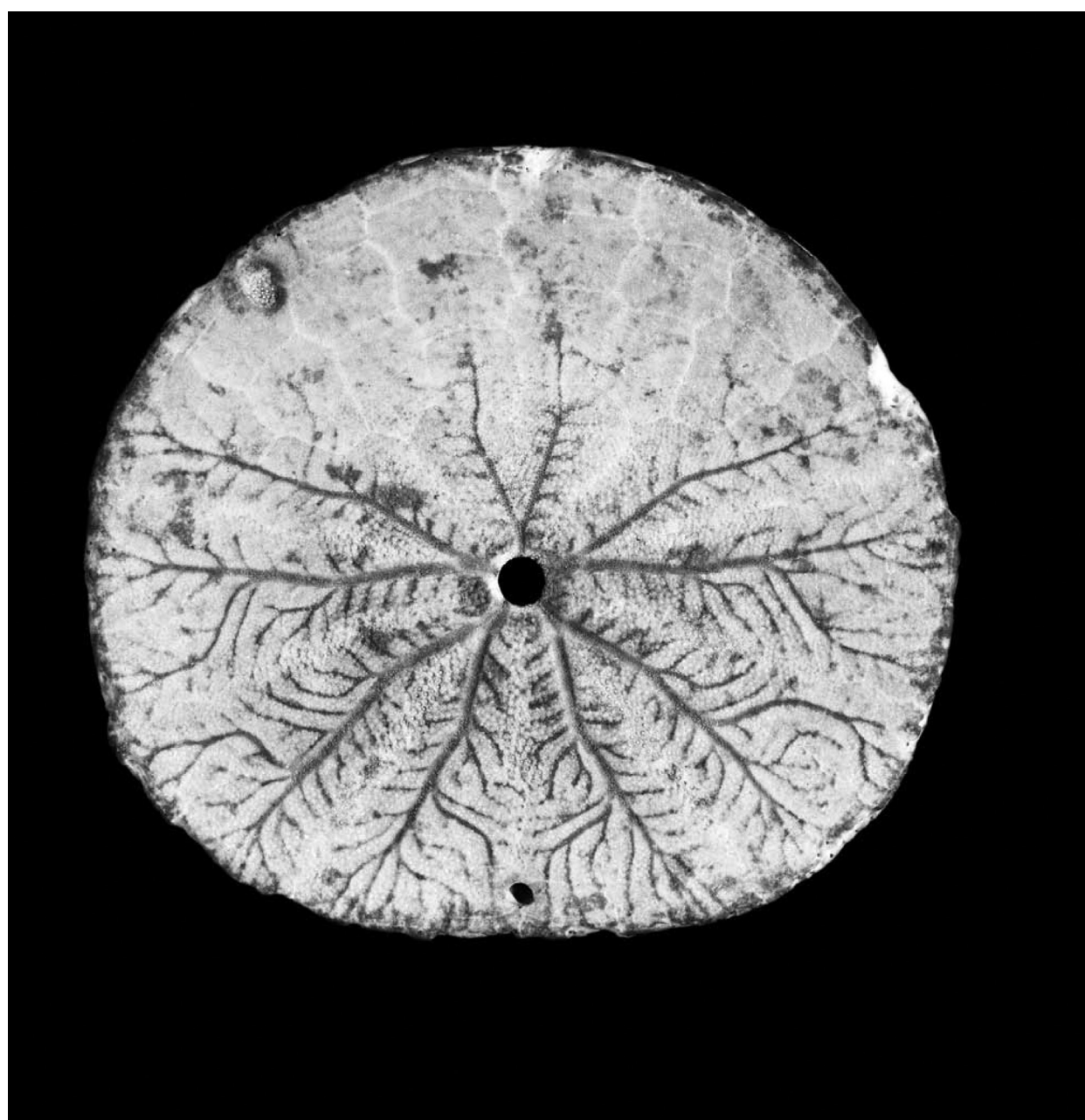


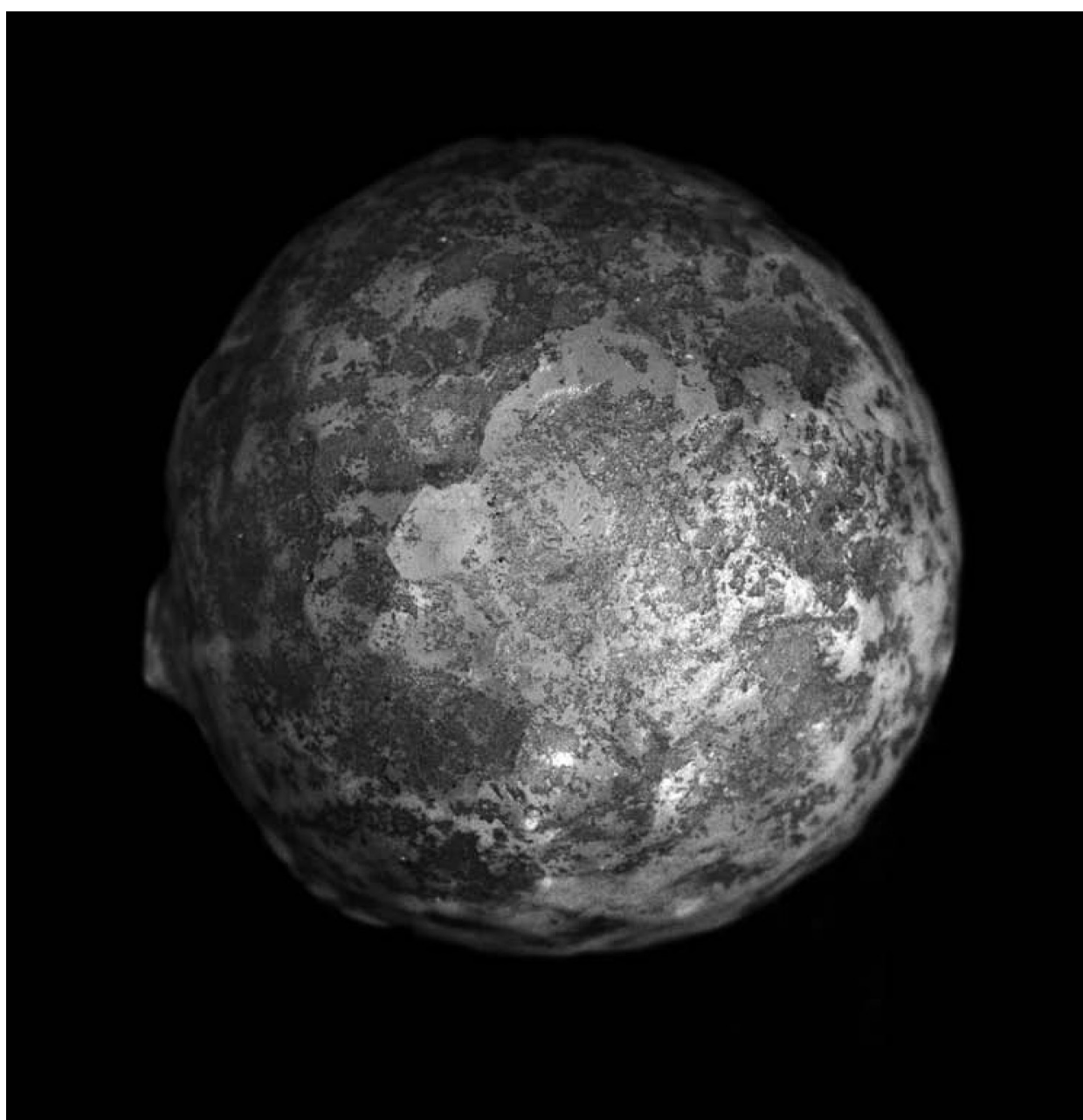
THE EVENING STAR

Friday October, 9 1992 - Friday October, 9 2015

STRIKES AGAIN!



Akiyasu Shimizu. "Magical Shapes / Scutella Californicus, Tertiary, Baja California, Mexico"



Akiyasu Shimizu. "Magical Shapes / Echinospaeriten-Kalk (cystoids), Arenig"

ROCKY

DANA LEVY

When I was nine years old I fell in love with a rock. Our love story started while I was in 3rd grade in Atlanta Georgia. My best friend Susan and I decided to get pet rocks, so we each found a rock in the school playground. Mine was small and black, hers was a light grey. I named mine Rocky, she named hers Pebbles.

I took Rocky home with me and told my mother about my new pet. I looked at Rocky that evening and told it "I love you".

A few weeks later Susan asked me if I wanted to have Pebbles. She didn't want to keep it anymore. I declined but became more and more obsessed with Rocky. I took a Tupperware box from the kitchen and wrote Rocky on it with magic marker. This was Rocky's new home. I took that box everywhere. When I rode on the back of my dad's motorcycle, we had to secure it with a rope. Once a store clerk asked to see what was in the Tupperware box I was carrying that had Rocky written across it. I opened it and when she saw the small rock in the large box she burst out laughing.

Eventually I let the box go and kept Rocky in my pocket. I didn't want to hear other people's opinion on Rocky.

A year later we left America and moved to Israel. I didn't want to move. I loved my life in suburban Atlanta Ga. with a creek in our backyard, filled with tall trees, ivy and snakes. But no one asked me what I wanted. And we started a new life in the strange Middle-Eastern land, but all the while Rocky continued to reside in my pocket during the day and in my bed every night. A piece of the earth I had left behind on the other side of the planet. None of my new friends knew about Rocky of course, but I never left home without it. It was always close to my body in my front pocket.

Around the time I turned twelve, I started to feel that Rocky wanted to leave and go back to nature. It felt distant, like it was asking me to let it go. But I refused to.

Later that year, I went on an overnight school field trip and when I came home I couldn't find Rocky in my pocket. I couldn't believe it. How could I have lost Rocky! I cried. My father who always respected my relationship with my rock, and never made me feel weird about it, took me that night to where all the buses from the school trip were parked. We found the bus I rode and the driver let us on, he thought I must have lost something very important on the bus.

We searched the bus with a flashlight, with no luck. Rocky was gone. After came a week-long mourning period in which I couldn't stop crying over Rocky. Then my dad had an idea. His older brother Albert had a rock collection. He lived in another town in Israel. I loved Albert, he was the funniest of all my dad's 6 broth-

ers, but I remember him always being high. We drove there and found Albert passed out on a park bench. We woke him up and took him home. It was very messy but he knew exactly where to find his rock collection on the dusty shelf. We looked at all the rocks and there was one rock that was shaped like a profile of an Indian chief. My dad and Albert encouraged me to take it, and so I did and thanked Albert. I was surprised that he agreed to give me this beautiful rock. This rock was no doubt more beautiful than Rocky, which was just a plain black rock, but I didn't feel anything for this new rock.

