

ALLEY CULTURE

AC NEWS V14 #1
FALL 2012

DETROIT CEREMONY AND ART
FOUNDED 1995

THE LONG WALK

In a few short years we will enter a world where massive climate disruption, autonomous military drones, artificial organisms, and irreversible chemical pollution are not only everyday realities, but interacting in complex, unpredictable ways. Sensing our predicament, we clamor for more elaborate problem solving, funneling resources toward technical solutions for the complexities we ourselves are bringing into existence. Yet, a knowledge gap is not responsible for the ecological crisis, potential energy shortage, or economic collapse. The fundamental problem we face runs deeper than scientific knowledge or capital resources. We must come to understand how to live, a challenge that is not technical or economic, but philosophical.

We are a self aware species; what should be the way of our existence? Before the emergence of minds in the natural world, intention played no role in the course of history; now our intention is a central feature of what is, and what will be. Our science gives us unprecedented control over reality, the implications of which only the bravest will accept. Our future will be what we choose to make. Refining our way of existing is the most important work of self awareness, the long walk of a human life. A self aware organism's way of life is its legacy to the cosmos – is it a story of depletion and death or expansiveness and wisdom?

Lucid thought is crucial to confronting this challenge, but our time is dominated by commodified experience. Even the clearest minds are quickly muddled with media distractions and consumer items. Yet products are not the problem, intention is. Many of those that sell us things or ideas have a vested interest in drowning divergent explorations, all the better to sell a quick fix or create endless live streams of low content media and targeted marketing. It is unimportant whether or not hypercapitalism is inherently evil, but crucial to apprehend its relentless skewing of dialog towards short term gain. The baseline for analysis becomes monetary, not reflective, a situation which utterly deprioritizes the internal work necessary to lead a balanced existence. We are left with towering productivity, but very little wisdom.

Expanding the space for real discourse is crucial. No matter how bad conditions become, even the nihilism of apocalypse cannot save us from the realities we create. The end never really arrives – time only continues. Existence either becomes more exalted, or more terrible. Unlike any other species on Earth, we can engage this choice; the message comes in what we choose to work toward. This will be a long, long walk, and it requires collaboration across centuries. We must meet this challenge with courage and resolve.

Music is a beacon. It calls out to us, and we flow toward its nodal points. Its intentions are crucial. If the root is solid, music becomes a place of joining together and sharing, a discourse not only of new musical ideas, but also towards transformation of real life. Feeding the discernment of what our reality can become is the most significant contribution that music can make. Opening an expansive path of resonant, deep experience, music's potential is to actualize a door to a different world. The point is to clear blockages, discuss possibilities, and nurture a vibrant existence. This is the beacon of a path that can be found.

Split Horizon, 2012

questions & comments contact Alley Culture – ac@coast.eml.cc

FALL 2012 AT ALLEY CULTURE

Opening - Friday 2 November – 7PM
Open - November 3 – 24 Friday & Saturday 3 – 6PM

Night on Earth

Ron Morosan Christine Hughes John Brown
Ruth Leonard Matthew Hanna

In the 1950s a number of nations launched space programs for the first time, giving consciousness to the idea that one could just pick up and leave. Twenty years into this race to leave, a few people thought we ought to take a look at home, at least one day a year on Earth Day. The comedian Pete Holmes reminds us sixty years later “You parked your car on the planet. Your house is on a planet.” The trend that began in the 1990s to report on homelessness seemingly more than during the Dust Bowl, may have been reflecting a growing psychic restlessness in the entire population. The summer's radical loss of glaciers on Greenland followed a month later by the Polar ice cap melt gives reason for this unease, at least to the Inuit. As we approach the infamous 2012 ‘Mayan’ Winter Solstice traveling in the dark from a hot, hot summer, these artists through their alchemy give us a moment's reprieve, and an immersion in which we might recognize the nature in and around us. As the Navajo healing prayer begins “In beauty I walk.”

Ruth Leonard's paintings appear to have taken on the seasons along with the flora, as if they stood in nature through heat and cold building layers of memory. The invisible atmosphere of communication between the soil, fungus, trees lurks as visible as smoke.

Looking at a series of Christine Hughes' drawings in the 1990s, each one the width of a wall map with blocks of color, connectors, neighborhoods, I was told that each drawing was actually of a singular “twig.” She had given monumental translation to something we consider inconsequential. With the current series *Compost*, again we are looking at something we might not ‘see,’ but it would be hard to find a sunset or movement on the surface of a river more beautifully expressed than these drawings and paintings.

Ron Morosan paints through his language of algebraic existentialism the earth's malaise, decoding the imprint of apathy and greed, or predicting future needs created by ‘unintended consequences,’ as in *Water Boy*. The painting is placed in probable upstate hills of New York with ‘Water Boy's’ water tower standing out front foretelling the importance of the aquifer that ten years later would be threatened with pollution from the new process of fracking for natural gas. The fight to stop this rampant unregulated process would become a focus of Morosan's attention.

John Brown's aged landscapes of the floating horizon line have a familiarity, a previous glance taken out a small pane at the sea. They give a contemplative sense of time.

Matthew Hanna might rather be at the highway motel postcard rack near the Paul Bunyan monument looking for the last of the large ones to tell the stories in his paintings, but he has found in this series the sumac and the berries that pass us by in the city near the orange cones, pallets and barrels. He completes the narrative of *Night on Earth* revealing that nature is – everywhere.

FOOTNOTE TO NATURE

Alone among the beings who have arisen on Earth, we have evolved into virtually total dependence upon not our nature but our nurture. We have lost the comfortably shifting experiential balance between the two that makes for healthy functioning beings in the world. We have chosen instead to gamble our future and the planet's on ideas.

