

A FLAG OF NO NATION:

*PRIMER for POTENTIAL
SYMBOLISM*

WALL DRAWING
BOSTON MUSEUM

On a wall surface any
continuous stretch of wall,
using a hard pencil, place
fifty points at random.

The points should be evenly
distributed over the area
of the wall. All of the
points should be connected
by straight lines.

Sol LeWitt

STUDIES for an EXERCISE IN WORLD CRE-
ATION

(OR HOW TO MAKE, OR UNMAKE, A NAT-
ION)

after Sol LeWitt

WINDOW [*Breath*]

[Insert: time and place of installation]

From a window, any opening, limit or
edge with a continuous drop in alt-
itude, ideally over an area
where many can see [e.g. busy int-
ersection or public forum], lower
the flag, fasten to pole.
Let it be shown in all weather.
Hurricane, khamsin, hail. Witnesses below
are called to attention. The flag is lifting.

FLOOR [*Barrier*]

[Insert: time and place of installation]

Across a floor surface, any expanse
of ground that is commonly traversed
[sidewalk, museum floor], gently place flag. Stand
close. Monitor its borders, count those who
cross over. Assemble witnesses
to hold the flag at each corner [simulate wallness]
Lift until light passes through.
Then lower. Place a stone
on each corner.

WALL [*Domain*]

[Insert: time and place of installation]

On a wall surface, any unbroken
horizontal plane: stretch the flag. [Fasten
or raise and hold it up suspend-
ed]. Let the ambient air
jostle it in any direction. Witnesses
participate, pull it, test its elasticity, release.
Let the flag sit; imagine passage:
press hard. Turn away close eyes
listen to it waver.

LIGHT [*Frame*]

[Insert: time and place of installation]

Through the flag, light[the activating agent]
falls. Sight is stimulated. Witnesses stand
underneath, flag overhead, walk together
to the nearest source of light. Brightness
passes through: copper, turquoise, white.
Witnesses, move closer, meet at center, make flag
slacken, pull again til it's taut. Measure how it
changes under
fluorescence, tungsten, fire, sun.

EARTH [*Aftermath*]

[Insert: time and place of installation]

Onto the flag, for burial, place soil, cover.
If soil is unavailable, any refuse will do
[any set of items of shared substance
that have been emptied of use]. Fistful on fistful,
alone or with the people near you (citizens of any
nation), obscure the flag. Make a column,
pyramid, or layer of sediment
over flag's surface [image of eye opening]. Heap
until flag is completely concealed.

BODY [*Nauman*]

[Insert: time and place of installation]

Against the flag, press your body
[witnesses must hold flag laterally]
Press hard. Feel skin against flag.
Fall into it, limbs unbent [imagine pressing
hard]. Witnesses wrap, guide
you to the ground. Close eyes, detect:
gravity, body against earth,
flag mediating pressure. Contact.
Stand, shrouded. Tug at folds, carry further.

AIR [*Nonsense*]

[Insert: time and place of installation]

To fill the flag, any kind of air may be used
: a witness's breath,
crosswind, headwind, tradewind, random prayer,
the steady current of an industrial fan,
the intentions of ten men and women,
permanent music, a surveilled scream
Any action to lift it inside; outside:
the given weather will determine its orientation. Mon-
itor wind's direction, let it move without interference.

DELIVERY

To deliver the flag to any state body or principal political figure, wrap it in the body of the kit for dissemination, this poem enclosed. Conceal the flag in your belongings. Enter airport, enter seaport; treat your body as a vessel. A sequence of similar bodies conceals the flag and forms an unviewable parade: [Imagine our largest organ, iterating]. As it moves through worn thresholds, security checks, it is a distress signal, only to turn into a transitory marker of distance.

ETYMOLOGY

From the root of the word, vexillo-logy, "the study of flags": the Latin word for skin: *vellum*. Consider the concept: *the logic of skin*. Think of the flag as skin. Imagine the organs, the body it conceals, what it can sense, feel. Think of a human being's skin as a flag. Imagine the nation it represents; the displaced air it presses against.

FLAG INVENTION I

In 1909, in Istanbul, a student-run organization developed the Pan-Arab flag, its colors lifted from a 13th century poem by Safi al-Din Al-Hilli (*when sublime feelings his heart fill*). In 1914, Paris, the Young Arab Society designed a new iteration of the flag (Hussein Sharif added the color red), which was adopted in 1916 (Arab Revolt) and 1948 (Naqba).

consider - sing- the dates:

