

THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT.

NEWSPAPER



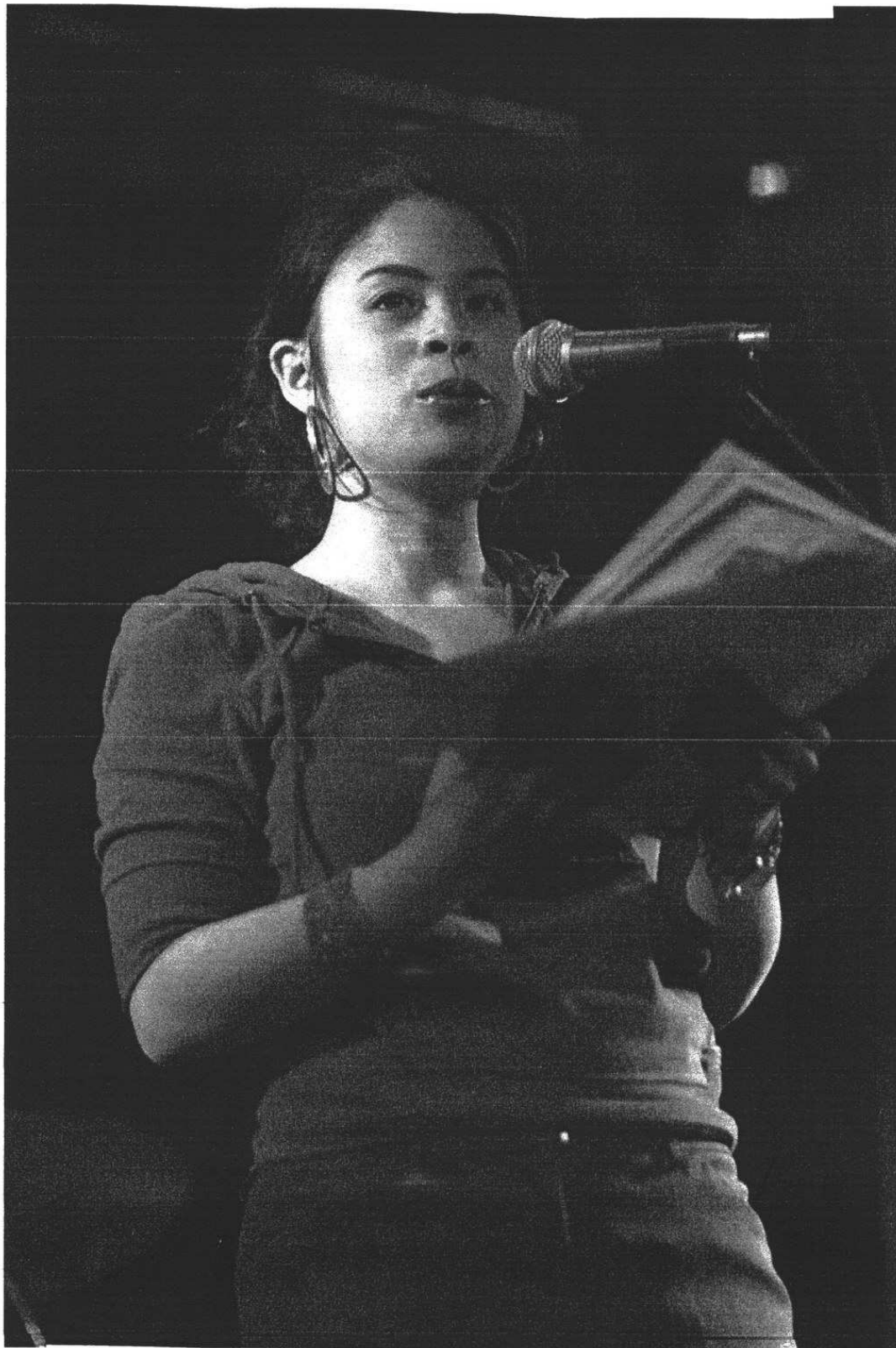
"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 8)



July 17th, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY

The Gramsci Monument-Newspaper is part of the "Gramsci Monument", an artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn, produced by Dia Art Foundation in co-operation with Erik Farmer and the Residents of Forest Houses

SARAH GAMBITO



AMERICAN POET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

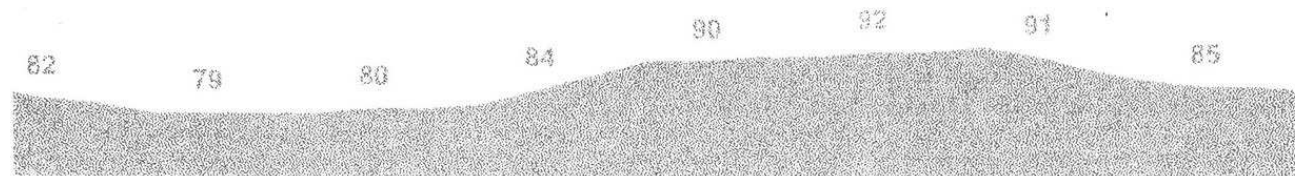
1. Cover Page
2. Table of contents/ Weather
3. About Sarah Gambito.
- 4-5. Poems written by Sarah Gambito.
6. Ambassador's Note #12.
7. Thomas Hirschhorn.
- 8-10. Marcus Lecture
11. Gramsci
- 12-13. Feedback
14. Resident of the Day.

