



ISSUE 05: NO BOUNDARIES SUMMER 2020

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With

Cover Image

Yu-Wen Wu, Bundle Stories, 2019.

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NO BOUNDARIES



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Julio de Mesquita Neto recebe Pena de Ouro

lido por sen pai. Ju ser popular, no senti-mais nobre da palavra,

Os Lusiadas Canto Primeiro

- "Somos (um dos das Ilhas lhe tornou) Estrangeiros na terra, Lei e nação; Que os próprios são aqueles que criou A Natura, sem Lei e sem Razão. Nós temos a Lei certa que insinou O claro descendente de Abraão,
- De lodos os que as ordias navegamos, De Quiloa, de Mombaga e do Sófala. E, por ser necessária, proturamos, Cemo próprios da terra, de habitá-la; E, per que tudo enfim vos notifique, Chama-se a pequena Ilha: Moçambique.

- De Las os claros raios rutilavam.

Ao receber a Pena de Ouro, Júlio de Mesquita Neto lembrou a solidariedade da imprensa ocidenta

Desentendimento ameaça debate Jost-Brossard

Campanha revela que divergências na Arena crescem

Geisel anuncia na terça linha do PND

Os Lusiadas Tanto primeiro

RADIO ELDORADO

FM - 92.9 megahertz OM - 700 Quilohertz

Clipping from O Estado De S. Paulo on Wednesday, September 4, 1974, featuring poetry by 16th-century Portuguese poet Luíz de Camões in an effort to denounce censorship during Brazil's military dictatorship from 1964-1985. See p. 74.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Well, universe, you got us: we named an issue "No Boundaries," and then you made us really wish we hadn't.

The work for Issue 05 began last year and was scheduled to go to print in April. By mid-March, just as we wrapped up our articles, COVID-19 stopped us in our tracks. We pushed back our schedule and revamped the entire magazine, then reserved a slot with our printing company. Issue 05 was going to print whether we were ready or not.

All this happened before George Floyd was murdered by a white police officer in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. This modern-day lynching, caught on video, set the world on fire—reinvigorating a 400-year-long fight for justice.

On our website, bostonartreview.com, we have published a list of anti-racist resources, local voices to pay attention to, and BIPOC-led organizations to support. We have also published a list of resources for relief due to COVID-19. Both of these lists will be updated as the movement evolves and the effects of the pandemic linger.

As a contemporary art publication, we have a duty to respond to extraordinary moments like this. We believe in art's potential to provide nuanced reflections of the past and radical visions for the future. Our editorial team makes a point of highlighting socially engaged and politically responsive art. Artists—especially artists of color—have been carrying the weight of this work for centuries. We can do more as a publication to elevate these voices. At Boston Art Review, we promise to examine our own privilege and highlight the marginalized voices of those who have always been advocating for justice.

This issue may feel anachronistic, but the messages it contains are not. Issue 05 features the work of artists, writers, curators, and collectives who have long been advocating for a new normal. We hear from Mar Parrilla, whose dance company Danza Orgánica fights for social justice with a decolonizing praxis. We see the work of Imaginary Collective, whose underground exhibitions envision an art world free from capitalist interests. And we learn from Yu-Wen Wu, whose bundles represent the trauma, stories, and objects that fall in the wake of migration. Their voices, among many others, spotlight the crucial role that art and discourse play in disrupting long-standing systems of inequality.

There is one piece in this issue that grapples with the nation's current upheaval: a zine insert by OJ Slaughter. Slaughter is a Boston-based artist, photographer, and community organizer who has been tirelessly working to document the Black Lives Matter protests and community vigils in the wake of George Floyd's death. This fold-out poster includes their latest work in cataloging this moment. For centuries, broadsides and pamphlets have played a crucial role in promoting revolutionary social, artistic, and political movements. We are excited to present Slaughter's artwork in a medium that may allow it to serve as an artifact from this time.

As I write this letter, the world is protesting on behalf of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and countless other Black lives lost to systemic violence in the United States. Together, we have used our words, bodies, and actions to loudly declare that Black Lives Matter in the face of police brutality, institutional racism, and white supremacy. Revolutions do happen. The actions from the past week have already led to substantial change as governments in several cities have taken steps to defund police budgets and reconsider community programing. The fight is far from over. We must continue to dismantle systems of violence and oppression and work to establish entirely new, equitable systems for community growth.

