

2014

Vanished Art: The Lost Legacy of Occupy New School v.3

It was a lazy Thanksgiving 2011 when I got an unexpected call from the dean. The message went something like "the Occupy protesters who have encamped in the Parsons Gallery and the Student Study Center are wearing out their welcome, and the president is inviting a small group of faculty to come in tomorrow to consult on next steps." I wasn't told why I was included, but my ancient history with student protest as both student and faculty at Kent State and San Francisco State was known. Annoyance at having the holiday weekend interrupted was outweighed by a potential opportunity to influence a peaceful resolution.

The next day, about twenty bedraggled colleagues met with the president in the Orozco room, only to learn that the occupiers had left that morning. There was both relief and disappointment, but mostly relief when it became clear that the president had been in close conversation with the NYPD commissioner and was prepared to act sooner rather than later. We were then invited to tour the scenes of the occupation to see the legacy the occupiers had left in their wake. It was brutal and beautiful, wall after window boldly and hastily covered in colorful words and images of occupy sentiments:

*OCCUPY EVERYTHING
BLOOMBERG'S GOT TO GO
FREE EDUCATION
DON'T FEED THE PIGS
WE ARE STUDENTS AND ACTIVISTS, NOT CRIMINALS
(RE)OCCUPATION; NO CONDITIONS
STOP THE NY POLICE STATE
WHY ARE WE HERE? SOLIDARITY
STOP THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE POOR
FEED YOUR HEAD
NO SEXIST, NO RACIST, NO HOMOPHOBIC, NO FATPHOBIC,
NO TRANSPHOBIC, NO ABLEIST ACTION OR LANGUAGE
POLITICS PRECEDES BEING.
IN FACT, BEING PRECEDES POLITICS
SPREAD THE MUTATION
DARE TO STRUGGLE
WE ARE HISTORY IN MOTION
WE WANT EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE*

⚡: Reminder: April 15 Offense + Dissent

1 message

Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu>

Tue, Apr 15, 2014 at 1:59 PM

To: Carol Wilder <wilderc@newschool.edu>

Cc: Julia Foulkes <FoulkesJ@newschool.edu>, Mark Larrimore <LarrimoM@newschool.edu>

Hi Carol,

I think we were hoping to use your Kent State article as part of our research and background for the 1970 exhibition at TNS. So it would be great if you wanted to write about the disappeared Occupy TNS.

Julia/Mark, do you agree?

Cheers, Radhika

On Tue, Apr 15, 2014 at 1:57 PM, Carol Wilder <wilderc@newschool.edu> wrote:

Hi Y'all - I can't remember if you decided if you want me to do something about the disappeared Occupy images or Kent State.

Please let me know.

thx,

carol

On Tue, Apr 8, 2014 at 3:12 PM, Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu> wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in the summer exhibition. This is just a reminder that we're hoping to get your choice of artwork/design by next Tuesday, April 15. All we need is the name of the work/artist or the aspect of design, as appropriate, and the location.

The text itself -- 300-500 words -- with the questions is due on May 15. If you are considering response in some other medium, please let us know -- we're open to other possibilities of responding but would like to consider the exhibition issues. However, it's really important to us that the dialogue within the disagreement or argument remains as part of it.

Best regards, Radhika, Julia and Mark

We would like to invite your participation in an exhibition titled *Offense and Dissent: Image, Conflict and Belonging at The New School (working title)* to be installed this summer in the Kellen Gallery at the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center. The second exhibition to explore the diversity of the university community, this exhibition examines three moments in the history of The New School in which art and design were in a political vortex with widely varying responses. In addition to the three incidents, we would like to have a fourth exploration that is a present-day investigation by faculty, staff and students at The New School in dialogue with an image/installation or an element of design that they regularly encounter at the university.

We ask that you

1. Select either an artwork or an aspect of design that you regularly encounter at the university to which you have a strong reaction, positive or negative, that you may not necessarily share with others. The work should be either an image or installation from The New School Art Collection that is in the hallways, offices, courtyards and hallways of the university OR it should be an element of design—graphic, interior or architecture—on campus.
2. Describe briefly why you are provoked or disturbed by the image/design: How do you encounter this work? Why does it disturb or delight you? How do others feel? Does it exclude some people in its address? Are you left out, drawn in, disgusted, bored, taken aback? If you could effect a change with regard to the display, design or reception of this piece of work, how might you begin?
3. Suggest three questions that you would use to initiate a conversation with your colleagues to make such a change possible.

We are interested in **all three** aspects of your response – selection, disagreement and dialogue – and will include these texts with questions and the corresponding artwork/designs, as appropriate, as part of the exhibition.

