

riencing boredom is not suffering from an absence of desire, but from its indetermination, which in turn forces the subject to wander, in search of a point of fixation.”¹

This notion of indetermination (of desire, an ideal, the void) helps to explain how boredom came to confound the oppositions so central to eighteenth and nineteenth-century thinking about work and leisure, nobility and commonality, excess and lack, fullness and emptiness, and—by implication—masculinity and femininity, that earlier had defined philosophical, literary, and psychoanalytic approaches to this conceptual category. Indeed, with the rise of visual culture, mass society, mass production, and consumerism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, boredom came to epitomize the modern experience of time as both empty and full, concentrated and distracted. This is perhaps why boredom continues to offer such a useful conceptual language for contemporary theorists, who struggle to come to terms with the status of experience and history in postmodern representational forms.

Note

1 Michele Huguet, *L'Ennui et ses discours* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), 215.

—Patrice S. Petro

Breast

Cancer.

—Janine Marchessault

Chemical

Replaced chemistry in the 1970s, was superseded by “nuclear” only to resurface at the end of the century as “organic.”

—Janine Marchessault

Classroom



#1



#2

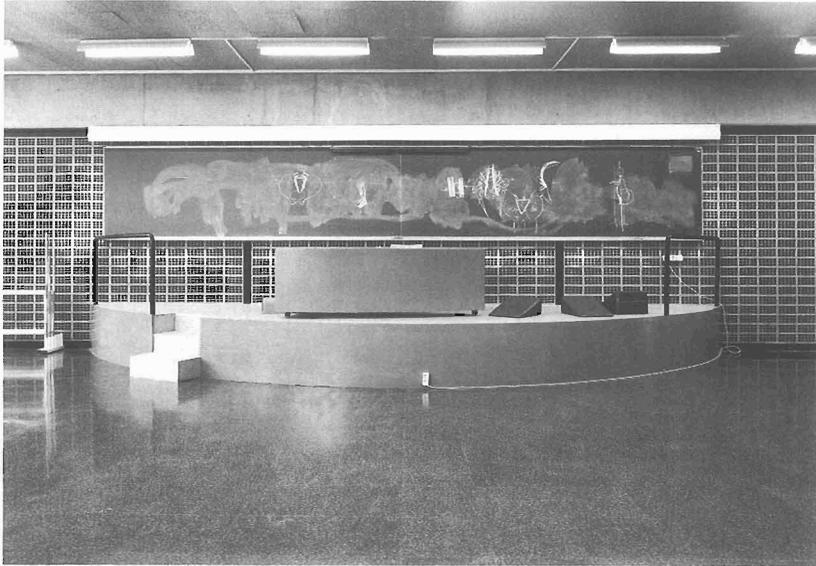


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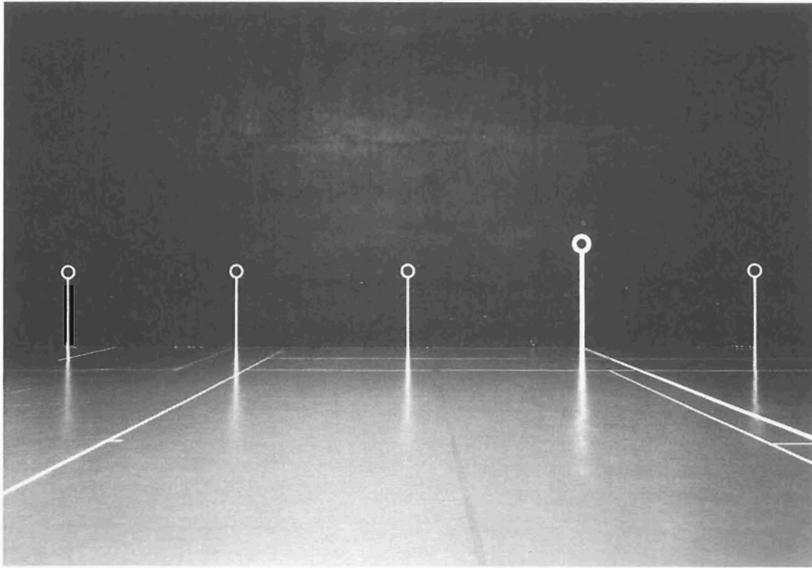


