



Of Partiers and Parking Lots: Anthology Film Archives Celebrates the Work of Jeff Krulik

ART

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MUSIC

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POETRY

Megyn Adkins, Stephen Bett, Ian Davisson, Jason Gallagher

PRINTED MATTER

This Is How We Do It: On
Rebecca Lazier and Dan Trueman's *There Might Be Others*

Boog City Academy: 5 Poets on Their Summer Syllabi

SMALL PRESS

On Homage and Muse, with Kore Press

This Is How We Do It



BY JOSEPHINE STEWART

There Might Be Others
Rebecca Lazier and Dan Trueman
The Operating System

Good improvisation, and the crafting of good improvisational systems, requires not just a willingness to say yes but an unshakeable will to decide repeatedly and never tire of it. To decide to make rules. To test and push and determine which rules are right. To decide to follow. To decide to lead. To decide to release the most free and unedited creative impulse, and simultaneously to decide to respect the impulses of others. System-based improvisation is marriage: deciding each day not to toss the ring out the window and try something else, deciding to work on it. It is society-building: making laws and deciding their justness, accumulating knowledge and deciding to share it, constructing language and deciding meaning.

There Might Be Others (The Operating System) is a choreographic and musical composition that, here in its published form, manages to be an open and accessible discussion of my favorite questions about creative systems as well as an artwork. It is at once simple, sprawling, and subtle. Its antecedents are not obscure, and it does not disrespect them, and yet—both by its final form and by its frank disclosure of what went into that form—it steps beyond them and closer to the barrier separating creative development and construction of community. It documents a system used to create a highly successful piece of performance, but it refuses to settle for any simple definition of that success. The book-of-the-work affords us a vantage that’s rare in the performing arts, a sort of split screen, showing both intended product (as well as can be conveyed on paper) and process, and presenting both in the context of a larger conversation about the open-source distribution of artistic ideas, as is very much in keeping with the documentary ethos and philosophy of the press that published it.’

The project began with choreographer Rebecca Lazier’s exploration of Terry Riley’s *In C*. She wondered if a similar structure (minimalist, modular, instruction-based, flexible) could be designed for movement rather than sound and produce the same kind of complex but compelling performances. In constructing a system that tried to access *In C*’s aesthetic coherence and adaptability while incorporating a much wider range of inputs—bodies moving in space, with all attendant physical and psychological variations—she and her collaborators were pulled into a deep study of rule-making.

A command to clap or to produce defined sounds is different from a command to walk or to leap. A quarter note at 150 beats per minute is always a quarter note at 150 beats per minute. It may be played on any instrument and at any specified pitch, and the tempo may be a range rather than an absolute, and there are established frameworks for each of these variables. There are as many leaps, though, as there are human bodies who can leap, multiplied by 360 degrees of spatial freedom and by however many emotional tones the human face can convey. I don’t wish to dismiss the variety of expression available in music, but I think the notion of scale is relevant. Guidelines that successfully govern one group may not work for another.

As the introductory essays and process notes make clear, this mismatch between the purity of Riley’s directives and the requirements of multiple moving bodies drove Lazier to rigorous interrogation of her rules and their outputs. She tested her choreographic system with collaborators who might break it: ballet dancers, folk dancers, dancers who do not share her language and culture, non-dancers, scientists, and musicians (both as movers and in the sonic component of the piece, developed by Dan Trueman). She encouraged talk and back-talk. She solicited discomfort. She poked into the corners of “Do this” to amass a huge body of data about how and when and why “this” works, how it looks and feels when it does, and how it looks and feels when it doesn’t. She plumbed the experiences of her comrades, endlessly iterating, striving for a scheme that succeeded not because of blind conformity to its boundaries but because the scheme itself could handle any questions thrown at it. The structure still says “Do this,” but the “How?” and “Why?” are part of the plan, not excursions from it.

It should be noted that the impetus to preserve these interrogations and present this ongoing process as an evolving document came from conversations with Lynne DeSilva-Johnson of The Operating System press. Rather than being exterior to the performance, or just a record of it, the published form of *There Might Be Others* has become another facet of the whole. The dialogues between creators and press are in themselves another collaboration—one which helped Lazier and the performers further clarify the work’s intentions and implications.



In effect, *There Might Be Others* is a set of choreographic and musical instructions inextricably coupled with a psychological and behavioral code used by the performers to interpret those instructions. This is explicit in Lazier and Trueman’s articulation of their goals and methods. They expose the limitations of their instructions. They actively recruit a diverse group of performers, knowing that the tension between those instructions and the differing personalities on stage tests the rules. They show us the seams by telling us how performance decisions were made, how they changed, and what patterns they had to counteract. They document for us not just things to do, but a way of doing. They face us at every turn and plainly state that there are other possibilities, and that we will see them. This work, then, via this document, is not a repeatable or reviewable performance; it is a reusable tool or a community to be joined.

For readers unfamiliar with modern dance and postmodern and minimalist composition, the fine points of the performance’s score may not be the most riveting reading, but the discussions of why scoring decisions were made have something to offer anyone interested in group behavior and artistic rigor, and especially in how those two forces interact. The score itself and the detailed instructions in the various dance and music modules are the product of Lazier’s way of doing, and her process is visible in them. In one piece of dance instruction, Lazier says:

There are two roles in this module: the manipulators and the manipulated. These roles change within the module. There should be a minimum of 3 manipulators.

The play of this module is to take the center person off center and bring them back.

The person to be manipulated stands on one leg extending their limbs to provide a scaffolding for the manipulators to move. The manipulators provide surfaces for the center person to press against. The center person can be in control or the manipulators can take control. The signaling between roles is essential for safety and maximizing movement potential.

Always start slowly so that trust can be established.

Together, you can do small repetitions of movements that elevate progressively so that you can safely build to lifting the manipulated high in the air.

A goal of this module is to enhance the topography of the space, especially the up space.

Make sure gender roles are shared.

Some modules are more choreographically specific and “dance-y,” some more general, or more gestural, but this approach to direction is the norm throughout and the underlying principle of the work: Physical/external instructions and psychological/internal instructions have equal weight. Material and aesthetic/metaphorical goals share the same tone. Physical descriptions are neutral. Social and behavioral

aspects of movement are pulled to the foreground as needed. The way of doing is indivisible from the task. “How you do it is what you get” is such an old, dull saw that hearing it barely cuts at all, but seeing it put into practice so comprehensively is refreshing and instructive. Lazier and Trueman’s discussions of process tell us what they value. The tenor of their instructions tells us that they’re not interested in

‘How you do it is what you get’ is such an old, dull saw that hearing it barely cuts at all, but seeing it put into practice so comprehensively is refreshing and instructive.

simply passing on the outside shape of the work—that shape being worthless without those values.

And so: A book containing what a book can contain of a dance, of music, of gnarly conversations over the course of several years, of performers’ personal answers to the questions posed by Lazier’s rules and by improvisational structures in general. *There Might Be Others* invites us to struggle along with those questions in a way that a high-quality video of this type of performance would not. I was lucky enough to see the piece in person, and though a recording would more accurately capture the stunning complexity and funky, honest beauty I witnessed, it would not do justice to the work’s philosophy or its goals, and would therefore be an inappropriate record.