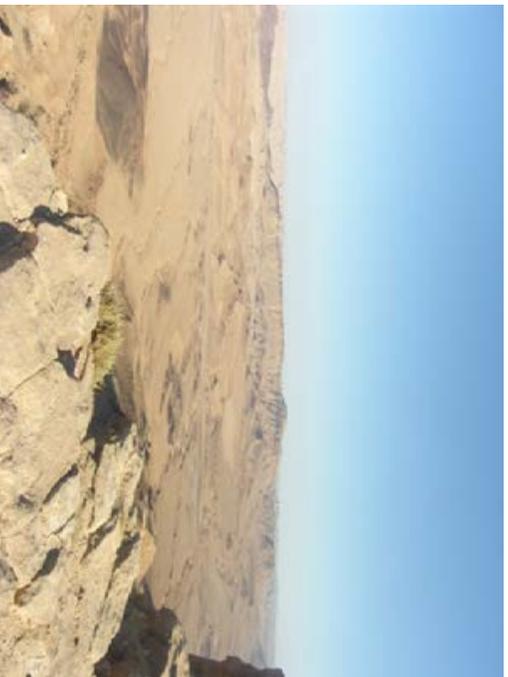
1909, 1914, 1916, 1948, 1967, 2015

FLAG INVENTION II

In 1885, in Rishon LeZion, Fanny Abramovitch and Israel Belkind designed the "Flag of Judah" (*bring witness the swords, did we lose hope*) as a marker of a new settlement. In 1897, Switzerland, Morris Harris, a New Yorker, presented a design for the flag of a new state, which was adopted in 1898 (Second Zionist Congress) and 1948 (War of Independence).

consider - sing- these dates:

1885, 1897, 1898, 1948, 1967, 2015



NATIONAL SONG

During the final note of national song, which is the longest, begin to disassemble the machinery of citizenship. Or if the the song is just beginning, but is held in fermata, begin screaming. The *gestureless salute* may be used: no arms raised, never facing the flag, only your neighbor, mouth closed. As soon as patriotic effect is desired, incinerate the flag. Use its ash to paint lines of flight. Foxtails are burning. The buildings are swept aside like wheat. *Salute*: repeat.

OCEAN

Beneath the ocean, the divine body, the deflection of a sequence of forms, marching into the unending ordering of. One pole projecting into sky. Another deeper into ocean. The ocean of obstructions. The charge on the individual. The charge on many: on those bodies who bend the perimeter of other bodies. Watch the flag through optical obstructions (your bedroom window, school window, stained glass, LCD [ion-strengthened glass, antimony, boron], ice.)

BENT FLAG POLE

In a domain in which a wall of light diffuses our attention, there is a flag pole. The flag pole has the flag of a nation on it. It is not necessarily a nation that you recognize [the necessary action]. Pick up the flag, briskly lower it, raise it, ceremoniously lower it, remove it. Rush into the wall of light. Tomorrow, you may begin by breathing. You may begin by wondering what kind of projection this pole is, what kind of wall may be passed through, perceived.

OTHER FLAGS

Before the aftermath, during hours of darkness, the flag must be fully illuminated. Remain silent; it will be seen. Ordinarily, the flag should be displayed in the sun. Cyclones, war, siege, electrical fire may remove it. No superior prominence than when it seeks no honor. Other flags raised nearby must stand. The palm, syntagm. In a time of peace; in a time of internationalism. The flag: the bright bits of flame in a long sequence of bodies, the durational hum of passing eras.

OF

Of it, if, from about behind the of now for, for the under through. Into, off, belonged to, to the flag. Over over over, the within of into first The widened-from, the fear of into Domain, child, out of, out of leisure, across love; when the exquisite becomes expedient the revolution has begun.

Begin each action with a preposition: "where to," she says. Home or out. From home, back home, or into

the world?

THE

These are the strong words that carry more weight than words, this is the game that we established when we were young. The ocean was the great skin. The ocean laughed while we were asking. The body, the earth, the white night, never woken to. We called our nation: birth.

Behind each preposition: the situation at hand. Our hand towards, for, the mouth of a larger morning:

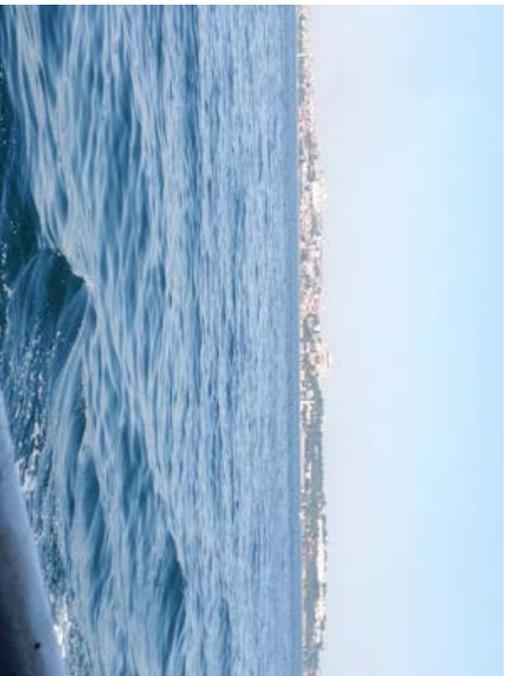
night, unclosed.

