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Åbäke / Ben Cain

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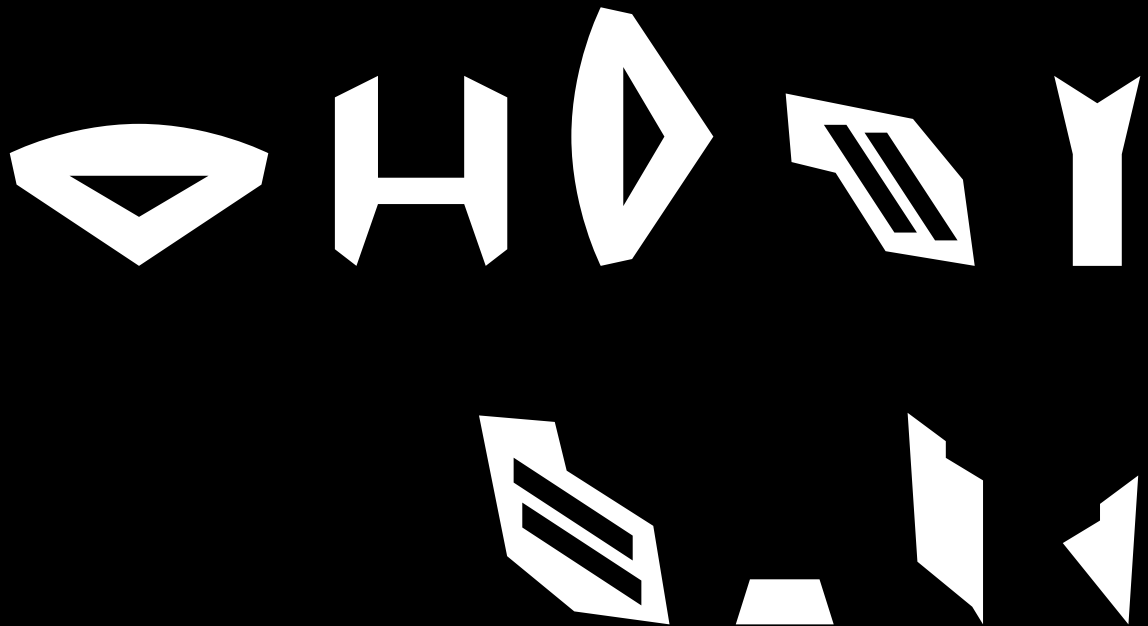
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...Can a collaboration take place without one of the two participating collaborators being aware of the fact that it's taking place? The artist Herman Pitz once suggested to me that we make a collaborative work together via telepathy. I found that very funny, and very hard.