Bronx, NY 10456
 Wednesday
 Partly Cloudy




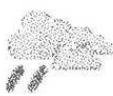




 **93** °F | °C

Precipitation: 10%
 Humidity: 46%
 Wind: 7 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
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12 AM 3 AM 6 AM 9 AM 12 PM 3 PM 6 PM 9 PM

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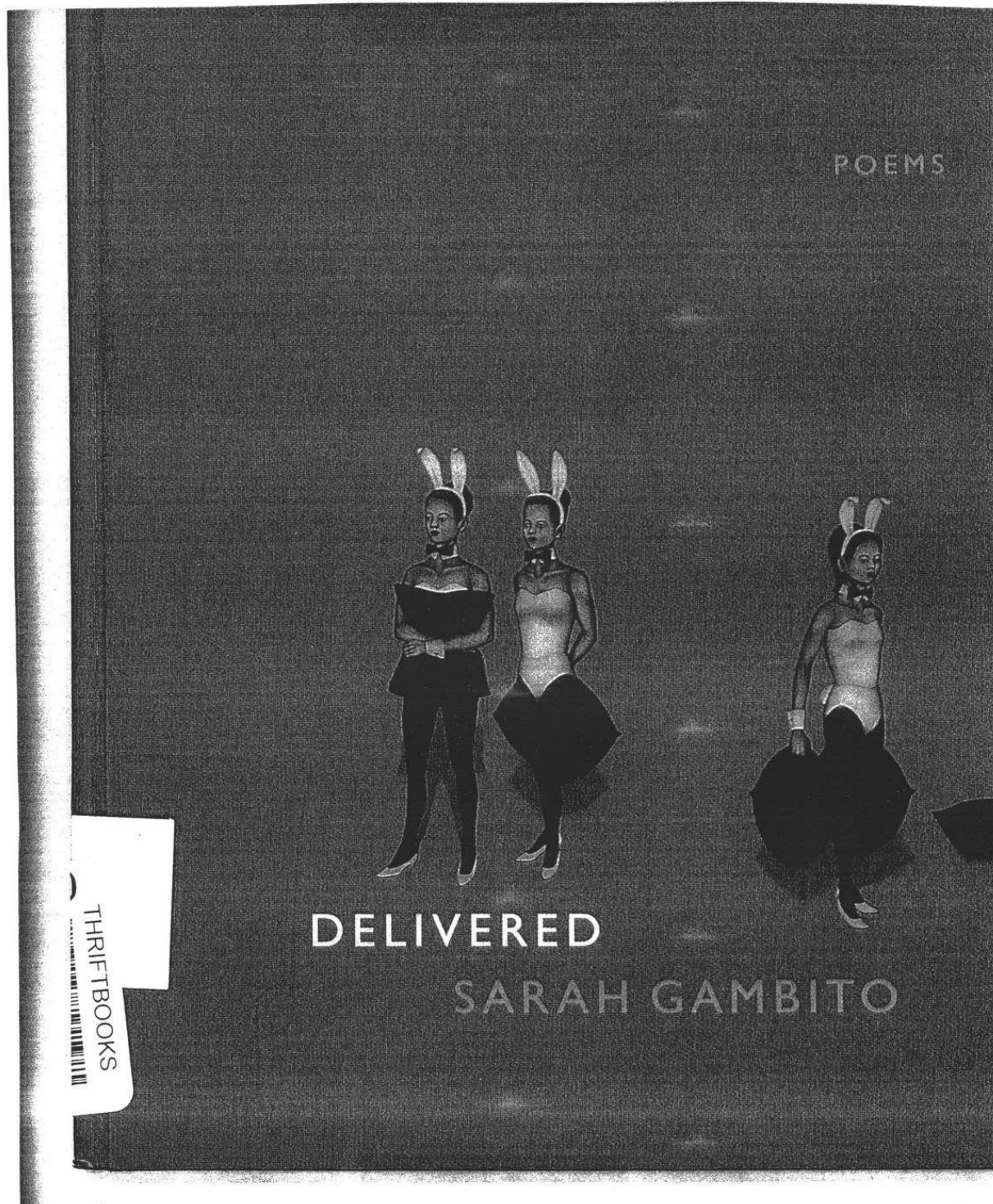
Sarah Gambito

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Sarah Gambito is an American poet and professor. She is the author of two collections of poetry, most recently, *Delivered* (Persea Books, 2009). Her first collection, *Matadora* (Alice James Books, 2004), was a New England/New York Award winner and won the 2005 Global Filipino Literary Award for Poetry.^{[1][2]}

Her honors include a Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award from *Poets & Writers*, and grants and fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Urban Artists Initiative,^[3] and a MacDowell Colony Fellowship.^[4] Her poems have been published in literary journals and magazines including *The Iowa Review*, *The Antioch Review*, *The New Republic*, *Quarterly West*, *Fence*, and in anthologies including *From the Fishhouse* (Persea Books, 2009).^[5]

Gambito earned her B.A. from the University of Virginia and her M.F.A. from Brown University. She is an assistant professor of English and director of creative writing at Fordham University. She is also co-founder, with Joseph Legaspi, of Kundiman (nonprofit organization), which serves emerging Asian-American poets, and she lives in New York City.^[6]



POEMS WRITTEN BY SARAH GAMBITO

A Borderless Ethos Would Please Everyone

I

But everyone says I just want to look.

I won't touch.

On TV I watch you drive grand armed cars.

I imagine the lush seats as an expensive, brushy wine I can't name.

But who I'd like to share with a girl: Carla, Racine, Maria.

A peppery jolting effect.

Look, no hands!

I saw her movie.

Braids brushing the blinking explorer's face.

She was brown and graceful.

Like a land she danced on.

She said I'm yours.

And I wanted her to say that to me too.

30

III

Let's make it more specific.

If I stood next to my grandmother,

headless secrets with droplets of water not here

But over there would condense on my new clothes.

I would be alluring to myself.

I'd lick my arm.

I'd tell her an obvious joke.

One she can see running toward her like a frantic, clean-shaven father.

32

II

But then what happens to my fringe element boy poems?

Picking at vermin in their hair.

And always something tenuous to say.

To be built for the office. Cracking jokes and hanging

onto the color printer for life.

A café. A cordial. A cordial partner. Cordials & a partner.

I wish I could pull it off and wail into the badge.

31

IV

I'm scared

It won't heal anything.

It will heal your foot.

She could ejaculate all over her coach.

And he wanted me to do that too.

Don't you kiiyaaaaa?

Kiiiyayyaaa!

Kiiiyayyaaa.

Because I'm sick of pretending that everything is a brierpatch hymnal.

Or that I'm close to them.

Close to you close to myself how do I get closer.

I say like a new, chewing boyfriend to myself.

You let it go a little.

You don't need everything to be a gymnast.

