



The first part of the *UNDER FIRE* project is coming to an end on May 29 with the discussion in WITTE DE WITH.

In September, a new round of *UNDER FIRE* discussions will begin. Subscribers will be automatically integrated to the new forum at that time.

YTO BARRADA A LIFE FULL OF HOLES THE STRAIT PROJECT

JUNE 26 - AUGUST 22, 2004

DEBATES

June 26: Witte de With, Rotterdam [in collaboration with the Alliance Française, Rotterdam]

Participants: Sylvaine Bulle, Stefania Pandolfo, Nadia Tazi, Anais Masson, Maxence Rifflet, Mohamed Tozy, Fouad Laroui

WITTE DE WITH, CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, ROTTERDAM
For details WWW.WDW.NL



WITTE DE WITH CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

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Opening hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Price: € 2.30 (Witte de With and TENT.) Discount: MJK/Rotterdampas € 1.10; <16 free
Openingstijden: dinsdag t/m zondag 11.00 – 18.00 uur Toegangsprijs: € 2.30 (Witte de With en TENT.) Kortings: MJK/ Rotterdampas € 1.10; <16 gratis

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Witte de With is an initiative of the Rotterdam Arts Council and is supported by the City of Rotterdam and the Dutch Ministry of Culture
Witte de With is een initiatief van de Rotterdamse Kunststichting en wordt ondersteund door de gemeente Rotterdam en het Ministerie van OC en W

AmbulantDesign GF GÖTZ

JORDAN CRANDALL *UNDER FIRE* A CRITICAL FORUM ON THE ORGANIZATION AND REPRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE

Witte de With organizes in collaboration with V2_ a symposium focusing on the issues debated in the *Under Fire* forum that was active on the Internet from January 25 till April 19, 2004. The main speakers are John Armitage, Asef Bayat, Susan Buck-Morss, Brian Holmes, Gema Martín Muñoz and Loretta Napoleoni. The discussions will be moderated by Jordan Crandall and will be conducted in English. The entire debate will be accessible live through the Internet, streamed via <http://www.v2.nl>. Online moderation by Stephen Kovatz, V2_.

BIOGRAPHIES SPEAKERS

JOHN ARMITAGE is Principal Lecturer in Politics and Media Studies at the University of Northumbria, Newcastle [UK]. He is the editor of *Paul Virilio: From Modernism to Hypermodernism and Beyond* [London/Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000], *Virilio Live: Selected Interviews* [London/Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001], and the co-editor, with Joanne Roberts, of *Living with Cyberspace: Technology and Society in the 21st Century* [London/New York: Continuum, 2002]. His writings have appeared in journals such as *New Left Review*, *Theory, Culture and Society* and *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*.

ASEF BAYAT is the Academic Director of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIIM) and the ISIIM Chair at the University of Leiden. He has taught sociology and Middle East studies at the American University in Cairo and has held visiting positions at the University of California, Berkeley, Columbia University and the University of Oxford. He is the author of *Workers and Revolution in Iran* [London: Zed Books, 1987], and *Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran* [New York: Colombia University Press, 1997].

SUSAN BUCK-MORSS is Professor of Political Philosophy and Social Theory in the Department of Government at Cornell University, where she is also Professor of Visual Culture in the Department of Art History. Her publications include *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* [New York: Free Press, 1979], *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* [Massachusetts: MIT, 1991], and *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* [London: Verso, 2003].

BRIAN HOLMES is an art critic, activist and translator, interested primarily in the intersections of artistic and political practice. He is a member of the editorial committee of the journal *Multitudes* [Paris] and the art magazines *Springerlin* [Vienna] and *Brumaria* [Barcelona], and a founder, with the French conceptual art group "Bureau d'Études," of the new journal *Autonomie Artistique* [Paris]. He is the author of a collection of essays, titled *Hieroglyphs of the Future: Art and Politics in a Networked Era* [Zagreb: Arkzin, 2003].