I must thank every person who made themselves vulnerable and available for this issue. Thank you to my incredible editorial team, who endured several long nights to bring this issue to fruition. I always emphasize that BAR is a volunteer-led and community-supported publication, so I must thank you, our community, for supporting us along the way.

Jameson Johnson

Founder & Editor-in-Chief

TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

Edited by Jameson Johnson and Helen Singh-Miller

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has shifted our relationship to time, waking us up to the present if only to reckon with a precarious future. The current uncertainty, however, has also reawakened the power of memory for the artistic imagination. In one Zoom meeting after another, we have heard artists, curators, and cultural critics inspired to recount creative work carried out in similarly unprecedented circumstances.

Boston artists who spent time in New York in the 80s and 90s have shared vivid memories of collaborating with members of Gran Fury, Fierce Pussy, and ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). In addition to iconic poster campaigns pronouncing Silence=Death and Kissing Doesn't Kill, these collectives are responsible for convincing Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, to expand research during the AIDS epidemic. Meanwhile, LA artist Betye Saar is remembered by West Coast transplants who studied with her at Cal State Long Beach and Otis College of Art and Design for her sustained commitment to issues raised by both the women's movement and the Black Arts Movement of the 60s and 70s. Saar's appropriation of racist American icons in assemblages of household objects such as *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* (1972) and *Cowboys and Indians* (1973) is legendary. Action painter Shiraga Kazuo rolling through the mud half-naked and Murakami Saburo jumping through a paper screen came up in conversation with contemporary choreographers about minimal performance and the radical Gutai movement in post-war Japan. In talking about how students are going to produce work without access to the usual technology, one professor pointed to the silent video version of *Moby-Dick* that Israeli artist Guy Ben-Ner staged in his kitchen in 2001. The list goes on.

This widespread ekphrastic effort regarding historically significant art and activism inspired us. Instead of inviting artists to make new work, we asked members of the local Boston art community to share their knowledge and experience of work made during a time of uncertainty. We are grateful for the generous texts and accompanying images submitted in response and for the bridges they build between personal and public domains, the distant and recent past, and changes to come.

Sam Adams On Jourdan Christopher

With a broad following on Instagram as @StrangersInBoston, Jourdan Christopher makes the case that even the lone-liest among us is plugged into some form of community. To make his photographic portraits, Christopher engages passers-by for long enough to capture an irreplicable facial expression or gesture. "All of these individuals are alone together," he says. Having moved from Memphis to Dorchester six years ago, Christopher often feels he is the "stranger" in Boston, not his subjects.

Christopher recently gave a frank and heartfelt artist's talk at the opening for his exhibition at Haley House Bakery Café in Roxbury, acknowledging that he too has struggled through the ills of racism and drug use. Currently, Christopher is drawing on his gift for working with vulnerable populations as a Boston University Arts Lab Fellow at Boston Health Care for the Homeless. Responding to the coronavirus pandemic threatening him and his loved ones, Christopher remarks, "Introverts have been preparing for this our entire unacceptable lives. Lack of acceptance is the root of my artistic expression. Now I find myself fluctuating between being ready to share more of myself and sharing less, or nothing."

Sam Adams is a curator and art historian. He is the Koch Curatorial Fellow at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum and lives in Boston, MA.



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Stephanie Cardon, In extremis, 2019. Repurposed high-visibility fabric, debris netting, thread, stone (found in North Adams, MA). 6in x 3ft x 4ft.

Stephanie Cardon On Rumi and Ecological Breakdown

Pinned to the wall above my desk is an eight-hundred-year-old sentence by the Sufi poet Rumi:

Sit, be still, and listen Because you're drunk And we are at the edge of the roof.

I have found no more succinct, nor accurate, nor, for that matter, tender way of reminding myself daily how close we stand to irreversible cultural and ecological loss. The entreaty to sit would be voiced by a few old souls among us who have the poetic imagination to see both the problem in its entirety and its myriad ramifications. The remainder displays varying measures of drunken, brazen foolishness, toying with balance and depth perception, and counting on being caught, in extremis.