In some ways, *There Might Be Others* has more in common with a school or a trade workshop or a family home than with, say, a finished symphony. Its rules must be learned and internalized. Method and intention matter, and individual actions simultaneously challenge and reinforce the collective every day, every minute. That dense net of activity and decision, and of learning and teaching how to decide, is the artwork. Decades of ethnography have taught us that it’s hard to record that. It’s hard to smash a culture—even one this small—onto a tape. You have to learn the language and go visit. The book is a ticket for a bus that will drop you off nearby, and I recommend it.

Josephine Stewart is an actor, dancer, editor, and lazy poet. She is a founding member of a theater company called Tillyard, lives in Bed-Stuy, and likes eggs. Please invite her to hear your poetry readings.

Shadows & Substance | Marcia Haufrecht

June 24, 2016 – July 18, 2016

266 W. 37th Street (between 7th and 8th avenues)
New York City

Nearest Trains: A, C, E, 1

Hours: Wed & Sat: 3-7pm and by appointment
On view 24/7 from the street

Opening Reception: Friday, June 24, 2016, 6-8pm. A poetry reading by Nathaniel Siegel at 7pm, will be followed by a conversation with Marcia Haufrecht and curator, Hyewon Yi.



Shadows & Substance presents recent oil paintings by Marcia Haufrecht. These intriguing paintings, loosely based on photographs Haufrecht made with a point-and-shoot camera, offer the artist’s interpretation of reality in muted color palette, airy brushstrokes, and soft lines.

Two modes of painting are on display. One mode presents silhouettes that possess abstract qualities as they merge with their surroundings of a swimming pool, a sandy beach, or a grassy lawn, hinting at the mysterious identities of their subjects. The substance mode offers realistic representations of people the artist observed on subways, in parks, and on lakes and beaches. These paintings reveal truths about modern life as they present subjects engrossed in their electronic devices, relaxing outdoors, and conversing with friends. And while some images depict social engagement, others convey loneliness and alienation.

Haufrecht delves into the apparent realities and hidden mysteries of her world. Her “substance” works fall into the Realist tradition of American painting harking back to the Ashcan School led by Robert Henri in the early twentieth century, while her “shadows” paintings join the long history of fascination with the dark shared by artists from Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Goya to Umbo and Kara Walker. For this actor-turned-painter, painting is an intimate exploration that manifests her belief that “all the arts are ¼ means of communicating with the world at large.”

About the Artist: A long-time member of The Actors Studio and Ensemble Studio Theatre, Marcia Haufrecht is the founder and artistic director of The Common Basis Theatre. A playwright and accomplished actress, her plays have been produced in New York by The Actors Studio, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Quai, and The Common Basis, as well as at The Company of Angels in California, La Mama in Melbourne, Australia, and Kultur Im Gugg in Austria. Haufrecht has appeared on and off Broadway as well as in many films and television shows. Haufrecht played Paul Giametti’s mother, Gina, in *Win Win*, appeared in *The Night Listener* with Robin Williams, and had roles in the film adaptation of the musical *The Producers*.

Retired from teaching acting at The New School, she also has taught at the Lee Strasburg Film and Theatre Institute and at Columbia University. Haufrecht continues to teach in Australia, Austria, and Portugal, and has been a private acting coach for over thirty years.

About the Curator: Hyewon Yi, Ph.D., is Director and Curator of the Amelie A. Wallace Gallery, SUNY College at Old Westbury, where she also teaches art history courses.

For more information, please contact the artist at marcia.haufrecht@gmail.com.

This project is supported in part by a space grant from chashama.

muses on the raft
musing about this
and that
the whole world
is going
“BYE !”
does God see
his reflection
on this green earth
the gentle lap
stretching
in the sun
protected by
cotton
faith and
kinship

poem 8
to accompany Marcia Haufrecht’s painting

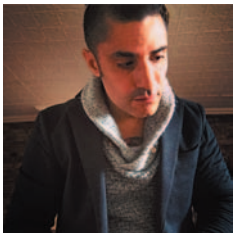
Nathaniel A. Siegel
17 April 2016, NYC

Boog City Academy: 5 Poets on Their Summer Syllabi

[Epigraph:] “And poets not only use what other poets have discovered but change it. It’s a language that doesn’t (can’t) hold still. Each poet shows other poets how to write and how not to...”
–Kenneth Koch, *Making Your Own Days*

In this day and age, and for better or worse, most poets aren’t far from classrooms: be they students themselves, printed names on dust jackets or handouts, teachers in and around the community, adjuncts slaving away behind stacks of papers or one of those employed by academia fulltime. To the poet, as with any writer, the learning never stops even after final grades are due. In fact, summers are most likely a period of increased reading and writing for our poets, who are free to storm out of their literal classrooms right into their metaphorical ones.

Therefore, it’s time for summer school here at Boog City Academy. Sit anywhere you like and remember: Absolutely no cell phones, please. Since it’s the first day of class, it seems only fitting that we should take a look at the syllabus. In the spirit of higher education, Boog City rounded up five poets this semester and asked them what their seasonal lesson plans looked like.



Our first learner is **Ray DeJesus**, himself a prodigious molder of young minds. Some might even say that he’s the big man around campus.

Boog City: So what are you reading and what’s your impression so far?

RD: Zero K (Scribner), Don Delillo; heavy doses of Claude Royet-Journoud, Rosmarie Waldrop, Keith Waldrop. Impressions: Wowed, mesmerized, silenced.

And what are you learning from this reading?

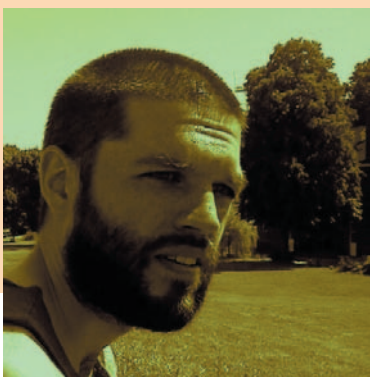
Developing a renewed appreciation for simple phrase and sentence structure.

Having rushed across campus, eerily empty these summer months, we then run into **Alex Crowley**, who is considering matriculating to Boog City Academy in the fall.

Boog City: What’s on your summer syllabus? Can you tell us about your experience of it?

AC: I’m currently reading Frans DeWaal’s new book, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* (Norton). It’s an unwieldy and not particularly great title, but it’s a pretty astounding book. He’s a renowned primatologist and ethologist, but this is the first time I’ve actually read his work. I don’t tend to read a lot about biology, but this work deals heavily with animal cognition and I’ve been on a bit of a cog-sci/consciousness/neuroscience kick the past few months. It’s also very accessible to lay readers, so people that might be interested shouldn’t worry about getting bogged down in technical terms and whatnot.

There are a lot of really really smart animals out there ... but we have a tendency to downplay the extent and legitimacy of their skills, biased by our own prejudices and the faulty idea that humans must be better at everything. —Alex Crowley



And what are you gaining from De Waal?

