

W/HOLE

*How is one to get through that wall - since pounding at it is of no use?
In my opinion one has to undermine that wall, filing through it steadily and patiently.*

Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, 22 October 1882, The Hague.

Not a sound, not a word, nothing. Our opaque walls are as silent as the grave. However, these aphonic fortresses are loquacious in their own way. They are the Pale Face/White Mask. A wall is only a wall provided it is different from the self: a screen that projects what it hides, a face that reveals what it conceals, a membrane that brings into contact that which it separates.

In order to hear nonetheless; hear what a wall does not say and listen to what it prevents being said, stare down its face, pierce the screen, rip the membrane, *and file away the wall*.

We must distrust walls that pretend to be walls, just walls, *nothing more*; since the void of monotonous walls holds irreducible excess and encloses a well-sealed secret. At first glance, this one is no different from any other. Not friendlier, nor less hostile, it does not emit any audible sound to the ear and allows nothing to show through. It also pretends to be a wall—nothing but wall, *just wall*. A pure surface, a pure medium. Except that this wall-that-does-not-speak is traversed, spoken through. A rather small hole (as big as the orifice of a bullet lodged in flesh) has assassinated its opacity. In order to reveal its secret, all we have to do is poke a stem into the orifice until it reaches the base of the wound and touches the heart of the riddle. Soon enough, the opening becomes glaringly obvious, the hole communicates the *surplus* that spills over from *nothing*: that inexhaustible remainder that we exhaust ourselves in our attempts to exhaust, because it is always *too much*. The eye does not enter, only the mouth listens; the wall vomits its entrails at whoever bites the wound. Thus what was trapped inside matter, contained under the bark of skin and the crust of bones, escapes through the breach. When the switch becomes a transmitter and the transmitter becomes a receiver, an entire system is short-circuited.

W/HOLE digs into what *in life* we would ordinarily like to avoid or cover over for fear of falling into the void. ~~The hole~~. Furthermore, Katerina Undo's installation begins with a considerable opening: an ellipse in the representation that forces us to consider the work based on what it does not show—based on the absent image and the void that emerges in its place. The opening up of the hole both

DRAW

ME

A

HOLE

A pinhole, a
borehole, a
sinkhole, a
wormhole, a
pigeonhole, a holy
hole, an airhole,
an eyehole, a

alters and liberates; it perforates the subjective surface and releases the noise that lies impatiently beneath the layer of skin. *W/HOLE* represents nothing; its system ruins the edifice of image and undermines the wall's project, which would like to construe life as something outside of art. The hole tears the veil of representation, which distinguishes and maintains an inside at a distance from an outside. In a single movement, it reveals what it pierces through: the tenuous limit of a membrane that maintains the relationship between the strange and the familiar, the other and the same. In the shrillness of a cry and the transience of a breath, this continually traversed (yet never extenuated) boundary forms a threshold where *I* resonates with the self's own otherness.

What comes out one side to penetrate the other is a 'reality supplement' that is grafted to our lives, an outside that gradually dilates *its own* inside as it overfills and invades it.

Looking no longer suffices to see if there's nothing (or at least next to nothing) to see—a wall/a hole/a stem is still something; when there is Nothing to see. It is therefore important to *see* differently, without the eyes. To give up looking to the point of becoming blind to seeing- then listen.

Listening, as only the hard of hearing know how: by lending one's mouth instead of one's ear, to hear 'the unheard of' that paves its way on the inside. Now we are deaf and blind to the rest, in dark night. It is possible to see better in total darkness than in blinding light. Since space has narrowed down to the marrow, the mind can reach where the eyes can't see, under skin, inside the skull. There is a vast world of flesh and bones that resonates inside, a noisy world to be probed *viva voce*. With this deafness and this blindness of another kind, narrowed down to the IN side yet connected to the OUT side, we are now dreadfully open to possibilities: ready to receive the unexpected, since it always arrives, in a way that we never expected. That which we do not expect but yet still occurs—the accident, the event, the other, the noise—always manifests itself by ruining order and foiling reason.