I realized Rocky couldn't be replaced and so I moved on, happy that at least I lost it somewhere in nature. •

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METEORITE ECHOES HEARD IN PEEKSKILL

XAVIER ACARIN

When in the fall of 219 CE, Elagabalus entered Rome triumphantly; the Severan dynasty seemed to have re-vengeed the death of Caracalla repositioning themselves as the first family of the Empire. Elagabalus' mother and grandmother, Julia Soemia and Julia Maesa, were the origin of this victory, and secured a seat for themselves as the first women senators. The dynasty founded 26 years earlier by Septimius Severus, (the first North-African to reach the position of Emperor), had brought a series of military conquests, contained the corruption within the system, and introduced the cult of the Sun god Elagabal. Elagabalus, also the highest priest of the deity, took his name from the god, and brought to Rome from his hometown of Emesa, the embodied presence of the Sun god: a conical meteorite. The cult of the Sun can be traced centuries back to the Semitic cultures of the oriental coast of the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia (the actual Middle-East), and it is easy to understand why the Sun, source of light and warmth, played such a key role in agricultural societies. In times of Elagabalus, the summer solstice became a huge festivity in Rome, the stone was placed on top of a chariot carried by six horses while Elagabalus ran "backwards facing the god and holding the horses' reins." We can imagine the abundance of free food and wine being distributed in the streets, the crowds avid for the feast, secretly knowing that the good won't last.

Elagabalus' sexual practices soon became a source for controversy and annoyance for the Praetorian Guard. Besides his four successive wives, Elagabalus had a male lover, the slave Hierocles, his chariot driver. Elagabalus circumcised himself, and practiced prostitution in and out of the palace, dressed in women's clothes, it is known that he wanted a sex-change operation, and would have done it, if this procedure had been available in the 3rd Century. Again Julia Maesa anticipated Elagabalus' lack of support and knitted a new plan to replace him and his mother with another grandson of hers. Elagabalus and Julia Soemia were killed, their heads cut off, and their bodies exhibited throughout Rome, before throwing Elagabalus to the Tiber River. As usual the Roman river swallowed the unwanted. Hierocles and other members of the court were also murdered during the same month, March 222. Elagabalus was 18 years old, and the god-meteorite was sent back to Emesa.

In Peekskill on Friday October 9th 1992, at 7:50pm an 18 year old woman heard a thunder-like sound on the front porch of her house. The trunk of her recently purchased 1980 Red Chevy Malibu had been crushed by a stone-like material body. A meteorite had crossed the East Coast of the United States,

1 Herodian Roman History. Herodian unlike Cassius Dio, was not a senator, and his historical books have not been considered as rigorous as those of historians like Cassius. However his views are more open towards Elagabalus that those who hold power positions, and had to move with the political changes in Rome.

recorded by sixteen different videos, and witnessed by thousands before arriving to the Hudson River location. This time the meteorite wasn't interpreted as a message from a sun-god, but simply as a meteorite from a collision of asteroids that chance had driven down to Peekskill on this fall evening. The meteorite was split and sold, with one section exhibited at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. The car experienced a similar fate, it was sold for a larger sum of money than its actual worth and exhibited around the world as an emblem of a marvelous encounter between human engineering and outer-space materiality.

If we gather all the acting bodies from the stories above, we end up with a curious assembly of elements and events. We have two meteorites separated by their human reception and a time period of probably more than two thousand years (it is unclear when the Emesa meteorite made impact with the Earth). These meteorites trace a time-space wave defined by three geographical points, Emesa, the actual Homs in Syria, Rome, now capital of Italy, and Peekskill, Westchester County, New York State. We also have two young people: one Emperor of Rome, the other an anonymous citizen of the largest economic, military, and political power on Earth in 1992. We even have the presence of a slave, freed and loved by Elagabalus and who fatally died for being chosen as object of desire: Hierocles, born in Caria, now Turkey. In all these encounters, the meteorite seems to be the key element that triggers a repositioning of the material and existential conditions of the participating actors. The stone of Emesa was considered sacred and thus endowed with vital capacities evidenced by the parading of the stone in Rome atop a chariot pulled by horses and the Emperor himself. Although no one would have assumed that the stone of Peekskill was sent from heaven, it was invested with a hallowed quality, as is often the case with scientific curiosities. It certainly too acted as an economic asset that reshaped the life of a local family.²

These encounters with meteorites show how non-human materials interact with the human in ways that exceed the capacities of culture to fully organize events and meaning. The various instances where meteorites have intersected with the human experience show how (other-worldly) non-human matter has the ability to act as influential agent. For example, Al-Dajar al-Aswad, the sacred stone of the Kaaba in the Grand Mosque of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, was already venerated before the foundation of Islam. Consider the meteorite that led to the extinction of dinosaurs or Panspermia, the group of theories that defend an extraterrestrial origin of life on Earth, precisely through meteorites as life carriers. We might consider things as not only endowed with stories, but also as protagonists that initiate action. We could trace the Peekskill car, shown in Europe, the US, and Japan. Or we could analyze the combustion motor of the 1980 Chevy Malibu, the fourth generation of the car model that started in 1964, as a derivative series of the Chevrolet Chevelle. In fact, if we trace this line we will end up in the Middle-East again. In 1981, the Canadian branch of General Motors produced 25,500 Chevy Malibus for the Iraq Government at that time led by Saddam Hussein. Some of those were sent and used as taxis in Baghdad, the rest, after the Iraq Government broke the agreement, ended up being sold to Canadians at a very reasonable price. The bloody Iran-Iraqi war of those same years, 1980-88, needed all resources available for a cruel and lasting war, as Iraq and Iran played a complicated chess game. Iraq, then an

2 This publication has unsuccessfully attempted to reach this family for an interview.

ally of the West, carried out a systematic genocide of the Kurdish and other Iraqi opposition groups, and introduced chemical weapons against these groups and against the Iranians. All the chemical weaponry was facilitated by the US and several European governments, including Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and Austria. Iran, instead, sadistically used regular troops to launch "human wave attacks", basically using the lives of their volunteer soldiers as cannon fodder.

