

The Vera List Center for Art and Politics presents
"I Beg Your Pardon." or The Reestablishing of Cordial Relations
A two-day exhibition

Saturday, October 15, 2006, 12-6 PM, and Sunday, October 16, 12-6 PM
Reception: Saturday, October 15, 4-6 PM
The New School, 66 West 12th Street, 4th Floor
New York City

In the current political environment saturated by political aggression and segregation along various kinds of power lines, processes of reconciliation and forgiveness have been strategically used as tactics for political and social manipulations. For this two-day exhibition at The New School, artists were asked to contribute a statement, video, image or text to address the possibilities of "Reestablishing Cordial Relations" or "Forgiveness" in the context of their work and political environment.

Organized by Andrea Geyer, the exhibition features works by artists Ayreen Anastas/Rene Gabri, Nancy Brooks Brody, Matthew Buckingham, Discoteca Flaming Star (Cristina Gomez Barrio & Wolfgang Mayer), Ulrike Feser, Benj Gerdes, Jennifer Hayashida, Sharon Hayes, Maryam Jafri, Jesal Kapadia, H. Lan Thao Lam/Lana Lin, Cristóbal Lehyt, Tara Mateik, Ulrike Müller, Taisha Paggett/Ashley Hunt, Katrin Pesch, Yvonne Rainer, Emily Roysdon, The Speculative Archive (Julia Meltzer/David Thorne), Valerie Tevere, James Tsang, and Urban Subjects (Sabine Bitter/Jeff Derksen/Helmut Weber).

The Vera List Center for Art and Politics is The New School's forum for discussion, reflection and research concerning the relationship between art and politics. This exhibition is part of our year-long investigation of "Considering Forgiveness."

Annotated Checklist (in alphabetical order)

Ayreen Anastas/Rene Gabri

7 times 77

DVD, 9 minutes

An interview, a conversation, an interrogation. What are they talking about? I think they are talking about forgiveness.

Ayreen Anastas was born in Bethlehem, Palestine, and lives and works in Brooklyn. She graduated in architecture from the Technical University in Berlin in 1996. She is a member of the 16 Beaver Group, New York. Her work has been seen in many exhibitions internationally.

Rene Gabri was born in Tehran and is now based in New York. His solo projects are largely based around the mediums of film, video, audio and text. He has been exploring a broad range of topics including cities, memory/forgetting, confession, popular culture, television, music, and issues related to in-between-ness and drifting in general. In addition to his solo projects, he has been involved with and initiated a broad range of social, collaborative situations and frameworks.

Nancy Brooks Brody

Torn 180, 2005

Pencil and staples on paper, framed, two pieces

Nancy Brooks Brody was born in Manhattan. Her home and studio is now in Brooklyn. Her current work involves manual labor, detailed repetition, and connection.

Matthew Buckingham

From 1957 to 1969 this Building Was Empty, 1999

Continuous slide projection

A double-slide projection work, “From 1957 to 1969 This Building Was Empty” investigates the twelve-year closing of St. Ann’s Church in Brooklyn Heights under the political climate of McCarthyism. A series of text-slides delivering a narrative chronology of events at the church is projected next to a static image of the church itself and an adjacent subway exit.

Matthew Buckingham is an artist living in New York and Berlin. Incorporating photography, film, video, audio, writing and drawing, his projects question the role that social memory plays in contemporary life. His work has been seen at ARC/Musée d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris; The Arnolfini, Bristol; The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Kunst Werke, Berlin; Kunstmuseum, Luzern; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York; Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster; and The Whitney Museum for American Art, New York among others.

Discoteca Flaming Star (Cristina Gomez Barrio & Wolfgang Mayer)

[and doubts and exaggeration and amnesia], 2005

Found carpet and paint

Oblivion as a “higher” form of forgiveness makes that what is to be forgiven disappear from the world, without burden the guilty with moral strength.

Cristina Gomez Barrio and *Wolfgang Mayer* have been working together as the founders of *Discoteca Flaming Star*, an interdisciplinary artistic and collaborative performance project since 1998. *Discoteca Flaming Star* aims to be a mental space that many artists can enter to experiment with different paths for contemporary aesthetic praxis, searching for its limits while avoiding processes of formalization.

Ulrike Feser

Whirling Dervish, 2004

DVD, 4 minutes

“A dervish is dancing. He is spinning; a spiritual dance is being performed. The audience is involved in the act by observing the dervish’s whirling; by observing his face. The mimic of the dancer discloses various expressions. Mimic, for the audience, an imagined outside, and then again an expression that shows his inner life. They loose every contact to the earth. This weightiness that is called balance.”

