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# EDITORIAL

Christie Pearson

There are a few things I've learned about you this year, Eros. That in bringing us together you can tear us apart. That my love is just a measure of how much your betrayal hurts. That you flee from us as we pursue you, eternal bohemian, in the love hotels and Taj Mahals, Walden Ponds and Walden 7s. I guess in the end, I simply wasn't prepared. But I thought at least I knew your power.

I was your defender at each turn, perpetually at war with those who insist on your secret agreements and complicities. Still, I will defend you and stay loyal to your principles of ferocity and freedom, sweetness and ache. I want to connect you to politics, to reactivate the *erotic energies of solidarity*,<sup>1</sup> and offer here some imaginaries for that revolution with dancing,<sup>2</sup> the revolution that would produce architectures of *jouissance*.<sup>3</sup> These works move between boudoirs and bunk beds, pools and rivers, microorganisms and moraines, economies of gift and of debt. Critical of identity and the mathematics of the pleasure principle, you begin to emerge as multiple bindings of love, power, and loss in the erotics of the world I am just coming to know.

I see intersections of your power with fields of action.

*Boundaries* seeks an architecture of limits, the boundaries that the erotic loves to challenge: sexuality, human and non-human beings, identity, the edge at which we recognize beauty, and the impossible. *Space* searches for architectures of freedom within the cracks, through the cultivation of practice and the conjuring of spells. *Home* turns inward, to be enveloped and nested in architecture's domestic matrix of bliss/death. *Body* embraces the site of revolution by prodding and sounding a bio-political architecture open to erotic superimpositions of landscape and geological formations. *Territory* expands toward new horizons of the concrete imaginary, tactically consolidating power in the service of love as staked out by the global Occupy movements, 15-M, #BlackLivesMatter, Idle No More and the Arab Spring, to focus on the courage of the women of Rojava.

I see both your creative and destructive aspects in our relationships with collaborators; in our bonds with so-called "materials"; shifting, dynamic relations on the micro- and macro-scales, always going deeper. I admit that you disgust me at times, as you spread and multiply. I guess I do the same thing. I think I am dying. My every act of reproduction is a testament to your greatness, while the offspring of those acts mirror my end. I leap out of species for you, search, then find, then lose you across the wide-open earth while falling into love with every crevice and crest. Every (a)sexual being ferments with your hum. I want to stay there/here, auto-erotically resonating with everything as myself/not myself.

**I was talking with my friend Safra and learned that the place she loved the most was a place she had never been. The key to her heart was reserved for something as-yet inaccessible, unseen, and imagined. If she had visited and *seen the real lions and big cats and lots of other stuff* she described, would she still rank it Number One? Does impossibility fuel desire? And more to the point, was Anne Carson correct about your nature as held in the tension between the lover and beloved, collapsing at the point of union? A dynamism she extracts from Sappho as dependent on a third, on limit and impossibility.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps that third is you: perhaps it is one of your alchemical agents.**

...when we begin to live from within outward, in touch with the power of the erotic within ourselves, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us, then we begin to be responsible to ourselves in the deepest sense. For as we begin to recognize our deepest feelings, we begin to give up, of necessity, being satisfied with suffering and self-negation, and with the numbness which so often seems like their only alternative in our society. Our acts against oppression become integral with self, motivated and empowered from within. In touch with the erotic, I become less willing to accept powerlessness, or those other supplied states of being which are not native to me, such as resignation, despair, self-effacement, depression, self-denial.<sup>5</sup>

**You show me that there are things worth fighting for. Is this part of the de-sublimation we have been planning? *Sensual and ludic values*,<sup>6</sup> compassion and empathy need defense. Opening to you, I seem to feel more pain as well. Yet I will continue to follow, my comrade, my ideal reader, my partner, even as you flee.**

<sup>1</sup> Franco Berardi, *On Eros, Communication, Desire and Semiocapitalism*, in this issue, pages 13–19.

<sup>2</sup> Attributed to Emma Goldman: "If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution."

<sup>3</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, ed. Łukasz Stanek, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 59.

<sup>4</sup> Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986)

<sup>5</sup> Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1978), 58.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Lamborn Wilson, *Eros and Thanatopia* *Scapegoat Journal*, in this issue, pages 21–23.

# EDITORIAL

Nasrin Himada

(White) spatiality: There is a specter here that haunts this space. It has multiple faces. We'll call one white supremacy: the belief in the universal, a pure idea arrived at by a series of white men who have combed through culture and curated its worth. Another face we'll call visual oppression. We'll call it passing. We'll call it presence without provocation. We'll call it just enough black faces to assuage liberal guilt without the discomfort of challenging anything. We'll call it the fantasy of postracial America. We'll call it visible invisibility.

**Eunsong Kim and Maya Isabella Mackrandilal<sup>1</sup>**

**I wonder how often I think with/in whiteness, how often I perpetuate its conditioning. This concept of "white spatiality" reminds me of a question posed by poet Bhanu Kapil: "How much of your life energy is spent recovering from the experience of moving through the physical space in which you are a minority member?"<sup>2</sup>**

**The white box that is the gallery space is any space whatever—the backdrop that envelops our postures, positions, investigations. (White) spatiality coordinates movement. It is not merely the spectre that haunts space, but actually spatializes it: drawing its edges, marking its limits, anointing its appearance, and colonializing its entrances and exists.**

*Colonial borders border the frame.*

(White) spatiality delimits perception so that what we see we think we just get. It conditions white supremacy and "visual oppression," creating what Kim and Mackrandilal call "visible invisibility." Referring specifically to the curatorial method and model implemented by the curators of the 2014 Whitney Biennial, they write: "The insertion of people of color into white space doesn't make it less colonial or more radical—that's the rhetoric of imperialistic multiculturalism, a bullshit passé theory. What's more, the 2014 Whitney Biennial didn't even bother to insert more people of color. The gesture was merely rhetorical."<sup>3</sup>

The gesture is often rhetorical. The insertion of people of colour into white space is never a given. It is a tactic employed to "diversify" the project, to simply mask or downplay the power inherent in what already makes a space a white space, which is white supremacy. In spaces like the Whitney, it's not a concern to contend with what it would mean to challenge these colonial structures. It is gestural: a pat on the back.