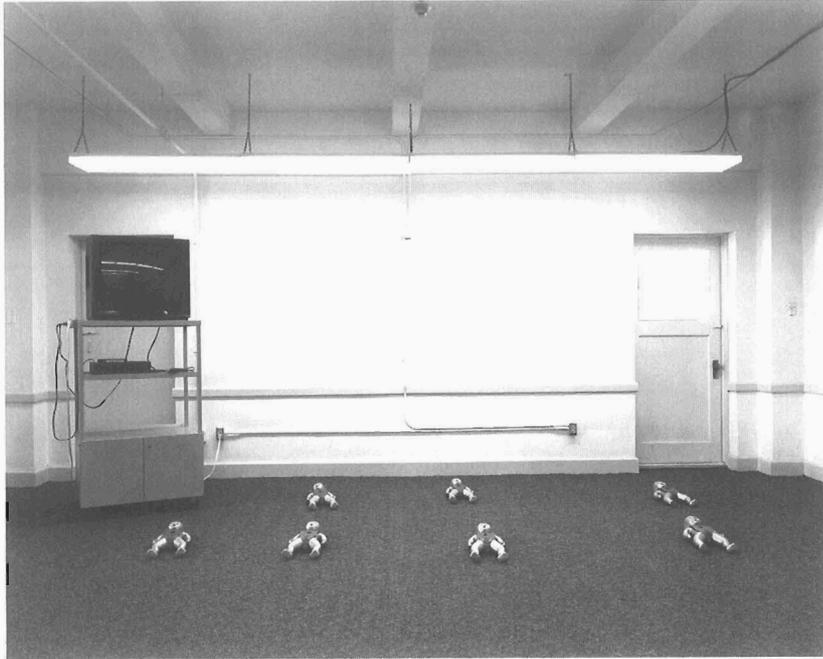
#4

—Lynne Cohen









Client

poor, ill, maimed, crazy or otherwise disenfranchised—*Get that client out of my office*, the host in the social welfare host/parasite symbiosis—*Get that client out of my occupational therapist office, my rehabilitational psychologist office*, etc., etc. Related terminology: For—professional detachment, read: thinly veiled disgust. When they say: *We at the Ministry do not make value judgements*—you’ve been cut off.

—Gerald Creede

Clock

It never all started once upon a time since inevitably there was a ticking nearby, in the blood or the wood, some coagulate of gears a batch of springs a face with moments quite divisible in anumerical way, a rock casting its shadow through the day, or the world was passing through its darkness when a doubt arose, alightning lack of faith that fell into the daily thoughts of one restless individual and quietly spread through the soul, cracking through others too, from town to town and ship to ship, across valley and farm and hermitage, great cracking and wracking, this fissure of faith rooting into the souls of a nation indivisible nor stop at mere borders of nations, leaping through the whole known world, languages wither to dust in such doubt, incantations lose their meaning, prayers drop off the tongue like a botched job, a feast of brambles, the darkness thick and people jostle shove kick splinters out of each other and never know, their words have holes they have no idea what is missing, faith but a stone in their shoe, they scream and wail not hearing a single note of their noise, like the businessman alone on his balcony of the castle he has taken great pains to restore, groping his way along the walls stumbles out onto the cold stones, insists he sees the stars and balancing on his ledge he picks up a lute, for the instrument is celestial to him and he strums and pulls and scratches the strings thinking it lovely, tears hopping down his fat cheeks because of the music that isn’t there, tender and full of dumb grace, while in some hovel far away unaware of itself a sound echoes softly through the room, a breathing almost whispers, a hum and the quick trickle of a laugh, till a hand reaches out to the little box on a table nearby, turns it round while a voice says Darling what time is it, Six-fifteen, the sun will be rising, let’s go up the hill and watch, but the first pleading No I don’t care stay here with me, and they sink back onto their pallet, pressing close as slowly the sun fills the dusty curtain with light, and everywhere a great cheering rises up, a wild delirious cheer, and people do not know the reason for their rejoicing.