This is the space in which I work, wondering what the line is exactly between each gesture I make for the sake of art, and each choice I make for the sake of the living and the yet-to-be. My work is economically and materially thrifty: its purpose is to build a skill and to emote. Some pieces meditate on a possible narrative, like this one involving a child, a forest, and only my legs to carry us. I made it last summer.

We are living in diaphanous proximity to death.

Stephanie Cardon is an artist and assistant professor at Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She lives in Roslindale, MA.



Tory Fair, Portable Window, Spy Pond, 2020. Rolling sculpture made from reclaimed wood and cellphone camera. 61in x 61in x 1.5in.

Tory Fair On Portable Window by Mary Miss

Social distancing has a lot of us taking long walks. For me, this time has slowed things down. Over the past year, I've been extending the legacy of a sculpture called *Portable Window* (1968) made by artist Mary Miss. The original *Portable Window* consists of a rectangle cut out of the middle of a circular piece of plywood. Using salvaged materials, I've developed a way in which, when rolled, this sculpture can capture video. On a recent family outing, we rolled my adaptation of *Portable Window* along with us. We rolled by closed stores in Arlington. We rolled across Massachusetts Avenue—barely any cars. When we made it to Spy Pond, we carefully rolled the sculpture through the water. The resulting video captures the water as it moves in and out of frame, the landscape tilting. The rhythmical flipping of the image communicates something of how I feel right now. Daily I find myself standing before calm, beautiful scenes, which rupture, somehow seamlessly. The turning of the wheel, the spinning pond, the rotation of the earth is disorienting. Another day, another calm, another spin and circle-back. This recurrence—a new norm—is something I think we share.

Tory Fair is an artist and associate professor at Brandeis University. She lives in Arlington, MA.

Wendy Jacob On Zero Cruzeiro

1968. Brazil. The president, a military general, suspends the constitution, enacts dictatorial powers, and begins imposing harsh censorship. Anti-government voices are silenced.

Soon after, newspapers begin to print 16th-century sonnets and recipes for cake and bonbons in place of editorials. Coca-Cola bottles stamped with subversive messages appear in stores. Banknotes with images of oppressed citizens start circulating. The banknotes, with denominations of zero cruzeiro, are not technically counterfeit because they are worthless.

What is going on? It is the work of typesetters and an artist in an absurdist dance with the state. Before newspapers go to press, censors veto content they deem critical of the government. The typesetters make the required deletions and then drop poems or recipes into the spaces left behind: a code for censorship. The banknotes and Coca-Cola bottles are the work of conceptual artist Cildo Meireles, who evades censorship even as he critiques the regime. These poignant, communal, and anonymous acts speak out and break the silence.

Wendy Jacob is an artist whose cross-disciplinary work includes sculpture, installation, and design. She lives and works in Cambridge, MA.



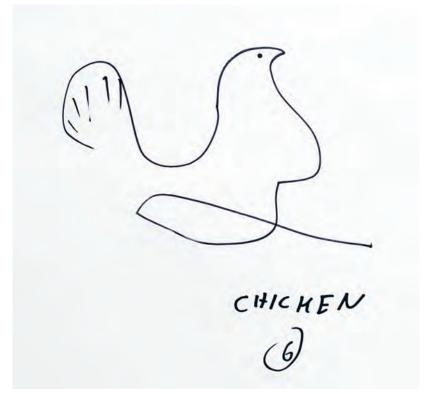
Cildo Meireles, Zero cruzeiro, 1974/1978. Double-sided offset lithograph on paper, 15.5cm x 6.5cm. Unlimited edition. Image courtesy of Museum of Modern Art Aloisio Magalhães, Brazil.