Relying on herself. All the livelongday.

33

V

Help me to sit at the feet of this lettuce defense.
I've become so hungry that I'm the default reason.
Give me its jawbone.
I'll kill its honey-lion.
I'm stronger than our own protection.
Reserved and ever patient.
I sprang to my defense.
I was better than you.
I wanted it more.

34

VII

I'm not making it up.
Jamming four fingers into a dead toy.
I felt like I wanted to tell him.
Sundry, elevator, striped, searching things.
I was born after the world wars.
I can't touch your hands.
Let me. Give me.
My church's silky, sad hair.

36

VI

I look at the save the children ads.
I am young and lambent.
They can't wipe the rubbery flies off their face.
Big eyes and convulsive smiles.
I said *We have to do something to help her.*
They laughed and said that it was just TV.
But I cram the photographs in her face.
It's the united states and can't she wake up.
I say was it like this.

35

Rapprochement

The art of war teaches us to rely not on the chance of the enemy not attacking but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.

—Sun Tzu

My father called me a chink
so I'd know how to receive it.
So I wouldn't be surprised.

Therefore the good soldier will be terrible in his onset and prompt in his decision.

In the wall, I bricked up my secret.
So it would gush forth. I did this for effect.
So you would know me.

On the day of battle your soldiers might weep bedewing their garments.

But it grew like a bullet loving its flowerstain.
It happened nonetheless.

But let them at once be brought to bay.

Because you are simply my medic watching me.
I'm a poem someone else wrote for me.
All of the characters "beautiful and flawed."

When we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far.

My sister said, you can forget our way of life?
I said yes and was annoyed. She ran away and I was desperate for her.
I was screaming into the mindspeaker.

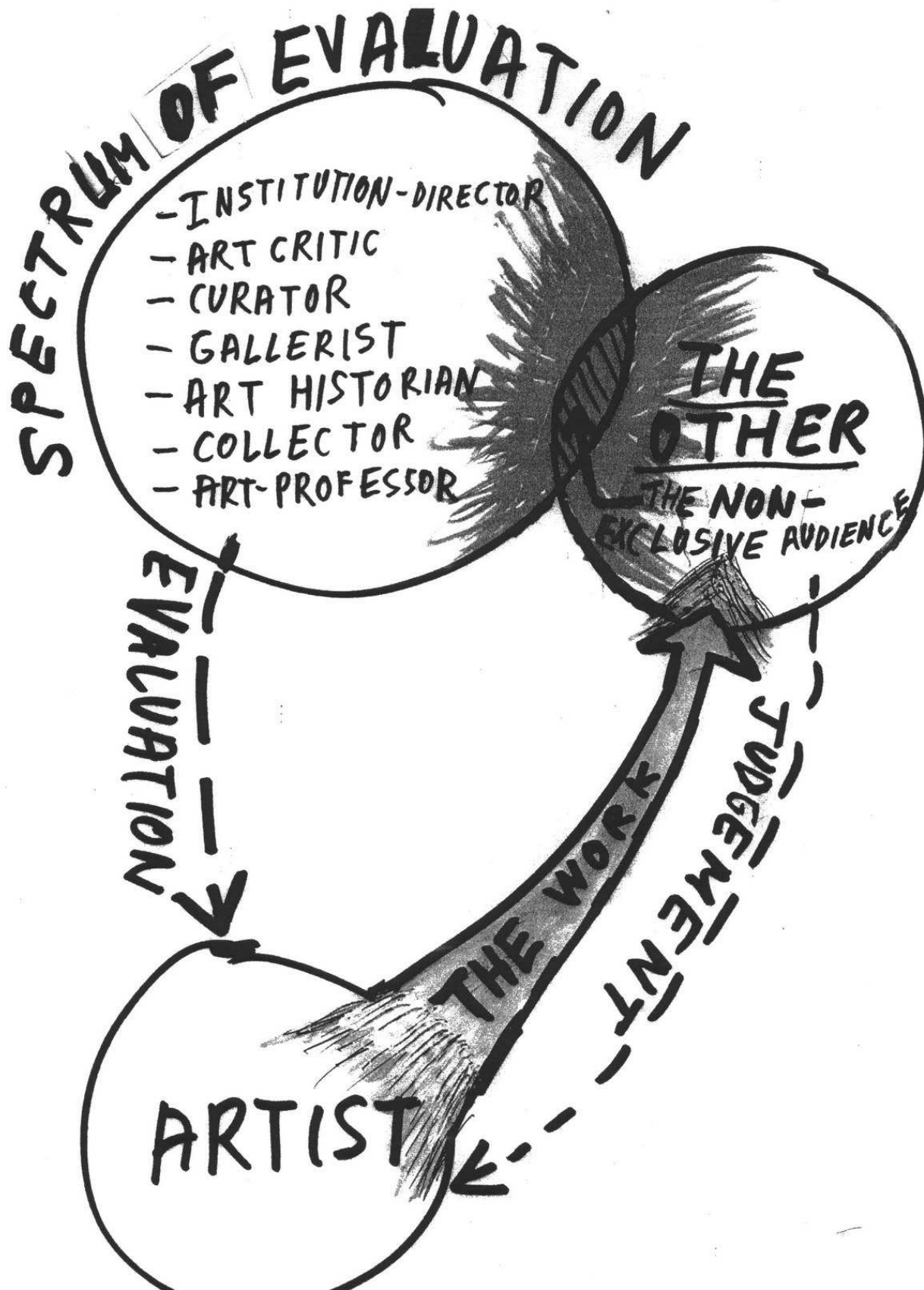
When far away, we must make him believe we are near.

I said, Christine, christine, christine.