—Jason Weiss

Clouds



—Mina Totina

Collapsed House



1997/98, chromogenic print, 18 x 36 inches

—Stan Douglas

Communication

My Mailbox Is Empty Again Today.

I try to shove this into words
 The longevity of us
 The complicated science of us
 Which is at once both
 Delicate as an origami bird
 And leaden as an antique cannon.
 I try to act like the sort of woman
 Men offer to buy drinks
 So that you can finish acting like a cowboy
 But really I just want a good nights sleep.
 It's hot as tarpits and the truth is, love,
 I hate you for painting the windows shut.

—Emily Raboteau



Community

Communication, communion, church. Say “the” and add “outreach” in all grant applications to governments and corporations.

—Janine Marchessault

Confession

It is well known that the main objective of the Greek schools of philosophy did not consist of the elaboration, the teaching, of theory. The goal of the Greek schools of philosophy was the transformation of the individual. The goal of the Greek schools of philosophy was to give to the individual the quality which would permit him to live differently, better, more happily, than other people. What place did self-examination and confession have in this? At first glance, in all the ancient philosophical practices, the obligation to tell the truth about oneself occupies a rather restrained place. This is so for two reasons, both of which remain valid throughout the whole of Greek and Hellenistic Antiquity. The first of those reasons is that the objective of philosophical training was to arm the individual with a certain number of precepts which would permit him to conduct himself in all circumstances of life without his losing mastery of himself or without losing tranquility of spirit, purity of body and soul. From this principle stems the importance of the master’s discourse. The master has to talk, to explain, to persuade; he has to give the disciple a universal code of conduct for all his life, so that the verbalization takes place on the side of the master and not on the side of the disciple.

There is also another reason why the obligation to confess does not have a lot of importance in the direction of the antique conscience. The tie with the master was then circumstantial or, in any case, provisional. It was a relationship between two wills, which does not imply a complete or a definitive obedience. One solicits or one accepts the advice of a master or of a friend in order to endure an ordeal, a bereavement, an exile, or a reversal of fortune, and so on. Or again, one places oneself under the direction of a master for a certain time of one’s life so as one day to be able to behave autonomously and no longer have need of advice. Ancient direction tends towards the autonomy of the directed. In these conditions, one can understand that the necessity for exploring oneself in exhaustive depth does not present itself. It is not indispensable to say everything about oneself, to reveal one’s least secrets, so that the master may exert complete power over one. The exhaustive and continual presentation of oneself under the eyes of an all-powerful director is not an essential feature in this technique of direction.

—Michel Foucault

Excerpted from “Subjectivity and Truth,” *Public 7: Sacred Technologies*, 1993.

Consumer

At the intersection between private and public space they want me to throw my skin back on. The security guard takes my clothes and shoes, then throws them at me. Afterwards, he gently covers me with a medical blanket, turning me into Sleeping Beauty. The whole time I know that they are frightened while I really do feel peaceful resting my back against the cool tiled floor. I'm surprised at how easy this is. I'm in a space between vulnerability and having enough power to explode the invisible pylons that regulate our movement in this shopping mall.

I lie here looking at the video camera and I see the imaginary audience witnessing the security guards surrounding my body. I stare up at you, the audience, and my extended self watching the scene unfold. I am a combination of a starving saint and a starvation artist performing for multiple audiences. In this busy urban mall the incidental audience thinks I'm either a psychotic or a junky, and it makes them uncomfortable. Anorectics like me are dangerous. We impose our bodies onto your gaze. We physically manifest our desires. It's become a type of sport: who can show their discomfort the most without speaking about it? Who can come up with a diagnosis to contain the discomfort?