De Waal presents some damning critiques of a lot of shoddy work in animal cognition research, especially with studies that have compared the capabilities of humans with highly intelligent non-human animals. There are a lot of really really smart animals out there—our fellow great apes (hominids), corvids, parrots, cetaceans, octopuses—but we have a tendency to downplay the extent and legitimacy of their skills, biased by our own prejudices and the faulty idea that humans must be better at everything. Consciousness is currently a major research and theory topic, and De Waal also has a lot to say about looking at other species as we try to understand human cognition. Cognition and consciousness didn’t arise ex nihilo with our species, so it makes sense to examine it in others to get a sense of the range of possibilities for cognition.



I think I’m learning something about the power of perspective. In many of these poems, things that are violent or dangerous or sad make use of the slow reveal of coming of age, or the frame of childhood, of some amount of naivete and wonder.

—Lauren Hunter

If you’ve got **Lauren Hunter** in your class, you might want to pick her to be your partner on group assignments; she’s a bona fide whiz is on track to be valedictorian.

Boog City: So, Lauren, what’s on the reading list right now and what’s your impression?

LH: I just finished reading Jamaal May’s *Hum* (Alice James Books) which I bought in a blur after reading his poem “How To Get Your Gun Safely Out of Your Mouth.” The language of these poems is so wonderfully tactile and musical and inviting, while reading it I fell into that familiar yet increasingly rare feeling of truly disappearing into a book. And while many of the poems deal with emotionally fraught situations, I find myself most reluctant to leave.

Can you tell us a little about what your learning from May?

I think I’m learning something about the power of perspective. In many of these poems, things that are violent or dangerous or sad make use of the slow reveal of coming of age, or the frame of childhood, of some amount of naivete and wonder. It makes for incredible, magical moments that cut right down to the heart/bone.



Jeff T. Johnson headed up Boog City’s yearbook with gusto and is, per most reports, a delight in the classroom.

Boog City: What’s on your syllabus and what are you getting out of it?

Mauve Desert (Coach House Books), by Nicole Brossard

I Hate the Internet (self-published), by Jarett Kobek

Mess And Mess And (Noemi Press), by Douglas Kearney

Nicole Brossard’s *Mauve Desert* takes apart and puts together the novel without making it about the novel, and infuses its pages with desert light, solar and atomic. Jarett Kobek’s book is a novel about the novel as agent of compliance among other oppressive technologies: your laptop was built by a slave, and tweeting about it won’t remediate the human cost of capitalism; every technology is an expression of its founding ideology, and the internet is inherently misogynist; “*Star Wars* was a total piece of shit.” How do you kick against the forms and write a book that knows these things and repeats them many times, but also is laugh-on-the-train funny? Kobek figured it out.

I just finished reading those two, and am taking Douglas Kearney’s *Mess And Mess And* slowly, backing up to reread sections, sharing pieces with friends, and marveling at the visual and visceral poetics messing with every page “to scrutinize human cruelty so that I can learn to be less cruel.”

Finally, we catch up with **Peter Longofono** outside the door to the band room.

Boog City: So what are you reading right now? What’s your current impression?

Currently reading the first edition of Norton’s *Postmodern American Poetry* anthology. So far it isn’t telling me much I didn’t already know, though I’m using it to fill in cracks in my knowledge and practice, so perhaps I haven’t gotten far enough to find the useful bits. The context for each writer is doing the most work for me; I like being able to trace provenance.

Have you gained any valuable insights or learned any lessons from the *Anthology*?

I’m learning, as I try to learn from everything, a new-ish kind of discipline. Many of these writers went fully in without the Internet’s bouncy, sure-why-not-ness to rescue proceedings. The open field still operates for the poet, though it sometimes seems to be more forgiving and less exhilarating than it used to be. My work’s sort of asleep at the moment. This might be a way to wake it up.

So you see, just because the principal has left the building, doesn’t mean the learning has to stop, especially here, at Boog City Academy.

Ray DeJesus lives in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

Alex Crowley is the author of Improper Maps (The Operating System) and works as the non-fiction editor at Publishers Weekly. He lives in Ridgewood, Queens.

Lauren Hunter is the author of Human Achievements (forthcoming from Birds, LLC) and the chapbook My Own Fires (Brothel Books). She lives in Durham, N.C.

Jeff T. Johnson lives in Bed-Stuy and is at work on Trouble Songs, The Archiverse, and The Book / Or / The Woods. Writing has recently appeared at Jacket2, Electronic Literature Collection 3, and Fanzine.

Peter Longofono’s chapbook, Chords, was published in March by The Operating System. He serves as the reviews editor at Coldfront, makes music with Thick, and lives in Bed-Stuy at the moment.

On Homage and Muse, with Kore Press

Boog City’s small press editor Joe Pan is excited to bring our readers a series of interviews between small press publishers and their authors. This month we have author Tracie Morris (handholding: 5 kinds—sonic, textual engagements) in conversation with Lisa Bowden, poet and publisher of Kore Press.

Lisa Bowden: Talk a little about the genesis your newest work, *handholding: 5 kinds—sonic, textual engagements* (<http://korepress.org/TracieMorris.htm>), and the processes of creating the audio components of the work?

Tracie Morris: The genesis of the book was *Eyes Wide Shut*. I’ve been a fan of the film for over a decade and was trying to figure out why. It’s beautifully shot and it’s Kubrick so it’s brilliant but I was wondering why I kept returning to it. I realized that there was an undertone to the film that I hadn’t often seen: that the ingénue in the film was the straight White male character and that he knew the least, of everyone, about what was going on throughout. There was a racial, gendered, sexuality and class critique underneath the film, that I’m quite sure was deliberate. When I went to the Kubrick archives in London and saw earlier iterations of the script, I believe this even more.

My relationship with this film evolved over time and it was fun to explore different ideas through this extensive, durational work (both writing and reading the response). I enjoyed researching it, engaging with it, and rethinking what it could mean. It was impeccably produced with everything meaning something, as is often the case with Kubrick’s work, so having time, over years, to deeply consider it even before my formal research was a great pleasure. My first draft of the audio component was completed while I was in residency at the MacDowell Artists Colony. I then did a more polished version of it at the Wexler Recording Studio at Kelly Writers’ House at the University of Pennsylvania.

How did you choose the five artists to engage in *handholding*? How much improvising went in to the sonic versions of the “experiments”?

The artists were chosen organically. I mentioned how the germination of the project was from Kubrick. While I was in London researching, I was also asked to do a poetry reading on the anniversary of the death of Malcolm X and Akomfrah’s magnificent film was being shown at the reading, so I thought I’d apply another aspect of “handholding” to that film. The previous year, I was asked to write a brief “review” of Stein on the anniversary of *Tender Buttons* and decided to complete that review for this book. I’ve long been an admirer of Schwitters’ opus and thought the best way to show my appreciation was not to duplicate or interpret *Ursonate* but to converse/sit in with it. The Cage piece was an homage to him but also to acknowledge the different environments I was in at the time that I was working on this book. It’s the documentation of a literal and figurative journey.