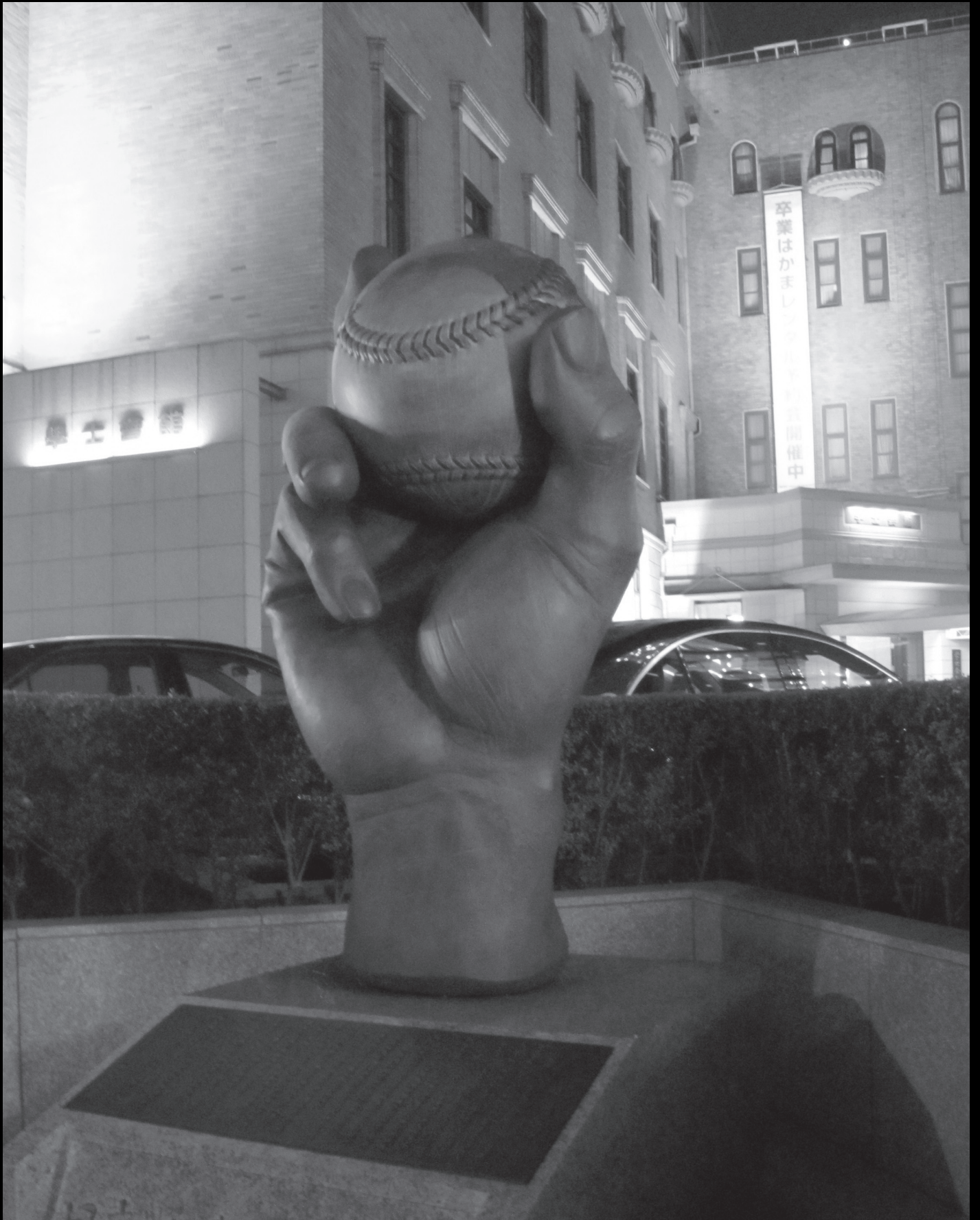
...At what point does collaboration begin? There are two people standing side-by-side in a room. The room's inhabitants, the room itself, one's own perception of the room and of oneself etc. etc. are all affected differently than they would be if they were standing by themselves, and that's even before anyone has opened their mouths. So the actual or imagined presence of another person causes change, its a banal point, but is it a form of collaboration? Even to imagine working with someone else already starts to produce altered products, but that's what happens all the time, and in this case maybe we are talking of working with the audience/viewer, in which case the idea of collaboration being about developing something with a co-worker towards common goals gets lost? (Or it's unethical collaboration? - connects to your example of 2ndWW and inequality in 'collaboration').

...Maybe this leads to the idea of setting out with a problem in mind, or a shared notion of an issue, or interest area. Although I like the idea of beginning nowhere as a starting point for working collaboratively, like you, I'm not sure how easy that would be. Do we need to define an area, something to do together besides writing letters? Through writing letters, will something arise, i.e. an understanding of how/why it might be interesting to place some ideas or sensibilities along side one-another?

...Can the process of collaborating be seen as a series of alternating roles - a constant exchanging of the positions of maker and audience? Or more like both collaborators being makers, who later show their outcomes to an audience. I'm thinking a little about 'slight', or unrecognisable collaborations... where collaboration goes un-noticed, but who knows what that entails. Showing one-another an image, or walking to specific place where someone else then shows an image. This is just thinking aloud though, trying to think through actions.

...Collaboration is something we have used and perhaps a term we abused in and around our collective. Being french, I am always aware of the co-notation with the second world war when the Vichy government "collaborated" with the nazis but this is perhaps the biggest misuse of the word as it seems that equality is essential to a collaboration and an occupying army is less prone to dialogue than the co-worker aiming at a common goal.

...I do agree that to start with a discussion is an interesting way. what are the conditions of a collaboration? If it starts with a defined goal, the collaboration can be born from gathering the skills needed to achieve it. Drop City comes to mind or anarchist DIY. Although I feel sympathetic to those examples, I wonder if we can collaborate without an obligation of result? If it is about solving a problem, it should either be shared from the beginning or defined together. The latter is more interesting to me but I would not want to impose! In the past I have been disappointed by disguised forms of collaborations I saw as an exquisite corpse version of a group where in the end everybody was only continuing their individual quests, allowing a superficial layer to signify some form of collectivity.





...When thinking of collaboration I'm always intrigued -perhaps for the fact that spaces suddenly seem to open up- but also slightly confused. Met with a sudden and overwhelming expanse of possibility, and potentiality -overwhelming because of its unknown quantity- I find it hard to know where to begin when it comes to 'collaboration'. What I'm saying is perhaps just that the notion of collaboration always seems attractive, as an idea, but the process of realising 'collaboration' appears relatively difficult.