And now, the medics come planning to take me away to the psychiatric ward for the diagnosis. Then, the police arrive and they think I have a bomb rigged to my body. In that moment, I think how ironic it is: the way passive bodies act like conduits for explosive situations. At this point my speaking self steps in because she knows that my body is about to be consumed by another violent gaze regulated by forces that can impose physical restraints. So, the voice and mouth speak the language of reason to the police officer kneeling beside me, and she says, "I'm finished now. I'm out of character. This is just a performance."

He laughs.

She articulates an understanding of the rules and displays rational cognitive skills. The voice that speaks as "artist" contains the behaviour. She is lying on my behalf because she knows the violence of the terms "anorectic, hysteric, and psychotic." The voice also knows that the policeman has taken a fatherly role as he proceeds to talk to her in a kind and gentle manner. The policeman tells her that if he were her father, he would take her home for a spanking. The voice laughs because his jokes speak volumes and she knows this is a warning.

The whole time I am aware of the camera that records this self-designated history. In fact, everything has gone as expected and the performance is successful. The gaze that imposes upon my body sifts through multiple screens as I match your look. I perform too well by my own design. I don't ask for permission to self-diagnose. I co-opt your regulated gaze and spit it out of my ears because I have redesigned my body. Advertising icons get absorbed

and thrown up. I drink up medical journals and psychoanalytic poetry and cough them out. I taste pornography and happily urinate its residue. I lie in the middle of this mall and drink the spectacle that you, the audience, assist in constructing. And I know that you will define a history based on a design that is not yours even though I have done my best to mediate it.

—Simone Cage a.k.a. Tagny Duff

Contact Lens

“The encyclopedia of the world and the pedagogy of perception collapse to make way for a professional training of the eye, a world of controllers and controlled communing in their admiration for technology, mere technology. . . . The question is no longer what there is to see behind the image, nor how we can see the image itself—it is how we can find a way into it, how we can slip in, because each image now slips across other images, ‘the background in any image is always another image,’ and the vacant gaze is a contact lens.” {Gilles Deleuze}

—Paul Kelley

Excerpted from “Letter to Serge Daney: Optimism, Pessimism and Travel,” [Preface to Serge Daney’s Cine-journal, 1986], *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 72.

Continental Motors Plant



1997/98, chromogenic print, 18 x 22 inches

—Stan Douglas

Corporate Office

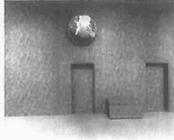


—Lynne Cohen





Corridor



—Lynne Cohen

Culture, High and Low

a.k.a. Highbrow and Lowbrow

Terms on death row. Incarcerated within the vertical axis of value desperately seeking petitions of clemency from the horizontal axis of belonging.

