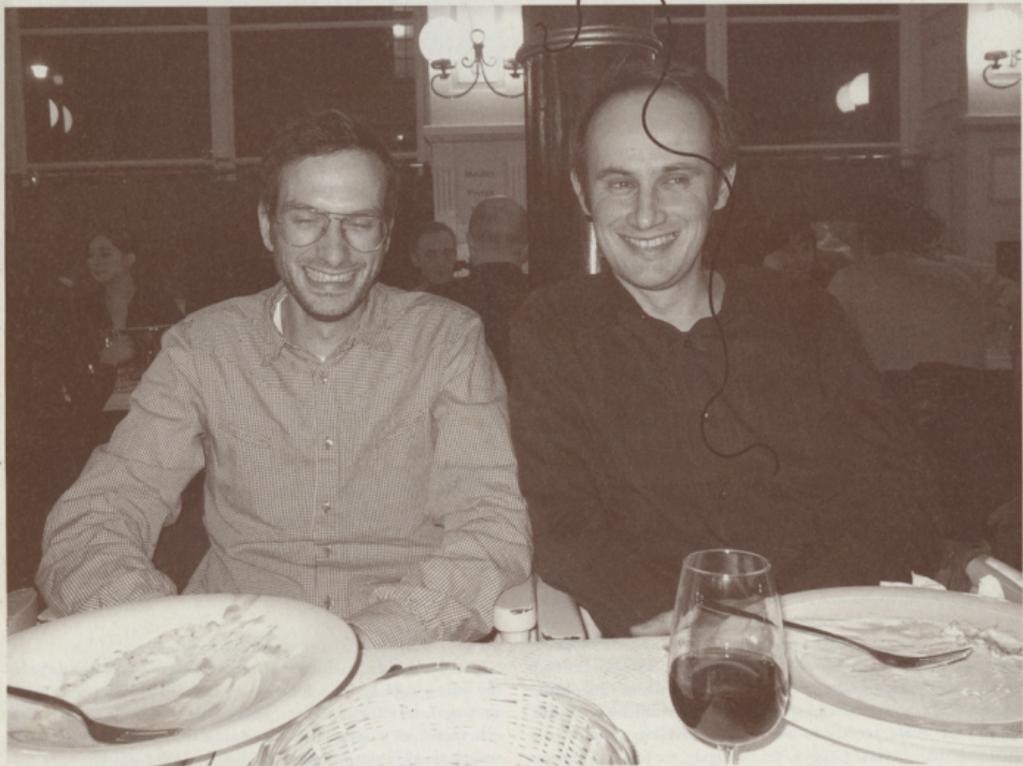


PACEMAKER 11



CHARLES AVERY

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LASSER MODERNA

MICHAEL ROY

BRUNO SERRALONGUE

ALEKSANDRA MIR

POLLY STAPLE

THE BACKROOM

SETH PRICE

KARL HOLMQUIST

LOS SUPER ELEGANTES

SEAN SNYDER

MELVIN MOTI

SPITBALL PENNZOIL, MORE... AND WITH THE HEADS

Craig Buckley

'Any colour you like, as long as it's black.' A quip that could probably find a nod at any number of openings in the last few years, group or solo, irrespective of media, in contexts commercial, independent, musical. Henry Ford was initially supposed to have uttered this phrase to describe his Model-T, whose colour included the realities of the process of production on which it depended: black Japan enamel was the fastest to dry. Black marked the availability of a commodity to whole new classes of consumers and Ford could sense its potential as the new freedom to make a decision minus the possibility of choice. In our own time, where design has largely departed from problems of standardization towards dreams of mass customization, this aesthetic colour has come back around and is again the best of jokes. If Ford could align black with efficiency in mass production, in our own moment this colour has no clear ally. As it is tempting to see the profusion of blacks as a passing phenomenon of style, it is unclear whether one understands anything more about it by lumping together so many different objects and practices. Or, does one proceed with the disaggregation of the colour in its distinct practices, a minute speculation of the various shades and surfaces from the outer Fringes of gray to the depths of what nineteenth century chemistry sought in its elusive quest for absolute black?

