

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

ARCHÉOLOGIE DE L'INACHEVÉ: EXPLORATION VISUELLE ET
LITTÉRAIRE DU POTENTIEL FICTIONNEL D'IMAGES ET DE DOCUMENTS
TROUVÉS DANS LA VILLE, SOUS FORME D'UN ROMAN D'ART
RÉHABILITÉ.

MÉMOIRE – CRÉATION
PRÉSENTÉ
COMME EXIGENCE PARTIELLE
DE LA MAÎTRISE EN ARTS VISUELS

PAR
RAWI HAGE

OCTOBRE 2009

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL
Service des bibliothèques

Avertissement

La diffusion de cette thèse se fait dans le respect des droits de son auteur, qui a signé le formulaire *Autorisation de reproduire et de diffuser un travail de recherche de cycles supérieurs* (SDU-522 – Rév.01-2006). Cette autorisation stipule que «conformément à l'article 11 du Règlement no 8 des études de cycles supérieurs, [l'auteur] concède à l'Université du Québec à Montréal une licence non exclusive d'utilisation et de publication de la totalité ou d'une partie importante de [son] travail de recherche pour des fins pédagogiques et non commerciales. Plus précisément, [l'auteur] autorise l'Université du Québec à Montréal à reproduire, diffuser, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de [son] travail de recherche à des fins non commerciales sur quelque support que ce soit, y compris l'Internet. Cette licence et cette autorisation n'entraînent pas une renonciation de [la] part [de l'auteur] à [ses] droits moraux ni à [ses] droits de propriété intellectuelle. Sauf entente contraire, [l'auteur] conserve la liberté de diffuser et de commercialiser ou non ce travail dont [il] possède un exemplaire.»

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

SOMMAIRE	Je tiens à remercier David Tomas, mon directeur de Mémoire.
INTRODUCTION	À mon frère Ralph
PREMIÈRE PARTIE	
CONCLUSION	

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

RÉSUMÉ.....	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
FOUND FICTION.....	6
CONCLUSION	47

RÉSUMÉ

Le travail présenté est une reconstitution partielle d'une composition imaginaire. En effet, les éléments présentés forment une brève interprétation d'un texte écrit. Le texte, en lui-même est une nouvelle basée sur le vie d'un artiste imaginaire. Celano, comme je l'appelle, est un artiste local qui a immigré au Québec depuis l'Amérique latine. Son travail artistique consiste en une collection de *trouvailles*. C'est à dire de petites notes trouvées au hasard des rues qu'il a ramassées, organisées, transformées et façonnées en entité artistique. De nombreuses années après la mort de Celano, son travail est redécouvert et acclamé par une institution d'art mais aussi par sa femme, sa fille et son fils perdu de vue.

Des traces de la vie personnel et artistique de Celano sont reconstituées, imaginées et exposées dans cet espace. C'est à travers de ces fragments que je fais allusion à une composition imaginaire plus vaste. Des morceaux de papier que j'ai moi-même ramassés dans la rue sont présentés comme une preuve contrefaite d'une partie d'un récit, l'exposé fictif d'un vie passée. L'ambiguïté de cette pièce artistique en fait un objet indéfini qui peut être situé dans différentes zones entre l'imaginaire et le réel, en suspend quelque part entre un espace narratif, une tentative de documenter et une pièce artistique collective exposée. C'est à l'intérieur de ces zones de multiplicité et d'artificialité – entre l'indéfini, le multiple, le variable, le précieux, le commerciale et ce qui est sans valeur – que les morceaux de papier existent. Encadrés, exposés et flanqués d'un prix, ces objets sont dans un état de transition permanent.

J'ai intentionnellement dispersé ces notes encadrées dans les différents coins de la galerie. Structurellement, ce type de positionnement invite le spectateur à accomplir une marche symbolique, le parcours d'un cueilleur et d'un interprète. Ces œuvres invitent le visiteur à construire, à supposer et à s'engager dans un dialogue interne, en clair dans un récit personnel.

Parmi d'autres objets trouvés que j'ai choisi d'inclure, se trouvent deux vidéos 8mn que j'ai trouvé dans une vente de garage au hasard d'une rue. Les vidéos datent des années 1970. Elles retracent deux périodes de vacances prises par la même famille. L'une est filmée en Europe l'autre semble avoir été filmée à Disneyland. Ces films trouvés sont transférés sur DVD et projetés sur les murs de la galerie. J'ai monté les deux films pour faire une seule et même présentation. De cette façon, j'ai éliminé et unifié la perspective d'une division géographique dans la structure narrative du film. Les deux films n'ont pas de bande sonore, dépourvus de séquences ou de dialogues. L'intégration au travail de ces images fugaces constitue une nouvelle *trouvaille*. C'est dans la banalité des événements et dans l'absence d'une histoire que le travail s'enrichit d'une valeur historique et visuelle. En limitant l'aspect narratif mon intention est d'ouvrir un plus large espace propre à la supposition. Des images ignorées, des images trouvées, des images qui ne se situent pas dans un contexte historique deviennent, dans leur mince obscurité, intemporelles et romantiques. De ce fait, le caractère inachevé de la narration, dans son sens conventionnel, se transforme en signes et symboles, décodant le film, le situant dans le temps et l'espace, laissant sous entendre l'existence,

l'identité et la mort des protagonistes du film projeté. À travers ce processus d'exhumation et de décodage, nous sommes, en tant que spectateurs, guidés vers une construction imaginaire de la vie de ces acteurs en terme de leur espace géographique et historique.

La vidéo

La vidéo est aussi basée sur la courte nouvelle qui retrace la vie de l'artiste Celano. La représentation des deux enfants comme jouant le rôle du fils et de la fille de Celano est une tentative de transcender le défilement du temps et la linéarité spatiale. De cette façon, elle agit comme un travail de fiction postmoderne. Les protagonistes de la vidéo sont en conflit avec le temps et l'espace ainsi qu'avec la chronologie de l'histoire. Une jeune fille dans la vidéo lit le transcrit d'une conversation entre le frère et la soeur à l'âge adulte; les notes trouvées par Celano sont examinées et lues par un jeune garçon. Les références à l'âge et au temps en suspend sont des constructions intentionnelles. Ici, les objets du passé (tels que les notes) et les mots du futur se heurtent et battent en retraite simultanément. En clair, ce qui est trouvé est éventuellement imaginé, coupé et tressé en "tranches de vie", pour citer l'écrivain russe Anton Tchekhov.

INTRODUCTION

For the last three years I have been gathering notes found on the streets. The first note I picked up was a drawing of a bird; the image intrigued me. The image of the bird was incomplete, and the incompleteness of the image made me question why the bird was not fully drawn, which in turn gave rise to many possibilities--the sudden death of the person who drew the bird, a decision to draw a better bird, or even maybe the vow never to draw again. I reached to pick up that first note, because I was simply drawn to the image of the bird; I kept it because of the stories it conjured.

With time I gathered more notes and developed criteria for picking up these notes: they must be found by me, they must be handwritten, or drawn and disregarded, or lost by someone else. So far I have gathered a few hundred of these, varying from grocery lists to love notes to medical prescriptions and so forth. I was attracted by the act of separation, the detachment of the maker of the notes to what is written or drawn. I was curious about the act of moving on or the letting go of these notes. But I was also fascinated by the content of these notes, which ultimately become archaeological evidence of a past action or life.

I have transformed the pickings-up of my daily *trouvailles* into phantasmal tracings of people's lives and events. I consider these notes a way of documenting imaginary lives, and proofs of obscure existences. The construct I imposed began to demand I preserve a disregarded history, and overwhelmed me by the enormity of creating an archive of sorts when it presents itself as the ultimate horizon of experience.

Every time I pick up one of these notes, my act is a gathering of traces as well as the creation of fictitious characters. These acts, performed in the street, turn an onlooker into a spectator and a witness, and consequently leave that spectator with the possibility of interpreting it himself as part of his own practice of fiction. I imagine that the spectator is involuntarily participating in the project and becoming, through the multiple interpretations, a creator of fiction.

My acts of gathering can be interpreted in a myriad of ways by this (perhaps fictitious) spectator: those of a curious man picking up a bit of paper; as a man in need and looking for money; as a man who lost a paper and has now found it; as a voyeur; as man who requires a piece of paper to clean his hand or some other such functional purpose; or as simply a mad man who gather papers... I have in my imagination succeeded in turning this banal act into an exchange between a complete stranger and myself, into role-playing and silent public exchanges of thoughts and interpretations, much like performance art.

I have turned these found pieces into an artistic endeavour, one of revival and continuity. I have reconstructed the life of the gatherer of these notes (myself) into an almost schizophrenic study. From picking up the first paper I found myself submerged in a long trajectory of finding and gathering that evolved into the creation of a world that blurred the boundaries between my act of amassing and the fictitious character I have created around these notes. By merging and confusing these two identities, I have fused the real with the imaginary to end with the fictitious as a final product.

