



lonely white guy planet

ENTERTAINING EVERY SECOND ○○○○○○○○ LIFE OF A CRAPHEAD

SCIENCE FICTION ○○○○○○○○ SEPTEMBER 7 - OCTOBER 20 / 2018
ESSAY BY JASON HIRATA

*There is fiction in the space between
The lines on your page of memories
Write it down but it doesn't mean
You're not just telling stories There is fiction in the space between
You and reality
You will do and say anything
To make your everyday life seem less mundane
There is fiction in the space between
You and me*

*There's a science fiction in the space between
You and me
A fabrication of a grand scheme
Where I am the scary monster
I eat the city and as I leave the scene
In my spaceship I am laughing
In your remembrance of your bad dream
There's no one but you standing*

*Leave the pity and the blame
For the ones who do not speak
You write the words to get respect and compassion
And for posterity
You write the words and make believe
There is truth in the space between*

*There is fiction in the space between
You and everybody
Give us all what we need
Give us one more sad sordid story
But in the fiction of the space between
Sometimes a lie is the best thing
Sometimes a lie is the best thing*

*Oh the best thing
Is the best thing 1*

The ache of Tracy Chapman's deadpan resolve to turn her words over to we delicate listeners as though cut directly from artist to audience is a pain congruent with history as much as it is with love and affection. Her words bite and grip in a way that is cause for examination—of distance, of contiguity, of distinction. I recall the song here because I want to speak of history through the music 2 of the present (as though history's here in this room with us—which it is) and because as artists we want to disenchant the cruel tricks, forgeries and science fictions we are all forced to live with.

The work of Life of a Craphead—their stoicism and unpretending humor—is something I've known them to cultivate amidst cascades of bad (world) news and amongst a huge family of friends. Affection, which comes easy to them, is a wonderfully connective force through which something like empathy 3 travels: first across bodies, then across time, and again back to bodies long forgotten or concealed. This is to say that the emotive contributions of Amy and Jon's practice come from a preoccupation that seeks to extend the in-the-hand possibilities of an encounter with a work of art to something that might bring history and the supposedly deeply wrought lessons it offers to bear on *itself* (as well as the abyssal failure of such lessons and offerings).

When Chapman sings that “there's a science fiction in the space between you and me” I propose this to mean that the transverse zone between bodies, by which common-knowledge would have us believe identity is made discontinuous and individual, is in fact the work of science and fiction alike. We live in an invention, you see—the world. Hurting me hurts you, and while I maintain that for you, my pain is most likely not understandable I know that, for you, *yours* most likely is. 4

*Leave the pity and the blame
For the ones who do not speak
You write the words to get respect and compassion
And for posterity
You write the words and make believe
There is truth in the space between*

There is a monopoly on contiguity 5 that places prisons and factories in the distant outskirts (away from family, home... life) and endlessly drafts and redrafts borders, rights, citizens, soldiers, and enemies. Contiguity—the state of being in contact, proximity or touch—when restricted, dulls the affection with which we might consider one another and distances our actions from the political urgency, efficacy and weight that they truly pitch. That we are not in touch is a fiction. The science of posterity as figured by forces like the state and the rule of law and property is a fiction. The necessity of bounded exclusionary zones and punishment is a fiction. The necessity of war and victory is a fiction. In the space, just space, dead space— In the abyss between you and me you move an inch to the right and low and behold you bump into a body, a cousin; an inch to the left, a mother, a daughter...

The “truth” then, “in the space between” lies in the fact that this depth is populated not by worded stories but bodied ones and that the segregatory defenses against this population 6 are in fact manned 7 and thus ultimately human and bodied as well.

Amy and Jon's rageful and loving destruction comes across somehow as light and immediate as a kiss on the cheek, and the *joie-de-vivre* with which these gestures land comes with the promise that you can hug and slap a ghost, deceased or living. What I mean—and what their work tells me—is that the past is not asleep: you can, with little pomp and circumstance, have the impossible conversations through which the world might be rendered *capable of a human response*. 8



1 *Telling Stories* by Tracy Chapman, 2000
2 An adult contemporary song from 2000 is not exactly a current top 40, but what I mean by ‘music’ in this case is lyricism, poetry, or feeling.
3 There's a problem with this word: empathy is the ability to understand someone else's feelings. The ableist belief in the primacy of understanding and logic that sets every imaginable state and situation neatly in line in an indexically fungible (exchangeable) grid of possibilities is one that turns the un-indexibal or un-understandable into the impossible. Affinity is a better word.
4 See probably *Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. The Undercommons, 2013.*
5 See *Ruth Wilson Gilmore. In the Shadow of the Shadow State. The Revolution Will Not be Funded, 2009.*
6 See Hans Haacke's 2000 artwork *Der Bevölkerung*.
7 ‘Manned,’ as in operated by a human and ‘manned’ as in operated by masculine patriarchal vision.
8 See *Hortense J. Spillers. On the Idea of Black Culture, 2006.* In this essay Spillers explains Black Culture to be the work of saving the world from the regime of capital, expansion and militaristic dominion (the inventions and tools of white settler-colonialist global empire and business). Our salvation as a species, she explains, depends on wresting control of the world from the cold machinic logic of capital and rendering its faculties capable of a human response.

Jason Hirata, born 1986, Seattle, examines the historical conditions of culture, social space, revolution and labor. Past works have lifted menus and meal plans of internment camps for people of Japanese ancestry from the archives of the U.S. Army Western Defense Command; reproduced Goya's renderings of famine, in which peasants eat the blight-resistant yet neurotoxin-containing grass pea; investigated the application of theories of shareholder value to General Electric by its notorious CEO Jack Welch; and re-positioned LED streetlamp hardware at eye level, reproducing the condition of hyper-visibility so that sight is overwhelmed by illumination. Hirata's works connect historical sites to show how financial speculation and risk are managed and implemented alongside a precarious model of the social. In his sculptures, drawings, and performances he examines how state and corporate practices and structures transform the cultural and material reproduction of life.

Life of a Craphead is the collaboration of Amy Lam and Jon McCurley. Their work spans performance art, film, and curation. The name Life of a Craphead comes from the opening joke of the very first live comedy routine they performed together in 2006. Their work investigates, through the central principle of humour, the different ways in which power and authority are deployed. Projects include *King Edward Equestrian Statue Floating Down the Don* (2017), a public art project where they floated a replica of a colonial statue down a river in Toronto; *Bugs* (2016), a feature-length film about a bug society; and *The Life of a Craphead Fifty-Year Retrospective*, 2006-2056, a fake museum exhibition of all of the work they will ever make (2013). They also organized and hosted the performance art show *Doored* from 2012-2017. Life of a Craphead has exhibited across Canada and the U.S. and has been featured in *Art in America*, *Canadian Art*, *Washington Post*, *CBC*, *VICE*, and others. Amy is Chinese and Jon is Vietnamese-Irish, and they live and work in Toronto, Canada.

This exhibition is presented in partnership with the ninth biennial **M:ST Performative Art Festival**, which takes place from September 7 - October 7 2018 in the Treaty 7 region, and includes 20 emerging, local, national and international performative artists.

TRUCK GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF OUR MEMBERS, THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS, THE ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS, AND CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT.



THIS EXHIBITION IS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO PROJECT GRANT SUPPORT FROM THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH M:ST PERFORMATIVE ART FESTIVAL, CLOVERDALE PAINT, LITTLE ROCK PRINTING & SHELF LIFE BOOKS.



TRUCK.CA

2009 10 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T3C 0K4
T 403.261.7702 F 403.264.7747 E info@truck.ca