--- Citation from Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of Koran

Born in Bonn in 1970, *Ulrike Feser* studied photo, film and design at the Freie Hochschule Bielefeld, Germany. In 1999 she received a DAAD Post-Graduate Fellowship, during which she realized a photographic project in Hawaii. Her work has been shown at various museums and galleries among them the Bonner Kunstverein (2002); Galerie Kamm, Berlin (2003); Ursula Blickle Foundation; the Frankfurter Kunstverein (2004); SK Stiftung, Cologne (2004); and Oboro, Montréal (2005).

Benj Gerdes

Terms of Service: When We Pretend We're in Control, 2005

DVD, 6 minutes

In this video, the notion of cordiality and the validity of forgiveness are critically explored through a reading of the military-sponsored (and distributed free of cost) computer game *America's Army*. It also features a letter by the CEO of the software company who created the game in which he accuses players who cheat of breaching U.S. military secrets. In juxtaposing these two, the video attempts to articulate the proximity of anti-terror and copyright law. The project deploys awkward juxtapositions that posit a series of reconciliation between film and video, video game and documentary, and representation and annihilation.

Benj Gerdes is a Brooklyn-based artist, educator, and organizer working primarily in film and video. He attended Brown University and recently completed the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. He has extensively taught video-related courses in public schools and after-school programs in New York City.

Jennifer Hayashida

Hirabayashi v. United States (1943), 2005

Overhead projection of text

In this work, the artist attempts to differentiate between reconciliation and erasure by imagining how judicial decisions might be inscribed on sites of political resistance, displacement, and disenfranchisement.

Jennifer Hayashida is a writer, translator and teacher whose work explores constructions of nationalism in language, as well as shifts in language and identity across geopolitical boundaries. Recent projects include the translation of Inner China by Eva Sjöldin (Litmus Press, 2005), a book-length prose poem that interrogates the utopian image of the Swedish welfare state and that country's pastoral narrative. She is currently a visiting lecturer in the Department of Asian American Studies at the University of California at Davis.

Sharon Hayes

Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) Screeds #13, 16, 20 & 29, 2003

DVD, 15 minutes

On February 4, 1974, Patty Hearst was kidnapped from her apartment in Berkeley, California, by a radical political organization called the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA). From February to April, 1974, the SLA and Patty Hearst made four audio tapes in which she addresses her parents on the subject of her kidnapping, the SLA's ransom (that the Hearst family feed all the poor people in California) and the family and the FBI's actions during the ordeal. In the last tape,

Hearst renames herself Tania and announces that she is joining the SLA in their struggle. From June 2001 to January 2002, Sharon Hayes performed a re-speaking of each of the four audio tapes. In each instance, Hayes partially memorized the transcript of the audio tape and spoke the text in front of an audience to whom she gave a transcript of the text. She asked them to correct her when she was wrong and to feed her a line when she needed it.

Over the past ten years, *Sharon Hayes* has been engaged in an art practice that moves between multiple mediums—video, performance, installation—in an ongoing artistic investigation into the relations of history, politics, and space to the process of individual and collective subject formation. To this aim, she employs conceptual and methodological approaches borrowed from artistic and academic practices such as theater, film, anthropology, linguistics, and journalism.

Hayes' installation, video, and performance work has been shown in New York at P.S. 1 Museum of Contemporary Art, Andrew Kreps Gallery, Parlour Projects, the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program, Dance Theater Workshop, Dixon Place, HERE, Performance Space 122, the Joseph Papp Public Theater, the WOW Café, and the New Museum of Contemporary Art; and in Los Angeles at LACE, Track 16, Gallery 2102, and The Project in Los Angeles. In addition her work has been seen in galleries, exhibition or performance spaces in Bogotá, Berlin, Copenhagen, Malmö, Vienna, and Zagreb as well as in Florida, Rhode Island, Texas, and Vermont, and in 45 lesbian living rooms across the United States.

Maryam Jafri

Next In Line, 2005

Chalk on blackboard

In this work, the artist shares a quote which presents a "rhetorical apology." A rhetorical question is a question the speaker asks but assumes won't be answered—because it addresses no one in particular. Jafri proposes that a rhetorical apology is an apology the speaker puts forth but all the while hopes it won't be answered—because it addresses no one in particular. In short, the work is a performance farce.

“Empire history should be celebrated. I think the days of Britain having to apologise for our history are over. I think we should move forward. I think we should celebrate much of our past rather than apologise for it and we should talk, rightly so, about British values. If you look at the whole span of British history, it's time to emphasise that that is at the core of our history, that's at the core of our Britishness and it's such a potential influence on our future that I believe we should be talking about it more not less.”

--- Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, UK, and next-in-line to follow Tony Blair as head the Labour Party

Maryam Jafri was born in Pakistan in 1972 and is now based in New York and Copenhagen. Her work often focuses on the role of narrative in the construction of identity, from the personal to the supranational.