Katerina Undo's sound installation undoes the grammar of the body, the hierarchies established between the organs and the senses, by creating new circuits and new and original connections. Body/Hole/Stem/Skull/Wall/Mouth/Bone. From the hole created to the existing hole, from the transmitter to the receiver, the trajectory is impossible to define. It is a continuous current that links heterogeneous elements together in a circuit without head or tail, without beginning or end. Anatomy has made humans docile and reasonable machines, subjected to the rule of the head, to the all-seeing eye and the diktats of verticality. Now, this great diseased and alienated body that is dissected by the strident nature of the voice, gradually breaks up as the wall cracks, as an established system is deconstructed; numbed by blanks, swallowed up by the hole, the *organs* fall one by one, sweeping blatant oppositions,

keyhole, an
 arsehole, a
 chuckhole,
 feedholes, a
 buttonhole,
 dholes, tholes,
 dreamholes, a
 peep-hole, a hole
 in the heart, a
 black hole, a hole
 in the wall, a
 hellhole.

NO. HELL, A
 HOLE. JUST A
 HOLE. NOTHING
 ELSE BUT A HOLE.
 A WHOLE HOLE.

To draw a hole,
 one needs to draw
 something else.
 What comes
 before or after
 the hole, the
 prefix, the suffix,
 the supplement
 that the hole
 pierces through.
 A pin, a sink, a
 worm, a worm ?
 an eye, a door, an
 arse, a key, a
 sink ! a button, a
 face, a heart, a
 sky, a pigeon ?
 one wall, two and
 four dreams,
 some air and a
 few stars. Hell !
 How to draw a
 hole as whole,
 that contains all,
 nothing more/
 nothing less ?

established categories and comfortable habits along with them in their endless fall.

The blueprint of the *body without organs* is simple but it requires pure and aimless desire and method in order to disrupt automatic gestures and throw the human machine into panic. To make oneself a body without organs, start from the toe rather than the eye, from the feet instead of the head; make the spleen *dance* with the heart, the mouth with the colon, the flesh with the psyche: learn to dance backwards so that *this wrong side* becomes *the right place*. Turn the *contemporary body* upside down until it flies into pieces, then gather up all of the shards without leaving a single one aside and juggle with these thousands, tens of thousands of aspects that form so many *selves*.

In this game of musical chairs and free associations, we discover a fluid network of nerves and intensities in which nothing holds still, everything circulates, nothing stays, and yet, yes, *it* holds, *it* makes sense in all directions. When the body is traversed just like a wall, it becomes a porous expanse that the skin stretched over the bones is no longer able to make watertight. Just enough remains—all that is required in terms of holes and surrounding skin in order to create a resonating chamber and produce an auditive, polyphonic, and *xylophonic* body.

Inside, it speaks, someone speaks—but who speaks *me*? The wall's separation collapses by way of the schizophrenic language that operates through proliferation and multiplication. Good things always come in threes, fives and more; one needs as many heartbeats, laughs and screams, as *the minute of one's states* requires.

The VoiCE that was expelled from its original dwelling is a disturbing, homeless vagabond; just two letters separate it from the VoiD. There is no body to assign it a stable location. No face to identify it. *Nobody*. Nemo sets out to conquer his own name and must undertake a long journey in order to be *someone*. As for the voice in search of a new and original body, it eventually *finds the bone*. One must start from the middle in order to understand who is taking the place of the Self and leaving it vacant again so soon, who is speaking from the “I” and addressing the impossibility of being oneself: *Who am I? Where do I come from? I am Antonin Artaud*, Artaud who says *NO*.

A visitor. Or rather, a ghost.

From the hole where he lies buried, Artaud, who died in 1948, returns to haunt the living that he never perhaps left entirely, with the intention of celebrating life through its two extremities and multiple facets.

Of *Artaud-le-Mômo* whose body has returned to the dust, there remains only the voice, as white as a white noise, as bare and electric as an exposed nerve. On the return voyage, *old Artaud* lost

Slowly getting to the bone, a hole always comes with the more that it lessens.

