

almost **EVERY POSITION** in the FIELD of INTERESTS that populate **CONTEMPORARY ART** **is CONVINCED** that the coming “crisis” will somehow **AFFIRM THEM, THEIR** stance, **THEIR** approach.

*And so, ‘critical’ art WILL SURVIVE, OR the MUSEUM will Grow in power, *or* the DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM will Lose its hegemony, *OR* the SMALL GALLERY will be important again, *or* the ART SCHOOL will be Exposed, *OR* the CRITIC will be Desired, *or* the FREELANCE CURATOR will be Crushed, *OR* the FAT MAGAZINE will become anorexic, *or* the ‘ACTIVIST’ ARTIST will be Redeemed, *OR* the NEO-LIBERAL MUSEUM will Stumble and Fall, *OR* the KUNSTVEREIN will have its day, *or* no one will buy RICHARD PRINCE any more.*

The art world will be about RELATIONSHIPS again, or about the STUDIO PRACTICE again, or about COLLECTORS looking at the work - NOT THE JPEG.

WE DECLARE THESE PLATITUDES MEANINGLESS

almost **EVERY** nose is to the ground *sniffing out the discourse*, the object, the practice, the practices that will *mark* the *break*, that will present the moment of CAPTURE in which this future that approaches, paradigm clenched in fist, is DELINEATED, however superficially. There will be so many false epiphanies in art over the next few years that **WE WISH TO CLAIM THIS STATEMENT AS THE FIRST.**

FIRST (*crisis*) EPIPHANY MANIFESTO

PILOT, wxbc.bard.edu, streaming live on April 28, May 5, and May 12, 8-10 PM EST.

PILOT

Three two-hour radio programs talking about 21st century strategies for the **MANIFESTO**

WHERE: WXBC BARD COLLEGE RADIO

Streaming live on **WXBC.BARD.EDU** from 8-10 PM EST on Tuesday April 28, May 5 and May 12.

PARTICIPANTS:

SPECIAL PROJECTS: Appearances by ALEJANDRO CESARCO & JUDI WERTHEIN, "The Parallel Chorus" by BENJAMIN TIVEN

SOUND: Live soundscapes composed by artist and Bard undergraduate KENJI GARLAND.

SPECIAL STUDIO GUEST: JANET LYON, Associate Professor of English, Women's Studies, and Science, Technology, and Society at Penn State University. Author of *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*.

CONVERSATIONS: MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES, LIAM GILLICK and more.

Curated and presented by BARTHOLOMEW RYAN.

PILOT is a project that takes the manifesto as a context in contemporary art, and tries to think about the history of the form up to now, and the possibilities for the form into the future. It retroactively proposes the manifesto as a medium within art practice, in the same way that painting is a medium, or sculpture. The manifesto medium has the innate capacity to displace the binary between the political and the aesthetic, which has plagued many conversations around art since the ideology of "art for art's sake" evolved in the 19th century.

Where most modern mediums, like photography, film, and the Internet, were inaugurated through technological breakthroughs, the manifesto arose in response to the emergence of the "bourgeois public sphere" with the liberal democracies of the 18th century. This was a system of looking at the world in which a culture of polite and rational conversation was presented as the correct posture for public interaction. It proposed itself to be universal, to represent the needs of all the people, but it was—and still is, in its neo-liberal incarnation—a zone which operated to erase and exclude narratives and histories that did not cohere to its tidy and convenient assumptions about itself. Janet Lyon, in her book *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* (1999), argues that the manifesto has operated to exceed the terms of this universalism, to call it to account for the promises it makes, but does not keep. And so the manifesto exceeds the rational sphere of consensual public discourse—it demands access to the conversation, even an *end* to the conversation; it demands regard for new formal approaches; demands complexity, even when it is coded as simplistic.

Under 20th century modernism, mediums competed for relevancy. There was a self-reflexive search for the inherent characteristics of each medium, on the basis that these characteristics could allow the individual medium to function on its own terms. This approach became fetishized into a productive, then deadening, formalism. And so, in the Sixties we had the "dematerialization" of the art object, the beginnings of the post-medium condition, of a hybridity in art practice that has continued to this day. And yet, when we encounter works of art, ephemeral or object-based, we often understand them in relation to the more staid medium-tradition from which we decide, or know, them to be derived. With this in mind, it is possible to look at many aspects of contemporary art practice as an example of the manifesto medium in an "expanded field". The manifesto may now be a "distributed attitude", a floating archetype or impulse that realizes itself in multiple contexts such as the theory essay, the exhibition, the performance, or even the syllabus. We might even propose this depressingly general rule for establishing the "manifesto-status" of a discourse, idea or thing: in the expanded field of the contemporary manifesto, something *is* a manifesto if someone somewhere says it is a manifesto.

When there are breaks in hegemonic orders, as during the rapid modernization of *fin de siècle* Europe, the uproar of the French Revolution, the Civil Rights era within the U.S., or indeed, as PILOT will explore, NOW...there are *manifesto-moments* where diverse groups and contexts struggle for agency and control of the emerging sphere. The fact that manifestos are frequently reactive, or proactively constituted to fight for control of an emerging set of relations, means they happen in competition.

