

A Near-Miss of the Present, With Ignored Endings or Alternate Vectors

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It was the spring of my last semester at the University of Houston. Friends of mine, two years before, had gone to get current with art affairs at the Whitney Biennial. I borrowed the weighty catalogs upon their return to see Lazzarini's telephone booth, pages of Chris Ware's drawings, some large heads in boxes, and wished so badly that I too could see all that was "now." These artists seemed at the time to illuminate some force in the world that was more prevalent in New York than in my insular Houston. This is what is really happening. A rich past where Cimmerians were decimated at the hands of savage barbarians and a future of cyborg police and dystopian Australian landscapes, short on petroleum existed side-by-side. All I had to do was fill in the middle with a visit to the next Biennial.

Two years pass and I am on my way to the Whitney. It seems as though there is a flashlight overhead that illuminates a spot right in front of me, showing me the way to the present. I chase the flashlight like a puppy all around the museum, out into the city and around to other museums in Brooklyn and Queens. I was contented with hustling about in and out of galleries with no end in sight; I am an art-devouring machine. With my belly full of the "now,"

my New York trip comes to a close and I am happy to be going home, initiated.

It occurs to me later that something about my prediction didn't quite line up with what I had felt. The flashlight, now gone, didn't speed ahead out of my reach, nor did it stay in New York as I left for Houston. I passed it up, I was that spot, and my perception of the museum changed. All of the art on exhibit was not what is happening, but was what just happened. In some instances the art was intentionally older, but I supposed that was intended to show the newness of the other works. Even then, the newer works had begun to show their age. The Whitney Biennial, exhibition of the very new, Exhibition of What Just Happened.

I suppose, in hindsight, that I was allowing that constant stream of prediction to look like an actual occurrence. It was as though I could suspend the moment to live in an actual parallel universe, so long as I could permit myself to live microseconds, or days ahead of myself. What happens when the idea of new becomes tired, when we have to edge ahead into a new that is even newer? The moment of the present does not dissolve into the past, but is the past already. Teleology has never seemed so immediate and tangible. This teleology allows for the

present to be a consequence of the future. I can imagine a few moments ahead to the possible directions that the now will take, no matter the actual probability, and let that potentiality take form in my work. This may very well be the practical use of maintaining a possible worlds theory, in order that I may keep my work charged with some sort of unpredictability. I can use logic or whatever decision making strategy while allowing for disparate elements to combine. Despite the obvious banality of this idea, prediction can become a rich source for the artist.