61

AMBASSADOR'S CORNER NOTE # 12 BY YASMIL RAYMOND

The monument functions like a massive magnet pulling on people from different walks of life: local residents, foreign visitors, New Yorkers, and what Thomas has often described as the "exclusive audience" which includes: curators, art critics, art historians, gallerists, and people working in the so called art world. Although many visitors remain anonymous in certain occasions their names are revealed and conversations spiral into concrete actions. Among some of the visitors from last week who can be grouped in this category were: a woman by the name of Peaches, a fantastic singer, who improvised a song for Gramsci Radio and promised to return this week for a "Running Event" on Tuesday; and Mike, a music producer who works with young rappers and would like to organize a performance during "Open Mic" this month. We also had the opportunity to welcome Frank Rosengarten and Kate Crehan, both Gramsci scholars and professors at CUNY (their books are part of the Gramsci Library). However, and equally insightful are the exchanges that occur with anonymous visitors. For instance, there is a resident of Forest Houses, a recent immigrant from North Africa, who speaks Arabic and some French but very little English. He comes to the monument accompanied by four toddlers, three boys and one girl. The girl, the youngest from the quartet, is his niece and the leading mediator and translator. After a couple of exchanges the uncle produced a piece of paper with a list of words from his shirt pocket and asked if we had a dictionary in the Gramsci Library. The next day a friend brought one to the monument and for the past three days the young man has been camping at the library with a notebook and his list of words. At the daily "Philosophical Lecture," Marcus Steinweg often repeats Alain Badiou's affirmation that one needs to "Live with an idea." For me, this man's list of word is a telling example of this instructive maxim.



A TEXT FROM THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

"Spectrum of Evaluation"

I made the "Spectrum of Evaluation" diagram for myself in order to clarify for whom I actually want to work; it is a plan for me so that I may orient myself. With this diagram I want to explain what, for me, constitutes the "non-exclusive audience." The "non-exclusive audience" or the "non-exclusive public" is my own term, and I made this term so that I could, for once, define who the public for my work should be. I wanted to establish who I will be turning toward, in and through my work; I also wanted to make a clear statement against the "exclusive public" or the "exclusive audience," AGAINST that which is "exclusive" in general. I continually read and hear the term "exclusive" used in art to argue, to intimidate, and to legitimize. I perceive that even in art, "exclusivity" has become a positive criterion. That can't be, and that cannot go unanswered. I wish to counter it because art has nothing to do with exclusivity; ON THE CONTRARY, art is inclusive; art never excludes. In other words, the "non-exclusive public" is the opposite of a pre-determined, selected, and initiated public. As an artist, it is essential for me to work for a "non-exclusive public."

Regarding my diagram and the circle that I have named "THE OTHER": "The other" is the one who is unknown, the neighbor, the next person, the foreigner, the person who is hostile to me, the person who frightens me, the uninvited, the person who appears unexpectedly, who happens to pass by, the unanticipated. "The other" is ALSO ALWAYS the one with whom I had not reckoned. I want to work for that person. This the reason for the thick arrow in the diagram, "THE WORK," which goes from the artist to "the other." That has to be the dynamic: from the artist to the other. I want to give my work to the other. By contrast, the dynamic should NEVER go from the artist to the "Spectrum of Evaluation." It is essential that I, as an artist, am never located in the "Spectrum of Evaluation," and it is crucial that I have my own position. That is why it is necessary that I have my own POSITION, entirely my own, perhaps indefensible, but MINE. I must have my own circle in the diagram.

As an artist with a work I am not "the other," nor am I a part of the "Spectrum of Evaluation" or the "spectrum of evaluators." As an artist, it is never my place to evaluate, and I never want to take part in the "spectrum of evaluators." The "spectrum of evaluators" is comprised of those who know art, who absolutely love art—I assume so. In the diagram, I have noted seven professions, all of which have to do with art, and which are located in the "spectrum of evaluators" and collectively evaluate art. Not all seven of the professions are in the spectrum all at once—but still, at least in pairs they evaluate art. Those who are in the spectrum evaluate art together: they discuss, they consult, they analyze, they inform themselves, they argue, they exchange, and they COMPARE. But one can only evaluate and compare if one evaluates or compares comparable things. The artist receives the evaluation from the "spectrum of evaluators." However, the artist can't do anything with such "evaluations"; they don't get him anywhere because the artist makes something INCOMPARABLE, and what he makes CAN'T BE COMPARED.

By contrast, what I, as an artist, get from "the other" is a JUDGMENT; my work is JUDGED, which is how it has to be. That is what I work for. I want to be, and must be, prepared for his JUDGMENT. It is never about judging a person; that is the important thing, the beautiful, cruel, and most definitive thing; it is what I need, what propels me onward, what agitates me, that with which I may confront myself, that which makes me think. A judgment is final. And because it is a judgment and not a comparison, it is always also an engagement with the person who is making it. It is a headless, thoughtless engagement. Receiving a judgment is unbelievably valuable; through and with my work, I want to create the preconditions for a judgment. To receive a judgment for something I make is a gift, a personal judgment that comes from the heart. In order for me to receive such a judgment, I must have my own circle in the diagram. I will only succeed if I am outside the "spectrum of evaluators."

What is crucial in my diagram is the fact that the "Spectrum of Evaluation" OVERLAPS with the circle of the other; the core of the "non-exclusive audience" is located in this overlap. No

one is excluded from my work, no one is excluded from being able to judge it. I do not wish to create a new or other exclusivity with my diagram; on the contrary, I want to exclude nothing. But as an artist, I think I must determine the dynamic, the line of force, or the DIRECTION OF IMPACT. That is the reason for this diagram.

Thomas Hirschhorn

2009

[Translated from German by Kenneth Kronenberg.]

A DAILY LECTURE BY MARCUS STEINWEG

17th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 17th July 2013
ONTOLOGICAL POVERTY
Marcus Steinweg

SEVEN FIGURES

THE FIGHTER, THE ANIMAL, THE MONSTER, THE DANCER, THE KID, THE ARTIST, AND THE GHOST

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM

By Marcus Steinweg

EACH FIGURE HAS TO BE PERCEIVED IN ITS SINGULARITY. NONE OF THEM IS IDENTICAL WITH THE OTHER. BUT THEY SHARE THE SAME GROUND OF LIFE. THE FIGHTER, THE ANIMAL, THE MONSTER, THE DANCER, THE KID, THE ARTIST, THE GHOST ARE PART OF THIS ONE WORLD. THEY POPULATE A WORLD WITHOUT EXIT, WITHOUT BEYOND. IF THERE IS NO SECOND WORLD THERE ARE ONE THOUSANDS OF WORLDS AND MORE. ONE MILLION LOCATIONS HERE AND NOW. THE MULTIPLICITY OF THE ONE FIGURE DEMANDS ITS UNDERSTANDING AS A FACTUAL LABYRINTH. LET'S CALL IT THE LABYRINTH OF LIFE. THE FIGURE CONSTITUTES AN ONTOLOGICAL MODALITY OF THE SUBJECT AS SUCH.