GEMA MARTÍN MUÑOZ is Professor of Sociology of the Arab and Islamic World at the Madrid Autónoma University. She is a columnist for the newspaper *El País* on Arabic and Islamic subjects. Her recent publications include *Islam, Modernism and the West: Cultural and Political Relations at the End of the Millennium* [London/New York: IB Tauris, 1999] and *Iraq, un fracaso de occidente* [Iraq, a failure of the West; Barcelona: Tusquets, 2003].

LORETTA NAPOLEONI is an economist and journalist, specialized in terrorism. As an economist she worked for several banks and international organizations in Europe and the US. As a journalist she has worked as a foreign correspondent for several Italian financial papers. Her publications include *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks* [London: Pluto Press, 2003], and *Dossier Baghdad* [Rome: Newton & Compton Editori, 1997], a financial thriller set during the Gulf War.

PROGRAM

MAY 29, 2004, FROM 3 P.M. TILL 7 P.M.

- 15.00 – 15.10 welcome by CATHERINE DAVID
- 15.10 – 15.30 introduction by JORDAN CRANDALL
- 15.30 – 15.50 BRIAN HOLMES
- 15.50 – 16.10 ASEF BAYAT
- 16.10 – 16.30 SUSAN BUCK-MORSS
- 16.30 – 17.00 discussion and live feedback
- 17.00 – 17.30 break
- 17.30 – 17.50 JOHN ARMITAGE
- 17.50 – 18.10 LORETTA NAPOLEONI
- 18.10 – 18.30 GEMA MARTÍN MUÑOZ
- 18.30 – 19.00 discussion and live feedback



WEBARCHIVE OF THE PROJECT,
SEE WWW.WDW.NL

UNDER FIRE IS A PROJECT BY JORDAN CRANDALL
ORGANIZED BY WITTE DE WITH IN COLLABORATION
WITH V2_, ROTTERDAM





UNDER FIRE explores the organization and representation of contemporary armed conflict. The project consists of a series of presentations and discussions that occur online and in Rotterdam. The discussions involve participation from individuals working in politics, theory, criticism, the arts, and journalism from both the West and the Middle East. A series of publications are being released during the course of the year.

On the *organizational* front, the project looks at the forms of militarized agencies that are emerging today, including Western defense industries and decentralized terrorist organizations. It explores the forces that contribute to their emergence, whether operating at the level of economy, technology, politics, or ideology. On the *representational* front, it looks at the ways that armed violence materializes as act and image, searching for new insight into its mechanisms and effects. In so doing, it engages issues of economy, embodiment, symbolic meaning, and affect.

UNDER FIRE delves into the economic underpinnings of contemporary armed conflict. It looks at the legacy of the "military-industrial complex," the rise of the privatized military industry, and the repercussions of the commercialization of violence. However it does not simply prioritize economy. It looks to contemporary conflicts as driven by combinations of territorial, market, and ideological imperatives, and new attempts at the reconciliation of identity and universality. It looks to emergent processes of organization that operate on multiple levels of temporality and implicit form. Through this approach, the project aims to articulate emergent systems of decentralized control and new global dynamics of power. Building on historical conceptions of hegemony, it attempts to understand the nature of emergent power and the forms of resistance to it, situating cycles of violence within the modalities of a global system.

The project emphasizes the role that representations play as registers of symbolic meaning and as agents of affective change. It engages images from commercial and independent news media, as well as representations from artistic, literary, and popular entertainment sources, both in the West and the Middle East. These images are regarded in terms of attention strategy and perception management, but they are also regarded in terms of cultural imaginaries of conflict, where they can operate as "fictionalized components of reality." They are studied in terms of the deeper truths they may offer about collective identifications and aggressions, and their roles in the formation of a new body politic.

JORDAN CRANDALL

With the continued growth and activity of the global military services industry, the start of the twenty-first century is seeing the Weberian monopoly of the state on the forms of violence slowly break down. My assertion is not that the state is disappearing, for in many areas the power of these private military firms has been utilized as much in support of regime interests as against them. However, just as it has been in other areas such as trade and finance, the state's role in the security sphere has now become de-privileged. There is a growing reliance by individuals, corporations, states, and international organizations on military services supplied not by any public institutions, but the private market.