The Peekskill Meteorite traces another history, one centered on transformation, from fossils to oil, from metal to car, from car to exhibition object, from subject to object, from life to death. All participating bodies oscillate between these states, intertwined within larger-scale apparatuses, whether war, state power, or the time-span of the universe. Their participation can be dismissed, erased from the traces of history, but these are the bodies that keep producing the vibration of the world. Hierocles and the other servants of Elagabalus, the remains of ancient times, the Kurdish people still today under fire from Turkey (NATO), Syria, and ISIS, the thousands of refugees from Homs and other parts of Syria, forced to leave their country due to the yet unresolved Civil War, risking their lives in the Mediterranean, arriving to Greece or Italy only to keep walking towards the European North, across fields, rivers, and mountains—lives that do not matter.

All these elements enter in relation in a composition that has shaped our present and deeply influenced our forms of living. We are part of these intra-actions³, we are not external to the effects and relations. The actual expansion of information online was once developed from a collection of traces, and fragments. These written and non-written remains have inscribed and witnessed the distributions of wealth, religious systems, and concrete everydayness of previous generations. Elagabalus remains present in the form of a Roman coin of the period, surviving the efforts to erase him from the official history. His transgressive attitudes on gender and sexuality are known thanks to Cassius Dio's Roman History, among other sources. A collection of 80 books, covering a period of 1400 years, although only 20 of these books are conserved in a summary version done by John Xiphilinus, a byzantine monk of the 11th Century—fragility that lasts.

Fortuitous encounters and transmissions through time, among forms of life and material combinations, junctions that we extract, interpret and organize. The resulting meaning (always in process of revision) positions us in a larger perspective, the open edge of our present, where interpretation can be reshaped by new findings or new research techniques. And we move with these stories, we belong to them, as every day users of matter and imagination. Our cars are consumable goods, transportation engines, and contaminant devices fed by products refined from a yellow-black liquid that, due to conditions of pressure and heat outside our control, has accumulated over the course of millions of years. Our cars are drinking the remains of the plankton that were alive when the dinosaurs populated the planet. Our life conditions are inseparable from these situations, as much as the oil economy is connected to the destruction of lives and world heritage evidenced by the latest conflict in

3 Karen Barad uses intra-activity, as a substitute for interactivity, to underline that there are not previous independent entities. "Post-Performativity: Toward an Understanding on how Matter comes to Matter," in *Belief, Bodies, and Being: Feminist Reflections on Embodiment*, ed. Deborah Orr, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006). In this text Barad elaborates a concept of performativity, as a field of relations that questions the borders between nature and culture, object and subject.

October 9, 1992

the Middle-East⁴. The global warming threat is not an abstraction detached from concrete data and effects, and we are part of it. We consume, work, and enjoy, and in all instances of life we are attached to a system that is based on a necessary exploitation of human and material energy. We are equal to machines and fossils, in terms of this exploitation, with the exceptionalism we attribute to being human, as actors and directors of this structure of production and consumption. In 1992, the Peekskill Meteorite joined "her" predecessors to intervene in systems of life and belief. However, this time the pagans had been erased (long burnt in the pyre of Christian fanatics, as earlier Christians burnt in the pyre of the Roman Circus), and modernity and capitalism had been working to dislodge the sacred meanings of material life. The Peekskill meteorite, and its message of awareness against oil industry and all its successive effects, passed unheard as the echo of the bombs were still audible from the First Gulf War. Fiction as the basis of belief. •

4 Since the destruction by the Taliban of the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan (from the 6th century CE) in March, 2001 in Afghanistan, many monuments from different time periods have been attacked. Among them, The National Museum of Iraq (looted during and after the US invasion of 2003), and most recently, last summer, the historic district of Sana'a in Yemen, bombed by Saudi Arabia, and the attack by ISIS on the roman ruins of Palmyra in Syria (the temple of Baal (dedicated to the son of the Sun-god Elagabal from 32CE) in Palmyra, Syria.

October 9, 1982

MORE WISHES THAN STARS

ROXANA FABIOUS

As many have mentioned before me on October 9th, 1992 a meteorite traversed the atmosphere and crashed into a hot red Chevy Malibu in Peekskill, New York. This event was not covered by "The Evening Star". In 1992 I was 10 years old and would not learn about a town called Peekskill, New York until 20 years later. In 1992 I was in 5th grade and had a teacher called Nora who was known for engaging her students in a daily exercise called "News 5B". The idea behind News 5B was to convert a group of five students into an editorial board that would daily present a summary of the news of the day before. We, the students, would divide the news between ourselves. Weekly, we would work on the politics sections, the weather section, the international news or sports, and report according to what we read on the newspapers or captured from the news-casts. The exercise served to engage 10 year olds with the news and to teach us that those small fragments of truth that composed our daily morning introductions to class would in time become parts of history and would define it.