What is your ultimate, ideal venue for “performing the book,” and who would you like to have in the front row listening?

Wow. This is an intense question. I like museum and gallery spaces for performing this work but I always appreciate anyplace that would have me. I’d like anyone who’s interested to be in the front row. I don’t presume! I’m glad if folks show up! Lol.

You are a Brooklyn girl, born, raised and currently residing. Do the sounds of Brooklyn—past or present—figure into your work? How so, if yes?

Always, always. I hear things in Brooklynese. It’s my first verbal reference as my mother is from Brooklyn too. I’m a second-generation Brooklynite. Kubrick is from the Bronx and so there’s a New York “borough” centrality in the work, in all likelihood. My accent may have gotten even heavier over the years... I value it more in the era of gentrification.

Handholding is a lot about atomization, looking at the particulate matter of these inspiring innovators. What are the parts? What’s between the literal and figurative lines? What’s space? What words are left unsaid? —Tracie Morris



How does being a classically trained Shakespearean actor and bandleader inform your work (*handholding* in particular)?

Well, I love words and language. It might be more apt to say that my love of language and sounds, words and sounds, words as sounds/sounds as words expresses itself in different venues. Shakespeare is a giant, beyond a giant, and I love how British acting training focuses on the text being primary in acting. This is my feeling about life, in general. “Words, words, words...” to quote the Bard’s most famous play. Being a bandleader is, ironically, similar. When I work with music, especially with my wonderful musicians, I think of their sounds as words. They, being kind, often think of my sounds as music.

Handholding is a lot about atomization, looking at the particulate matter of these inspiring innovators. What are the parts? What’s between the literal and figurative lines? What’s space? What words are left unsaid? British acting and all forms of music emphasize space, phonemes, breathing and also, sometimes, what the implications are of “taking charge.”

What is one of the top three ethics that you abide in your art?

Oy. Hmmm... I don’t know if any of them stand out, per se: the golden rule (I try, sometimes fail, to live by that in my art); to not worry about being pretty or acceptable in the work but to focus on what the art wants me to do (usually to get out of the way); and my third mantra is: the muse is master. I follow the muse. Everyone else must wait in line—including me. Especially me.

You perform all over the world, have published with several houses, and are now launching the new M.F.A. program in Performance and Performance Studies at Pratt. What attracted you to Kore Press, in Tucson, Ariz. as a publisher for *handholding*?

Well, I wanted to support a feminist press, especially with this project, because I thought it might get a bit of attention with the names of these creative masters attached to the work. I’ve been in touch with Kore for many years and we kept thinking about projects to do. When *handholding* was finally in the real conceptual stage to move forward, I appreciated Kore’s diligence and knew it was the best house for the book.



Lisa Bowden.

I consider all of the things I do, even envisioning and administering an academic program, as part of my creative practice. I don’t see them as separate but as different aspects of one thing. Working with language.

You recently performed vocal work at the Whitney as part of an homage to Cecil Taylor, and also recently appeared in an avant-garde stage work to do with Gertrude Stein. Can you talk a little bit about what draws you to work with these artists in performance?

Well I adore Cecil. I had the great honor and pleasure of opening for him at St. Mark’s Poetry Project many years ago. I love playing at the Whitney and have done so many times. I’m honored and genuinely like playing in museums that consider performance as part of their curatorial practice. The wonderful thing about this most recent show, besides honoring Cecil, was that I had a chance to play with the great Susie Ibarra. It was a reunion (we hadn’t played together in almost 20 years) and we love playing together especially to honor Cecil. Susie has worked with him and we very much respect and have revered his brilliance. It was really quite an honor to be affiliated with this celebration of a singular genius life and career. I was also happy to be among other artists whom I admire for that celebration. There were many, many friends on the stage and in the audience. Too many to mention.

The Gertrude Stein play at Pratt was directed by my friend and colleague Jennifer Miller. I loved working with her and jumped at the chance to be directed by her. She’s a wonderful director and to work with Stein was phenomenal. What I enjoyed about the performance, besides working with the lovely faculty and student actors, was the presentation of the problematic aspects of Stein including her racial “issues” without equivocation. Stein’s intense, brilliant, and difficult, and I mean that in many ways. I also tried to address those controversies of hers in my book. Not to flinch from her to pretend those issues aren’t there but to see them for what they are and, in *handholding*, to give moments when those who are aggrieved get to tell their side of the story. Shakespeare does this very well in many of his plays.

Do you have any upcoming performances in NYC?

I do. I have a presentation coming up at The New Museum on May 23 as part of their Legacy seminars. I’ll be reading an excerpt from *Eyes Wide Shut* and speaking in a public program.

What are you working on now?

More book projects and trying to get the M.F.A. program off the ground. Hopefully a bit of RnR before things gear up this autumn. But it’s unlikely. I like to keep busy.

Lisa Bowden, publisher and co-founder, is the editor of Autumnal: A Collection of Elegies, co-editor of Powder: Writing by Women in Ranks, from Vietnam to Iraq, and co-adaptor and director of Coming in Hot (a play based on Powder). She has developed Kore’s long list of authors and award-winning programming as a literary activist, artist, and feminist culture worker. She is a recipient of the Maryann Campau Fellowship for poetry from the University of Arizona Poetry Center and a Woman on the Move Award from the YWCA. A poet who works with an improvisational ensemble of dancers, writers, and musicians called Movement Salon, Bowden has studied English and philosophy at the University of Arizona and in London. She lives in Tucson with her partner Eve and daughter Djuna. Her poetry can be found at <https://backroomlive.wordpress.com/>, <http://spiralorb.net/>, and <http://thedrunkenboat.com/>.

Tracie Morris is a poet, singer, critic, scholar, bandleader, and actor. She holds an M.F.A. in Poetry from Hunter College; has studied classical British acting technique at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London; American acting technique at Michael Howard Studios; is an alum of Cave Canem’s prestigious summer residency as well as residencies at MacDowell, Millay, and Yaddo. She holds a Ph.D. in performance studies from New York University. Her work has been presented at the Whitney Biennial, Ron Feldman Gallery, The New Museum, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and Dia:Chelsea and dozens of musical recording projects. Her books include Intermission, Rhyme Scheme, and handholding: 5 kinds and is co-editor of Best American Experimental Writing (2016) with Charles Bernstein. Morris is professor and coordinator of the M.F.A. program in performance + performance studies at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn..

FILM

Of Partiers and Parking Lots: Anthology Film Archives Celebrates the Work of Jeff Krulik

BY JOEL SCHLEMOWITZ

Before the term “viral” had its meaning as a pandemic of clicks and shares spreading through a virtual world Jeff Krulik and John Heyn’s *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* (1986) went viral. In the pre-YouTube world of the eighties and nineties this 17-minute video propagated itself through VHS dubbed onto VHS, passed from person to person through the network of human contact or sent through the post packed in bubble wrap mailers. The image degraded with each dub from one generation to the next—the color becoming jaundiced and sickly, the contrast increasing and smearing the boundaries around hard edges in the image, intermittent flashes of dark lines of tape dropout accumulating, and horizontal rainbow patterns of interference slowly passing up and down over the tv screen. This only added confirmation to a sense of treasured privilege in getting one’s hands on the fabled tape.