1. THE FIGHTER

The fighter has no past.

Like Antigone who first has to fight against her sister Ismene who represents the doxa, the current opinion of the tradition, the fighter does not look back.

It looks forward.
It looks ahead.

The fighter is a headless subject of this blind dynamics towards the unknown, towards contingency.
It is the subject of constitutive blindness.

You have to be blind to be a fighter because everything you see is invisibility as such.
Everything you are in contact with belongs to the future.
Nothing you deal with belongs to your past.

As a fighter you experience the very limit of experience.
You are in touch with your fundamental weakness.

The fighter is another name for the human subject.
It is a subject without subjectivity.

A faceless subject of its ontological poverty.
A nameless subject of an abecedarian nudity.

To fight means to fight against reality.
Reality is not simply a matter of fact.
Its status as incommensurable reveals that it is expansive and distracted.

Toward what does reality open, to what does it expand, with respect to what does it distract itself?
How to think a world without transcendence and yet not substitute for it a phantasm of immanence that negates
possibility of thinking something new, negates freedom and decision, autonomy and the consistency of the

How to back out of the alternative of finitude and infinity, reality and ideality, the possible and the impossible
How to think an opening that opens toward something not-given — toward the nothing itself?
How to affirm this opening toward closure without depriving it of its characteristic openness?

How to think an opening that is not one?

2. THE ANIMAL

Imagine a sleeping animal.
A sleeping spider that suddenly acts.

Imagine your brother, your sister.
Their movements are incalculable but precise and unforgettable.

Imagine your mother, your father.
Like Arachne they are hanging above the abyss of your life.

Imagine yourself as creature of your past.
You will not recognize yourself.

Imagine a dream without exit.
The animal is the subject of this dream.

The animal opens up to the closure of its world.

True opening is opening toward closure, toward emptiness and absence.
It is a rupturing of the texture of options toward its implicit outside.

Toward the naked there is (il y a) or, as Wittgenstein puts it, toward the miracle of the "existence of the world".
An opening not toward the world as it is, as a world of facts, but toward the miracle that it is.

3. THE HYPERBOREAN MONSTER

"We Hyperboreans" is how Nietzsche headed a fragment from his unpublished works dated November 1888.
A few months later he wrote The Anti-Christ.

We Hyperboreans, we who live in the "hyperborean zone", in inhospitability or uninhabitability itself, the extreme
The "hyperborean zone that is far removed from the temperate zones".

We Hyperboreans, we immoderates who only exist in contact with the immeasurable, the unmeasurable or
incommensurable.

We who would rather live "in the ice", says Nietzsche, we withdraw from the "fake peace" and the "cowardly
compromise" of a certain "tolerance" and "largesse of the heart".

We resist the "happiness of weaklings" and the ethics of compassion which these "weak ones" demand (for
themselves, for good reasons) rather than practising it themselves.

We Hyperboreans also means: we, the community of those who are without community, without we-commu-

We solitary ones.
We singularities.

We who touch the limits of the logos that represents the principle of the western we-community.

We who have fallen out of the we-cosmos.
We who have separated from the universality of a transcendental community, from the habitable zone of
transcendental we-subjectivity.

We homeless ones.
We arctic natures.

We monsters who are in contact with the limits of what is familiar, habitual and habitable.
We contact-subjects, we border-natures, we come up against this limit and accelerate beyond this limit.

We uncanny ones or, as Heidegger also says, we homeless ones.
We who are at home in being homeless in uncanny homelessness.

We over-confident ones, we exaggerated ones.
We are subjects of an always violent self-overcoming.

Subjects of self-overwinding, of self-over-stimulation and self-unbounding.

We who are who we are by betraying the idea of the we and our self through transgression.
We traitors, we non-identical ones without a secured origin or future.

The hyperborean monster is the hyperbolic subject of self-transgression and self-surpassing toward an absolute
exterior that is uninhabitability itself, chaos, incommensurability as such.
It is the subject of a non-identity-building self-assertion.

Subject of failed anamnesis, of transcendental non-recognizability.
Subject without name, without memory, without teleological inscription.

Subject of transcendental facelessness — barbaric subject.

4. THE DANCER

The dancer is dancing without stable ground beneath it.
It is articulating its primordial contact to the abyss.

The abyss is the name for a fundamental lack of a fundament.
Dancing means to open up to this lack.

The dancer is floating in the space.
It is floating with the preciseness of its desire.

The dancer is an empty subject of emptiness: an originally emptied-out cogito.
A subject that affirms itself as the subject of an empty sky, without divine substratum, without transcendent

A subject without subjectivity because it is the movement of this experience that remains incessant.
A subject without return to itself, beyond self-mediation and self-appropriation in/constituting a present.

An empty subject because it experiences emptiness as the absent ground and absent telos of its existence.
As the desert of a freedom that is so incommensurable that it cannot be experienced as such.

5. THE KID

The kid is constantly laughing.
Nothing is less serious for him than reality.

Think about the kid mentioned by Maurice Blanchot, describing his "primary scene" (scène primitive) as the experience of a depopulated heaven. An experience that confronts an infinity he sketches as empty infinity:

*"I was a child, seven or eight years old,
I was in an isolated house, near the closed window,
I looked outside — and at once, nothing could be more sudden, it was as though the sky opened,
opened infinitely toward the infinite,
inviting me with this overwhelming moment of opening to acknowledge the infinite,
but the infinitely empty infinite.
The consequence was estranging.
The sudden and absolute emptiness of the sky, not visible, not dark
— emptiness of God: that was explicit, and therein it far exceeded the mere reference to the divine —
surprised the child with such delight, and such joy,
that for a moment he was full of tears,
and — I add, anxious for the truth —
I believe they were his last tears."*

It is the desert of this absencing of meaning, this empty sky, that Nietzsche and Heidegger call upon us to transcend respectively, a growing desert and a now fundamental abyss:

As the point of departure of any thinking that, instead of being religion or science,

remains oriented toward the intractability of its reality by accepting the encouragement of this intractability to freedom that urges it beyond its certainties toward the domain of truth.