Look for the gaps and the cracks that each letter and each word are opening instead of filling in. All that blank whiteness or is it white blankness in which meaning falls, and greatly fails.

ECHO has fallen for Narcissus who is falling for his own image. We all fall for better or worse, apart or through, in love or oblivion. Talkative Echo has no longer a voice of her own, can no longer speak with her NAME, for her self. Diminished in tongue, doomed to repeat the words of others, she is the ever-respondent, the never-speaker, the never-addressee. What she hears and what she receives, Echo imitates it and gives it back. Gives back words

his flesh and kept only the rot-resistant bone, what remains when all else has gone. The voice and the bones that have turned into stones, that is also what remains of talkative Echo, whose body was consumed by unrequited love. Since then, the echo—the voice on the (perpetual) return journey—ensures the wanderings of words, the permanency and flows of desires relieved of their object.

Ordinarily, we call this a *voice from beyond the grave*: a spectral voice that reaches us from “the other side”, the final resting place from which it is said that only poets return. But this return comes at a price. In order to be able to articulate loss and resurface with it in the light of day, one must have experienced loss and trembled in a starless darkness. One must have experienced the hell of the hole. The rare ghosts always sacrifice something there: the object of desire, the reflection, the shadow, or the substance of the self.

Artaud speaking in my head, the other side is now closer than it has ever been, closer than it is supposed to be. Firstly, away from a mouth yet close to a breath. Then inside. Swallow. Inhale until the limit has been incorporated. This other side that is none other than this, reveals the repressed side of existence that is declared obscene and abject. *You are saying some very bizarre things, Mr Artaud.* In Artaud’s voice, the final breath meets the first, and the first is haunted by the last. God is dead with heaven in his pocket; henceforth, life is here and nowhere else: *from the hole, you will return to the hole.*

Yet Artaud, who is now well and truly dead and buried, was somehow already dead when he was alive, “suicided”; like his brother-in-arms Vincent Van Gogh, *the man suicided by society*, who painted convulsionary landscapes and wounded suns—the world, drunk with (an excess of) reality. In this twofold and ambiguous expression, we must hear the voice of an individual whose *neck was wrung* by society that did not open its ears wide to hear him, because it has never been able to stand the voices of those who are too lucid and who make themselves hoarse crying out into the void.

Artaud-le-Mômo wrote despite diagnostics, judges and their judgements, against poetry, literature and hacks, and above all, despite and against language. He wrote the same way as he drew or spoke: in syncopes, in the cavities and peaks, by scratching endlessly at the skin of words and the decorous surface of things, in order to exhaust the filter that intervenes between my flesh, my thought, and my-self. The more it scratches away, the more these words do away with superfluousness. They methodically exceed the mother tongue and the paternal law of the uppercase: the closed and asphyxiating system that Œdipus was first locked up in, with the rest of us not far behind him. It is the speech of an ageless and sexless man, since it reflects all ages and all sexes; untranslatable, multiple, and foreign like a foreign body penetrating the organism to contaminate it from the inside. The parasitic logic of W/HOLE is that of the noise that invites itself to the host’s table without being

which are not hers anyway. The economy of the gift seems at work. One says and sends his saying, the other receives or rather takes- she who receives gives back in return. True, one might give to better receive. But there are certain things one can neither give, take, receive nor give back ; such is time, such is memory ; such is death, such is oblivion.

Echo has fallen for Narcissus who falls for himself. Neither can reach what would please one and the other, neither can reach one another. The former is deprived of a proper *I*, the latter drowns in it. Both have fallen, are falling into failure.

Flesh is gone, bones have turned into stone. *Vox manet*, only voice remains and bones are left, dispersed like dust and sand in the air.

Voice stripped bare from flesh wanders around without a destination, without a

invited. Except that the permeability of the hole transforms the abusive one-sided relationship of the parasite into a mutual exchange. Body/Wall/Mouth/Skull/Bone, soon all the elements of the system in immediate proximity to one another will affect and parasite each other. In the end, at the other end, the *I* offered for common usage is no longer mine, no longer my own. With my self dispersed, *I* become clandestine and vagabond in my own body.