The dilemma has something to do with the completion, in 1978, of Philip Johnson and John Burgee's Pennzoil Place. Pennzoil's Vice-President, Hugh Liedtke, reportedly pushed Johnson to change his original design, not wanting to be associated with all the other buildings that terminated like a box set with "all that mirror stuff". Johnson and Burgee's twin-tower complex was trapezoidal in plan, was topped by 45-degree counter-sloping roof profiles, and had a skin of black steel and dazened grey-tinted glass. The two towers nearly meet at the centre of the site, separated by a ten-foot gap, a streaking 30-storey vertical slot within the dark and building profile. It was hailed by the *New York Times* as a shining of the year and a triumph for Houston's developer, a dark presence on the skyline. Pennzoil was heralded as a breakthrough, pointing out a new monumentally sculptural typology for the office building. As if to confirm this reading, articles included images of Tony Smith's 1966 sculpture *Spitball*.

Talking about a sculpture like *Spitball*, Smith would describe it as a "probably malignant," specializing in was-such sculptures might only be assimilated in the was-such areas and unfinished back lots of suburban America. The images of the Pennzoil towers would indicate otherwise. If Smith saw his work as germs that could spread disease, architectural critics presented it as the prototypic seed for Johnson and Burgee's new prototype. If it is tempting to see in the passage from *Spitball* to Pennzoil a stylistic appropriation of high modernist sculpture, such a linkage connects more than it reveals, duplicating the real site of the transference, something fugged at the level of the image, as a rhyming of black geometries upon the printed page. It is a rhyming that Erwin Panofsky, and more recently Yve-Alain Bois, identify as pseudomorphic, insinuating relations of influence between different objects on the basis of an apparent formal similarity. Given the tenuous nature of the connection when both objects are approached in detail, the popularity of pairing Smith's sculpture and Johnson's Pennzoil may be seen less as a monumentalization of *Spitball* than a monument to such pseudomorphic looking, a trait that looks good from a distance. The site of transfer hinges upon a generic image of such black geometries, a colouristic pseudomorphism that swallows Smith's practice whole. If Smith could be identified with the black finishes of his sculptures, his comments regarding this colour were evasive but insinuating. The plywood mock-ups first created in the backyard of his house in New Jersey were coated in black paint for car underbodies, less for the emotional effects it would produce than because it seemed to him the least arbitrary. To use any other colour, Smith argued, "would imply a different kind of choice." Smith, like Ford, affiliated black with a decision without the possibility of choice. What could be seen as the least arbitrary colour by Smith and Ford as became nearly fungible, invested with an ability to radiate connotation only to absorb and dissolve it again. A dark comedy compounded by the fact that it is hard to tell whether the repetition of black as symptomatic or strategic, making for a powerful superficiality: a trait that meters the very opposition of surface and depth as a model for thinking the importance of differences. Perhaps ominous, re-considering such a pseudomorphic moment might at least allow one to grasp upon a paradigm of considerable currency: the lure of black geometry has something to do with its ability to flip between the generic, whether the model-T or the neutral ground of a medalesse medala, while simultaneously being a colour marked out for hyper-specification. Taken as a red thread, looking back at black might offer some distinctions that might lead away from the temptations of cynicism towards a possible distance upon the moment.

PEOPLE WITH NO HEADS V. PEOPLE WITH THE HEADS

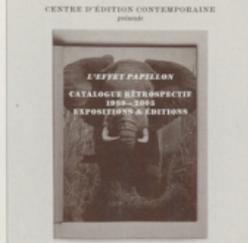
Bob Peier

For the British, British men in particular, men of possibly the Edwardian period, or in any case men of a certain social class at some point prior to World War Two, an almost unconscious game of conversation was to defer the verb to the very end of a sentence; a display of breeding, a showing-off, a décor hole: 'Let's don't us down the garden path lead... Keep deferring the verb.'

