



Volume ISSUE THREE

ALICIA FRANKOVICH WE ARE HOUSED (in and around all of this stuff)

if we're gonna talk about the stray as a constitutive being, a mobile, parable unit keenly attentive and yet residually inert to the domestic scene, then it's definitely gonna be worth looking at the urban order of decay.¹ which, hardly enough, is where Alicia Frankovich's project for The Physics Room's Volume

sees is situated: yeah sure, there's other issues circulating around the work but, perhaps, at its founding inception is this conflation of urban capitalist order with the domestic scene of the late modern individual: call it consumer

politics if you want, but you can't spray the word 'property' on onion bags, hoist vacuum seal, self-storage-units and then feign domestic interiors with a broken dilapidated fold out mattress without some kind of notion of what Walead Beshty has called 'the perennial anxiety of late capitalism',

that consumptive anomisation and conflation of identity with market place saturation.² but this isn't really anything new, as with everything modern, it's been embedded within the very order of modernity's linear roll: take Walter Benjamin's reading of the flâneur, that cultural agent of capitalism's leisure domain whose indolence, marks out an 'empathy with the commodity' as

a kind of final ambit, in which the very concept of marketability is taken for a stroll.³ more recently though, Benjamin's flâneur figure has been re-cast from what one could call the rosy character of capitalism's consensual consumer, to become, instead a figure of entropy who not only precedes but

also codes modernity's own fallings: as best exemplified by Tom McDonough's essay, *The Crimes of the Flâneur*, it is better to see the flâneur as a doubled cultural agent who highlights "the tenuous nature of urban order; the way that our everyday routines are always subtended by other possibilities"⁴

throughout the following then I want to follow a thread which might exacerbate the cultural condition of the flâneur, suggesting that though the domestic ordeal is complicit with capitalism's constitutional pull, there also exists what

Matthew Hyland calls, 'defective wit', a strategy displayed in the future, anticipative procedures of Frankovich's practice.

'better living...'

us within the inert, noxious terrain of Junkspace...

really Rem Koolhaas suggests that Modernisation has run its course, leaving this premise into the realms of the public domain of contemporary urban

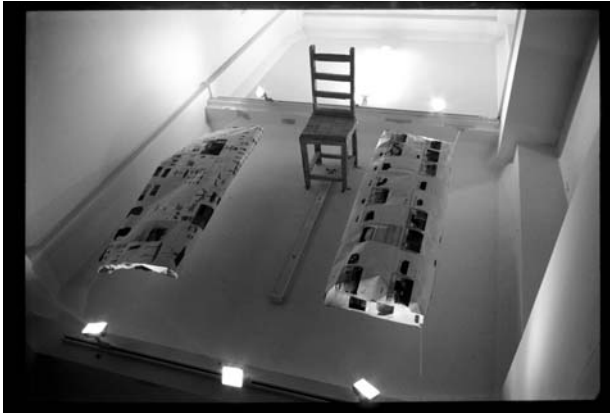
conflation of the realisation of self with the consumption of identity",⁵ taking not boost our 'character', as *Lifestyle* claims; rather, it aids the contemporary

— a folding of the 'examined life' into the 'designed life'. Such style does style' in the philosophical sense of the Greeks, Nietzsche, or Foucault, that of his work, Canadian designer Bruce Mau asks us to think design as 'life

consumption. Hal Foster writes this better: "In *Lifestyle* (2000), a compendium we're subsumed into the very matter, the constitutional appeasement of instant access, conflatng understanding with wit, 'incredulity, discernment,

impeccable and addressed to you. just as this is. we read from the page in its subsumed into conditional living: sped up, becomes hyper-live. instant,

take the latest, long running Glad ads', it's all conflation. the modern product



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Harold Grieves is a walking somnambulist. He dreams slowly in his sleep.

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Junkspace is the body double of space, a territory of impaired vision, limited

expectation, reduced earnestness. Junkspace is a Bermuda Triangle of

concepts, an abandoned petri dish: it cancels distinctions, undermines

resolve, confuses intention with realisation. It replaces hierarchy with

accumulation, composition with addition. More and more, more is more.