The work itself is as direct as the title suggests; high-spirited, youthful heavy metal heads hanging out in a parking lot before a Judas Priest concert. They converse with the filmmakers who ask such questions as: “What would you say if you saw Rob Halford right now?” or even getting the conversation started with: “Who are you here to see?” prompting an emphatic: “Judas Priest!” from the Judas Priest tee-shirt garbed teens clustered by the side of their cars. Thirty-years later the visions of blow-dried haystack-like hairstyles and the boxy-edged, long-hooded vintage cars make it a time-capsule of the mid-1980s. But there is also a timeless familiarity to the sight of young people congregating and getting buzzed before a concert. One can’t help but thinking, while watching these young men and women on screen, of some vague recollection of knowing some of them from high school—which could be a possibility for those who grew up in Maryland in the 1980s. Fans of the film—which notably included Nirvana—have bestowed nicknames like the “Zebra Man” on the teenager decked out in black and white striped ensemble who grabs hold of Krulik and Heyn’s microphone to declare: “Heavy metal rules! All that punk shit sucks!”

The parking lot is a liminal space. A place of prosaic utility between the concert arena—where the main event takes place—and the journey from elsewhere. Its centrality gives the work a certain *Waiting for Godot* quality, as suggested by the brief shots of the band’s parked and empty tour bus. Some fans are stalked out across from it, keeping an eye out while they party in the hopes that some of the bandmembers might be spied around there before the concert. Scenes of the concert itself appear more as a footnote to the activity in the parking lot, as a backdrop to the film’s credit roll. A reversal of the typical concert film where the audience performs the role of starstruck spectator in the occasional cutaway shot or as the thronging spectacle of an anonymous sea of faces. Here the individual concert-goers are the film’s unassuming superstars.

In honor of the 30-year anniversary of *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*, anthology Film Archives will be hosting a three-screening retrospective of Krulik’s work June 17-18. Krulik’s recently produced feature *Led Zeppelin Played Here*, showing on Saturday, continues his preoccupation with transforming the anecdotal into the essential, chronicling the cryptic tale of a performance that might or might not have taken place in 1969 by then little-known Led Zeppelin in the gym of the Wheaton Youth Center in Wheaton, Maryland.

The three-program retrospective begins on Friday June 17 at 7:30 p.m. with *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* and other parking lot-related works, continuing on Saturday June 18th at 6:00 p.m. with *Led Zeppelin Played Here*, and 8:30 p.m. with a collection of short portraits and other pieces. The short portraits, as much as his other films, exemplify the Krulik approach to the unconventional:



Heavy Metal Parking Lot.

Courtesy of Jeff Krulik

The filmmaker Jeff Krulik is, above all, an outstanding empathist of cinema. It’s a natural consequence of his choices of subject matter and style; the person speaking directly to the camera is the essential element in a Krulik film. Sometimes this occurs through an interview interacting with the offscreen filmmaker and other times in a more casual monologue. But it is his tacit respect for the endearing weirdos in his films that is the crucial aspect of his work.

As a documentary filmmaker it is incumbent to understand how an audience is inclined to read the material in a film, a delicate part of which is the ethical question of how the nonconformist character comes across to the viewer. Has the filmmaker—even without intending it—invited the audience to snicker or to empathize? It is one thing to snicker at the personage of the status quo and quite another to snicker at the misfit: The former situation seems the genuine duty of the critic of hidebound privilege while the latter has a distasteful, exploitative quality of picking on the little guy.

Krulik manages to fill us with empathy for the quirky population of his films, even managing to pull the occasional switcharoo on the viewer by setting up the premise as the more problematic type of film capitalizing on human foibles and then—in a moment of whiplash—bringing the audience to a place of empathy. Even if beginning to watch *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* with the expectation of snickering at the provincial, rowdy metalhead teens the viewer inevitably will be guilelessly charmed by them in the end. This is the empathist Krulik at work.

Joel Schlemowitz (<http://www.joelschlemowitz.com>) is a Park Slope, Brooklyn-based filmmaker who makes short cine-poems and experimental documentaries. His most recent project, *78rpm*, is in the final stages of post-production. He has taught filmmaking at The New School for the past 19 years. Robyn Hasty photo.

It is his tacit respect for the endearing weirdos in his films that is the crucial aspect of Krulik’s work.



Megyn Adkins
Harrison, Ohio
Encyclopedic Braid

“Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo.”
William McKinley uttered his last complete sentence
As he took the very first automobile ride ever,
No one knowing exactly what he was thinking.
Maybe it was about a city far away
Or maybe he was just in a daze.

Perhaps he really liked the animals
And wanted them included in his memorial.

Like Queen Elizabeth I said, “The past cannot be cured”
So a new day came and the world still turned.
Light shown through the window from the morn
Or was that light teleported there from somewhere unknown?

No one could really know the truth,
And there’s no way to try and find out.
People are scared to believe things without proof
We shy as well from whispering into to moose hunters aloud.
It’s not only dangerous, it’s also illegal
In Alaska for those who wish to live to the next meal.

It was a tragedy that happened that day,
As McKinley was the one who did not see another meal.



Ian Davisson
Philadelphia
Pearson

doesn’t tell stories
for breakfast
I’m gonna cry
lonely
over this
moon
omelette
eggs
over easy
rolled over
thoughts
o god
o god
take me to Chestnut
Hill
I’m sorry
I’m cheating on you
with your mother
we plant seeds together
all night
in her skin
turn to babies
we talk
how much
she loved feeling
you grow inside
I was her baby too
her little spoon
I said goodnight



Stephen Bett
Victoria, British Columbia
*Back Principles (39) :
pockets empty*

Yes, we have each

other’s back

... till death

do us part

I have no other

“principles”

left

Back left & back

right pockets

sitting on

empty



Jason Gallagher
Williamsburg, Brooklyn
A Simple Poem for Spring

Passing the blooming dogwoods, magnolias and daffodils, I think of you.
I thought I told you about them once before this season, but you don’t seem to respond when I
remind you.
You don’t seem to remember.

A couple days later you come back to me excited.
“The magnolias are in bloom. Why didn’t you tell me?”

Three days later, you say,
“I don’t think that the sun will even make me happy.”

Poetry Bios

Megan Adkins is a student at Miami University (Ohio).**Stephen Bett’s** (<http://www.stephenbett.com/>) latest book of poetry is *The Gross & Fine Geography: New & Selected Poems* (Salmon Poetry). **Ian Davisson** (<http://iandavisson.tumblr.com/>) lives, writes, and teaches in Philadelphia. His recent work can be found in *Little Red Leaves* and *Tender-Loin*. **Jason Gallagher** (<http://ottermagazine.com/?s=Jason+Gallagher>) was a contributing editor at *Evergreen Review*. His poetry has appeared in *The Otter* as well as in *Kind of a Hurricane Press* anthologies *The Seasons* and *Storm Cycle*. He lives in Williamsburg, Brooklyn with his cat and works as an adjunct English instructor at Borough of Manhattan Community College and Brooklyn College.

