

VI. This year, I have completed two projects that play with the problems suggested by this amalgam. First I wrote and codirected a cinematic, database novel entitled Bleeding Through. Layers of Los Angeles 1920-86 (ZKM in Karlsruhe. Labyrinth/USC in LA), It is essentially the second volume of -the history of forgetting more about how photography and

VII. Hollywood films erase memory about booterism (as in my first volume). The intimacy that collective forgetting generates is similar to watching an old movie about a city that was invented purely on a movie back lot, with a back story filled with consumer fantasies, about downtowns in noir high contrast lighting. The central character in Bleeding Through, Molly may have Killed her second husband, but does not behave like a noir heroine. She is not afflicted by guilt. She feels quite at home. As she walks through streets that served as locations for hundreds of -movies murders - in and around downtown. LA Through nests of photos and films and a kind of picaresque novel (over a thousand assets in all) the viewer enters the dynamics of how collective memory is "distracted" by media. A second project covers the history of scripted spaces and lavish illusionistic environments from 1550 to the present: The Vatican to Vegas. The History of Special Effects (from the Baroque to Electronic Baroque.

But at the heart of all these projects (scripted and otherwise) is the schizophrenic divide in the city itself in 2003 in a public sector in LA that devolves into a warlord chaos- while the monuments of media politics get larger, and more constitutionally normalized. Underneath the glamor of its new suburbanized downtown, we find contradictions that will undoubtedly melt in all directions from downtown LA to Bushismo, this is one movie that does not have its third act yet. If these are the early scenes, however, the rest will undoubtedly surprise us.

Increasingly much of downtown LA has become a back lot for the movies. On many of the upper floors along Broadway, and all the way to the loft warehouse district, movies are being shot. Even Spiderman's New York was shot partly over Broadway. Sometimes movie helicopters, for an action sequence, compete with police helicopters known as ghetto birds (actually searching for crime). The two share the same space overhead but manage not to collide. One wonders how long that equipoise will last and whether cultural critics like NY self can stop using worn-out twentieth century models of disaster, and capture instead the realities of this matured Electronic Baroque word as it careens toward the future.

**STREET SINGS: Urban invocations for the World (from underneath your feet)
Shuddhabrata Sengupta.**

I want to begin my presentation by reading from a series of notes made in the course of research for two installations by the Raqs Media Collective in the last year. I refer to these, as a line of aide memoir of images, and effects, that to mind register the city, in my thought, and in the artistic and media practice that my colleagues in the Raqs Media Collective and I enter into, when we engage with the city, as an idea, and as a provocation for our work.

**I. When the day begins in Mexico City a night begins in Delhi...
Preliminary notes for Locationⁿ⁶**

On a global scale- awakening and exhaustion, love and grief, hunger and joy are all emotions that occur at the same time, in different places. When someone ends their working day in London, the office moves, across the internet to a location in Delhi where a new person occupies the virtual workspace that her distant colleague just left. She opens his file as he walks home. When it rains bombs Baghdad at night, it is time for cook supper in New York,

the hands and facts of clocks expressionless and neutral though they may be, can be read as if they registered and calibrated a gamut of emotions through the global night and day.

The drawing of the twenty first century has witnessed the dissolution of time zones and date lines. We are now everywhere and always in a state of jet lag, catching up with the soft insidious ticking away of panic in our heads, in time with accelerated heartbeats and the speeding of our everyday lives, our daily bio-rhythms, (time to rise and time to sleep, times for work a leisure, time for sunlight and time for stars), get muddled as our faces find themselves lit by the light of millions of network screens. The wan light of data flickering across screens, makes day for naught, and night for day. Just as, at an earlier moment, the introduction of electric lighting lengthened the working day. It constructs artifices of emotional states and ways of being as we replace sleeping with waking, hunger with stimulation and that peace of our minds with images of intimate terrors and distant wars.

II. Notes for a work on the city of Delhi in the first years of the 21st Century7

An array of numbers denoting the days accident statistics – a scorecard of injuries and deaths –stands at a busy intersection. The numbers change everyday, roadkill rises with the temperature in summer, and thickens with the smog in Winter.

A sign commemorating a slum demolition warns squatter against attempts are rebuilding shacks.

A blackboard covered with chalk inscriptions. The details of each day's missing persons and the roster of the unclaimed dead, on the wall of a police station on the old city – a new inscription list woman as missing and then as unclaimed dead.

