

Droste Effect



of

2017

Bulletin #12

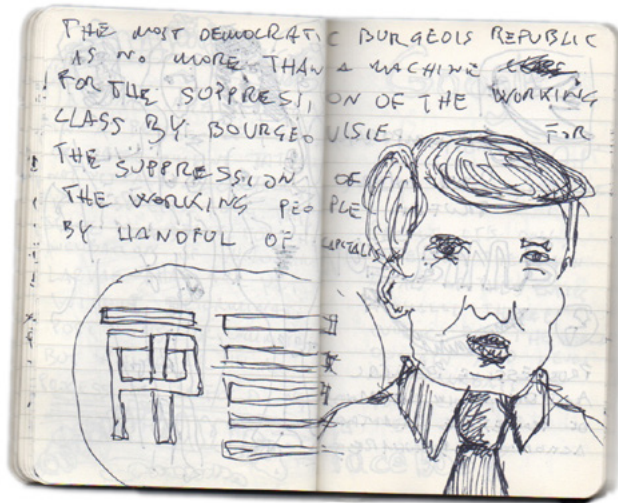
Bulletin #12 Best of 2017

Contents:

<i>Notes on what I would have liked to write and on what I only left as thoughts</i> by Vincenzo Estremo	3
Artists' contributions:	
Danilo Correale	6
Hugo Canoilas	7
Massimo Ricciardo	11
Kasia Fudakowski	12

Notes on what I would have liked to write and on what I only left as thoughts

by Vincenzo Estremo



Note number 1

What kind of political agenda does Donald Trump have in mind for workers, and for all the people who voted for him?

He doesn't have an agenda; he just applies a program. Next year he'll screw up something, then we'll talk about it, after a couple of weeks we will appreciate Melania, sometimes we'll notice she's sad, some others that she stands up for her rights of First Lady. Talking about Trump is useless, and working for an alternative is far from our possibilities. Negative January.

Note number 2

Anthropocene or Capitalocene

I noted down two or three things about concepts of Anthropocene and Capitalocene. A few words coming from articles, conferences and debates.

If it is true that «Anthropocene» is the word that indicates the era characterized by the predominance of human activity on the planet – in which anthropogenic influences impose themselves on the composition and functions of the Earth-system and the forms of life that inhabit it – it is also true that this concept is not so clear as it is supposed to be.

Are we all guilty? Somehow, maybe, half and half... The concept of Anthropocene implies that humanity is a homogeneous totali-





ty; thus operating a mystification, because, for example, it is not true that all of humanity has been responsible in the same way for the increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Jason W. Moore invites us to speak of «Capitalocene» to refer to the transformations inscribed in the relations of capital, proper to an ecology-world with specific relations of power and forms of control of nature.

Capitalocene does not identify a geological epoch, rather it clarifies the understanding of socio-ecological changes that have been happening since a few centuries before the Industrial Revolution. To be continued.

Note number 3

Athens and the (n)th vanishing of criticism in contemporary art

We have written about Documenta in Athens,* but more and more could be added. This joyful exile is the evidence that something needs to be changed in the realm of international contemporary art exhibitions. Athens didn't work out; the partial de-location of documenta, that was supposed to be a decentralization of art power, ended up to be a colonization: the appropriation of a weak but strategically perfect area. The international exhibition model was imposed on a city that was meant to be a new, alternative center, and not just a branch for certain European business.

In Venice they had a show, but almost nothing happened there... Yes, some friends told me that Spritz cocktails and *tramezzini* sandwiches are reaching prices that are unsustainable for the precarious community of international contemporary art professionals. In November, the organizers were very happy with the results; someone said that more tourists than ever before visited the city and its Biennale.