It is here that one of the oldest distinctions philosophy has proposed for its own definition situates itself: The distinction between meaning and truth, which names the rift between certainties of fact and their incommensurability.

The kid is the joyful subject of this desert.
It represents ontological innocence as such.

In the game of the world, the subject grasps itself as the subject of innocence.
Heraclitus, Nietzsche and Deleuze associate this playing subject with the image of the child.

In the kid, all the necessities of the traditional logos, of reason as world reason are compressed.
Responsibility, beauty, love, freedom, justice and truth only exist as excessiveness, as a ruleless game of infinity as excess.

6. THE ARTIST

The artist is a dancing animal.
Nobody is able to take him for serious.

The fundamental artistic claim is the claim of autonomy.

Art exists only in the here and now of this one world without an exit, the world of facts.
Art is not an escape from it; it formulates its claim to autonomy in the midst of the world of determinants in opening to heteronomy, to escape this world's phantasmagoric mistaking of itself.

Just as there is freedom only under conditions of factual unfreedom, sovereign independence only under conditions of its absence, autonomy becomes a demand and necessity only in the field of factual heteronomy.

Art was never anything other than consent to the fragility of its times.
Art does not come from a stable situation.

It is the experience of the inconsistency of its reality.
Art exists only as the experience of the porosity of the system of facts.

Therefore, for it, there cannot be any alliance with facts, which does not mean that it disputes or misrecognizes power.

But art does not exhaust itself in demonstrating this non-misrecognition through the analytical power that is immanent within it.

As long as art does not surpass its knowledge, it is not art.
It would be nothing other than a self-reassurance for the subject within the web of its critically commented

Only an assertion of form that evades a narcissistic self-reassuring by articulating the transience of the certainties succeeds in confronting the universal inconsistency that is the subject's proper time and proper place.

7. THE GHOST

The ghost is a subject permanently assuring itself about its impermanence without a stable securing in a firm being that puts its trust in its structural or transcendental substantiality.

The ghost is a subject insofar as it extends itself to the dimension of infinity.

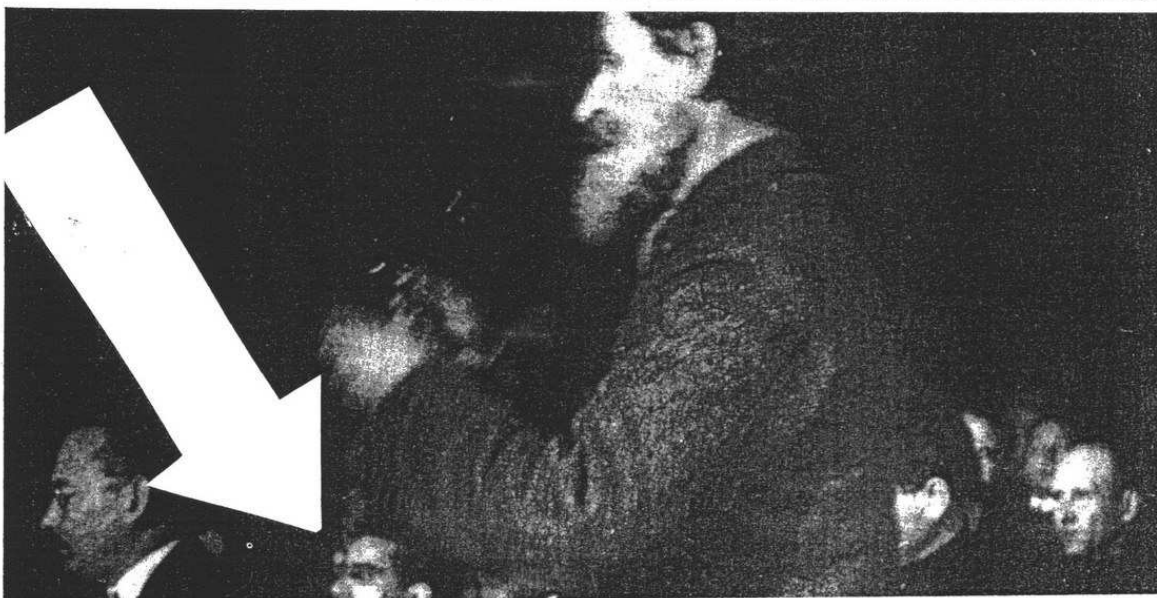
It is life related primordially to death.
It juts out into the space of infinity.

Because this is the case, it is a matter of giving the uncanny dimension which death is the status of something evident, of taking the non-evidence of death as evidence in order to affirm oneself as a finite subject, for it is finiteness which lives and bears the infinity which death is.

It is not the human subject that is infinite, but death.
But this infinity only exists for a finite subject.

The ghost moves along a border that separates the sphere of life from the non-world of death — between life and silence, finitude and infinitude, knowledge and truth, life and death.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI WITHIN THE
DELEGATES OF THE FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN
MOSCOW.



WHAT'S GOING ON?

FEED BACK

Art House

NEW YORK 07.15.13



Left: Joe Budda, Erik Farmer, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Susie Farmer. Right: Phil Beder of the Gramsci radio station. (All photos: Kaelen Wilson-Goldie)

"I NEED SOMEONE who understands art to come down here and tell me how this is art," Phil Beder says as he steps into his radio studio on the damp opening day of Thomas Hirschhorn's majestic *Gramsci Monument*. Beder understands books, sculptures, and paintings, "Less so the ephemeral stuff." His only just covers up his mischief. A former schoolteacher, Beder is a veteran of the storied New York radio station WBAI. I am sure he knows very well how Hirschhorn's work is art and, moreover, why it is interesting, urgent, and even critical to the times and we are living. However faux his naïveté, Beder is casting around for opinions with an open and admirable tone for the project. This matters in no small part because, like so much of Hirschhorn's work, *Monument* not only flirts with false notes but also runs the very real and deliberate risk of blowing everyone's face.