While a disregarded paper might very well have some other limited material function (fodder for recycling, for example), I have given these notes a new life by imposing on them new interpretations and reshaping them through fictitious accounts and stories. Every note dropped is interrupted from the role it plays in the symbolic realm; picked up, it is given a new life and the possibility of continuity. For instance, a note that I found in Montreal had Chinese writings and an English translation that said "osteosclerosis." That note was revived in my imagination into a story about death, malady, and displacement. My most vivid extrapolation of the note concerned a Chinese immigrant who is facing death and the dilemma of burial; I saw him sitting on a metal bed, wondering if he should ask his family to send his body back home and let them deal with the burden of debt or if he should settle with having his body buried in a Montreal cemetery.

With every piece I have saved and revived, I constructed a short story, and an image of a character, or characters, based on false impressions and assumptions. Yet my first encounter with these objects is real: visual. In my walks and searches for these disregarded notes, I transform myself into a visual device with an intention to capture visual objects (papers,

notes) and to transform them into art pieces, with a history (constructed or not), a storyline, a monetary and artistic value. Through the fictional account I assign to these findings, I place these objects within the realm of the visual and the commoditized. Upon exhibiting these objects and surrounding them with a history (be it false or real), I give them legitimacy and make them into tangible *œuvres*. Much like a photograph or a painting, these scrabbles—disregarded pieces, refuted and dirtied ink—will earn the status of image. Much like any image that is put *en relief* based on its craft (I am assuming that a handwritten note or a drawn note involves some craft), or on narrative, history, and discourse, these notes are accepted by the public and art institutions alike. I intended to create a series of metamorphosed objects, from garbage to image, from the practical to the allegorical, from the invisible into the valued. I have attempted to prove that the relation between the mundane and the aesthetic is shaped and elevated by the discourse that is assigned to it.

Most of these stories fabricated in my mind have not been written down (not yet at least). In the thesis presented I have concentrated on one character of the many that have surfaced in my mind as I was picking up these papers. These papers were revived and used as clues to something that did, could or ought to have happened. I turned them into physical evidence and constructs, characterizing this form of fiction as false archaeology.

In an age where recording and the preservation of memory have excelled to the point of becoming an industry unto itself, some contemporary artists have questioned the authenticity of that “memory industry.” Things that were preserved and valued by institutions as historical were at times pushed into the realm of the fictitious and the imaginary by contemporary artists. By emphasizing the unreliability of the documented, art seems to attribute more value to the creative and the imaginary process. To quote Terry Eagleton, “there is no contract between the writer and the reader to tell the truth.” In his art piece “The Giant,” Jeff Wall positions the Giant naked women in the middle of a library. The discrepancy of scale between the statues presented and the surrounding Wall, and the disproportionate dimensions of the work seem to question the depository disproportion between the place of depository and art as a destabilizing force. The fantastical and the exaggerated become reminders of the fragility of the so-considered authentic.

Based on my own act of gathering, I have transformed my own personality, the character of the gatherer, into a fictitious one, and in the process created a new and different character or protagonist. It is through the story of that particular gatherer—the fictitious, new me—that I deal with and comment on issues that deal with art in general. In considering what constitutes art and how art is constructed to fit a nation's agenda, I have also alluded to art as an omen, a place for superstition, as well as material gain. Through these imaginary characters and events I have stated that art no longer exists within a vacuum, away from political, market and state influences. Art is influenced by broader economic and political transformations. In my fictional account of the artist Celano, I have presented something of a credible story on the process of transforming a long-lost artist into a being of mythical and mystical status to fit an institution's agenda.

I presented you with a novella that draws its material from the act of gathering the banal, the forgotten and the not-used, and creating something meaningful and corrupt. The instrumentality of art has touched the lives of every personage in this novella in a different way and was used by every character for a different purpose and gain. Here I explore art as a strategic construct, with its direct or indirect consequences on ordinary lives and the politics of nations. I have shattered the perception of the politics of art and presented it as a multifaceted assemblage of functions and consequences. All these questions are alluded to and dealt with through a fictitious account of lost and revived lives within which I have weaved theories and politics.

In this project, I have attempted to cross various boundaries, tangible boundaries between various media—photography, performance art, writing and appropriated art (found notes)—that establish the project as interdisciplinary, and that, through various media, tackles various issues. But I also constructed a fictitious example depicting the selection and revival of artists to fit a special societal need. Celano, the protagonist of the novella, is revived and selected for various reasons. It is the hybrid, however, the displaced artist who surfaces in the novella who is the most important. This project was initially founded by the ways I imagined Quebec, an imagination fuelled by objects found on the streets of this place but engineered by a "foreigner," a person without the full notion of belonging. In the story, the curator who acquires the work is conscious of the complications of foreignness and belonging and eager

to highlight the life of the artist Celano over his artistic contribution. Like the “author” of the found-note arrangement, the novella’s curator undertakes a selective process based on the found and on the instrumentality of art and here of fiction.

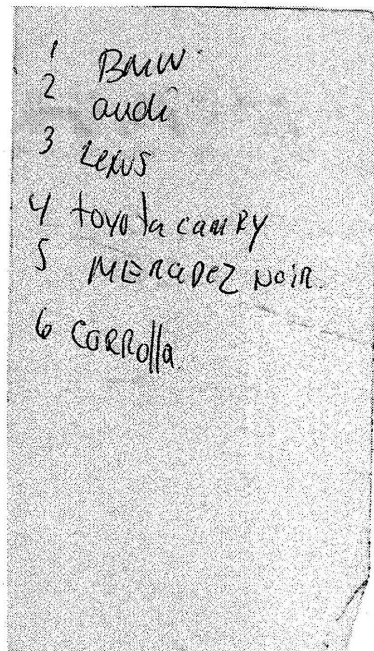
In this project I have attempted to highlight the relationship between the various strata of art through an integral narrative. I have gathered what was never to be considered an art object (found notes) and surrounded it with a story, a fictional account, a narrative. I elevated these objects from oblivion into images and œuvres and in doing so emphasize the role of narrative in the legitimacy of art. Is a work of art still considered art without a narrative? Would a piece of art stripped of any sense of narrative be embraced as art by the public and by institutions? When art is devoid of any narration, when a work sidesteps narrative, either through abstraction or obscure minimalism, an immediate search for the archaeology of such a work seems to surface and draws new attention to the maker, the discoverer, the saviour of the work from oblivion, to the year of its execution, the life of the artist and the place the work is or was displayed. Could art exist without the constraints of history and our own need for a story?

In shaping the bulk of this thesis in narrative and image form, I emphasize the link between these two elements, gathering and fusing narrative and image into one work where the limitation of the images is completed by fiction and the fragility of the story is sustained by the images found.

FOUND FICTION

BY RAWI HAGE

A peculiar thing has been happening to me, it involves paper, letters. In brief, if I want to define it, I would say it involves traces of individuals' lives. You see, it all started when I was walking towards my home, coming back from my long, daily walk. I found a drawing of one half of a bird. It was drawn on a wrinkled sheet of paper, with tire marks on it. I picked it up, smoothed it out, and looked at it. I was about to throw it back again, mainly because it was dirty and I could feel the dust and black tire marks on my fingers, but I kept it and continued walking, my head hanging low towards the sidewalk.



If it wasn't for those daily walks I would have gone mad. But now lately, I am wondering if I became mad after all, mostly because of these notes that I keep amassing, my collection from the ground. For instance, right after I picked up the bird drawing, I sat on the balcony and I

saw a man feeding birds on the sidewalk below my house. Once I picked up an infant's drawing, it must have been a school project. One sheet had been folded in two to make four separate planes, with drawings of faces, teddy bears, and families. But, then, as I picked it up, I saw a chain of young students and one of them pulled out his crayons and looked at me, called me Monsieur and showed me a few colored pencils. He laughed all by himself and then disappeared with the herd. I kept the paper, and added it to the first paper I had found.

I forgot about the incident until the next day when I was having my coffee in the morning. I usually have it in my room, because I do not want to collide with the French boyfriend. He is a talker. He wakes up and the first thing he does is talk. And he is obsessed with money and comparing prices, obsessed with currency conversions, the price of bread and biscuits and train fares. I find his money talk irritating. Especially now that I am unemployed and very anxious about money matters. Anyway it hit me. The coincidence between the child's drawing that I found on the street and the child who spoke to me was too flagrant.



All these thoughts drive me to leave the house and walk every afternoon. I walk past the cemetery, along the côte, and into downtown. On the way, now, I keep on looking for small papers. The walks are no longer contemplative like they used to be. I walk with my head dangling towards the floor, like a pigeon or a stray dog sniffing for traces of piss. When I see a piece of paper on the floor, I stop. I flip it up with my foot. If it is hand-written, I pick it up and keep it.

One day I picked up a paper with a list of damaged things. It referred to a car:

- Window only works from driver side
- Rear window is cracked
- Rear left door sometimes doesn't close well....

I folded it, delicately put it in my pocket and continued walking. It was a cloudy day and it looked like it was going to rain. But I walked and kept on walking along my usual path. I passed the bus station then walked by the edge of the mountain where once I saw two snakes fucking in the afternoon heat.

On my way back home it started to rain. Hard. I took shelter under the door of a building entrance. I was in shorts and sandals and it got kind of colder.