Junkspace is override and under-nourishing at the same time, a colossal

security blanket that covers the earth in a stranglehold of seduction...⁷

koolhaas suggests that Junkspace is the 'continuity', the 'built product',

the coagulation of the rational, empirical plan of progress. caught in such a bind, Junkspace renders endeavour inert, forcing creativity to become

'regurgitation', an 'embrace of manipulation' in which all 'materialisation

of what Mathew Hyland and JJ King have called "the vile regime of the

'look', [the] sheer spectacularity of identity"⁹ writing again, against this

subjugation, Hyland suggests that the "social subject-object of deformation

cannot rationally plan the counter-adaptation that would wreck 'self' for

valouring. If it hopes to turn illness into a weapon against capitalist evolution

it must live by its defective wits"¹⁰ just what those wits might look like

are happily played out in the 'lethargy rhetoric' of Frankovich's work.¹¹

by blocking the entranceway Frankovich forced her work to become a room

into itself: you couldn't just walk into her room, you had to do it intentionally,

as Don DeLillo points out, "the point of rooms is that they're inside. No one

should go into a room unless he understands this. "People behave one way

in rooms, another way in streets, parks and ports. To enter a room is to agree

to a certain kind of behaviour"¹² Frankovich built on this concept through

a jumble of cobbled design that's half-critique and half earnest appeasement,

which suggests that Frankovich's work isn't lethargic at all, merely symptomatic.

after all it is considered, it's certainly accumulative, saturated, manipulative,

use-value and design as marketability. such strategies may come off as half

measures, entropic dejects, but such readings draft that 'shabby theist' which

Harold Grieves

¹ somewhere along the way the stray has become a pet subject. i blame animal studies, but lately it's been popping up in both the street literate subject and the technological sublime, see, 'Kim Swanson's stud-hood' (High Street Project, Christchurch, May 2005) and 'i wanna be zapped' (SOFA, Christchurch, September 2005).

² Beshty writes, "our own surroundings are tailored to our desires, our sense of self is externalised to the point of complete erasure. We fear becoming as inhuman as the objects that are meant to reflect our deepest aspirations and desires anominisation". from 'Notes on the Subject Without Qualities: From the Cowboy Flâneur to Mr Smith', *Afterall* ,(8), p.125.

³ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999, p.448.

⁴ Tom McDonough 'The Crimes of the Flâneur', *October*, (102), Winter 2002, p.101.

⁵ Glad product advertisements, which are still running, centre on the slogan 'better living everyone'. the Glad website states "Managing your busy life is a challenge, but managing your kitchen doesn't have to be. Glad can help. Every time you try a new recipe, pack those school lunches, throw a dinner party, or even clean out the fridge, we've got just the right GLAD® product to help make your chores a little bit easier. How do you like them apples?". Retrieved from www.glad.com, 07/09/05.

⁶ Hal Foster, 'The ABCs of Contemporary Design,' *October*, (100), Spring 2002, 194-5.

⁷ Rem Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', *October*, (100), Spring 2002, p.176.

⁸ Ibid, 176-78

⁹ J.J. King, with Matthew Hyland, 'Seventeen Reduced Propositions for Francis Upritchard', *Doomed, Doomed, All Doomed*, ARTSPACE exhibition catalogue, Auckland, February, 2005.

¹⁰ Matthew Hyland, 'The teeth of the underdog's saw', *Natural Selection*, (4), 2005, p.5.7

¹¹ there's a sense to which this is lazy, generic quoting on my behalf, but the more I think about it, the more I think it's right, see, www.imageandtext.org.nz/alicia.html

¹² Don DeLillo, *White Noise*, London:Picador, 1986, p.306.

¹³ Benjamin writes against the rubberneck who disappears into the crowd, 'who is absorbed by the external world', distinguishing the flâneur as a devotee to 'that ancient dream of humanity, the labyrinth'. see *Arcades Project*, pp. 429-430.

¹⁴ See 'The return of the flâneur' in *Selected Writings Vol. 2*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003, p.264.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.265.

¹⁶ Op. cite.