If you are interested in participating, please let us know by email right away. The subsequent deadlines would be as follows:

April 15: Art/design work or space selected. Please let us know the title of the piece and its location or the space/design to which you are responding.

May 15: Text and questions due.

Attached is a draft description of the exhibition. We hope you will be interested in participating.

Best regards,

Radhika, Mark and Julia

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THE NEW SCHOOL

Carol Wilder <wilderC@newschool.edu>

Re: Reminder: April 15 Offense + Dissent

Carol Wilder <wilderC@newschool.edu>

Thu, Apr 17, 2014 at 9:49 AM

To: Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu>

Cc: Julia Foulkes <FoulkesJ@newschool.edu>, Mark Larrimore <LarrimoM@newschool.edu>

Bcc: Carol Wilder <WilderC@newschool.edu>

fyi, these are the images I want to work with.

On Wed, Apr 16, 2014 at 12:00 PM, Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu> wrote:
Hi Carol,

Mark, Julia and I plan to discuss this on Monday so will get back to you with some size options.

Best, Radhika

On Tue, Apr 15, 2014 at 7:40 PM, Carol Wilder <wilderC@newschool.edu> wrote:
Also can be flexible. Give me a size and I'll fit it.

On Tue, Apr 15, 2014 at 5:32 PM, Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu> wrote:
Dear Carol,

Great. Thanks. If it's a collage, let us know the dimensions -- or if it can be flexible.

Best, Radhika

On Tue, Apr 15, 2014 at 4:21 PM, Carol Wilder <wilderC@newschool.edu> wrote:
Selection:

Scrubbed: The Vanished Art of Occupy New School

Location: Parsons gallery and 72 (?) Fifth Ave Study Center

I am thinking of some sort of collage of 3-4 pieces of Occupy art juxtaposed with photos of space now with some commentary.

On Tue, Apr 15, 2014 at 1:59 PM, Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu> wrote:
Hi Carol,

I think we were hoping to use your Kent State article as part of our research and background for the 1970 exhibition at TNS. So it would be great if you wanted to write about the disappeared Occupy TNS.

Julia/Mark, do you agree?

Cheers, Radhika

THE NEW SCHOOL

Carol Wilder <wilder@newschool.edu>

Re: "Vanished Art: The Lost Legacy of Occupy New School"

1 message

Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu>

Wed, May 21, 2014 at 12:55 PM

To: Carol Wilder <wilder@newschool.edu>

Cc: Julia Foulkes <FoulkesJ@newschool.edu>, Mark Larrimore <LarrimoM@newschool.edu>

Hi Carol,

Quickly: I had opposed the painting of the gallery over the weekend and had wanted to leave it until students came back from break. Tim Marshall et al overruled that and wanted us to get the occupy students who were still here (who were angry about the "trashing" of the gallery) to repaint. A few showed up but the removal of the paint which was in giant globs was very difficult. They washed the walls for a while. In the meantime, the gallery student workers, several who were away for the holiday, were in a rage on Facebook etc because they felt this was a slap in their faces! Anyway, finally Facilities and some of my staff/crew repainted the gallery. Town Hall in the gallery the next day. The student workers spoke up about their work here. Student Senate voted to "return the gallery" to us. (Then, there is also the "white wall" context of galleries themselves)

I felt the use of the gallery was a papering over of the real issues of space and student voice at the univ. And it was a peculiar deployment of "artistic space" against "educational space" in which the former was considered dispensable. I remember sitting in that Orozco room meeting in which Emanuel Castano, advocating for the use of the gallery as a student space, turned to me and said, of course, I'd be very unhappy if they were taking over my lab.

I'm not sure I'd have wanted to leave the A peace sign because it seems gratuitous -- as in, see, we can be radical and here is the most trite depiction of it.

Not so quickly after all :)!

Anyway, if you meant both spaces, a sentence or two to include the gallery in this would be good.

Cheers, R

On Wed, May 21, 2014 at 12:44 PM, Carol Wilder <wilder@newschool.edu> wrote:

Interesting! I hadn't thought much about how different the spaces were. Would love to hear your painting story. Meanwhile, I think my favorite image - the "A" in the window - is from the gallery. (Yes, I would have left it intact!) Let me know if you want me to revise to make the essay more inclusive - or maybe add a sentence about the gallery painting?

On Wed, May 21, 2014 at 12:38 PM, Radhika Subramaniam <subramar@newschool.edu> wrote:

Dear Carol,

Thanks so much! Re. visuals, since your discussion is primarily about the student center space, I'd select from those.

Unless you also intend to include the gallery where the point about the painting white etc has other resonances and other meaning -- having been involved in that painting, I know there were very different things at play there. (Of course, I am curious as to whether you would have proposed leaving some of the gallery expressions intact but that's a longer conversation)

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