P.W. SINGER

We need to question how a globalized media, increasingly, repetitively, unavoidably, acts not only as trigger and transmitter of conflict as a global event, but also how a global audience responds to it. From the actual moment to the eventual interpretation - for better or worse - the media identifies, records, relays, represents and informs our response to armed conflict. It shapes how we remember or forget its significance, more so than any other institution. Instead of the fog of the 18th Brumaire and the man on horseback who tossed the peasants "like a sack of potatoes" onto his back, we get the fog of war - again - and a man on aircraft carrier who's taking half of a fearful America along for the ride. I think we are facing a public attention deficit disorder, which leaves very little time and a very distracted audience for critical inquiry and political action. That applies to artists and academics alike.

JAMES DER DERIAN



We need to have a global conception of the massive violence that the US empire is perpetrating around the globe. Two factors work against this global awareness: the domination of the US media in news production around the world, thus selecting certain areas and disregarding others, and the nature of the US domestic politics that feeds on systematic historic and geographic amnesia. The mercenary function of both US and European social sciences has become that of chasing after concepts and categories [terrorism, fundamentalism, Islamism, etc] manufactured by the US military and propaganda machinery.

HAMID DABASHI

How do we develop a common political culture? We agree pretty easily on what we are against, but how do we articulate this outside of hegemonic discourses, including our own partial collective identities? What of images? Think of Walter Benjamin's optimism: "only images in the mind motivate the will." The image-world is the surface of globalization. It is our shared world. Impoverished, thin, mute, dim, and easily misread, this image surface is all we have of shared experience. Otherwise we do not share a world.

SUSAN BUCK-MORSS

Representations in general play only a limited role. The reason I chose to write about the battlefield as a social space was precisely because the events that happen there are so physical and real. To put it bluntly, bullets pierce your body and kill you regardless of the beliefs you hold, that is, regardless of how you represent the events to yourself. Now, it may be argued that representations are important for morale, that is, they may not stop bullets but they make people fight. But that is only partly true: what

makes people fight is not so much the semantic content of beliefs [the meanings open to interpretation] but the intensity of the devotion with which one holds those beliefs. The intensity of beliefs and desires, the passion behind them, is not in itself representational.

MANUEL DELANDA

In an attempt to understand the social environments that created the popularity of Bin-Laden and al-Qaeda, I explore notions of honor and asabiyya [group loyalty, cohesion, or solidarity] within Islam as tools for mapping the global environment in which Muslims and non-Muslims find themselves and for potential hopes and dangers for the route ahead. I suggest that we live in a post-honor world where inaccurate interpretations of religion, specifically the Islamic religion, lead to violence and terrorism. I believe that notions of honor within Islamic societies are changing into what I call hyper-asabiyya, where exaggerated and even obsessive concepts of group loyalty are expressed through hostility and violence, rather than through the justice and compassion taught in the Quran. I postulate that this hyper-asabiyya has resulted from the widespread loss of honor in Islamic societies due to global developments that shake the structures of traditional societies. Therefore, as societies fall back to tribal notions of honor and revenge in times of perceived crisis, people defend their own honor by dishonoring others. Where honor in the past meant doing good and pursuing noble causes, people like Bin-Laden pervert the idea into the acts of violence and retaliation we see today. Distortions of the good ideals taught in Islam are actually the absence of honor.

AKBAR AHMED



The studies of the empirical senses in the 19th century that led to examinations of movement by Marey and Muybridge were not only deployed in various "entertainments" such as cinema but within factories for improving time-motion studies. These in turn led to an intensification of the ability to reproduce almost anything: machines, images, weapons, technicalities, etc. The divisions we wish to make between various spheres of endeavor - daily politics, activism, democratic politics, stone-throwing - reinforce another important dimension of the military and the state: the power to divide, which has been the story of sovereignty and diasporas from the Torah to the present.

RYAN BISHOP

Part of the task is to stop politics itself from becoming "politics by other means." That is, the idea of doing a protest, going to a forum, etc. as forms of being political. These are important, but maybe there is a politics of the everyday that is not located at a separate space? I think this is a space where the "activist" is not even a category - would we dare call young Palestinians throwing stones activists?

