

Pretty Objects of Revolt



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Institute for Experimental Freedom

“What you feel as the intimate estrangement of corporeal need is what I feel as the estranged intimacy of desire: your need is my want; my want is your need”
- Sade

about abuse and that disables the force of our limbs to make gestures of care.

I know it seems absurd but it is in the spaces where I can feel anonymous—where I can lose my sense of individualism and even my sense of *dividuality*, where I can feel my singularity; my point in time and space that is attached to all that matters—that the force of kindness and my desire are proven to be potent. It is these spaces—where the party’s shared joy overwhelms our fear of foolishness, where our circumstances incline us to support each other—that I can be vulnerable, powerful and happy. I want to meet you there and I want to extend these spaces with more duration and with different frequencies.

So I’m going to put on a black mask or I’m going to transform the meaning of a t-shirt by wearing it on my face as such. There is no other zone of desire that is pleasurable. The t-shirt, the sneakers, the bottle, the car, all our commodities have proven they are bankrupt if they remain as property—they must be profaned and put to use in the sphere of human desire lest they end up in museums. I want to put everything to use to prove the fact of its potentiality and to locate that it is my gestures that inscribe meaning; that pull, stretch and interrupt the continuum of time.

There is an insurrection coming because there is always an insurrection coming; because there is always *in-surrection*. It is in place because it is in practice; always exposing the seam of power and desire of function and potential. Those rioting across the sea are sending to us this subtle communiqué: we are running faster, evading the social sciences’ force of recognition, of identification; running across borders; throwing rocks, burning arcades and prisons and kicking at the thresholds of the state.

The insurrection in practice draws us closer and whispers, “It is possible, it is in practice and you, these bodies that you are, are potent with its possibility; the secret is to really begin”.

Liam Sionnach, The ass-end of December 08

The cradle of democracy is burning. It may change its frequency, its duration and its specific location, but I want to be clear about this: the interruptions that strike at the thresholds of the state-form and that press against the fleshy anterior of capital are en route.

I risk speaking in terms of slogans when I say this but I want to go to where the fires are—where everything enables the desire to reduce monoliths and dialectics to ashes. I think this is why there are these riots; because we can’t afford to go to where the riots are, because the people in Greece are at home with their perverse desire and are at home with their endurance. Alexandros Grigoropoulos, who was murdered by the functionaries of the state, for fifteen years inhabited this fact and his friends, comrades and so called *genre*, continue to inhabit this fact. I see my self in Alexandros, as I see my self each time the state exposes its function—when police act by grace of sovereignty to erase bodies with an “accidental” just violence. The libidinal economy of death acts as a force to produce human bodies as subjects. By the 6th century this originary biopolitical imperative is already clear in Pindar’s Platonic proverb:

The *nomos*, sovereign of all mortals and immortals
Leads with the strongest hand
Doing violence to the most just.

Today, there is only a zone of indistinction between the force of law of the ancients and the force of law of the modern states.

The Greek riots trace a seam directly through our bodies—dividing me and then dividing me again. At once, I am interrupted from my habit of producing pretty espresso drinks and culture; feeling the

seam of the Greek riots cut through me, pulling me to the shadow of my historicity—recalling different riots I’ve experienced, watched on TV, read about in books and recalling my relationships with different people; the abuses I’ve dealt and suffered; the ways police and managers and doctors have acted on my body, the separations they’ve made. I think about watching that terrible movie *The Dreamers* just for the scandalous parts and for the money shot at the end and I try to distinguish whose body part was in what orifice and whose desire reigned with so-called impunity.

The media speaks of the “seven hundred euro generation”—it is they who riot, who have been let down by the Greek government in particular. Yet this month I will struggle to make a rent of three hundred dollars and my roommates will struggle as well.

Tomorrow, we will go out on an odyssey to find cheap enough cigarettes. Tonight we trade roles of support; I have the pack that is not empty and my roommate the bottle of whiskey and the bag of coffee seized from work.

None of this new and those rioting in Greece know this. Certainly we *could* work more; two, three, maybe four jobs. Certainly that would keep us busy but we would prefer not to. I’ve learned to endure so much and what those of us who work for shit jobs and produce nothing material know is our conditions is more than mere poverty. It’s historically constructed, and it’s not necessarily of our choosing but we wouldn’t keep doing it if we didn’t like certain aspects of it. Maybe it’s the power to wield subcultural capital, maybe it’s the potential of not-work every so often—while on the job or on holiday (because all aspects of our lives are colonized by work); maybe we want to be in systems of asymmetrical power where we can be pretty and ugly objects. Whatever it is, we kind of like it. What is it at stake and what makes my skin so raw when I feel my empathy surface from the image of people gleefully demolishing temples of capitalism is the desire to interrupt functionality with play, with pleasure that is prefers not to reproduce, with violence that is bored with death.

I fear saying this out right because the psychologists of all the sciences want to know it; because they will sell it to public

relations firms and they will employ me or my friends to mystify this fact and make it into more jobs. Furthermore because the state will put to a specific function the things we say over drinks that cause us to recognize each other. They will include us the way the Jewish religious hierarchy was included to make the ghettos and gas chambers function—the way black leaders are employed to neutralize the potentiality of rebellion every time what happened in Athens happens in every urban epicenter in the US.

Already in the US, the political class of simulations and the petite Leninists who paint themselves in red and black are getting organized; attempting to reconstitute the Left at Obama’s Inauguration. If it were not for the tactics they wish to employ, I would care less, but *how* matters and their desire for sovereignty is only loosely veiled. The advocates for the popular power bloc demand nothing less than recognition for their rightful inheritance of sovereignty and thus the state-form. When they say they wish to celebrate the victory of the “grassroots movement” of organizers that got Obama elected, they are clarifying this: a desire to celebrate management and discipline of a constituting (or so-called constituent) power. The horror of recognition prefers a site of pleasure in *whatever singularities*, not the banality of reproducing management and discipline of subjects.

I want to be vulnerable to you because I know you and you already recognize me and because you are always, and above all, anonymous—a quality that makes you potent. You, the unknown and the known, reading this text are a force and an orifice, a face and a chair. And yet so many managers; so many police are present here. At a party, in a bar, at a grocery store, we might cross paths; and I would want to share with you the simple pleasures of my existence but my desires conflict and our inclinations are veiled because my simple pleasures are criminal. I imagine yours are as well but what if you tell my boss or the grocery store owner about my proclivities?

It is this surveillance that causes our emotional poverty—a surveillance that congruently silences our brittle lips from talking