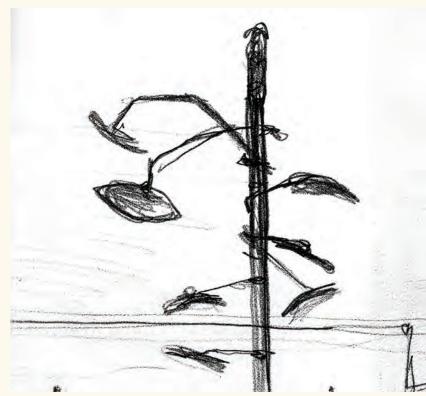
John T. Maier On the Squiggle Game

The psychoanalysis of children is an exercise in uncertainty, as there is no mind as uncertain as a child's. It is also, when practiced with some measure of self-awareness, an exercise in light comedy. To read the annals of child psychoanalysis is to experience the joy of witnessing some very serious people being slightly silly. Here is Erik Erikson—refugee from 1930s Vienna, professor of psychology at Harvard, who gave himself the name "Erikson" to indicate he was the son of no one but himself—making a zoo out of building blocks for imagined lions. And here is D.W. Winnicott, perhaps the most profound analyst of the last century, playing the Squiggle Game.

In the Squiggle Game, the analyst blindly draws a "squiggle" on the page, and then the child completes the drawing into something that the child recognizes. Winnicott draws a "squiggle of the closed variety," and liro, a Finnish boy in an orthopedic hospital, decides that it is a duck's foot, and draws the leg and the webbing. ("It was clear immediately that he wished to communicate on the subject of his disability.") Then the child draws a squiggle, and the analyst completes it. And back and forth like that. A car, a bow-tie, a teapot, a goose, a mountain, the sea. Children rarely want to take the drawings home. While drawing, they talk. Winnicott asks liro if he is happy, and liro answers: "One knows if one is sad."

John T. Maier is a writer and clinician. He lives in Cambridge, MA.





Ralph Pennel, Performing is a Way of Leaving, detail view, 2020. Pencil on paper.

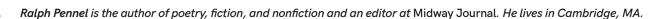
Ralph Pennel On Hiwa K's Mirror

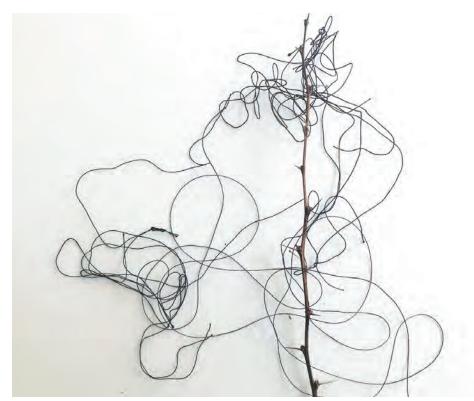
I was in New York for something else entirely. I think that's important. Hiwa K's *Blind as the Mother Tongue* was on exhibition at the New Museum. In *Mirror* (2017), a video performance, the artist balances a pole on the end of his nose, the pole affixed with a variety of motorbike mirrors angled so that when he leans his head back, he can find the ground at his feet.

"When you are trying to balance something, you are always in a panic," he says in the film, which was projected onto a wall in the dark. There were stools, but they were hard to find in the darkness, so we stood. I think we were meant to. "You are swinging all the time, you don't have a center, you are not anchored..."

Since March, I have been walking farther and farther on the same path along the Charles. Walking until my feet hurt. Until my legs wobble beneath me. So that I'm forced to reconcile with my body and ice my wounds. I have seen more of the land around where I live since sheltering in place than in the entire ten years prior.

"Very often people say I am based in Berlin ... I'm never based ... I'm based on my feet. I came walking ... The wave of refugees itself is a statement... It's a performance art ... Performing is a way of leaving." *Mirror* is as much about film, the spectacle of watching Hiwa K walking, as it is about walking. Reaching home with each step. Home wherever he is positioned in the film.





Sal Randolph, Thread Drawing, 2020. Thread and thorns. 9in x 12in.