Isn't this institutional standard operating procedure? To only do what seems enough?

*To make "race" visible enough.*

In editing this issue on eros, a question persisted: how do I dislodge whiteness from within the spaces I work in? During the editorial process I saw this proposition as an act of love in itself. Questioning how whiteness manifests in space, or constitutes space—how whiteness (re)appears—is at the heart of what I do, and forms my many modes of expression.

*This is loving.* To push against what conditions a white space is urgently compelling. To push against what makes us disappear is space-making, and that in turn becomes desire-making: not to enter their space, but create new spaces for those we love.<sup>4</sup> Sara Ahmed writes: "When we think this question 'who appears?' we are asked a question about how spaces are occupied by certain bodies who get so used to their occupation that they don't even notice it. They are comfortable, like a body that sinks into a chair that has received its shape over time. To question who appears is to become the cause of discomfort. It is almost as if we have a duty not to notice who turns up and who doesn't. Just noticing can get in the way of an occupation of space."<sup>5</sup>

But let's not stop at just noticing the immediate effect of no-relation from the spaces we enter. Love is action. After all.

Following a rigorous and sharp critique of the Biennial itself, its mandate and platform, Kim and Mackrandilal turn their backs to it by writing about the artists of colour who are featured, like Etel Adnan and taisha paggett. In order to further break with the corrupt curatorial procedure of the institution, Kim and Mackrandilal begin a new section: "We're tired of talking about them. We all know who they are. Let's talk about us. Let's talk about the people on the margins of things. Let's talk about the ones who slip through."<sup>6</sup>

Yes, let's talk about us. Let's talk about what we do, how we do it, whom we do it for, and how we form acts of love.

This is the power of critique: to intervene in order to ultimately change the scene. The power of love is an ethos here: how to create an ethical mandate constituted by other ways of knowing and doing?<sup>7</sup>

*Love makes space here.*

I worked directly with the following contributors: Eunsong Kim, Jen Hofer, Cameron Hu, Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Douglas Kearney, Adam Szymanski, and Maiko Tanaka address how political formations of space constitute access, language, an image, an

utterance, a scene, a letter. Alexis Bhagat, Sherry Walchuk, Alexis Mitchell, Laura Broadbent and Lisa Robertson investigate notions of making space in reconstructing a dwelling, sexing the camp, and the bodying of a concept.

In each piece, love is felt as a movement in the act, a radical shift in thought. In each piece, readers are compelled by the poetics and politics of the relation between eros, architecture, political economy, and landscape. How else to think love as that which makes space appear, but through the investigations that take us in—personally, intensely—through experiments in process, form and content.<sup>8</sup>

Love conditions the relational expressions made here: "Who are you and who do you love?"<sup>9</sup>

**1**  
Eunsong Kim and Maya Mackrandilal, "The Whitney Biennial for Angry Women," *The New Inquiry*, 14 April 2014, [thenewinquiry.com/essays/the-whitney-biennial-for-angry-women](http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/the-whitney-biennial-for-angry-women).

**2**  
Bhanu Kapil, "Notes for an Essay on Structural Violence," *Was Jack Kerouac a Punjabi? (No. But I, too, hitch-hiked, studied Buddhism, etc.)*, 8 November 2015, [jackkerouacispunjabi.blogspot.ca/2015/11/notes-for-essay-on-structural-violence.html](http://jackkerouacispunjabi.blogspot.ca/2015/11/notes-for-essay-on-structural-violence.html).

**3**  
Kim and Mackrandilal, "The Whitney Biennial for Angry Women."

**4**  
Here, I am indebted to poet and scholar Tisa Bryant, who is quoted in Eunsong Kim's "Found Found Found: Lived Lived LIVED," featured in this issue. Bryant writes: "There is another instrumentality for POCs and Black women, and that is for white people to take the processes and concepts of our work and turn them into the grounds for their careers, as niche on the job market, as beacons of a magical singularity that had no presence or expression in them before they absorbed our light. To make our stuff into 'a thing' that they do, theorize, brand and perform. But here is notice: you cannot do what I do because you do not love who I love."

**5**  
Sara Ahmed, "Making Feminist Killjoys," *feministkilljoys*, 11 September 2013, [feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points](http://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points).

**6**  
Kim and Mackrandilal, "The Whitney Biennial for Angry Women."

**7**  
Denise Ferreira Da Silva, "Toward a Black Feminist Poethics: The Quest(ion) of Blackness Toward the End of the World," *The Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 81.

**8**  
We never think alone. While putting this issue together I read with and thought alongside writers I admire and look to for support. Thank you: Eunsong Kim, Bhanu Kapil, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Jen Hofer, Jennifer Tamayo, Fred Moten, and Maya Mackrandilal.

**9**  
Kapil, "Notes for an Essay on Structural Violence."