FOR LETTING

For letting go of the flag, *for* beneath and coming up
of the flag, *for* the asking price of the flag, *for* the true
knowledge of the flag, *for* the falling order of the flag's
release, *for* the leaves that fall near the flag, *for*
emotion behind surface of loss, *for* counting, *for* the
long list of lost names, *for* the true release of the flag,
for the ashes that swarm into marches of the true seas,
for releasing into natural language the commanding
voice, *for* the computational force, *for* the

GO OF

strict list of last troubles, *for* the terror of the moon
that pulls us in this still war, *for* the noose of identity,
for the war on the word on the word on the word,
for the son that engendered bad news, *for* how we
told our only son that this is the war on the word &
how we told our only remaining daughter that this is
a war on the word, *for* the pause that is true breath,
for the pause that is false breath concealing hurrying
thoughts: those which race til exhalation: total.



CAVE I [DIRECTIVE]

Into the poem, stillness. *Against* initial action, mute force. Enter word into poem, situate under title. Let it file along the span of nine lines. Martyr. The cave that is filled with language. The cave whose content is noise. The cave whose content is silence, noisy earth churning beneath it: particles of grammar, tornado. Weather unheard of. Not known before we had begun talking. The cave caves, and silence silences the tall. The bell that falls that hears the age.

CAVE II [CONSECUTIVE]

At the start of the consecutive song, the breaking of voice, thought turning to stone. Thought thrown. Thought the night that covers vengeful sleep. What is witnessed. At the start of the consecutive song: digits of an outward catastrophe. One that resists its complete cause. At the start of the consecutive song: passion spent. How were your words used when the pomegranates fell. How were your words taken [felt] when the oranges stopped falling.

CAVE III
For Yael Bartana

Into Cave III, voice turned voidward. To un-void.
To turn tender noun to wall of proper nouns. Yvette
pours us coffee. When she was in Mersin, she was cut
off from parents. Envious of sister. New to the
world. Tilt this phone, this plane, this city. The air is
medium, the friction from which voice
forms. This is the song of dreamlessness. Momentary
limb, heave us into the home of having
known what to be called. To let the air speak.

CAVE IV [1982]

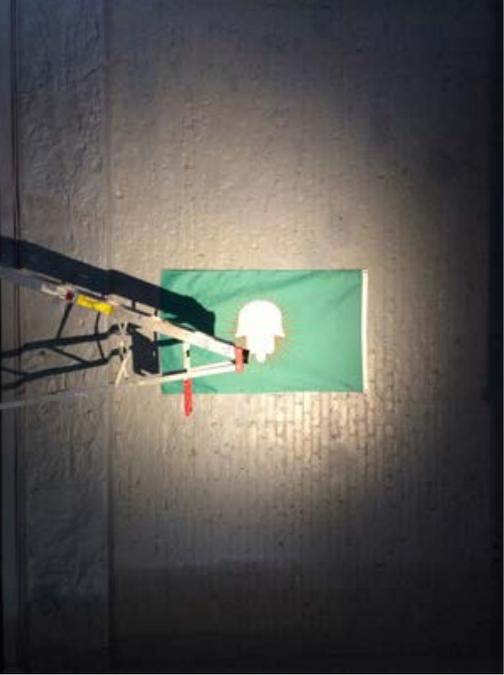
As the air carves the flag, flag carves the air.
My father learned to make his way in a desert.
A desert is a flattened cave. Like a cardboard
box, taken apart, the desert is. Creates no shadow.
Is completely exposed. We walked across it,
figuring the dirt, figuring those who had brought
us here. The scene is flat. The scene has no depth,
no cave. We lift it inside, inside the song that encloses
the song of collapse. We carry the cave in our arms.

CAVE V
For David Hammons

When the flag covers your head. When it rests on your
vision. When strange night turns into lawful day.
The flag is torn from itself. The flag announces
your name. A flag is pulled from the flag.
What is pulled stands between man
and man, sight and sight. When perception falls
through. Take this sight, into the heart of. Those fruits
that have fallen [pomegranate, orange]. They will lie
on the ground, ripe, for as long as we need them to.

CAVE VI [1992]

As a cave falls behind you, shadow, its contents not
disclosed, but, rather, turquoise, touches the surface
of song. Together, we lift the corners of the light.
The light is tugged taut at its four corners. A roof
forms over our history, and that which is unwritten.
Now we can witness unending space. Lift the corners
of light higher. Let the air stir it. Lift the corners of
earth. Lift the corners of body. Higher. Under the
banner of darkness, we share new light. We practice.



Have we reached a window, or yet another wall?

Poetry by Tom Haviv

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