

# TRENCHART : LOGISTICS

aesthetics

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## CONTENTS

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TrenchArt 8/0

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$\log_0(0)=$  mind The Gap: a preface  
VANESSA PLACE

$\log_3(81)=$  To Quill at Film  
REDELL OLSEN

$\log_5(73.1)=$  These lips which are not one  
DODIE BELLAMY

$\log_2(256)=$  In the Words of a Djinn:  
an exercise in transcreation  
CHRIS TYSH

$\log_4(16)=$  A Mouth to Mouth with Your Mouth:  
a buccal biography  
DIVYA VICTOR

$un-log =$  Symbol on Island  
ALICE KÖNITZ

## CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

(p+r)<sup>n</sup>

**Dodie Bellamy**'s books include *the buddhist*, *Academonia*, *Pink Steam*, *Cunt-Ups*, and *The Letters of Mina Harker*. *Time Out New York* named her chapbook *Barf Manifesto* "Best Book Under 30 Pages" for 2009. She has been awarded a Firecracker Alternative Book Award and a Bay Guardian Goldie Award for Literature. She is a frequent contributor to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's *Open Space* blog, and she teaches in various creative writing programs.

**Alice Könitz** studied at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf and at CalArts. She has presented her work in numerous exhibitions including the 2008 Whitney Biennial (Whitney Museum of American Art, NY); the 2008 California Biennial (Joshua Tree/ Orange County Museum of Art); "Half Square Half Crazy", Villa Arson, (Nice, France), International Paper (UCLA Hammer Museum, LA) and the Tirana Biennial, (Tiranana, Albania). Her solo exhibitions were at Susanne Vielmetter Projects, Los Angeles and Berlin; The University Art Museum, CSU Long Beach; LAXArt; Hudson Franklin, New York; and LACE, Los Angeles, and Luis Campaña, (Cologne, Germany). Her work has been reviewed and published in *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *Flash Art*, *Sculpture Magazine*, *Art and Text*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and other publications.

**Redell Olsen's** publications include *Punk Faun: a bar rock pastel* (Subpress, 2012), *Secure Portable Space* (Reality Street, 2004), *Book of the Fur* (rem press 2000), and the collaboratively produced *Here Are My Instructions* (Redell Olsen / Susan Johanknecht) (Gefn, 2004). Her film poems, and texts for performance and film, include: *Bucolic Picnic (or, toile de jouty camouflage)* (2009), *Newe Booke of Copies* (2009-10), *Lost Pool* (2010), and *SPRIGS & spots* (2011-12). From 2006-2010 she was the editor of *How2journal.com* the international journal for modernist and contemporary poetry and poetics by women writers. She is the director for the MA in Poetic Practice at Royal Holloway, University of London, UK. For further information see: <http://redellolsen.co.uk/wordpress/>

**Chris Tysh** is the author of several collections of poetry and drama, including, most recently, *Night Scales* (United Artists, 2010) and *Molloy: The Flip Side* (BlazeVox, 2012). A recipient of fellowships from the NEA and the Kresge Foundation, she lives in Detroit and teaches at Wayne State University. *Our Lady of the Flowers, Echoic* is the second volume of her three-part project, *Hotel des Archives*, inspired by the French novels of Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, and Marguerite Duras.

**Divya Victor** is a poet and scholar. She is a member of the Troll Thread Collective.

## TRENCHART: LOGISTICS

8/0	<i>TrenchArt: Logistics</i> AESTHETICS
8/1	<i>Our Lady of the Flowers, Echoic</i> CHRIS TYSH
8/2	<i>Film Poems</i> REDELL OLSEN
8/3	<i>Cunt Norton</i> DODIE BELLAMY
8/4	<i>Things To Do With Your Mouth</i> DIVYA VICTOR
	Logistics Series Visual Artist ALICE KÖNITZ

mind THE GAP: a preface

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VANESSA PLACE

mind as such is that *Ding* which cannot be said, but only literally minded. Of course, this is old Kantian hat, and yet, like any hat, once doffed, it's as easily forgotten. Luckily for us, meaning you, we have these four partial reminders, set, perhaps improbably, in a series entitled *Logistics*. Logistics, of course, is that branch of the military that addresses the support and deployment of its personnel: support meaning making sure there is proper equipment; deployment making sure there is proper movement, including evacuation and hospitalization, as needed. In business, logistics simply refers to minding the organizational details. The devil, as you know, is in the details.

Thus, the devilish deployment of scripture in Chris Tysh's "In the words of a djinn: an exercise in transcreation," in which the author speaks to and for the impossibility of translation, which is also a partial trope, but rather than whinge and wail or pledge some partial fidelity, a monstrous infidelity is happily sworn. And, like the advice columns advise, infidelity is trickier, involving rules and big-picture promises, with no room for petite or grand jealousies. *I.e.*, when Tysh takes Genet, as Deleuze advises, and Jean might have liked, from behind, it is as an American, that is to say, without saying *bonjour*. What issues is a Frankenstein that is not frightening but frighteningly familiar. In the same way that truly new poetry can creep gently under the skin, then erupt, unbidden, in the same way that one's own American-ness comes unwilling from the heart, mind, and mouth, including the American-ness that wants to escape being American, but is forced to the fore by the foreign, this Genet can't help but yawp in the *langue du jour*. Is there a gap? Between now and then? To my mind, it reads more like an evacuation. As with soldiers in retreat and bowels in action. After all, what is history, what is literature, if not yesterday's