* <http://www.drosteeffectmag.com/documenta-14-teaching-in-athens/>

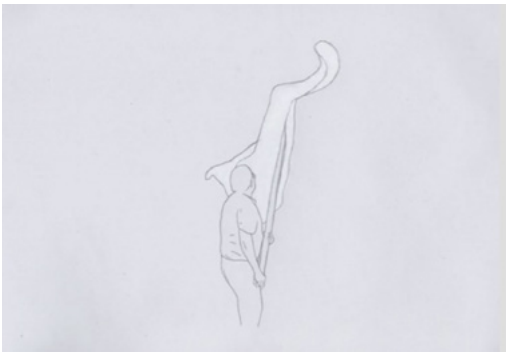


Note number 4


What do we – and what should we – do with our monuments?

A lot has been said about monuments and their physical and political presence. In August, the city of Charlottesville, Virginia, shrouded two of its Confederate monuments in black. This is just a note, but a few weeks later, in Barcelona, while the struggle for Catalonia's independency was at its apex, an artist brought back a ghost from the past, as Benjamin would say.

Is it a ghost, the being with whom the man drawn with a rod in his hand we see in the exhibition centerpiece? Who is that man? What is he trying to do? He seems to be blind, but it might just be someone who performs a practical activity that has been ordered, such as removing a cloth. Or is it a flag, and is he waving it? And if it's a flag, what color is it? It looks white. Then maybe he's giving up. What if the important thing is not so much what moves or removes, but what may be under the fabric? This is just the incipit for *Stir with a wooden stick* (2017) by Matteo Guidi. •



Matteo Guidi, *Stir with a wooden stick* (2017). Courtesy of the artist.

A satellite with solar panels is shown in space, with the Earth's horizon visible in the lower-left corner. The background is a deep blue space with some stars.

Let's be honest 2017 sucked: it started bad and seems it will end even worse. Nevertheless, it is important, now more than ever, to remind ourselves that a good life is still possible, not in distance and estrangement from the sorrow of daily struggles and the general misery we perceive around us, but in acknowledging that it is in those fleeting moments of Joy and in the Good that we do that we remain human. In the past 300-someodd days, marked by unceasing trumpettarian downs and, #not surprisingly beheadings of the despica- bles, we have seen the rise of a new culture that has given voice to those who had none. *Wait, is that true?*

#2017ers tried hard to brand this as a pivotal year for social justice, but I am concluding here that the year has failed to live up to this promise (probably at the service of an often too subjectivized narrative), and hopefully it will soon be forgotten in favor of a bolder 2018, defined less by Supreme's red and white "art-ivist merchandise" and more by, dare we hope, spirituality and listening (and not of the kind you practice with a \$9.99/month subscription).

From: **Hugo Canoilas**

Dear Vincenzo, Dear All,

I am writing to you regarding the idea of putting together a list of the Best of 2017.

Last year around this time, I wrote to a friend director of another magazine to tell him that the most powerful people in the art world were not all stars; That this year position number one should be given to all the independent art spaces all over the world, that make art happen and establish their community however small it is.

The number one should be the figure in the middle, those who reached a plateau, weed instead of flowers.

I'm also particularly interested in the ways art can reach the wider public, in the belief that a specialized public is an accomplice to art, and art needs real testimonies to happen; That the real matter of art is not its materiality, rather the interrelations it creates, especially when it makes a difference in relation to communication, science, realpolitik, and so on; When it enlarges the possibilities of the present by grasping the future.

So my second to fifth choice are as following.

> The remake of Alberto Carneiro's installation *Um Campo depois da Colheita para Deleite Estético do nosso Corpo* [A Field after the Harvest for the Aesthetic Delight of our Body] (1973–1976) (rye and hay, variable dimensions) at Culturgest in Porto, Portugal.

Alberto Carneiro (1937–2017), author of a manifesto of Ecological Art, was a key figure in the Portuguese art scene for both his art and writing. My choice of this installation remake as one of the greatest things I have testified and experienced this year has to do with the fact that the show was postponed by 15 days because the cereals were not ready to harvest – nature forcing the institution to change, the institution becoming elastic in order to absorb the conditions for such work to happen. It's a trap, that this environment creates, both in the communal experience and travel in time, and in its emergency in the current situation.



Installation view at Culturgest Porto. Photo © 2017, DMF.