—Clive Robertson

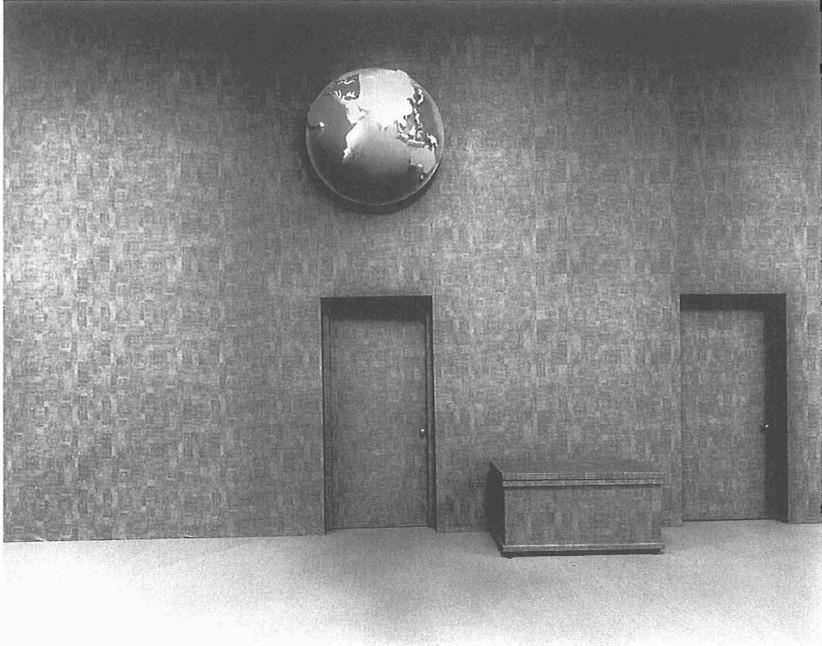
Curator

In contemporary parlance, refers to a person who organizes art objects and interprets them in a meaningful way. The term Curator has historically meant guardian and manager but it has increasingly lost that general meaning. Curate is etymologically linked to religion (a curate is an assistant to a parish priest). The English definition is related to its French counterpoint which is, however, more specific—a *conservateur* preserves and maintains a collection of valuable objects and is conversant with them. In contemporary culture, anyone can throw together some loosely related objects within the context of an indeterminate space (*see* “Institution”) and call themselves a curator.

—Tom Folland

Cyberspace

“Cyberspace” has become a rather familiar term in a relatively short period of time, a term referring to a technologically-generated environment within which various communicative activities occur. The technologies involved in the production of cyberspace work toward the creation of a seemingly self-contained and separate world. This “separateness” is often taken as fact, foreclosing any discussion of cyberspace as an instrumental space produced by the wider social space of late capitalism. It is a space which functions; it automates and operationalizes the specific networks of information, space, and power that are involved in the production and reproduction of political, economic, and social relations.



Cyberspace, as it currently exists, is not just a space, but a discourse about a space—a name given to a certain desire for a social space whose contours are emerging from within late capitalism. This discourse is defined by the proposal that a new and electronically-constituted space must be created in order to manage the increasingly large field of information that has come into being through the activities of globalized late capital and the social welfare state. The strategic goal of the proposal is this: rather than controlling the informational topographies that exist in any given geographical place, these places are interlinked and combined into a networked electronic topography. The ability to actually create and define an apparently independent, electronic geography allows control to be “built in” to the space in advance via the use of standardized data formats and protocols for use. Cyberspace must be addressed, therefore, in terms of how it participates in established power relations and in terms of the degree to which these relations are altered, amplified or transformed by their extension into a new space of social activity.

If cyberspace is continuous with the networks and institutions that comprise late capitalism, it is not unreasonable to suspect that power relations in cyberspace will be similarly continuous. . . . Surveillance in cyberspace is detached from a fixed and/or central position and is dispersed over the entire network and automatized in the standards and protocols that define cyberspace’s practical functioning. Everything in cyberspace is only ever data and, as such, standardized formats and protocols are employed which ensure that all data-objects and subjects find their place within a recognizable and reproducible structure. In order to make cyberspace a stable and secure space, controlling mechanisms are required which record and monitor the activity within it. Surveillance in cyberspace is thus an architectural and geographic principle which renders the “space” of late capital’s informational networks visible in order to control it. It makes the space intelligible to its (virtual) inhabitants while, at the same time, making those inhabitants visible to whatever mechanisms are necessary for controlling and policing the space.

—Dale Bradley

Excerpted from “Situating Cyberspace,” *Public 11: Throughput*, 1995.

Day

“If Fascism promises beginnings of the day, representation exposes the interests of the middle of the day; then the owl of Minerva, flying at dusk, may reflect on the remains of the day—the ruins of the morning’s hope, the actuality of the broken middles.” {Gillian Rose}

—Paul Kelley