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Jeanne Wilkinson

Park Slope, Brooklyn

Jeanne Wilkinson is an artist and writer living and working in Brooklyn. Her creative projects have been exhibited and published in numerous venues, including *Columbia Journal's* online magazine and *Adirondack Review*. Her videos and experimental short films have been featured in A.I.R. Gallery's Biennial exhibition, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and in the New York City Indie and Greenpoint Film Festivals. Some of her art involves the vision quests and travels of the Painted People who enter her studio as Barbies and Kens and become transformed into members of clan that travels this world and beyond. In this series they explore the magical environment of the Long Island City studio of artist Susan Sechler Luss.

Artist Statement

The "Painted People" come into my studio as Barbies, Kens and G.I. Joes, and leave it as a clan of wanderers who travel the universe both virtually and in "reality." They've been to the Wild West, traveled the city by night, observed the earth from the clouds, and gone into outer space via the Hubble Space telescope. In this case, they stayed nearer to him, visiting the Long Island City studio of artist Susan Sechler Luss where they spent the afternoon exploring new terrain. Luss's paintings, collages and installations of found objects from the streets of New York turn an ordinary room into a place of light and mystery. I desaturated the photos to bring attention to the shadows and patterns, but left a little color to shine through.

<http://jeannewilkinson.com/>



Pact 2016, digital image, variable sizes.



Shadows 2016, digital image, variable sizes.



Julius and Dawn 2016, digital image, variable sizes.

Where Are They Now? Checking in On Boog City Music Coverage Gone By



BY JONATHAN BERGER

Hi, I'm Jon. I used to be the music editor around here. I held the job for a bunch of issues, then realized that chasing deadlines was exhausting, and more of a younger man's game. In the years I was involved with Boog City, I reviewed and featured any number of artists, mostly because I was interested in their art. In most cases, that interest didn't diminish after the article was published. Some of the people that were featured have continued their artistic journeys, even years later - sometimes in very different ways. Below are a few stories of where their journeys took them.



Brenda Kahn

<http://brendakahn.com/>

<http://www.boogcity.com/boogpdfs/bc11.pdf>

Featured in my first cover story for Boog City back in 2003, Brenda Kahn had released five albums and begun to transition into new media, co-founding "the first online magazine dedicated entirely to women in music," womanrock.com.

The site's long gone now, but the interest in writing remained. Kahn has several children's books in the works, including *How Many Arms DOES an Octopus Have!?* and *Why Won't Anyone Play With The Dog Besides Me*, as well as a book of poetry about being a mom—expect it in the fall. Her last 10 years have been primarily focused on "recording, teaching music, writing and raising kids." Kahn and her husband moved out to Pennsylvania in the aughts, where they remain, now with two sons for company.

Kahn's excellent last album, 2010's *Seven Laws of Gravity*, as well as the upcoming *Little Yellow Truck* (her first children's record) prove she hasn't given up on music. Her interests seem to be leaning toward younger fans, like her students in a Salisbury elementary school. She spends her time there "teaching kids to read and railing against institutionalized boredom."

Her interests seem to be leaning toward younger fans, like her students in a Salisbury elementary school, 'teaching kids to read and railing against institutionalized boredom.'



Drew Blood

<https://soundcloud.com/thedrewblood>

<http://www.boogcity.com/boogpdfs/bc24.pdf>

The artist formerly known as Drew Blood, who, back in 2005, was described as an egotist with keyboard skills and hooks aplenty has, for the most part, stopped performing his original songs. "Bands are hard," he says forlornly. But fear not: the scheming dreamer doing business as Drew Rakowsky still plays. He's in the bicoastal band Brothers, plays sporadically with the F-Bomb tribute series, and, every Sunday, can be found at Sid Gold's Request Room, satisfying every one of your live karaoke dreams.

Sid's was recently identified by Grub Street as the #1 "Absolute Best Karaoke Bar in New York," and Rakowsky's playing and personality were identified as highlights. His material focuses on hard rock and alternative, but every week, the list of songs at his command seems to widen. With vocal assistance and co-hosting by Lez Zeppelin's Shannon Conley, the evenings are inviting and welcome to all. I've gone a few times. It's pretty good.



Dan Fishback

<http://www.thematerialworldmusical.com/>

<http://www.boogcity.com/boogpdfs/bc27.pdf>

In August, 2005, Dan Fishback said: "I've been juggling several projects for two years, and at this point ... let's just say it's really hard to do everything well at the same time. At some point I have to start cutting things off."

In May 2016, Fishback states, "As usual, I'm doing too many things."

He's the director of The Helix Queer Performance Network, an initiative at La MaMa Experimental Theater, BAX/Brooklyn Arts Exchange and the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics. "I curate festivals, teach workshops, edit critical writing and produce live events that serve the queer performance communities of NYC across age, race, gender and class. Most of the work has an intergenerational component, and was initially inspired by the research I did for my solo show 'thirtynothing' (2011) which explored the gay generation gap created by AIDS and gentrification."

Speaking of shows, he's developing the third in a trilogy of plays started first with *You Will Experience Silence* in 2009 and then *The Material World* in 2012.

"The series explores the emotional life of politics, and the political life of trauma in the history of a single Jewish-American family." The latest iteration, *Rubble Rubble*, will feature a curious structure. "One act is a regular play, and one act is a musical."

Sounds busy? It might be, for a mere mortal.

"This is actually less than I'd like to be doing." Fishback details, "In 2009 I came down with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, which forced me to step back from constant show-going, and made me completely re-arrange everything in my life. A lot of this work—curating instead of performing, writing shows that I'm not in - has been an effort to stay creative and engaged without putting too much stress on my body and health. Which is just to say: I'm insane and I know this is a lot, but I wish I was doing more!"

Some of the "more" he'd like to take on is a continuing focus on Palestine solidarity advocacy. A research trip to Israel/Palestine in 2015 resulted in the talk *Shame Monster: Dan Fishback's Queer Jewish Anti-Zionist Trip to Israel/Palestine*, presented at various venues in the city. "I wrote a piece for Slate about the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism (http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2016/02/08/pinkwashing_creating_change_and_anti_zionism_is_protesting_israel_necessarily.html), and I have few other projects in the works that aim to normalize Jewish anti-Zionism in the world."

It sounds like music has been put on the back burner, and, since 2009, there have been very few Dan Fishback live gigs - though 2012 and 2015 saw new albums, available at <http://danfishback.com/>.

But this summer, his original band, Cheese On Bread, is making a comeback. Recording for the first time in 10 years, the six-member band will reconvene from three non-contiguous states. "I'm really fucking excited about it."

To be honest, though, he seems to be really fucking excited about all of it.

Sounds busy? It might be, for a mere mortal.