> *New Literacy*, 4th Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Ekaterinburg, Russia. Main exhibition curated by João Ribas.

After crossing over the ethical problem I have mentioning projects or people I'm involved with, or exhibitions I have participated in, I have decided to mention the 4th Ural Industrial Biennial in Ekaterinburg, not because I have indeed participated in it, but because it was the best show I have seen this year.

João Ribas has tackled the arrival of the 4th Industrial Revolution by using 3 guiding metaphors (Image as witness/Capitalism choreographies/Persistent word), that organized the exhibition in 3 different floors of a former factory.

The relation with the factory building where the exhibition took place was outrageously significant and echoed the history of the city.

The interrelation between works of different geographic origins, media and generations, together with their relationship with the building, built up a sort magnetic capacity to initiate the wider audience to an understanding of the depths of the research implied in this project.

The theme of a new form of literacy embedded in the 4th Industrial Revolution was addressed inside a factory whose original clocks are still hanging on the walls, signing the different times at which they stopped. All this arised a notion of time as potency, envisaging the future through artwork as an opaque significant; a sort of happy marriage between meaning and form, with no instrumentalization.

Above: View of the factory.

Below: Pilvi Takala, *The Trainee* (2008): installation of three videos (13'52"), PowerPoint presentation, keycard, letter. <http://pilvitakala.com/the-trainee/>

At the next page:

Above, left: Babi Badalov's site-specific work in the factory.

Above, right: Zip Group, Demonstration Aerobics.

Below: Zip Group's performance during the opening.





> Gianni Manhattan Gallery's last two exhibitions.

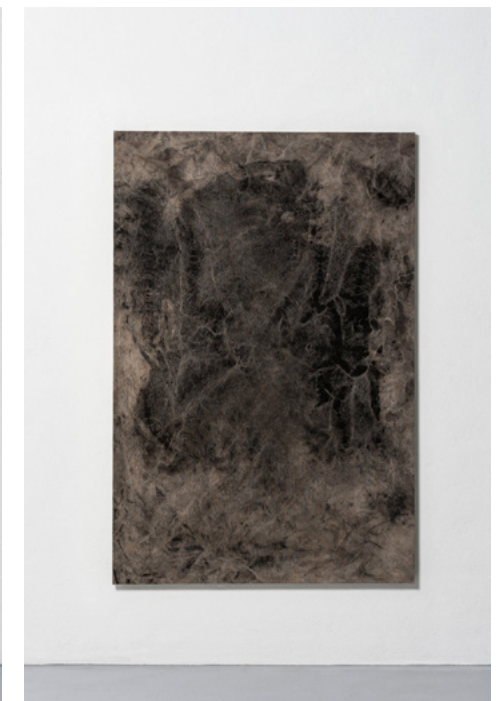
SÜD by Jamie Sneider was a great exhibition at Gianni Manhattan Gallery in Vienna, Austria.

The South is a state or frame of mind, and a way of being that, in a more and more monocultural world, is oppressed by the rational in everyday life.

The South was placed, made possible to experience as a temperature and a flux that is channeled through a series of materials (from urine to *nero di sepiä*) crystallized in canvases that work as receptacles for gestures, events and fluids, in a mixture of action and something that happens in front of the artist.

The passage from an animal view (when the paintings are processed, they must lay on a horizontal plane) to a human, vertical perspective (now that we look at them) allows one to grasp the suspension of time conveyed by these objects.

The installation of paintings on the floor with marble objects, and leaning against plastic chairs, made it a great show within a scene where the display techniques have been largely developed. •





Massimo Ricciardo, *La luce del giorno è un'esca [The Light of Day is a Bait]* (2017),
black Bic pen on paper, 36x24 cm.

Kasia Fudakowski

5 Shorts from Sweet Seventeen

I hate to piss on my own apple crumble, but it seems to me that top tip lists are almost always thinly veiled self-referential taste-ticking exercises in self-congratulatory, backslapping the writer and in some cases, also the reader. Having said that, here are my top 5 art experiences of 2017...