...But it is 'difficult' unless its understood on less grand or important a level. If collaboration was conceived as just a conversation, or a walk, or an exchange of letters - at least initially, then it's an easier term to stomach?

...It also reminds me of the myth of ubiquity but also a perverted idea of fordism where the co-workers (arguably poor collaborators but rather co-operators) never really got to see the process of collaboration but only the end result in the shape of the car. Added to this the ethereal of the internet maybe calls for physical action of making.

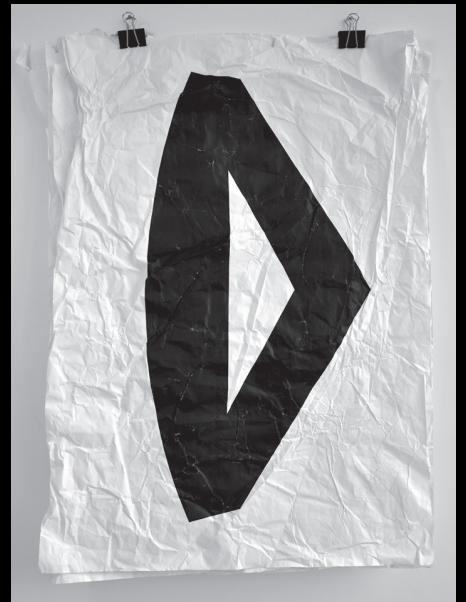
...As the starting opportunity was a magazine, there is perhaps another interesting comment on how representation too often reframes a work and even tends to make it exist as Dan Graham commented on the relationship between the work of the bunch of them in empty lofts in New York somehow needing the validation of magazines like Avalanche they somehow came up with as an essential element into the alchemy of the works being the works. On a less critically referential level I'd say it is great if the magazine is the only place the work is seen complete.

...I'm imagining holding up a large sign/poster/thing in an open space as a form of very public communication to single person (you). Vaguely, I think about sending fireworks holding written messages up into the sky, and hoping that they might later arrive in Tokyo, on your desk.

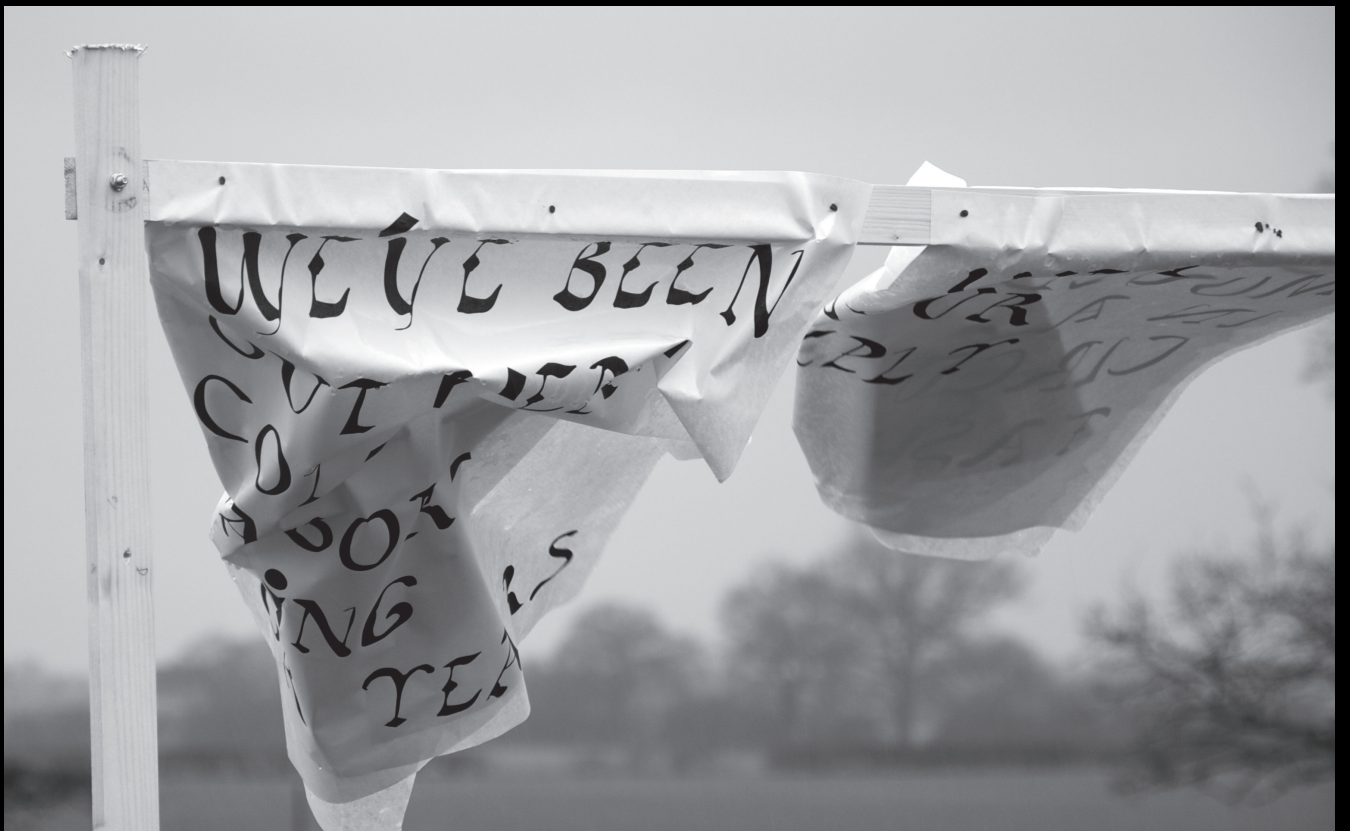
Or burying a message-in-a-bottle in the ground, again hoping that in disappearing out of sight, it would gradually seep into the ground and make its way over.