Grey Revell

<https://greyrevell.bandcamp.com/>

<http://www.boogcity.com/boogpdfs/bc35.pdf>

Back in 2006 Grey Revell's album *Little Animals* was reviewed. A native Californian, former New Yorker, Revell had been bouncing back and forth between New Orleans and Charlotte, N.C., and the atmospheric *Animals* was a tribute to all that traveling.

In the last 10 years, Revell's moves have been more local in nature. In 2010, he took up residence at Impermanence Studios, a shared recording space and commune in the Charlotte vicinity. There, he wrote and recorded *First Cuban Boy On The Sun* over a 12-day-period in 2011. He was also producing a variety of local North Carolina acts, including Case Federal and the Agents, Zoe Vette and the Revolvers, and Paleface. His work with Paleface, another East Village emigre, took up most of 2012, where the two toured as part of a band, with Revell on bass.

"That took me up and down the East Coast and into the Midwest," Revell tells. "It wasn't anything I'd ever want to repeat, but it was a valuable experience, I suppose."

The fall of that year, though, brought "an unexpected game changer for me." A 1999 song, "Gone Gone," was picked up by Hewlett Packard for a Latin American tv ad campaign. The surprise revenue and popularity encouraged certain lifestyle changes. "The payday from that allowed me to cut ties with Paleface, and I moved back into Impermanence Studio, and immediately recorded 'I

Don't Leave Friends In Darkened Houses'," a single dedicated to Michal Friedman, a New York singer/songwriter who'd died suddenly in childbirth the year before.

2013 saw Revell touring Argentina to promote "Gone Gone" and "Darkened Houses," as well as locations as disparate as New York and Colorado.

In 2014, Revell began releasing monthly singles with the newly-formed band Roman Candles. "We issued 3 EP's that year—*The Happy Infinite Volumes 1-3*. A whirlwind of creativity that we weren't able to maintain, as it goes, but great while we had it."

Roman Candles barely lasted a year, but Revell continues to focus on his writing, recording, and producing. He returned to New York to play the Sidewalk Cafe earlier this month, and is looking for more musical opportunities.

"I'm pretty certain that I've ended a major phase. I don't quite know where I'm headed, but now in 2016 with the Impermanence Studio location sold, I certainly feel like it's time to try something else. What? I really don't know."

Jonathan Berger is the former music editor of Boog City. Heard of it? He writes poems of manic intensity, which he performs with the same at Sidewalk Cafe (and publishes at <http://jonberger.com/>).

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The Death and (After)life of Great American Libraries :: Mellow Pages, Bushwick, Brooklyn



INTERVIEW BY LYNNE DESILVA-JOHNSON

In case you're not familiar with the Mellow Pages story, here's a brief recap:

This beloved indie library was founded in Bushwick, Brooklyn by Matt Nelson and Jacob Perkins in 2013, occupying a sliver of - and then a considerably larger - studio space at 56 Bogart St. Their collection of more than 4000 titles has been built by donation, and now lives in a trailer with a sweet vintage feel in the yard at Silent Barn (at 603 Bushwick Ave.).

Matt (and Jacob) and I have been friends for a good many years now, and I know they share my passion for independent library, archive, and cooperative projects—a passion out of which this library was born. Matt and I are joined today to talk about Mellow Pages' continued evolution—and about the larger landscape of independent archive and library initiatives—by Dolan Morgan, who's taken over the charge in MP's current manifestation at Silent Barn.

Boog City: YOOOO comrades! Thanks for chatting with me today. Before we get down to poking around the shadowy corners of the MP story, why don't you tell the Boog City folks a bit about your history with libraries and archives, both indie and non. Are there any particular spaces—or people—that made an impact on you?

Matt Nelson: 5th Grade Science class I had to write a report on the Stellar Jay. Cool bird with a blue mohawk who was virtually invisible when I tried to find books pertaining to them at my neighborhood branch (shout out to Southwest). So after a quick research consultation with the librarian, my parents took my the University of Washington. If you ever walk around that campus, I dare



Matt Nelson

Jon Axtell photo

you not to fall in love with libraries, especially Suzallo as it has a certain magical feel. Anyway, and my parents will backup this story so ask them if you don't believe me, I walked through rows and rows of stacks and stacks of bound together paper to find this bird and at some point I said aloud in wonder, "I want to live here." Fast forward almost ten grades and I'm at UW, doing my best to not graduate, the only thing stable in my life is my job working for the Seattle Public Libraries at the nearby Northeast Branch. It was there that I learned about community and locals, the ethics of free information and access to tools. And what a strange joining of people. Cigarette stained vets from the low-income Theodora House surfing the web next to the pink octet of punk kids who just moved in down the street and shared the bottle of hair dye. It was such a wonderful nexus of people and ideas, organized but meant to be used and touched and taken home. Where else are you encouraged to borrow? Where else is sharing the cornerstone? I've always used books as a way to feel better about myself and about everything outside of myself, so to be a part of the structure of the ideal of that belief system was super rewarding. And then I found Pilot Books run by Summer Robinson Karaskova and small press became the next geological layer of my internal book world.

Dolan Morgan: My first memory of any book place: playing with the great little train set on the first floor of the library in my hometown. All wood and magnets and bright colors. I loved it. But the librarians didn't like me hanging around there too long. Oh well. I grew up in a somewhat stuffy town, and I always felt a little bit like an outsider in our local library. Even though it was free and public and anyone could go there, I still harbored the notion that I was accessing something I wasn't supposed to see or touch or have access to. The whole thing seemed built to communicate that idea. This feeling was brought into sharp focus when I was physically barred from entering the building one afternoon. As I approached the front entrance, a group of elderly people gathered together in the vestibule to hold the door closed and would not let me open it. They stared at me and swatted their free hands. They were strong and determined and I failed to win them over. To this day, I don't really understand what was happening or what they were afraid of. But I imagine they must have been very scared to muster that kind of force. And if they really did feel as if they were in some kind of danger, then I'm glad they had the courage to protect themselves. And anyway, I came back the next day to get some new books,

and I got in just fine, so no problem. This also feels like a pretty accurate depiction of how I met Matt Nelson and Jacob Perkins at Mellow Pages.

I don't know that there's time to tell my own starcrossed-kid-in-the-stacks story now (though I talk about it here along with my intentions for this series), but I certainly share (and shared) a little bit of both these feelings: like I'd found a home, and like I'd somehow been allowed across a portal into something perhaps dangerous or powerful, that perhaps I wasn't supposed to be allowed access to. Obviously I ran TOWARDS, and fast, before anyone could stop me. Fast forward to the present: I've recently been ramping up my own research into indie archives and libraries across the U.S. and abroad, not only book based, and even as someone who's been attuned to these efforts for a long time, I've been really excited to find a huge number of projects I'd never heard of. Off the top of your head, can you rattle off a few that you're currently aware of? And, also: how have you come across these, or other indie projects you know or have known in the past?