1. A Busty Vignette

I was watching Helge Schneider playing the human rights spokesperson for Isis in one of Alexander Kluge's many films in *The Boat is Leaking, The Captain Lied* at the Prada Foundation in Venice. It was a brilliant set up, because depending on which door you chose in one of the first exhibition rooms, you either ended up as the person on stage or as the audience in a subsequent room. I asked my mother to take a picture of me when I found myself on stage, beautifully lit (in my opinion) by Anna Viebrock, while she was in the audience's position. Because my mother keeps her phone tucked into her bra, the photo came out with a misty, smudged vignette and failed to capture what I considered a very beautiful moment.



On stage at Alexander Kluge's *The Boat is Leaking, the Captain Lied*, Venice, 2017.

2. Driven or Hounded?

I was on a date-weekend in Kassel, daydreaming about how I had been to Documenta 13 with a previous boyfriend, while I waited like a good art tourist to enter into the number restricted top floor at the Palais Bellevue to watch Roee Rosen's *The Dust Channel* at Documenta 14. Apart from this highlight, overall I have to admit that I enjoyed 13 more than 14, but maybe that's because it was my first... I saw Rosen's film again at *Lo Schermo dell'Arte* in Florence, where he was present. I managed to ask him whether he felt «driven or hounded» by the controversy that his work sometimes caused. His answer was smart, witty and funny, so if you get a chance to ask him, you really should.



3. The Second Mrs. Rivera

In a mild mid-January in Mexico City, I found out the wonderful news that I have a new niece named Anna. A few days later, I went far down south of the city to visit Anahuacalli, the museum Diego Rivera built for his Pre-Columbian collection. The museum is not only a testament to the love Rivera had for these artifacts, snatching them from the jaws of another history, but also a bizarrely potent anti-second-Mrs.-Rivera-i.e.-not-Frida narrative, as she is repeatedly dissed in every other wall label. Photos were not permitted inside the museum and the catalogue is a 30-kg tome, so I took a picture of my friend Philipp outside standing on a bit of exposed volcanic rock and hoped to remember at least that I was there. Referring to my niece as Anahuacalli has also helped it register.



Above: Roee Rosen, *The Dust Channel* (2016), still from video. Courtesy of the artist and Galleria Riccardo Crespi.

Left: Philipp outside of the Anahuacalli Museum, January 2017.

4. Non-Skulptur in Münster

On the same date-weekend as Kassel, we arrived in Münster too early to wade through Ayşe Erkmen's *On Water*, which looked amazing and was just what our tired Documenta-ed feet needed, but we saw the never-fails Mika Rottenberg and Michael Smith, and while choosing tattoos, I daydreamed about how I had been to Münster 10 years ago with yet another boyfriend, and made a mental note to try to keep these things apart in the future. A tattoo suddenly didn't seem like such a good idea.

5. Only blinking pixels

Lee Lozano at Reina Sofia was written in blood on my to-do-or-die list for 2017, and I didn't make it, along with Ana Navas' *I had to think of you* at Stadtgalerie Sindelfingen, which looked right up my street along with Ayami Awazuhara's *Walks in the Fictional Woods* at Despacio, Anna Szaflarski's *Tired of Waiting*, curated by Imke Kannegiesser at Porcino, and Philipp Modersohn's *SiO2go* at Guido W. Baudach. I have a good excuse for all of these absences, as sad as I was to miss them, but I rushed my raviolis and nearly broke my neck trying to get to Roberto Fassone's performance *All Blue Everything Mixtape* at Sonic Somatic, only to find out I got the time wrong and had missed it by two hours. For all these, I heard and saw only pixels, but what magnificent pixels they were. •



Above: Anna Szaflarski, *Tired of Waiting*. Courtesy of the artist and Porcino Gallery.

Below: Ayami Awazuhara, *Possible Woods* (2017). Courtesy of the artist and Despacio.

With our Best Wishes for this 2018



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Curated by Vincenzo Estremo, Matilde Soligno.

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