The text of a White Paper on Civil Defense in the event of a nuclear attack details of the

number and distribution mechanism and artificial mind to be made available to survivors.

"Warnings at a cybercafe to surfers that their online behavior may be monitored,

Slide show at the cinema in the interval images of teddy bears, lunch boxes, hand-bags and radios -Careful! Abandoned objects may conceal explosives deceives!"

Announcements on the radio asking the public of desist from paying attention to rumors of a masked killer ape, cyborg, or any other unidentified creatures of the night.

Grim men with large weapons of film posters plastered on the wall of an underpass. Smiling men with promises on election posters plastered on the walls of an underpass. Vacant faces with masks on for an ad for cosmetics on the walls of an underpass Gods, goddesses, godmen, healers, prophets an saints on the wall of an underpass.

An array of identikit faces – wanted by the police for terrorism – the features, assembled out database of faces, could be the contours of anybody's face.

A police officers megaphone voice taking his men through the paces of a daily barricade erection drill at a space for public demonstrations in the city centre.

A medical transcribers identity card, containing details of the amount of hours, of data she logs in each shift.

The telephone voice of a call centre worker, the swift change the vocalization of consonants, diphthongs, nasals and vowels as she takes a call from California spaces of the city, made into film sets by surveillance cameras. A man crosses a grainy frame in the footage, disappears, reappears and looks up at lens.

*Traffic Lights, stenciled with the words
"RELAX" glowing to themselves at night.*

A photographic image of the city, taken by satellite in geo-stationary orbit on a clear day. The radials and straight lines and spaghetti loops of roads, patches of green and rust, the meander of a river and a code that spells a location, and time: 28.28N/77.15E:+4.5hrs UTS. The photograph gives nothing away, it shows everything. This image, of the city that I come from, Delhi, in from a array of images is now in the custody of the Pentagon, which bought out all the images of South and Central Asia taken by this satellite, in preparation for the Afghanistan campaign, last year. I had downloaded, it some two and half years ago, while on a random search for images of my city on the internet from the then public archive of the Satellite's images. Images of my city trapped in a vault, located in another city. Images. Images of my city, a fragment of data, which may one day become a virus in hard drive and infect the realities of another

III: A City is a Provocation...

A city is a provocation for acts of making meaning, a map waiting for a reader, an invocation that always awaits its Messenger. Crowded with experiences, people, memories and histories, city spaces demand interpretation, and inscription.

Streets ask for signs, Crossroads intersections, over bridges, cul-de-sacs, and grids wait to be written on to imagined topographies.

Let me quote here from the writing of a young Mexican media activist. Fran illich, who has always impressed me with the astuteness with which he observes the contemporary moment in his work.

-...At once you have them all walking into the city the pariah and the outcasts, the lonely writers coming from the provinces and towns and small creepy cities, cities which

don't exist and aren't contemplated by time itself maybe, in their homeland cities, which they already left in the past, they could tune into the worst happenings of network TV infomercials, telenovelas, propaganda and snow – there's always snow on TV. There are roaming tourist with guides in their hands looking closely for things they will never find following steps and instructions every moment only to find that they will be forever a step too far, and bottom models from every miserable part of the country trying to become top, but always missing that special something that they could never become: sure, sure, sure there's plastic reconstruction, genetic synthesis, but basically there is never a chance to find what it takes This is a city that renews itself with every step, and still it's always the same... the map is fading and blending, and yet it's still the same. Everyone here is a replacement of a constant in the equation.

(If I hadn't told you that this was written by a young man called Fran illich, about Mexico City I could have passed this off as the kind of thing that a young artist in a city called Delhi might have written, while watching a dubbed Mexican telenovela on late night Indian satellite TV But for now let that pass.)

We are forever reaching destinations inside the city, and in our own lives. That address each of us as long-term inhabitants, transients, strangers and hostages. We may be hostages to the city but we also hold the keys to our own freedom within it Some of these keys are artworks, and the things that can be made from the residues, as well as anticipation of various artistic practices I see the city as a demand for an art that addresses the nature of our times.

The streets of our cities, and the pathways of our daily lives are jammed with traffic. The skies we live under are crossed with cables, the Ground beneath our feet is a cobweb of mud, rocks and optical fiber.