Back in 1992, we didn't question the veracity of the fragments of truth we were presenting - the news was the truth. Today it is more difficult for me to think of pure objective truth, every story has multiple angles that are composed to generate a view that hopefully is closer to truth. Journalism Professor Alberto Cairo states that journalists and readers should promote an expansive construction of stories towards what he calls a truth continuum that is enhanced by discussion, levels of objectivity, and constant rationalization through data presentations. Doubt rather than truth will develop a habit of skeptical thinking that can be transformed into a habit of active information consumption.

The news is fundamental to affect public opinion. Thus, one of the most important functions of the general circulation of news is to provide readers/users/citizens with information on government and politics, since information represents the ability to criticize and choose freely.

Such was the importance of news in the early modernity that in 1787 Thomas Jefferson, author of the American Declaration of Independence, wrote, "... were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

However, news reports and public opinion were not always accounted for; as a matter of fact less than four hundred years ago news were managed only by decision makers and those of their close proximity within courts and nobility.

The modern era brought with it men with enough power (yes, only propertied men were allowed) to challenge the news of the few: with their economic abilities and the development of international commercial networks, a unified format of news was needed, one that everyone within the network would understand and share. Thanks to the proliferation of the printing press, as Upworthy editor Eli Parisier puts it "scientists and scholars could spread complex ideas with perfect precision to an audience spread over large distances. And because everyone was literally on the same page, transnational conversations began that would have been impossibly laborious in the earlier scribe-driven epoch."¹

We have taken these transnational conversations to the next level and, unified the format even more. There is something about the uniformity of the interface, the contact between us and that piece of information that provides it with an air of seriousness that we all respect and appreciate. In the past this seriousness was supposed to be backed up with teams of editors that responded to an urgency of keeping their audience informed, because information is power and is what composes public opinion, public action, and what is written on history books. Revolutions and financial crashes alike were generated by bits of information.

Today we are more connected than ever, and flooded by information with an infinite ability to search for the pieces and the clues. But while we own this ability, we are also fueled by a sensation of truth rather than doubt that leads us to a passive act of information consumption. Most of us consume information on-line

1 Parisier, Eli, *The Filter Bubble*, The Penguin Press, New York, 2011, p-55.

October 9, 1992

rather than on-paper. And while paper is becoming necessarily obsolete, there was one thing about news on-paper that was useful to form visions of the world - it forced us to go through all the news items and not only through the ones that an algorithm selected for us according to the data the cookies on our device have marked as possible interests for comfort and advertising. As such the truth that is generated for us by these readings of our persona is more fragmented than ever, there are so many holes on our pages.

Now you are reading "The Evening Star", or fragmented versions of its fragments. The Evening Star was a local newspaper that functioned between 1922 and 1985 and reported mainly with a focus on Peekskill. To construct this version of the paper that you are holding we selected pieces of The Evening Star from different eras, and invited artists to contribute with texts and photographs to respond to an event that the original Evening Star did not cover, the fall of a meteorite in Peekskill in 1992. The appearance of a newspaper is an excuse to comment on the disappearance of a medium that once existed in Peekskill, and that has in itself a conflictive history with the town and the events that it reported, such as the Peekskill Riots. All facts need to be double-checked even those reported in the history of a paper. The holes on the agonizing format of the newspaper on-paper serve as a signal that marks the invisible holes on our screens, those holes that we don't see because we are driven by sensations of truth, rather than doubt. •

TWO QUESTIONS FOR DANA LEVY

The new video that you are presenting in Peekskill is a recent piece that you shot in the Dead Sea in Israel, and Death Valley and Mono Lake in California. In it you do a series of interventions into these sites, an action that you refer as painting in the landscape. This is a twist of the tradition of plein-air painting, adding to the landscape instead of capturing it, and has also a deep connection to land art. What interests you of land art? There is also an interesting contrast between the inter-

ventionist relationship that Land Art had with nature and the way you treat your relationship with the site, which is very different from what artists were trying to do in the 60's and 70's, can you comment on that?

Dana Levy. As Allan Kaprow said in his interview with Robert Smithson "Museums tend to make increasing concessions to the idea of art and life being related. What's wrong with their version of this is that they provide a canned life, an aestheticized illustration of life."

This work is an attempt to actually intervene in the landscape instead of just making "an aestheticized illustration." Landscape painters project themselves, their thoughts and emotions, onto the landscape, resulting in unique personal interpretations of the landscape onto a canvas. Here I am literally projecting onto the landscape, not thoughts and emotions, but moving images. In a way my process is more objective. Firstly, because my physical body hardly plays a role, and secondly, the footage I project is selected from online stock footage banks, which I collect and then project, but cannot change while I'm projecting them onto the landscape.

Unlike Land artists I have no desire to physically alter the landscape beyond the visual. I'm simply adding another non-opaque layer onto the landscape. Like an Instagram filter, but in the actual physical space. The landscape is just an actor in my movie. When the camera turns off, the show is over. My in-

tervention ceases. And the landscape continues to exist just as it did before me. Except for the living creatures in the area, whom the light of my projector may have affected, after all nothing exists in isolation, but there is no lasting effect.

This process is similar to Land Art and painting, in that I am changing the landscape before me, but unlike my process, these are processes that require the artist's physical action. Here the action is disembodied. The projector projects, the camera documents, but I, the artist may stand still. What makes it perhaps more reflective of our times, similar to what McLuhan called "discarnate". Our presence can be experienced in a many places at the same time without the physicality of our bodies.

With a click of a button the projector starts projecting the moving images onto the landscape, while I stand beside it as my camera documents. My body has no effect beyond the click of a button, yet still a complete visual alteration to the landscape is occurring.