It kept on raining. I pulled out a cigarette and lit it. Two girls ran towards the building entrance. They were all wet and their shirts stuck to their bosoms. They were laughing and giggling as they ran towards me. I moved to the corner, making space for their keys to penetrate the locks. They felt a bit awkward at my presence. I looked at their breasts, their nipples were hard, erect through the wetness of their cotton shirts. Rich, of course, they were rich. Only a rich person could afford to live in these apartments.

Then there was traffic. Drivers, for some reason, always slow down in the presence of rain. A car with two Arabs stopped at the red lights beside me. They had Arabic music playing loud (what do you expect, Arabs must be genetically semi-deaf), they were smoking and looked bored and quiet. I looked at the man sitting in the passenger seat and as soon as we made eye contact, I ran to him and said,

Mon frère tu vas sur Côte-des-Neiges ?

He nodded a little, then looked at the driver and the driver waved at me to come in. I did. It was still raining and all the windows were open except for the driver's window.

The water came in and splashed our elbows. I tried to close the window, but the guy turned and said to me not to bother, they just don't work. Of course, there was a crack in the rear mirror and, since I sat on the right side door, I did not even check to see if the left door worked or not. But I did pull out the paper that I found that day and all prophecies were correct:

- Window only works from driver side
- Rear window is cracked
- Rear left door sometimes doesn't close well....

I've had a lover for the last six years. She is in her mid-forties now. A little aged. Wrinkles, white hair, her breasts are starting to sag a little. Her once curved, high ass is still attractive. She occasionally invites me to dinner. When I can afford to, I bring the wine. We are somehow friends. Our friendship is confined to food, sex, and small conversations. She does it all to please me, she said once. It is her way of giving... We never have intercourse any more. She is not interested, she says. She usually sucks me after dinner. She calls it dessert.

When I say something offensive, stupid, anti-feminist, like she calls it, she simply takes her dishes back to the kitchen, finished or not, and mumbles, No dessert today, I forgot to buy milk...

All that is to tell you, my dear reader, that I found a paper once: it was a small grocery list. That day, after I found it, my lover called me.

Come for food and dessert, she said. Bring the usual (wine that is) and on your way pass by the depanneur and pick up a few things. Do you have a pen handy? she asked.

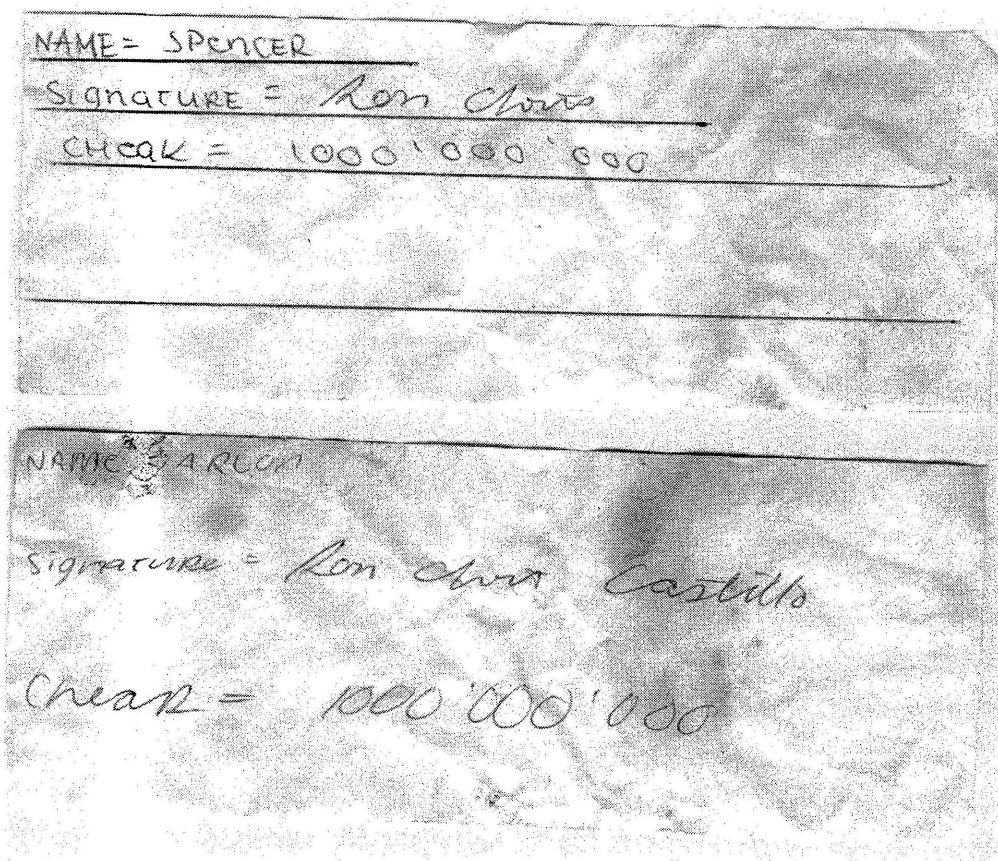
I picked up the found list from the table and read:

OIL

RED ONION

FRUIT AND TORTILLA.

YES, that is it, she said. She hung up the phone and never asked me how I knew it. That evening I did not say anything stupid. She offered me fruit and a long dessert after the meal.



I stopped looking for jobs. It was getting too depressing. The moment you say to an employer that you are an artist they shrug, puff and play with their ears before finally showing you the door. But on my way to the welfare office I found the attached list:

+ 514-213 0848 CAA

514-327-2875

FAX: 514 276 9128

CHAUFFEUR DE NUIT

...

I never called.

My wife, after the divorce, kept our daughter. She won the custody battle. I shouldn't have beaten her. I only did it once. But even once, the judge said, is like always and everyday. I hardly see my daughter. But today my ex-wife must have been desperate; she called and asked me to pick my daughter up. On the way to her school I found the attached paper:

Autorisation de sortie de classe

...

I forgot to mention that, on my way to the welfare office, I found the following paper with the following number on it:

620.80

That month, this was the amount I received on my government cheque.

The richer people are, the more pathetic they get. Of course this statement is related to a paper I found next to an expensive car. The writing on the paper said:

“Broken Coin stuck”

The paper must have fell from a broken meter. It was written on a slice of what appeared to be an envelope. It was stamped on the top, right-hand corner with an emblem, a royal design belonging to the Royal Montreal Golf Club.

I become fascinated with these findings, and by my own character as a collector of fragments and prophecies. The objects found are inherently much like the photographic process: scattered, fragmented. In brief, they work as a maxim to some incomplete story of people's lives and of my life.

Once when I was walking with my lover, I saw children's drawings that I immediately picked up and put in my pocket. My lover complained about how filthy that piece of paper was and said that I should not dirty my clothes or, eventually, the house. Which gave me the idea for

the opening of the novella I have presented in this thesis. I knew that she must have thought that I had gone mad: I saw a value in all this that she didn't. I saw an artistic value and, of course, being poor and all, I fancied a monetary value if I amassed enough of these papers (*trouvailles*) and gathered them all together in an archive of some sort.

Later, of course, like any man in need who feels a certain desperation in life, I imagined that one day these inconsequential papers would be valued by an establishment for their *trouvailles* historical and their aesthetic worth. The establishment, be it a museum or an established gallery, would pay me handsomely for the collection. Because they are not just pieces of art but also prophecies. I will be saved by art. Those institutions shall value my diligent efforts to preserve the beauty of all these mysterious handwritten notes and fragments of history.

I never ruled out the possibility that I was becoming delusional. The coincidence between the messages that I found and the events that followed them were too real and also a bit shameful because I always considered myself a rational being. But poverty and misery brings escape and superstition, false hopes and maybe even a bit of creativity. I hoped that one day, when I was finally discovered, I would no longer be an unemployed artist but a recognized one. Then I would prove to the world that I was not wrong to neglect everything else in favour of my art. I became so obsessed with this dream that I started to collect more and more of these papers. I organized them into categories ie, groceries, children's drawings, directions, love notes, medical prescriptions, apartment hunts, and many other kinds of notes as well. I even contemplated that my success would come later, after my death. I'd even settle for that much. One day, I found a note that said: write!

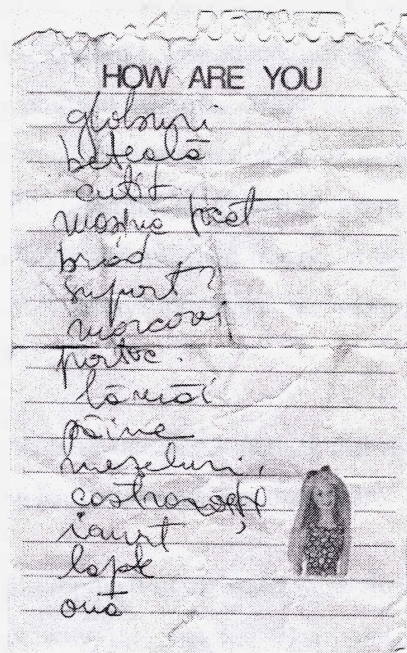
With an exclamation mark.

