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## From the Editor

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Welcome to the September 2023 edition of *Afterimage*.

This issue begins with a recap of Arda Oz’s experience as a Fellow at this year’s Flaherty Film Seminar. Explorations of “Queer World-Mending,” the theme of the 68th Flaherty gathering, offered new and rediscovered films and makers, leading to vibrant discussions and, as reported and not unexpected, “a few explosive debates.”

Three featured essays explore a variety of media approaches. Dorothea Braemer applies the term “polyphony” (borrowed from literary critic and scholar Mikhail Bakhtin) to documentary film practice, highlighting three productions in particular: Black Audio Film Collective’s *Handsworth Songs* (1986), Sabine Gruffat and Bill Brown’s *Speculation Nation* (2014), and Brett Story’s *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes* (2016). Braemer finds that a “multivoiced, nonhierarchical approach gives many different subjects a chance to be seen and heard.”

In a feature on multimedia artist Laura Arminda Kingsley, Jaimie Baron notes that the artist’s work “meditates on the origins of life, the processes of evolution, and the potentials of one kind of organism to transform into another,” stressing the endless transformation that typifies both biology and (human) culture and “helping us recognize our kinship with other living beings by reminding us of what we all were, are, and might still become.” Baron connects the work of Kingsley (a self-described optimist) to Donna Haraway’s concept of “staying with the trouble,” a practice of navigating existential threats without succumbing to despair.

In a conversation with our contributor Marcus Civin, photographer Tarrah Krajnak highlights her recent performance and book projects, also discussing a range of topics from aging to transracial adoption to the experiences of artists of color. In speaking about Indigenous lives in particular, Krajnak says, “There has to be a way photography makes visible these histories that have been submerged.”

This issue offers three scholarly articles connecting photography, digital media, materiality, and performativity. Katherine C. M. Adams details how Walid Raad’s *The Atlas Group* “sets up forms of circulation and distribution for its contents, and the ways in which its images contest the very boundaries of their apparent material forms,” arguing that ultimately Raad’s project “engages a deep contestation of the terms on which imagemaking unfolds in the midst of proliferating digital technologies.”

Nazar Kozak explores Kenji Yanobe’s *Atom Suit Project*. Kozak employs an ecocritical lens to connect Yanobe’s work in the Chernobyl zone and the nuclear disaster zone of its setting. This project from the late 1990s has much contemporary resonance and Kozak examines its potential for survival, writing, “With its cultic dimension, the *Atom Suit Project* provides an example of what the nuclear semiotics strove to achieve—to deliver a message from the present into the deep future.”

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Joshua Glick takes a broad look at deepfake satire and the possibilities of synthetic media, elucidating the profound ramifications of this new form, and referencing theories addressing such perspectives as “feminist advocacy geared toward legislation along with public pressure on platforms is necessary to reimagine models of accountability and consent online.” Glick writes, “the caricatured bodies and voices that comprise deepfake satire demonstrate how comedy can serve as one of the most urgent forms of truth-telling and expose the grotesque lies that undergird systems of oppression around the world.”

This issue’s reviews explore two recent and one continuing exhibition and a new book of photo history. While acknowledging the delight she found in engaging with *Brake Run Helix* at MASS MoCA, Alisia Chase also delves into the artist EJ Hill’s perseverance in performance as well as his overarching concern for joy, as an integral aspect of social equity, to be available to all. In writing about *Direct Contact: Cameraless Photography Now*, recently at the Eskenazi Museum at Indiana University, William V. Ganis points out the prevalence of identity expression among the works in the exhibition. In a show in which “tactility reigned” and the “physical predominated with the images’ absence,” Ganis writes, the most successful works “pulled together process, conceptual intent, and materiality to say something more about photography itself.” Emile Mausner closes out this issue’s exhibition reviews with a dive into *The Heart’s Knowledge: Science and Empathy in the Art of Dario Robleto* at Northwestern University’s Block Museum. Robleto, using audio, video, and sculptural works, “resurrect[s] the cardiological archive” while employing a range of images and media from pulse waves traced in smoke to EKGs to stellar dust. Ultimately, contends Mausner, the show “represented the culmination of meaningful interdisciplinary encounters where the ethos of enlightenment was shared.”

Lastly, Brian Arnold reviews a new book by Thy Phu, *Warring Visions: Photography and Vietnam*. Phu works under the assertion that in order to understand war photography in Vietnam, we need to look at the images created and disseminated by the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese (not just those made by the French and Americans) as well as engage with vernacular photography (going beyond media and propaganda). Arnold writes that Phu reminds us that “dominant historical narratives are still grounded in hegemony, and we can understand a very different world when we can see history through opposing lenses.”

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Our next issue, the last of the year, will be a special issue celebrating *Afterimage’s* 50th volume. You can expect a panoply of voices reflecting on some of the most seminal articles we have published in our long history. You won’t want to miss it.

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We welcome submissions of scholarly articles intended for peer review, as well as reports on events and happenings (in person and virtual); essays; photo essays; interviews with artists, curators, writers, and theorists; and exhibition, book, film, video, event, and project reviews. Please see “Submit” on our website for more information or inquire directly about guidelines. We are pleased to publish dossiers, and accept proposals for future guest-edited issues as well.

Wishing you a colorful autumn.

Take good care,  
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