$\log_0(0)=$

The world is full of partial objects. In part, one could safely say the world is only partial objects. Or at least say that since 1915, the vicissitudes of the object have been as familiar as their tendency towards flotation, and that since 1975, we've been happy as shiny state quarters in our castrated understandings of the same. In the collection I'm now fronting, partial objects are proudly on parade: mouths, cunts, cuts of tongue, and the skin-surface of films/film-surface of skins. And while it would be terribly safe to say this all falls in the now-comfortable discursive register of the gap, the vacuous referent that puts the *de* in deconstruction, this itself is insufficiently partial, or hardly provisional enough. For just as *de* is "duh," the pieces before me obviously say, as the voice-over obviously says, "mind the gap." Put another way, the mind is here, dumbly on display as the partial object par excellence, that horribly skinny chasm between what may be and what, for all intents and purposes, *is*. Put another way, the

tomorrow today? Prisoners in cells know as much, as do penned children: all that poetry is is the hash of time, what's marked *now* for later. Versus prose, of course, which presents itself in the puffed golden crust of *fait*. The plans one makes when one doesn't yet fully grok the enemy at hand. So Tysh properly slices our sailor-bait into seven-line stanzas (same number as the seas) and *Our Lady of the Flowers* becomes a fresh bouquet of thick and salty sensations that set us back into the slits of our orifices, with little to do but wait, watch, and try hard not to itch.

Children, being fundamentally Humean, often confuse itching and scratching. Similarly, Redell Olsen's filmic metamorphoses are itchy scratches and scratchy itches. Effect, that is, creating cause. In her "To Quill at a Film," Olsen plucks at the resultant scrim between images and words, pointing at that suture-point where iconoclasm becomes iconicism because each limns what ought, by rights, lies beyond each, but which are only illuminated in their negative lights. In other words, just as birds cannot be photographed for field guides, but must be drawn and colored—because photographs are too specific, reducing the generic creature to a singular bird, whereas illustrations are general, only typographical, amplifying a bird to Bird—Olsen indicates language operates as guide to and obfuscation of image, and image as key to and confusion of sound. Meanwhile, as the motion pictures say, her mind is ostensibly set in the gap between image/word, as if there should be a harmony, or as if harmony is anything more than a happy synchronicity. The *mises en abyme*, like the scratch, is now *mise en face*, put in place of the itch. By characterizing her practice of writing and "saying live" over/on extant film as the movement from a found relation to a poetic one, Olsen creates a kind of feeding tube running from room to room, which

serves to hides the salami, so to speak, from the real logistical work at hand: showing that all poetic relations are fundamentally found. And the rest, as they say in Hollywood, is history.

Historical razzle-dazzle is the preferred mode of Divya Victor's glitterati *oratorio*: mouth after mouth after mouth, so many maws flapping throughout her "buccal biography" that Freud himself would have called for some face-saving, a bit of clamming up. There are no elegant mouths in this Cubo-Futurist *bios*, for whether in repose "crusted with Colgate edges" or "scrubbed with a gnashed *neem* twig," or moving "elated to teats" or messed with "mother's tampons," these orifices are pinkly feral, scribbled with rank desire. Rank is a good thing in the military, proving a easy guide to who ought be listened to. But Victor's mouths are moreover revealed as senseless as a footsoldier's soliloquy, "sweaty" being as illogical in the mind of the mouth as "minty" is to the mind's eye. What comes through these serial gapes then is not an oral fixation, but a scopophilic one: we see that we love to look inside, to watch the sponge of a fat rouge tongue and oogle the uvula's plump bounce and clutch. It's not a point we're after, just the constant in-and-out: we take in what exits and duly expunge a serrated self in fits of sound and excremental story. And, if I can sustain this slippery slide from one speculum to another, mouth-feel is just what Dodie Bellamy's "These Lips Which Are Not One" provides. By supplying a country cook's guide to her cunt-ups, Bellamy does Burroughs one better: if the phallus is the thing that cannot be shown (as it will be revealed as merely a penis), the cunt is the thing that can/must be constantly on display (as no matter how hard the gaze, the mystery, *comme l'origine du monde*, persists). Author is no substitute for authority.

These cunts prove as impermeable and reversible as raincoats: as Bellamy writes, once a text is cunted, it is “monstrous, unashamed,” walking about like it wasn’t showing its toothed seams, which, by happy harmonic chance, articulate the rough seams that the hybrid always suggests. If the difference between metamorphosis and hybridity is that the metamorphic text is entirely transformed, going from *esse* to *esse* with full faith and credit given each to each, the hybrid text is necessarily a messier proposition. The hybrid can neither relinquish nor fully regulate its constituent parts: the creature is a logistical failure to the exact degree it is a logistical success—for every deployment, there is something unaccounted for. And why not? If we can ditch the love of the gap for a moment, and just hold hands, can we not agree that we are, at best, ourselves only partial solutions, flapping wildly about, mouths hanging open, images flitting before our faces as monstrous sounds sound from our guts, mouths, and butts. It’s the same old story, trying to fashion some sort of crummy coherence out of our various partial engagements. Including, as it hardly need be said, the conceit of the sentient self. But, as Deleuze would say, bugger me. Or, put another way, as artist Paul Chan has written: “If art has any insight into life today, it is that we have no other interior than the world.”<sup>i</sup> Logistically speaking, in other words, I’m glad I’m a man.

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i. Paul Chan, “Where Art Is and Where it Belongs,” *The Return of Religion and Other Myths: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*. Eds. Maria Hlavajova, Sven Lütticken, and Jill Winder. (BAK: Rotterdam, NL, 2009) 67.