That is all it said. A few days later, one moonless evening, I found myself writing about my life after my own death. I called it Found Fiction. Here is what I wrote:

Karine O'Brian, Montreal, Café Souvenir, Bernard Street, Jan 21 2005.

Temperature outside -15 C

Yes, yes my husband has gone crazy. All of a sudden he became obsessed with note and scraps of paper that he finds in the streets. We would be walking together, we always walked everywhere at that time, we didn't have any money, we didn't own a car, and he would stop and pick up some dirty paper and examine it and put it in his pocket. I would say, We have enough junk and dirt at home, why are you bringing this? It could be filled with germs and besides it is all torn up and illegible. Look at your hands and now you've put it in your pocket. But he never cared. He all of the sudden had decided to go back to doing art, he said. And I would say, Well create something on your own then, why don't you create something on your own? These are things that other people have written and, besides, where is the art in things that people have already disregarded, thrown on the street like that. Who would throw away art, especially if they intended it to be art? Which I am sure they didn't. He would often show it to me and there is nothing there, only grocery lists, medical prescriptions, child's drawings, ads for apartments. Once in a while he would find a personal letter or a note and that made him the most happy. I could see him smiling and carefully slipping it into his inside pocket. He would always use his inside pocket to carry these filthy papers. In the winter he would pick them out all wet and on the verge of disintegrating. Once he opened his palm, it was a freezing day, much like today, he pasted this wet paper on his palm and we walked all the way home with his palm opened and his fingers exposed to the cold wind. I thought he would get frostbite. He walked as if he were a beggar. Well, come to think of it, he was a beggar for most of his life. I worked and he sat at home and smoked and talked and read all the time and asked me for money at the end of the day to buy cigarettes and beer... Well anyway, that is not what you want to hear. So I took pity on his frozen hand, I even suggested that I would carry the papers of junk for him. I promised that I would lay it gently in my bag without damaging it, because he had picked it up from the snow and it was wet and dirty, the ink was almost washed out. But he didn't care. Precious, he kept on saying and smiling, precious. If you ask me, that was a turning point of his madness.



**Professor Tim Barbichon, UQAM University, Pavilion JR, Fine Arts, graduate section.
Temperature outside -2C. Sunny with occasional flurries.**

Yes, he was a student of mine. He barely graduated. He was a bit aggressive in his arguments, even in his body language. Opinionated, but nevertheless interesting, somehow more well-read than the others in the class. At the time he was interested in doing film. I remember him being interested in hand-held cameras, an eight millimeter. He was very engaged and critical of everything, idealist like they tend to be at that age. I remember him as being political or maybe pseudo-political, what really interested him was “exposing and questioning power”. I think he read some critical theory, a bit of Foucault, which was a bit ahead of the times because the postmodern wave was just on the verge of infiltrating the art scene, I believe. His work started to change. He was very critical of other students' work. He even called another student a bourgeois, navel-gazing, egocentric etc. Once, a student, who was much younger and, I guess, a bit insecure about things, started to cry. Any art that doesn't contribute to the improvement or the elevation of societies from misery is a waste of resources, he would say. The “instrumentality of art”. For him, art should be an instrument to

further social and political causes. I am not sure how his “Found Fiction” project is politically engaged and to what extent. From what I’ve read about it, the project seems a bit, how shall I say, removed from an overtly political message. When someone in class asked him if culture matters, if he felt that culture could educate and contribute in the long run to the improvement of society, and why he is in this program, he quoted Foucault or was it Marx, I think it was Marx. Something from a reading I had assigned maybe, or possibly he found it on his own. Anyway it was from a short essay by Marx on material reproduction and artistic reproduction. Wait. I think I have it.

Here let me get it, I happen to have that essay here, I still refer to it in my class once in a while. Some things in teaching hardly change. Yes, here it is:

“Certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization.”

Yes, I heard that recently his wife sold a project of his that he called “Found Fiction” to the museum in Ottawa. And for a good amount of money. Of course, he was on the news. I was a bit surprised because most students just disappear into oblivion and you never hear anything about them. Many of them give up art altogether and use the degree to work into a completely different field. Very few “make it”, quote, unquote, in the art milieu. At times, I encounter some of them in restaurants working as waiters... Yes, it is an ethical dilemma for me and for the art institutions I guess, why do we pour so much money into this, why do we allow those students to go into debt and then let them go without having provided any prospects. But, then again, sometimes I hear the names of students or see on the news that some of them are accomplishing something...

Yes, like him. Yes. I have seen the work. Yes, I also went to the gallery where it was exhibited. Basically, he did a video, or was it a low resolution film, based on notes that he found on the street. Based on some of these notes, he constructed a fictitious account of lives, incidents or thoughts and invited some of his friends to read it or recite it in front of the camera as if it was their own story. I guess, at the time, it was something new. One of the

early attempts to reconcile two very different and segregated mediums. The narrative and the visual (if we can consider these *trouvailles* of his as visuals, with enough aesthetic merit).

I heard they paid his wife half a million, but I might be wrong. Yes, at one point in time she was going around telling everyone how mad and what a lunatic her husband was, but then when the money came, she changed her mind. You know that? Interesting. I guess you should know. You are the investigator on this. And you come all the way from Chile to study his work you say... Well, yes, it was a breakthrough. Afterwards, many other artists started to be interested in combining the narrative with the image. He did start some kind of movement on his own, in seclusion. What's his name, Dewan Michal, I believe, incorporated that into photography and he started to write on the image his personal encounters, a kind of condensed Proustian homoerotic account of his life. Yes, I've seen the work of Chris Marker, *La Jetee* I assume you are referring to. Well, I believe Cellano's work is just as important when it comes to the merger between fiction and art as we know it. Yes, it has some merit, though *La Jetee* was a bit more substantial in its references... Someone said that it is a "timeless reflection on cinema as a time machine." And, I would say, on us humans as well, as time machines, that is.

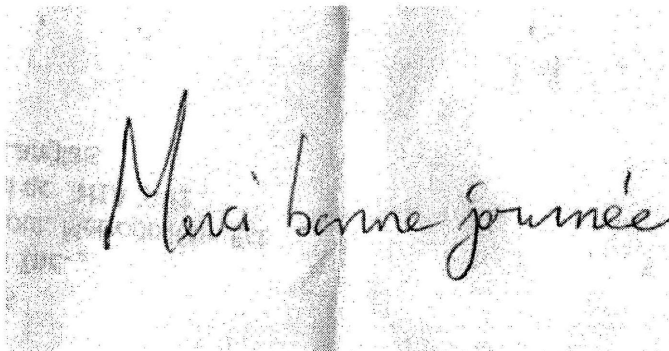
If you think about it, we are all, as individuals, time machines... Meaning we have the capacity to remember and imagine and that is a form of travel through time... Cellano's project falls into some other sphere... Unlike *La Jetee*, I don't think it falls in the essay-film category. It is a project on documentation first and foremost and about the arbitrariness of the construct of history. To preserve what is found and rescued from between the ruins. Yes, we could evoke Walter Benjamin and *The Arcades*, but I don't think he read Benjamin's work. Well, maybe he did later on in his life. I only knew him as a student.

It became a part of a nation-wide Canadian debate on excavation and documentation. Well, some separatist journalist, or the latent ones who dwell in the Quebec art scene, think that the only reason it was given such importance as an archive, and paraded as a part of our, let's say, past, I won't use history because twenty years can hardly be considered history, but anyway, the objection was that it contains a substantial amount of English notes that are shown to the public, it does not reflect the demographics of the time, or the present for that

matter. Yes, a predominantly French population. And consequently, it was shown by the federalist forces in the federal institutions as an assertion of the strong Anglo presence in Quebec. You see, that particular project was integrated into the national heritage. Well, yes, I know he was a Chilean newcomer who lived in an Anglo neighborhood, or maybe predominately Anglo at the time, that was before the referendum, that is. He happened to live there because his wife was an Anglo of Irish decent. But the fact that he was a Chilean makes him seem more neutral and gives the project more credibility, no?

I have to leave; I have a class in few minutes. You could walk me to the class if you like, we could talk more on the way. But, in my own opinion, it is a classic example of the "instrumentality of art"... By whom? By the State of course. The arts, for the State, is an instrument towards social inclusion. Yes, I agree, yes, unless it is a conservative government eager to hand everything over to the corporate apparatus. But that is a new phenomena, this merging and acquisitions relationship between big business and the government. Yes, I guess, so they can become one. You are right. Well, yes, the corporation's ultimate goal is to reduce the visual and the aesthetic experience to fashion, hence a commodity etc... To function as a propagandist for neo-liberal values... Ultimately, to use art as a smoke screen in order to sell goods to an increasingly suspicious public, cynical of their marketing methods. Yes, the neo-liberals are desperate to change their image. Watch out... I have to go now, my class is down here... Yes, distortion is a good word. But what is art but a process of perpetual distortion? Okay, we could talk more later. Do you know Cellano by any chance?

You remind me of him... yes, your looks...



Marie barme journée

Celine Bouchard, Curatorship, Acquisition department, National Gallery of Canada. Ottawa, Bonita Café, Ottawa Market. Outside temperature -20, with wind factor it feels like minus thirty.