The fourth and final installment in his continental philosophy quartet, Hirschhorn's makeshift temporary structure set against the grassy hills of an incongruously green South Bronx housing project, *Forest Houses*. In keeping with the artist's unmistakable style, the piece looks like it was cobblestoned from an explosion of plywood, Plexiglas, and packing tape. In addition to the radio station, *Gramsci Monument* includes a bar, a lounge, an Internet café, a library, a workshop for kids' art classes, an editorial office producing a daily microcommunity newspaper. A maze of stairs and elevated walkways connects the different spaces together. If you ever made fortresses as a kid from imagination and what you had at hand, then you will love spending time here. And for seventy-seven days this summer you have ample reason to do so, as Hirschhorn and his band of makers and doers have sketched an exhaustively ambitious schedule of talks, plays, poetry readings, and related programs to analyze the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, and then some.

Beder is in charge of the radio station, which, from now through September 15, is broadcasting on 91.9 FM, and to the world online. On opening day, July 1, he seemed genuinely daunted by the prospect of filling up seven hours of airtime, every day, for the next two and a half months. "As much royalty-free, public domain music as we can manage," Beder says. Two DJs from the Bronx, Gucci and Baby Dee, were already on board with a deep reserve of songs and talent, including beat-boxers, and poets, and the "what makes it art" question seemed guaranteed to generate hours of debate, drawing everyone into a meaningful conversation and, at the same time, creating a ready-made audio archive.

I duck out of the radio studio and wander over to the newspaper, where I find the first of many potential answers to Beder's question. The front page of the first issue of the *Gramsci Monument Newspaper*, edited by Lakesha Bryant and Saquan Scott, features an interview with Erik Farmer, charismatic president of the *Forest Houses* tenants' association and, according to Hirschhorn, the man who made the monument happen here rather than elsewhere. "We have seventy-seven days to teach the basic and fundamental of art to the tenants of *Forest Houses*," says Farmer, "because art is so much bigger than a painting, drawing, or portrait. It's our everyday life."

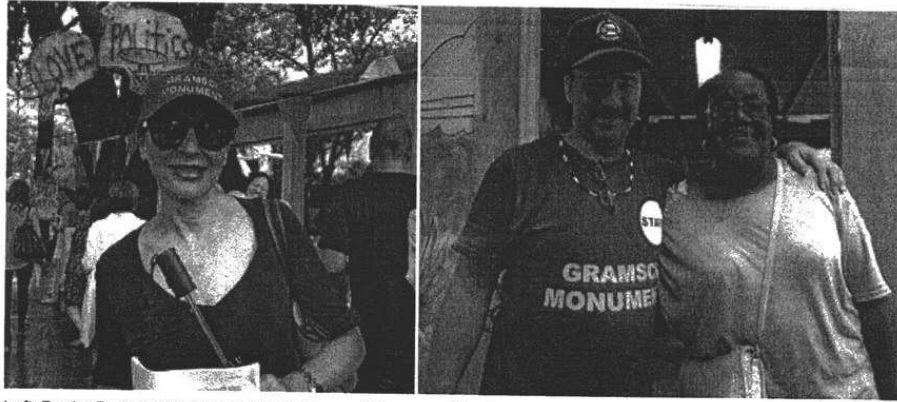
A cacophony of voices erupts from the Antonio Lounge, where a dozen actors are running through *Gramsci Theater*, a play written by the philosopher Marcus Steinweg, who has been collaborating with Hirschhorn for fifteen years. The cast is mostly women. They stand in front of cardboard placards adorned with the names of their characters, among them Gramsci, Heidegger, Derrida, Nietzsche, Deleuze, Badiou, and Brecht. I see someone named "Second Marxist" but can't find the first. Someone hands me a photocopy of the script. There are lines of dialogue for "Anyone." The characters begin shouting all at once and on top of one another, as if bombarding the audience with intellectual dissonance and an edge of Bronx attitude. At regular intervals, a young man saunters on stage with a basketball and takes an easy layup into one of two hoops, labeled LOVE and POLITICS on their respective backboards. Plucked at random, the lines are hilarious. I swoon for Marguerite Duras, who says: "Pull yourself together, not even your grave is for free."

Gramsci Theater is being performed every Monday afternoon. "I love not recognizing what I wrote," says Steinweg. "You hear two different registers. Strong voices and chaos. There's too much meaning, too much sense. That's why I like this swarm of meaning, the overproduction of sense is a new kind of normality." For his part, Steinweg is giving a lecture every day. The topics are set on the schedule—from "What Is Art," "What Is a Problem," and "What Is Sex" to "Romantic Shit" and "Beautiful Souls"—but Steinweg is improvising all of them. "I don't like to be too prepared," he says, as I wonder if his T-shirt is soaked through with rain, sweat, or a spilled drink. "It must take a lot of energy to give seventy-seven lectures in a row," I offer. "Most people work eight hours a day," he replies. "I just work forty minutes. In fact I am lazy." Note to self.

During Steinweg's first lecture, "What Is Philosophy," the opening crowd begins to appear, a combination of cops, security guards, the curious and palpably skeptical residents of *Forest Houses*, forty-five people who are officially on staff (and paid a decent hourly wage), beloved editors, a handful of critics, a documentary film crew, Hal Foster and Barbara Gladstone (each resplendent in red *Gramsci Monument* ball caps), and a small

but serious contingent of the city's luminous museum curators, including Sheena Wagstaff and Nicholas Cullinan from the Met, Peter Eleey from MoMA PS1, and Thomas Lax from the Studio Museum in Harlem. Philippe Vergne, director of the Dia Art Foundation, hangs out at the back, looking amused in a bright yellow raincoat.