Jesal Kapadia

Telegraph, 2005

Video, 4 minutes

Telegraph is a counter-documentary video that addresses its audience through a withdrawal of the image. It exposes us to the movement of a text rather than securing our vision of an object.

In response to the global acclaim of the film “Born Into Brothels,” which recently won an Oscar for Best Documentary, the video depicts the letter of protest and complaint that was written by the sex-workers organization DMSC (based in Calcutta, India) to the editor of the local newspaper *The Telegraph*. I have retrieved this letter from the labyrinthine archives of the internet and re-delivered it to the video screen in an attempt to complicate and interrupt the process of communication, thereby calling for a new response. In doing so, the video questions our own implication in the violence of wanting to do good to “the other,” and our own relation to global economies of guilt and forgiveness. Should we be asking for it? Is our desire to always fix “the other” in images unforgivable?

Jesal Kapadia is a video artist and digital photographer, born in Mumbai, India and now living and working in New York. She is the Co-Editor of the Arts for the journal *Rethinking Marxism*, a graduate of the Whitney Museum’s Independent Study Program as well as a recipient of the 2003-04 Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant in Film and Video. She is a frequent collaborator with the 16beavergroup, a collective based in New York. Her work is exhibited at Momenta Art, Brooklyn, MIT Media Test Wall at the List Visual Arts Center, Boston, Cyber-Arts Festival 2001 in Cambridge MA, Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, Stephen Stux Gallery in New York, the Vera List Center of Art and Politics at The New School, New York, as well as venues in Spain, Lithuania, Singapore and Mumbai, India.

H. Lan Thao Lam/Lana Lin

Dark Meat or White Meat?, 2005

Chalk on blackboard, DVD, 15 minutes

Every Thanksgiving since 1987, the US President has pardoned two turkeys so that 45 million may be slaughtered guilt-free. The annual turkey pardon exemplifies the absurd and arbitrary exercise of executive authority. With the President’s sweeping, irrefutable power, questions of life and death, freedom and imprisonment, hinge upon taste and personal preference akin to the choice of dark or white meat. The video combines counter-narratives as commentary on this highly prejudicial process: a humorous history of turkey pardon ceremonies contrasted with tickertape statistics detailing controversial pardons and the plummeting number of pardons granted since the 1980’s.

H. Lan Thao Lam and *Lana Lin*'s collaborations in time-based media and installation bring together their interests in history, language, and architecture. Their work has been exhibited internationally, published in *Cabinet* magazine, and screened at the Taiwan International Documentary Festival. For more information, go to www.strangerbaby.info.

Cristóbal Lehyt

No, 2004

DVD, 45 seconds

The video “No” features somebody lost on the desert and finding something unexpected. Set in Chile’s North.

Cristóbal Lehyt was born in Santiago, Chile, in 1973. He has exhibited in several countries including Chile, the United States, Mexico, Colombia, and China. He currently lives and works in New York.

Tara Mateik

Zurück an Absender/ Return to Sender, 2005

Postcards, unlimited edition

Born in 1974 in Leominster, MA, *Tara Mateik* is an artist and educator living in New York City. Entering both political and biological cells as an ersatz scientist, his work critically explores the gendered signifiers and codes of these fantastic mythologies through performance, video, and intervention. Mateik holds a B.A. in Film and Video from Hampshire College and an M.F.A. in Integrated Electronic Arts from Rensselaer Polytechnic. Selected exhibitions were presented at John Connelly Presents, New York (2005); Longwood Art Gallery, New York (2005); FACT/The Liverpool Biennial, UK (2004); Laboratoria Arte Alameda, Mexico City (2004); Participant, New York; Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC), Chicago, IL; Anthology Film Archives, New York (2003); Center for Contemporary Art, Vilnius, Lithuania (2003); and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York (2003). Publications that features his work include *North Drive Press #2: Society of Biological Insurgents (SBI) Code of Operations* (North Drive Press 2004); *LTTR: A Feminist Art Journal* (LTTR 2001); and *FELIX: A Journal of Media Arts and Communication* (Semiotext(e) 1999). Mateik was the Coordinating Director of Paper Tiger Television (1998-2002). Currently, he is the Education Coordinator at Art in General.

Ulrike Müller

LOVE/TORTURE, 2005

DVD, 6 minutes

The video “LOVE/TORTURE” features the performance of a text about pain and pleasure—sexualized pleasure but not necessarily shared pleasure. It investigates emotional relationships and the contemporary subjectivities of media consumers. Confronted with a situation that is both bleakly basic and the utterly confusing (“people are torturing and killing,” “people are being tortured and killed”) this video proposes that the viewers shift their attention and attempt to identify with the role of the perpetrator rather than the victim.