In plein-air painting the painter stands in the landscape and documents the landscape, providing a personal interpretation of it. Also the painting can be done remotely, from memory or imagination or by observing an image of the landscape. There is no need for the painter to ever visit the landscape. This project is one step beyond just being a representational image of the world. I did actually go to the site and whoever was

there witnessed this transformation not of a canvas, but of the physical landscape. But I don't go as far as to actually change anything permanently or physically. It remains like a poem, a reflection, a thought. It offers a new reality, but just as momentary illusion, like a fata morgana in the desert. "Fata Morgana mirages distort the object or objects which they are based on significantly, often such that the object is completely unrecognizable." (wikipedia).

The Fata Morgana is unique to the viewer and doesn't exist without the viewer. My work does. Whoever is there will see it from all angles within the range of vision. It is objectively there, even if no one sees it.

While creating this work, the only witnesses to this temporary transformation of the landscape were my assistant and I, and the occasional passerby. We stood there and saw the landscape change before our eyes. The landscape transformed into something else, somewhere else. The dry monochrome desert landscape was now covered with flowing water, bubbles, with colors, lights, life.

The Dead Sea was now a sea of life, Death Valley was now a valley of life. It could be seen but not touched. And the minute the projector's battery died, there was no trace of the visual transformation that had just occurred. I think I chose these landscapes because their names included death, something lifeless, or not yet born. Like a blank canvas, which I can add to, and bring to life. •

A RATE OF RETURN

DANIEL BEJAR

In 1982, the sci-fi film E.T. The Extra Terrestrial by Steven Spielberg was released. In the film, an alien nick-named E.T. is stranded on Earth, and a young boy, Elliot, helps him return to his home world. Throughout the movie, a friendship blossoms between Elliot and E.T. Eventually, Elliot discovers that E.T. has unique powers when he witnesses him revive a dead plant and shortly thereafter, the two begin to develop a psychic connection. In the mean time, the government has also discovered E.T., and while Elliot continues to help him, the government's attempts to capture him for study and exploitation ensue.

The capturing of an alien technology, aliens, or foreign objects to extract or harness their powers is a common trope in the sci-fi genre. The alien always becomes a commodity. In talking about commodities and their effect on humans functioning in a capitalist society, curator and writer Joshua Simon reveals another way to look at this power dynamic, saying, "As all objects that enter into this world are commodities, we must realize that this is not our world, but theirs." By simply landing on Earth, E.T. had become a commodity.

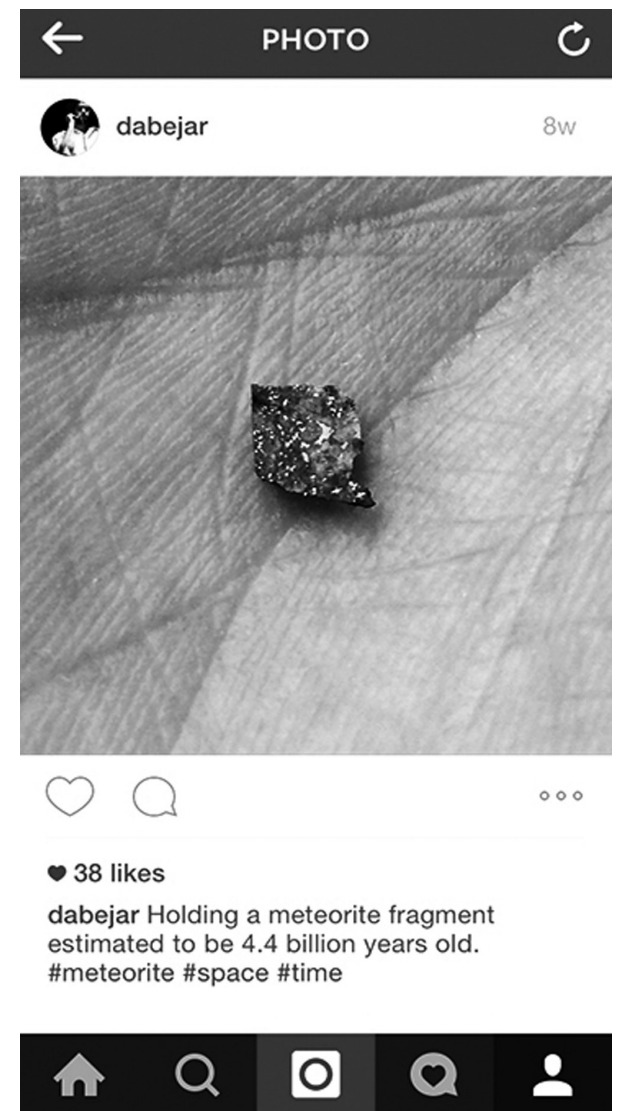
A decade after E.T. was released, on the evening of October 9th, 1992 a fireball entered Earth's atmosphere over Kentucky. Sightings and video documentation of the event were reported along the eastern seaboard of the United States from Kentucky to New York. The fireball's trajectory eventually led it to crash into 18-year old Michelle Knapp's 1980 red Chevrolet Malibu in Peekskill, NY. The sighting and documentation of a meteorite crashing to Earth is already an extremely rare occurrence; it is even more rare for a meteorite to hit a car. The meteorite instantly became a commodity, and the market-driven leg of its trajectory here on Earth was beginning.

Shortly after the crash, the 1980 Chevrolet Malibu that Michelle Knapp had purchased for \$300, was sold to a collector for \$10,000. The meteorite itself was sold to a consortium dealers and universities for more than \$69,000. Sliced up and scattered throughout the world, portions of the now famous Peekskill meteorite can be found in Chicago's Field Museum, the American National History Museum in New York City, and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. Small fragments of the Peekskill meteorite can also be found on online auction sites such as eBay for as little as \$125 a gram.