The more manifestos there are that make an overarching claim for a group or context, the more atomization there is, as agents work to produce ever more refined self-identifications. Perhaps the promise of a *manifesto moment* is that it is about relations; it is about mapping the divergent eruptions of a new social order before it has condensed itself again into a set of *prima facie* transparent doctrines and ideologies. It is a *relativist* time because all the spheres, and spaces, and specific institutional and identity sedimentations are rocked and blown open. There is a battle for narrative control by not yet discernable forces. In this regard, any attempt to understand something about a historical period that does not proceed through a methodological relativism, (offered, in this proposal, via a horizontal tracing of the manifesto off a vertical axes *determined* by the manifesto), is missing out on something. It fails to see the connections across a culture, and remains within the endless refraction of one frame.

PILOT takes the intimacy of the free-form radio format, and a set of artists and individuals with interesting and developed positions, and looks at some of the ideas that are outlined above. It also goes back to some primary texts, and sees in them a quality that can inform the present. Across the virtual ether will stream this signal made up of voice and sound... searching, ever on, for the receptive ear into which it can be jammed.

Bartholomew Ryan, April 2009.

- Lyon, Janet. *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999.

program one:

MANIFESTO HISTORY AND THEORY April 28, 8-10 PM EST

History and theory of the manifesto form with Bartholomew and Janet Lyon. The program will include live recordings of historical manifestos performed at Bard on April 13.

program two:

AN EXPANDING FIELD May 5, 8-10 PM EST

A conversation with the artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Artist-In-Residence at the Department of Sanitation in New York City for over 30 years, and author of the *Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!*

program three:

THIS IS IT! May 12, 8-10 PM EST

Bartholomew discusses 21st century strategies for the manifesto. Among other conversations, Liam Gillick talks about his *Berlin Statement*, presented by the artist at the Hamburger Bahnhof on February 12, 2009.

THANKS TO:

Staff and faculty at CCS Bard, especially Maria Lind, Letitia Smith, Jaime Henderson, Niko Vicario, and Sofia Hernández Chong Cuy; the readers who performed at the MANIFESTO! event; PILOT participants, including Kenji Garland, Alejandro Cesarco, Liam Gillick, Judi Werthein, Benjamin Tiven, Janet Lyon, and, of course, Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Marcia Acita and the preparators for helping with the restroom project; Billy Rennekamp and all the others at WXBC Bard College Radio; thesis readers, Anne Ellegood and Tirdad Zolghadr; Carin Kuoni; Kay Larson; Tom Eccles; Norton Batkin; Peter Amentas and the other gentlemen in security; Helena Murphy; Nora and Phil Ryan; and Adam Pendleton. This poster is designed by LeAnne Wagner

other programming:

MANIFESTO!

MONDAY APRIL 13, 6-7:30 PM

Weiss Cinema, Bard College

In preparation for the radio program, MANIFESTO! is a performance-reading by Bard students and others of a number of historic and contemporary political and art-based manifestoes.

INCLUDING:

- Gerrard Winstanley, *The Diggers Song* (1650), read by Fionn Meade
- Sergei Eisenstein, *Montage of Attractions* (1923), read by Sam Stonefield
- Mina Loy, *Feminist Manifesto* (1914), read by Sofia Pia Belenky
- Wyndham Lewis, *BLAST* (1914), read by Diana Stevenson
- Theo van Doesburg and Others, *Manifesto I of De Stijl* (1918), read by Niko Vicario
- F.T. Marinetti, *Xenomanes* (1931), read by Michael Nickerson
- Antonin Artaud, *All Writing Is Pigshit* (anthologized 1965), read by Katerina Llanes
- Robin Morgan, *Goodbye to All That* (1970), read by Adam Pendleton & Wendy Vogel
- Joyce Stevens, "Because" (1975), read by Kate Menconeri
- Guerilla Art Action Group, *The Definitive/ist Manifesto* (1981), read by Christina Linden
- Gustave Metzger, *Manifesto Auto-Destructivist Art* (1960), read by Niko Vicario;
- Alexei Shulgín, *Art Power and Communication* (1996), read by Hajnalka Somogyi
- Susie Ramsay & Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *OK Art Manifesto* (2001), read by Jessica Wilcox
- PILOT, *First (crisis) Epiphany Manifesto* (2009), read by Bartholomew Ryan.

(Non-chronological order of list reflects scheduling needs of some readers)

MANIFESTOS-IN-THE-RESTROOMS

APRIL 19-MAY 24, 2009

CCS Bard, Restrooms

In an intimate reformatting of the restroom context, a recording of the MANIFESTO! event will be played on an ongoing basis in the CCS restrooms.

PILOT and related programming are completed as part of the requirement of the thesis project at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College where Bartholomew is an MA candidate.

WELCOMETOPILOT.BLOGSPOT.org