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Deconstructing Tercerunquinto

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Much of Tercerunquinto’s work around the turn of the millennium was characterized by a talent for intervention in the spatial relations of neighborhood. This intervention was made particularly explicit in a project called *Videoclases* (2007), a word that came-...
A set of spacing procedures constitutes a counterpart to the breaching procedures described above. Perhaps the most poetical example of these is Deleuze’s reterritorialization of the old administrative (Dismantling and Restoration of the National Croat, 2008), commissioned by the Centre d’Art Contemporain of Toulouse (CCGT) as part of a broader commemoration of the victims of disturbances and borderlines who were murdered by federal troops at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City on October 2, 1968. In the weeks leading up to the fortieth anniversary of the Tlatelolco massacre, Terceurunquinto removed five of the six archive panels that comprise the Mexican national cross on the façade of the CCGT. On October 2, 2008, the last of the six panels was dismantled, leading in its place an empty space. This stood as a poignant index of the state of exception that had exemplified the perpetrators of the massacre from the rule of the law. The following day, however, the artists re-installed the work in the exhibition space, where it was periodically cleaned and polished.

Terceurunquinto’s project, however, is not complete without the totality of the intervention takes place in the exhibition space, where it is periodically cleaned and polished by university museum workers. This act of spacing confined the distinction between inside and outside by leveling the museum’s proper name from its proper place. (Derrida had of course already acknowledged that “the properness of the name does not escape spacing.”)

The spacing procedure that distinguishes these projects from the preceding procedures described above implies, again, a relation to phenomenality. Spacing—the blank intercalate that separates the words on this page, these very words, here—is precisely the non-phenomenal, that which does not disclose itself to sensory experience. The impossibility of a brisure that would articulate these two different procedures has become evident only in some of the artists’ more recent projects.

Whether or not the artist had intended to do this, the fall of Wafa Bush Toaf (2009) would destroy its own title. The project was to be part of Desert to Revolution, an exhibition curated by James Voorhees at the Columbus College of Art & Design in Columbus, Ohio, as part of his Generous Open Culture initiative. The artists proposed to reclaim the eponymous words—spelling it correctly, the blank intercalate that separates the words on this page, these very words, here—is precisely the non-phenomenal, that which does not disclose itself to sensory experience. The impossibility of a brisure that would articulate these two different procedures has become evident only in some of the artists’ more recent projects.

The Military Revolution (1976), trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 39-40 and still a relatively new development in fifteenth-century Europe. See Geoffrey Parker, was the first to conceive of polygonal walls as an effective architectural defense against heavy artillery, never complete”—have arrived at a breach into which they cannot step. By contrast, Terceurunquinto’s most felicitous negotiation process to date has perhaps been New Langton Art’s Archive for Sale: A Sacrificial Act (2007, 2013). In 2007, during a visit to New Langton Art’s San Francisco facility, the artists approached the museum director and suggested that the institution might consider selling its archive for New Langton Arts: it was to be A Sacrificial Act. From an anthropological standpoint, the title of this project constitutes something of a category error, as sacrifice by definition entails an act of making (sacred) (sacred) and—it is thus a form of communion with the divine—whereas a sale is mediated by the money form, would be difficult to regard as anything but the most profane of human acts. If this sacrifice, the artists were suggesting that the organization divest itself of both its institutional memory and its symbolic capital, thereby committing a kind of auto-decapitation. The money form of New Langton Art’s payment would similarly serve as the vehicle for the organization’s resurrection to come. With this sacrificial act, the collective negotiation process has assumed a distinctly messianic cast.

This confrontation with death is the experience of the impossible to exceed. And here Terceurunquinto’s analysis has placed before them yet another threshold. They are posed to take their leave of the ontological that grounds Western aesthetics alone Aristotelian philosophical principle of虚空: in terms of its relation to the realm of the probable. But to displace this ontology, to depart from the realm of the actual, the probable, the imminent, or the virtual would be to step into death itself. “The impossible is the final death, the necessity for destruction for existence.” The impossible, as Derrida argued late in his own life, is a special kind of origin. The sacrifice proposed to embody the eponymous words—which inscribes itself in the artists’ performative gesture.

With the project’s negotiation process thereby foreshadowed, the project went unrealized. Terceurunquinto’s most felicitous negotiation process to date has perhaps been New Langton Art’s Archive for Sale: A Sacrificial Act (2007, 2013). In 2007, during a visit to New Langton Art’s San Francisco facility, the artists approached the museum director and suggested that the institution might consider selling its archive for New Langton Arts: it was to be A Sacrificial Act. From an anthropological standpoint, the title of this project constitutes something of a category error, as sacrifice by definition entails an act of making (sacred) (sacred) and—it is thus a form of communion with the divine—whereas a sale is mediated by the money form, would be difficult to regard as anything but the most profane of human acts. If this sacrifice, the artists were suggesting that the organization divest itself of both its institutional memory and its symbolic capital, thereby committing a kind of auto-decapitation. The money form of New Langton Art’s payment would similarly serve as the vehicle for the organization’s resurrection to come. With this sacrificial act, the collective negotiation process has assumed a distinctly messianic cast.

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No young artist can resist a $50,000 cannon blast, 2012. Installation view at Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, part of the group show Resisting the Present, Mexico 2000-2012. Courtesy of the artists.