Yes, yes, I was instrumental in acquiring the work for the National Gallery. I'd never met him before and he was a total incognito. I examined the work after I saw it on a tour of galleries in Montreal. It was a retrospective on Quebec art from the sixties to the eighties. No, I'll have some green tea, no more coffee for me. You drove all the way in this storm. Yes, research, you said that when we talked on the phone. Well, anyway, at the time, I thought it would lead to some new, Canadian artistic movement, but it didn't. I thought other writers would jump on the wagon, I even approached a few of them to explore the possibility of merging their work with the conceptual visual, as I would have liked to have named the movement, but writers tend to be conservative and solitary and, if I may say, reactionary, in general. They are not known for exploring things, well, at least it is not the norm in that milieu while, of course, in the visual arena it is all about breaking rules. To the extent that breaking rules becomes the norm. But, to go back to his work, yes, I think if we put it in the context of the time it was an avant-garde notion in art.

No, not half a million exactly, around two million. And you can imagine what a roar it made when the local media got hold of the story. It is the conservative amalgamated media. Conservatives love to attack the arts as a decadent waste of money. Well, yes, it was not a decadent project per se, but they love to appeal to their constituencies, saying art is a waste of taxpayers money, etc... Look at the Neumann affair. No, I was not involved in that purchase. All these people kept saying is that the painting only has three lines and therefore is a waste of taxpayer's money... They can't go beyond the raw materials and the craft aspect of it. Because they look at thought and creativity as a commercial product... No, no, I never met him. Cellano, well yes, we are working on his bio at the moment. Yes, talking to his wife and daughter, I found his daughter much more interesting as a person than his wife, yes, I mean intellectually. His wife was a working class woman...of course, of course, I don't dismiss her because of class... well no, no, listen, I was a Maoist in my youth, I know the drill... I hear you... but what I found fascinating was the insight I was getting from his daughter... though I think she is not all there at times. Yes, he died fairly young but it seems that his daughter

remembers the relevant things... Well, yes, we have in some ways attempted to make him more appealing as a person. Well, there is a lot of pressure from the public and the politicians to justify the acquisition. Well yes, immigrant, loner, poor, yes, and eventually a genius, of course. No, he didn't cut his own ear off, I am smiling. Hire you for what? But I am investigating that myself. You think you could do a better job? Why?

I don't think we have the budget for that. And if the public found out about it... can you imagine. No, I don't live too far from her. Yes, I can provide you with some literature on the work. Yes, of course, it is all in the art bank and I am sure they will provide you with everything that you need. Yes, the work is still there.

Vartan Shlomovian, Photographic studio, King Street, old Montreal. Sunny day.

Yes, yes. I remember him. Of course. I met him at a wedding show... Well, in Place Bonaventure... We had a booth selling wedding photography... I was the first man to revive black-and-white wedding photography in this city at a time when everyone was asking for colour. Did you know that? And not only that, I was the first to start the 'fun shots' concept and then all those Italian photographers who used to make their subjects stand like mummies had to change their way of shooting because of me. I started a trend, my friend. They used to have all these sets made in their studios, some had columns like Roman times: drapes and blur backdrops and they made the bride and the groom stand for hours like statues under the light. Sometimes it would be so hot that some of these brides with their synthetic dresses would faint from the heat. But I came and took the wedding party to the streets, bridesmaids, best man, everyone, I would put them in their limousines and take them to old Montréal and make them cross the streets, make them shout, wave, jump. I made all the guys take off their shoes and dip their feet and dance, dance you hear me, dance in the city fountain. I was in the news. *The Gazette* wrote about me. All the clients loved what I did, and from then on everyone started wanting fun shots. I had so many customers after that and also, I tell you, all these photographers used to have these big cameras, huge cameras, one of them had a camera like the one Karsh, the famous Canadian photographer... You don't know him? Well, that is

because you are not from here. Anyway this guy had an 8x10!! Do you know how long it takes to load one of those suckers? And taking one shot at a time and bracketing and changing and processing these huge negatives in the dark rooms! Anyway, I tell you I was the first one to start shooting with small cameras, a 35mm, that is it!!! You know why? Because I read about cameras and film and saw all these magazines on photography. I used to read them all. I read the reviews on every camera and every kind of film. So Fuji ... Japanese men, I tell you... So Fuji made this new film that is so sharp, its results compare to those big suckers. I bought that film and started to use it and bang business booms. Yes, yes go back to him, we called him the Mexican, but he was Chilean I guess... Yes, I remember him, he came to my booth and looked at the sepia photo I had blown up and hung in the middle of the booth. He had long hair, was a bit badly dressed. I took one look at him and I said, You are a photographer. He smiled and shook his head. He said, I am an artist who uses the medium of photography. I figured I could market him as an artist and see what happens. I am always looking for new angles for my business. Like all artists, I thought, he must need the money. So I hired him as an assistant. I paid him a little money. I always need assistants to carry the bags. By then I already had some back problems from working all these years and carrying heavy equipment, you know, lights and stand and tripods etc... It was a Sunday, it was a Jewish wedding, I remember. He was quiet. The first few times I just wanted him to observe how I work, right? There are sequences that one has to follow, some shots that you can't miss... Yes, we marketed ourselves as freestyle etc... but I tell you the mother-in-law didn't give a shit. No matter how much her son and daughter jumped and waved in the fountains she wanted the family shots and the grandmother shot and the three generations shot and god fucking forbid you miss the cake shot. They could kill you. Anyway he was a quiet, hard-working man, though he needed new shoes and some decent clothing. I made him cut his hair. That was a big deal for him. I can't have a ponytail like that in the synagogues and churches. It is just disrespectful...

Cher Monsieur,
 Le frigo va
 être réparé
 demain, Jeudi.
 Merci!
 Berly

So I said, Okay, go get the bags, bring the car, carry this, carry that, and he would do it pronto, slow, a bit slow, and he needed to smoke all the time, but reliable. He didn't hit on the women or steal food or anything like that. Because I tell you, in this business I have had horror stories. I tell you, all these assistants who have come and gone. I could tell you horror stories. This one guy ate the halva, the Jewish bread that is used for the ceremony--you wouldn't know since you are not from here. Anyway, a sacred bread that the rabbi breaks during the reception and shares with the people... Anyway, this guy he didn't know what it was. He saw it on the dresser he took a piece of it.... All hell broke loose: the mother of the bride, her uncle the big-shot lawyer... but it was the rabbi who saved me. Actually, he was a good man and made a joke about it, he told some story from the torah and everyone laughed.... Well, to get back to the Mexican, I finally decided to see what he could do with a camera, so I handed it to him and told him to shoot some "artistic shots". I even gave him black-and-white film. Some nice dramatic portraits of people at the wedding, I said to him. You know, something different. You are a great artist, I said to him, give me something I can show to a client and say, So how many copies do you want blown up of this beauty, this painting? Sometimes I would call a nice photograph a painting, clients love it. Everyone

wants to claim or buy art. I said, Mexican man, give me something I can put in the album and say: I only hire artists like myself to work for me. You know people pay for art, like I said. They all want to be, what is the word, memorized by an artist. Like Karsh and that famous Churchill shot with the cigar story and all... You don't know, you are not from here. But anyway, this guy took three 35mm rolls of film, the best kind of film, a Tri X at the time, each film has thirty-six shots so how many shots that is? You don't need a piece of paper. I'll tell you, it's 108 frames and what he does he photograph at the reception? You tell me. Well my friend, that Mexican photographed empty tables. Yes, empty tables!!! Yeah, I can show you some of those shots. I kept it all. I keep everything and know where everything is. Do you know why? I never throw my negatives out, do you know why? No, not only because of the clients, but because Karsh, well, you don't know him, you are not from here, but Karsh sold his negatives, all his negatives to the Ottawa museum for two million dollars. Yes, my friend, millions of dollars. I don't expect to get a million dollars but I can get something. Don't forget, I changed the wedding photography business and that should count for something. I didn't photograph Churchill and pull out his cigar like Karsh did, but I photographed many important people in this society. Like the daughter of the Prime Minister of Canada, her wedding. You are not from here. But all the important people were there. I was there, my friend. No, the Mexican was not there and why would I take that dirty communist with me to a wedding? Do you know what he said after I asked him about those table pictures? He said he wanted to expose the excess in this society. What excess, I said. He said, all the things that rich people leave after they eat, all the waste this society has that they don't share with the poor. I fired him. I said I don't need trouble with my rich clients. I had enough trouble with the mothers-in-law and the albums and this and that. People want to see themselves, not the poor or the tables. I fired him. He left and never came back. But before he left, he asked me if he could take those pictures. I said what for. For an artistic project, he said. What is artistic about that? All he photographed were empty plates and a few bags and things that have no value. I said, well pay me for the three rolls of film, that is 108 photographs plus the money for processing and printing the proofs... He said he'll be back with the money but I never saw him again. I figured, he was a bum. I thought that he might bring something to this business. But he was a bum. I have assistants who have worked for me for a long time and they became photographers and good ones. Some of them have their

own businesses now. Sure, like that Arab guy, he is making a killing. Now he brought his brother in and they have a place in Ville St-Laurent. He calls himself Tony and he acts like he's Italian, but I know he's an Arab. And he never went to photography school...