...Watching Juzo Itami's "Marusa no onna" I could not help notice how everything belonged to what I remember were the 80s in Japan. Of course I have not lived here then and it is only VHS tapes sent by distant family to my parents which constitute the souvenirs by proxy. The notable exception of the cinema fiction of 1987 with the reality of being here in Tokyo today is a mystery I might not want to solve. The car industry always seem to follow a boring form trend which identifies any time traveller of the period one is but all the numerous taxis in Tokyo are the same as twenty thirty years ago except they look brand new. How? is not so much the question as How brilliant!

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...Može li doći do suradnje a da jedan od dvojice suradnika uopće ne bude svjestan činjenice da je do nje došlo? Umjetnik Herman Pitz jednom mi je predložio da ostvarimo neko djelo u suradnji s pomoću telepatije. To mi se učinilo veoma smiješnim i veoma teškim.

...U kojem trenutku započinje suradnja? Dvoje ljudi stoje u sobi jedno pokraj drugoga. Oni koji u toj sobi borave, sama soba i osobna percepcija sobe i sebe sama itd., itd. ... sve to utječe jedno na drugo, drugačije nego što bi bio slučaj kada bi ti ljudi ondje stajali sami – i to čak prije nego što je bilo tko otvorio usta. Tako stvarna ili zamišljena prisutnost druge osobe uzrokuje promjenu, to je banalna stvar, ali je li to oblik suradnje? Čak i zamišljanje rada s nekim drugim već počinje proizvoditi izmijenjene rezultate, ali to je ono što se neprestano događa, i u tom slučaju možda govorimo o radu s publikom/gledateljem, pa gubi li se u tom slučaju ideja suradnje kao razvijanja nečega sa suradnikom u smjeru zajedničkog cilja? (Ili je to neetička suradnja? – to ima veze s vašim primjerom Drugog svjetskog rata i nejednakosti „suradnje“.)

...Možda nas to vodi k ideji kretanja od nekog problema koji nam je na umu, zajedničkog poimanja neke stvari, nekog područja interesa. Iako mi se sviđa ideja da se krene ni od čega kao polazišta za suradnju, poput vas, ni ja nisam siguran koliko bi to bilo jednostavno. Trebamo li definirati neko područje, nešto što ćemo raditi zajedno osim pisanja pisama? I hoće li nešto izniknuti iz tog pisanja pisama, nekakvo shvaćanje onoga kako/zašto bi moglo biti zanimljivo staviti neke ideje ili senzibilitete jedne uz druge?

...Može li se proces surađivanja smatrati nizom alternirajućih uloga – neprestanom izmjenom pozicija stvaratelja i publike? Ili će prije biti da su oba suradnika stvaratelji, koji kasnije pokažu svoje rezultate publici. Pomalo mislim na „blage“ ili neprimjetne suradnje... gdje suradnja prolazi neprimijećena, ali tko zna što donosi sa sobom. Pokazujemo li neku sliku jedno drugome ili odlazimo do određenog mjesta gdje onda netko drugi pokazuje sliku. Ali to je samo razmišljanje naglas, pokušaj razmišljanja kroz djelovanje.