HAREL SHAPIRA

The "power of the image" was sorely tested, at both extremes, in Africa and Eastern Europe in the 1990s. The decade began with the Gulf War, the Romanian "television revolution," Rodney King, and the famine and "humanitarian intervention" in Somalia. It seemed to constitute the definitive triumph of the image. CNN, said the Secretary General of the United Nations, was "the sixteenth member of the Security Council." Everyone talked about the CNN effect, about "real time war," "headline diplo-

macy," a new politics or even a post-politics in which "images drive policy"... The architect of the Cold War, George Kennan, saw his world disappearing in these images: "If American policy from here on out, particularly policy involving the use of our armed forces abroad, is to be controlled by popular emotional impulses, and particularly ones provoked by the commercial television industry, then there is no place - not only for myself, but for what have traditionally been regarded as the responsible deliberative organs of our government, in both executive and legislative branches." And his spiritual soul mate, Paul Virilio, even worried out loud that politics itself was disappearing. "Today, the public image has taken over public space. Television has become the forum for all emotions and all options. We vote while watching TV. [...] We are heading toward a cathodic democracy, but without rules. [...] There is no politics possible at the scale of the speed of light. Politics is the time of reflection. Today, we no longer have time to reflect; the things that we see have already taken place. And we must react immediately... Is a real-time democracy possible? An authoritarian politics, yes. But what is proper to democracy is the sharing of power. When there is no longer time to share, what do we share? Emotions."

THOMAS KEENAN

The acquiescence to a dichotomy of West/Islamic world, and the activation of a discussion within this conceptual framework, in and of itself constitutes a surrendering to the aims of the war-machines... It would be interesting to delve into how the very fashioning of reality, the very invention of the specific terms of the discourse and the cate-



gories and concepts of representation, the very conditions created for exchange and interaction, are part of the structure of the possibility of warfare.

AMIR PARSA

"We didn't game for that," the General explains. War is the futurology of war. The globalization of what Rumsfeld calls "the security environment" has produced [as explained in the Eschatology's of Virilio] a dangerously monocultural web of war space and wartime, one in which arms markets [large and small] are enmeshed not only with resource markets, labor markets, production markets, but are enrolled as a basic currencies of the futures markets [secular and sacred] that motor the production of that war space as a collaborative prophecy... "Terrorist violence" constitutes a sort of virtual product, one through which the supply chain management of various militia is modulated by demand chain technologies. But in an almost embarrassingly Durkheimian sense these futures markets also rationalize the prophetic meta-discourses of fighting "evil," whether understood as the profane America, or as that Terror which would attack America in the name of its own competing prophecies: the persistent militarization of teleology.

BENJAMIN BRATTON

I think the most interesting effect of the "alliances" between makers of entertainment and "warlords" means the war is fought at several levels, also in the symbolical level...Today the Muslim world uses the same weapons and fights its war also in the entertainment field. Computer games are today among the broadest platforms to carry narratives and to establish truths and myths. It is

impossible today to deny the impact of the game industry.

ANA VALDES

There are for me two extremes of discourse on *UNDER FIRE*. One extreme manifests itself as the authority I give to those who have participated in militarized situations of struggle, and when they speak of their experiences either having fought, been captured and/or tortured I release the authority of judgment and take their words as a kind of profound representation of a truth. When I read their posts, and they are often very readable for me, I experience myself as a reader of extremity and feel enervated. The other extreme is the extreme of critical theory lingo, a word I use knowing that it might deliver harm, but intending instead to signify the power and currency that psychoanalytically and philosophically informed discourses exercise in the academic world. They are poetry of enormous power, asserting the significance of the unconscious for the ability of the human to incorporate experience, and the central role that the traumas of subjectivity have in our ability to recover and sustain existence and expression. Nevertheless, these posts deaden my responses, run over my readership, even though I have been a student of Lacanian work for 20 years. In the silence between these discourses, and the errant runs between them, and the examination of images, I seek the community in which I might somehow become effective in building art or spaces for communicating, here in the belly of the militarized beast, a human and conscious response to the machine to which I have largely abdicated my power.

MARY KELLER