Traffic and data traffic. Wires and wirelesses, codes and codecs. Define that way we are and will be from now on, at least for the foreseeable future. Crucially, this also means that the urban sprawls on the planet, wherever they may be located, enter shifting configurations of meta-urban cluster, linked by data flows. The fact of globalism is something that we would be foolish to discount anymore as the most crucial experience shaping all our lives. Cities are the vessels and vectors of this experience. All of us who are urban, are also global.

IV BORDERS AND NETWORKS

Paradoxically, this occurs, at a time when the senile security paranoia of the nation state also places the most severe restrictions on the freedom of movement. To give you just an example. The journey from New Delhi to Mexico City took me through seven security checks at four airports, and detailed questioning by the immigration officers of four countries, India France, the United States and Mexico Had I Tried to come to Mexico as an ordinary traveler. It would have been impossible, because Mexico no longer grants tourist visas to Indian nationals. Perhaps due to pressure building up from the gatekeepers across your northern borders which specify who may or may not be let into the neighborhood Were I a Pakistani, or a not very well off Bangladeshi trying to meet relatives in the city of New Delhi, the difficulties that I would have to face would have been difficult by a hundredfold. No nation state has a monopoly on the quality of cussedness towards outsiders.

So what do we have, millions of inhabitants living in increasingly globalized cities, an explosion of the numbers of displaced people, exiles, refugees, economic migrants, and workers who straddle intercontinental distances on the telecom networks and an increasing insularity in the politics of culture, and in the culture of politics Networks that open and borders that close.

Nowhere, unless perhaps in dreams, can the phenomenon of the boundary be experienced in a more originally way than in cities! said Walter Benjamin. Although he was talking of the way in which cities desegregate into quarters, and districts, each with their own distinctions, we could transpose this stray remark of Benjamin's to read new meanings about the condition of being in cities that carry the world in them, In carrying the world, they reproduce within themselves the ubiquity of the phenomenon of the border I could speculate that it is because the Tijuana border is what it is. I and Indio have to carry an identity certificate with me issued by the government of Mexico. The city that I come from will also soon awake mandatory the carrying of an identity card inscribed with biometric information. Two senses of the word citizen, get conflated here, the inhabitant, of denizen of a city and the subject of a nation state, and the second threatens to eat up the first. So that the freedom of the city, becomes in time, the dank air of the prison of the state.

Where else, but in the cities, in Mexico City, Chicago, Durban, Dubai and Delhi, Sao Paulo. Shanghai and Sydney –can these realities be glimpsed on a daily basis. This condition of our lives, this shifting contour of the nature of everyday networked existence that is the mundane reality of a twenty-first century urban space, suggests that we make the fact of begin located in any given city and the concomitant fact of placelessness, of not having a place where you live, become a criterion for evaluating whether or not the adventures of the aesthetic bear any fidelity to the nature of this moment.

I would like to offer you here a consideration on a word that I find useful when thinking about how one can best represent and articulate the condition of our networked urban existence. I will read now to you an entry for the word -liminal - from "The concise lexicon of the Digital Commons" a text that we in the Raqs Media

Collective wrote as a prelude to some of our recent work.

-Liminal:

Interstitial, vestibular and peripheral. Far from the center, close to the border, a zone both between and without, larger structures. Liminal spaces and moments are those into which large stable structures leak animated data about themselves and the world. Things happen in liminal zones. A city carries within it the contradiction of liminal zones located in its center, because inner cities are the city's farthest borderlands.

Liminal fringes are often the most conducive environments for the culture of memes. This is because exile images ideas and meanings from several stable structures mingle in the corridors between them. Here, bereft of identities and other certainties they are free to be promiscuous and reproduce. They infect each other with recombine art strands of thought and image at the same time perspective of liminality to bear with an exclusion. Being liminal is to be close to your stand outside the site of the border of any stable system of signs where meaning is frayed from being nibbled at on the edges. Nothing can know the center better than the sideways glance of peripheral vision. Liminality may be acquired from prolonged exposure to the still art of airport departures lounges, thick and over boiled tea at the interstate, but Terminus on the ring road in Delhi, or the subliminal flicker of a cursor in an email message.

