. The photos make a shape, nestled amongst the sculptures. The sculptures flatten playground architecture into floor plans, silhouettes of the layout, veering from right

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angles. The playground provides imagination with something to cling to and swing from. The playground makes clambering upwards an end unto itself rather than a means to one. The playground is a functional waste of space, useful in its uselessness. The playground is a structure one can be playful within; it relegates this play. The video follows through on this possibility. In it, time, sleep, and enumeration are disobedient, pushing against the framework they find themselves within. Pushing against the framework she finds herself within, **Martine Syms** paws at the rapport between identity and image, the image economy being an arena in which identities are formed. It was a trick of the gaze, White Boy behind the camera. The grammar one inherits, when one makes images, is an apparatus of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, so the question becomes, how to escape or puncture this grammar. Martine navigates this query by flattening the strong arch of the image into texture, swinging around and around, like a reaction gif or a zoetrope. In her work, narrative arises but never accumulates. In place of the occurrence of discrete events is a safely hopeless loop, so no matter how long you go, you'll end up in the same place. You'll touch the start. No real climax can arise out of the loop because we will always return, chomping the tail. Martine deflates the image economies of racism and misogyny by spinning texture, allowing waves of narrative to approach and recede. One can utter from this coordinate. The speaker slips. **Heather Anne Halpert** uses water trays as tiles, slippery in their alignment. These tiles need some light to be in conversation with, so she photographs the wall as

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the light comes through the window, every thirty seconds, from eight to eleven a.m. The light moves towards the lower right corner of the wall. On the table lie bells, books, a bottle of wine, a candle, clocks with cords, cutlery the wrong way round, dice, a fruit bowl, a miniature skeleton, paper, both loose and bound with ribbon, pencils, pens, a scale, scissors, tassels, and a toy lion. Someone eats this pile of things. Some of the objects are not okay with being eaten. Some of them put up a fight. We fear the gluttony of the famished because it has no end. We fear the insatiable appetite. Endlessly chewed, bubble gum precipitates an endless cycle of hunger and satiation. Heather Anne chews soft porcelain, then fires it, preserving small gestures of tooth and tongue forever, forever masticating. The gum's endless cycle is mirrored by the eternal task of preparing food: one is never done preparing food; the stomach will rumble again and there will be another meal. This task stretches endlessly backwards and forwards. You could, if you want, use food as a clock, marking the passage of time with its rotting. You could, as **Sarah Chow** does, make screens out of which something can emerge and the question becomes, what should it be, this thing that emerges? Not an image. Images distract us from the power structures beneath. So Sarah allows language to emerge from the screen, or more precisely, brings what is outside language into language. In this case the screens are made of raw clay: two of them, speaking to each other through the wall. The clay is always a body, even when it is a rectangle. Sarah is in the habit of tossing books, splaying pages, making language obscene in its materiality. Words, spliced by the

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way in which they are projected on the clay screen, become less intelligible. So we could enter, perhaps, a space before language, before we inscribe ourselves on the day. Language is light, when it is projection. The room is what fills the room. The room is what limits the height of the stack. **Lauren Anderson** uses what is at hand to make the stack higher and higher. It is especially convenient when there are two of the same object lying around: two paper towel rolls, or two plastic buckets, for balance, as though they are clambering onto the ark in pairs. As though we, too, are so symmetrical, we clamber only to find ourselves coping. A coping joint refers to two mitered pieces intersecting at not quite a 90 degree angle, and is, in this way, a mechanism for dealing with imperfection. Lauren breaks her structure of dowels and epoxy putty and puts it back together, painting it with a pre-mixed color from Walmart, Lavender Sachet. One could be painting, in Chesapeake, and paint with Lavender Sachet, or one could be painting, in Chicago, and paint with Lavender Sachet, or one could be painting, in Saugatuck, and paint with Lavender Sachet, or one could be painting, in Kingston, and paint with Lavender Sachet. Lauren refers to the dowels and epoxy putty as a flamingo because it stands on one leg. Because we are flamingos, we are the only beings to have ever achieved unchaperoned balance.

Because we are painters, we are the only beings to have ever upset the palette. In World War I Berlin, one could order an escort to fulfill one's particular military fetish, right down to the uniform. Marsden Hartley made encoded portraits of these uniforms, complete with flags and military insignia, backgrounded

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by a grid. **Scott Roben** repaints these portraits from behind, from the sleep side, the grid moving to the foreground, the flags and insignia flung to the periphery. These paintings are backwards, rectal; they are exercises in perversity, proof of their own being behind. These paintings seem abstract but are, in fact, contaminated by depiction, by the motifs of military iconography. The grids turned into gridded rooms on larger canvases: bathrooms, maybe. Back to front. Here, the grids are sucked into the architecture of the space, articulating and obscuring it, constituting and being constituted by the space they measure. They make up and are made up by the shimmer, the obscured, the dissolved. Here, too, the room fills the room. The room performs a room. It is uncanny, how the coin is always heads, while **Suzanne Kite's** dress, halfway between costume and daily attire, beautiful on purpose, placidly pushes against settler colonial time, in circles, spiraling, mocking the dumb straight line: the light cone edge, band separating in winter, manifest destiny, bureau found corrupt. She takes on the imperialist pedagogy, by which I mean, it is a trick of history, this pedagogy placing violence against NDNs in the past; the power structure still exists and continues to encircle. Her grandfather, capable only of telling the truth, presented evidence that he was not lying. *One of you does not believe*, he said upon leaving, and so they clung to belief. And so they clung to the corners of pictures. **Tavi Meraud** does not like these corners, so she buries them in sand, or slips the images into slots, choreographing our crouching, in this way, or turning us into children. She left a sheet of paper over a jar of tea for a week and it became a

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tea island, having absorbed the evaporation, having been traced over and over on thin transparent acrylic. We can locate an island in the moment when the cobblestone emerges from the pavement. We can locate an island in mylar. In order to learn something about the surrounding water, I scrape my head against it, and the question becomes: how to transfer a site to another site or how to move from morning to evening or how to move from studio to gallery. Tavi enters, she exits, we enter, we exit; an ailing moth entered the space and she wished the best for it, she hoped it would live. The moth left, came back, and promptly died, at which point it became admissible for her to include it in the installation. It becomes admissible to cling to belief. We locate our belief in the amateur scientist. Just as plants suck vitamins from dirt, the amygdala sucks knowledge, or something like it, from the world, that is to say, in order to learn something about the anatomy of the flower, I scrape my head against it. Because we are plants, we are the only beings to have ever dined on the sun. Because we are forensic archeologists, we dig up the past but are presented with a fleshy present. One can only cast something so big, so **Ross Iannatti** cast the stem and petals separately, giving rise to a pile of stems and a pile of petals, categorized neatly, like something you'd put behind glass. This led us to something like floral archeology, which, thrilling in its banality, wiped the code blank. It had a life that was useful, then useless.

Clara Lou

5