To Have Done With the Judgement of God ambitiously hoped for a double ending, a double murder: that of the Verb that sucks the life out of what it names and that of mute speech that is unable to restore vitality to things. Already announced yet continually postponed, the death of God, that *monkey*, judge and thief all in one, since the body no longer has its holes, *I* is without Self and the flesh is pallid. *Neither my cry nor my fever belongs to me.*

To Have Done With the Judgement of God was also Artaud's testament, since he died the following year. Originally designed for broadcast as a radio programme, its goal was to shout out flesh, shake up the carcass, and stutter the tongue to vibrate thought. But the *pursuit of fecality* frightens morals and outrages good manners. The programme was first cancelled, and then reprogrammed for a smaller audience. For wont of finding more than one ear, Artaud's electric verb was smothered by its muzzle and went underground.

Antonin wrote. He wrote letters too, many letters: letters to the editor, to his psychiatrist, to his friends and his censors, to Jacques, Yvonne, Robert, Paule, Fernand, Max, and the others in order to speak of the evil that eats away at thought, and protest that this evil is not madness but rage. Some of these letters reached those they were addressed to, others remained on the platform; since they were not heard, many remained *dead*.

Antonin did not address Katerina Undo with her NAME. He would have been incapable of it; he didn't know her. Between him and her, between him and us, lies the great gulf of time. However, the letter and the voice always take a certain time to reach their destination. This gap that marks the distance between a starting point and an arrival point, the spacing and interval between two *letters*, manifests the inaudible difference that exists within a whole. HOLE/WHOLE

The *letter* and the voice may also never reach their destination: get lost en route or be poorly read, misread or misunderstood. Each *letter* carries in itself the risk of a potential failure, that of wandering endlessly around without ever finding an ear or a home. This is what Derrida, corresponding with the never quite corresponding, called the *destinerrance* of the letter: a destiny in and of wander.

What good is a voice if there is no one to hear it? Katerina Undo's approach might start there: based on this rift and blank that by depriving an utterance from its reception, deprives a thought of its

recipient. No home nowhere. Now everywhere is home. Echoing Echo repeats the words of others in wander, free of body, soon even to be uncoupled from bones. But what she gives in return is never the same, never matching what has been said, what has been sent in the air. Garrulous Echo swallows the first words of each sentence, keeps them for herself, hides them from ear, then spits out the last words out of many. *Is anyone here ?* he asks. ... *Here*, she replies. *Why do you fly from me ?* he wonders. ... *Fly from me*, she says.

There is a hole in the sentence, blankness in her voice. There is difference in the air.

Words are falling into void, soon in oblivion. There is a hole in the sentence and nothingness voicing in between.

In that interval, Echo has found her voice ; now hear her making her difference.

voice. It aims to restore an interrupted movement and re-establish a *correspondence* that has been missed by internalising the dual function of a membrane that both joins and separates simultaneously. W/HOLE is an ear that is complicit with a mouth, the kind of listening that forms a pact with the breath in order to *eardrum* the body, and to reveal the Whole that cohabits with the Void. This special kind of listening that emerges from a postponed encounter plucks a discourse as it flies and accommodates it, for a time—the time to reform a body and restore health.

The stay is temporary and the resting place is not definitive. In order to avoid the vertigo of chasms, we consider the hole from the edges, like a void to be filled and a desire to be sated. But no stopgap has ever managed to re-absorb the emptiness that threatens us underfoot, or to interrupt the flows of desire. He, the *unframed hole which life wanted to frame* has gathered flesh and mind in the bottomless pit that embraces all of existence.

Inside the hole, walls do not stand and the world as we once framed it no longer holds.

DRAW ME A WHOLE

with every letter
in it,

give me a hole
with the whole,

and I will find my
name.

Selen Ansen

Translation : Anna Knight