There is a long recorded history of extraterrestrial objects being utilized and worshipped by humans across many countries and cultures. The metal in meteorites has been found in jewelry, tools, and sculptures. The earliest example of this is iron beads crafted from a meteorite found in northern Egypt dating back to 3200 BC; to the ancient Egyptians, iron was known as the "metal of the heavens". Native Americans are known to have utilized meteorites as ceremonial objects as well as practical tools like blades for cutting, and arrow and spearheads for hunting. Among the more

fascinating discoveries of meteorite use is a Buddhist statue believed to depict the Buddhist deity VaiDravaa. The 1,000-year-old, 9.4 inch-tall statue was carved and chiseled from a meteorite fragment believed to have come from the Chinga Meteorite which is believed to have crashed near the Chinghe River in Russia about 15,000 years ago. The figure, known as the "Iron Man," was discovered in 1938 in Tibet by a German SS expedition searching for the origins of the Aryan race. The explorers extracted the statue and brought it back to Germany, most likely because of their affinity for the coopted ancient symbol of the swastika, which was carved prominently into its belly. Sounding like the plot from another of Spielberg's films, the "Iron Man" meteorite statue eventually resurfaced at an auction in 2007.

The Peekskill meteorite is estimated to be around 4.4 billion years old, which makes it older than the Earth, and further places its origins around the beginning of our universe. Born from the same "pot" or solar nebula as the planets, moons, and asteroids, the Peekskill meteorite's trajectory began at the dawn of time and has circled the Milky Way galaxy for 4.4 billion years. As its trajectory has continued here on Earth in the capitalist marketplace, circling the globe through online auctions, in auction houses,



and on illicit black markets, the Peekskill meteorite's will now continue its journey by heading back out into the Milky Way.

Completing a 23-year journey here on Earth, the fragment of the Peekskill meteorite I purchased on eBay from Flagstaff, AZ and then shipped to Brooklyn, NY will be returned to Peekskill, NY and launched back into the stars on October 9th, 2015. Attempting to free it from the market forces here on Earth, and return it to its home like E.T., the Peekskill meteorite will just be starting the next chapter in its 4.4 billion-year old trajectory. •

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FILTER, MENTHOL, 15 mg "tar", 1.1 mg "nicotine," av. per cigarette, FTC Report AUG. '72.

October 9, 1962



CUMPLEAÑOS

PABLO HELGUERA

Píndaro Hindemith se despertó en su habitación en los brazos de su mamá el día de su cumpleaños. Varios adultos lo cargaban, cantando, y aunque no tenía una idea muy clara de por qué había tanta felicidad en la casa, se daba cuenta que él era, de alguna manera, la razón de la celebración. El día de su cuarto cumpleaños se estaba poniendo los pantalones, y al cumplir los seis se puso su camisa naranja que él mismo denominaba “mi camisa de presidente”. La camisa, tan elegante, no sobrevivió mucho tiempo, y parece ser que para cuando Píndaro había cumplido los ocho ya no existía, aunque Píndaro mismo siempre sospechó que su mamá se había encargado de esconder, y posiblemente tirar, aquella prenda para que ya no se la pusiera. De cualquier manera, en su décimo cumpleaños como siempre Píndaro estaba emocionado por ir a desayu-

nar a un restaurant o comer fondue como siempre en el Chalet Suizo donde había una consola a la que cuando se le metía una moneda activaba unos títeres que bailaban. Era su catorceavo cumpleaños, y Píndaro comenzaba a volverse cada vez más retraído. Tenía la tendencia, eso sí, de hablar en tercera persona y de siempre narrar todos los incidentes de su vida y todas sus memorias como si fueran una narrativa épica. Ahora que había cumplido los diecisiete le dolía el corazón por una chica que nunca le hizo caso a pesar de todas sus declaraciones de amor, y nada parecía consolarlo. Pero al salir al pasillo en su decimonoveno cumpleaños por una chica que nunca le hizo caso a pesar de todas sus declaraciones de amor, y nada parecía consolarlo. Pero al salir al pasillo en su decimonoveno cumpleaños sabía que la vida lo iba a recompensar. Entró al baño al cumplir los veinte años, y en esos momentos sentía más que nada una enorme urgencia por hacer cosas, con la certeza que en la juventud se nos ofrece un horizonte infinito de posibilidades con puertas que poco a poco se van cerrando conforme uno va envejeciendo, cometiendo errores, perdiendo oportunidades, desperdiciando otras. Decidió hacer un dibujo en el momento en el que cumplía veinticinco, sabiendo que la familia lo esperaba en la sala con el pastel de cumpleaños, entendiendo por primera vez que el tiempo no es aquello que vemos en el calendario sino más bien todo

aquello que somos capaces de recordar en un cierto momento. En el momento en el que cumplía la edad de Cristo sentía una enorme voracidad, un deseo de consumirlo todo intelectualmente, mientras que a la vez sabía que su padre estaba expirando en la habitación contigua, y que a la vez él mismo se encontraría en su cumpleaños número cuarenta persiguiendo a su hija de dos años por la casa. Ya estaba listo en el momento en el que cumplía cincuenta años, que habían llegado demasiado rápido para la lista de cosas que tenía que completar, incluyendo el llegar a su fiesta de cumpleaños número sesenta donde, alguien le dijo, había un fotógrafo que lo entrevistaría preguntándole acerca de lo que se siente cumplir de un momento a otro. Su cansancio era visible en ese momento en el que casi por accidente cumplió setenta y tres, que lo hizo pensar en su tío Pancho que era muralista y fumaba como chimenea, y que lo ponía a pintar mientras que le contaba anécdotas coloridas del Dr. Atl y Frida, a quien Pancho había conocido en su juventud. Pensó Píndaro en aquel momento que la edad, de la que supuestamente nos acordamos oficialmente solamente una vez al año, no puede ser jamás descrita y quizá nunca debería de ser conmemorada. El pasillo era enormemente largo,