Sal Randolph On Cecilia Vicuña's Precarios

Cecilia Vicuña's *precarios* are tiny assemblages of debris, litter, beach drift, and thread—barely held together, barely there. Some are like mobiles, some are like boats or bodies, some are like garments or flags; many feature string linking the elements. Vicuña began making them as a young person in Chile at the end of the 1960s, then as an art student in London, and into the present. One early array, *A Diary of Objects for the Resistance*, was created after the attempted Chilean coup in 1973—"to support the Chilean revolution and stop the conspiracy against it," she said. She claimed they had the ability to act in multiple ways: "Politically they stand for socialism, magically they help the liberation struggle, and esthetically they are as beautiful as they can be to recomfort the soul and give strength." Exiled from Chile, Vicuña eventually settled in New York, writing poetry and collecting debris from the Hudson for her sculptural work. The *precarios*—slight, fragile, fashioned from what is thrown away or washed ashore—evoke for me the possibility of making under any conditions. They are full of feeling and sympathetic magic, wielding their deliberate precarity as a declaration of tenacity and resilience.

1. The Precarious: The Art and Poetry of Cecilia Vicuña, M. Catherine Zegher, ed. Hanover & London: University Presses of New England, 1997.

Sal Randolph is an artist and writer working between language and action. She started in experimental theater and performance art in Boston and Cambridge in the 1980s. She currently lives in New York, NY.

Felipe Shibuya On "Chaotic Good"

"SHIkebana" (from the Japanese shi: death; and ikebana: giving life to flowers) is a series of photographs inspired by vanitas paintings portraying the ephemerality of life and the egoism of the human species, which celebrates its own existence through the death of other beings, such as the flower.

A few months ago everything seemed normal. The work was up in the gallery and the exhibition had an opening date. "Chaotic Good," curated by Tina Rivers Ryan, was set to tell the tale of nine emerging artists struggling to survive in a world full of uncertainty. The memory and performance of personal and systemic trauma filled the vibrant paintings and photographs on the wall. I was among the artists, represented by my piece SHIkebana, a series of photographs exploring the beauty of life through the death of flowers. My flower arrangement is a metaphor for human selfishness and the celebration of aesthetics above well-being.

On opening day, we were notified that the show would be canceled and the gallery would remain closed indefinitely. Ulysses Atwhen, Jason Contangelo, Leanne Goldblatt, Karis Jones, Tanner Petch, John Santomieri, Felipe Shibuya, DaVideo Tape, and Sara Zak remain in uncertainty about the future exhibition of their work. Nevertheless, it was a similar precarity, which characterizes the lives of so many artists, that gathered them to start. As flowers take on another form in dying, perhaps this professional uncertainty will compel new work.

Felipe Shibuya is a Brazilian ecologist and artist currently exploring natural color and pattern both in the lab and in the studio. He lives in Brookline, MA.



Felipe Shibuya, *SHIkebana* (second photograph in the series), 2019. Clay, dried flowers and leaves, trunk bark. Inkjet print on matte paper. 35.5in x 23.5in.

Sheida Soleimani On Returning

Thinking about being stuck inside isn't as daunting to me as thinking about not ever being able to go to my home country due to threat of imprisonment, punishment, and death. My only knowledge of Iran comes from my parents, whose stories have lived in my work since my adolescence.

My mother spent a year in solitary confinement for being married to my father, who was a political activist during the Ayatollah's regime during the early 1980s. She doesn't seem bothered at all by staying inside, which makes me feel foolish for even thinking about the current stay-at-home orders. Instead of wondering what else I can do at home, I have started to wonder what I would do if I could visit a place I am not allowed to visit: my family's old home in Iran.

As a nurse in Iran, my mother worked on the delivery ward in a village hospital. Stillbirths or fatal complications, for both mother and child, were not uncommon. Ashamed, women would sometimes leave their deceased children behind. After observing this practice, my mother decided to preserve the children's bodies in jars. When I was young, she would paint or draw them from memory. I didn't understand that this was a strange practice until I was much older.

When my mother escaped from Iran, my grandmother asked her to bury the jars in the backyard under a *narenj*, or sour orange tree. When I was a teenager, my mother drew me a map of where they were located in the yard, indicating the specific tree's location, when I was a teenager.

A morose scavenger hunt, it feels important for me to undertake the task of finding the jars, or even just the site.... Maybe I would photograph the tree. Or make a new map. Or create some sort of monument. It seems like the most impossible project in the world to me.

Sheida Soleimani is an Iranian-American artist and assistant professor of fine arts at Brandeis University. She lives in Providence, RI.



Taraneh Samimi, map of family home in Shiraz, Iran, 2013.