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In a nutshell, the fallacy is the generally unchallenged belief that wild, undomesticated plants and animals and their communities can be enabled to survive the human presence on Earth by means of their careful safekeeping within the rational, managerial framework of "resource conservation." The belief is fallacious because to see any phenomenon as a "resource" is to see it as a human utility or amenity. Such a perception precludes the possibility of any non-quantifiable worth residing in that phenomenon – even to itself. Its value becomes purely instrumental. If such value cannot be shown, and



Rick Vian, "Miagishkingjigwe" (Ojibway) "I Have a Changed Face," 2001, graphite, 38 x 50"

in practice even if it can, the non-human is permitted to continue to exist solely at the human pleasure. Since resource conservation does not allow worth (to itself) to inhere in Nature, it can protect Nature only as the human estate, in which case it is no longer Nature but rather an extension of the human apparatus.

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Contributions to this body of thought have come from both the sciences and the humanities, and although there are many interpretations, perhaps the most pervasive in the ecophilosophical community at the present time is that the "antidote" to our modern ways of dealing with the world is not technological, not scientific, not even ethical. The modern challenge is metaphysical and ontological – indeed, cosmological.

Now this may or may not be an accurate diagnosis, but if it is even partially correct, the modern challenge is to our received ways of perceiving and apprehending the nature of reality and the nature of being in the universe.

John Livingston, Rogue Primate: An exploration of human domestication, Key Porter Books, 1995

A cold and snowy january day in detroit at the dawn of 1968 in the cass corridor heading down cass avenue to full circle records across from old main on wayne state u campus. Hey robin you get Dylan's new album john wesley harding. O yeah we got it. (you got to remember the War is Hot on our trail and we are fighting back with a sonic assault detroit style and the roots run deep) you listen to it yet? Yeah and it ain't blonde on blonde. Another twist in the road flying off his motor bike into the arms of Isaiah. The allegory of escape poems sung with a nashville grange band the harmonica mixed up front a tribute to bebop. Dylan shrunk from a full size fold open prince of cool on blonde on blonde to the portrait of the camp cook. Chanting scripture to a military drum beat a romantic two step for the poor immigrant. In the epoch listening to joe south and stevie wonder jimi hendrix and muddy waters the rolling stones chuck berry iggy pop and marvin gaye the beatles paul butterfield blues band tim hardin so much left out in the big mix here comes bob with a salve for the war wounds a snake oil tale of flight and possible mercy was it's own kind of medicine. Dylan was still following the footprints of woody guthrie and little richard tracks out of the swamp into the desert flanked by harry smith and harry houdini for the myth and magic lurking in the shadows of the songs.

Mick Vranich, 2007, for Harvey Kubernick's article on the 40th anniversary of John Wesley Harding

LOCAL AND INDEPENDENT SHOPS & SERVICES

Detroit outwits the gone tomorrow box stores

house & tent supplies: **BROOKS LUMBER & HARDWARE** - since 1892 (962.6448 - Trumbull at Tiger Stadium) **DETROIT HARDWARE** - 1924 (875.0838 - Woodward N of WSU) **3RD AVE HARDWARE** - 1913 (832.7241 - 3rd Ave & Selden) **CENTRAL DETROIT GLASS** - 1930 (833.8870 - Grand River & 12th) **MONDRY HARDWARE** - 1949 (894.3260 - OPEN SUNDAYS - Michigan West of Livernois) **BUSY BEE HARDWARE** - 1918 (567.0785 - Gratiot at Eastern Mkt) **PERRY SCREW & BOLT** - 1942 (831.7635 - Grand River W. of 12th) **ADVANCE PLUMBING** - 1920 (831.7770 - Grand River at Lodge) **CANIFF ELECTRIC** (365.8144 - Caniff & I75) **DETROIT FARM & GARDEN** - 2012 (655.2344 - 20th at Vernor, rear 3rd Precinct)

transportation: **FENDER BENDER** (4605 Cass Ave Detroit 48201 - alleyside) bike learnin' and riding **THE HUB** (3611 Cass north of Mack Avenue) bike parts and repairs 11-6PM **SERVICE TIRE** (2200 Waterman - 842-9100) new owner Sam, and mechanics Dallas, Tony - auto repairs and rebuilds for sale

meeting: **MOTOR CITY BREWING WORKS** (832.2700 - 2nd & Canfield) **CAFE 1923** (2287 Holbrook - 319.8766) talk and read **OmniCorpDetroit** (1501 Division, Eastern Mkt - open hack 1st & 3rd Thursday 8PM) Detroit's hackerspace since 2009 **TELWAY** (24 hour coffee - Michigan west of Livernois) city talk

food: **CASS CAFE** (831.1400 - Cass & Forest) art and talk **LOUISIANA CREOLE GUMBO** (567-1200 - Gratiot east of Russell) best carry out N of NOLA **LA COLMENA** (Bagley at 16th behind the Train station) "best chorizo E of Atzlan" **DUTCH GIRL DONUTS** (Woodward 1 south of 7 Mile) original Detroit **FOOD NOT BOMBS** (check Cass Park)

herbs: **NATURE'S PRODUCTS** (N. Hmtk - 891.3900)

books: **MARWIL BOOKSTORE** - 1948 (832.3078 - Cass & Warren) **LIBRARY BOOKSTORE** (248.545.4300 - E. Nine Mile - used books)

paper: **STANDARD PAPER** (now Millcraft) - 1930 (963-9163 - 14th N. of 375)

eyes: **DR. MURRAY FELDMAN** - 1962 (4851 Michigan Ave. - 894.6333)

shoes: **DRAPERS SHOE REPAIR** (155 W Congress off Griswold - 449.6755) a working museum of tools and machines collected from Detroit's famous repair shops by a young devotee to the trade - pick up & delivery available