...Suradnja je nešto što smo već koristili i možda smo taj termin zlorabirali u našem kolektivu i oko njega. Budući da sam Francuz, uvijek sam svjestan konotacija s Drugim svjetskim ratom, kada je vichyjevska vlada „surađivala“ s nacistima, ali to je možda najveća zloropotreba te riječi ikad, budući da se čini kako je jednakost nužna za suradnju, a okupatorska vojska nije baš toliko spremna na dijalog kao netko tko surađuje kako bi ostvario neki zajednički cilj.

...Slažem se da je započeti s diskusijom zanimljiv način: koji su preduvjeti za suradnju? Ako započne s određenim ciljem, suradnja se može roditi iz okupljanja umijeća koja su potrebna da bi se taj cilj ostvario. Drop City mi pada na pamet, ili anarhistički DIY. Iako su mi ti primjeri simpatični, pitam se možemo li surađivati a da ne budemo obvezni postići neki rezultat? Ako se radi o rješavanju problema, on bi trebao biti zajednički od samog početka ili barem definiran zajedno. Ovo potonje čini mi se zanimljivijim, ali ne želim ništa nametati! U prošlosti sam znao ostati razočaran prikrivenim oblicima suradnje, koje sam smatrao divnom ali mrtvom verzijom skupine, u kojoj je svatko naposljetku naprosto slijedio vlastite interese, dopuštajući da površinski sloj označava nekakav oblik kolektivnosti.

...Kada razmišljam o suradnji, to me uvijek zaintrigira – možda zbog toga što se čini da se odjednom otvaraju neki novi prostori – ali također sam pomalo zbunjen. U susretu s iznenadnim i fascinantnim prostorom mogućnosti – fascinantnim zbog njegove nepoznate veličine – teško mi je znati odakle da krenem kada se radi o 'suradnji'. Ono što želim reći možda je naprosto to da se zamisao o suradnji uvijek čini privlačnom kao ideja, ali je proces ostvarivanja „suradnje“, izgleda, prilično težak.

...Ali i nije toliko „težak“ ako se shvati na manje veličanstvenoj ili važnoj razini. Ako se suradnja zamisli kao puki razgovor, šetnja ili razmjena pisama – barem u početku, je li onda taj pojam lakše probaviti?

...To me također podsjeća na mit o sveprisutnosti, ali i na izopačenu ideju fordizma, gdje suradnici (koji zapravo i nisu surađivali, nego prije radili zajedno) nikada ustvari nisu vidjeli proces suradnje, nego samo konačni rezultat u obliku automobila.

K tome, eteričnost interneta možda poziva na fizički čin stvaranja.

...Budući da je početna prilika bila časopis, možda imam još jedan zanimljiv komentar o tome kako reprezentacija i prečesto preoblikuje rad i čak tendira tome da ga stvara, kao što je Dan Graham komentirao odnos rada svih njih u praznim loftovima New Yorka, koji su nekako trebali potvrdu časopisa poput Avalanchea te su nekako nadošli na to da je bitan element u alkemiji rada sâm rad. Na manje kritičnoj referencijalnoj razini rekao bih da je sjajno ako je časopis jedino mjesto gdje se taj rad vidi u dovršenom obliku.

...Zamišljam kako držim veliki znak/plakat/stvar na otvorenom, u obliku veoma javne poruke jednoj jednoj osobi (vama). Neodređeno razmišljam o tome kako bih mogao ispaliti vatromet s pisanim porukama u nebo i nadati se da bi one kasnije mogle stići do Tokija, na tvoj radni stol. Ili zakopati poruku u boci u zemlju, ponovo se nadajući da će time što nestane s vidika postupno utonuti u tlo i uspjeti stići na drugu stranu.

...Gledajući film Juza Itamija „Marusa no onna“, nisam mogao a da ne primijetim kako je sve to pripadalo onome za što se sjećam da je sačinjavalo 80-e godine u Japanu. Dakako, u to vrijeme nisam ondje živio i samo su udaljeni rođaci slali VHS-kazete mojim roditeljima, što su posredne uspomene. Značajna iznimka u filmskoj fikciji iz 1987. godine, sa stvarnošću toga što sam danas u Tokiju, misterij je koji možda i ne želim riješiti. Čini se da automobilska industrija uvijek slijedi dosadni trend forme, koji obilježava svakog putnika u vremenu iz tog razdoblja, ali svi ti brojni taksiji u Tokiju isti su kao prije dvadeset, trideset godina, osim što izgledaju sasvim novo. Tu nije toliko pitanje „kako“, nego „kako briljantno“!

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