



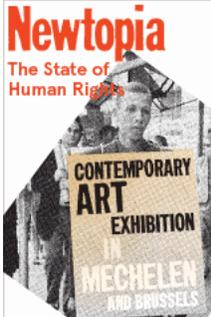
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500 WORDS

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Bernadette Corporation talks about "the final days of contemporary art"
 Adam Putnam discusses his new show and work
 Liu Xiaodong talks about his Hotan Project
 Roy Brand discusses Yaffo 23
 Amanda Palmer on her Kickstarter campaign and new work
 Marisa Jahn talks about El Bibliobandido


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Bernadette Corporation

09.08.12



Left: Bernadette Corporation, *Get Rid of Yourself*, 2003, digital video, color, 60 minutes. Right: Bernadette Corporation, *Creation of a False Feeling*, 2000, color photograph, dimensions variable. Photo: Cris Moor.

Bernadette Corporation is a New York-based collaborative with three principal members: Bernadette Van-Huy, John Kelsey, and Antek Walczak. Since the early 1990s, the collaborative has explored processes of production from event planning to fashion design and from publishing to filmmaking. Artists Space will host a retrospective of the group's work, titled "2000 Wasted Years," which opens on September 9 and runs through December 16.

ARTISTS SPACE CAME TO US with the idea of a retrospective and were very flexible in framing the idea. They weren't there to pin us down. Our immediate reaction was, "But we have nothing to show," followed by, "What's the budget?" While collecting works for this retrospective, we noticed that our sloppiness in the past had prevented us from maintaining an archive. In a way, we had nothing to show for all these years. The implication, if there is any, is in our indifference toward black/white dichotomies around the notions of the original/the copy or the reboot/the new. What matters is the complexity of the method and not really the clarity of the intent, which relates to our need to abandon the right/left straitjackets of political identity in favor of something like a direct politics.

In regard to the pros and cons of a retrospective, there are only positives now. This has to do with the particularly transitional nature of this historical moment. All around the globe, those who are in a certain privileged position are grabbing all the money, resources, publicity, attention, and glory that they can, while not giving a fuck about tomorrow. These are the final days of contemporary art and we're happy to have a seat at the table. The signs are everywhere: apostasy, the sacrifice of sacred cow(s), a 200 million strong army of art school grads, cheering the dead prophets, the gospel preached around the world, the mark of the blue-chip primetime Basel gallery, and the general godlessness of art discourse (lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth). Also, personally, there was the "getting old" sentimentality and pleasure in digging up again those old photos and remnants of the past.

For us, irony is not a by-product of slippage but a product of complaisance, denial, and delusion. No way is it a strategy! It's the self-congratulatory coping mechanism of those who have all but given up hope. By this we mean anyone the least bit professional in the cultural and academic fields. We count ourselves as a part of that sorry lot that's attempting to reform itself. The question of irony is far more relevant today than ever, because it is an untenable stance.

What we've discovered is that fashion, at least in the way seen by ourselves and many others who were in it at the time, had a kind of underground viability. What does that mean to us? Well, as opposed to art back then, it was still possible to perform classic scenarios of transgression and antiestablishment competitiveness. In the years since, fashion has ballooned into something completely different, and we've barely been able to keep up with it. Its relevance to us in terms of vehicle or means of expression or medium has diminished, while its potential for communication is staggering. It cuts across social boundaries in unheard-of ways; it's like Esperanto, a successful Esperanto. We are doing our best to catch up with this state of things in order to become fluent with today and still be on top of our game.

— As told to John Arthur Peetz