I think you can get a sense of the kind for aesthetic practice, that I am alluding to by deploying this quotation interstitial, vestibular, and peripheral. Which allow for the promiscuous, and secretly joyous mingling of images ideas, and meanings from the stable structures of national cultures, in the corridors that are forged between and across them. In the back alleys and basements of global cities, from

where, the sharp sounds and accents of a what the cultural theorist Mackenzie Wark has called a *Globalization from Below* – have begun to emerge, from underneath your feet.

Today, we need a mode of cultural practice that can enlarge our sensory, intellectual and emotional horizons, in order to make space for acts of reflections on our lives as data bodies as fluid and floating clusters of information and meaning. We need a sensory context in which we can examine how we are reflected and multiplied in the compound eye of the apparatus of signs and information that surrounds us and streams through us. We need to know how to offer counter examinations of our own.

V. CITIES AND THE FUTURE ART.

Let me end by quoting a fragment of another text that I wrote last year, as a meditation on what the work of the artist might hold as promise for an imagined future.

'It is as if the pray paint of potential experience, were to mark the walls of the city of the present, with the cryptic signature of its own graffiti enabling life to teach passers by, the citizens of the present, the grammar and the lexicon of a new language for talking about the everyday-ness of the future.

It is to say – here take your passport, your newspaper, your identity card, your work permits, your electoral register, your health record, your social security number, your x ray, your bank statement, your doctors, prescription, your inheritance, your insurance, your wage bill, your shopping list, your debit, your balance sheet, your inventory your fear, your anxiety, your boredom, your humiliation and see what happens if you were to then make them into paste and fashion a papier mache object out of them like you did once with waste paper in primary school recall for once the joy of watching certainties being mashed into pulp.

Watch how the glistening laminate of the passport cover can run and melt when touched, see the figures in the bank statement and the wage bill dance, watch the decimals explode, witness fear dissolving”.

“To make art for the future is to add substance to this speculation to enact it to Perform it, as one would a rite, is to change reality by making another reality occur. To be witness to that art is to listen to whispers from the future, to decode signed and unsigned messages. These messages can be laments, prophecies, or calls for celebration, or puzzles and enigmas but they will all ask us to turn away from the present moment on to some unmapped and immediate tomorrow, which is not merely an accumulation of today's all revolutionaries must lead to be artists even if all artists need not be revolutionaries.

What kind of artists can prepare us for the future? Artist who are willing to hold in abeyance the barriers between artwork and world who can say there is no boundary behind which my work needs to be, of authorship, or patronage, or curatorial frames within which it needs to be protected in order to survive. Artists who are willing to be generous with themselves and be demanding of life- Artists who will give away their work, share their work share their work, collaborate and quarrel with others in the making of work and who will freely take from life and form culture whatever is up for grabs Artists who are not bothered by either the pressure to be original or by the need to belong, artists whose daily lives may be woks in progress, and who can create ways of being and working with others that are pleasurable and provocative. Artists for whom there is no need to fetishize style or manner, or technologies, or practices, even while they evolve styles, take on manners push the borders of technologies and transform practices., Artists who even if they sell in the marketplace, know that the market only measures the vanity of the buyer, not the work of the artwork

Such people, whether or not they are recognized as artists, or choose to call themselves as such, may choose to be nameless, may be comfortable ensembles or coalitions, might perform different identities for different purposes, and find themselves more often in a fairground, on the street, in a picket line or on web site than they might be in a gallery, a museum or a studio. For me, the future of art, and the art of the future, hinges on the recognition of these realities, and on artists, on all those who work with art, choosing to create those ways in which they can work in the present that anticipate imagined futures.”

From all the reports that I have been able to gather, it appears that this sensibility of the future is the great as public secret that seems to be circulating between the cities like passwords passing whispered from mouth to mouth outside the gates of citadels. Perhaps the word of art will begin to recognize the cadence of these utterances. From what I have hoped to hear in this conference. It appears that, such an undertaking might already be in progress. We are all pitching in to make our cities hospitable to the world in each of us. What better reason can there be for making art?

PUBLIC SPACE JOSE LUIS BARRIOS

Public spaces are the issue we will be dealing with today their conception and functions, their nature and the shifts they may manifest in the contemporary world context. In a world where the city can no longer be seen as an enclosed territory fundamentally defined by political discourse on national identities or traditional notions of the state in a society where information technology and consumerism have had such an impact that they impose themselves as patterns defining the global; the meaning of public space has changed developing into new forms and processes that no longer merely refer to squares. Parks and streets