pensó, tan largo que justo en este momento en el que cumplía ochenta y nueve años él mismo no se podía explicar cómo era posible que sus nietos pudieran recorrer el mismo pasillo siete veces mientras que él apenas estaba llegando al final una sola vez al cumplir los noventa y cuatro. Muchas personas le hablan y lo felicitan, lo acarician y él reconoce de varias maneras que son sus hijas, su esposa, pero que a pesar que él ya es mayor y está cumpliendo un siglo en este momento los rostros de todas y de todos comienzan a convertirse en uno solo, que ese pastel de cumpleaños que se ilumina parece reproducirse cada minuto añadiendo años como si fuera un cronómetro. Y todas estas manos y brazos que lo cargan cuidadosamente y con enorme amor y ternura, lo regresan desde el pasillo hasta la cama otra vez, donde él sabe que ya no puede comer pastel ni hablar ni ver nada con claridad, donde el mundo se le escapa poco a poco, donde la mayoría de las puertas ya se han cerrado como se cierra la puerta en la noche cuando nuestros padres nos han puesto a dormir y abrazamos nuestro oso de peluche, viendo la luz del pasillo del otro lado, y sabemos que alguien nos está cuidando mientras caemos en el más profundo y definitivo sueño. •



Anna Marie Rockwell. "Pythagoras"



Anna Marie Rockwell. "Time Again"

CUMPLEAÑOS

PABLO HELGUERA

Píndaro Hindemith awoke in his mother's arms on his birthday. Many adults were carrying him, singing, and even though he did not have a very clear idea as to why there was so much happiness in the house he intuitively realized that, in some way, he was the reason for the celebration. On the day of his fourth birthday he was putting his pants on, and when he turned six he put on his orange shirt- one that he liked to call his “president shirt”. The shirt, which was so elegant, did not last long, and looks like today when he turned eight the shirt didn't exist anymore, maybe because —as Píndaro suspected— his mother had managed to hide, and maybe throw away that old piece of clothing so that he would not keep wearing it. In any case, given that it was his tenth birthday Píndaro was excited by the idea of going for breakfast at a restaurant or as usual to the Chalet Suizo where there was a console that, when you inserted a coin, would activate a number of happy marionettes. It was his fourteenth birthday and Píndaro would become ever the more introspective. He did have the tendency to speak in third person and to narrate every incident of his life as if it were an epic story. Now that he was turning seventeen his heart was hurt-

ing for a young woman who had never paid attention to him despite all his declarations of love, and nothing seemed to comfort him. Yet when he exited the room in the moment of his nineteenth birthday he knew that life would reward him. He got into the bathroom, on his twentieth birthday and in that moment he felt an enormous urgency for doing things, with the certainty that in youth we are offered an infinite horizon of possibilities with doors that slowly start closing as one ages, makes mistakes, misses opportunities, wastes others. He decided to make a drawing on the moment that he turned 25, knowing that this family awaited him in the living room with the birthday cake, and understanding for the first time that time is not that which we see on the calendar but rather all of which we are capable of remembering at a given moment. And on that moment when he turned Christ's age, he felt incredibly voracious, with a desire to consume everything intellectually, while he knew that on the next room his father was expiring and that he would find himself in his fortieth birthday chasing his own two year old daughter around the house. He felt ready in the moment he turned 50, which nonetheless had arrived to quickly considering the list of things he was supposed to complete, including arriving to his 60th year birthday party where, someone told him, there was a photographer that would interview him about what it feels like to have birthdays from one moment to the next. His exhaustion started to become visible on the moment in which, almost by accident, he was turning seventy three, which made him think of his uncle Pancho who was a muralist and

smoked like a chimney, and who would put him to paint while he would tell him colorful anecdotes about Dr. Atl and Frida, who Pancho had met in his own youth. Píndaro thought to himself at that moment that age, of which we supposedly bring our attention and celebrate once a year, actually can never be described and perhaps should never be commemorated. The hallway was incredibly long, he thought, so long that just in the moment that he was turning 89 he himself could not explain how it was possible that his grandchildren could run around the hallway seven times back and forth while he was reaching the end only once while turning 94 and them becoming adults. Many people come to him and congratulate him, they caress him and he recognizes in various ways his daughter, his wife, but even though he is older and he is reaching the century of age in this moment the faces of all of them, men and women, start merging into one, that birthday cake shining in the living room and illuminating his life seems to reproduce itself every minute, adding years to itself as if it was a chronometer. And all those hands and arms that carefully carry him, with infinite love and tenderness, back to his bed again, where he knows that he can't eat cake nor speak nor see anything with clarity anymore, where the whole world escaped from him little by little, where the majority of the doors are now closed just as it happens at night when our parents have put us to sleep and we hug our stuffed animal, looking at the dim light of the hallway from the other side, and we know that someone is taking care of us as we fall in the most profound and definitive sleep. •



Anna Marie Rockwell. "Looking-glass"

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