Yes, let me look up those negatives. For an investigation, you said. In Chile. Did he do something there? You can't tell me. Well, I'll help the law in any way I can. I'll let Liana, my assistant here, look for them but first let me remember what year that was. I'll look it up, but you see that might take a little time, and I pay my employees by the hour. Well good, I am sure the Chilean government will reimburse you for that. I could even give you a receipt. Here we do honest business, everything is filed and everything can be found. For a price of course, heheheh. Come back in few days. The girls are busy but I'll be on it.

Christel O'Brian-Cellano, Le depanneur café, Bernard street. A musician is playing the piano. Christel is behind the counter making a café latte.

I'll be right there. Let me wash my hands and I'll be right with you. Have a seat at the table there, next to the brick wall. Chilean, well my father grew up in Chile, and I always imagined him in his youth riding a motorcycle, his soft belly wrapped up by a chiquita's hands, covering his bellybutton with her painted nails, those same nails that would scratch and pierce my father's back. Well yes, yes, I know you said that. You are interested in my father's work. Who isn't, lately. But, here I am still working here, opening the pressure from that machine's hose and boiling milk and coffee. At least every thing is organic here, or so they say, not like your Chilean grapes infested with pesticides and a history of dictators. But then it is because of these dictators that I am born here. Nothing like fascist dictators to further the mixing of races and make exiled semen travel into foreign fallopian tubes. God, he is so handsome. He does remind me of my father. I will ask him out, but I am so fucking shy, I wish I could say everything I think of out loud, but what a white, half-breed trash I would be, just like my mother. But to start, I could always have a taste of his penis behind those thin, ridiculous jeans of his, he must be freezing his ass off and his penis must be tucked inside like a turtle's head curled up at the sight of a dog. Yes, let me offer him that. No tea, no coffee? We make good coffee here. I could make it with milk.

We don't sell wine or anything like that, this is a healthy joint. What kind of laugh is that, Christel, fuck, get a hold on yourself.

So what do you want to know? How old am I? Hahaha. That is funny. I thought you were here to learn about my dead father. Oh yes, well he died when I was about ten, maybe eleven, maybe it was a good thing, a few years later and he might have witnessed the line of blood slipping all the way to my ankles. How disgusting and embarrassing that would have been. Yes, an artist, that's what I heard and now everyone seems to want to remind me of this fact. Yes, including you, you dirty little Chilean hunk, with that big smile and those eyes fixed on me. To the back room you filthy foreigner, to the back room. I am going to rip your brains out and fuck you blue. Yes, I studied art myself. How did you know? Were you talking to my mother? No? Why not? You should ask her first. She is the one who fed him all these years, literally. ... I remember my father laying on the couch and reading all the time. He never wanted to play or listen to me.

Yes, I remember him as a good father. He worked hard. A photographer, no. I don't remember. He did photography? My father? I don't think he ever owned a camera. He was too poor to buy one. Enrico or Enrique, are you sure you don't want some coffee? How long are you staying here, Enrique, so I can unzip you for years to come and glutton myself on your fresh grapes, sweet... Well yes, that I remember. He walked me to school everyday and he would pick up bits of paper. I would pick up pieces as well and hand them to him. I thought it was a game. The first time, I cried when he threw them right back on the ground, but after that he kept everything his left pocket and I guess he threw the rejects out later on, when I wasn't looking.

Oh yes, he kept some of the things I gave him. Well yes, yes, I never thought of it that way. In a sense I contributed to it. My share, well yes, I like you already, I will tell that to my mother because I haven't seen a cent. No, you see, here is where I work. You can come later this evening, there is a band playing here. You like music?

Well yes, yes. I do, but you know. Sure, I like to dance. Latin of course, it is in my blood. Why, you're not inviting me or anything, are you?

Maybe? Oh you can't smoke inside here. No, no, no smoking. No. Bueno.

Yes, that is better. I know but it is not Chile here. Comprende senior? My fucking god, the way he nods his head. This long, submissive, mischievous nod. I just want to touch the top of his head and lick those half-drugged, half-smoking eyes. Yes, you bastard, I bet you lay there in bed after you ejaculate with a moan as long as Chile on a map, from head to toe, from north to the south pole. There I will strip you under the gaze of few innocent penguins wobbling their way north and down into the freezing quilt. Oh my god, I must be horny. Now I know that after-hours fucking with spineless vegan men is not working. I am secretly craving protein, my love. Something cannibalistic, that rips through flesh and sweat. Let me go and pretend to arrange the glass behind the counter. I still have that Chilean ass that he will recognize in once glance and he will feel at home. Look, look the sun is coming in through the glass, yes, I never thought of it that way, it seems as if it is leaving us, I agree. Well, that is why we don't produce grapes here, and here is where I laugh, naturally of course.

I think I am over using the grape motif today. Well, I have to go back. It was very nice meeting you, we could meet later or maybe tomorrow. I have plenty of things to tell you about my father. We can discuss it all for sure. Yes, that as well. I can feel it, he is looking at me, my ass, oh my god. What, he is calling me back!

Yes, a curator. Yes, I talked to her. She also asked about my father's life.

Tonight? Okay. What time? I'll be here, just come here, okay. I've got to go and wash off the filth of espresso splashes, the milk on my hands and the fucking onion from these guacamole sandwiches. My fucking God! I must have smelled like a fucking onion.

Karine O'Brian, 5666 Clark Street, 15 degree C, Sunny day. A garbage truck is blocking the street outside.

I am not sure why you're back, but come in. Journalist from Chile, right.

Well, yes, I just bought this house. I like the neighborhood. I don't have much time because I have to be somewhere. Yes, well yes, the curator contacted me and she said that she would

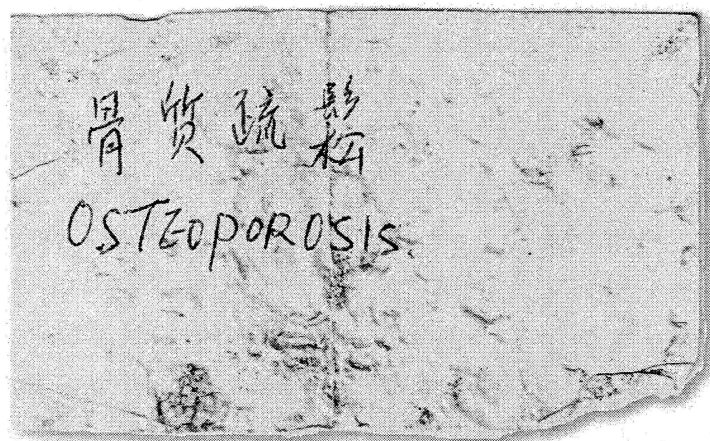
like me to say a few words at some opening. I am not much for words. I am a simple girl. Yes, he went back on a voyage to Mexico. Yes, he said he was meeting his sister who had also fled from that General. Pinochet, yes. Yes, he was there for a week. He stayed for two months. He would call and tell me that he would be coming next week but then never show up. I even waited for him at the airport once, he never showed up. He was very, how can I say, he didn't care. Irresponsible, yes. Yes.

You know something, you kind of look like him. No, no that is not where we stayed. We moved. My poor Christel, she always complained about the moving. Maybe that is why she is so restless in her life. I call her and she never answers anymore. I paid the rent when I could but, you know. Yes, yes. Do you think so? Thank you, yes I cut it yesterday. I always liked to go to the hairdresser but god, for many years I just couldn't afford it. No, he never owned a camera. I am not sure if he even knew how to use one. Actually, once I heard him saying how aggressive cameras are, I mean photography. He said it was all lies. And I said, Why, here is your daughter's photo and she looks like herself! Yes, I have few photos from back then. Yes. Wait, let me get that album for you. This Christel. This is me and this is Arthuro. That was taken at a trip to Disneyland. No, when my mother died. I inherited a little bit of money, very little. And I always wanted to take Christel to Disneyland. So we went. And all her father wanted to do was walk around and take notes. He hated it. He said something about capitalism and how we shouldn't have come and so forth. I knew then that I had to leave him. It wasn't enough that he collected rubbish from the street but here we were on vacation and all he could see were the bad things. He was a pessimist.

You think so? Well, you are too kind. Where, on my shoulder? Well yes, a few hairs from the hair cut. Yes, you could take them, just brush them off with your hand. Oh, you think it is necessary to take it off. Really... Well no, he never did photography.

He was not a photographer... No, my husband if you really want to know. He was mad. He said that he could see the future in these papers that he found on the street.

No, I never told this to anyone and, if you tell anyone, I will call you mad.