We're familiar with artistic explorations of banality, emptiness, depletion, etc., which seem to focus their passive aggression on the image. But every image is facile. Something quiet and useful. How to make an art that is not interested in the image and its politics? It may be true that images are one of the pivotal regulators of contemporary society, whether in advertising, in art, or in the cultural programming that falls some place between. Should there not be, however, regulators of modern life which fall outside the realm of the image, which have instead to do with codes and processes lacking any 'visibility'? Or might it be true that everything reduces to images?

Well, like most liberals I prefer to solutions. The mission of a virus is to kill its host, but to preserve its host, and thus itself. In any case, subversion is not an activity in and of itself; nor can it be an end or goal. As ever, the artist's work is an analysis of the artist's relation to the world, the artist asserts that, the artist resists the artist, and other extrapolations along those lines. Resistance from an unusual quarter. As in the following anecdote:

Recent radical labor activity has tended to come from an unusual quarter: migrant workers who have reached the US from areas to the South: Mexico, Central America, South America. In many cases these workers cannot necessarily speak English, and may not actually be American citizens. They may in fact have no intention of becoming even long term residents, hoping to put in only a few years of work before returning to their country of origin with full pockets. How is it that radical left politics now finds itself springing from this constituency? It may be instructual to turn to earlier moments in left US social history. One finds the same patterns in the currents of the Socialist 1930s, although in that case the new immigrants were from Europe. The point is, in this country much of the most fervent agitation on the progressive labor side of things has come from foreigners, whether it be those who weathered the Eastern European 1950s, or the Latin America 1970s and '80s, or whatever. Truly a home grown radicalism finding in line with everything we expect from the United States. OK, basically what happened is, America's Latin American misadventures of the 1970s and 1980s produced a new wave of radicalized immigrants from below, bringing their own organizing strategies and demands that will remain here even after they have departed.



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The responsibility of artists was a symbolic activity of the Situationists, but the game was up when the Art & Language history war moved to Paris.

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A VOS RISQUES ET PÉRILS

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PACEMAKER

LASSER MODERNA : HOROSCOPE

Bâtir le nid brilla et réfléchit le soleil ; son regard fixe l'évolution.
 Taverne au revers du moment de l'Atlantide.
 Gagner son pain en coagulant ; tout regard, sa démarche.
 Gagner dans la vie il faut savoir perdre.
 Loin : mouvement ; le temps passe.
 l'Argie le temps passe ne guérit les dérangements surdos du Pouille.
 Auteurs : amonster, reuener, danser les dérangements ; tout est possible, la normalité et le véridé.
 Espérons que se verra tomber du ciel, dans une voiture lancée à tout aller.
 Suggestion : que diable tu, hier, du soleil ?
 Explication : sur ton terrain il y a pas d'histoire ; les perres l'indiquent dans un creux.
 Réponse : les carreaux sont des épines du diable en pays tropical.
 Plaisance : la tête l'argente, nous sommes ceux que ça va se terrer ; et les Kachos, préparez-nous pour la grande finale.



Wie Delphine, Delphine es tun...

Always loved the story of the magazine journalist casually asking David Bowie how it was sharing an apartment with Iggy Pop in Berlin in the mid-seventies – just out of curiosity somehow, blissfully ignorant that their relation would have been a sexual one, which apparently it wasn't in fact (guess they only know themselves...) even if we were all in love with the idea at the time – and Bowie answering that Pop was so messy and annoying, always emptying the refrigerator when coming back from drink and drug binges. And I just loved the thought of Bowie having to stand in line at the local Aldi, in a bad mood getting the milk for his morning coffee, even though he had already bought two litres or something the day before.

Who is a star, who is a disappearing artist? How do you build your own person to where it is no longer even possible to imagine you in line at the supermarket? Who is cult history and who never even had a life? / Karl Holmqvist



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La lutte des artistes contre le sida, projet Aids Riot, en 2003
L'art, l'infotainment et la télé-réalité, projet Royal Wedding, en 2004
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