Ulrike Müller lives and works in New York and in Vienna, Austria. She is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (1996), and participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York, in 2002/2003.

Taisha Paggett/Ashley Hunt

Undeliverable Address: 53 Questions That Will Not Be Answered by the White House, 2005

69-page booklet, edition of 100

Taisha Paggett is a dancer and choreographer living and working in Los Angeles. *Ashley Hunt* is a Los Angeles based artist who works primarily in video and multi-media. His main project of the last five years has been the "Corrections Documentary Project", exploring the political economy and relations of U.S. prison expansion. <http://ashleyhuntwork.net>, <http://correctionsproject.com>, <http://prisonmaps.com>

Katrin Pesch

Left Behind, 2005

Slide projection

The slide projection “Left behind” shows various sequential views of people walking through the foyer and hallways of an office building as part of their daily routines or working lives. The title of the work refers to the bestseller novel series of the same name that addresses a growing fundamental Christian population as well as to the “No Child Left Behind Act”, which allows military recruiters access to high school students data.

Katrin Pesch received an M.F.A. from Weissensee College of Art, Berlin, in 1999. In 2000 she participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. In 2004/5 she was Visiting Artist at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. Recent projects, exhibitions, and collaborations included "Now and Ten Years Ago," Kunstwerke e.V. Berlin (2004); Havana Biennial, Pabellon Cuba, Havana (2003); Symposium for Public Affairs, Museum for Modern Art, Vienna (2003), New Wight Biennial, UCLA, Los Angeles (2001).

Yvonne Rainer

2005

Chalk on blackboard

This work consists of a simple statement, to be written on a blackboard:

I cannot find it within myself to forgive George W. Bush and his cohorts for being the worst president within living memory.

--- Yvonne Rainer

Yvonne Rainer is a filmmaker and choreographer based in New York City.

Emily Roysdon

POW, 2005

DVD, 80 seconds

“POW” continues Roysdon's investigation into memory and representations of collective progress. It is an unapologetic body forward hysterical meditation on the rise and fall.

Emily Roysdon is a Los Angeles and New York-based interdisciplinary artist whose projects engage language, gesture, and memory. She is an editor of *LTTR*, a trans-feminist independent art journal. She completed the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program in 2001 and is currently an M.F.A. candidate at UCLA.

The Speculative Archive (Julia Meltzer, David Thorne)

May You Choke on a Peanut, 2005

DVD, 3 minutes 35 seconds

"Forgive me for I am one of you. And for I talk like you. For I listen to you. For I see you. And because I can touch you. Forgive me for loving you. Forgive me for . . . If I die, would you forgive me?"

The Speculative Archive produces video, publication, and installation projects which address political violence. The Archive is a collaboration of *Julia Meltzer* and *David Thorne*. Julia Meltzer is a media artist and director of *Clockshop*, a non-profit arts organization in Los Angeles. David Thorne is a Los Angeles-based artist.

Valerie Tevere

Survey, 2005

Paper

A scenario that has been, or will be, put into action, as a diagram of different systems of knowledge/belief that act upon each other and as a map that offers several different crossings through a field of physical and ideological positions.

In different intersecting forms—video, performance, activism, micro-radio broadcasting—*Valerie Tevere's* practice has looked to the public sphere as a condition and framework for inquiry and discourse. Current work examines the formation and delivery of “questions” through interrogation, interviews, and surveys. Tevere’s solo and collaborative projects have been exhibited internationally throughout North and South America and Europe. In 2001 she co-founded the collaborative *neuroTransmitter*. <http://www.neurotransmitter.fm/>

James Tsang

Hospitality, 2005

DVD, 15 minutes

"Hospitality" is a series of brief encounters collected in Milan, Italy, focusing on the movements of affinity for queer travel. It is an open observation of gestures such as generosity and enunciation, and how they reflect upon the quality of location.

James Pei-Mun Tsang is an artist and feminist organizer who lives in Los Angeles. Recent projects include a touring presentation of Pilot Television in Western Europe and Mexico, and ongoing performances with collaborative group Marriage (Tsang and Math Bass). Other works include single channel videos, and collaborations with the Pilot TV collective in Chicago.

US (Urban Subjects) (Sabine Bitter, Jeff Derksen, Helmut Weber)

The Unforgiven, 2005

DVD, 1 minute 50 seconds

This video features the epiphany scene from the Clint Eastwood-directed anti-western, “The Unforgiven” with press images of Henry Kissinger.

US (Urban Subjects) is a Vancouver/Vienna-based group developing projects on the global-urban nexus. US is *Sabine Bitter*, *Jeff Derksen*, and *Helmut Weber*.