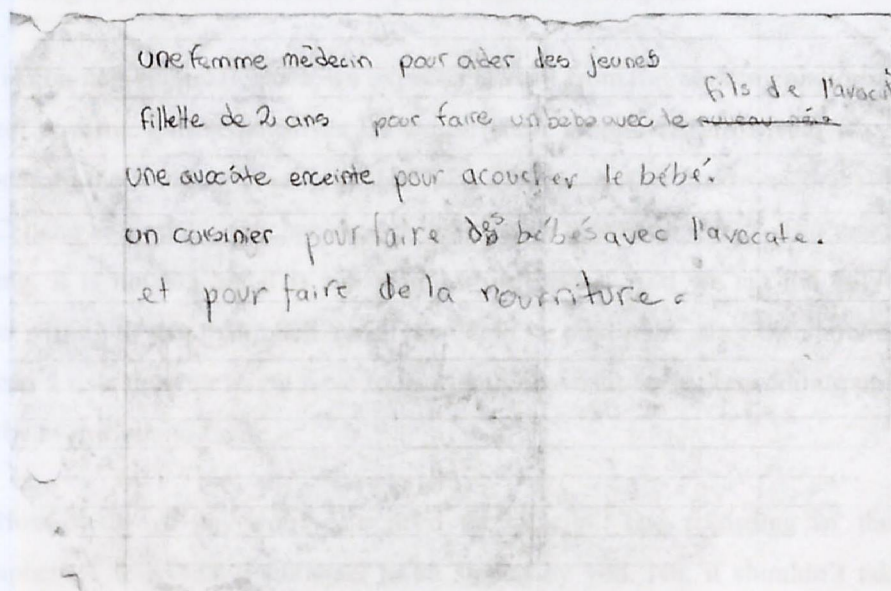
Christel O'Brian - Cellano, in front of Le depanneur café, Bernard street.

Here you are. You are late. I was about to leave. It is freezing out and I've been waiting. You know, for a journalist you should be a bit more punctual. I thought you wanted to dance. A drink first. Why not. You should dress warmer. This is not enough. Yes, around the corner there is a bar. I'll have a Bloody Mary. Thank you. My mother, you saw my mother today? How is she? Two years, maybe more. No, I stopped calling her. Because it is personal. Well, if you want to know, she is a control freak. Well yes, I know, but she is holding that money over me. She thinks she can control me with that money. I prefer to stay poor.... God, I am starting to get drunk. So, are you walking me home? Not too far. It is late and I thought Latin men were gentlemen. Sex, who said anything about sex. We can't have sex. Well, speak for yourself...Brother, sister, what are you talking about. You must be drunk, more than me. Money, you want to give me money for what? You want to make me rich? Well, maybe you should start by buying yourself some warm clothes if you have that kind of money. I'll go home alone. No need. No need. Stop it, weirdo. Stop talking. Shut the fuck up. I am not your sister, weirdo....

Celine Bouchard, Curatorship, Acquisition department National Gallery of Canada.
McLeod Street, Ottawa. A spring day, sunny sky.

Cigarette. Yes, I always smoke after making love. You, before and after? Yes, I see what a chain smoker you are. So what is so urgent? Cellano's negatives. What are you talking about. You have some of his negatives. How did you get that? He worked as a photographer, an assistant for a photographer, you say. Yes, tables at weddings. This photographer that he worked for still exists? In business, yes. I'll be interested to see the negatives. But I want to make sure that they were taken by Cellano. Himself. Yes, yes. I know it would be a good addition to the construction of Cellano's biography, his life. Sure. Yes, I know. We could, we could. But I need to see them. You bought it from the photographer. For how much? You have a receipt from him. You recorded the photographer giving testimony.

Yes. That could be of interest to us. To the museum, yes, that is what I meant.



You have a strip of the negatives in your bag. Can I see it? Interesting, so this photographer hired him to do weddings and he took photographs of tables and glasses. Yes, I see, I can read a negative. I'll have to discuss all that with the project committee. You are asking for

money. Of course you are. You are not really a journalist, are you? Maybe you should put on your clothes now and get going. I have some work to do. It was nice knowing you.

Can I keep the negatives? No? Could I have the name of the wedding photographer.

Not even that. Yes, I know you could prove all that. But we need to be sure.

How much? You are asking for quite a bit of money for a few negatives.

Where can I reach you? Good, call me when you are ready.

**Celine Bouchard, Curatorship, Acquisition Department, National Gallery of Canada.
McLeod Street. Ottawa. The oat tree Café, bank street. April 5th.**

We are willing to pay you this much. I'll put the figure on a napkin.

Here. It is non-negotiable. Besides, we expect a lawsuit from the wedding photographer when he realizes how much these negatives are worth. There is some risk involved. We might have to compensate the wedding photographer. Take it or leave it. It makes a good story. Yes, it asserts Cellano as a rebellious character, breaking with convention, etc... But that is what we are paying. It is not big but it is substantial nevertheless. And we are the only ones who would be willing to pay that much. Yes, you could be paid more after the show on Cellano, but there is a risk and you might have to deal with a lawsuit from the wedding photographer and maybe even Cellano's wife.

Good. How shall we pay you? We need the receipt. The recording of the wedding photographer. A few legal documents to be signed by you. No, it shouldn't take long. A month at most. Sure yes, we discussed all that. No, I don't think it is a good idea for you to walk me home. Let's just keep it at that. Call me.

[illegible]

Christel O'Brian-CellanoCellanoCellano, in front of Le depanneur café, Bernard street.

Listen, I am not sure what you want. I am busy here. I am working. Do you understand? I am dumbfounded. You come here and tell me this major news, just like that. What do you mean, our father? What do you mean. You mean half-brother. If you didn't look so much like him I would have thrown you out of here already. I am shivering. Why. So no one knew. My mother?

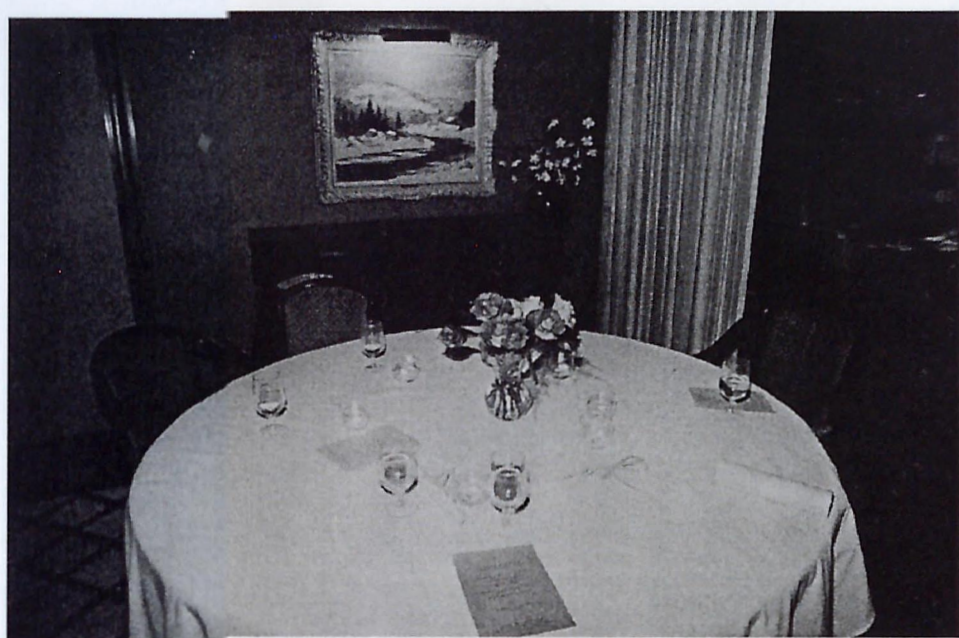
No. Chile. You grew up in Chile. No, Mexico. Yes, Mexico. My mother told me that my father left for Mexico. So you are from the other woman. I need to sit down. Better yet, let me get my jacket. Let's go out and smoke. I need a smoke.

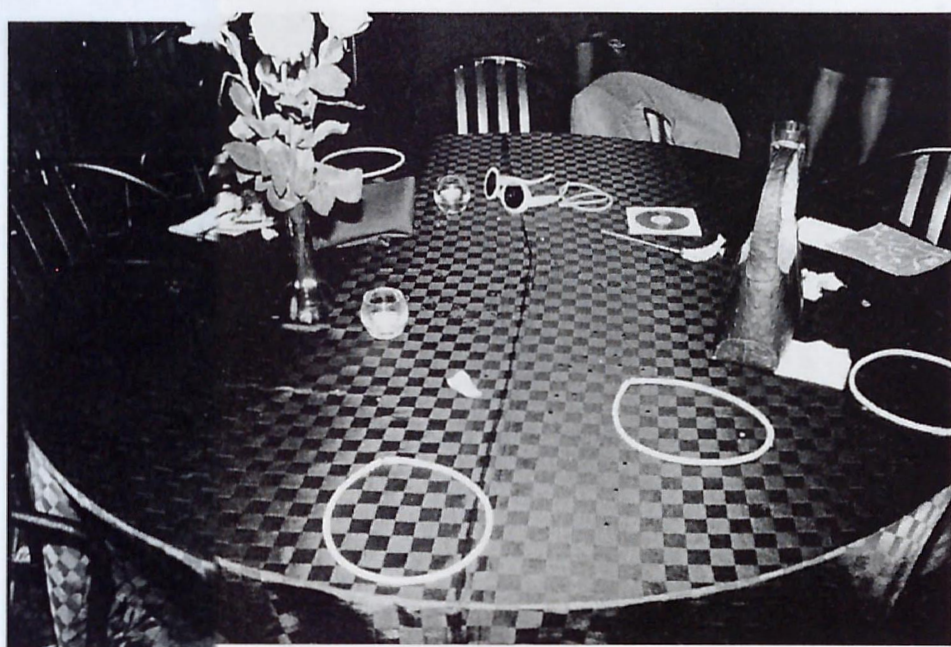
Yes, how crazy, and we went on a date. I am laughing, my god. I feel a bit repulsed. No, not by you, but what I thought of you. You are leaving. Where to. Back to Mexico. No, I don't carry a bag. Pockets. Yes, my jacket. What is that. An envelope. Money, what for...