MN: My favorite alternative library project, that I know of, which is a very limited knowledge, is the eponymous Alternative Library in Bellingham, Wash. I remember the day this seemingly stitched together person walked into Mellow Pages and got right into talking shop. How do we check out? How do we sort donations? How do we deal with overdues? Questions we didn't normally get asked, especially after someone walked into the chaos which was the old space. Turns out this person was Future Man, the founder of the great and mighty A.L.I We talked shop until the sun came down. They had home-built a website as a functioning circulation system much better than we had, with the foresight to create a simple checkin and check-out process with an extensive database including book requests based on democratic member votes. The collection is very much a reflection of the members. Future Man had thought of so many library protocol oriented to the reader in an unique space fed and supported by the community, people and businesses included. The Alternative Library is a blueprint for how an indie library can work smoothly, professionally, and to the benefit of the neighborhood. Last time I saw them at Short Run Comics Fest in Seattle, Future Man was telling me about the church they've been gutting and rebuilding to their exact and always growing idea for what a space can look like including a printing press. I'm so excited to see it once it's done.

DM: Basically, I don't know anything about libraries or archives. A good friend of mine is a professional archivist, and it seems pretty exciting. But his know-how hasn't rubbed off on me really. My knowledge of other indie libraries or archives is pretty minimal, and perhaps even arcane. I mean, literally the first archive that comes to mind for me is an independently run database of aviation safety incidents that tracks global flight information dating back to 1919. I used a site crawler to duplicate a section of it on my computer once so that I could investigate the history of airplane hijackings. It was organized very well, and I admire that.

The second archive that comes to mind is one that is lost in the middle of the Connecticut woods and full of drawers that nobody opens. One time I put a bunch of random art in the cabinets because I was 100% positive that nobody would ever find it because nobody was ever going to open that drawer ever again after I closed it. What I'm trying to say is that neither of these places had a wooden magnet train to play with, and so maybe they weren't libraries or archives at all. And I mean this in all seriousness. The aviation archive is a digital database and it is so uninviting that I literally made a copy of it for my house so I wouldn't have to "go" there anymore. And the other one was so elite, wealthy, and remote, that I think it was designed for you to immediately forget its existence and not want to touch anything. That's not what I want from a library. For me, the job of an independent library or archive is definitely not to replicate on a smaller scale what larger institutions can do, but to do something else entirely. That is, when I think of a library (or at least what I want from an independent one), I think of 1) ghosts, and 2) nice times with people. In this way, I feel like I run into independent libraries and archives all the time. They can be at a house, on the road, or inside some hearts I know. If you know two people who laugh together, you know of an independent archive.

Correct me if I'm wrong but in my experience most of the little libraries I've known I've found out about through local, grassroots channels. I know that for a while Mellow Pages got a good deal of press, and given the current public attention to cooperatives and alternative business models, here and there I'll see an article about something, but I've only recently started looking for organized listings—and found these to be mostly nonexistent. Local Tools—an awesome org that offers open-source tools for library building and management has a short list of mostly tool libraries, and there's apparently a conference specifically for indie and membership libraries now in its 4th year that's hosted by the Mechanics Institute in San Francisco, but I'll wager a guess that you've not heard of either of these things. Do you think it's important that indie libraries find each other, become better networked, share tools and strategies, and become more searchable/accessible to a public that might not be nodally local enough to link in to grassroots press or networks?

MN: They should be. I mean, that's what libraries are all about, right? The sharing of knowledge? We got maybe three or four emails while Jacob and I were running the ship asking for basic library info, charitable presses, scar stories. We even wrote a little how-to about starting your own library. But, again, this information is all limited to what channels you listen to, how far you're willing to dig. Which is again, so library. Like, did you know most libraries do something called inter-library loans where if an individual library doesn't have some book, they'll find a different library that does and then ... I mean aren't libraries great? They're often connected even when you don't notice. That said, I do think that there are institutional connections in place for more established entities. A city calls the county calls the university etc. The next place to try is in place already because each institution tries to provide the largest, most mean demographic, with allowable fluctuations based on location. I think a specific part of an independent library is to fill in gaps they feel need coverage, so inherent in that is a specialization or localization of each indie library thereby creating, content-wise, a fruit salad of desires. But the ethos, the skeletons and support systems each library uses are probably very similar and I bet many people would benefit from a wiki or meeting place to share nuts and bolts, the comedy and drama of humans interacting. I wish I had known about the conference, not so much to book a ticket to San Fran, but to at least see what else was going on in the world of outside the norm.

DM: A very big part of me thinks an interconnected super sharing system is a great idea. Everything should be accessible, and everything should be connected. The free dispersal of information is innately a great idea and somewhat unimpeachable. Likewise, technology offers us all new ways to facilitate the interconnectedness of different resources and pools of knowledge. It's exciting, and I'm all for it. Yes. People should be able to touch a brick on the sidewalk and know the sound of every whale in the world. I agree with this. There's no reason not to. At the same time, another part of me is like, maybe not. Or: there's a part of me that specifically wants to not replicate what the broader, larger archival and library systems are doing, and specifically wants to not incorporate the dubious innovations of the tech sector into every inch of the universe. There's a part of me instead that wants to value an opportunity for chance encounters, unmitigated experience, and intimate connections through geography and community and inane probability. Or to connect to dance studios or ant farms rather than other libraries. There are a lot of super organized things in this world, and a lot of super functional things: sometimes I need exactly not that, plus a friendly face. I guess what I'm saying is, after every library connects to every other library, and everything is accessible and intertwined, and everything is at our fingertips, and we're all taken care of, and all of our questions are answered, I'm going to be really excited to seek out and visit the spaces that didn't or couldn't join up. And that might be just a street corner, or a porch, or a friend's giggle, but I'm looking forward to it.

to be continued

Lynne DeSilva-Johnson (<http://www.theoperatingsystem.org/people/>) is a slinger of image, text, sound, and code, a frequent collaborator across a wide range of disciplines, a community activist, and a regular curator of events in NYC and beyond. She has served as an adjunct in the CUNY system for a decade, and as a K-12 teaching artist since 2001. Also a social practice artist and poet, she has appeared at The Dumbo Arts Festival, Naropa University, Bowery Arts and Science, The NYC Poetry Festival, Eyebeam, Undercurrent Projects, Mellow Pages, The New York Public Library, The Poetry Project, Industry City Distillery, Independent Curators International, and the Cooper Union, among others. She is the founder and managing editor of The Operating System, which is based in Brooklyn, where her family has lived since the 1890s. Follow her birdsong at @onlywhatican.

Matt Nelson likes libraries and books and has published An Apologies for Apologies (Big Lucks) and Please Don't Make Me a Character (Shabby Doll House). He encourages you to start your own library meaning help your friends read books.

Dolan Morgan lives in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, where he helps edit The Atlas Review. He's the author of two story collections, That's When the Knives Come Down (AIP) and INSIGNIFICANA (CCM). His work can be found in The Believer, PANK, Electric Literature's Recommended Reading, Selected Shorts, and the trash.



When I think of a library (or at least what I want from an independent one), I think of 1) ghosts, and 2) nice times with people ... They can be at a house, on the road, or inside some hearts I know. If you know two people who laugh together, you know of an independent archive.

—Dolan Morgan