Somewhat maligned in recent years, Dia is the institution now hurling itself back into the art world's limelight. *Gramsci Monument* is the only Hirschhorn monument realized in the United States, and the first public art project funded by Dia since 1996, when Joseph Beuys's *7000 Oaks* was restaged in Chelsea. Vergne calls it a defining moment. Yasmin Raymond, meanwhile, tells me: "I am no longer the curator of Dia. For the next seventy-seven days I am the ambassador of *Gramsci Monument*." Indeed, if you want more than easy platitudes and pat quotes, if you want to dig into the substance of Gramsci's thought, and if you want to start peeling back the layers of how the monument was made and why it is set there, then you should go to the



Left: Dealer Barbara Gladstone. Right: *Gramsci Monument* librarians Freddy Velez and Marcella Paradise.

She'll tell you about the five hundred books that Anthony Tamburri, dean of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute at Queens College, loaned to Forest Houses, from a five thousand-strong collection donated by John Cammett, who was the first person to write a book about Gramsci in English, in 1967. She'll walk you through "the incredible cultural objects" borrowed from the Casa Museo di Antonio Gramsci in Sardinia and the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome. And she'll make lucid connections between a wallet housed in a glass vitrine and an extended passage on money in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. She posts a note of her own, every day, on the monument's website. (Questions from the community she's fielded of late: "What is fascism?" and "Why are all contemporary artists Marxists?") Ambassador of what and to whom, I have no idea. Why intimations of statecraft and diplomacy over the care of curatorship, same. ("The home country is art," Raymond says. "The foreign country is Thomas Hirschhorn's *Gramsci Monument*.") But of anyone, Raymond is most likely to make you fulfill one of the monument's key missions, which is to read and think Gramsci in the present, and out of love.

A year ago, Hirschhorn told the *New York Times*' Randy Kennedy that in Forest Houses, "some people think I am a priest or an eccentric rich man." One of the tensions running through his work—through his commitment to "doing art politically," his insistence on touching the hardcore of the (Lacanian) real, and his self-representation as an artist-worker-soldier—is the quasi-missionary, pseudoreligious element that seems to lurk in the corners of his oeuvre. Another is the fact that all but three of the subjects of Hirschhorn's four altars, eight kiosks, and four monuments are men, with few women to be found in his constellation of influential writers and thinkers. Paradoxically, another still is the sense that Hirschhorn's choice of subjects is somehow arbitrary—the work "attends to Antonio Gramsci by paying no attention to him," says Steinweg—while his choice of location is anything but. (In Hirschhorn's *Establishing a Critical Corpus*, the philosopher Sebastian Egenhofer makes a compelling argument about the sites of social tension that the artist seeks to "explore, but also exploit").

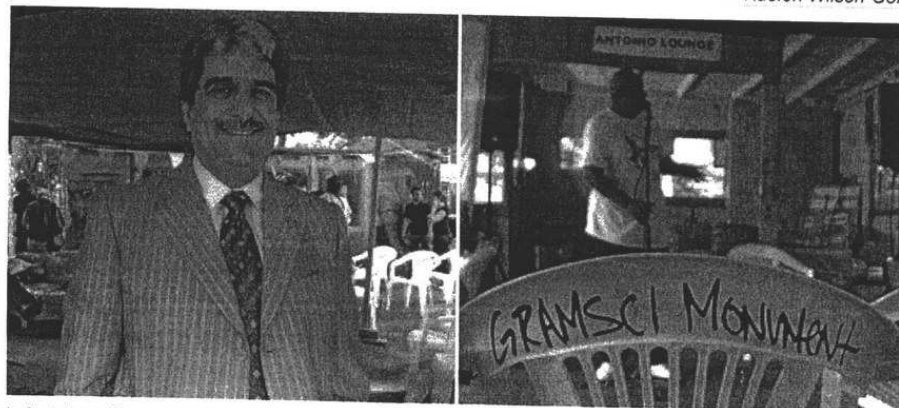


Left: MoMA PS1 curator Peter Eleey with Studio Museum in Harlem curator Thomas Lax. Right: Sheena Wagstaff, chairman of the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Forest Houses, in Morrisania, is no more than fifteen blocks east of the traffic triangle at 169th Street and Jerome Avenue where, as part of a public art project in 1991, the artist John Ahearn installed three bronze sculptures made from casts he had taken of three people he knew from the neighborhood. An excruciating controversy ensued, with accusations of racism slung everywhere. Dejected and disheartened, Ahearn took the sculptures down. They moved to PS1, and then to the Socrates Sculpture Park. As Glenn O'Brien wrote in a forceful, moving piece for *Artforum* at the time, Ahearn wasn't being critical or judgmental. He considered his artworks a loving tribute to his subjects. In that sense, he wasn't far from where Hirschhorn stands now, using art as a tool to know the world and confront reality. Ahearn told the writer Jane Kramer, in the *New Yorker*, that he wasn't trying to change the South Bronx. He was trying to change the art world, "giving rich white people a bridge to the life there, and to a different kind of vitality." To compare the two projects now is an interesting measure of how much the politics of race and class have changed in New York in the past twenty years.

To be fair, Hirschhorn has weathered similar strife. In 2010, his *Théâtre Précaire*, in the French city of Rennes, was vandalized twice and destroyed by fire, prompting an impassioned letter from the artist to area residents. The strength of his rhetoric is enough to win over anyone. On opening day, he gestured to the fifteen buildings of Forest Houses and said: "This is only the beginning. Will the people on the fifth floor there, on the eighth floor there, will they come down and enjoy this and be implicated in it? This is the challenge. In Erik Farmer, I found a key figure," he explains. "This is why *Gramsci Monument* is here. Not because of the urban situation or the architecture but because Erik Farmer said, 'Do it here.' This is how it works. This is how an artist's fieldwork makes the conditions for an encounter possible. The first phase was meeting. The second phase was construction." The third phase is to constitute the monument as art, and as memory. "This is very important," he says. "What I want is to create a common memory of this summer. To create a new kind of monument, we have to build it every day. The third phase starts tomorrow," he adds. From then on, the monument will lodge itself "into the heart of the people here, and the heart of me."

—Kaelen Wilson-Goldie



Left: Anthony Tamburri, dean of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute at Queens College.

RESIDENT OF THE DAY



SUSIE FARMER SHAW