A few negatives. My father's, our father. Yes. I hope you took some. You kept some for yourself. That is good. Stay a few weeks. Stay for the opening of the show. You have to go before the show. Yes. Yes. I am crying.





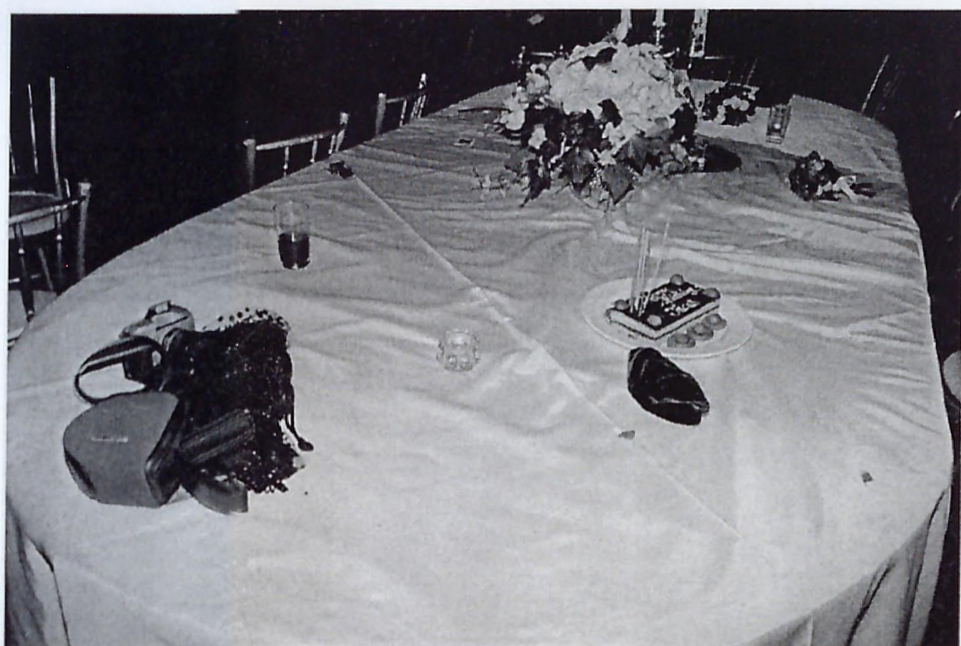


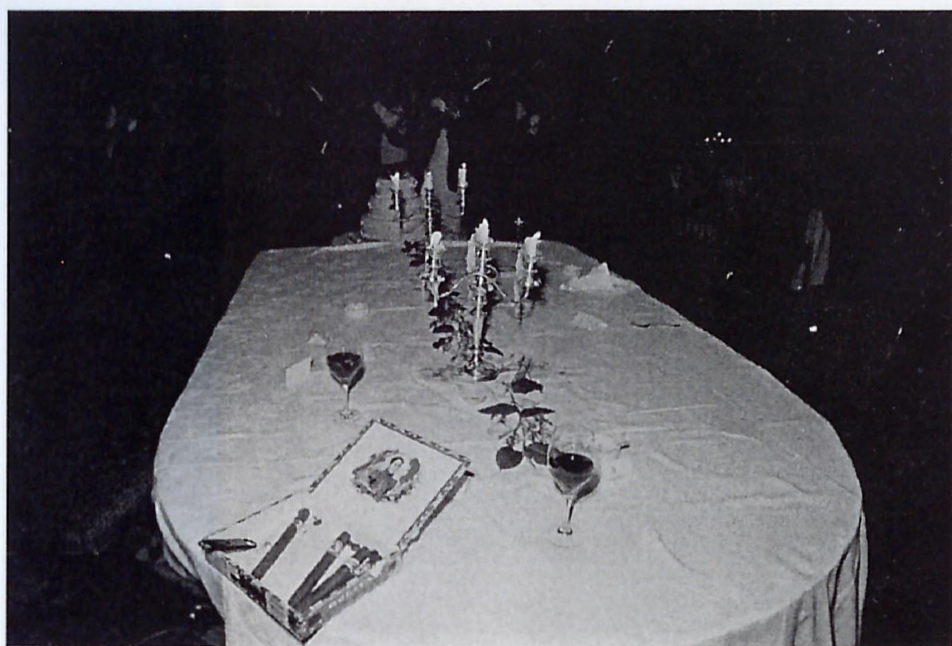


















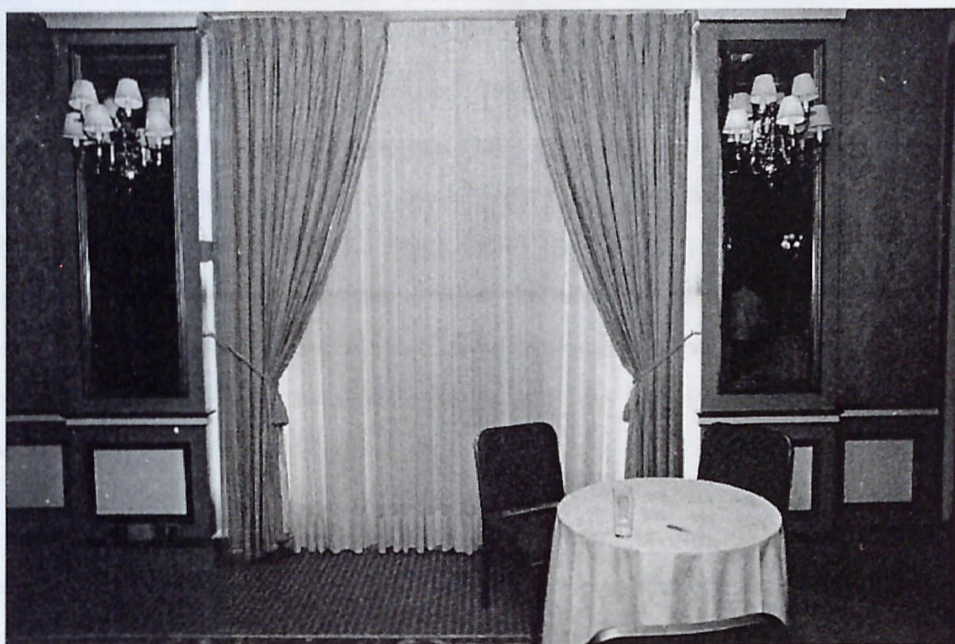






CONCLUSION

The Narrative presented is what I might define as an inter-disciplinary work that fuses, and blurs, between, aesthetic and perception, fiction and reality. By constructing a story in the form of a novel, I am attempting to create a double vision of the novel as a



The conceptualization of the work lies in the representation of the narrative in relation to the visual and text forms. By combining and collating these two forms of representation, I attempt to create an inter-disciplinary perception of the story behind the work.

CONCLUSION

The Memoire presented is what I might define as an inter-disciplinary work that fuses, and alternates between, mediums and perceptions, fiction and reality. By constructing a story in the form of a novella and then presenting some tangible element of this novella on a gallery wall, I intentionally blur the boundaries between a narrative, a narrative transformed into visual elements, and *un objet d'art*. It is in this transition, between the novella and the object presented in a non-virtual space, that the duality of the work rests. The questions I propose are: what constitutes an art work? How dependent is art on the narration to give the work its meaning? By isolating the work inside the gallery space, separated from the novella which is the story behind the work, I show the necessity of a contextualization of art. The question that arises is: will art, in itself, ever have meaning without the a priori, and is the a priori possible without a narrative? Art, much like literature, seems to linger in a zone between the real and the constructed, or the unreal.

The work I presented is, ultimately, a work that is defined by these two constructed spaces which are simultaneously distant and interconnected, which could well exist not only independently but interchangeably. To link the two spheres, the novella and the exhibition, is to create a third identity, in what the post- colonial theorist Homi Bhaba refers to as "the third space".

The conceptuality of the work lies in the representation of the narrative in relation to the visual, and vice-versa. By dividing and colliding these two forms of representation, I attempt to create an ever-interchangeable perception of the story behind the work.

GALERIE DIVISION

RAWI HAGE

DU 6 AU 11 JANVIER, 2009
JANUARY 6TH TO 11TH, 2009

FRANÇAIS | ENGLISH

GALERIE DIVISION - ART CONTEMPORAIN
DIVISION GALLERY - CONTEMPORARY ARTS